

LIFE IS COMPLICATED, YET SIMPLE

"It's complicated." That concise, vague response is convenient when we're asked about a topic or situation that seems too unwieldy or time-consuming to explain, or when we just don't want to talk about it. But sometimes "It's complicated" sidesteps a deeper matter that really is not complicated at all.

For instance, there are many aspects of an unexpected, unplanned pregnancy that can make it extremely complicated, including the relationship of the mother and father, the mother's age and health, financial circumstances, employment or school considerations, family values and pressures, social repercussions, and more. Any additional component of criminality, scandal, or exploitation layers real trauma onto the situation. Yes, it can be very complicated, indeed.

And yet, beneath all those very real complications, there is an underlying truth that is simple. A human life has been conceived, made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26–27). A new person, unique in all the world, has begun the journey of life, innocent of all the external complications that may be swirling around his or her tiny existence.

The Bible teaches that this new person, like each of us, was created by God. He or she is alive and developing according to God's will and the scientific processes He designed. As King David wrote in Psalm 139:13, "You knitted me together in my mother's womb." Although David did not have the particulars of human reproductive science available to him, he still knew the essential truth about the wonder of human life.

He knew that his life was the gift of our Creator, and that his every thought, desire and action were known to God as well (Psalm 139:1 – 12). David responded with profound gratitude and insight: "I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." And so is each and every person.

This magnificent yet uncomplicated truth establishes the sanctity of every human life, regardless of how admittedly complicated their surrounding circumstances may be. The desire to celebrate and protect each person's life, from conception to natural death, reflects Jesus Christ who declared, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

Upholding life in the name of Jesus means we always do so with his love and compassion. We must embody his love and compassion for women and men facing an unexpected or crisis pregnancy, by helping them untangle their complicated and often distressing circumstances to see that there is always a life-giving way forward, and by helping provide the moral and practical support they need to choose it.

We must convey Christ's compassion and love for women, and men, who need post-abortion healing. They may have carried this burden around for years, even for decades, often silently. We can help them find healing and wholeness in God's abundant mercy and forgiveness. National ministries like Silent No More and Rachel's Vineyard, as well as compassionate local churches, are ready to assist, without judgment.

If we absorb the truth of Psalm 139:16, that it is God who numbers our days, we will bear his love and compassion as we support people facing severe illness, disability, or end-of-life difficulties. This helps

them, and their families, resist the temptation to take matters into their own hands through euthanasia and assisted suicide as those avenues become increasingly available and promoted as reasonable -- even loving -- choices.

And if we embrace the sanctity of life, we will have Christ's love and compassion for people who are deadened by a culture that says that life is cheap, and we will lovingly offer the gospel to breathe abundant life into their lives.

Life? Yes, it's complicated. But this is not: from Day One to the divinely decreed end, life is a precious gift from God, who loves each and every person so much that He sent his only Son Jesus to die for them, so that they may have life -- abundantly, and eternally (Revelation 4:11; John 3:16, 10:10).

With love in the Lord,
The Rev. Christine Maddux