

Biblical Theology by Dr. Chuck Baynard

Lesson 41 (HCLD 40)¹

Preparation: Begin and end each study time with prayer. Pay particular attention to the background reading and pray over each passage asking God to reveal Himself to you.

Background Reading: Read all the Scripture verses in footnote # 1 & 2.

Question: Which is the sixth commandment and what are the duties required in the sixth commandment?

Answer: The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill. The duties required in the sixth commandment are, all careful studies, and lawful endeavors, to preserve the life of ourselves [1] and others [2] by resisting all thoughts and purposes,[3] subduing all passions,[4] and avoiding all occasions,[5] temptations,[6] and practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any;[7] by just defense thereof against violence,[8] patient bearing of the hand of God,[9] quietness of mind,[10] cheerfulness of spirit;[11] a sober use of meat,[12] drink,[13] physic,[14] sleep,[15] labor,[16] and recreations;[17] by charitable thoughts,[18] love,[19] compassion,[20] meekness, gentleness, kindness;[21] peaceable,[22] mild and courteous speeches and behavior;[23] forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil;[24] comforting and succoring the distressed, and protecting and defending the innocent.[25]²

The list of proof texts for these two questions is quite impressive, as it should be if we properly consider all implications of the simple command do not kill. We have all seen those who render this do not murder and ignore all other applications. They do greatly err, for I believe we will find that the Westminster Assembly rightly make their case for this much broader and deeper application from the Scriptures themselves.

¹ The Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 40

Q105: What does God require in the sixth Commandment?

A105: That I do not revile, hate, insult or kill my neighbor either in thought, word or gesture, much less in deed, whether by myself or by another,[a] but lay aside all desire of revenge;[b] moreover, that I do not harm myself, nor wilfully run into any danger.[c] Wherefore also to restrain murder the magistrate is armed with the sword.[d]

a. Matt. 5:21-22; 26:52; Gen. 9:6 b. Eph. 4:26; Rom. 1:19; Matt. 5:25; 18:35 c. Matt. 4:7; Rom. 13:14; Col. 2:23 d. Exod. 21:14; Matt. 18:6-7

Q106: Does this Commandment speak only of killing?

A106: No, but in forbidding murder God teaches us that He abhors its very root, namely, envy,[e] hatred,[f] anger,[g] and desire of revenge; and that in His sight all these are hidden murder.[h]

e. Rom. 1:28-32 f. I John 2:9-11 g. James 2:13; Gal. 5:19-21 h. I John 3:15; James 1:19; 3:16

Q107: But is this all that is required: that we do not kill our neighbor?

A107: No, for in condemning envy, hatred, and anger, God requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves,[i] to show patience, peace, meekness,[j] mercy,[k] and kindness [l] towards him, and to prevent his hurt as much as possible;[m] also, to do good even unto our enemies.[n] Matt. 7:12; 22:39 j. Eph. 4:2; Gal. 6:1-2; Rom. 12:18 k. Matt. 5:7; Luke 6:36 l. Rom. 12:10 m. Exod. 23:5 n. Matt. 5:9, 44-45; Rom. 12:20-21; Col. 3:12-14

² 1. Eph. 5:28-29 2. I Kings 18:4 3. Jer. 26:15-16; Acts 23:12, 16-17, 21, 27 4. Eph. 4:26-27 5. II Sam. 2:22; Deut. 22:8 6. Matt. 4:6-7; Prov. 1:10-11, 15-16 7. I Sam. 24:2; 26:9-11; Gen. 37:21-22 8. Psa. 82:4; Prov. 24:11-12; I Sam. 14:45 9. James 5:7-11; Heb. 12:9 10. I Thess. 4:11; I Peter 3:3-4; Psa. 37:8-11 11. Prov. 17:22 12. Prov. 25:16, 27 13. I Tim. 5:23 14. Isa. 38:21 15. Psa. 127:2 16. Eccl. 5:12; II Thess. 3:10, 12; Prov. 16:26 17. Eccl. 3:4, 11 18. I Sam. 19:4-5; 22:13-14 19. Rom. 13:10 20. Luke 10:33-34 21. Col. 3:12-13 22. James 3:17 23. I Peter 3:8-11; Prov. 15:1; Judg. 8:1-3 24. Matt. 5:24; Eph. 4:2, 32; Rom. 12:17, 20-21 25. I Thess. 5:14; Job 31:19-20; Matt. 25:35-36; Prov. 31:8-9

We begin with lawful endeavors to preserve our own lives. Now we must understand that life as far as man is concerned can end long before the actual death of the body. When a person cannot be about their normal daily routine nor care for self, life for that person humanly speaking has ended. Perhaps when we realize that the preservation of this body given by God is also commanded by God we will give due caution to how we treat it.

The focus immediately shifts to others and the how to of the observance of this command. It speaks of the unjust taking away of the life of another. What is a just taking of the life of another? The civil magistrate in imposing sentence upon wrong doers is a just application. Note again I think this would also cover imprisonment and not only capital punishment. It is not life when one is locked away from family, friends, and loved ones and forced into all sorts of occupations and situations that are not normal nor desired.

