

Making Life Make Sense **(Transformed by the 10 Commandments)**

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. **1John 5:2**

Session 6:

“You shall not murder.” **Exodus 20:13**

The Commandment of Respect for Human Life

Indifference would be a great word to use to begin this conversation about respecting human life. The word conveys the idea of a lack of concern, sympathy or interest. Human life is not always viewed the way God sees it, precious. Differences are settled today without regard for person. Criminals steal not only possessions but victim’s lives. Unwanted pregnancy is an inconvenience and not a life. This is a contrast to a Creator who values life not only for the present but eternal. God gave commandments as a bedrock for a civil society. The question is often asked; does the Creator know best or do we?

- Few people really need to be convinced that murder is wrong.
- God is not pleased with the death of anyone, yet God is a just God his preference is to be merciful.
- When the woman was caught in adultery and brought to Jesus although it was law he did not condemn her to death. He offered mercy and told her to sin no more lest she fall under the judgment to come.

Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel? **Ezekiel 33:11**

Engage:

What do you believe is the difference between judgment and mercy?

Engage:

We must believe God is always just, however, how do we see God’s justice with regard to Pharaoh in Romans 9:17-18?

Capitol Punishment:

There’s several camps of opinion in the Body of Christ regarding capitol punishment. God’s law permits constituted government authorities to impose capitol punishment when the state abides by God’s principles this action does not violate the 6th Commandment. By giving us his laws, God has revealed his judgment on this matter. God has revealed in advance which offences deserve the sentence of death and He has established strict parameters for such decisions.

¹ Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

Romans 13: 1-4

- The apostle Paul reaffirms the state’s authority to inflict capital punishment.

“Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.
Genesis 9:6

This Old Testament passage seems to reaffirm God’s position on the taking of another life and what should occur after that life is taken.

Engage:

Before we move deeper into this discussion, what are your opinions on capital punishment, do we have the right to take another life?

This subject demands a deeper look into the scriptures to reach a better understanding. The Old Testament did not simply state the “whether” of capital punishment but also the “how.” For example, **Deuteronomy 17** required the condemning witnesses to throw the first stones. This is impossible today, because stoning is not a current method of execution. However, the principle is that witnesses were held *responsible* for the consequences of their testimony, encouraging truthfulness.

Principles from the Mosaic Law

PROPORTIONALITY: **Exodus 21:23-25** establishes that punishment must be proportional to the offense. The extreme sanction of death should be considered only in the most serious offenses.

CERTAINTY OF GUILT: Before a murderer could be executed, two witnesses had to confirm his guilt (**Deut. 17:6-7**). This was a very high standard of proof. The Bible says nothing of circumstantial evidence.

INTENT: **Numbers 35:22- 24** established that capital punishment could not be imposed when the offender did not act intentionally.

DUE PROCESS: Several provisions of the Law ensured that executions took place only after appropriate judicial procedures (**see Num. 35; Deut. 17**). The issue was not simply whether the accused was guilty, but whether he also had a fair chance to prove his innocence.

RELUCTANCE TO EXECUTE: Although the Law may sound bloodthirsty, it was applied with great restraint. In **Ezekiel 33:11** God laments, “As sure as I live . . . I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live.” The Lawgiver Himself was reluctant to impose the death penalty, preferring that the wrongdoers repent. Reluctance is **not** refusal. But it does imply that execution should be a last resort, and, as **Ezekiel 33** suggests, repentance or contrition could commute the death sentence.

Engage:

What is the common thread throughout these principles?

“Because man is made in the image of God.” In other words, the Bible says that human life is so sacred, so precious, so holy—human life has so much dignity—that if with malice of forethought you wantonly destroy another human being, you thereby forfeit your own right to life. God doesn’t merely allow the execution of murderers; he commands it. **R.C. Sproul**

The Spirit of the Law:

²¹“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ ²²But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to

judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell-of fire. ***Matthew 5:21-22***

- Jesus came not to abolish but fulfill the law and he gave an understanding of the spirit behind the law.
- Jesus amplified the meaning of murder by pointing to its place of origin, the heart; this is where the sin begins where it begins is the place where the law is broken because the law was spiritual.
- The spirit of murder can live in the heart and Jesus points to the consequences being equally as severe as the physical act.

Engage:

Suicide or self-murder, how do you believe God sees this regarding a Christian?