

**Whatever Happened To The Humans?  
Stone Tablets in a Wireless World—Part 7  
Exodus 20:13  
August 19, 2018**

**Before 9-11, the worst terrorist attack in the United States was committed by Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma City Bomber.**

His attack killed 168 people and injured more than 800.

McVeigh was executed June 11 2001.

Not only did he confess to his crime, but he also granted 75 hours of interviews for the writing of a book about him.

**McVeigh had some things to say:**

“To these people in Oklahoma who have lost a loved one, I’m sorry, but it happens every day. You’re not the first mother to lose a kid, or the first grandparent to lose a grandson or granddaughter. It happens every day, somewhere in the world.”

McVeigh had no serious regrets for the 1995 bombing.

He called the 19 children killed in that explosion “collateral damage.”

His only regret is that it soured people’s view of the bombing.

Dan Herbeck, one of the authors of the book about McVeigh, told Prime Time,

“He has never expressed one ounce of remorse for the Oklahoma City bombing,” though McVeigh did get choked up when he spoke about once killing a gopher.

**Shocking?**

I want to suggest to you that the average person in America is just a few steps away from the same thing, because we’ve lost regard for the value of human life.

All around us are daily reminders of that.

**The command that we’re looking at this morning is a call for just the opposite.**

It’s a call to respect the sanctity of human life.

**But before we unpack this, it’s time for our weekly review of the 10 Commandments as we’ve been learning them in order.**

We’ve covered the first 5 so far, and as you may or may not know, we are using the 10 fingers on our hands to remember each one.

Let’s review:

**First Commandment: Hold up one pointer finger - point to the sky (one God; no other gods)**

**Second Commandment: Hold up two pointer fingers – have one bow before the other (no idols)**

**Third Commandment: Hold up three fingers – place over mouth (don’t take God’s name in vain)**

**Fourth Commandment: Hold up four fingers – place on cheek as if to nap (Sabbath rest)**

**Fifth Commandment: Hold up 5 fingers and place over your heart and say, “Honor Parents.”**

**Here’s today’s Commandment: Hold up five fingers on one hand and the pointer finger of your other hand—turn the pointer finger into a “gun” and aim at the other hand and say, “Don’t Murder.”**

**Exodus 20:13 simply states: “You shall not murder.”**

**With this verse, I want to give 3 Safeguards to reinforce the sanctity of human life:**

Number one: A Proper UNDERSTANDING of Human Life

Let’s make some observations.

First: This is the SHORTEST verse in Old Testament.

The text is terse, with only two words in the Hebrew, literally translated, “No murdering.”

Second: This command is stated in the strong NEGATIVE (like seven of the other commands).

Third: Every culture that I’m aware of has some sort of LAW against murder.

Fourth: This command deals with MURDER, not KILLING.

There’s confusion about this because the King James Version translates it this way: “Thou shalt not kill.”

There are eight different words for killing in the Hebrew Old Testament.

The word used here refers to unlawful killing or as Ryken defines it: “The unjust taking of a legally innocent life.”

Webster puts it like this: “The unlawful and malicious or premeditated killing of one human being by another.”

It’s about the destruction of innocent human life.

**When we adopt a proper understanding of human life, the command “You shall not murder” is a no-brainer.**

But, to get where our society is now in the way it regards human life, there are some important presuppositions that have to be deliberately set aside.

The most important and basic one is that God is the AUTHOR of life.

Take away this fact, and none of what I’m about to tell you is true or relevant.

So, if you don’t accept what the Bible says about human life – its origin, its uniqueness, its value – then you won’t care much about this.

But please do listen, because you'll need to consider where the alternative leaves you.

**I'm assuming that the Bible is right on this one.**

And that being true, here are some basic truths about human life from the Bible:

One: Human life is God's CREATION and therefore God's POSSESSION.

Psalms 24:1-2: The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.

**It's by virtue of being Creator that God is our owner and rightful authority.**

This is the most primary problem with the theory of evolution, and the driving force behind it.

If human life occurred by chance, then no one can have authority over it.

