

The School of Biblical Law

Covenant and Law

Lesson Twenty-Nine: “The Covenant Model and Commandment Six, Part 2”

Commandment six places a boundary of protection around the life of one’s neighbor. The command, “Thou shall not kill” is not a singular law but rather a category of ordinances that range from premeditated manslaughter to verbal assaults that devalue another person. Included in this commandment is the authorization to take life without violating the law. Commandment six addresses the proper respect for and treatment of life.

Commandments 1-5 (Love God)	Covenant Model	Commandments 6-10 (Love thy neighbor)
No other gods	Transcendence	Do not Kill
No graven images	Hierarchy	
Do not take God’s Name in vain	Ethics	
Remember the Sabbath Day	Sanctions	
Honor thy Father and Mother	Continuity	

1. The various ways that a man’s life might come under assault are addressed under commandment six. (Scripture lists examples or cases where the commandment applies and different judgments required in the varying cases.)

Each man is responsible for his direct and indirect actions that may bring harm to his neighbor.

- Num. 35:16-18: Deliberate and premeditated murder regardless of type of weapon
- Deut. 19:4-5: Accidental manslaughter
- Ex. 21:14: Death resulting from uncontrolled anger
- Ex. 21:15: Physical assault against one’s parents
- Ex. 21:18-19: Physical injury to one party resulting from two men engaging in a fight
- Ex. 21:19-21: Physical injury to an indentured servant caused by beating
- Ex. 21:21-22: Death of unborn baby caused by men fighting and accidentally injuring a pregnant woman
- Ex. 21:23-25: Any physical injury to a neighbor by the actions of another (Deut. 22:8)
- Ex. 21:28-32: Death or physical injury caused by your animal (your property)
- Matt. 5:21-22: Verbal assault, cursing, or describing someone as an insignificant nobody

Retribution and recompense for physical injury range from the death of the perpetrator to financial remuneration, but the general rule is described as *Lex Talionis*, meaning the law of retaliation.

- Ex. 21:23-25: “If anyone is injured, the offender must pay a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot”
- Anything more than *Lex Talionis* is injustice to the criminal and less is injustice to the victim.
- Justice is the fair and impartial treatment of an individual in matters pertaining to the blessings or punishments resulting from his deeds.

2. Retribution and punishment is executed through God-appointed agents in compliance with Genesis 9:6, “Whosoever sheds man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man.”

God has a monopoly on vengeance and alone can determine where He will allocate that power.

- Civil institutions are ordained of God to punish the evildoer.
- Personal vengeance is forbidden (Deut. 32:35; Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30).

Police actions and times of national warfare are not a violation of commandment six.

Doing loving actions for one’s neighbor exemplifies the heart of Commandment Six. Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan to demonstrate how to show love to one’s neighbor. Being responsible for the well-being of one’s neighbor goes beyond the prohibition against doing them harm and extends to charitable acts to those who bear the image of God.