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The Fifth Commandment— Respecting Human Life

THOU SHALT NOT KILL

Down through the ages murder has always been regarded as the most heinous of crimes. Part of its horror is that it can't be undone. Neither catching the criminal, punishing the guilty, nor collecting insurance payment can change the fact that the victim is dead.

But the evil of murder does not start with the taking of another's life. Jesus tells us, "Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander" (Matthew 15:19). Murder starts in the heart, from not putting God first in your life. It starts by not trusting Him for forgiveness, love, care, and material blessings.

EXPLORING THE CAUSE

The police look for "motive" and "probable cause" in a murder. God tells us much more.

1. Let's examine four murders God told about in the Bible. The cause of each of these murders came "from the heart."

Place one of the following words in the blank after each story to identify the evil thought that caused it.

Guilt Jealousy Greed Revenge

a. Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21:1-16)

b. Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-10)

c. David and Bethsheba (2 Samuel 11:2-26)

d. Moses and the Egyptian Soldier (Exodus 2:11-12)

2. David and Jezebel themselves did not actually kill anyone in these stories. Why were they guilty of murder?

3. Some people say, "This is my body. I can do with it as I please—even end my life if I want to." God does not see it that way.

a. Read Deuteronomy 32:39 and 1 Corinthians 6:19. According to these statements from God, why is suicide forbidden?

b. How would you help a friend who talks about committing suicide?

4. A teenage friend discovers she is pregnant. She is afraid to tell her parents. Someone suggests an abortion. You know that abortion is murder. You also want to help your friend. What do you say to her?

The Fifth Commandment

You shall not murder.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.

5. You are having a discussion about persons who are in comas or otherwise unable to care for themselves. A classmate argues that putting such persons to sleep is the humane thing to do. How would you respond?

THE LIFE-CHANGING, LIFE-SAVING POWER OF THE GOSPEL

When God took upon Himself the body and life of a human, He showed that He held the quality of human life in high regard, that He was concerned enough to die for it. Now, by faith, God's children live their lives for Him. Writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the apostle Paul explains, "For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

God desires that we not hurt or harm someone in *any* way; it is His will that we treat each other with respect and care. Consider each of the following situations. Tell how, as the Holy Spirit works in your forgiven heart, you might show your love for God with regard to the Fifth Commandment, replacing feelings of greed, jealousy, guilt, and revenge with those of gratitude to God for His goodness to you in Christ Jesus.

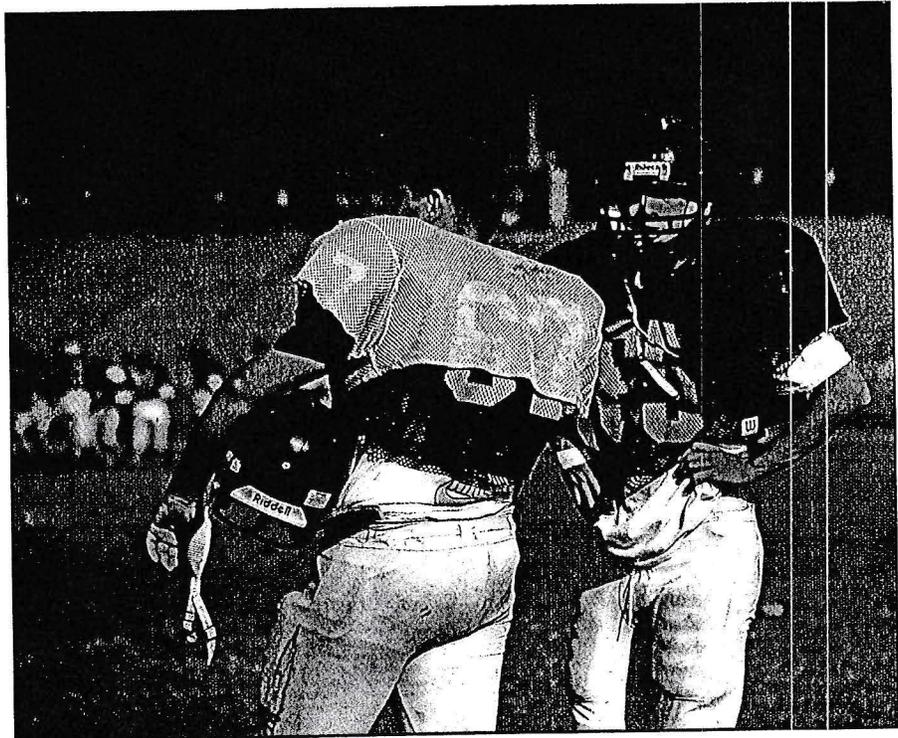
1. Your football team is in the championship game. You could win first place if it weren't for the other quarterback. He could win the game for them singlehandedly. Your coach says, "He needs to be roughed up. He needs to be hurt. Our only chance is to get him out of there."

You're a lineman. You could win that game if you rough up that quarterback—hurt him. You are also a follower of Jesus. You know love of God doesn't stop on the football field. How will you play the game? You might look at Matthew 5:7-10.

2. Your kid brother has caused you trouble for years. He teases constantly; he embarrasses you in front of friends; he's utterly selfish. You've tried to be kind, but now your hurt is turning to hate. You can't stand him any more. You

don't want to be around him. Yet, you are a Christian. What is the answer? You might want to look at 1 John 4:19-20.

3. Tony has been your friend for a long time. He comes to church with you often, but his family has never been interested in religion. Sometimes they make fun of Tony for being religious. Many of Tony's friends use drugs. So far, Tony hasn't joined them, but today he told you he's going to try it. "It can't be so wrong," he says. "Half our class has tried it, right?" He's looking to you for a comment. What will you tell him? You might want to look at 2 Corinthians 7:1.



4. You've studied and worked hard. It wasn't easy, but you made the honor roll. Lisa, long jealous of you, told the teacher she saw you cheating on a test. The teacher doesn't change your grades, but her attitude toward you changes. She obviously believed Lisa, and you are hurt and angry. Your mom has been helping you plan a party for your friends. Lisa has always been a part of the crowd to which you belong and you are inviting all the others. What will you do about Lisa? You might want to look at Matthew 5:9-12.

5. Your friends are waiting for you. They're all going over to Susan's new house on the other side of town. Maria's dad is driving. It will be a fun party. Suddenly you remember that no one else is home but your grandmother who is staying with you now. She often needs help and doesn't like to be alone. You don't have to stay home, but you know how much it would be appreciated. It's your decision. What will you do? You might want to look at James 2:14-17.

TO REVIEW AND REMEMBER

Matthew 25:40: I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.

1 John 4:19-21: We love because He first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And He has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

The Fifth Commandment and its explanation.

