

The Sanctity of Life, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 12: Building a Culture of Life

Deuteronomy 30:19–20

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Doctrinally, this closing lesson gathers the whole study into a positive call: to choose life. Deuteronomy 30:19–20 sets before God's people the choice of life and death and pleads with them to choose life, binding that choice to loving God, obeying His voice, and holding fast to Him. Micah 6:8 distills the life that honors God into doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God. The teacher should help the class see that reverence for life is not merely opposition to what destroys life but the active pursuit, protection, and cherishing of life at every stage, rooted in relationship with the God who gives it.

What is at stake is the translation of conviction into a whole way of life, and of a way of life into a culture. A culture of life is built not mainly by arguments but by people and churches that cherish and care for life at every stage, from the womb to the final breath. This lesson aims to move the class from the convictions built over eleven lessons to a lasting, active commitment: to choose life in their relationships, decisions, families, and congregations, marked by justice, mercy, and humility. It should also gather the study's threads, the image of God, the unborn, the suffering, the despairing, the vulnerable, into a single, coherent calling.

Formationally, and as the study requires, this lesson must end with grace and hope, including for any who carry guilt connected to these issues. Several lessons have touched tender wounds; the close should assure every penitent heart of full forgiveness and a fresh beginning in Christ, so that students go out not weighed down but lifted up, ready to choose life as those who have themselves been chosen and loved. Teach this final lesson with warmth, hope, and a sense of joyful commissioning, holding unflinching truth and overflowing grace together, as they meet at the cross.

Question 1

Student Question:

Read Deuteronomy 30:19–20. God sets before His people “life and death, blessing and curse,” and pleads, “Choose life, that you and your offspring may live.” What does it mean that reverence for life is not only about opposing what destroys life but about actively choosing it?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Begin with the active force of Moses' call in Deuteronomy 30:19. God does not merely say, “Do not choose death”; He says, “Choose life.” The whole orientation is positive and active.

Reverence for life is not satisfied with the absence of harm; it presses toward the active pursuit and cherishing of life.

Draw out the difference this makes. One can avoid destroying life while remaining indifferent to it, keeping clean hands and a closed heart. Choosing life means more: welcoming it, protecting it, nurturing it, delighting in it, and spending oneself for it. The call is to be actively for life, not merely not against it.

Connect this to the whole study. Every truth the study has built, the image of God, the worth of the unborn, the dignity of the suffering and the despairing, the defense of the vulnerable, now becomes a summons to action: to choose life in concrete, daily ways. The convictions are meant to become a way of living.

Set the tone for the final lesson. This is a commissioning, a sending out to choose life. Establish that the study ends not with a list of prohibitions but with a positive, joyful calling to cherish what God cherishes.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The positive, active call to choose life, not merely to avoid destroying it (Deuteronomy 30:19).
- The difference between harmlessness and the active cherishing of life.
- The study's convictions becoming a summons to concrete action.
- The lesson as a joyful commissioning to choose and cherish life.

Discussion Prompts

- What is the difference between not destroying life and actively choosing it?
- How does choosing life go beyond mere harmlessness?
- How does this call gather up everything the study has taught?

Question 2

Student Question:

As this study closes, where is God calling you personally to "choose life," to actively pursue, protect, and cherish life rather than merely avoiding harm? What would choosing life look like in your daily relationships and decisions?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This first self-examining question makes the call to choose life immediate and personal. The aim is for each student to discern where, in their own life, God is calling them to actively pursue, protect, and cherish life rather than merely avoiding harm.

Help the class bring it down to daily life. Choosing life shows up in relationships, in how we treat family members, neighbors, and strangers; in decisions about how we spend time and resources; in our care for the vulnerable; in our words and attitudes. It is lived out in countless ordinary moments, not only in dramatic ones.

Press past the abstract toward the specific. It is easy to affirm choosing life in general; the question asks where it applies to this student, in their actual relationships and decisions. The answer will differ for each: a strained relationship to invest in, a vulnerable person to care for, a habit of contempt to lay down.

Move toward concrete intention. Invite each student to name one area where choosing life will reshape their daily living, and to begin there. The whole study comes to fruition as conviction becomes a chosen, active way of life.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The personal call to choose life in one's own relationships and decisions.
- Choosing life lived out in ordinary, daily moments.
- Moving from abstract affirmation to specific application.
- Conviction coming to fruition as a chosen, active way of life.

