

Discussion Questions: Living in Freedom 6th Commandment: Do Not Murder - Exodus 20:13

Drawn from the February 9, 2025 sermon by Dr. Jeff Chandler

Opener: Why do you think people find the subject of murder (in novels, movies, and news items for instance) so intriguing?

Exodus 20:13 (**New Living Translation**)

"You must not murder." It is even more terse in the Hebrew... "no murder"

I. What did God mean?

It's not prohibiting killing animals (Genesis 9:3)

It's not prohibiting capital punishment (Leviticus 24:21)

It's not prohibiting going to war (Ecclesiastes 3:8)

1. Of all the crimes human beings can commit, why is murder considered the worst?

From the following verses we can see that God is the author of life and also is in charge of how long we should live.

Read Job 12:10 (New Living Translation)

For the life of every living thing is in his hand, and the breath of every human being.

Read Job 14:5 (New Living Translation)

You have decided the length of our lives. You know how many months we will live, and we are not given a minute longer.

Read Psalm 139:16 (New Living Translation)

You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

From these verses we can infer that....

God says no to suicide

God says no to mercy killing (euthanasia)

God says no to abortion

2. Oftentimes, people justify these acts as “quality of life” issues. How do we wrestle with this in terms of upholding “sanctity of life”?

II. Why is human life so valuable?

Read Genesis 1:27 (New Living Translation)

God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Read Psalm 139:13-14 (New Living Translation)

You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.

We are different than any other created being, because we bear the image of God. When people justify murder they usually dehumanize (take away the special value) of human beings.

3. How do you see God’s image in human beings? With that realization, what kind of respect should follow?

III. Murderous emotions

Read Matthew 5:21-22 (New Living Translation)

“You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’ But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot (literally “raca”, a form of contempt), you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone (calling them a fool), you are in danger of the fires of hell.

Read 1 John 3:15-16 (New Living Translation)

Anyone who hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don’t have eternal life within them. We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters.

Jesus addresses the topic of murder in the Sermon on the Mount, and brings it to the heart level. In this explanation, anger and slander can be seen as closely related to murder.

4. How do you distinguish between anger at what someone has done versus anger at who someone is?
5. Have you ever felt verbally assassinated? What would you have rather heard from the person in that situation?

IV. How to handle anger

There are many passages in the New Testament which talk about controlling our emotions so that they don't turn into sin.

Read Romans 12:14 (New International Version)

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Read Ephesians 4:26-27 (New International Version)

"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

6. What kind of sin have you seen anger produce?
7. Are there any footholds that come to mind that you would like to be free of in this area?

Group Prayer Time: In this session you've talked about murder and its related cousins, anger and contempt. If there's a lesson here it is that we need to treat every human being with respect, because all humans bear the image of God. Pray for each other and any attitude adjustments that have been highlighted. Pray also for any needs you are facing in the group.

For personal reflection in the group or on your own:

Anger is a choice

The story of the first murder is found in Genesis 4. Cain became jealous of his brother Abel, which turned into anger. Before he followed through, God approached him and said, "You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master." (Genesis 4:7). Unfortunately, Cain did not listen and proceeded to shed his brother's blood.

How do you personally cope with feelings of fury or hatred against another person?

When Jesus addressed the subject of anger and verbal assault in the Sermon on the Mount, he continued with some advice on what to do when our relationships are in tension.

Read Matthew 5:23-26 (New Living Translation)

"So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.

"When you are on the way to court with your adversary, settle your differences quickly. Otherwise, your accuser may hand you over to the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, and you will be thrown into prison. And if that happens, you surely won't be free again until you have paid the last penny.

What do these verses teach about nipping our relational problems in the bud?

Next week, February 16, will not have discussion questions since we will be having a missions speaker. On February 23, pastor Jeff will cover "You shall not commit adultery" and there will be discussion questions available in "Downloads" on the SCC website.