

## 6th Commandment Honor Life

Let us turn into our Bibles to Proverbs 19.16. Proverbs 19.16. Let us listen attentively to the Word of God. Proverbs 19.16. He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, that he who is careless of his way towards God. May we see the importance of the Word of God and here its particular tie into the sixth commandment to preserve life.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, may we learn thereby to honor life as well the other side of the commandment. And that you would equip us to this end, God, not to save ourselves by our own obedience, Lord, but to know that you, it is He, Jesus Christ, who has kept the commandment for us and therefore has kept our soul from certain death and damnation. Gracious God above, help us to relearn this lesson again and be encouraged as believers to follow you and to follow your will as expressed here in the sixth commandment.

Amen. More than the other ones because of a subject matter, murder. You're snuffing out a life.

This is one of the most heinous sins as you can imagine, so much so that pagan societies have forbidden it from age to age. Although of course they tweak it around at times and make exceptions like we do for babies, but it's still there more or less. But there's another side of course of the sixth commandment that sometimes Christians forget about and that's the commandment to preserve life.

And I want to talk about both of course and then tie both of them to the work of Christ as this proverb here I think is a good segue to that, points or put upon themselves the curse and punishment of death itself. In violation of the sixth commandment, you should not violate it, but we do because we are of course sinners.

## What is Forbidden in the 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment?

The first point, what is forbidden in the sixth commandment? Now I'm not going to read a lot of the sort of catechism here.

I'll reference it question 69 if you want to look it up. I want to unpack this part here, what is forbidden in the sixth commandment into three parts, three degrees of violation. The first being the most obvious, the unjust taking of life, life taken, and they will try to stop such terrible activities.

Secondly, the harming of life. So this is one step removed. Unintentional harming of life, doesn't matter, but something that brings danger one step closer to death itself.

And then lastly, furthest, the furthest circle as you can imagine concentric circles, the tendency towards harming or taking life. We want to avoid that as well. So the taking of life unjustly, here this sub point, reminder that is more precise.

We think of the commandment thou shall not kill, it's more precisely thou shall not murder. You can kill, you can take life under the proper conditions. And I want to highlight this because the taking of life such as defense of your life or the life of another, just war and the

like, the Roman Catholic Church officially teaches that the death penalty for example is wrong.

And there are a lot of Roman Catholics and they have a fair amount of influence in our politics in this nation and they don't believe in the death penalty. It's the weirdest thing but that's part of their teaching and it's clearly wrong. They have a just taking of life.

There is a just way to do it. God commanded of course death for murder under Noah. You take another man's life, you're going to lose your life.

He commanded death in Israel's judicial system as we know, which was often an application of the law of the Ten Commandments. And you can see that if you go through Deuteronomy, it more or less follows the Ten Commandments in order. And of course there in Romans 13, again explicitly, what is expressed there but the magistrate has what? The staff? The power of the staff to beat people? Well he certainly has that.

You can beat, you can use that power and authority. But Romans 13 says, for he is God's minister to you for good, but if you do evil be afraid for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is God's minister and avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

What's a sword supposed to be used for? Chopping onions? The imagery clearly is about the death penalty. If it can use and it can have the authority to execute people for justice, then of course it can of course use the lesser penalties of caning and imprisonment and things like that. Of more than the Word of God, don't they? They say we have the Bible, but they also have church tradition.

They have things the church declares and their councils that are just as binding upon the conscious as the Word of God. And of course the sword is not used just for external threats but within the nation itself. So in other words, murder as unjust killing, that is wrong.

Talking about murder. There's two types of murder or more precisely two parts of murder. The act itself or the murder of the hands and of course murder of the heart.

Murder of the hands, the most obvious. Infanticide, they can take the baby out and kill them in 36 weeks if they're supposedly viable. Abortion, assisted suicide, unjust wars, even vigilantism of sorts, trying to run around and cause problems that way.

These are clearly violations of the second commandment. We're aware of these things. We pray against them because unfortunately they're here in Colorado.

They opened their first abortion mill that now covers 36 weeks, up to 36 weeks. We've never done that before in Colorado. That's a viable child.

You can take them out of the womb at that age. By what? The heart. Not an accident that we have more and more heinous laws like this in this land of ours.

But we have hearts full of wickedness, full of hate, full of lust, full of murder. It could be a combination of all of them. It matters not as far as I'm concerned because I can't read people's hearts.

