**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

**Lesson 9 - The Sixth Commandment: No Murder**

**Exodus 20:13**

**Introduction:** The first four commandments clearly deal with our responsibility toward God directly. Of course, none of our conduct of life is independent of God; nothing escapes the realm of His concern. Commandments one through four, however, clearly give our responsibility with regard to God directly. The fifth commandment has to do with the closest of human relationships: the family. We are responsible to God to honor our parents. The last five commandments clearly express our duty to one another as members of the human race. Again, it should be said that we are responsible to God for our conduct toward other human beings no matter who they are or where they are. Racial and cultural diversity eliminate none of these commandments.

God said, “Thou shalt not kill!” The word “kill” is from the Hebrew word *ratsach,* which means “to dash in pieces, to kill (a human being), especially to murder; to kill, slay, or murder.” So the word is the same word used for “murderer” in Numbers 35 where Moses explains how to deal with those who purposely, willfully, and maliciously destroy the life of another human being. The word translated “kill” as in Exodus 12:6 when the Israelites killed the Passover lamb means to kill or slaughter with no reference to malice or evil. It is not the same word as in Exodus 20:13. The point is that it is abundantly clear that this sixth commandment is the forbidding of murder, and not the forbidding of any manner of killing.

1. **HUMAN LIFE IS SACRED!**
2. **Genesis 2:7 Human life is the work of God Himself.**
3. “Life is the most precious thing; and God has set this commandment as a fence about it, to preserve it.” (Thomas Watson)
4. Every individual’s life has its existence by the work of the Sovereign God.
5. No life is self-existent. Every life has its existence in God!
6. Therefore, no man at any time has any right to arbitrarily murder a life that is the workmanship and property of God who gave it.
7. G. Campbell Morgan said, “Human life is emphatically declared to be sacred. It is a divine creation, mysterious and magnificent in its genesis and possibility, utterly beyond the control or comprehension of any human being. It is, therefore, never to be taken at the will of one, who can by no means know the full meaning of its being.”

**B. Violation of this commandment says a great deal about a society.**

(**Note:** At this point, we could look into the annals of history and review current statistics and trends of violence in our own country and the atrocities of the world. However, most are very much aware of the fact that violation of the sixth commandment is much too common.)

1. Violation of the commandment reveals a society which has gone wrong in its view of man’s existence.

1. Once, our children were taught “In the beginning, God.” They were taught to believe Genesis 2:7, and the reality of the Creator God, Elohim.
2. But then Humanism infiltrated public education, with its cardinal doctrine of evolution! Man’s existence is explained by mere chance. Evolution deals wrongly the question of “Why?” Why are we here? What is our purpose? Where do we go from here?
3. Godless evolution, the fundamental doctrine of Humanism, taught as fact in the public education process, cheapens the value of the human life.
4. To stand a person here and say, “This person exists by the will of a Righteous, Holy, and Sovereign God who sustains the person’s existence” is quite different from “This person is here due to a process of chance and is therefore no different than a tree, a monkey, or a skunk.” One mindset gives natural sanctity to the life and the other cheapens the value of the life.

2. Violation of the commandment reveals an angry society.

a. Hate expressed to its fullest is murder. Yes! Hate in full bloom is murder.

b. Our free and liberated nation has now been taught that there is no God to whom we give account.

c. People are more prone to anger when they do not know their purpose for existence or when they are convinced they have no purpose for existence.

d. They conclude that since they and others are here by chance, and since others have made them angry, and since we’re all like a tree or a cat, then, “I will kill whom I hate and I will then kill myself and it will all be over.”

e. One of the killers at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado reportedly asked victims, “Do you believe in God? Why?” and then shot them dead!

f. If we had time, we could also discuss abortion (which is murder), euthanasia, suicide, etc.

3. Make no mistake about it; violation of this commandment puts a society at odds with Jehovah God.

a. Proverbs 6:16-17 God hates the shedding of innocent blood.

b. The prophets of God pled with Israel to repent of their many sins, among which was the shedding of blood and their tolerance of murder.

c. Genesis 4:10 The first murder account of the Bible is very revealing. The blood of the innocent “cries” unto God and God hears.

d. Jesus clearly said in Matthew 19:18 “Thou shalt do no murder.”

1. **WHAT THE COMMANDMENT DOES NOT FORBID**

**A. It does not forbid capital punishment.**

1. Some argue that capital punishment is a violation of the sixth commandment and that even the life of a murderer is sacred.

2. However, the exercise of capital punishment is not a diminishing of the sanctity of life, but a reinforcing of the same. Read Genesis 9:6.

a. The murderer is to be put to death because life is precious.

b. That person murdered was God’s workmanship, created in His image, and the Creator is to determine when the life is to be terminated.

c. The death of a murderer is a statement for the sanctity of life.

**B. It does not forbid just wars.**

1. Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount is not about a nation of pacifists.

2. For instance, brave soldiers who fought in World War II, who were Christians yet engaged in combat and in combat killed other humans, did not violate the Sermon on the Mount. Now if for Jesus’ sake and kingdom they were opposed and persecuted, then the Sermon on the Mount is the standard. War to preserve freedom and stop evil is not a violation of this sixth commandment.

**III. JESUS CALLS HIS DISCIPLES TO A HIGH STANDARD THAT COULD NEVER VIOLATE THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT**

**A. Matthew 5:21 The Pharisees proudly taught and claimed to live in accord with the sixth commandment.**

1. They abstained from murder, and being hateful as they were, that in itself was quite a feat.

2. They were very proud of their observance.

**B. Matthew 5:22 “But I say unto you …”**

1. Jesus taught us that anger and hate is the attitude of murder.

a. Read, for example, of the Columbine High School massacre. The murderers were filled with hate and anger for months before the crime.

b. This is why murder is more that killing; there is malice and malicious intent.

2. Jesus teaches us to live free of anger and hate. Murder, therefore, will never enter our mind.