

## The Ten Commandments

### **Commandment #6:** "You shall not murder..."

Today's commandment is one that, on the surface, seems fairly easy to comprehend. What we will find is that the commandment prohibits the obvious (taking someone's life) but, according to Christ, it has a far deeper implication and meaning.

#### 1. The obvious

- a. It is clear that it is wrong to kill someone...
- b. Murder here is defined as the unprovoked killing of another
  - i. Notice the definition includes an adjective (unprovoked)
  - ii. There are provisions in the law for self-defense (see Exodus 22:2-3) AND there are provisions for killing in war (we celebrate David and Joshua, for instance, for their courage in conflict)
    1. These things are very neatly segregated in the biblical witness
      - a. Self-defense occurs when a person takes a life out of genuine fear for their own wellbeing or the concern of those they are to protect
        - i. Note that this is not "unprovoked", instead this takes place when a person is wrongly attacked and needs to defend their lives or the lives around them
        - ii. Some might wonder what this has to do with turning the other cheek... the answer is that turning the other cheek describes non-life threatening circumstances
          1. If someone insults you or slaps you, it is good to demonstrate the love of Christ by not responding in kind
          2. however, if someone threatens my life or the lives of those around me, the greater good is to protect the innocent
      - b. Wars are clearly defined as conflicts established by nations which means that terms are understood prior to the battle taking place
        - i. If you have interest in whether a war can ever be biblically justified, I would encourage you to read Augustine's "Just War Theory" (very helpful but not the point of our study today)

#### 2. The underlying reason

- a. Why is murder a sin? Some might consider this a dumb question and, in a way, it is!
- b. Nevertheless, the heartbeat behind this commandment needs to be understood!
  - i. Murder is sinful because it takes away that which is precious
  - ii. Human lives are not something to be carelessly disposed of because humanity is made in the image of God
  - iii. We are not like the animal kingdom, we have been uniquely set apart from the rest of creation and, therefore, our lives are uniquely valuable

- c. When a society blurs the lines between beasts and people, tragedy and gross sin are the natural result
    - i. You can see this in our “culture of death”
    - ii. We advocate for the murder of the unborn and, increasingly, we advocate for the murder of the elderly!
    - iii. We are not phased by visual depictions of murderous violence and our society (particularly our cities where people congregate), are full of those who have forgotten how to blush and, therefore, are predisposed to senseless acts of violence against their fellow man
3. A deeper application
- a. While it is true that murder is a sin... Christ taught us that murder is actually deeper than physically taking someone’s life
  - b. You’ll recall that Jesus said these words, “You have heard it said to those of old, ‘you shall not murder’... but I tell you that if you have hated a man in your heart, you are guilty of murder” -Matthew 5:21-22
    - i. What is Jesus saying here? He is not saying that hating man in your heart is equal to killing him in the flesh
      - 1. Obviously, the degree of severity is multiplied here
      - 2. What He is saying is that the sin itself is present in the lives of those who hate their brother
        - a. Hatred gives birth to violence
        - b. Furthermore, our God knows all things which means He can see the hatred we harbor in our hearts
  - c. This means that the seed form of the sin is still... sin
  - d. Additionally, it means that all of us need to be aware of our propensity to commit this sin
    - i. Folks, I worry about us as believers at times for this very reason
    - ii. Obviously, I do not fear that Smyrna is harboring physical murderers!
      - 1. While it may be the case that, on rare occasions, a man guilty of the crime of murder takes cover in a church, I don’t believe that to be a primary threat
      - 2. However, I do worry about our souls
        - a. It seems to me that we are imbibing a good amount of hatred in our culture today
        - b. Political discourse is full of it
          - i. Do you “hate” the other side? I’m not asking if you disagree or find their views repulsive, I’m asking if you hate them!
          - ii. Does your language reveal a disdain of those you are called to lovingly disagree with?
          - iii. Are there people in your life who have wronged you and, secretly, you seethe against them?
    - iii. If so, know that this is sinful! Jesus condemns it and it needs to be confessed and repented of!