

GUARD HUMAN LIFE

Small Group Study Guide | June 16, 2024

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP

Today is Father's Day! Take a few moments to share with your group about the godly influence your dad or a father-figure has had on your life.

Discuss: What do you think makes humans so special compared to the rest of God's creation?

Key Text: "You shall not murder." (Deuteronomy 5:17)

In Commandment #6, God commands us to not murder. The word "murder" refers to the unlawful taking of a human life—that is, causing the death of a human being in a criminal sense or through negligence or carelessness. Commandment #6 is a specific command against murder, not a general command against all life-taking.

1. Revelation – What is God teaching us about Himself in Commandment #6?

In Commandment #6, God teaches us that because He created humans in His image (Gen.1:26-27), human life is sacred to Him. Thus, to murder a human being is to murder what is most like God in creation. God sees murder as an attack on *Him*!

Discuss: How do these verses highlight the sanctity of human life: Genesis 1:26-27; 9:6; Psalm 139:13-16?

Discuss: How does our moral capacity (our ability to know right from wrong), our intellectual capacity (our ability to think and reason), and our relational capacity (our ability to relate to God) make us humans different and superior to the rest of creation?

Also, in Commandment #6 God is teaching us that He alone has the right and privilege to give life and take it away when He chooses (Deut.32:39). The person who assumes the right and privilege to take a human life when he chooses through murder—including abortion (murder of an unborn child), suicide (self-murder), and euthanasia (murder of someone who is terminally ill)—is setting himself above God. Thus, murder not only violates Commandment #6, but it also violates Commandment #1: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Deut.5:7) by placing self before God.

Discuss: How do these verses highlight God's sole authority over life and death: Deuteronomy 32:39; 1 Samuel 2:6; Job 1:21?

2. Introspection – What is God teaching us about ourselves in Commandment #6?

In Commandment #6, God is teaching us that we have a propensity to hate rather than love, and murder begins in the heart (Mat.5:21-26). The same attitude that causes one person to hold hatred in his heart causes another person to commit murder. A person is morally guilty before God for both the attitude and actions of hate.

Discuss: What do Matthew 5:21-22 and Jeremiah 17:10 teach about our attitudes?

Discuss: How do these verses teach us to choose love over hate: Leviticus 19:17; Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27; Romans 12:18; Colossians 3:13?

3. Transformation – How does God want us to live per Commandment #6?

God wants us to guard human life since it is valuable and precious.

- **Self-Defense** – The Bible encourages us to protect ourselves from a violent attack by escaping the danger or, if necessary, using deadly force. Jesus' instruction to turn the other cheek when slapped (Mat.5:38-39) prohibited individuals from taking personal vengeance to get even with someone. A slap indicated a personal insult; thus, Jesus told us not to return insult for insult. Jesus was not referring here to a violent attack that would physically harm us. In fact, Jesus told His disciples to keep swords for self-defense which was a common practice among people in those days to protect themselves from robbers (see Luke 22:36-38). Why didn't Jesus defend Himself on the cross? Jesus' death on the cross was a unique and special act of submission designed to accomplish salvation. Yet, even up to that time when, according to God's timetable, He was ordained to die, Jesus avoided physical danger by hiding (John 8:59) and by escaping (John 10:39).

Discuss: How does the Bible support using deadly force, if necessary, to defend your home in Exodus 22:2 and to protect an innocent third party who is being attacked in Genesis 14:14-16?

- **Justified War** – While the Bible does not condone war indiscriminately, it does recognize occasions when war is justified such as stopping genocide, aggression, and injustice so that righteousness and peace can be promoted. God, who is called “*a man of war*” (Ex.15:3), used warfare to judge sinful nations, and Israel had to fight necessary wars (Num.31:1-24; Josh.3:9-10). Jesus Himself is depicted as a warrior at the end times coming to establish ultimate peace (Rev.19:11-21). Christians pursue peace—we don't desire war (Mat.5:9)—but we also understand that governments bear the divinely ordained responsibility to protect their citizens (Rom.13:1-5) and this involves maintaining a military and weaponry. Like the wise King Solomon who, in an era of peace, kept 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen in addition to his infantry (1 Kings 10:26), we recognize the principle of peace through strength. Honorably serving as a soldier in the military is highly respected throughout the Scriptures and is consistent with a biblical worldview.

Discuss: Many soldiers are commended in the New Testament as people of good character and faith. For examples, see and discuss Matthew 8:5-13; Acts 10:1-2.

- **Capital Punishment** – God gives civil government the right and responsibility to administer the death penalty at least for the crime of murder (see Genesis 9:6) to justly punish the murderer and protect innocent human life by deterring crime.

Discuss: How does Romans 13:1-5 address capital punishment?

Discuss: How can Christians guard human life from abortion (murder of a preborn child)? Suicide (self-murder)? Euthanasia (murder of a terminally ill person)?

For Further Study:

Free online study tools (commentaries, dictionaries, etc.) at blueletterbible.org

Ten Secrets of Successful Living: A Perfect 10 for Families That Win by Adrian Rogers

For more biblical information on issues in today's lesson, see articles at gotquestions.org.