

January 29, 2021

I had to close my eyes the other day while watching a historical film. The accuracy with which the director portrayed death and punishment was too real for my fragile sensibilities. It brought home the heinous side of humanity and had me seeking cover behind my hands while the sixth commandment popped into my mind.

You shall not murder. Exodus 20:13

It seems the simplest of the ten commandments. Murder, in any civilized society, is outlawed and carries a steep punishment of lifelong incarceration and sometimes, death. Obeying the sixth commandment is the Easy Button of the Law, because in disobeying, all freedom is forfeited. I am grateful, very grateful, that murder is against the law in the United States.

I do not start my days with the thought: today I will not commit murder. Murder has never been on my to-do list. As mentioned above, I find it difficult to watch the depiction of such violence being done to another human being. But if this commandment is flipped into a directive, rather than a prohibition, it might simply read: **Love one another.**

It is the love growing cold – the Spirit of God falling away from the human heart – that leads to hate that leads to law-breaking, murder, and death. Turning away from love that comes from God, is a turning away from relationship and an exaltation of self, opinion, and importance. So while I have never concerned myself with breaking that sixth commandment, there have been days I have begun with an over-inflated opinion of my own agenda--get done what needs to be done, push those whose cooperation I need, all to advance my cause, no matter the detriment to relationships. Frustration grows if cooperation is not obtained. Words may start to be uttered, first muttered, then increasing in volume.

Left unchecked, such is the beginning of the death of respect for others well as relationships. This is what Jesus was referring to when he said in *Matthew 5:21,22* *You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.'* *But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother-without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.*

The law, the ten commandments, is a perfect reflection of the character of God. They are not just rules, they are given as a reference point for our protection, for our freedom, to allow us to experience relationship, in love, with God and those around us by showing Christlikeness. There have been so many times I have regretted my rash and angry words, and so many times I have cried out to God to restore my relationships.

The good news is, He will do it! He is there, and He will do it! When we begin each day with our Creator at the front and center of our lives, our actions will reveal His character. *By this everyone will know you are My disciples, by your love for one another. John 13:35.*