

No. 6: Considering the Command We Think We Keep, 1

“Why All Lives Matter”

Sunday Evening Bible Study

January 8, 2017

1. The *imago Dei*—the image of God (Gen. 1:26,27): Human beings are distinct from all other creatures for “...man is like God and represents God” (Grudem). Not equal or identical, but similar. We have moral accountability, capacity for fellowship with God, ability to reason abstractly, deep desire for complex community, inherent dignity as the vice-regents of God, ruling over the earth. Incarnation!
2. The sixth commandment: “You shall not murder” (Ex. 20:13). Murder is taking a human life, made in God’s image, that one is not authorized by God to take.
3. Murder is not the same as killing. Justified homicides may include: self-defense, just war, punishment for a capital crime (Gen. 9:6; Ecc. 3:3; Ro. 13:4).
4. In his commentary on the law, Jesus made it clear that all of these commands can be violated in numerous ways (Mt. 5:21,22).
7. The first murder demonstrates the root sin addressed in the 6th commandment which God hates (Gen. 4:1-13; Jas. 4:1,2). So the sixth commandment condemns the violent act of murdering a human being *and* the corruption of the human heart that conceives and carries out the homicide.
8. The Heidelberg Catechism (1563) is a great aid in this:

105. Q. What does God require in the sixth commandment?

A. I am not to dishonor, hate, injure, or kill my neighbor by thoughts, words, or gestures, and much less by deeds, whether personally or through another; [1] rather, I am to put away all desire of revenge. [2] Moreover, I am not to harm or recklessly endanger myself. [3] Therefore, also, the government bears the sword to prevent murder. [4] [1] Gen. 9:6; Lev. 19:17, 18; Matt. 5:21, 22; 26:52. [2] Prov. 25:21, 22; Matt. 18:35; Rom. 12:19; Eph. 4:26. [3] Matt. 4:7; 26:52; Rom. 13:11-14. [4] Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:14; Rom. 13:4.

106. Q. But does this commandment speak only of killing?

A. By forbidding murder God teaches us that He hates the root of murder, such as envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge, [1] and that He regards all these as murder. [2] [1] Prov. 14:30; Rom. 1:29; 12:19; Gal. 5:19-21; James 1:20; I John 2:9-11. [2] I John 3:15.

107. Q. Is it enough, then, that we do not kill our neighbor in any such way? A. No. When God condemns envy, hatred, and anger, He commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves, [1] to show patience, peace, gentleness, mercy, and friendliness toward him, [2] to protect him from harm as much as we can, and to do good even to our enemies. [3] [1] Matt. 7:12; 22:39; Rom. 12:10. [2] Matt. 5:5; Luke 6:36; Rom. 12:10, 18; Gal. 6:1, 2; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12; I Pet. 3:8. [3] Ex. 23:4, 5; Matt. 5:44, 45; Rom. 12:20.

9. The sixth commandment (as all of the ten commandments) has a negative and positive aspect. It commands us to do *nothing* to harm our neighbor’s life and it commands us to do *something* to guard our neighbor’s life. (Ex. 21:29; Lk.10:3)
10. A non-exhaustive list of issues addressed by the 6th commandment: Unjustified homicide, unjust war, terrorism, torture, suicide, physician-assisted suicide, drinking while driving, speeding, euthanasia, air and water pollution, failure to adhere to building codes, failure to follow company policy and safety procedures, negligence, child abuse, spouse abuse, providing unsafe working conditions, over-eating, over-drinking, under-exercising, over-smoking, foolish risk-taking, manufacturing/selling/using illegal drugs, discrimination, sexual immorality (STD’s), jealousy, envy, anger, insults, name-calling, revenge, slander, gossip, bullying, cyber-bullying, posting defamatory comments or articles on social media, the tone of discourse in political debate, racism, abortion, and criminal activity.

11. These last three (racism, abortion, criminal activity) will be addressed in greater detail in the next two weeks: January 8, “All Lives Matter”; January 15, “Black Lives Matter”; January 22, “Unborn Lives Matter,”; January 29, “Blue Lives Matter.”
12. Those who have greater power have greater responsibility to protect those who have lesser power (Lk. 12:48).
13. Failure to acknowledge the harm that others experience and failure to do something protect them from harm is a violation of the 6th commandment.
14. Decatur Coalition of Church Leaders Charter:

The purpose of the Decatur Coalition of Church Leaders is to gather church leaders in our community to listen to one another with understanding and to speak as one voice in the common cause of a just peace and unity for our city. Though the differences of the various theological views of our members are significant, we can, without reservation, affirm and confess our agreement with these important truths.

We believe that all human lives bear the image of God and are equal in value, worth, and dignity. We are therefore required to love our neighbors as our own selves, and sacrifice to seek their good, regardless of racial, cultural, social, or religious differences (Gen. 1:27; Gal. 3:28; Lev. 19:18; Mt. 22:39; Mt. 5:44; Lk. 6:27,35; 1 Cor. 13:4–6).

We believe that law enforcement officials are appointed by God to restrain evil, protect the innocent, and bring evildoers to justice. Every citizen is therefore required to obey all just laws as well as to respect, honor, and support law enforcement officials in their self-sacrificing mission to love, serve, and protect our city (Ro. 13:1–6; 1 Peter 2:17; 1 Tim. 2:1,2).

We believe that there is no partiality with God and that every official is held accountable, both by human authority and our Supreme Judge, to ensure that all persons are treated equally and fairly under the law and that no government official abuses the power entrusted to him or her (Acts 10:34; Ro. 2:11; Gal. 2:6; Col. 3:25; Jas. 2:1; Pr. 15:27).

We believe that professing Christians are obligated to pray and work for the peace and prosperity of the city in which they live, which will require us to speak for the oppressed and address any underlying and systemic injustices. We are equally bound to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God, in Jesus’ name. To this end we will instruct, by our teaching and example, the members of our respective congregations who are commended to our care (Jer. 29:7; Col. 4:5; Micah 6:8; Col. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Peter 5:1–4).

We believe that in his atoning work on the cross, Jesus has broken down all dividing walls of hostility, whether cultural, generational, racial, or economic. Jesus Christ is the only Son of God, eternal second Person of the Trinity, in nature both fully God and fully man. Jesus himself, the conqueror of death and the risen king of the universe, is our peace (Jn. 1:1,14; Col. 1:15-23; Heb. 1:1-3; Eph. 2:14).

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