

“The Sanctity of Human Life”

INTRODUCTION: When God said, “You shall not murder” (Ex. 20:13), He was speaking about the value of human life.

1. Our *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (Q’s, 68, 69)
 68. Q. What is required in the sixth commandment?
 - A. The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others. (WSC #68)
 69. Q. What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?
 - A. The sixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor, unjustly, or whatsoever tendeth thereunto. (WSC #69)
2. Commandment #6 has to do with...
 - a. **The sanctity of human life**
 - b. **The dignity of human beings**
 - c. **The value of particular persons**
3. This commandment is much more *comprehensive* than we ever imagined.
 - a. Jesus extends it to cover anger and even mean-spirited speech!

You have heard that it was said to those of old, “You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.” But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, “You fool!” will be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:21-24)
 - b. Note: broken relationships qualify as a form of **murder**.
 - c. Our *Westminster Larger Catechism* instructs pastors about this 6th commandment
 - i. *The duties required in the sixth commandment are, all careful studies, and lawful endeavors, to preserve the life of ourselves and others by resisting all thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions, and avoiding all occasions, temptations, and practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any; by just defense thereof against violence, patient bearing of the hand of God, quietness of mind, cheerfulness of spirit; a sober use of meat, drink, physic, sleep, labor, and recreations; by charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness, peaceable, mild, and courteous speeches and behavior, forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil; comforting and succoring the distressed, and protecting and defending the innocent. (WLC #135)*

- ii. *The sins forbidden in the sixth commandment are, all taking away the life of ourselves, or of others, except in case of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defense; the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life; sinful anger, hatred, envy, desire of revenge; all excessive passions, distracting cares; immoderate use of meat, drink, labor, and recreations; provoking words, oppression, quarreling, striking, wounding, and whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any.* (WLC #136)

4. But how does this work in *real life*? Please allow me to **illustrate** this commandment with a **true story**:
- a. **Kathryn DeWitt** is a 19-year-old, Christian girl, from California.
 - b. She was a straight-A student; graduated with a 4.0 GPA, took 6 AP tests (one she prepared for all by herself), ran track, represented her school at a state-wide girls' leadership program, was in numerous extra-curricular activities, was considered a "high achiever," was accepted to an Ivy League School: *The University of Pennsylvania*.
 - c. In the first 2 weeks of classes at Penn, she joined a co-ed fraternity, signed up to tutor elementary kids, joined the same campus ministry her parents had joined, and jumped into her studies – *she did everything "right."*
 - d. But, she was filled with self-doubt and self-loathing!
 - i. Classmates wore make-up to school; Kathryn had acne.
 - ii. Classmates had great internships; Kathryn focused on homework.
 - iii. Friends shared selfies of great fun; Kathryn had no social life.
 - iv. She saw her seat-mate text message to a friend, "I'd rather jump out of a plane than talk to the ugly girl beside me."
 - e. In a few weeks, Kathryn went and purchased razor blades and wrote several suicide notes – a stack of goodbye letters to loved ones.
 - f. Then, on January 17, 2014, **Madison Holleran**, another Penn freshman, jumped off the top of a parking garage and killed herself! Madison was attractive, popular, talented and successful.
 - g. Miss Holleran was the 3rd of 6 Penn students to commit suicide in a 13-month stretch! (In that same year, Tulane lost 4; Appalachian State 3; Cornell faced 6 suicides in 2009-2010; and NYU had 5 kids kill themselves in the 2003-2004 school year; William and Mary had 6 suicides last year)
 - h. Nationally, the suicide rate among young people 15-24 years of age has risen from 9.6 per 100,000 students in 2007 to 11.1 per 100,000 in 2013!
 - i. A survey of Counseling Centers reports that ½ of all clients show "severe psychological problems" – a 13% jump in 2 years!
 - i. Anxiety is issue #1
 - ii. Depression is issue #2
 - iii. Hurtful behavior is issue #3
 - j. In 2003, Duke University reported that most of its female students felt pressure to be "*effortlessly perfect.*" – smart, accomplished, physically fit, beautiful, popular without visible effort. The "perfect female."

- k. At Stanford, counsellors call it “*the Duck Syndrome*”: appearing to glide in the water while paddling furiously under the – surface – just to stay afloat!

- l. **Gregory T. Eells**, Director of Counselling at Cornell University, said this:

Social media is a huge contributor to the misperception among students that peers aren't also struggling. When students remark during a counseling session that everyone else on campus looks happy, I tell them: “I walk around and think, ‘That one’s gone to the hospital. That person has an eating disorder. That student just went on antidepressants.’ As a therapist, I know that nobody is as happy or as grown-up as they seem on the outside.”

