



Exodus 20:13

HONORING HUMAN LIFE

What matters is not merely the letter of the law but the spirit. The law says: 'Thou shalt not kill'; but that does not just mean: 'Thou shalt not commit murder'. To interpret it like that is to define the law in a way which enables us to imagine that we escape it. Yet we may be guilty in a most grievous manner of breaking this very law... Contempt, a feeling of scorn and derision, is the very spirit that ultimately leads to murder. We may have various reasons for not allowing it to be expressed in actual committal of murder. But, alas, we have often murdered one another in mind and heart and thought, have we not? We have nursed thoughts against people which are as foul as murder. There has been this disturbance in the realm of the spirit and we have said of another, 'Raca!'. Oh, yes, there are ways in which men can be destroyed short of murder. We can destroy a man's reputation, we can shake somebody else's confidence in him by whispering criticism or by deliberate fault finding. That is the kind of thing which our Lord is here indicating, and His whole purpose is to show all that is included in this commandment: 'Thou shalt not kill.' Killing does not only mean destroying life physically, it means still more trying to destroy the spirit and the soul, destroying the person in any shape or form.

—D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

The Ten Commandments reveal God's righteous character. They also summarize the foundational principles for ethics and for life. The sixth commandment begins the second half of the Decalogue, focusing on our responsibility to others. This responsibility begins with honoring the sacredness of every human person and life.

THE COMMAND

You shall not murder. (Hebrew, *lo tirtsakh*)

- **What the sixth commandment prohibits:**

- _____ murder (Numbers 35:16-19).
- _____ murder (Numbers 35:20-21).

- **What the sixth commandment does not prohibit:**

- _____-defense (cf. Ex. 22:2-3; Esther 8:10-11)
- _____-defense (cf. Gen. 9:5-6; Rom. 13:1-7)
- _____-defense (cf. Deut. 20:1; Luke 3:14)

The laws of Hammurabi are most revealing in their omissions... Surprisingly they have little to say about murder or, for that matter, about criminal law in general.

—Nahum Sarna

The commandment is expressed in just two words in the Hebrew, equivalent to "never murder."

—Douglas K. Stuart

Murder. Heb., *ratsakh*, "to dash in pieces; to murder, slay, kill." It is not the word used for capital punishment or for the killing in war.

To murder a human being is to murder someone who is more like God than any other creature on the earth. The murder of another human being is therefore a kind of attack against God himself.

—Wayne Grudem

To kill an offender is not murder but justice. A private person sins if he draws the sword; a public person sins if he puts up the sword.

—Thomas Watson (1620-86)

THE REASON

*Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed;
For in the image of God, He made man.* (Genesis 9:6; cf. 1:27)

1. Every human life is _____.
2. Every human life is _____.

THE PRINCIPLES

- Human life is to be protected from conception to final breath.

*For You formed my inward parts;
You covered me in my mother's womb.
I will praise You,
For I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* (Psalm 139:13-14a)

- Human life is to be honored regardless of ethnicity, sex, socioeconomic class, or ability (Acts 10:34, 17:26; Col. 3:11; Rev. 5:9).
- Hatred, resentment, insult, and slander violate the spirit of the sixth commandment (Matthew 5:21-22; James 3:8-10).
- My own body is to be stewarded well and cared for (Rom. 6:13; 12:1; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 15:35-58; Eph. 5:29; 1 Tim. 4:8; 5:23).
- Every person is made in the image of God, impacted by sin, and loved by Jesus Christ who died for their sins (Is. 53:6; John 3:16).

This reality should govern how I see and treat each person I meet (Luke 10:25-37; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21).

To take the life of a fellow human being is to assault the sacredness of the image of God.

—John MacArthur, Jr.

Since the Lord has bound the whole human race by a kind of unity, the safety of all ought to be considered as entrusted to each... Thus, the sixth commandment prohibits the murder of the heart, and requires a sincere desire to preserve our brother's life. The hand commits the murder, but the mind, under the influence of wrath and hatred, conceives it. —John Calvin (1509-64)

The best contemporary science shows that the human genome is almost (99.9%) exactly the same in all people... DNA studies do not indicate the separate classifiable sub-species (races) exist within modern humans. While different genes or physical traits such as skin and hair color can be identified between individuals, no consistent patterns of genes across the human genome exist to distinguish one race from another.

—Human Genome Project
Cited in W. Grudem, *Christian Ethics*, p. 636

The commandment also requires that we should preserve our own life and soul... We must use all means of diet, exercise, and lawful recreation, which, like oil, preserves the lamp of life from going out. —Thomas Watson (1620-86)

There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors. —C. S. Lewis