In speaking of just defense against violence the question must be how far can we extend violence toward another in defending self or another against violence? This is where we find justification (if such exist) for war among men. Obviously we still speak of the civil magistrate, but I think this can apply to an individual too. Too often we turn to the civil magistrate for the interpretation of what is just or unjust. However this will lead to an uneven application as we see the laws of man differ from nation to nation. This command was given to the nation of Israel when it was directly under God in a theocracy. This does not remove its application for the New Testament church, however in a world where the Word of God has no meaning to the majority of its inhabitants, we end relying upon the mind of man and not God to decide what is just. The Bible points to those worthy of defense, and in all cases it seems to me it is the weak that cannot defend themselves, whether from poverty and social position or other handicap. This points directly at the responsibility of man under God to live his own life justly, and where need be step into the gap for those more destitute of defense than him. The proof text given concerning Joseph gives an example of one who interceded to save the life of the innocent who could not defend himself, but if we continue we know that Reuben did allow Joseph to be sold into slavery. The thought being that he could do no more without bringing harm to himself should give us all pause that to enter into the defense of another calls for due examination of the situation so we not only save the intended victim, but also ourselves. The result may be as with Reuben and less than perfect. We might apply this to several so called police actions taken by the nations of the world to relieve a people from the oppression of their own government or lack of same. When innocent blood is spilled in the process of protecting the innocent, has this commandment been met?

This is important to us for several reasons, particularly as a nation. First, God will not let the shedding of innocent blood go unheeded. Notice how God worded it when speaking with Cain of the first murder, the blood cried out from the ground. What do we think shall be the portion for a nation that sheds the blood of millions of innocent children each year in the abortion mills? Then consider what we, as Christians must do to protect these weak ones who cannot speak for themselves. How loudly this decries the violence we see then from pro-life Christians who go so far as to take a life to preserve life.

Note then the things, which this commandment speaks to that we so often pass by with no thought of, as it continues to deal with how we use the things provided by God in grace and love. How many would think that their sleep accounted for anything? Yet we know God is concerned with the very hairs of our heads. How much more so then our use of the means whereby He has provided those things needed to obey Him.

Note the readiness to be reconciled and how that is so different than what we find in the world and even in the church. If we were inclined toward reconciliation at all, there would be far less division within the body of Christ. How shallow the words we then hear concerning unity in some mission areas, but never of the body because of differences. How sad, can Christ be divided, is God many? God's love and grace toward His children is so rich and abundant, yet we starve at the banquet table because we cannot sit at meat with such as that sister or brother. This isn't of God and at the very best is only tolerated by God out of His mercy.

The clinics are over flowing with those suffering the most severe of depressions. There are new miracle drugs introduced almost daily it seems to deal with this. Where is the church? Of all mankind, none is better prepared to deal with life, and especially the downside of life than the Christian. Attempt to find a Christian counselor in your city; you may have to travel some distance. I suggest it should be as

close as the first church of Christ you see. It isn't and those entering into this field do not so through the church, but of Para-church organizations devoted to this task, or secular counselors who happen to be Christian. Considering that all of these charge upwards of seventy-five dollars per hour, where is the help to the poor and helpless?

When we consider things like this can we doubt why the church is a paper tiger, toothless and lame in face of the onslaught of the world? We have the medicines needed to cure the ails of the world, to lift up the down trodden and fill the portals of heaven with lost souls. God has given us His Holy Spirit, which should remove the shame and cause our souls to sing God's praises and glory. Still we spend more time attacking each other in the church, than being about the business of the Lord.

Dare we look at the abundant grace shed upon us by God and our total misuse of the gift and deny the big T?

Suggested Sermon Outline

What does God require in the Sixth Command?

That I am not to abuse, hate, injure, or kill my neighbor, either with thought, or by word or gesture, much less by deed, whether by myself or through another, but to lay aside all desire for revenge; and that I do not harm myself or will fully exposed myself to danger. This is why the authorities are armed with the means to prevent murder.

But does this commandment speak only of killing?

In forbidding murder, God means to teach us that He abhors the root of murder, which is envy, hatred, and desire for revenge, and that He regards all these as hidden murder.

Is it enough, then, if we do not kill our neighbor in any of these ways?

No; for when God condemns envy, hatred, and anger, He requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves, to show patience, peace, gentleness, mercy, and friendliness toward him, to prevent injury to him as much as we can, also to do good to our enemies.

I. God Forbids Murder

A. Jesus not only affirmed the prohibition against murder but expanded it to cover all the conditions and practices which encourage it. 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: 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, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. (Matthew 5:21-22) [More below]

B. Christians must actively defuse situations which lead to conflict and by Jesus' implication to murder. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. (Matthew 5:25)

C. Being right in a conflict is not enough - God will handle settlement of accounts. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. (Romans 12:19)

D. Settle accounts with yourself before they fester. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: (Ephesians 4:26)

E. Christians do not excuse evil or suggest murder should go unpunished - that would make them co-conspirators in murder. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man. (Genesis 9:6)

F. Civil authority exists so people will not have to take justice into their own hands. 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. (Romans 13:4)

G. Private settling of accounts produces terrible consequences. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. (Matthew 26:52)

Scotland / Ulster / Serbia / Israel / Rwanda / Columbia

II. The Climate of Murder Is Prohibited

A. The Bible places murder in a web of corrupt thinking which produces sinful behavior and opens the door to hell. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)

B. Self-centeredness rather than submission to God brings on a natural judgment of destructive thinking. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to Do Those Things Which Are Not Convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. (Romans 1:28-32)

C. Saying the right things cannot substitute for a changed heart. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. (1 John 2:9) Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. (1 John 3:15)

D. Apart from the God of the Bible, moral analysis is perverted. A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. (Proverbs 12:10)

III. Avoiding Murder Is Not Enough

A. Half of God's law is impossible for those who are prepared to murder or tolerate conditions which promote murder. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (Matthew 22:39) Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

B. By removing the context believers preempt murder. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; (Romans 12:10) With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; (Ephesians 4:2)

C. Create the context of compassion and empathy. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. (Romans 12:15-18)

D. Convert provocations into calls to faith. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; (Matthew 5:44) Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:20-21)