



The Fifth Commandment

by Pastor Glenn Huebel

You shall not murder.

The wisdom of putting a fence of protection around human life is pretty obvious. We can't solve our problems by just knocking off people who get in our way but wait- that's exactly how the human race has been trying to solve its problems since the fall of Adam! It didn't take long for sin to flower in all its horror and ugliness. The first murder is recorded in Genesis 4. By Genesis 6 "the earth was filled with violence" and deemed so incorrigible by God that He was forced to destroy it by a flood and begin anew. After the judgment, God

recognized that the heart of man had not changed (Gen 8:21 – compare with Gen 6:5). Obviously, the evil heart of man would have to be severely curbed. God Himself established the principle of capital punishment to deter murder (Gen 9:6). He also established the principle of government to restrain wickedness and violence (Rom 13:1-7). Note that God places "the sword" in the hand of the government in order to punish and restrain evil. The sword would include the just use of both capital punishment and warfare. Those who claim that any exercise of the sword by government is contrary to the fifth commandment are ignorant of Scripture and have simply not thought through the dilemma we face in dealing with the beast of original sin. Without severe restraint, original sin will always fill the world with violence and consume pacifists along with everyone else. The Hitlers, Stalins,

Maos, and Pol Pots of the world will not be deterred by pacifists from killing millions. Because life is sacred, it must be protected even by the most extreme penalties. Those who serve as soldiers, weapons-makers, policemen, judges, etc. are doing a good and noble task when defending the innocent by the sword of justice. This may be a paradox, but it is not a contradiction.

The problem comes when government exceeds its God-given bounds by using its power to defend, sustain and support injustice, such as the intentional shedding of innocent blood. There is a vast difference between putting to death a person who has committed a heinous crime, or killing a brutal terrorist leader by a drone or SEAL team, and killing an unborn child through abortion or euthanizing a terminal patient. The reason God gives the sword to government is to protect innocent people, not those who want to shed innocent blood. Using the immense power of government and the courts to defend and protect the shedding of innocent blood is calling evil, good

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Rembrandt, *Moses With the Ten Commandments*. 1659. Oil on canvas, 168.5 cm x 136.5 cm. Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

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That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name. —John 20:31

and good, evil. We see from the murder of Abel that innocent blood cries to heaven for vengeance (Gen 4:10, Prov 6:17). This should certainly expose the silly “personally opposed” argument of many Christians: “Personally, I would not dare shed innocent blood, but I believe the government should defend those who want to do that.” That argument can be reduced to the absurd in so many ways I thought it had disappeared from the public square- until I saw the Vice-Presidential debate. Really?

One way that we justify the shedding of innocent blood is to “dehumanize” the people we would like to get rid of. Mistreatment of blacks in the South (and even in the North) was justified just this way in the 19th century. Blacks were considered less than human, or at least inferior to whites, during the slavery years in America, and for a long time thereafter. This argument dulls the conscience in the abortion issue as well. The problem for Christians who try to defend abortion is that God doesn’t allow us to play word games with the “fetus.” God calls it what is really is, a “baby” (Luke 1:44). Christ assumed a human nature at conception (Luke 1:31), not birth.

A Christian needs to be clear thinking in regard to social and government policy as it relates to the ten commandments, but the fifth commandment applies to our personal life as well. This is the commandment almost everyone believes he has kept, but Jesus corrects that error in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Jesus shows us that murder begins in the heart with anger. We might add envy and covetousness to the list of motivations for murder. James lumps all these and others into the

word “passions” or “lusts” of the flesh. These cause all quarrels, fights and murders among us (James 4:1-2). The primary cause of murder is not guns, knives, poison or any other weapon, but the sinful heart. God did not try to restrain Cain through weapon control, but through the admonition to self control.

Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.’ (Gen 4:5-6)

Jesus also warns us to deal with anger in our own hearts, and in the hearts of those we may have stirred to anger (Matt 5:21-26). We must not allow it to fester in our hearts or in our relationships. We must IMMEDIATELY deal with it when we see it arise (Matt 5:23-26) because anger, like cancer, grows quickly and is best restrained in the early stages. Once anger takes root in the heart it becomes monstrous and almost impossible to appease. It not only leads to individual murders, but, as we can see in the history of the Middle-East, to intractable wars and continual violence and hatred between nations.

The proliferation of road rage, domestic violence, gangs, violence in schools, mass murders, and anger-management classes indicates that the general level of anger in our nation is rising quickly. Trying to solve the problem of raging violence without even addressing the issue of uncontrollable anger is futile. There is no more thorough program of weapon control anywhere than in our prisons, where not even the guards are allowed to carry weapons inside the facility. Does this prevent

violence and murder in that community? Of course not. Anger always finds a way to kill. That’s why God called Cain - and us - to take hold of anger when it crouches at our door that we may rule over it.

Christians have a great advantage in putting this admonition into practice, since we have a new nature created in baptism. Knowing the great danger posed by anger, we can put off the old man by the renewal of the mind in Christ (Eph 4:22). We can refuse to let the sun go down on our anger so that we give no opportunity to the devil (Eph 4:26-27). We can put away bitterness, wrath, and anger and put on kindness, tender-heartedness, and forgiveness in Christ (Eph 4:32). St Paul teaches us to overcome evil by doing good to our enemy and persecutor (Rom 12:19-21). He is simply following the teaching of Jesus who bids us to turn the other cheek, go the extra mile, and pray for those who persecute us (Matt 5:38-48).

When we teach our children how to respond to evil and injustice in this way, we teach them how to transform energy that destroys into energy that heals and builds. We are teaching them to regard human life as sacred even when it shows its ugly face. Jesus did this for us because He valued our life even when we were His enemies.

