

Deuteronomy 5:17
The Ten Commandments
TC1007

Commandment #6
July 18, 2010 pm

“THE GIVER OF LIFE”

INTRODUCTION: Deuteronomy 5:17 is one of the shortest verses in all of Scripture...

1. Two words in Hebrew, four words in English: “*You shall not murder (kill).*”
 - a. The Hebrew word *ratsach*: to kill, to murder, to slay, to slaughter, to put to death; manslaying.
 - b. Related to *retsach*: to shatter, to slaughter (i.e., to put to death in a violent way).
2. **Eugene H. Merrill:** *Deuteronomy: NAC; p. 154.*

*Though there is no technical term in Hebrew for premeditated homicide, the translation of the verb *rāṣâ* as “murder” in the sixth commandment is most accurate. Usage elsewhere as well as overall theological context makes a clear distinction between the prohibition here and the endorsement otherwise of capital punishment, killing in warfare, and the like. Because life is sacred in God’s eyes, and that of humankind especially in that they are the image of God, the violation of a person to the point of death is an affront to the sovereignty of God, an assault upon his earthly representative.*
3. This short command must have been given “much press”, especially in more modern times. I say this because of the ethical issues surrounding the *sanctity of life* raised in America in the last 35 years...
 - a. Issue of Just War (*Vietnam and War in Iraq*)
 - b. Sanctity of Life (*abortion, birth control, infanticide and Euthanasia, etc.*)
 - c. Racism and Oppression (*civil rights movement*)
 - d. Resurgence of violent crime (*urbanization*)
 - e. Questions about self-defense (*gun control, etc.*)
4. In my way of thinking, this little commandment is easy to understand, unpopular in its principles, and much opposed in its application.
5. I believe **J. C. McConville** hits the nail on its simple head in his commentary on Deuteronomy (*Apollos OTC; p. 129*)
 - a. *The elaborated commands in the first part of the Decalogue now give way to a series of short prohibitions (17-21), joined, as we noted, by ‘and’, thus conveying a sense of coherent consequentiality, and building up a total picture of the standards to be observed in the covenant community.*
 - b. Law concerning man’s most sacred gift: *Life*
You shall not murder. (Deuteronomy 5:17)
 - c. Law concerning mankind’s most sacred relationship and institution: *marriage*
And you shall not commit adultery. (Deuteronomy 5:18)
 - d. Law concerning the sacredness of man’s possessions: *theft*
And you shall not steal. (Deuteronomy 5:19)

- e. Law concerning the sacredness of both reputation and truth: *false witness*
And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. (Deuteronomy 5:20)
 - f. Law concerning the sacredness of man's gifts from God: *wife, family, home and possessions*
'And you shall not covet your neighbor's wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.' (Deuteronomy 5:21)
 - g. **Eugene H. Merrill:** *Deuteronomy NAC; pp. 155-156.*
The tenth commandment differs greatly from the other nine in that it has to do with an inner disposition more than with an outward act. That is, it has to do with the desires and not the practical steps to satisfy those desires. What is less frequently observed is that this is in line with the progression of violence or disruption in a descending spiral from the shedding of blood to the ruin of personal reputation. What has been manifest empirically in acts and words is now hidden in thoughts and cravings. Also of interest is the fact that this last commandment appears to be a summary of at least the previous three.
 - h. *What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.* (James 4:1-3)
6. I see in these last six commandments, a **parallelism of sanctity** to those of the first four commandments.
- a. First table of the law: *God is sacred*
 - b. Second table of the law: *Man made in God's image is sacred as well.*
 - c. The Sacred Authority of God and Parents (superiors)
 - i. *I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.* (Deuteronomy 5:6)
 - ii. *Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.* (Deuteronomy 5:16)
 - iii. God owns us; parents own us (authority)
 - d. The Uniqueness of God and the Image of God
 - i. *You shall have no other gods before me.* (Deuteronomy 5:7)
 - ii. *You shall not murder.* (Deuteronomy 5:17)
 - iii. Cannot dispose of God or human life
 - e. The Loyalty we owe to God, spouse and family
 - i. *You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation*

of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. (Deuteronomy 5:8-10)