Discussion Prompts

- Where is God calling you to actively choose life?
- What would choosing life look like in your daily relationships and decisions?
- What is one specific area where you will begin?

Question 3

Student Question:

Deuteronomy 30:20 describes choosing life as “loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice, and holding fast to him.” How is choosing life ultimately bound up with our relationship to God Himself, the source and giver of all life?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Focus on how Deuteronomy 30:20 defines choosing life: “loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice, and holding fast to him.” Choosing life is not merely an ethical stance; it is bound up with our relationship to God Himself, the source and giver of all life.

Draw out the deep connection. Because God is the author and giver of life (Lesson 2), to choose life is ultimately to choose God, to love Him, obey Him, and cling to Him. Life flows from Him, and a true reverence for life is finally a reverence for the God who gives it. Apart from Him, even our best efforts to honor life lose their root.

Show how this guards the study from mere moralism. The call is not simply to adopt a set of pro-life behaviors but to be rightly related to the living God, from whom all true love of life flows. The deepest way to choose life is to hold fast to the Lord who is life, and to let love for Him shape everything else.

Apply this to the believer's walk. Invite the class to see that growing in reverence for life is inseparable from growing in love for God. As we hold fast to Him, His own heart for life is formed in us. Choosing life and walking closely with God are, in the end, one calling.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Choosing life as bound up with loving, obeying, and holding fast to God (Deuteronomy 30:20).
- Reverence for life rooted in reverence for the God who gives it.
- The guard against mere moralism: right relationship with the living God.
- Growing in love for life as inseparable from growing in love for God.

Discussion Prompts

- How does Deuteronomy 30:20 connect choosing life to our relationship with God?
- Why does true reverence for life depend on reverence for God Himself?
- How does this keep the study from becoming mere moralism?

Question 4

Student Question:

Looking back over this whole study, the image of God, the unborn, the suffering, the despairing, the vulnerable, where has God most changed your heart? What is one area where you now see life differently than when you began?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-focused question invites students to look back over the whole study and name where God has most changed their hearts. It is a moment of reflection and consolidation, gathering eleven lessons into personal testimony.

Help the class recall the journey: the image of God in every person, the wonder of the unborn, the deepening of the sixth commandment, the hard grace of the abortion lesson, the hope in suffering and death, the tenderness toward the despairing, the call to defend the vulnerable and care for the orphan, the humility on disputed questions. Each student will have been touched at different points.

Encourage honest naming of change. Real formation involves seeing differently than before. Ask students to identify one area where their vision of human life, others' or their own, has genuinely shifted through the study. Naming it helps to consolidate and keep it.

Move toward gratitude and continuation. Invite the class to give thanks for how God has worked and to consider how to carry that change forward. The end of a study should not be the end of its effect; the aim is a lasting reshaping of the heart toward the sanctity of life.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Reflection on the whole study as personal testimony to God's work.
- Formation seen in a changed vision of human life.
- Naming specific change as a means of consolidating it.
- Gratitude and continuation as the response to God's reshaping of the heart.

Discussion Prompts

- Looking back over the study, where has God most changed your heart?
- In what area do you now see life differently than when you began?
- How will you carry that change forward?

Question 5

Student Question:

Read Micah 6:8: "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" How do these three, justice, mercy, and humility, together form the heart of a life that honors the sanctity of every person?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Turn to Micah 6:8 and its three-fold summary of the life God desires: "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." Together these form the heart of a life that honors the sanctity of every person.

Draw out each element. To do justice is to defend the rights of the vulnerable and to give each person their due as an image-bearer. To love kindness (mercy) is to pour out compassion on the hurting and the guilty, as God has poured it out on us. To walk humbly with God is to live in dependent reverence before the Giver of life, neither playing God nor despising His ways.

Show how the three belong together. Justice without mercy becomes harsh; mercy without justice becomes sentimental; and both, without humility before God, become self-righteous or self-serving. Held together, they form a balanced, God-honoring life, exactly the balance this study has sought throughout: truth and grace, conviction and compassion.

Apply this as a summary of the whole study. A culture of life is built by people who do justice for the vulnerable, love mercy toward the wounded, and walk humbly with the God who gives life. Invite the class to take these three as a rule of life going forward.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Justice, mercy, and humility as the heart of a life honoring the sanctity of every person (Micah 6:8).
- Justice as giving each image-bearer their due; mercy as compassion on the hurting and guilty.
- Walking humbly with God as dependent reverence before the Giver of life.
- The three held together as the balance of truth and grace the study has sought.