- m. **William Alexander**, Director of Penn’s Counseling and Psychological Services adds this comment:

A small setback used to mean disappointment, or having that feeling of needing to try harder next time.” Now? “For some students, a mistake has incredible meaning.”

- 5. Oh...one more thing about young **Kathryn DeWitt**:

- a. Kathryn has struggled with her female gender identity.
- b. In high school, she felt attracted to other girls.
- c. She knew that her church and her parents seriously disapproved of homosexuality.
- d. She was deeply convicted by all this.

- 6. What happened to Kathryn? How did she go from high school happiness, to cutting, to plans for suicide? What convinced Kathryn to violate the Sixth Commandment and murder herself? (*Good News: Her friends intervened, she was hospitalized, and she did not take her own life. Not yet*)

- 7. I would ask you to look with me at **James 4:1-10** for an exposé on murder and suicide.

- 8. Three things went wrong in young Kathryn’s life. James 4:1-10 speaks to each of these errors.

- a. A Defective View of Self-worth (4:1-3)
- b. A Wrong Understanding of Her Identity (4:4-5)
- c. An Inability to See Oneself Accurately (4:6-10)

I. LIFE CAN BE RUINED BY A DEFECTIVE VIEW OF SELF-WORTH (James 4:1-3)

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. (James 4:1-3)

- 1. Kathryn’s problems began with her **parents**. Sad to say...

- a. Her dad is a civil engineer; her mother a pre-school teacher in San Mateo, California.
- b. They pushed Kathryn, their oldest child, to always excel.
- c. Her mom checked her grades, every morning, online.

Every day at 5 p.m. test scores and updated grades were posted online. Her mother would be the first to comment should her grade go down. “I would get home from track and she would say, ‘I see your grade dropped.’ I would say, ‘Mom, I think it’s a mistake.’ And she would say, ‘That’s what I thought.’ ”

- d. Kathryn came to see that to be loved, she must succeed.

Hearing my parents talk about me in a positive way, or hearing other parents talk about their kids doing well in academics or extracurriculars, that’s where I got some of the expectations for myself,” she said. “It was like self-fulfillment: I’d feel fulfilled and happy when other people were happy with what I’m doing, or expectations they have are met.

- e. In kindergarten, she realized she was expected to attend an elite college: Stanford, an Ivy League School, Oxford, etc.

- f. **Sound familiar parents?** *Duke, UNC-Chapel Hill, Vanderbilt, etc.*

- g. When she was accepted into Penn, after being on the wait list, her dad said to her...

Her father sat her down for a heartfelt speech about how proud he was of her getting into Penn and of the direction her life was going. Tears rolling down his face, he said, ‘Kathryn, the reason I’m living is to pass you off to your husband.’

- h. Something hard to hear for a girl struggling with same-sex attraction but not able to discuss that with her own parents!

- i. The message was clear: Go to Penn, graduate with honors, be a success, marry right, look good, never embarrass Mom and Dad!

- j. **There was a war raging in little Kathryn’s soul with no one she could talk to!**

2. Look at James 4:1-13...the apostle tells us about this inner war:

- a. *What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.* (James 4:1-3)

- b. These Christians’ wayward values, worldly pursuits and self-destructive goals had ruined their lives!

- c. **Dan G. McCarthy:** *James: ECNT; p. 208.*

The structure seems to suggest that murder, jealousy, fighting, and war are derivatives of these self-centered desires, and that even good desires can become evil if motivated by the wrong reason.

3. **Gist:** They had become less than human in the way they pursued their values, goals and desires in life. They’d produced quarrels, fights, even murder in pursuit of their **“success.”**

- a. Literal murder?

- b. Some scholars say yes...*abortion, killing a slave, casting a debtor into prison until he dies, cheating the poor, perhaps even suicide!*

Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you. (James 5:4-6)