- ii. *And you shall not commit adultery. (Deuteronomy 5:18)*
 - iii. Idolatry is referred to as “spiritual adultery” in the Old Testament. God and your spouse will brook no rivals.
- f. The Holiness of God’s name and the human reputation
- i. *You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. (Deuteronomy 5:11)*
 - ii. *And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. (Deuteronomy 5:20)*
 - iii. God’s name and others’ names are not to be taken in vain. We owe both to God and to men the truth.
- g. The Sacred things that Belong to God and to others
- i. *Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. (Deuteronomy 5:12-15)*
 - ii. *And you shall not steal. (Deuteronomy 5:19)*
And you shall not covet your neighbor's wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's. (Deuteronomy 5:21)
 - iii. The Lord's Day belongs to God and must not be stolen by you for your use.
 - iv. Your neighbor’s wife, family and possessions belong to him and must not be taken by you for your use.
- h. *A descending order of sacred things in commandments #5-10.*
7. **All of life is sacred; both our life with God and our lives with others.**
8. When people become more and more *godless*, they then become more and more *lawless*, and this means they will become more and more *loveless (cruel)*.
9. *Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:9-14)*

10. It should not surprise us, then, that in our postmodern, post-Christian and libertarian (lawless) age of spiritual, moral and cultural *anarchy*, we see the value of human life once again depreciated.
11. So let's look at commandment #6: "*You shall not murder.*" (Deuteronomy 5:17)

I. GOD IS THE AUTHOR OF LIFE

1. Why is human life so sacred? Because men and women are made in the *image of God* and receive their *life* from God Himself.
 - a. *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis 1:26-28)
 - b. *...then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.* (Genesis 2:7-8)
 - c. Human life *belongs* to God: No one can give life except God and no one can take life except God.
 - d. *While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you."*

Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong. (Job 1:18-22)
2. God may well delegate certain authorities with the "power of the sword" to take life in punishment for murder or in defense in war...
 - a. i.e., the state: government, courts, police and military.
 - b. *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. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 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, 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)

- c. Few Christians deny the authority of the state to execute criminals and wage war – both deliberate actions intent on killing people.
 - d. The sanctity (protection) of life necessitates such.
3. God surrounds the sanctity of life with clear warnings, prohibitions, statutes and accountability to the state:
- a. *And the Lord said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth." Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." Then the Lord said to him, "Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. (Genesis 4:10-15)*
 - b. *And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man.*

*"Whoever sheds the blood of man,
by man shall his blood be shed,
for God made man in his own image. (Genesis 9:5-6)*
 - c. *"Whoever strikes a man so that he dies shall be put to death. But if he did not lie in wait for him, but God let him fall into his hand, then I will appoint for you a place to which he may flee. But if a man willfully attacks another to kill him by cunning, you shall take him from my altar, that he may die. (Exodus 21:12-14)*
4. In my thinking, the following 4 issues are patently clear, so I will **not** digress to speak on them tonight.
- a. The issue of *capital punishment*
 - b. The issue of *just war*
 - c. The issue of *abortion* and *infanticide*
 - d. The issue of *euthanasia* and "*mercy killing*"
5. I am aware that people have questions about...
- a. Birth control practices: *Rule of Thumb: you can prevent conception but you cannot terminate conception. (See your doctor about these issues)*
 - b. In vitro-fertilization: *Rule of Thumb: a fertilized egg is a living soul. (See your doctor)*
 - c. Abortion to save a mother's life: *Self-defense? (Could be. See your doctor)*

- d. Living wills and “pulling the plug”: *Can’t terminate life but need not prolong life-support methods. (See your doctor)*
 - e. **The key:** *Accountability. These are not just medical issues but issues of soul and body. You need to consult with your pastors, attorneys and physicians, but you make the decision. In all cases, the sanctity of life prevails!*
 - f. **Not all cases are cut and dry, but all have a Biblically moral answer that you cannot arrive at alone!**
6. **My point:** *God set forth the principle that the sanctity of life needed to be safeguarded by the entire human community – state, church, home and individual.*
7. **John Calvin** clearly sets forth the importance of the entire community safeguarding the sanctity of life...
- a. *Institutes of the Christian Religion; 2:8:39; p. 404*
The purpose of this commandment is: the Lord has bound mankind together by a certain unity; hence each man ought to concern himself with the safety of all. To sum up, then, all violence, injury and any harmful thing at all that may injure our neighbor’s body are forbidden to us.
 - b. *Sermons on the Ten Commandments; Sermon 8; p. 155.*
Now in addition, since it is God who has forbidden us to kill, insofar as it is such a shameful and atrocious thing, let us understand that, in the first place, whoever raises himself up against his neighbors to kill them is not worthy to be kept on this earth, for he is worse than savage beasts. Therefore let us clearly keep in mind that God has never yet spoken to us but that we are already quite convinced that if anyone sets himself against his neighbor, he despises nature; he is not worthy of being included in the human race.
8. **God alone gives life. God alone takes life. God has charged mankind to preserve life and the state to punish those who take life illegitimately. Life is God’s basic gift to mankind, and if life is not safe all the other gifts of God are in jeopardy of ruin: “...life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness...”**

