

Subject: God's Moral Law: The Sixth Commandment

Scripture: Exodus 20:13

I suppose that most people feel like this is one commandment they have kept. They say they haven't murdered anybody. But there is more to this commandment than you might think. I want to show you what this command means and how it applies in many different ways.

1. The killing that God approves

A. Killing animals – God gave permission to kill animals for food. He instructed His people to offer animal sacrifices. **Exodus 20:24** *An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen.*

B. Killing in self-defense – **Exodus 22:2** *If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him.* If someone was breaking into a house, the resident had to protect himself and his family.

C. Killing in war – **1 Samuel 15:3** *Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.*

D. Killing in capital punishment – God prescribed the death penalty for several things: for people guilty of idolatry (worshipping false gods, Deut. 13:15; for those guilty of physically or verbally abusing their parents, Ex. 20:15, 17; for those guilty of sexual immorality; for those guilty of witchcraft and sorcery; and for those guilty of murder

Exodus 21:12 *He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.*

Genesis 9:6 *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.* The seriousness of a crime is shown in the punishment it deserves.

God instituted the death penalty and He still approves of capital punishment.

Romans 13:3-4 ³ *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:* ⁴ *For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

2. The killing that God forbids – There are many kinds of killing that God forbids and we will consider them in three groups.

A. Intentional killing - The Sixth Commandment literally says, "Thou shalt not murder."

- Murder – When Cain murdered his own brother, Abel... **Genesis 4:10** *And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.*
- Suicide – Life is a gift from God and no one has the right to take his or her own life. The most well-known suicide in the Old Testament was King Saul; the most well-known suicide in the New Testament was Judas, and we know what kind of men they were. Is it possible for a Christian to take his own life? Yes it is possible, but it is never God's will.
- Abortion – Thousands of unborn babies are killed each year. This is a crime against man and a sin against God. In Proverbs 6, there is a list of seven things God hates, and one of

them is “hands that shed innocent blood.” When does life begin? **Jeremiah 1:5** *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.*

- Euthanasia (mercy-killing) – Some of us remember Dr. Jack Kevorkian, known as Dr. Death. He performed many assisted suicides, claiming that he was doing these people a great favor.

B. Indirect killing – Some people may not be guilty of intentional killing, but they are guilty of indirect killing by the things they are doing, and the way they are mistreating others.

- Killing by degrees – For example, this happens when a rebellious child puts his parents in an early grave because of stress and worry.
- Killing by influence – An example of this is people who are associated with the alcohol industry. When someone is drinking he becomes “intoxicated.” A toxic substance is poison. If someone is intoxicated, he has poisoned himself. **Habakkuk 2:15** *Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!* Another example is people involved with the sale and distribution of illegal drugs. **Galatians 6:7** *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*
- Killing by consent – If someone knows that a person is going to be murdered it is wrong to just stand by and do nothing. He is an accessory to the crime. **Proverbs 24:11-12** ¹¹ *If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain;* ¹² *If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?*
Paul stood by when Stephen was being stoned, and that became part of his testimony. **Acts 22:20**, *I was standing by and consenting to his death.*

C. Invisible killing – This is a type of killing that no one else sees, but God sees and knows.

- Character assassination – This is a way to kill someone with words, slander, lies. To ruin someone’s name is, in effect, to kill him.
- Hatred in a person’s heart – This is where murder begins. **Matthew 15:19** *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.* **Matthew 5:21-22** ²¹ *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:* ²² *But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca (a term of contempt), shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.* Hatred is the attitude behind murder. You don’t have to shoot a man to kill him. You can have murder in your heart. By state or federal law someone who hates is not guilty of murder, but in the sight of God they are guilty. If police can prove that someone is planning to assassinate someone, they can prosecute and convict if they have sufficient evidence. Even then, the police can’t know what a person is thinking or feeling. But God knows. **1 John 3:15** *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.*

- Killing of the soul – More people are guilty of this than we think. **John 8:44** says that *Satan was a murderer from the beginning*. He didn't go around killing people with a knife or a gun, but by tempting Adam and Eve to sin, he murdered their souls and millions more after them.

How can a person kill someone's soul? It can happen at home when ungodly parents never teach their children about Christ and never take them to church. Their children grow up and die without Christ. Those parents will be guilty of killing their souls. It can happen in school. A teacher may corrupt the thinking of his students by telling them to reject the Bible and the Christian faith. The souls of those students will be on his hands. It can even happen in church. A pastor and congregation reject the truth of God's Word and offer false teaching, ritual, and empty tradition. Those who come under the influence of that church and pastor will die in their sins. Those souls have been killed and ruined forever. Souls can be starved to death by a lack of truth. Souls can be poisoned to death by false teaching.

A person can kill his own soul by rejecting the Gospel and hardening his heart toward God. That's a scary thing.

Revelation 21:8 ...murderers shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.