

END-TIMES ISSUES




#103 Commandment #6 – Context/review and definition.

GOD DOESN'T TELL US TO KNOW ALL THE END-TIME DETAILS. HE TELLS US TO **BE READY.**

A N D B E Y O N D I

THE 10 COMMANDMENTS.



- ⇒ They don't show us *how to be saved*, but *how to live* as a saved person.
- ⇒ Each of the commands represents a *category* of commands and instructions. They apply not only to our actions, but also to our thoughts and attitudes.
- ⇒ As an *external regulation*, they can restrain sinful conduct. But they need to be made *internal* to our hearts and minds, before we can follow God the way we were created to follow him.
- ⇒ As an *internal regulation*, they guide us in *how to live*. We cannot fully obey these commandments without a changed heart – which God offers us. If we are willing to trust God and learn to live by his Word, God will give us both the desire and the ability to live by them.

THE "POSITIVE" COMMANDMENTS SHOW US HOW TO LIVE.

In the wide open "territory of life," our conduct must be governed by two principles: holiness and honor.
(Commandments #4 & #5.)

THE "NEGATIVE" COMMANDMENTS SHOW US HOW TO NOT LIVE.

They are the boundaries that keep us from death.
(Commandments #1-3 & #6-10.)

No other gods. No misrepresentation of God.

Holiness, honor.

No disrespect of God and his name (i.e., who he is).
No murder. No adultery. No theft. No lying. No coveting.

PAIN & SORROW **SLAVERY TO SIN** **DEATH & DESTRUCTION**

LOVE AND THE 10 COMMANDMENTS CANNOT BE SEPARATED.



- ⇒ The Ten Commandments are summarized as "Love for God and neighbor." Yet *love itself is a command* that needs to be obeyed!
- ⇒ The type of love that God requires is a *choice*, not a *feeling*. It's an act of the will, not an emotion. It is *fact-based*.
- ⇒ It is only through Scripture that we can find out the nature of this love, so that we can express it properly. Otherwise, it will *not* be the type of love that God requires – the type that summarizes the Ten Commandments.
- ⇒ We *cannot* have this type of love, if we choose to disregard the Ten Commandments. This love is *incompatible* with any other type of conduct!

There is *nothing* commanded by God that is outside the ten *categories* of the Ten Commandments!
And all of it is an expression of love.

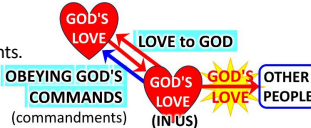
- ✓ The *command* to *love* is an expression of these 10 *commands*!
- ✓ The *commands* themselves show us *how to love*.
- ✓ The *command* to "love God" is an expression of the Fourth *Commandment* regarding *holiness* and our devotion to God.
- ✓ The *command* to "love neighbor" is an expression of the Fifth *Commandment* regarding *honor* and how we treat other people.
- ✓ The "negative" *commands* show the boundaries between "love" for God and neighbor and "not-love" for them.
- ✓ "Ritual-like" *commands*, such as baptism and the Lord's Supper focus on *love* for God, if not treated as mere rituals, and would fall under the category of the Fourth *Commandment*. (Some may also focus on love for neighbor.)

The ultimate proof that our love is *genuine* – that it's from God – is seen in our response to God's commandments.

- ✓ God's commandments *define* genuine love. Obedience to them is *visible* evidence that all can see. We can *accurately* learn the nature of these commands *only* through Scripture.

SAVED PEOPLE:

They obey God's commandments.
This is *evidence* that their love is genuine, and that they are saved.



Dear friends, let us *love one another*, because love is from God, ...

By this we know that we *love the children of God*: whenever we *love God* and *obey his commandments*.

For this is the *love of God*: that we *keep [= obey] his commandments*.