- c. Other scholars say no: James is using figurative speech.
 - d. Either way...*good, innocent people were hurt by their drive to success, popularity, wealth, notoriety!*
4. **Here is James' point:** One truth Kathryn's parents needed to know:
- a. A person is of infinite value simply because persons are created in *the image of God*. (Dignity of humanity)
 - b. Their souls will live forever. Jesus died to save those souls. God says, "No one can end a human life or determine a soul's eternal destiny except Me! You shall not murder – not even kill yourselves!"
 - c. **People are of value for who they are, not what they do, the grades they get, the success they earn, what they accomplish.**
 - d. When Kathryn's parents allowed her to think that her life had no value beyond the University of Pennsylvania, success, and a happy marriage...
 - e. **...they set up their beloved daughter for self-destruction!**
5. **Personal Fact:** Mark Davis said to me Monday at lunch, "I have never lived in a place – Iowa, Tennessee, Florida, and Massachusetts – where success, appearances, good grades and prosperity meant so much as here in Charlotte." I've been telling you this for 9 years – and it's killing your souls, ruining your families, endangering your children!
6. **Hear me, young people!** You are of such value to God that He sacrificed the life of His only Son (child) to save your soul and rescue your life from ruin. Don't you believe the lie that you were "born for success," or "expected to excel," or even "live a good life" in order to be of value. *You are of value because you are! You are a human being...the image of God.*
- Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*
- So God created man in his own image,*
- in the image of God he created him;*
- male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:26-27)*
- Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. (Genesis 2:7)*
7. **Anything else, told to you by anyone else, is a LIE!**
- a. *For you formed my inward parts;*
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

*I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
 Wonderful are your works;
 my soul knows it very well.
 My frame was not hidden from you,
 when I was being made in secret,
 intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
 Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
 in your book were written, every one of them,
 the days that were formed for me,
 when as yet there was none of them.* (Psalm 139:13-16)

- b. Your body is too precious to starve, to cut, to abuse.
- c. Your soul is too holy to pollute with porn or fornication.
- d. Your life is more than what you do, earn, possess.
- e. **You are not a machine to produce; you are the Image of God!**

II. LIFE CAN BE RUINED BY A WRONG UNDERSTANDING OF IDENTITY (James 4:4-5)

You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”? (James 4:4-5)

1. These folks, to whom James writes, considered the value of the world to be more important than the value of God.
2. James says that they were = *friends of the world*
 - a. *You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.* (James 4:4)
 - b. They had not yet come to terms with what the apostle John wrote –
Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17)
 - c. “Worldly” people cannot be spiritual people:
The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14)
3. Financial success, good grades and academic laurels, popularity, power and influence, beauty and athletic prowess – all these things drove their lives forward in a violent manner.

4. Godliness, Christ-like character, faithfulness to the church, ministry and service, leading others to Christ, and the values of the Kingdom of God meant little to them.
 - a. They'd not yet learned life's #1 priority
 - b. *Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:25, 31-33)*
5. Somehow they'd missed life's #1 lesson: *We belong to God!*
 - a. *Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? (James 4:5)*
 - b. This is a difficult verse interpreted in a number of ways.
 - c. **Grant R. Osborne:** *ESV Study Bible, footnote, p. 2396.*
God created mankind with a "spirit," and he deeply desires that our spirits worship him. Some interpreters believe the verse speaks of human jealousy (the spirit that he has made to live in us envies intensely). But the idea of divine jealousy fits the context best, since the surrounding verses deal with man's relationship with God.
 - d. *You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. (Deuteronomy 5:8-10)*
6. We belong to God because He made us. Christ died on the Cross to purchase us out of sin's slavery and assert His ownership of us. When the Holy Spirit comes to live inside us, we become temples of the Spirit.
Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
7. Young **Kathryn DeWitt** got this all wrong. She lived to please her parents, impress others, find her identity in her school work, and become like her friends. *Kathryn struggles with her identity – who she really is.*
8. **Julie Scelfo:** *"Suicide on Campus and the Pressure of Perfection", p. 5.*
The existential question "Why am I here?" is usually followed by the equally confounding "How am I doing?" In 1954, the social psychologist Leon Festinger put forward the social comparison theory, which posits that we try to determine our worth based on how we stack up against others. In the era of social media, such comparisons take place on a screen with carefully curated depictions that don't provide the full picture. Mobile devices escalate the comparisons from occasional to nearly constant.

Where the faulty comparisons become dangerous is when a student already carries feelings of shame, according to Dr. Anthony L. Rostain, a pediatric psychiatrist on Penn's faculty who was co-chairman of the task force on student psychological health and welfare. "Shame is the sense one has of being defective or, said another way, not good enough," Dr. Rostain said. "It isn't that one isn't doing well. It's that 'I am no good.'" Instead of thinking "I failed at something, these students think, 'I am a failure.'"

Helicopter parenting robs children of opportunities to develop independence and resiliency, thereby crippling them emotionally later in life. These cultural dynamics of perfectionism and overindulgence have now combined to create adolescents who are ultra-focused on success but don't know how to fail.

