



# LESSON

# The Ten Commandments, Part 6

*“If you will not have death unto sin, you shall have sin unto death.  
There is no alternative. If you do not die to sin, you shall die for sin.  
If you do not slay sin, sin will slay you.”*

**CHARLES SPURGEON**

## **Kirk’s Comment**

We can all agree that murder is a very serious sin. Most of us think we’re safe with this Commandment. But from God’s point of view, you and I are not so innocent. This is a sobering lesson.

## QUESTIONS & OBJECTIONS

*“If abortion wasn’t legal, we’d have all those poor girls slipping off to see back-alley butchers. At least this way they’ll get counseling.”*

You’re right. Think of all those poor murderers who are consigned to slip around and kill in secret. We ought to legalize murder too! Then they can kill in a nice, clean, safe environment. They will be protected from getting splashed with blood that might contain diseases, and we can offer counseling so they won’t have any post-murder trauma from the choices they have made.



In this lesson we will look at the Sixth Commandment, and what it means in light of New Testament revelation: “**You shall not kill**” (Exodus 20:13).

In the dim light of their ignorance, the world looks at the Sixth Commandment and proclaims itself “not guilty.” However, God requires truth in the inward parts (Psalm 51:6). In other words, He sees the thought-life—the intent, the innermost motive of every human being. If civil law can prove that you are planning to assassinate the President, you can be prosecuted and severely punished. That law, however, is limited in its search for evidence—it can’t see what a man *thinks*. Not so with the all-seeing eye of our Creator. His Law searches the heart, and He sees “evil thoughts.” To even *think* hatred is to transgress the Sixth Commandment.

Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said by them of old time, You shall not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say to you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment” (Matthew 5:21,22). The Bible further adds that if we hate someone, we are murderers (1 John 3:15). There are many who would like to kill, but refrain because of fear of punishment. God counts them guilty of murder.

Even if we don’t have thoughts of physically murdering someone we hate, there is another sense in which we desire their death. John 8:44 says of the devil that “he was a murderer from the beginning.” While Satan didn’t go around physically killing men and women, by tempting Adam and Eve he did bring about the spiritual death of all mankind through sin (see Romans 5:12). If we hate someone, the last thought in our minds will be sharing the gospel with them out of concern for their salvation. In that sense, we too become a murderer, desiring the person’s eternal death, by not giving them the words of life.

Some states have laws that declare a bystander guilty for standing by and failing to prevent a crime. In the same way, God declares us guilty of murder if we stand by and do nothing to prevent someone’s eternal death. Their blood is on our hands (see Ezekiel 3:18).

Sixty people are murdered each day in the United States (FBI statistics reveal an average of around 20,000 murders per year). Homicide has become so common that it hardly merits a mention on the news.



Some time ago, Thomas Lyndon Jr. of Rocky Point, Long Island, confessed to the murder of a woman during a robbery. He admitted that he held the point of a four-inch hunting knife to her throat, and then “dug it in a little deeper” after she awoke and began to struggle. He said that after Lea Greene stopped moving, “I counted her heartbeats out of curiosity to see how long it’d take her to die . . . I knew exactly what I was doing . . . I knew it was against the law . . . I felt powerful—invincible, sort of, you know?” How true are the words of Charles Spurgeon, the Prince of Preachers: “Look at fallen human nature. Whitefield used to say that it was half beast and half devil. I question whether both beast and devil are not slandered by being compared with man when he is left to his own.”

In our day, abortion is another common occurrence. Many people try to convince themselves that the unborn child is nothing but a “blob of tissue,” making it acceptable to destroy. But at 21 days gestation, the child’s heart is beating, and at 40 days brain waves can be measured. If by our medical criteria a life is ended when there is no heartbeat or brain activity, then surely by their presence we can assert that life has begun. The Bible tells us that taking the life of the unborn is clearly murder: “He slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave” (Jeremiah 20:17), and God vowed to punish those who “ripped up the women with child” (Amos 1:13). God, the Creator of life, commanded us, “Do not shed innocent blood” (Jeremiah 7:6).

