



BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

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SERIES : "10 DUMB WAYS TO MESS UP OUR LIVES"

November 20, 2005 Study 6 : "Not Taking Life Seriously"

INTRODUCTION

TO THE SERIES

10 Dumb Ways To Mess Up Our Lives a fresh look at the 10 Commandments (See Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5) Note that they are not the Ten Suggestions! They are not arbitrary religious rules. They are not outdated curiosities that belong to an ancient and less sophisticated society. Whilst their introduction has a specific context, the 10 Commandments are not bound to a particular culture or time or nation.

They continue as the basic moral laws of creation for all people. If followed, they produce a healthy society by fostering proper relationships with God and with others. If ignored, they produce a mess in both our individual lives and our society as a whole.

Our task in this series is to understand what they mean and how to follow them in our lives and circumstances.

TO TODAY'S STUDY

You shall not Murder. Ex20:13

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour. Ex20:16

I have combined these two commandments (6 and 9) together in today's study because the principle behind them is the same; that a person's life is to be taken seriously. The Scriptures themselves recognise this in Lev19:16 where variations of the two commandments appear together :

Do not go about spreading slander do not do anything that endangers your neighbour's life.

We have seen in these studies that the context of the Ten Commandments is relational; in the words of Ex19:4-6 "... *my treasured possession a holy nation.*" ... both dimensions, toward God and too each other, are covered. The first four commandments tell us that God is to be respected and honoured. These last six commandments tell us that those around us are to be honoured and respected ALSO.

A. WHAT DO THE COMMANDS MEAN?

1. YOU SHALL NOT MURDER

Does the Sixth Commandment prohibit ALL killing - of animals, of a condemned prisoner or an enemy during war.?

Of animals? The Sacrificial system required the death of animals. Further, God gave mankind permission to kill animals for food :

Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Gen9:3

Today, there may be some good reasons to be vegetarian; but it is a life-style or medical choice based on those reasons and not on any biblical imperative.

What about capital punishment and warfare? Christians have argued on both sides - particularly in light of Jesus' teaching and example. But this command may not be used to settle the issues as its immediate context contained orders for both capital punishment and the waging of war.

Paul, in Romans 13:4, speaks of civil authorities as

... God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid; he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an angel of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

In verse 5 he suggests FEAR and CONSCIENCE be the reasons that we submit to civil authority ...and that we should even be happy about paying taxes to support them and their work. The New Testament supports the use of force by government. Of course it is still a live issue as to the limits of that force or of a Christian's personal involvement in delivering it.

The intent of C6 is clearer in those translations that use the word "*murder*" instead of "*kill*." Hebrew has seven words for "kill," ranging from wholesale, vengeful slaughter to the slaying of a sacrificial animal in a religious ceremony. The word used in the command refers to killing with intent - the private, deliberate slaying for personal, sinful reasons.

Note the distinction between murder and manslaughter; "cities of refuge" were set up for

one who kills his neighbour unintentionally without malice aforethought. Deut4

but not for the man who

hates his neighbour, lies in wait for him and assaults and kills him. Deut19:11

2. YOU SHALL NOT GIVE FALSE TESTIMONY

The focus ... LIES directed toward another person, in order to :

Make FALSE friends ... Do not help a wicked man by being a malicious witness Ex23:1

BLEND in ... When giving testimony do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd 23:2

Personal GAIN ... Do not accept a bribe Ex23:8

B. THE BASIS OF THE COMMANDS

All capital offences in the OT are against relationships - with God and each other. There are no capital offences against PROPERTY.

Why? Because PEOPLE matter - from conception to natural death. Their value is not measured by economics or utility, but is inherent, because everyone bears the mark of the image of God in their being :

Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God has God made man. Gen9:6

When we reverence God, we reverence human life, because it is His creation and gift.

C. BEYOND THE COMMANDS

Both commands go beyond a simple shunning of actions to MOTIVES.

Killing : Was it deliberate and with MALICE? Lying : was it done for personal PROFIT?

And so Jesus questions the heart

You have heard it said, "Do not murder." But I tell you anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgement. Mat5:21-22

James follows with :

What causes fights and quarrels? Don't they come from desires that battle within you? You want something, but don't get it. You kill and covet ... Jam4:1-2

A negative command always implies the corresponding positive ACTION

Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another. DO not go about spreading slander. Do not hate your brother in your heart. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge... but love your neighbour as yourself. From Lev19:11-18

A DUMB WAY TO MESS UP YOUR LIFE?

On the practical level, "What goes around, comes around." Honouring the generation above is a powerful model for your own children.

On the spiritual? Not honouring and respecting due human authority grows into a habit that will extend into our relationship with God.