

**LIFE OR DEATH?**

What's the leading cause of death worldwide? That's a question asked by the National Day of Prayer Task Force (NDPTF) this week. Most people likely answer cancer. This disease kills more than 8 million people each year. But it's not the leading cause of death. Perhaps AIDS or smoking? Alcohol-related deaths? Traffic accidents? These four together take the lives of more than 11 million people around the world. But the leading cause of death kills more people than all of these combined.

**1- CHOOSING DEATH?** - The "Worldometers" website aggregates statistical data from World Health Organization and other sources. In 2018, some 41.9 million pregnancies were "prematurely terminated." This names abortion as the number one cause of death worldwide. Yet, unlike most other leading causes, abortion is "nearly 100 percent preventable." The womb in the United States is a danger zone, as 9 out of 10 abortions are elective, performed not for medical reasons but because the baby is "not wanted."

NDPTF wonders what would happen if society viewed abortion like smoking or cancer, with public service campaigns advocating choosing life instead of choosing death. What if billions of dollars were spent on research to save the lives of babies, as done for diseases? NDPTF notes the sad truth, that our culture doesn't discourage abortion, but rather "champions and celebrates" death.

**2- CHOOSING WORDS?** - NDPTF reports that in a recent video, the founder of a so-called "pro-choice group" was telling children why abortion is "good" and said, "They just suck the pregnancy out. It was like a really crappy dentist appointment or something, like a body thing that's kind of uncomfortable." What a misleading choice of words! You know better. "An abortion does not suck a pregnancy out. It forcefully removes, often through suction and cutting, a *fetus* from the womb," killing the pre-born baby.

What's the message to children? "That a baby is only valuable when it doesn't interfere with your life and your happiness." Numerous elected officials try to legislate this outrageous concept. NDPTF notes that the 116th Congress, hailed for having a record number of women, just voted on a bill to provide funding for the federal government. But it also restores monies to organizations doing abortions overseas. It's a direct contradiction to numerous recent decisions preventing the use of taxpayer funds for abortion.

**3- CHOOSING LIFE!** - Hopefully your church observed "National Sanctity of Human Life Day" this past Sunday. On January 22, 46 years ago, the Supreme Court legalized abortion across all 50 states. NDPTF notes this one fateful decision has led to the deaths of over 61 million babies in America alone. That's about the combined populations of California and Florida. Wiped out, why? By legalizing death.

But NDPTF says, "There is nothing in this world more valuable than a human life. The Bible tells us God made us in His image and likeness. This means that, regardless of race, gender, age, place of birth or socio-economic status, every human life has intrinsic, unalienable value. From the womb, all the way to the tomb, life is precious. I pray America will choose life." Amen! And for those wrestling with the choice of life, don't overlook the loving option of adoption. Fortunately, northwest Iowans have several advocates for life, including Cherish Center in Okoboji, Bethany Christian Services in Orange City, Cornerstone For Life in Storm Lake and Algona, Birthright of Spencer, Beauty Amidst The Ashes, Iowa Right to Life, Knights of Columbus, and more. Get to know them, support them, pray for their ministries of life.

**4- LIFE WINS!** - What if you or someone you know has chosen death instead of life, and is responsible for the death of an infant through abortion? Your heart aches about that. But there is good news to share. God has done something about it. The creator of life conquers death. That's because the root leading cause of death is actually generic and genetic. The Bible calls it "sin" which means acting against the character of God. You were born a sinner, and choosing abortion is just one of countless examples.

God has the only cure. And good news - life wins! In Romans 5 and elsewhere, the Bible teaches that death came into the world because of the original sin of the first two human beings, in rebellion against God. That's why our Creator came in the flesh to become the sacrifice for sin. To pay our debt of death. And to be the death of death, in His own body on the cross. The Lord Jesus Christ rose to life, in victory over sin and death, which extends to all who receive Him as Lord and Savior.

The apostle says, "*so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" When you come to Him in repentance and faith, you receive not only His forgiveness of sins, but His eternal spiritual life. Paul says, "*He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him.*"

The Bible says, "*choose you this day whom you will serve.*" Choose life, through Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. And live out His new life by His power within you, day by day, as you trust and obey! ☐