God can and God knows. I grew up, as many of you know and some of you probably did too, with a spotty knowledge of the Word of God. And so I knew about passages like Matthew 5.21. I certainly remember though, this is Jesus, "...of those of old, you shall not murder.

And whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever says to his brother, Rakkah, shall be in danger of the council.

But whoever says, you fool, shall be in danger of the hellfire." So you hear that and you may think, well, that's interesting. So this is what Jesus is teaching. He's clearly correct.

Pharisees of that day who added on extra rules and understandings and traditions upon what God had given them already in the Old Testament. They already knew there in the Old Testament, God was concerned about the heart. I've already talked about it a couple of times already, First Commandment and Second Commandment and the Fifth Commandment.

Those verses there about the heart, about love, about clinging to God and the like. Jesus, one of the other cues that you have here, of course, is you have heard it was said of those of old, not written in the Word of God. It was verbal tradition upon layers of false teachings on the Word of God and Jesus was going to correct them.

But what do we read? As I read finally, I know I probably read it one time. Maybe I even saw it, heard about it at church, but it never had that connection there. Leviticus 19.17. This is a good one to put down if you run across people, and they're still there, dispensationalists and others who make this division between the Testaments as though the Old Testament is about externality and the New Testament is about the heart and internality.

Never. That's a false dichotomy. There's a degree of difference to some extent, of course, in terms of the law because they were very, how can I put it, immature.

Hate your brother in your heart. It's there in the law of God in the Old Testament. You shall not hate your brother in your heart.

You shall surely rebuke your neighbor and not bear sin because of him. So the opposite here is if you really love them and there's a problem going on here is the implication you're going to rebuke them instead instead of holding it in your heart and getting bitter and angry at them and say, you're doing something wrong here, brother. Let's talk about it.

There it is. The Old Testament spirituality is in substance the same as New Testament spirituality, the sanctification, the growth as believers. So we can go to the Word of God, the entirety of it, and learn and grow thereby.

That's a good verse, Leviticus 19. One important element of murder in the heart, anger is another one. Anger and hatred overlap often in our lives.

And so Jesus gets to the heart of the matter with respect to the Pharisees. That's why we talk about pharisaical people now. It comes from them.

They were playing games. They were putting on a show. They were wearing two masks, pretending they were something they were not.

And so they had much anger and hatred in their hearts. And so Jesus calls them the children of the devil, that your father is the liar from the beginning and so are you. Murder, the unjust killing or taking of another life, both by hands and by heart, is not just done by individuals but can be done by the government.

Tyranny from the government. The illustration I have here I think is one that some of us will still remember. That's why I'm picking it so I don't get into modern politics too much.

Ruby Ridge, for example, I remember reading into that event in the 90s. You can look it up yourself. The courts found the government guilty of coming in there, killing the wife.

She stood out in front of that house. They were out there in the middle of Idaho. And they had guns or something.

And I think he sawed off, had a sawed off shot. He was pregnant. It was astounding.

I'm not aware if anybody really got in trouble for it either. Of course, places like China we have forced abortions, or at least they did for a long time. These are examples of murder in society executed not by individuals.

The interesting thing about abortion, it's a terrible interesting fact, is that we do it by our free will, right? You have the choice to kill your own baby. And we're not going to get involved in your choice. Here I'm talking about the government coming along and saying you have no choice.

It doesn't matter. If you have no choice, if you have a choice, it's wrong in both cases. Next, so that's the old murder.

But unnecessary harm upon the body, damage of the body that can lead to death. So we have in Exodus 21-18, we have a lot of case laws there in Exodus, especially Deuteronomy, related to the sixth commandment. So they can be helpful to illustrate the application and the depth and the breadth of the law of God.

Exodus 21-18, if men contend with each other, and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist, and he does not die but is confined to his bed, he should only pay for the loss of his time and should provide for him to be thoroughly healed. So there's still a punishment there. He hasn't died, but nevertheless, clearly this would fit under what? The sixth commandment.

Doesn't fit under the seventh, doesn't fit under the fifth. It's bodily harm that clearly could have led to death. And so you wait in this case, if he rises again, he walks, so he survived, he didn't die, he still gets punished, is the point, because he harmed him.

He harmed his body. And this falls under the sixth commandment. We have this again, not only there in this kind of a case law, but in our society.