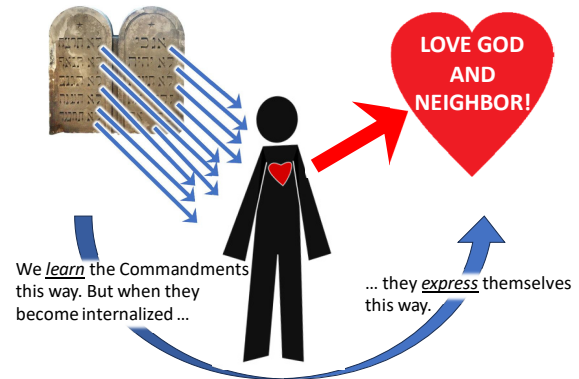
1 John 4:7a; 5:2-3a (NIV)

"LOVE" IS THE BEST WAY TO SUMMARIZE THE 10 COMMANDMENTS, WHEN THEY ARE EMBEDDED WITHIN OUR HEARTS.

- ⇒ Our duty is to grow in our understanding of the commandments, and to learn how to apply them to *all* areas of life. Jesus and the prophets give examples of how it's done.
- ⇒ The complexity of life means that our actions are often related to *more than one* of the commandments. Even in Scripture, we can see how the commandments are interrelated.
- ⇒ When these laws are embedded within our hearts, we do not have to be constantly "categorizing" what we do, based on *ten* regulations. When our whole attitude is based on a desire to do God's will, we can simply describe it as an expression of God's love, which encompasses *all* that God would have us to do.



GENUINE love never violates the Ten Commandments.
It's an *expression* of these commandments.



THE 6TH COMMANDMENT

You shall not murder.

Exodus 20:13 (BSB);
also in Deuteronomy 5:17

- The basis for this commandment: As we saw in the book of Genesis, the basis for this command is the special relationship that humans have to God – a relationship that no other entity in creation has. (This is in addition to the fact that we owe our very existence to God. *He owns us*; we do not belong to ourselves.)

"... for in His own image
God has made mankind."

Genesis 9:6b (BSB)

- This moral obligation was given to the entire human race (in Genesis 9:5-6). And though many people ignore it, it *still* remains in effect – and always will.

- Because we have chosen to rebel and sin against God (our maker/owner), we have *earned* death. We *must* die.
✓ *Spiritual death* has already occurred.
✓ *Physical death* follows at some later point.
- Our only hope is to repent, trust God and let him *change* us, so that we can learn to obey him.
- If/when this happens:
✓ We have been "*born again*": we *now* have a *new spiritual life*.
✓ We *must still physically die*; but we have been promised a *new (resurrected) physical body* when Jesus returns.
- Regarding our physical death, our sin is against God. So, he claims for himself the right to decide when to execute this judgment.
✓ This is such a serious matter, that God tells us that *anyone* who decides to "steal" this right from him is to *forfeit his own life*.
✓ God usually delays this judgment (which is why people often live 70-80 years) – *even though we do not deserve this delay*.

YES, OUR SIN REALLY IS AGAINST GOD.

- Even though it *does* harm the people we sin against, ultimately, the issue is that we are *sinning against God*, who gave us these commands – and doing so *results* in harm to people.
- This is why David was able to say:

Against You, You only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in Your sight, ...

Psalms 51:4a (BSB)

 - ✓ It is only because David violated God's commandments against adultery and murder, that he was able to commit the sins that he did. And people suffered because of it.
- Joseph also pointed this out, when Potiphar's wife tried to get him to commit adultery. If he had chosen to yield, it would have been a sin *against God* (Genesis 39:9).
- That's also why we have to confess our sins to God (in addition to confessing to those we sinned against).

WHY THE CHANGE IN WORDS?

OLDER TRANSLATIONS

Thou shalt not kill.

Exodus 20:13 (KJV);
also in Deuteronomy 5:17

MOST MODERN TRANSLATIONS

You shall not murder.

Exodus 20:13 (BSB);
also in Deuteronomy 5:17

- There are several Hebrew words that can be translated as "to kill" (or a similar word); and their meanings sometimes overlap. This specific word [רָצַח (rā-ṣāḥ)] occurs 47 times in 40 verses.
- This word is *never* used in reference to war, self-defense, or judicial punishment (which are all defined and regulated by God).
- This word is used in reference to *premeditated* killing, and also to *accidental* killing – **any killing that God has not authorized, whether intentional or not**. We do not have a word that corresponds exactly to this.

