

Exodus 20:13 – The sixth commandment: You shall not kill

God has a law. It is a law for all people, in all places, at all times. It is the standard he will judge us by. It is known; we can test ourselves by it. We can study the commandments and learn if we have broken them. It measures us. When it finds us guilty, it leaves us only two places to go: to hell for eternal judgment, or to Jesus Christ for salvation. Which will you go to?

1. God alone is the Lord of life

Why has God given this command? The root of the command is that *God alone is the Lord of life*. He alone gives it, and he alone has the right to take it away. He chose the place and time of our birth; he chose our nation, tribe and family. He is God! With the animals, he gives us permission to end their lives; to kill a diseased animal, or to eat one; but with men, he gives us no right to decide ourselves. He alone can say when a man should die. The command is about bowing to God: he is God! Are you glad and do you rejoice that he is God?

2. God looks at the heart

This command is about more than killing. If someone beats you to within an inch of your life, is he innocent because he did not kill you? Of course not. Are hatred, rage and bitterness sins? Of course they are. God's laws go down into our hearts (Leviticus 19:18, Deuteronomy 6:5). God made the inside and the outside. Hatred and malice are the roots, and murder is the final fruit: but God has forbidden both. Jesus explained this command in Matthew 5:21-24. Is there someone who you cannot speak kindly about, or who you are happy to see falling down? That is hatred; "whoever hates his brother is a murderer" (1 John 3:15).

3. What God requires from us

God is the Lord of life. Nothing must be done to take away his rights. We must not shorten any life – by murder, by suicide, by euthanasia (killing the old when their lives become difficult), by abortion (killing babies inside their mothers). Going further, we must not hate any person, desire bad to them, speak badly about them to hurt them, or fail to protect them from damage. We must instead aim for their good – to their lives, their homes and reputations. For example, the Bible forbids bitterness (refusing to forgive an offence), gossip (speaking unkind words when a person is not present), and failing to care for the weak and needy (who rely on our help). These all break the sixth commandment.

4. We need a new heart

Have you obeyed? Do you hate gossip, love your enemies, protect the weak or do you think mostly of yourself? The truth is, we need a new heart that is a heart of love. Jesus had this heart. On the cross he prayed, "Father, forgive them". He died for the sins of others. He loved – even to death. He is risen and offers us new life. Have you received it? Come to him by faith today and live!