

## THE 10 COMMANDMENTS - PART 7

### Many ways to kill.

Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage:	Exodus 20:13
Subject:	what we should not do
Complement:	kill
Exegetical idea:	We should not kill.
Homiletical idea:	<b>God wants you to be a channel of life and peace and love.</b>
Purpose:	To encourage my hearers not only not to murder, but to find freedom from destructive anger and hatred and to love all of God's children.

#### Introduction

The 6<sup>th</sup> commandment is one of the shortest of the 10 commandments. Two words in Hebrew. Four words in most English translations. The KJV translates the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment with these words: Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not kill. Many of us have heard the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment on numerous occasions, or seen it in print, or engraved in stone—thou shalt not kill. But what does it mean—thou shalt not kill? And how does this 6<sup>th</sup> commandment relate to our lives today?

A careful study the Scriptures reveals that there are many ways to kill. In Hebrew, there is a verb that is used for killing an animal. For example, when the children of Israel were instructed to kill an animal as an offering to God, like the Passover lamb, the verb SHACHAT is used. That is NOT the verb that is used in the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment. Thou shalt not kill. So whatever this 6<sup>th</sup> commandment is saying, it's not talking about the practice of killing or sacrificing an animal.

There is a Hebrew verb that is used for putting a person to death as a punishment for committing a crime. (MUTH). You may be surprised to learn how many crimes were to be punished by death: crimes like sacrificing a child to a pagan god, various forms of sexual immorality, and various forms of witchcraft were all punishable by death. Offenders were either

to be stoned or burned. But that Hebrew verb, meaning to execute a person guilty of a crime worthy of death, is NOT the verb used in the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment. So whatever this 6<sup>th</sup> commandment is saying, it's not talking about putting a person to death as a punishment for a crime.

The Hebrew verb used in the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment, Thou shalt not kill, is the verb RATSACH. That Hebrew verb, RATSACH, implies an act of violence that results in death. That is why the NIV translates the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment this way: "You shall not murder." Look at another text where this same Hebrew verb is used. Jeremiah 7:9 "Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal and follow other gods you have not known." Even the translators of the KJV translate RATSACH as murder here. It's the same verb that is used in the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment. This is quite different from killing an animal or putting a person to death as a punishment for a crime. This is an act of violence. The implication is that it is an act of violence against an innocent person.

In the New Testament, when Jesus quotes the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment, the Greek verb that is used is phoneuo. This also implies killing as an act of violence, murder. A different verb is used for killing the fatted calf, in the story of the prodigal son. But when Jesus quotes the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment, the verb phoneuo is used. Here are two other examples of the use of the verb phoneuo in the New Testament. Matthew 23:31 "So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets."

It's clear from our study of Scripture that the Hebrew verb used in the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment in the Old Testament, and the Greek verb used in quoting the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment in the New Testament, both imply murder, killing as an act of violence against the innocent.

So don't use the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment, Thou shalt not kill, to argue in favor of being a vegetarian. Don't use the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment to argue against capital punishment. Don't use the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment to argue against having a law enforcement officers and military personnel who protect your life and liberty. This 6<sup>th</sup> commandment is very specific: You shall not murder.

And that is an essential commandment for any society. If people can take the lives of the innocent in acts of random violence, you have anarchy. Society would collapse in chaos. It makes good sense for the LORD our God to speak this word of blessing.

Satan has inspired a new temptation for breaking the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment in our 21<sup>st</sup> century culture: murdering people on video games as a form of entertainment. Many video games include the murdering of people as part of the game. Here is just one example: a car driving game called Carmageddon. "Carmageddon is a fast and frenzied speed-fest in which pedestrians are your target." Pedestrians? You murder pedestrians, vehicular homicide, murder, in order to earn points?

That's just one of hundreds of games like Doom and Mortal Kombat where people are murdered on video games as a form of entertainment. Ah, but someone says, "That's not real! It's just a game!" Why then is it that more and more frequently we are hearing reports of young people going into schools and randomly murdering people? Is it possible that these violent games give people permission to commit murder in their imaginations and it's just one more step to murder people in real life? Research has clearly demonstrated that violent video games may be even more harmful than violent television and movies because the video games are interactive and require the player to identify with the aggressor. (An article published in the APA's Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, April 2000, showed a direct correlation between playing

violent video games and aggressive behavior.)

People like Kimveer Gill, who opened fire in the parking lot at Dawson College, near Montreal, Canada. He murdered one, wounded 19, and then took his own life. Police later discovered that he liked to play a murderous video game called Super Columbine Massacre, which recreated the Columbine High School massacre of April 20, 1999.

Perhaps you should review the games that your children are playing, or the games that you are playing? A simple question to ask yourself would be this: Would Jesus play this video game with me? You say, “Don’t be ridiculous! Of course Jesus wouldn’t play that video game with me! Well, then, should you be playing it? We may break the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment by committing murder in real life, but we may also break the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment by committing murder in our imaginations as a form of entertainment.

Jesus also reveals a deeper meaning for this 6<sup>th</sup> commandment, this 6<sup>th</sup> word of blessing from our loving God. Look with me at Matthew 5:21-22a. “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ [22] But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.”

Jesus does not discard the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment here. Rather, He goes beyond the letter of the law to the spirit of the law. Not only should we not murder, but we should not hold on to anger that may lead to violence. I was interested in the message on our church sign this week: anger is only one letter away from danger! And that’s true. So Jesus says, “Don’t even get angry with someone. That’s a step towards murder.”