II. JESUS CHRIST IS THE REDEEMER OF LIFE

1. God warned Adam that sin would end life: “...you shall surely die...”
2. He sent His own Son, in the person of Jesus Christ, to conquer death, give eternal life, and provide the resurrection from the dead.
3. **Jesus makes it clear that He, too, is a giver of life, just like His Father...**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. (John 1:1-4)

For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. (John 5:21, 25-26)

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. (John 5:39-40)

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. (John 10:10)

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. (John 10:28)

I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)

And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. (John 17:3)

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:30-31)

4. Paul makes it clear: mankind is rescued from death by Jesus Christ...

For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. (Romans 5:17-18)

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

5. We must **not** spiritualize this truth in any way. Jesus gives *spiritual life* to those who trust in Him. This spiritual life brings with it *resurrection life* and *eternal life* in heaven for the elect. But Jesus is also concerned to *restore all life* to newness in this world.

6. In one of the most magnificent passages in all of Scripture, Jesus Christ promises to restore us to Eden's glory of a deathless life in all its glorious dimensions.

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his

people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” (Rev. 20:11-21:5)

7. Jesus has three goals to His Kingdom Mission:
 - a. *Give spiritual life to all who believe in Him*
 - b. *Restore human life to its glory and safety*
 - c. *Create a new world where death is no more*
 - d. Jesus said: *“I am the resurrection and the life...”*
8. Therefore, we who know Christ as Savior and Lord must take up His life-preserving ministry as part of our sacred calling as His disciples and citizens of the Kingdom of God...
9. **Stuart Townend** and **Keith and Kristy Getty** touched on all three of these salvation themes in Christ in their song *“Hear the Call of the Kingdom”*...

- a. i.e., salvation, justice, the new world...

- b. *Hear the call of the kingdom
Lift your eyes to the King
Let His song rise within you
As a fragrant offering
Of how God rich in mercy
Came in Christ to redeem
All who trust in His unfailing grace*

*Hear the call of the Kingdom
To be children of light
With the mercy of heaven
The humility of Christ
Walking justly before Him
Loving all that is right
That the life of Christ may shine through us*

*(Chorus)
King of Heaven we will answer the call
We will follow bringing hope to the world
Filled with passion, filled with power to proclaim
Salvation in Jesus' name*

*Hear the call of the Kingdom
To reach out to the lost
With the Father's compassion
In the wonder of the cross*

*Bringing peace and forgiveness
And a hope yet to come
Let the nations put their trust in Him*

III. CHRISTIANS MUST BE PRESERVERS OF LIFE

1. **John Calvin** reminds us that the sixth commandment rests upon a “*twofold basis*”... (*Institutes; 2:8:40*)
 - a. *The Lord has willed that we consider those two things which are naturally in man, and might lead us to seek His preservation: to reverence His image imprinted in man, and to embrace our own flesh in Him.*
 - b. A reverence (respect) for the image of God in each and every person.
 - c. An embracing of our shared humanity with each and every person.
2. I **will not** address the typical issues we habitually turn to, as conservative Christians, every time we study the sixth commandment...
 - a. Abortion, war, capital punishment, medical ethics, etc...
 - b. There is much written from Biblical sources on these issues.
 - c. I’ve addressed them all in previous sermons here.
 - d. **Note:** *Abortion remains the #1 evil in our land, and I fear it is an issue we’ve grown tired of, or discouraged over, or complacent about.*
 - e. I’d like to address “pro-life” issues in two underdeveloped spheres...
 - i. Hidden murder 6:3
 - ii. Lost perspective
3. Let’s look at our own *Westminster Larger Catechism* and what it says about the sixth commandment:
 - a. *The duties required in the sixth commandment are, all careful studies, and lawful endeavors, to preserve the life of ourselves and others by resisting all thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions, and avoiding all occasions, temptations, and practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any; by just defence thereof against violence, patient bearing of the hand of God, quietness of mind, cheerfulness of spirit; a sober use of meat, drink, physick, sleep, labour, and recreations; by charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness; peaceable; mild and courteous speeches and behavior; forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil; comforting and succouring the distressed, and protecting and defending the innocent.* (Westminster Larger Catechism #135)
 - b. *The sins forbidden in the sixth commandment are, all taking away the life of ourselves, or of others, except in case of publick justice, lawful war, or necessary defence; the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life; sinful anger, hatred,*

envy, desire of revenge; all excessive passions, distracting cares; immoderate use of meat, drink, labour, and recreations; provoking words, oppression, quarrelling, striking, wounding, and whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any. (Westminster Larger Catechism #136)

