

the sixth commandment is not just about restraining our outward behavior. It is about actually loving our neighbors and loving the God who made them.

Discussion Questions

- In light of Jesus's words in Matthew 5, have you broken the sixth commandment?

Day 5 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

When you look in the mirror, what do you see? If the mirror is clean and straight you should see an accurate image of yourself, but if the mirror is warped or foggy that image may be distorted. As human beings we are made in the image of God, but because of sin we do not image Him accurately. Even so, God forbids the murder of such flawed image-bearers, and the judgment for it is severe. Revelation 21:8 says, *But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.* How much more horrendous was the killing of Jesus? After all, *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation* (Colossians 1:15), and unlike all of us flawed image-bearers, He never sinned. In Acts, Peter says Jesus was killed by the hands of lawless men but that God *raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.* (Acts 2:24). There is beauty in the death of Jesus because He voluntarily offered Himself as a sacrifice in our place. As He said, *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly”* (John 10:10).

Discussion Questions

- What does it mean that Jesus came to give life abundantly?

Baptist Catechism

Family Worship Guide



West Oaks Baptist Church

(in preparation for Sunday, February 16th, 2025)

Baptist Catechism Question #72

Q: What is the sixth commandment?

A: *The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill.*

Suggested Memory Verse

Exodus 20:13 “You shall not murder.” (ESV)

Day 1 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

This week we continue our study of the moral law with the sixth commandment: thou shalt not kill. This particular wording comes from the King James translation of the Bible and is sometimes misunderstood to mean Christians should never kill any living thing, even animals. Notice that the ESV translates the sixth commandment as “you shall not murder,” which is a little more specific. Murder is defined as “the unlawful premeditated killing of one human being by another.” It is not merely taking a life that is so morally wrong, it is taking a human life. Why? Because humans are created in the image of God. *Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image* (Genesis 9:6). Have you ever seen someone who is angry with a political leader resort to tearing down a statue or spraying graffiti on a portrait? Why would they do that? They do not have the power to attack their enemy directly, so instead they destroy images and symbols. So, too, the enemies of God are powerless against Him, and yet their hatred spills over onto His image bearers. If they can’t kill God, they can kill His representatives, and vulnerable people make easy targets. Even in the womb, each and every human being is made in the image of God and their lives are precious. Destroying innocent life is ultimately an attack against God Himself.

Discussion Questions

- Why is murder so offensive to God?

Day 2 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

Another misconception of the sixth commandment is that it prohibits ever killing another human under any circumstance. Scripture, however, makes a distinction between murder (the unlawful premeditated killing of one human being by another) and other circumstances where the lawful death of a person is justified. For example, in the case of self-defense or in defense of others it may be necessary to take the life of an attacker in order to preserve the life of others. *If a thief is found breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there shall be no bloodguilt for him* (Exodus 22:2). Capital punishment is another example. When rightly applied, capital punishment is a demonstration of God’s justice being carried out by His delegated authority. Romans 13:3-4 explains it this way, *For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.* The key here is that God has appointed a proper means for justice to be carried out, and it is not through murder. *Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord”* (Romans 12:19).

Discussion Questions

- Have you ever wanted to take someone’s punishment into your own hands because they seemed to be “getting away” with sin?
- What should we do when we feel like our authorities are not wielding the sword properly?

Day 3 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

When did murder become a sin? Was it when Moses declared it as part of the ten commandments on Mt. Sinai? Of course not! God created man in His own image, and destroying that image has been a sin against God from the beginning. The moral law was written on the hearts and consciences of men long before it was ever summarized and codified into Hebrew law. Cain knew it. We all know it. 1 John 3:11-12 reminds us, *For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.* Cain’s response when confronted by his sin was callous denial and feigned ignorance. *Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?”* (Genesis 4:8-9). Consider God’s answer: *The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.* Any violation of the sixth commandment goes against our own conscience, and cannot be hidden from God. Our only hope is to put our trust in Christ.

Discussion Questions

- Is it necessary to have laws against abortion in order for people to know it is wrong? Why or why not?
- What might you tell someone who says to you that they’ve had an abortion?

Day 4 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

Rule-keepers like the Pharisees often love the sixth commandment. It seems so easy. As long as I haven’t physically murdered anyone, then I can check the box and say I’m a pretty good person. Right? Wrong. Jesus exposed the folly of this kind of thinking. He told the people, *“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire* (Matthew 5:21-22). It seems like Jesus is imposing a much higher standard than Moses did. Why is that? It is because murder, like all outward sin, originates in our sinful hearts. *But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander* (Matthew 15:18-19). Anyone who broods and stewes in hatred and evil thoughts about another person should not be surprised when those thoughts eventually become actions. But keeping