Some manuscripts, including the one used to translate the KJV, add “without cause” to the phrase “anyone who is angry with his brother”. Whether that word, translated “without

cause” is part of the original or not, the clear implication is that this is not a righteous anger.

This is not a justified response. Such anger is a breaking of the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment.

I’ve seen people look at me with such rage in their eyes. Have you? I remember one occasion quite vividly. I was convinced that the angry individual would have murdered me if he knew that he could get away with it. Jesus condemns such anger. When people commit acts of violence in their minds, that is also wrong. That is also a transgression of the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment.

Sometimes people attack you with words. They may not stab you with a knife, but they attack you with sharp words. But notice what Jesus has to say about that. “Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin.” Matthew 5:22b. The word “Raca” means “empty head.” A modern equivalent might be something like “you pea brain!”, “you dummy” or “you air-head.” Using the term Raca was an expression of contempt. Today, it’s fairly common to attack people with words, and most people don’t think that in so doing they are breaking the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment

You may be interested to know that according to Jewish law, if a person called another person “Raca”, they would be taken before the Sanhedrin. That was the equivalent of the supreme court for the Jews. If found guilty, the offender was charged a heavy fine.

Jesus continues in Matthew 5:22: “But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.” This is serious. In danger of the fire of hell! The expression, “You fool” literally means, “You rebel! You apostate. You enemy of all that is good.” Such an offense was punishable by cutting out the tongue of the offender and thrusting a hot iron, ten fingers in width, into the mouth of the person who used it.

Ouch! Now that sounds very severe to me. Barbaric even. If we implemented that

punishment for people who attacked others with violent words, we would have a lot of tongueless people in the world. Perhaps finally, people would realize that it is a serious offense to attack people with words.

Some one might be thinking, “Being angry with a person, attacking them with words, even hating them, that’s not as bad as murdering them, is it?” Listen to the Word of God through the apostle John. 1 John 3:15 “Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.” There are many ways to kill besides murdering a person with a weapon. You can kill them in your anger-filled mind. You can kill them with hostile words. You can kill them with lies and false rumors. All of these are a direct transgression of the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment.

At this point, some of us might be feeling somewhat discouraged. Perhaps we thought that we were keeping the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment because we haven’t murdered anyone. But Jesus has taken this 6<sup>th</sup> saying to a whole new level. Don’t be violent towards another person in your mind. Don’t be violent towards another person with your words.

How can we possibly live in harmony with this 6<sup>th</sup> saying from the mountain? Jesus makes it clear that thoughts and words come from the heart, from the mind. Listen to the words of Jesus to the religious leaders who were planning to kill him. “You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.”

Matthew 12:34

If we are going to live in harmony with the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment, we need new hearts. I was inspired this week by the prayer of the psalmist David, recorded in Psalm 51. Listen to this heart cry, recorded in Psalm 51, beginning with verse 1. “.....”

God wants to cleanse you, to heal you, to fill you so that you can be a channel of life and peace and love! Then we can truly live in harmony with the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment. It's more than not murdering, as important as that is. It's more than not harboring violent thoughts or using violent words. The true fulfillment of the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment is to be a channel of life and peace and love!

Is there anyone here who has broken the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment? Perhaps you murdered someone. Perhaps you're listening to this message in a prison cell. If that's you, then I have a word of hope for you! The Apostle Paul was a murderer. In those early years, his name was Saul of Tarsus. But he was a murderer. But there is grace for all you call upon the name of the Lord. Can you say Amen? All who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Saul of Tarsus not only called upon the name of the Lord and was saved. But he also became a preacher, a proclaimer of the Good News about Jesus!

Perhaps someone listening terminated a pregnancy because it seemed like the only way out, but you have been filled with grief and remorse. You haven't murdered anyone, but you feel like you took an innocent life. I want to bring you a word of hope this morning. The Lord wants to cleanse you and heal you. The Lord wants to restore to you the joy of His salvation, if you'll just open your life to Him today.

Perhaps you've never murdered anyone, but you are full of anger. And you realize today that you have also broken the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment. I lived many years of my life full of anger. But I'm here to testify today that the Lord God can set you free from your anger, by the power of Jesus name! He can use Christian counselors. He can use godly teachers. He can take you from being a cauldron of anger and transform you into a channel of life and peace and love!

I asked several Christian counselors for some resources that might be helpful in dealing with anger. Here are a few of them:

- Letting of your anger by Ron and Pat Potter-Efron
- Angry men and the women who love the, by Paul Hegstrom
- Making love last forever, by Gary Smalley (chapter on 7 ways to unload unresolved anger)
- Deadly Emotions, by Don Colbert
- Change your brain; change your life, Daniel Amen

If you send me an e-mail at [dmorris@forestlakechurch.org](mailto:dmorris@forestlakechurch.org), I'll send you a list of resources and also the names of some Christian counselors.

Others may plan to attend a seminar on forgiveness, or a presentation on how to handle conflict in a non-destructive way.. And remember, we are not seeking this healing so that God will love us. We are seeking this healing because He loves us. God wants you to be a channel of life and peace and love!

Is there anyone here today, or listening via our web church, via radio, or via television, and you want to say, "Pastor, please pray for me. I want to accept this 6<sup>th</sup> commandment as a word of blessing from our loving God. I want to not only not murder, I want to be free from angry thoughts, I want to be free from angry words, I want to be healed in my heart." I want God to transform me into a channel of life and peace and love.

If that's your heart cry today, I want to invite you to slip to your knees, wherever you are, just slip to your knees, and let us tell the LORD our God the prayer of our hearts.