9. This is hard for us to hear, but it is truly liberating: *We are owned by no one but God – Father, Son, and Spirit.*
 - a. Not by boss, not our teachers, not our country, and...
 - b. ...not even our parents (or our kids!)
 - c. **Heidelberg Catechism; Question #1**

Question 1. *What is thy only comfort in life and death?*

Answer: *That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ; who, with his precious blood, has fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him.*

10. **I struggle with this** as all of you do –

- a. If I do not “do well;” if the church doesn’t grow bigger; if I don’t please you with my sermons; or if I make you angry because of leadership decisions...
 - b. ...then I can (would) be fired!
 - c. My conclusion? *So what? I am who I am **not** because I pastor this church, please you all, or “make the grade!” I am who I am because God made me and loves me, Jesus redeemed me, and the Holy Spirit lives in me. My identity is in Christ who owns me.*
 - d. “But by the grace of God I am what I am...” (1 Corinthians 15:10)
11. Therefore, my whole life’s focus is **not** on this world, but on the next. I look to God, Christ and heaven for my measure of both success and personal worth.
 - a. *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. (Colossians 3:1-4)*
 - b. There is the key: “your (my) life is hidden with Christ in God.”
 12. **We are identified not by anything in this world but by the God in heaven who made us, redeemed us and owns us. Our identity is in Jesus Christ.**

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

III. LIFE CAN BE RUINED BY AN INABILITY TO SEE ONESELF ACCURATELY (James 4:6-10)

But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. (James 4:6-10)

1. Something sickeningly revolutionary has slowly taken place during my lifetime.
 - a. **Narcissism has become the American lifestyle.**
 - b. In 1950 (a year after I was born), the *Gallup Organization* asked high school seniors if they considered themselves as "a very important person": 12% said yes.
 - c. By 2005, the percentage of high school students who considered themselves "very important people" had risen to 80%.
 - d. 93% of young people suffer from self-inflated opinions of themselves.
2. **David Brooks:** *The Road to Character*, pp. 6-7.
 - a. *Psychologists have a thing called the narcissism test. They read people statements and ask if the statements apply to them. Statements such as "I like to be the center of attention...I show off if I get the chance because I am extraordinary...Somebody should write a biography about me." The median narcissism score has risen 30 percent in the last two decades. Ninety-three percent of young people score higher than the middle score just twenty years ago. The largest gains have been in the number of people who agree with the statements "I am an extraordinary person" and "I like to look at my body." Along with this apparent rise in self-esteem, there has been a tremendous increase in the desire for fame. Fame used to rank low as a life's ambition for most people. In a 1976 survey that asked people to list their life goals, fame ranked fifteenth out of sixteen. By 2007, 51 percent of young people reported that being famous was one of their top goals.*
 - b. He calls this syndrome "*The Big Me*"
3. **One survey of middle school girls:** Who would you most like to have dinner with? Results: (1) Jennifer Lopez, (2) Jesus Christ, (3) Paris Hilton.
4. **The girls were then asked** to choose from several jobs.
 - a. Twice as many chose to be **Justin Bieber's** personal assistant than president of Harvard University.

b. Why? *Because they'd be surrounded by famous people.*

5. **David Brooks** commented on this sad state of affairs (p. 7).

As I looked around the popular culture I kept finding the same messages everywhere: You are special. Trust yourself. Be true to yourself. Movies from Pixar and Disney are constantly telling children how wonderful they are. Commencement speeches are larded with the same clichés: Follow your passion. Don't accept limits. Chart your own course. You have a responsibility to do great things because you are so great. This is the gospel of self-trust.

6. **One problem:** When you *fail* (and you will), you are unable to deal with your deficiency. When you *sin*, you fall apart. And you soon come to the conclusion that you are a worthless person, unfit for life!

7. **Kathryn DeWitt's** life collapsed when she couldn't deal with being (a) a Christian, (b) the child of Christian parents, (c) and having lesbian desires. It drove her to near suicide!

8. St. James tells us three very important truths about dealing with failure – especially the sins of spiritual or moral failure.

a. **First:** God is a God of grace...a *greater grace*

i. *But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."* (James 4:6)

ii. "greater grace" – greater than any and all sin

iii. Given to those humble enough to receive it

iv. A grace to regenerate, renew, revive, reform, restore

b. **Second:** if we submit ourselves to God, He will help us with our spiritual struggles.

i. *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.* (James 4:7-9)

ii. Described here is a process of *repentance and faith*.

iii. Transformation: God changing you from the inside out

iv. **Key:** God fixing who you are before He deals with what you do!

c. **Third:** To humble ourselves before God is to succeed!

i. *Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.* (James 4:10)

ii. Humble oneself...be exalted

iii. The way to glory is the road of repentance.