Every person owns himself.

Every person is the authority of himself.

**Alongside much of today's policy-making in regards to human life issues is the assumption that man is his own god and that no outside entity has the right to tell us what to do.**

In your proper understanding of human life, start with this beginning: Human life is God's creation, God's possession.

**Number two: Human life is uniquely in God's IMAGE.**

Genesis 1:26-27: Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

The Latin phrase is imago dei.

It means "the image of God."

I've heard different attempts at explaining this.

Does it mean that God has 2 eyes, 2 arms, 2 ears?

If it does, then monkeys would have the same image too, just with more hair!

No, it has to be something more than just our physical appearance, otherwise lots of animals would share the honor of bearing God's image.

**This image of God thing most importantly means that, of all the rest of creation, man is distinct.**

Human life is different.

Only it's not because of what we're made of, or even how we look...

Fact is, we all started out as dirt!; (Genesis 2:19)  
You and Bossie the cow.  
And we all physically die and physically return to dirt.  
Physically, we're actually quite similar.  
That's why you dissected a frog or a cat in 8th grade biology!  
But when it comes to human beings, there's something different: man is  
created in the image of God.  
It doesn't say that about any other part of creation.  
God breathed the breath of life into man.  
It doesn't say that about the rest of creation.  
God made man into more than just a physical animal.  
He made him into a spiritual being with a soul and the free will to choose right  
from wrong and to freely choose to fellowship with God.  
It doesn't say that about the rest of creation.

### **We bear the image of God.**

It ought to distinguish us in what motivates us, in the way we act, in the way  
we govern ourselves.  
In your proper understanding of human life, keep this fact: human life is  
uniquely made in the image of God.  
It's distinct.

### **Number three: Human life should be VALUED beyond all the rest of creation.**

Genesis 9:5-6: And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will  
demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will  
demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. Whoever sheds the  
blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has  
God made man.

Peter helps us to see this value when he writes in 1 Peter 1:18-19:

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that  
you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from  
your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without  
blemish or defect.

People are worth so much more than silver or gold.

So, to try this out this morning, turn right now to the person next to you, and  
say, "You're valuable!"

### **A number of years ago on the television show "Frontline," there was a piece about xenotransplantation – in this case, the use of pig cells and organs for humans.**

They spoke of some progress in the use of fetal pig cells helping patients with  
Parkinson's Disease, and also about the potential for use of pig organs,  
like kidneys, for transplants.

They showed a young man whose life had been saved by the use of a pig liver until he could get a transplant.  
They also showed protestors, sitting and chanting, against the use of animals for these purposes, because animals have to die for it to happen.  
Several few years ago, a baby girl was born with an extreme heart defect. An attempt was made to save her by transplanting a baboon's heart into her. Once again, the animal rights people protested the death of the poor baboon! Understand, God cares about animals.  
After all, He made them!  
They're His handiwork.  
The last verse in the book of Jonah, God mentions His concern not only for people, but for animals too.  
God sets the example of a proper regard for animals.

**But when human life is viewed as less valuable than or equal to animal life, something has gone terribly wrong.**

Folks, we aren't some alien presence on planet earth!  
Human life should be valued beyond all the rest of creation.  
God gave us this comparative appraisal.  
It wasn't for dogs and cats that Jesus died.  
God didn't seek to redeem cows and chickens with the precious blood of His Son.  
We have to have a proper understanding of the value of human life.

**This has huge implications for how we view creation.**

It means that nothing in all of creation is more valuable than the human soul.  
It affects whether or not we'll go to the expense and work of sending the gospel to people overseas.  
It affects our attitudes toward everyone we contact.  
It affects the way you regard the creep at school who causes you trouble, the guy who pulled out in front of you and is driving slow, the person who waits on your table, and the person who's seated across the table from you.

**Psalm 8:5-8 reads: You made [man] a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.**

**When we learn to look upon every person as more important than the rest of all of creation, we'll steer clear of the foolishness that pops up in the media.**

Go ahead, have a hamburger or chicken salad for lunch today!  
Human life belongs to God, is distinct, and is valuable.  
That's a biblical understanding of human life, and it allows us to then take...