Some equate capital punishment with murder, and cite Jesus’ command to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44) as evidence that He did not endorse capital punishment. However, just because we have love for an enemy doesn’t give us the right to allow him to escape punishment for murder. The Bible says, “Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resists the power, resists the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation . . . But if you do that which is evil, be afraid; for he bears not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that does evil” (Romans 13:1–4).

The Bible says that anyone who deliberately takes a life should lose his own: “Whoso kills any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the



mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die. Moreover you shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death” (Numbers 35:30,31). Genesis 9:6 says, “Whoso sheds man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.” This shows the value God places on human life. The seriousness of a crime is revealed in the punishment dealt to the criminal. It is interesting to note that when Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh requested the death penalty, 250 relatives of the victims he killed asked to watch his execution. Their desire to actually see justice done testifies to the value they place on the loved one they lost. Despite claims to the contrary, capital punishment does deter crime. The person executed will not do it again.

Still, there are respected Christian leaders whose conscience will not allow them to advocate capital punishment, out of concern that innocent people may fall through the cracks of a godless justice system. That is why such extensive effort is expended to ascertain the guilt of the accused in a capital murder case. However, despite civil law’s imperfections, we are told to be subject to the governing authorities.

It was God who instituted the death penalty in the beginning. The Judge of the Universe pronounced the death sentence upon all humanity when He said, “The soul that sins, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:20).

## QUESTIONS

- 1. Why is civil law limited when it comes to prosecuting criminals?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2. Most people will claim to be not guilty of violating the Sixth Commandment. How can you explain God’s perspective?**



3. **Why does God consider hatred to be murder?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. **Is there someone you dislike strongly enough to not want to see the person in heaven? Do you think God considers you a murderer for this?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. **Do you think God views abortion as murder? Why or why not?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. **Does the Bible equate capital punishment with murder? Why or why not?**

## PREACHER'S PROGRESS

**Ben Gay:** “Hey, Christian, I’m gay, and science has proved that I was born like this.”

**Christian:** “True. I was born with homosexual tendencies.”

**Ben Gay:** “Huh?”

**Christian:** “I was also born with a tendency to lie, steal, commit adultery, and fornicate. It’s called ‘sin’ and it’s in every one of us.”

**Ben Gay:** “So are you saying that I’m going to hell just because I’m homosexual?”



**Christian:** “I didn’t even mention hell. Where do you think you will go when you die?”

**Ben Gay:** “Heaven.”

**Christian:** “Why?”

**Ben Gay:** “Because I’m a good person.”

**Christian:** “Do you want to do a short test to see if you are?”

**Ben Gay:** “Okay.”

**Christian:** “Have you ever told a lie? Stolen? Used God’s name in vain?”

*The Bible tells us that the Moral Law was made for homosexuals (see 1 Timothy 1:8–10). If you use the Law when witnessing, you won’t even have to mention their “sexual preference,” and thus be accused of “hate.” The Law will show the homosexual that he is damned despite his sexual preference. When he finds a place of true repentance and faith in Jesus, God will take away his unclean spirit and give him a new heart with new desires.*

## Memory Verse

*“Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer: and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.”*

**1 JOHN 3:15**

## WORDS OF COMFORT

In Lakewood, California, a man who sent four golf balls into the lake at the local golf club decided that he wasn’t a gifted golfer. He was so upset at his effort that he threw his golf bag into the lake and stormed off to his car. Onlookers thought that he had had a change of heart when he went back down to the lake and waded out into the water. He then grabbed the bag, searched the pockets until he found his car keys, returned to his car bagless, and drove away.

### Last Words

**Edith Louisa Cavell** (1865–1915) was a British nurse martyred by the Germans for harboring British refugees. About to die, she said:

**“Standing, as I do, in view of God and eternity... I realize that patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness against anyone.”**