In the government, we have tyranny from businesses and medical practitioners in society at large with kind of peer pressure that they have upon people. They can do it in abortion, of course, where perhaps the husband or whoever else is involved in the family says, yeah, get rid of the kid. You have this for transitioning.

They use the word loosely. I like to use the word mutilating kids this day and age, trying to pretend the girl is a boy and the boy is a girl. Easy access to such things and harm.

Drugs is another example. We have a lot of that in Colorado now. They've been adding more and more to it.

It's no accident you see more and more drugs that clearly can lead to death. It's harming their body with drugs, so it's a different kind of harm. It's not just punching, scratching.

It's injecting themselves with poison with these drugs. Unnecessary killings of civilians in war. War, of course, is a problem and widespread throughout history, but indiscriminate war should be avoided.

Christians have always taught in the time of Augustine, that's about the 4 and 500s and probably even before, deal with it quickly, get it done, and avoid any unnecessary casualties. And that, unfortunately, has been ignored at times where they just have these fights and battles and whatnot. Terrorism has made it worse, of course, where they just indiscriminately come across and kill.

It isn't bystanders. They have nothing to do with this war. It's not even official war, so it makes it harder in many ways.

But it's still wrong, it's still a problem, and it's something we need to pray for our government to get a better grasp on these things. And, of course, there's no excuse for civilians to stay in a war area. They ought to leave unless they're going to fight if it's a just war.

And lastly here, disproportionate, turn around and make sure you lose 30,000 people. That's not just war theory at all. That's just anger and vigilantism of a sort, and that too is wrong.

You can defend yourself, you can fight, but it ought to be proportionate. That's one of the key points, because you don't want to make the matter worse. You can make generational hate grow thereby.

And justice does that anyways. Is it fair if I stole 100 bucks and you're like, I'm going to take your house? That's not what? Proportionate, a proportionate punishment. And same with war and murder.

If they're murdering your people, that's... Lastly, the tendency towards taking life unjustly, not just murder outright and harm outright, whether internal harm of drugs or external harm of being hit and the like and being damaged, but the tendency towards taking life. Question 99 of the larger catechism, which you probably all memorized by now, I'm sure. Point six, that under one's sin or duty, all of the same kind of sin or duty, right, are forbidden or commanded together with all the causes, means, occasions, appearances thereof and provocations thereunto.

And I think you can see where this is going. As an individual, you're not going to get a cop or something, if it's severe enough, call for help or get a cop, hospital, call the hospital, whatever. You're not to be involved with, of course, murder, either through encouraging murder or supporting murderers.

You can't just pretend that, hey, it's only the person that actually does the killing. Paul himself, you recall in Acts, what did he do when it came to Stephen? You remember Stone's death and the death, and Paul, as it tells us, or Saul, was holding their cloaks. So although he did not pick up a stone, he participated in it, nevertheless, he supported the effort, is the point.

He was a support. And we have the law set up that way with respect to murder and terrorism. If you are supporting murderers and terrorists with your money and like, you can also get in trouble.

And that makes sense, doesn't it? It's not enough just to go after the person who did it. You also go after the mastermind. We have laws like that as well.

You didn't pull the trigger, but you might as well have. You're the boss. You told them to do the hit.

But I am pleading for here with the sixth commandment, indeed, all the commandments. Not all individuals have the same responsibility, of course, just like the fifth commandment, to whom much is given, much is required. Parents, magistrates, police, governors, judges, they have more power, more authority, business leaders, men with lots and lots of money.

They have a greater responsibility to avoid murder and any tendency towards murder or harm of other people, of their members, of civilians, of citizens underneath them. A collection of individuals as well are also responsible. We have this with HOAs, churches and businesses and clubs and individuals.

So not just individuals, lots of influence, all of us together in certain contexts can do a lot more good or harm as the be. And so we ought to not be silent about murder and the like, but to push back both individually and collectively. And then lastly here under what is forbidden, murder, physical harm and tendency towards either one, the larger Catechism question 136 on murder includes the word oppression.

It's there in the Bible. It's a translation of a Hebrew word there. It's used a number of times in the Old Testament.

But of course I like to use these words to really get at you and get their point across. They mean something more specific and oppression looks different in different contexts. Ezekiel 18, 18 is the classic text there.