Discussion Prompts

- What does each of the three, justice, mercy, and humility, mean?
- Why must they be held together rather than separated?
- How do these three summarize a life that honors the sanctity of life?

Question 6

Student Question:

Which of the three, doing justice, loving kindness, or walking humbly with God, does God seem to be pressing on you most as this study ends? What would it look like to grow in that area in the coming season?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question asks which of Micah's three, doing justice, loving kindness, or walking humbly, God is pressing on the student most as the study ends. The aim is to make the summary personal and to identify a specific growth area.

Help students discern honestly. Each person tends to be stronger in one and weaker in another. Some are passionate for justice but short on mercy; some are merciful but avoid the costly work of justice; some are active in both but proud rather than humble before God. Self-knowledge here is valuable.

Encourage attention to the area of weakness. God often presses on us precisely where we most need to grow. The one strong in justice may be called to grow in mercy; the merciful, to grow in courageous justice; the active, to grow in humble dependence on God.

Move toward a season of growth. Invite each student to name the one of the three God is pressing on them and one way to grow in it in the coming season. The end of the study becomes the beginning of a deliberate, ongoing formation.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Personal discernment of which of the three God is pressing on us most.
- Honest recognition of our characteristic strengths and weaknesses.

- Attending to the area of weakness as the place of needed growth.
- The study's end as the beginning of deliberate, ongoing formation.

Discussion Prompts

- Which of the three is God pressing on you most as this study ends?
- Where are you stronger, and where weaker, among the three?
- What would growth in that area look like in the coming season?

Question 7

Student Question:

A culture of life is built not mainly by arguments but by people who cherish and care for life at every stage. How can you, your family, and your congregation become a place where life is welcomed, protected, and treasured, from the womb to the final breath?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns to how a culture of life is actually built: not mainly by arguments, but by people and communities that cherish and care for life at every stage. The class is invited to consider how they, their families, and their congregations can become such places.

Help the class see the limits of argument and the power of embodied love. Arguments have their place, but cultures are shaped most by lived examples, communities where life is genuinely welcomed, protected, and treasured. A church that cares tangibly for mothers, children, the elderly, the disabled, the despairing, and the dying preaches the sanctity of life more powerfully than any debate.

Make it concrete across the whole span of life. Welcoming life from the womb may mean supporting struggling mothers and adoptive families; treasuring it to the final breath may mean caring for the elderly and the dying; cherishing it in between may mean coming alongside the despairing, the disabled, and the vulnerable. A culture of life cares at every stage.

Move toward communal and personal commitment. Invite students to consider one way their family or congregation could grow into a place where life is cherished, and one way they will contribute. Cultures change as individuals and communities choose, concretely and consistently, to cherish life.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- A culture of life built by embodied love more than by argument.
- The church's tangible care as the most powerful witness to the sanctity of life.
- Cherishing life at every stage, from the womb to the final breath.
- Personal and communal commitment as the means of cultural change.

Discussion Prompts

- Why is a culture of life built more by people than by arguments?
- How can your family or congregation cherish life at every stage?
- What is one way you will contribute to that culture?

Question 8

Student Question:

For some, these lessons may have stirred old grief or guilt connected to abortion, end-of-life decisions, despair, or other wounds. How does the gospel speak grace and hope to you, assuring you that in Christ there is full forgiveness and a fresh beginning?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-focused question speaks grace directly to the wounded, as the study requires at its close. Several lessons may have stirred old grief or guilt, over a lost child, a hard decision at a deathbed, a season of despair, or other wounds. The question assures such hearts of the gospel's grace and hope.

Speak the gospel clearly and tenderly. In Christ there is full forgiveness and a fresh beginning. No sin and no sorrow connected to these issues is beyond the reach of the grace purchased at the cross. For the penitent, the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin, and the past, however painful, does not have the final word.

Be faithful to the gospel as this church holds it, without the excluded language. Forgiveness and new life come through Christ, received by a penitent, obedient faith and walked out in ongoing faithfulness. For the wounded believer, the way forward is to bring the grief and guilt honestly to God, to receive His forgiveness, and to walk in the freedom and hope He gives. This is not a cheap comfort but the costly grace of the cross, freely given.