- c. Prohibition: do not violate the safety of others.
 - d. Prescription: promote the welfare of others.
4. **First:** There is a need for us to re-examine our ethics and practices with regard to the Sanctity of Life.
- a. We are *single-issue* people in this area of theology and ethics: Abortion.
 - b. Result? In America, violent deaths are 20 times that of Europe and 40 times that of Japan!
 - c. The U.S. is “the most violent nation on earth” (title)
 - d. **Michael S. Horton:** *The Law of Perfect Freedom; pp. 155-157*

Evangelicals in other parts of the world are often baffled by the political agenda of some of their American brothers and sisters: pro-life and pro-family, yet opposed to any restrictions on fire arms and generally unsympathetic to the problems of the inner cities. In America, the wealthiest nation on earth, one child in five is poor. We may be anti-abortion, but are we really pro-life? The United States has won the dubious title “Most Violent Nation on Earth.” That is why we must begin, not with social issues, but with Biblical themes. Instead of deciding on a set of core issues and then going to the Bible for support, we must develop a concern for God’s concerns and search the Scriptures to find where He places the heaviest emphases. We must discern our role in personal and practical—not just political and ideological—terms and must distinguish clearly between the role of the church (purely Word and sacrament) and that of the individual Christian. Finally, we must begin to see our duty in one-on-one terms, not just in political categories.

5. Please allow me to raise **seven** issues with you – prevalent in our culture – that are practices of “hidden murder.”
- a. **Heidelberg Catechism #106** (“hidden murder”)
 - Q 105. What does God require in the sixth commandment?*
 - A. That I neither in thought, nor in word or look, much less indeed, revile, hate, insult, or kill my neighbor, whether by myself or by another; but lay aside all desire of revenge: moreover, that I harm not myself, nor willfully run into any danger. Wherefore, also, to restrain murder, the magistrate is armed with the sword.*
 - Q 106. But this commandment speaks only of killing.*
 - A. In forbidding this, however, God means to teach us that He abhors the root of murder—namely, envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge; and that all these are in his sight hidden murder.*
 - b. **First:** The Sea of Anger and Contempt in which America swims.
 - i. Addressed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount
 - You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But 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)

ii. *Q 107. It is, then, enough that we do not kill our neighbor in any such way?*

A. No; for in condemning envy, hatred, and anger, God requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves, to show patience, peace, meekness, mercy, and kindness towards him, and, so far as we have power, to prevent his hurt; also, to do good even unto our enemies. (Heidelberg Catechism #107)

iii. The angry heart is the nursery of murder by mouth.

c. **Second:** Violence as entertainment and even comedy.

i. TV, internet, video games, extreme fighting, etc...

ii. Gladiatorial spirit of sports

iii. Macho men: men with a hair-trigger nature

iv. "Strong women": aggressive women ready to vent

v. **Key:** *domestic violence is at an all-time high!*

d. **Third:** The homelessness of our cities and communities.

i. People whose families have turned their backs on them

ii. Human life lying in the gutters of our city streets

iii. **Martin Luther:** *Larger Catechism; Fifth Commandment, p. 391, Book of Concord)*

If you send a person away naked when you could clothe him, you have let him freeze to death. If you see anyone suffer hunger and do not feed him, you have let him starve. Likewise, if you see anyone condemned to death or in similar peril and do not save him although you know ways and means to do so, you have killed him. It will do you no good to plead that you did not contribute to his death by word or deed, for you have withheld your love from him and robbed him of the service by which his life might have been saved.

e. **Fourth:** Starvation: a world-wide problem!

i. **Facts** – unbelievable statistics

- *Every year 15 million children die of hunger*
- *3 billion people in the world today struggle to survive on US \$2/day.*
- *In 1994 the Urban Institute in Washington DC estimated that one out of 6 elderly people in the U.S. has an inadequate diet.*
- *In the U.S. hunger and race are related. In 1991 46% of African-American children were chronically hungry, and 40% of Latino children were chronically hungry compared to 16% of white children.*

