

10 HABITS of Highly Healthy Homes



Habit 6: Value The Individual

Sunday, July 2, 2000

*You are cordially invited to join us for **The Re-Wedding** on Sunday Evening, July 30 at 6:30, as dozens of couples renew their marriage vows in the biggest wedding in the history of Saint John.*

Ten Habits of Highly Healthy Homes

**Examine Your
Priorities**

**Avoid The
Counterfeits**

Take God Seriously

**Renew Your
Relationships**

**Respect Your
Heritage**

**Value The
Individual**

**Protect Your
Marriage**

**Maintain Your
Integrity**

Speak The Truth

**Discover Real
Contentment**

Exodus 20:13 (NLT) Do not murder.

- By the time the average North American child has reached sixth grade, they have already witnessed over 8,000 murders and watched 100,000 acts of violence on television. More kids die from violence than from illness today. Nearly 2 million North Americans will become violent crime victims this year. Every 20 seconds, someone is beaten, stabbed, shot, robbed, raped or killed in the United States and Canada.
- But some of you are probably thinking, "We can skip this one." Your urge to murder probably doesn't happen very often, except maybe in traffic! It's not like we have too many "hit men" in our church!
- Clarence Darrow once said, "I haven't killed anybody, but I've read a whole lot of obituaries with glee."
- The sixth command seems like it should be quite straightforward, but actually it's often misinterpreted, misapplied and misunderstood. In it's basic form, this command states that **NO ONE BUT GOD HAS THE RIGHT TO TAKE THE LIFE OF AN INNOCENT HUMAN BEING.** God creates and sustains man, and He alone has the right to number man's days or determine when a person should die.
- Before we look at what this commandment DOES teach, let's take a brief look at what it DOES NOT teach:

THREE THINGS THIS COMMAND DOES NOT TEACH:

1. It does not prohibit killing of animals

- The Bible is very clear about the difference between human life and animal life. Many times God commanded that animals be sacrificed, and He is not contradicting Himself in this commandment!
- **Genesis 9:3 (GN)** *Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.*
- You don't have to be a vegetarian unless you want to be – it's not commanded in the Bible. It's okay to eat animals for meat!

2. It does not prohibit capital punishment

- Many times in Scripture God commands capital punishment, and to maintain order in our society, He has allowed human governments to enforce the law and punish wrongdoers.
- ***Leviticus 24:17 (GN)*** *Anyone who commits murder shall be put to death ... the principle is a life for a life.*
- ***Romans 13:4 (JB)*** *The state is there to serve God for your benefit ... The authorities are there to serve God: they carry out God's revenge by punishing wrongdoers.*
- The Hebrew phrase "lo t'ratzach" in the sixth commandment means "no wrongful killing." It teaches that we must not take a "judicially innocent" life, and is in accordance with the Biblical principle that an accused person is innocent until proven guilty.
- God wants justice in His world, and He also demands swift justice. But our system of appeals has made a mockery of that. When US President William McKinley was assassinated, his killer was caught, convicted and executed 53 days later. Do you think that would happen today? When Ted Bundy was finally executed after killing so many women, it was 11 years after the crime. And US taxpayers paid for his "room and board" all those years! That's not justice.
- Some people say, "I don't think capital punishment really deters criminals." It deters the one that is executed! He's not going to rape or murder anybody anymore. Why not just give him a life sentence? Because a criminal given a life sentence in North America is now only in prison for an average of eight years!
- Oliver Wendall Holmes: "Justice delayed is justice denied."

3. It does not prohibit going to war

- God sent His people to war many times, and His Word teaches us that there are some things worth fighting and even dying for! It's right to fight in order to preserve freedom, defend innocent people, or stop the spread of evil.
- ***Ecclesiastes 3:8 (NLT)*** *[There is] ... a time for war ...*
- German Protestant minister Martin Niemöller said this about the Nazis: "When Hitler attacked the Jews, I was not a Jew, therefore I was not concerned. And when Hitler attacked the Catholics, I was not a Catholic, and therefore, I was not concerned. And when Hitler attacked the unions and industrialists, I was not a member of the unions and I was not concerned. Then, Hitler attacked me and the Protestant church -- and there was nobody left to be concerned."