Ezekiel 18, 18 we read, as for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, robbed his brother by violence and did what was not good among his people, behold, he shall die for his iniquity. So that's the chapter on repentance and the generational, you can break the generational curse if you want to call it that, a father to son, father to son, he can just simply repent. And this is one of the sins he does.

He oppresses and I think, that's not sufficient. It's more specific here. It's robbing his brother by violence and not even doing good among his people.

He's just always being bad all the time. All these particular ways of being bad adds up to the general category of oppression when it gets bad enough. And our confession summarizes that as part of what is forbidden, because these things can add up to rebellion, revolution, war within your own society.

We saw that in 2020. That's clearly means, causes, and occasions that led to violent ways in which sin can sneak in, is the point here, and break things down in our society. Unjust use of power is a problem.

We ought to pray against it and do the best we can. It's like Pharaoh is another good example. What did Pharaoh do? He demanded bricks.

But what? Stop supplying the straw to make the bricks. So it's not just governments that do that. Businesses can do the same thing.

They can make it harder on their workers when they shouldn't. Bad diet, of course, living habits and the like that increase danger upon ourselves. That's obvious.

I'm not going to get into that. But we are protecting life, justly protecting life, not just any way you feel like it. Whatever works to protect life is good.

No, there are still limits. You're not allowed just to do anything. You can't write murder to protect life.

You can defend yourself in that regard, but not how to write murder. Question 99.5 tells us that what God forbids is at no time to be done. What He commands is always our duty, and yet every particular duty is not to be done at all times.

So whatever's forbidden, that is murder. Murder is never to be done. Never set someone up for murder.

Never support murderers. Never support harm and the like.

## **What is Required in the 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment**

But what is commanded, preserving and health that leads to life, that's a particular duty, is not to be done at all times.

And this is what I mean. I get phone calls, ads, and I'm sure you have too. The church does.

I have to be on top of that with the church number. You get all kinds of requests from good organizations, bad organizations, suspect people, people you've never met, and things like that. Right to life, food for the hungry, poor in Africa, etc.

But I simply cannot do and handle that all the time. My duty is to preserve life, but not at all. Redirect our sources, as we have here, we have a budget, to other ways of preserving life.

In our case, especially spiritual life, which is the purpose of the church. We're not here to help the poor. That's what the liberals did 100 years ago, and that's not our call.

That's the call of the community. That's maybe your call as a citizen of your neighborhood. You have the ability, that's true, but the church, properly speaking, is here to preach the gospel and to feed the people of Jesus Christ and His Word.

That's preserving the life of the soul, Proverbs 19, 16. So, therefore, it's my duty to prioritize, take care of the widows, but only after the family can't take care of the widows, if they're godly widows. Indeed, there are restrictions in that sense.

Another point about justly protecting life, preserving life, and avoiding harm, and avoiding murder, is that there's no room for a live-and-let-live politics. And here's what, this is what I mean by that. When I say politics, I can say society, I can say businesses, relationships, whatever.

Proverbs 24, 11. This is a good one. Proverbs 24, 11 through 12.

I think this is also important. What are we reading here in Proverbs 24, 11? Deliver those who are drawn towards death and hold back those stumbling towards the slaughter. We have a responsibility to help people in need.

It's not every man for himself. We don't believe that. Christianity has never taught that.

And as they are on their way to slaughter, that's a very terrible happening in their life, as a metaphor of sorts. But something bad, certainly, very bad happening. And we are called, if we have the ability, to deliver them from said destruction and harm in their lives.

And I would argue, of course, this is the basis for defensive wars, self-defense of the family, and the like. We are called to deliver others, not just yourself, others, your family, your neighborhood, your friends. As you are able, of course, as the circle gets wider, more people are involved, we have a lot less authority and power.

And we feel frustrated, I'm sure, that way. So it's not a systematic theology as such. It's a short, pithy saying to remind us of important moral truths.

And it would also include the death of the soul, to warn them of hell. Duties of the magistrate, this would naturally come up under the Sixth Commandment, as being such a serious crime, a serious problem. And the magistrate himself, that is the civil authorities, have been given the power of the sword to defend and protect the innocent.

That's their job. Romans 13 outlines the most severe punishment, the most basic function, protection of life to the punishment by death. Protect life is just and right.

The straightforward application, of course, is death penalty use, is therefore appropriate and important in many ways. And, of course, lesser crimes as well. Now, omission is also a sin here.