9. Young **Kathryn DeWitt** struggles with her homosexual feelings –

a. Her lusts, her desires, her illicit sexuality...

b. ...and an emerging identity

c. At the root of the issue is a certain *narcissism*.

d. She wants to define herself by her own feelings.

10. This is causing tremendous dissonance in young Kathryn's life.

- a. She at times wants to be 100% female.
- b. At other times, she desires to act like a male.
- c. And there are times when her confusion paralyzes her.
- d. **Julie Scelfo:** *Suicide on Campus...*; p. 8, 9.

Ms. DeWitt has tried to forge a new path for herself that is kinder and more forgiving. Rather than stay involved with the Christian group favored by her parents, she joined the progressive-minded Christian Association and the Queer Christian Fellowship, where she feels comfortable talking about her newly found identity as a lesbian.

These days, Ms. DeWitt's lime-green watch covers up a scar where she had cut herself. But she is less concerned about covering up her true self. She has confessed her sexual feelings to her parents. They are working on acceptance. "My mom is there," Ms. DeWitt said. "My dad is still working on it."

11. "Kinder...more forgiving?...progressive-minded?...her true self?...*There is a bias in Ms. Scelfo's reporting of this story.*

12. Homosexuality is grossly misrepresented by the modern media, the academy and social scientists:

- a. First: simply because you feel homosexual urges does not make you a homosexual.
- b. Second: homosexual acts do not make you a homosexual.
- c. Third: a homosexual (lesbian) is one who chooses to live a gay lifestyle and to advocate for a new identity; opposite to the one God gave them.

13. God made no mistake by making Kathryn the way He did; God **did not** place a male soul in a female body...

- a. By mistake
- b. Just to be mean
- c. Or to confuse Kathryn

14. *God loves Kathryn and desires to help her find her way through her gender uncertainty, and into a blessed life under His grace.*

15. Kathryn, as well as you and I, has a choice: *She can allow God to define who she is, how she should live, what to call her same-sex attraction and how to deal with it. Or...she can assume that power and privilege to herself – narcissism.*

16. We know this about God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

- a. God created only males and females, but no homosexuals.

*So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27)*

- b. Every time God speaks about homosexuality in the Bible, He calls it sin (9 times).

- c. Jesus Christ was a heterosexual, therefore, homosexually active people are not what God would have us be because God wants us to be like Christ.
- d. God's love for us, in Christ, is the model for heterosexual love.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. (Eph. 5:25)

- e. God can help Kathryn find her way without entering into lesbianism. *He offers to her a greater grace – greater even than her same-sex attractions.*

17. **Most of all** God considers Kathryn's life (and your life) far too valuable to ruin with suicide simply because she is going through a particularly painful stage of her human development.

18. God's Gospel message is one of **Hope**: *There is life beyond our sin.*

- a. i.e., there is life beyond lesbianism or homosexuality
- b. There is life beyond fornication, porn, alcohol, drugs or other sinful patterns of enslaving sin.
- c. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:16-17)*

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. (John 10:10-15)

- d. **Jesus died for our sins so that we might live free from the power and pain of our sins.**
- e. *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. (Romans 6:12-14)*
- f. *But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." (James 4:6 NASB)*

19. Kathryn is deeply loved by God. Christ died to save Kathryn's soul. The Holy Spirit now lives in Kathryn (if indeed she is a true Christian). Her parents really do love her. Her church is waiting to help her, with the *means of grace*, find her way forward into this "abundant life" Jesus offers her. God and all these people deeply love young Kathryn – even in her homosexual state!

20. **The Good and Noble life** is what they all want for Kathryn and what Jesus promises her.

21. Kathryn, and each of you, are too precious to be lost in sin or destroyed by suicide. God's love is greater than your sin!

22. *God's grace has an exalted plan for you, if you are willing to humble yourself, in repentance and faith, before God.*

*But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”
Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. (James 4:6, 10)*

CONCLUSION: God’s greatest gift to us is the **gift of life...**

1. Natural life, born-again life, eternal life. Nothing should be allowed to rob us of this precious life.
2. **“You shall not murder”** is meant to protect the sanctity, dignity and blessedness of every human life.
3. **Nothing** is worth your life, except Jesus Christ!

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 10:39)

4. Jesus has in store for you an abundant, good and noble life; a life beyond the University of Pennsylvania, good grades, acne, gender confusion, struggles in school, career distress and feelings of low self-esteem.
5. **God loves you and your life more than you do.** He sent His Son to save us all.
6. And...the proof of all this is before us today: *The Lord's Supper*

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. (John 15:9-14)