- *The infant mortality rate is closely linked to inadequate nutrition among pregnant women. The U.S. ranks 23rd among industrial nations in infant mortality. African-American infants die at nearly twice the rate of white infants.*
 - *One out of every eight children under the age of twelve in the U.S. goes to bed hungry every night.*
 - *Malnutrition is implicated in more than half of all child deaths worldwide - a proportion unmatched by any infectious disease since the Black Death*
 - *About 183 million children weigh less than they should for their age*
 - *Every 3.6 seconds someone dies of hunger*
 - *It is estimated that some 800 million people in the world suffer from hunger and malnutrition, about 100 times as many as those who actually die from it each year.*
- ii. World hunger remains the world's #1 problem.
 - iii. "our daily bread"
- f. **Fifth:** The neglect of the elderly by their children and grandchildren
- i. Old people left to die: poor, poorly fed, under medicated and uncared for...lonely
 - ii. Euthanasia is on the rise in America.
- g. **Sixth:** Racism still plagues the American Church and society.
- i. **George Gallup:** White evangelicals are more likely than any other demographic group in America to oppose living next door to a non-white person (*Horton; p. 155*) disdain for the image of God in *Technicolor!*
- i. **Seventh:** Slavery: the growing world menace
- i. Slavery is on the rise: domestic, sexual, political and illegal labor
 - ii. Tied to illegal immigration
 - iii. See sermon on slavery in 2009.
7. **Second:** I ask you to prayerfully work into your life as a Christian these 7 **key dimensions** of Gospel life.
- a. *He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)*
 - b. **Covenant:** accept the truth that you are in a human covenant of creation and common grace with all humanity.
 - i. You are "your brother's keeper"

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" And the Lord said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. (Genesis 4:9-10)

- ii. **Peter C. Craigie:** *Deuteronomy, NICOT; p. 159.*

The reasons underlying the commandment are both social and religious. The commandment protected the individual within the covenant community from any danger at the hands of a fellow member of the community and thus enabled him to experience the blessing of God, which was long life in the promised land.

- c. **Civility:** Christians must be free of contempt.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:31-32)

But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. (Colossians 3:8)

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. (Colossians 4:5-6)

- d. **Charity:** A loving disposition toward all men

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor. 13:13)

- e. **Compassion:** A special concern for the poor, the oppressed and the forsaken...

Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' (Matthew 25:34-36, 40)

- f. **Cherishing:** Give special attention to the spiritual and physical well-being of those closest to you.

- i. Wife (husband), children, parents, siblings, etc.

In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. (Ephesians 5:28-31)

- ii. "Charity begins at home" – safe homes make for a safe society.

- g. **Community:** reconnect to your neighbors and learn how to make life better where you live.

But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. (Jeremiah 29:7)

- h. **Church:** I want to ask the deacons to lead us in studying, planning for and implementing a fully pro-life church.
 - i. Classic pro-life ministries
 - ii. Special needs ministries
 - iii. Focus in at least some of these “*hidden murder*” areas of need.
 - iv. **Goal:** *Every family personally invested in and involved with some mercy ministry.*

CONCLUSION: Can we really do all this?

1. Answer: Yes, but it will take a conscious effort for each of us to think less like an American, full of anger, contempt, violence, selfishness, fear, bigotry and individualism...
2. And to *work* at thinking like a Christian: *our covenant with mankind, civility, charity, compassion, cherishing, community-mindedness and church effort.*
3. This will have to become, for Christ Covenant Church...
 - a. A theme of our preaching and teaching
He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)
 - b. A priority of ministry for the session
 - c. A concerted plan developed by the diaconate
 - d. A personal practice for each person
 - e. An adopted ministry for each family
4. **But what a glorious effect this could have upon our children, our church, our community, and our city:** *That we would become known as a place where every human life was precious, every human being was honored, and every human breath was a prayer of gratitude to the Giver, Redeemer and Enhancer of life – the Father, the Son and the Spirit!*
5. **John Calvin** had it right, back on July 1, 1555...
 - a. Sermon #8 on the Ten Commandments...
 - b. As he preached 200 sermons on Deuteronomy
 - c. 16 on the Ten Commandments
 - d. When Calvin came to “*thou shalt not kill,*” he said this is the conclusion of his message.
Therefore let us now learn to submit ourselves truly to what is said here, that being purged of all rancor and ill will, we might be advised to engage ourselves in the service of our fellowman and fulfill our obligation according to the means that God has given us.

6. What better way to end our message tonight: “*to engage ourselves in the service of our fellow man*” and to protect and enhance his life.