SO HOW SHOULD WE TRANSLATE IT?

- **The problem:** We do not have a word that *exactly* corresponds to the original Hebrew word.
 If people would just read Scripture in their own language, and pay attention to the verses that specifically define what types of killing are permitted (required) and what types of killing are forbidden, they would understand how to interpret this commandment. (We do not need to know the original language to understand this!)
The problem is that most people don't do this.
- **The early translators chose the word "kill,"** because the Hebrew word meant *more than* just "murder." But this word "kill" is *too broad* in definition, and led to confusion among those who started using this commandment to condemn *all* forms of killing (even those that God said were *necessary* – described in passages they ignored).
- **Most modern translators choose the word "murder,"** which is *slightly narrow* in definition, and doesn't remind people about the seriousness of *accidental* killings.

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- **The best alternative?** Considering how many people misuse this commandment, when it's translated as "do not kill," it's probably best to translate it as "do not murder."
 ✓ This will give us *the main intent* of the commandment. And by paying attention to what else Scripture says about killing, it will clarify any issues regarding: ① *unintentional* killing (which we normally call "manslaughter," rather than "murder"), as well as, ② the types of killing that are authorized by God (each in its own specific context).
- **What word do we plan to use here?** We will use either:
 ✓ The phrase "*unauthorized killing*" – which closely represents the intention of the Hebrew word. (This required us to explain the issue, in order to minimize any misunderstanding with the word "unauthorized.")
 ✓ The word "*murder*" – which covers *most* of the intention of the commandment.

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THE VALUE OF KNOWING THAT THE COMMAND PROHIBITS ALL KILLING THAT IS NOT AUTHORIZED OR ALLOWED BY GOD:

- **It clears up a lot of questions related to other passages** we find in Scripture – since there are many passages that describe situations where killing was commanded.
- **It answers many of the modern-day questions we may have,** since *any* unauthorized killing is sin. (This would include suicide, as well as many of the other types of killing that tend to be promoted in our "modern" society – abortion, euthanasia, etc.)
- **It shows us that even *accidental* killing has consequences.** We can't go on in life as though nothing happened. *The other person doesn't stop being dead! People still alive continue to suffer the consequences.*
 ✓ Many accidental killings are *preventable* – such as those caused by carelessness.
 ✓ One of the factors in determining intentional vs. unintentional has to do with the type of interaction the individuals had in previous situations. Was there friendship? Or animosity and hatred?

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WHAT WERE THE CONSEQUENCES OF UNAUTHORIZED KILLING?

(The main passage that deals with this issue is found in Numbers 35, which describes the basic principle.)

- **Determine whether the killing was deliberate or accidental.** Since a killing has occurred, consequences *must* occur. But the type of killing will determine the type of consequences.
 ✓ **If the killing was determined to be intentional,** the consequence would be:
 ✚ The individual was to be put to death.
 ✓ **If the killing was determined to be unintentional** (accidental, not premeditated), and there is no evidence of a hostile relationship between the individuals, there would still be consequences for the one who did it, but not death:
 ✚ The individual would have to live in a designated "city of refuge" *and not leave there*, until the death of the high priest. (If he left the city before that, he could be put to death.)

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If we were to try to apply this *principle* today, we would have to make some adjustments, because we live in a different context. But realistically, no nation that exists today would be willing to consider it. However, we (as individuals) can still learn from this, and can see how serious a matter that even *accidental* killing is, in God's eyes.

- **Why was this penalty necessary for an accidental killing?** It is because bloodshed *pollutes* the land and *requires* a "payment" to remove the polluting effect. This "payment" would be the killer's blood, *even if the killing was accidental*.

Do not pollute the land where you live, for **bloodshed pollutes the land**, and no **atonement** can be made for the land on which the blood is shed, except **by the blood of the one who shed it**.

Numbers 35:33 (BSB)

Do not confuse this type of pollution with the type that involves things like trash and hazardous chemicals. *This is more serious*; for it can bring the judgment of God, which can include environment-related catastrophes!