This commandment teaches us not only self control, but to be cautious about generating anger in others. I am not suggesting that the way to deal with anger is appeasement, because that doesn’t work, nor am I suggesting that it is always possible to avoid angering some people. I am well aware that many angry people will FIND things

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to be angry about because they are addicted to anger. But I am also convinced that some people get a rush out of making other people angry. It must be a symptom of the corrupt human nature because children do it so well to their parents and their siblings. God also warns fathers against doing it to their children (Eph 6:4) so this is not just a one way street. Sometimes we may not intend to anger another person, but we really don't care if it happens. Sometimes we contribute to the problem. We don't feel especially responsible for our own language or behavior that stirs up wrath in volatile relationships. This is why anger escalates so quickly today. People are always getting hurt or killed over arguments about silly things. We all know by nature how to escalate a conflict, but few know how, or even try, to de-escalate a conflict.

Angry people are many and peacemakers are few. Since true and honorable peace fosters life and health, those who believe human life is sacred will desire and work for peace. Jesus blesses the peacemakers (Matt 5:9) and calls them "sons of God" because they reflect the Prince of Peace who reconciled us to God. If anger is a sin and I participate in stirring it up in my fellow man, am I not leading him or her into sin? And does not the "woe" proclaimed in Matthew 18:7 apply to me? Sometimes an honorable peace is impossible to attain (Ps 120:7), and we should never compromise or give up our confession of truth to obtain it. But we should always strive to be peacemakers in our homes, our churches, our neighborhoods, our cities, our nation and the world. St Paul writes, "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all" (Rom 12:19).

Here are some ways we can help our children to become peacemakers and supporters of life.

1. Bring them up at the feet of Jesus, the Prince of Peace and the Lord of Life. Faith in Christ renews the mind and turns us from violence and death to life and peace (Rom 8:6).
2. Speak of unborn children in the womb as "babies" because that is what they are. There are many fine and beautiful books in our

library that show how fearfully and wonderfully the work of God progresses a baby develops in the womb. You don't need to talk about abortion at all if you do this.

3. Teach them self-control, especially in regard to anger (Prov 16:32; Prov 19:11).
4. Teach them how to de-escalate conflict when confronted with an angry person (Prov 15:1,5; Prov 20:3; Prov 29:8)

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Messiah Lutheran Classical Academy

1308 Whitley Road, Keller, TX 76248

www.mlcatexas.org 817-431-5486



KINDERGARTEN ROUND-UP

Tuesday, February 12 & Wednesday, February 13
9:00 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.



The mission of MLCA is to mold and shape the minds and spirits of all students to become what God has created them in Christ to be.



Messiah Lutheran Church & School

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

1308 Whitley Rd. Keller, TX 76248

Church Office: (817) 431-2345

Early Childhood Center: (817) 431-6139

Classical Academy (K-8): (817) 431-5486

Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Sunday School & Adult Bible Class: 9:30 a.m.

Rev. Glenn Huebel, Senior Pastor

Rev. Dennis Kitzmann, Assistant Pastor

Mrs. Ellen Malzahn, Principal, Academy

Mrs. Alison Smith, Principal, Early Childhood Center

Mrs. Vicki Main, Kantor

Mr. Joseph Sustrik, Financial Director

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5. Show them the danger of mob mentality. Anger is very contagious. Beware of the influence of angry friends or role models. (School groups, Music, TV shows, etc.) (Prov 22:24; Prov 3:31; Prov 13:20; Prov 14:16; Prov 16:29)
6. Model these behaviors for them. If they hear you swearing at the slowly moving car ahead of you, yelling or snapping at your spouse or neighbors, speaking in a vengeful way about co-workers or fellow church members, or angrily throwing things around when you are frustrated because they are not working correctly, your children will follow suit.
7. Model compassion, kindness, and charity before your children. Give them opportunities to meet and help the poor, the needy, and the afflicted

(soup kitchens, community storehouse, nursing homes) so that they might experience the joy of helping others. (Prov 19:19; Prov 21:13)

There was a time, not so long ago, when the value of human life was understood by the whole community. That is no longer the case. Parents today have to specifically teach what our parents probably considered to be just plain ol' common sense. It is a sad commentary on our culture, but it is a glorious opportunity and privilege. May the Lord bless your labors of love.

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Huebel

Messiah's Braille Center by Pamela Buhler



Did you know our Braille center has printed over 35,000 pages since we've opened? Glory be to God!

Messiah Braille Center #132 is an ongoing mission project held at Messiah Lutheran Church in Keller, TX. Lutheran Braille Workers print bibles in over 30 different languages. At Center #132, we print two books of the bible: Hebrews-Jude in English (a Children's Bible) and Esther-Job in Latvian. Our Center usually receives an order for about 30 books a month.

How are our Braille Bibles made? Our volunteers print Braille by placing paper between two zinc plates and embossing them through an electronic roller press. We bind them and ship them to individuals and Braille

schools in over 120 countries free of charge.

All 200 Braille Centers in the USA function on volunteers and donations. Our volunteers usually print for a two hour shift once a month. Would you like to help bring Christ to those in darkness? Center #132 could use your help!

Laralynn Conaway leads an open session on the second Tuesday of every month from 6:30-8:30pm. Everyone is invited to come.

Pastor Kitzmann leads an adult session on the third Thursday of every month after his bible study.

Messiah's Senior Youth Group has a session on the second Sunday of every month. See Mark Boyd for information.

If you would like to start your own session, please contact Buckley & Pamela Buhler at pbbuhler@gmail.com. Your group may meet whenever you like and as often as you wish. A group should have around 5-10 volunteers. Children from 3rd grade and up are great workers!

Are you a family of 5? You could lead your own family session. Printing Braille is a wonderful way for your school group, scout group, or study group to serve.

Would you consider serving the Lord this month?