



The sixth commandment says, “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:14). The Hebrew language has several different words for “to kill.” The one used in this commandment has to do with violent, unlawful killing, and is therefore translated “murder.”

This addresses very serious questions of our day. Couldn't it be said that all killing is murder? Is capital punishment murder? What about war? Self defense? And there are major social issues to consider such as abortion, euthanasia, and suicide.

This commandment addresses what may be considered the most basic of all human rights and responsibilities. Life is a gift from God. Who can take that right away? Furthermore, the sanctity of human life provides the incentive and responsibility for us to defend those who are helpless to defend themselves. Let us consider what makes killing wrong and how that applies to us today.

1. What is it about killing another that makes it wrong? (Psalm 139:13-16)
2. What was God's standard in the Old Testament concerning murder? (Exodus 21:12-14)
3. What was the justification for capital punishment? (Genesis 9:5-6)  
Is there justification today? See John 8:1-11 and Romans 13:1-5)
4. What is the relationship of this commandment to war? Just war? (Ecclesiastes 3:8)
5. What is the relationship of this commandment to abortion? Euthanasia? Suicide?
6. Jesus extends this command to a challenging and personal level. How does it relate to murder? (Matthew 5:21-22). How important is this in our relationships today? (5:23-24)

*“The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” ...and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”  
**Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.**”  
(Romans 13:9-10)*