

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

"THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT: DON'T MURDER"

For individual study or group discussion

As we examine the sixth commandment, we find that the five words, "You shall not murder," comprehends not only the command not to murder, but the requirement to preserve life and support the welfare of our neighbors.

The Rationale Behind the Commandment

Since we are uniquely created in God's image, we are accountable to him for how we treat human life. The book of Genesis begins with an intra-Trinitarian conversation, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). Because all humans are image bearers, we are related to one another in our humanity. John Calvin explains, "*Man is both the image of God and our flesh. And if we do not wish to renounce our humanity, we ought to cherish [our neighbor's] as our own flesh.*"¹

- Read the [WCF Shorter Catechism 68](#). Note how it states that the sixth commandment requires us by "all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others." How does Psalm 82:3-4 direct us in this responsibility?
- Using the [Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 40, Q&A 105](#) with its Scripture proofs, in what ways are we to preserve life?

The Meaning of the Commandment

To modern ears, the negative wording of the *Ten Commandments* ("You shall not...") may sound harsh. But within the negative concept of God's law there inwardly lies the practical benefits of dealing realistically with sin and also insuring the protection of life and liberty against evil.

- Using the [WCF Larger Catechism Q&A 135 & 136](#), discuss both the positive and negative principles found within "You shall not murder." (i.e. What does "Do not murder" mean? What does it "not" mean?)
- The sixth commandment focuses on the protection and flourishing of life. Calvin also wrote, "*We are accordingly commanded, if we find anything of use to us in saving our neighbors' lives, faithfully to employ it; if there is anything that makes for their peace, to see to it; if anything harmful, to ward it off; if they are in any danger, to lend a helping hand.*"² Discuss the ways the correct application of the sixth commandment could impact some of our current laws.
- Read Ezekiel 33:6. Why does God view it as a violation of "do not murder" when we are negligent to warn others of danger or to speak up on behalf of those who are dependent upon you for safety?

Jesus' Corrective of Our Shallow Understanding

During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus appeals to the sixth commandment in order to instruct his hearers that the application of the law must first begin in the heart (Matthew 5:21-22). Murder flows from murderous hearts, and we can violate this commandment with anger, hatred, envy, or a desire for revenge (WLC #136). Martin Luther explains, "*You shall not kill.*" Here I learn, first of all, that God desires me to love my neighbor, so that I do him no bodily harm, either by word or action, neither injure nor take revenge upon him in anger, vexation, envy, hatred, or for any evil reason, but realize that I am obliged to assist and counsel him in every bodily need. In this commandment God commands me to protect my neighbor's body and in turn commands my neighbor to protect my own."³

- Read Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 12:34-35, Luke 6:45, and James 1:14-15. Explain how the heart is central to keeping God's Law.

The Hope of the Gospel for All Who Break This Commandment

The dual role of the law (to condemn and to point the way to life) has been perfectly fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ so that we might have hope and everlasting life! (Romans 8:1-4)

DATE: February 19, 2023

SPEAKER: Wil/Frank

SERIES: Deuteronomy

PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 5:17

Family Dinner Table

Of Human Life

Malcolm Muggeridge explained in an address he delivered at the University of San Francisco in 1978 that if human life was relegated to an "economic entity," the government sanctioning murder of the elderly and infirm would be around the corner: "*If people are only considered to be economic entities whose value is measured by the quality and/or quantity of their productivity, then what conceivable justification is there for maintaining, at great expense and difficulty, mentally and physically handicapped people and elderly? I know, that as sure as I can possibly persuade you to believe: governments will find it impossible to resist the temptation to deliver themselves from this burden of looking after the sick and the handicapped by the simple expedient of killing them off. Now this, in fact, is what the Nazis did, not always through slaughter camps, but by a perfectly coherent decree with perfectly clear conditions. In fact, delay in creating public pressure for euthanasia has been due to the fact that it was one of the war crimes cited at Nuremberg. So for the Guinness Book of Records you can submit this: That it takes just about 30 years in our humane society to transform a war crime into an act of compassion.*"⁴

- Discuss the many ways the sixth commandment speaks to our culture today (i.e. abortion, suicide, euthanasia).
- For further study, read Kevin DeYoung's article [linked here](#).

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Lakeway Presbyterian Church,
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Melanie and Bill, supported
missionary partners

¹Calvin, John. *Institutes of Christian Religion*, Volume II, Chapters 7-8. 1960 Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

²Luther, Martin. *A Simple Way to Pray*. 2012 Concordia Publishing, 17.

⁴Muggeridge, Malcolm. *Malcolm Muggeridge on Humanae Vitae*. 1979. The National Committee of Catholic Laymen, Inc