

Ten Commandments -- #6 Preserve Human Life

Do not murder. (Exodus 20:13 NLT)

There are many ways that we murder one another. Most of us will not go out and physically assault a person until they die, although under the effects of our addictions many of us have done incredibly harmful things and strayed closer to these kinds of actions than we ever thought we would. However, many of us think and say things that Jesus classifies as murder. Others of us have cut another off emotionally. Some of us have spoken criticism and made sarcastic comments often enough that we are part of the breakdown of a person's spirit. Their dignity and sense of worth and value has been murdered by our attitudes, our words, or our actions. They walk around living and breathing but things are terribly broken inside. Jesus calls that kind of action murder.

. Cursing another, with words that damn them, shouting destructive wishes over people, "I hope you", and gossiping venom to a third party about someone are all ways we commit murder, according to Jesus. Telling someone how stupid they are or what a jerk they are is murder. There are plenty of witchcraft activities around where people are speaking evil onto another. How many of us have participated in the sale of drugs or alcohol or shared the same with others? We've participated in the murder of perhaps not someone's body, but certainly their soul as we helped each other open our lives up to the deadly tactics of Satan.

You have heard that the law of Moses says, Do not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment. But I say, if you are angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the high council. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell. Slam them in such a way that others will stop trusting them (Matthew 5:22 NLT)

There are also so many occasions where we have wished someone dead or wished we could have done something harmful to them or wished that harm came on someone. For some of us we've spent a fair bit of time in our imagination plotting how we'd like to get the person back for what they did. Getting our anger out by beating on a punching bag is helpful to get rid of pent up frustration, but not if we are imagining it as someone else's head. Then it's murder.

My dear brothers and sisters, be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Your anger can never make things right in God's sight. (James 1:19-20 NLT)

For many of us, our first justification for our angry words or spiteful thoughts about another is "If you only knew what they did to me." "Do you know how much they hurt me?" Sometimes it's not even the actions of the person that sparks the anger and murder in our hearts and thoughts, it's the underlying pain of the murderous attacks of others in our lives over the years. It may have begun with an abusive parent, callous school children with their cutting remarks, or even our own thoughts of self-hatred and disgust.

God's command to us is "Do not murder" and we live in a world that is filled with "assault with intent" no matter how we try to hide it and disguise it. God wants us to know the

tactics of the devil whose only purpose in our lives is to steal, kill, and destroy. That's His plan for my life, your life, the lives of your loved ones, and the lives of your enemies. **The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.** (John 10:10 NLT) The devil will use anyone He can to try to kill us and he will do his best to get us to kill as many others as we can - immobilize them so they cannot be effective people sharing God's kindness and grace.

How do we deal with the anger and the hurt and the bitterness we hold against others and spew out on occasion? We need to find out if there is anything we have done to offend another person. We can't

evaluate our intentions nor avoid responsibility because we feel our part of the problem is smaller than the other person's responsibility. **So if you are standing before the altar in the Temple, offering a sacrifice to God, and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there beside the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.** (Matthew 5:23, 24 NLT)

Pray for the happiness of those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. Do for others as you would like them to do for you. (Luke 6:28,31 NLT)

God not only asks us to seek forgiveness through humility but He also commands us to bless and work for the good of the person. Whenever we do not do that, we are living in murder. If there is anyone we refuse to forgive, God holds us responsible for the sin of murder. It is God's plan that we deal with our anger, clean up our side of the street, regardless of the other person's actions. May the God of all life help us to honour and preserve all life.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. How am I living in murder?
2. What changes will I make this week to honour and preserve all life?

Other Forms of Murder To Avoid
Suicide, euthanasia, and abortion are three forms of murder that we need to avoid even though society give increasing authorization to them.

Thankfully, there is complete forgiveness for those of us who have attempted or participated in these actions.