## **Number two: A BIBLICAL Approach to Modern Life Issues**

Things have been tense with China – for decades – and one of the reasons is because of their different approach to life issues.

The questions of abortion and physician-assisted suicide have been hot issues in our nation for some years now.

You might be thinking, “Well, that’s fine for medical boards and politicians and protestors to fight over. I really don’t need to get into it.”

Really?

**If you ever vote, are eligible to serve on a jury, might become a public servant in politics or police or military action, or if you care about murderers not being loose in your neighborhood, or if you want to have a clue about how to comfort a mother who has just experienced a miscarriage, this is relevant to you.**

For instance, in Numbers 35:20-24 it says: “If anyone with malice aforethought shoves another or throws something at him intentionally so that he dies or if in hostility he hits him with his fist so that he dies, that person shall be put to death; he is a murderer. The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death when he meets him.”

There are 2 people here: an innocent victim, and a guilty murderer.

The one who’s guilty of murder, planned or spur of the moment, is to be put to death, because the person who takes an innocent person’s life is taking God’s place as the Owner and Authority of human life.

**We take that principle in our society and call it murder in the 1st degree and 2nd degree.**

The OT law even goes on to distinguish between murder and manslaughter: But if without hostility someone suddenly shoves another or throws something at him unintentionally or, without seeing him, drops a stone on him that could kill him, and he dies, then since he was not his enemy and he did not intend to harm him, the assembly must judge between him and the avenger of blood according to these regulations.

**Once again, we use this principle in our justice system today.**

A non-guilty person shouldn’t die, but the person who’s guilty of the crime is to be put to death.

That’s the issue when it comes to human life: innocence or guilt?

If we can take that biblical approach into modern issues involving life and death, we’ll safeguard the sanctity of human life in our generation and in the generations to come.

**In 2016, the number of homicides in the United States was 17,250.**

I wanted to find the stats for 2017 but those numbers haven’t been published yet.

No civilized country has a higher rate.

As a nation, we have devalued human life.  
Why is there a suicide advocacy group called the Hemlock Society?  
Why does a guy named Dick Humphrey write a book called The Final Exit  
about how to commit suicide and it becomes a bestseller?  
And does it surprise us that high school kids decide to show up at their school  
to destroy life when, in our own country, millions of innocent unborn  
babies have been killed in the name of convenience?

**If our nation were taking a biblical approach to human life issues, this  
wouldn't be happening.**

It also helps us answer the sticky questions about if taking human life is ever  
justified.

In the case of murder, the issue is guilt or innocence.

Has the life of an innocent person been taken?

Then the guilty person is to be punished.

Paul writes about the governing authority in (Romans 13:4): "For he is God's  
servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not  
bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring  
punishment on the wrongdoer."

**The same principle applies in war.**

Is the opposing nation, collectively guilty of destroying human life?

Applying the 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment gives us direction as a nation.

These situations all involve the death of a guilty person or of a collectively  
guilty nation.

God directs for people to be put to death.

Does He like this?

Is God pleased to destroy wicked people?

Ezekiel 18:23.

"Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign  
LORD. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?"

**Human life is so precious that God has issued conditions under which it  
should be taken.**

Only God has the authority to say that, and He certainly has said it.

Now, is all this current stuff?

Sure it is!

It provides us with answers about

Our nation going to war

Whether or not to serve in the military

Abortion

Capital Punishment

Physician-assisted suicide

**I won't take any more time to apply those this morning.**

You do that around lunch today.

And as you do, give attention to whether or not the person in question is innocent or guilty.

That will give a more biblical approach to life issues.

Now, turn to the person next to you and say, "Let's take a biblical approach to modern life issues."

**Now, the third safeguard to reinforce the sanctity of human life: A Personal APPLICATION of the 6th Commandment**

If those issues don't touch you closely enough, let's take off our shoes now; not because we're on holy ground, but because it's easier to stomp on toes that way!

