

## **The Ten Commandments:** **The Sixth Commandment**

*"You shall not murder."*

לֹא תִרְצַח  
— *Exodus 20:13*

### **1. What does the Sixth Commandment mean?**

- The fact that God uses one of at least three different Hebrew words for murder, suggests that the commandment specifically prohibits the unlawful, premeditated taking of life. But there is so much more to it than that!
- **Genesis 1:27:** Every person is made in God's image. He is the "author of life" (Acts 3:15) and murder robs someone of life and destroys one of God's image bearers.
- Wilhelmus a Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*: "Human life is the most precious thing that man possesses."
- Important side issues:
  - *Capital Punishment*
    - **Genesis 9:6**
    - **Exodus 21:23–24**
    - This shows the importance of human life — in His Word God protects the dignity of human life, and one role of the civil magistrate is to punish murderers, to make sure victims and their families receive justice.
    - **Romans 13:14**
  - *Just War*
    - God frequently sends Israel into war, and His actions are always moral, right, and just. War is not forbidden, and is one of the times when lives must be taken in pursuit of higher goals or ideals.
    - Jesus and John the Baptist interact with soldiers, some of whom ask what to do to follow Christ, and they are never told to leave armed service: **Luke 3:14**.

### **2. What are the duties required in the sixth commandment?**

A. The duties required in the sixth commandment are, all careful studies, and lawful endeavours, to preserve the life of ourselves and others by resisting all thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions, and avoiding all occasions, temptations, and practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any; by just defence thereof against violence, patient bearing of the hand of God, quietness of mind, cheerfulness of spirit; a sober use of meat, drink, physic, sleep, labor, and recreation; by charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness; peaceable, mild, and courteous speeches and behavior: forbearance, readiness to be reconciled,

patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil; comforting and succoring the distressed, and protecting and defending the innocent.

- Love for life — yours & others: **John 13:35**
- Tolerance
- Seeking after and preserving peace
- Meekness: **1 Peter 3:3-4; Colossians 3:12; Matthew 5:5; 11:29**
- Compassion for others
- Friendliness – having a loving heart toward others

**3. What are the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment?**

A. The sins forbidden in the sixth commandment are, all taking away the life of ourselves, or of others, except in case of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defence; the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life; sinful anger, hatred, envy, desire of revenge; all excessive passions, distracting cares; immoderate use of meat, drink, labor, and recreations; provoking words; oppression, quarreling, striking, wounding, and whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any.

- Premeditated Murder: **1 Kings 21:1–16**
- Reckless homicide
- Negligent homicide: **Deuteronomy 22:8, Exodus 21:28–29**
- Current Cultural Relevance:
  - *Suicide*: **1 Samuel 31:1–7; Matthew 27:3–10**
  - *Abortion*: **Psalms 139:13**
  - *Euthanasia*
  - *Delayed Adolescence*

**4. Jesus and the Sixth Commandment**

- Jesus shows that our heart motives are just as important as our actions.
- The Sixth Commandment prohibits not just physical, but also hatred, “heart violence” **Matthew 5:21-26**
- You and I must live our lives in such a way that we don’t cause others to hate us, to murder us in their hearts.
- How do we do this? Look to Christ! **1 John 3:15-16**