

The Message of Jesus: Choose Life

Keep these ideas in mind as you study *Chapter 13*.

❖ God made us who we are, and Jesus died to give us eternal life. He taught us that the secret to fullness of life is love. Read about the two new commandments Jesus gave us in Matthew 22:36–40.

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❖ Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan to illustrate Christian love. Most Jews disliked Samaritans, yet a Samaritan stopped to help a Jew. You can read the full parable at Luke 10:29–37.

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❖ Jesus explained that Christian love is difficult, a whole new way of thinking. Few, he said, can follow this way of love. See Matthew 7:14.

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❖ In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave us teachings that guide our decisions. He gave us a new understanding of the Law. Among the teachings found in this sermon is to love our enemies. Read the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7.

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❖ Good laws protect the rights of people, protect the common good, and help all people reach goals and live with dignity. Jesus wants us to live by the spirit of the law, not the letter of the law. He wants us to cherish life and show love to others.

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❖ The Fifth Commandment tells us not to kill, but it also teaches us to cherish and respect all life, especially our own.

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❖ Anger often leads to sinful acts, but it is not sinful to feel angry. It is important to channel anger properly. Anger can lead to good acts too.

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❖ Scandal sets a bad example. It encourages other people to act sinfully and can cause damage.

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❖ Abortion is the killing of an embryo or a fetus, a developing baby, before birth. A baby has a right to know, love, and serve God in this world. We should protect and cherish a baby's right to life.

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❖ Euthanasia is direct intervention to end life for the purpose of ending suffering. It appears to be merciful, but it disrespects the gift of life God gives us. God alone has the right over life and death, and we cannot know what plans he has for those who are suffering. Allowing a person to die without artificial support is not wrong if continuing such treatment is overly burdensome in prolonging the life of a dying person.

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❖ The Church opposes using the death penalty to punish criminals. We should work instead to build a culture of life.

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❖ Prejudice is the unreasonable dislike of a particular group of people. Examples include racism, sexism, and ageism. Prejudice is wrong because it causes harm to people and denies them their rights.

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❖ The corporal works of mercy are ways to show love for others by tending to their physical, or bodily, needs. The Spiritual Works of Mercy are ways to show love for others by tending to their spiritual needs.

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