**We are going to deal with (ONE) Murder's ROOTS.**

Let's start by getting a better grasp of what it means to destroy human beings. And to do so, let's consider what's at the root of murder, the way Jesus told us to in the Sermon on the Mount.

Then let's each ask ourselves if we need to more carefully apply this principle or not.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:21-22: "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca, ' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell."

**Some may think that I've now moved from preaching to meddling.**

These words are similar to the words we use when we want to tell someone that we despise them or they're worthless to us.

Jesus wasn't introducing a new law; He was opening peoples' eyes to the spirit of the Law as it was given.

Murder isn't just an act, it's an attitude.

One writer put it this way: "Anything that contributes to the erosion in our society of the sacredness of the person" is a form of murder.

**Remember Cain?**

He was jealous of his brother.

Inwardly, Cain was angry.

God said that sin was crouching at his door and he needed to master it.

But Cain let his anger erupt into an act of premeditated destruction against his brother.

The very first murder is a vivid illustration that anger and hatred are at the root of murder.

**Maybe you've never even approached the thought of killing someone.**

But have you ever let your anger erupt into a tirade of words that were meant to tear someone down?

Have you ever been so angry that you wished something bad would happen to them?

**Paul writes about it in Ephesians 4:26-27.**

He says, "In your anger do not sin." Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold."

The devil knows that if he can keep us angry at someone, if he can store up that anger inside so that it can simmer overnight and be even more cooked by the next morning, he's got a foot in the door of our heart.

One of the ways that you and I can uphold the value of other people, safeguard the sanctity of human life, is to deal with anger in a biblical way rather than stowing it away for later reference.

**A second application is to: Value human life in GENERAL**

In one of the horrible story of a potential school shooting in Middle America, a young high school girl told her story on an edition of ABC's 20/20.

When a male friend confided to her that he was thinking of shooting some of their classmates, she told no one about it.

It was only after he began to talk about killing her along with others that she informed on him, which led to his arrest and judicial confinement at his parents' home.

Asked by at news correspondent Connie Chung why she had initially remained silent about a possible massacre of her fellow students, she replied: "I didn't like them. I didn't care if he killed them."

Her matter-of-fact tone and expressionless eyes, as much as her chilling words, said it all: It wasn't that she hated her friend's prospective victims or had some special urge to see them killed; it was that she didn't care if they were killed, and she wasn't embarrassed to let the world know it.

**Just how much has our societal wave of devalued human life affected us?**

To answer that question, ask some more questions:

When you hear about an ethnic war happening on the other side of the world, do you get that pit in your stomach – the same one you get when you hear your job's in danger or your car breaks down?

When you watch a movie, and the bad guy dies some gruesome death, do you find yourself saying, "Good!"

When you walk through the mall, and your eyes meet with some guy who's got metal stuck all over his face and the weirdest haircut you've seen yet, do you think about the way God values him, or do you look away in disgust?

**Not being a murderer goes beyond just not doing something.**

It means doing the opposite.

1 John 3:16-18 says, "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If

anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

**Martin Niemoller was a minister of a church in Germany in the 1930's.**

He eventually became one of the millions who were arrested and killed in Hitler's concentration camps, but before he died he wrote:

In Germany they first came for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant.

And then they came for me, and by that time no one was left to speak up.

**Every time we fail to be moved by human suffering, every time we fail to see a valued soul when we lock eyes with someone else, we reflect our brainwashed apathy toward the value of people in God's eyes.**

People matter to God!

We need to show that we value human life by treating people, all people, as God's greatest concern on earth.

**Conclusion:**

**Just how valuable is every person in God's sight?**

1 Timothy 4:10 says, "...we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe.

In 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 it says, "For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."

All men...one died for all...

**Every person is valuable enough that God sent His very Son to die for every one, even those who reject Him this morning -- Even you.**

There is no greater love story, there is no greater reason for healthy self-esteem, than to realize the Creator and Sustainer of the universe values you, is wooing you, wants you to respond to His offer of eternal life.

There's no better reason to pause for serious reflection right now on the value of your life and what the Lord wants you to do with it.