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- **Why did the person have to stay in the city of refuge until the high priest's death?** Even though the death was accidental, the blood *still* needed atoned for. When the high priest died, it was considered a *substitute* for the blood required for the accidental death. It was an *atonement* for the guilt of the bloodshed.
 ✓ The person might have to remain in the city for many years... or for only a few days – depending on when the high priest died. But this was providentially in God's control, not the people's.
 ✓ This has a parallel to the type of activity the high priest did throughout his life. Every year, he would have to enter the most holy place, in behalf of the people, and by means of animal blood, make an *atonement* – a substitute payment – for the people's sin. In like manner, his own death would be viewed as an *atonement* – a substitute payment – for the shed blood of the slain person.
 ✓ These atonement situations were a picture of what Jesus would one day do on the cross – paying for our sins, by means of his own blood. He was our substitute.

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- **How does bloodshed pollute the land?** This is not our main focus; but we should point out that Scripture often makes a connection between sin and the condition of the environment. God *provisionally* blesses or curses the environment, in relation to the people's conduct. (There may be a time delay, during which the people demonstrate the consistency of their ways.)
- ✓ Modern society rejects just about *any* connection between God, our sin, and the environment. Yet the very existence of damaged environments is because of sin – all the way back to Genesis 3:17-19. And when God destroyed the wicked human race with a global flood, it was the biggest environmental catastrophe *ever*.
- ✓ Bloodshed is not the only reason for environmental judgment. When a society abandons itself to sin of *any* kind (usually *all* kinds), they are essentially pushing God's blessings away from themselves and their environment.
- ✓ There are examples of this throughout the Bible – both warnings ("it *will* happen") and examples ("it *did* happen"). **3 EXAMPLES:** →

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Cursing and lying, murder and stealing, and adultery are rampant; one act of bloodshed follows another.

Therefore **the land mourns, and all who dwell in it will waste away** with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air; even the fish of the sea **disappear**.

Hosea 4:2-3 (BSB)

How long will the land mourn and the grass of every field be withered?

Because of **the evil of its residents, the animals and birds have been swept away,** for the people have said, "He cannot see what our end will be."

Jeremiah 12:4 (BSB)

They act as though God doesn't see what they are doing.

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The word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, **if a country* sins against me by being unfaithful** and I stretch out my hand against it to **cut off its food supply** and send **famine** upon it and **kill its people and their animals, ...**"

"Or if I send **wild beasts** through that country and they leave it **childless** and it becomes **desolate** so that no one can pass through it because of the beasts, ..."

"Or if I send **a plague** into that land and pour out my wrath on it through **bloodshed, killing its people and their animals, ...**"

"How much worse will it be when I send against Jerusalem my four dreadful judgments—**sword and famine and wild beasts and plague—to kill its men and their animals! ... you will know that I have done nothing in it without cause,** declares the Sovereign Lord."

Ezekiel 14:12-13, 15, 17, 19, 21b, 23b (NIV)

The cause was their sin.

* (Any country, not just Israel.)

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- **What about injustice, such as willful killers being declared *not guilty*, or innocent people being declared *guilty*?**

- ✓ In a sinful world, such things may happen. The *final* judgment will straighten things out.
- ✓ Scripture gives instructions for minimizing the problem of false witnesses or witnesses who chose to remain silent. In some situations, such a person might be treated as an *accomplice* to the crime, because of their false testimony or silence.
- ✓ Also, as a safeguard, a person could not be convicted on the basis of only *one* witness.

We have been focusing on the *actual act of murder or bloodshed*. But the *Sixth Commandment, as a category, includes a whole lot more*: "negative" things we are to avoid, "positive" things we must do; external actions, as well as internal attitudes of the heart and mind. This will be our focus next time.

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OUR MISSION: "REALIZE!"

- **Realize that God wrote the Bible for *all* of us,** not just for theologians and Bible scholars!

Though we looked at some technical details regarding the issue at hand, simply reading and studying the Bible will lead us to approximately* the same conclusions, without needing to learn those technical details.

- **Realize the seriousness of "accidents"** – most of which are caused by carelessness. They might not occur *deliberately*, but consequences still occur.

* Any small differences will not have a serious impact on life and godliness.

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Credits

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