The omission of protecting life and preserving it. The passivity of the government, for example, is culpable before the eyes of the Lord if they are not there to protect us from rioters, from crime, from things that would cause harm or lead towards harm of a serious nature, of course. They're not there to handle every little thing happening in life.

That's just not accountable. All I can think of is not only our own Muslims, but the Muslims in Europe and the like. By Muslim, I don't mean ethnic group.

I mean the religion, Islam. I mean, it's the leaders there. We know what that's like.

And if they're not going to protect them, God will judge them because they've done a lot of harm and they want to turn another eye away because they call it racism otherwise. It's not racism. It's just simply what they believe and what they do.

We must pray for our nation and for them as well to fulfill the sixth commandment for their magistrate. Now, what must be done for all the policies other than simply one tool you ought to use is death penalty and ought to be, I think, even used more often than we do now. You really scare people away from crimes if you're going to take their life.

They know this. But the government has a responsibility to protect us, protect the citizenship, and should not be debatable at all. She has the right and duty, for example, to guard her borders, to maintain her identity, to protect the lives of her citizens and the like, and the occasions that they could be using to that end are vast, whatever that may look like.

It ought to be done because the preserving of life is coming down the door here. He's going to come shoot me. That's what it's talking about.

It's talking about the means, causes, and occasions. And means, causes, and occasions when it comes to politics and large groups of people, what, can happen pretty quick. It can also happen very slowly.

It can take generations. And you have to make a decision now that will have an effect five years from now or four years from now in the case of the election cycle of what he will do, for example. And you can't do anything for four years.

He gets all that power as president and do XYZ and bring harm or not bring harm. And it can do it. And it can come down to the nitty-gritty of where we are in life.

So these are things that we ought to pray for and be thankful. We ought to preserve life and avoid death, the soul death, the death of the soul. Proverbs 19.16, he who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, but he who is careless of his ways will die.

It is here in the singular, he who keeps the commandments. Looking at all the ten commandments as one commandment, which is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, I would argue. And that, of course, can bring about temporary death.

Obedience to God's law generally brings about good results, as we know, by God's blessing. But even believers can have shortening of their life if they don't take his commandments seriously. If you do something foolish, if you go out in the fort, that restaurant, you go around outside on the patio and they have signs saying to go out there.

And you're too close to the grass, too close to the edge. There are rattlesnakes out there. And you're a believer and you're like, well, God will preserve me.

You walk out there, you get bit and you die. I mean, that's you violating Proverbs 19.16. That proverb's for you, apparently, if that's how you think. And people do think that way, sadly.

I grew up that way, as you know. This is helpful for them. But it's not just that, because it's a proverb.

It covers all kinds of things in very pithy form. And I want to talk especially about spiritual death. If we can keep the commandments perfectly, but we cannot, alas, we what? We face death.

Because we too have violated the sixth commandment and the fifth commandment, and especially the first and second and third and fourth. And that brings about our death and demise, except for Jesus Christ. He kept the commandments in thought, in word, in deed.

He brings life, brothers and sisters. And he has fulfilled the sixth commandment. In fact, he took the death penalty for us, justly, as our substitute, as the second Adam.

Praise be to his name. So never forget, your obedience to the law is never enough to save you and deliver you. Any obedience should be that out of faith and love in Christ.

And it's always him, all his believers, saved and redeemed to do the best we can, both to avoid murder and to sustain life, our life around us. In sum, your duty is under the sixth commandment. Do not murder.

Do not think about murdering others. Do not support others who murder. Support godly leaders in all parts of life.

Pray for our nation. Support good causes that protect and preserve health and vitality. Pass on good facts and the truth of life that reinforce the sixth commandment.

And pray, of course, and examine your heart and repent from any hatred or anger of our salvation and deliverance from death itself. Let us pray. Gracious, wonderful God above, we are thankful that Jesus Christ has fulfilled the ten commandments for us, and he took the penalty of death.

We read here, Lord, that we are called to keep the commandments, to keep our soul, but we know we cannot and we will not, but Jesus has and he has kept our soul. Lord God and Savior above, may we continue to be encouraged and strengthened to know that we have the power, as we saw this morning, the ability to fulfill the sixth commandment, although in part, and never fully, God, and never enough to justify ourselves, but enough, Lord, that we can make a little better, different world.