

No. 6: Considering the Command We Think We Keep, 4

“Blue Lives Matter”

Sunday Evening Bible Study

January 22, 2016

Review

1. **All Lives Matter:** All human beings are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26,27). The 6th commandment negatively condemns the violent act of murdering a human being *and* the corruption of the human heart that conceives and carries out the homicide (Ex. 20:13; Gen. 4:1-13; Jas. 4:1,2; Mt. 5:21,22).
2. **Black Lives Matter:** Because all lives matter, black lives matter. No one who knows and loves the Bible can justify racism: Gen. 1:27; Gen. 5:1-3; Acts 10:11; 17:26; Eph. 2:14-16; Nu. 12:1). Because racism nurtures the corruption of heart that leads to murder (anger, insults, envy, hatred, division) and diminishes the value of human life, racism is a violation of the sixth commandment (1 John 3:15). Because of the historic and present systemic racism suffered by African-Americans, it is appropriate to emphasize to our culture that black lives matter too.
3. **Unborn Lives Matter:** Unborn babies are human lives, made in the image of God (Ps. 139:14-16). They are, therefore, protected under the sixth commandment even if they are not protected under the Constitution of the United States. In the Bible, the word for an unborn baby (*brephos*, in Lk. 1:41,44) is exactly the same as a born baby (Lk. 2:12,16). In its ongoing moral rebellion, our culture demands the pleasures of sex without the consequences. No matter the opinion of the Supreme Court or the American people, God's word is clear that abortion is a violation of the sixth commandment.

Key Principles

1. The 6th 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).
2. Those who have greater power have greater responsibility to protect those who have lesser power (Lk.12:48). In general, white Americans have possessed greater power than black Americans. Adult human beings have greater power over unborn human beings. In one sense, police officers have greater power than most citizens and they are called to use that power to “protect and serve” our community. In another sense, police officers are overwhelmingly outnumbered and vulnerable, so citizens are called to use their greater power to protect and support the “thin blue line.”
3. Failure to acknowledge the harm that others experience and failure to do something to protect them from harm is a violation of the 6th commandment.

The Thin Blue Line and the Power of the Sword

1. The Thin Blue Line is that line of uniformed (usually blue) officers who separate chaos from order in American society.
 - 1.1 The Line is ordained by God as a gift of common grace to all human lives, including Christian lives, non-Christian lives, black lives, and unborn lives (Mt. 5:45; Gen. 9:5,6; Ju. 17:6; Ecc. 8:11; 1 Peter 2:13,14; Ro. 13:1-7).
 - 1.2 The Line is thin because police officers are vastly outnumbered by criminals.
 1. There are 900,000 sworn law enforcement officers with arrest powers in the U.S. (local, state, federal).
 2. There are 2.2 million prisoners in local, state, and federal correctional facilities.
 3. There are 4.8 million adults on probation or parole.
 4. There were 15,696 murders in the United States in 2015, three-quarters by gun.
 5. 135 police officers died in the line of duty in 2016, 21 by ambush style attacks.
 6. The deadliest year for police officers on record is 1930 when 307 officers were killed.
 - 1.3 When the line is breached, the number of criminals and rates of crime increase.

1.4 When the lives of police officers are disrespected, threatened, or taken, criminals are emboldened.

2. First, do no harm to police officers' lives

- 2.1 Don't disobey the law.
- 2.2 Don't show disrespect to police officers.
- 2.3 Don't disobey an officer's orders.
- 2.4 Don't obstruct justice in any way.
- 2.5 Don't strike or attack a police officer.

3. Second, do what guards police officers' lives

- 3.1 Do pay them well.
- 3.2 Do train them well.
- 3.3 Do show respect and express gratitude.
- 3.4 Do hold them accountable to high ethical standards.
- 3.5 Do prosecute police officers who abuse their power.

4. Special Focus: Blue on Black Violence and Black on Black Violence

- 4.1 6000 black citizens were killed by black citizens in 2015
- 4.2 990 citizens were shot and killed by police officers in 2015
 1. 948 were male
 2. 494 were white
 3. 258 were black
- 4.3 Black Americans are 2.5 times more likely as white Americans to be shot and killed by police officers.
- 4.4 Black males represent 6% of the population but represent 40% of those killed by police while unarmed.
- 4.5 Black citizens committed 52% of homicides between 1980 and 2008 while composing 13% of the population.
- 4.6 White people make up 62% of the population but only 49% of those killed by police officers.
- 4.7 Why the disparity?
 1. Liberals: It's because of institutional and systemic racism.
 2. Conservatives: It's because of a few aberrant police officers and the breakdown of the family.

5. Our panel:

Nate Allen, Chief of Police, Decatur Police Department (DPD).

Scott Anderson, District Attorney, Morgan County.

Johnny Coker, Investigator, District Attorney's Office; retired Lieutenant after 26 years in DPD

Jerry Baker, Pastor, St. Peter Missionary Baptist Church and Vice President of Sales, Cook's Pest Control.

Troy Brand, Elder, Alpha Seventh Day Adventist Church.