Let this minister, not merely inform. Some may most need, at the very end of the study, to hear that they are not defined by their worst moment or their deepest sorrow, but by the grace of God in Christ. Give space for that grace to land, so that everyone leaves the study lifted up rather than weighed down.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Full forgiveness and a fresh beginning in Christ for the wounded and penitent (Isaiah 1:18).
- No sin or sorrow connected to these issues beyond the reach of the cross.
- Forgiveness received by penitent, obedient faith and walked out in faithfulness.
- Identity defined by God's grace in Christ rather than by our worst moment.

Discussion Prompts

- How does the gospel speak grace to grief or guilt stirred by this study?
- Why is no sin or sorrow beyond the reach of the cross?
- What would it mean to bring your wound honestly to God and receive His grace?

Question 9

Student Question:

Trace the whole vision of this study into a single calling. If every human life bears the image of God and is precious to Him, what does it mean to spend our lives choosing life, doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God, and how does this calling hold together unflinching truth and overflowing grace?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest doctrinal block, gathering the entire study into a single calling. Trace the whole vision for the class: every human life bears the image of God (Lesson 1); life is God's gift (2); He forms and knows the unborn (3, 4); His law guards life (5) and grieves its unjust taking (6); the gospel gives hope in suffering and death (7) and tender care in despair (8); He commands the defense of the vulnerable (9) and the care of the defenseless (10); and He calls for a Scripture-formed, humble conscience on disputed questions (11).

Gather these into one summons. To honor the sanctity of life is to spend our lives choosing life, doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God. It is a whole way of being: reverent toward every person as an image-bearer, active in protecting and cherishing life, merciful toward the wounded and the guilty, and humble before the God who gives and holds all life.

Show how this calling holds together truth and grace, the balance the whole study has sought. Unflinching truth: every life is sacred, and we will not call good evil or evil good, even when it is costly or unpopular. Overflowing grace: we meet every person, including the wounded and the guilty, with the mercy God has shown us. These are not in tension but in harmony, and they meet perfectly at the cross, where the innocent gave His life so the guilty could live.

Land the study as a commissioning. The aim is not merely that students leave informed, but that they leave reverent, compassionate, and equipped to defend and cherish life, sent out to build a culture of life marked by justice, mercy, and humility, and grounded in the grace and hope of the gospel. Close by pointing to Christ, who came that we might have life, and who calls us to choose it.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The whole study gathered into one calling: to choose life, do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8; Deuteronomy 30:19).
- Reverence for life as a whole way of being, not a single issue.
- Truth and grace held together in harmony, meeting at the cross.

- The commissioning to be reverent, compassionate, and equipped to defend and cherish life.
- Christ as the one who came that we might have life abundantly (John 10:10).

Discussion Prompts

- How does the whole study come together into a single calling?
- How does this calling hold together unflinching truth and overflowing grace?
- How does it all point us finally to Christ?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back over Deuteronomy 30:19–20 and Micah 6:8, and over the whole study. Name one specific, lasting way you will choose life and honor the sanctity of every person going forward, and one concrete step you will take this week to begin, resting in the grace and hope of the gospel.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The capstone question of the lesson and of the whole study gathers Deuteronomy 30:19–20 and Micah 6:8 and asks for a lasting commitment and an immediate first step, both resting in grace.

Press for one specific, lasting way the student will choose life and honor the sanctity of every person going forward. This should be a settled direction, not just a momentary feeling: a way of seeing and treating human life that will endure beyond the study, shaped by all they have learned.

Then ask for one concrete step this week to begin. The lasting commitment becomes real as it is begun now, in some specific act of choosing life, doing justice, showing mercy, or walking humbly with God. Spiritual formation lands in the next concrete step.

Close the study in grace and hope, as it must end. Remind the class that they choose life not in their own strength or out of fear, but as those who have been chosen and loved by the God who gave His Son that they might live. Send them out reverent, compassionate, equipped, and free, holding truth and grace together, to spend their lives cherishing every life that bears the image of God. End by pointing once more to Christ and His grace, so that the final note of the whole study is hope.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- A lasting commitment to choose life and honor the sanctity of every person.
- An immediate concrete step beginning the commitment now.
- Choosing life from grace and love rather than fear or self-effort.
- The whole study ending on the note of hope in Christ.

Discussion Prompts

- What lasting way will you choose life and honor the sanctity of every person going forward?
- What concrete step will you take this week to begin?
- How does resting in grace free you to choose life without fear?