

## **Preserving and Honoring Life: Obeying the Sixth Commandment**

Moms, Tots, and Beyond: Knox Evangelical Presbyterian Church

March 2, 2017

<sup>11</sup>For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. <sup>12</sup>Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. <sup>13</sup>Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. <sup>14</sup>We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. <sup>15</sup>Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

<sup>16</sup>This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup>If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? <sup>18</sup>Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

—I John 3: 11-18

---

### **Bible Study: The Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 35-37)**

- 1) What forms of murder occur in the story of the Good Samaritan?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) How, specifically, does the Good Samaritan honor and preserve the life of the victimized Jew? What forms of care are involved?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) What kinds of help do you tend to offer to people in need most readily, and under what circumstances? In what cases are you less likely to speak or act in ways that preserve life? In what ways can you identify with the behaviors of the priest and Levite?

## **Further Thoughts**

Because he [the Samaritan] is an outsider, he ran the risk of the wounded man's family seeking him out for vengeance when he took him to an inn. One scholar [Kenneth Bailey] said this about the risk the Samaritan took: 'An American cultural equivalent would be a Plains Indian in 1875 walking into Dodge City with a scalped cowboy on his horse, checking into a room over the local saloon, and staying the night to take care of him" (qtd. in Paul Miller, *Love Walked Among Us*, 34).

## **Living It Out: Reflection, Confession, Application**

### Honoring the Lives of Groups of People

- Consider vulnerable groups of people, such as the disabled, the elderly, the unborn, the poor, immigrants, refugees, or prisoners. In what ways has your heart subtly accepted our society's messages that these people's lives are less valuable? Ask God to help you imagine how you could take a step toward pursuing life for that specific group.
- Perhaps you have found murderous impulses in your heart toward people who are different from you, such as members of another race, culture, political party, or ideological group. Ask God to show you what is behind your feelings of contempt, and confess your sin.
- How have you seen your anger or disdain intensify toward a group of people when matters of sin or Biblical truth are involved? Remember that Jesus comes to rescue sinners, which includes all of us—and that even as He came to defeat Satan, whom the Bible calls a murderer, He died to redeem the very people who murdered Him.

### Honoring the Lives of Individuals

- Think of someone whom you struggle to love. Ask the Lord to help you see this person as fully human, in need of His mercy just as much as you are. Invite Him to reveal a way that you could honor and respect the life of this person. Ask Him to give you the strength and love to take that step.
- Is a loved one engaged in behavior that is harming his/her own life? Consider that God may be calling you to honor life by lovingly confronting that person about such self-abuse.

### Honoring Your Own Life

- In what ways do you care for your own physical health? How could you grow in honoring your body as a temple of the Holy Spirit?
- In what ways do you care for your own psychological and spiritual health? Are there relationships where you have allowed someone to abuse or harm you? Note: Upholding

another person's dignity may mean refusing to allow him/her to dishonor your own personhood.

## **Some Bible Verses About Preserving and Honoring Others' Lives**

### **Exodus 23:4-5 (We should protect the property of those who hate us.)**

<sup>4</sup>If you come across your enemy's ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to return it. <sup>5</sup>If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; be sure you help them with it.

### **Leviticus 19:32-34 (Respect the elderly. Treat foreigners with love.)**

<sup>32</sup>Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD.

<sup>33</sup>When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. <sup>34</sup>The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

### **Psalms 139:13 (The Bible indicates that personhood begins in utero.)**

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

### **John 9:1-3 (Recognize that people with disabilities bring Him glory.)**

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him."

### **Revelation 7:9 (People of all nations will be in heaven, so let's honor them now!)**

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

### *Verses to Direct All of Our Relationships*

#### **Romans 12:10**

<sup>10</sup>Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

#### **Galatians 6:9-10**

<sup>9</sup>Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. <sup>10</sup>Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

#### **Ephesians 4:31-32**

<sup>31</sup>Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. <sup>32</sup>Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

#### **James 1:19-20**

<sup>19</sup>My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, <sup>20</sup>because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

### **From the Heidelberg Catechism**

Q&A 105

**Q. What is God's will for you in the sixth commandment?**

A. I am not to belittle, hate, insult, or kill my neighbor—not by my thoughts, my words, my look or gesture, and certainly not by actual deeds—and I am not to be party to this in others;<sup>1</sup> rather, I am to put away all desire for revenge.<sup>2</sup>

I am not to harm or recklessly endanger myself either.<sup>3</sup>

Prevention of murder is also why government is armed with the sword.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 9:6; Lev. 19:17-18; Matt. 5:21-22; 26:52

<sup>2</sup> Prov. 25:21-22; Matt. 18:35; Rom. 12:19; Eph. 4:26

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 4:7; 26:52; Rom. 13:11-14

<sup>4</sup> Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:14; Rom. 13:4

Q&A 106

**Q. Does this commandment refer only to murder?**

A. By forbidding murder God teaches us that he hates the root of murder: envy, hatred, anger, vindictiveness.<sup>1</sup>

In God's sight all such are disguised forms of murder.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Prov. 14:30; Rom. 1:29; 12:19; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 John 2:9-11

<sup>2</sup> 1 John 3:15

Q&A 107

**Q. Is it enough then that we do not murder our neighbor in any such way?**

A. No. By condemning envy, hatred, and anger God wants us to love our neighbors as ourselves,<sup>1</sup> to be patient, peace-loving, gentle, merciful, and friendly toward them,<sup>2</sup> to protect them from harm as much as we can, and to do good even to our enemies.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 7:12; 22:39; Rom. 12:10

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 5:3-12; Luke 6:36; Rom. 12:10, 18; Gal. 6:1-2; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12; 1 Pet. 3:8

<sup>3</sup> Ex. 23:4-5; Matt. 5:44-45; Rom. 12:20-21 (Prov. 25:21-22)