- Edmund Burke: "The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing."

FIVE WAYS THAT GOD ESTEEMS THE INDIVIDUAL:

- What does the command "Do not murder" have to do with my family? Well, the very first murder happened in a family when Cain killed his brother Abel. In fact, today's most violent crimes and murders are committed by one family member against another.
- But the sixth commandment has a much wider view that just the act of murder. It includes any attitude or action that leads society in the DIRECTION of murder. God is saying, "VALUE THE INDIVIDUAL." Here are five applications of God's sixth commandment ...

1. God says "NO" to murder

- The most obvious meaning of this commandment is that we are not to kill another person. The prohibition against murder appears in all five books of the Torah – in fact, it is the only law to be repeated in every one of the books. Obviously, this is important to God!
- You may believe that murder is wrong because SOCIETY says so. But then, you would have to respect that in Nazi Germany, and much of eastern Europe, it was acceptable to kill Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, the severely retarded, and any other group deemed inferior. Hitler came to power through the democratic process, and the support of the people kept him in power. German society said murder was acceptable! Today, there are societies where it is acceptable to murder certain ethnic groups; that is what happened recently in Bosnia. Their society says murder is acceptable!
- THE FACT THAT SOMETHING IS APPROVED OF BY SOCIETY DOES NOT MAKE IT OBJECTIVELY RIGHT! Murder is not wrong because society says so, but because God says so! Murder is wrong because life is a gift from God; every murder is a direct attack on God.
- ***Genesis 9:6 (NLT)*** *Yes, you must execute anyone who murders another person, for to kill a person is to kill a living being made in God's image.*
- The only thing that keeps the North American murder rate "down" is the increase in the prison population (quadrupled in the last 25 years) and modern medical technology. A wound that would have killed 9 out of 10 soldiers in World War II, 9 out of 10 would survive today. By a conservative estimate, if we had 1940-level medical technology today, our murder rate would be TEN TIMES HIGHER!

- WE MUST CONSTANTLY GUARD OUR FAMILIES AGAINST THE "MOVIE MENTALITY" THAT DEVALUES HUMAN LIFE! About 350 characters appear each night on prime-time TV, with an average of 7 of them murdered every night. If this rate was reality, then in 2 months everyone in North America would be killed – and the last one left could turn off the TV! Human life is cheap in Hollywood!
- David Grossman is a military psychologist who coined the term **KILLOLOGY** for the study of the methods and psychological effects of training army recruits to circumvent their natural inhibitions to killing fellow human beings. Except in sociopaths, killing requires training because there is a built-in aversion IN EVERY SPECIES to killing one's own kind. Grossman states unequivocally that the SAME TACTICS used in training soldiers are at work in our media! Every time a child sees a violent movie or plays a violent interactive video game, he is learning the exact same conditioned reflex skills as a soldier or police officer in training. Grossman's complete article, "Trained To Kill," is currently available online at: <http://www.christianityonline.com/ct/8t9/8t9030.html>
- The Journal of the American Medical Association has published a definitive study on the impact of television violence. Their statistics show that in every nation, region, or city where television has been introduced, there is an immediate explosion of violence on the playground, and within 15 years there is a doubling of the murder rate. Why 15 years? That is how long it takes for a desensitized 3 to 5 year old to reach "prime crime age" – 18 to 20 years old.
- Rachel Scott (Columbine Victim) wrote this poem just days before her murder: I'm drowning, in my own lake of despair. I'm choking, my hands wrapped around my neck. I'm dying ... quickly my soul leaves, slowly my body withers. It isn't suicide ... I consider it homicide. **The world you have created has led to my death.**

2. God says "NO" to suicide

- The suicide rate for Canadian youth, ages 15-19, has increased by over 600% since 1955. Every day in Canada 224 teenagers try to take their own life. They literally have no reason to live!
- In North America, suicide is the number two killer among college students and the number three killer among high school students.
- Some people think, "It's my life and I have a right to live it and end it as I want." But the Bible disagrees with that concept!
- **Job 14:5 (CEV)** *Our time on earth is brief; the number of our days is already decided by you.*

- **Romans 14:7 (LB)** *We are not our own bosses to live and die as we ourselves might choose.*
- Our bodies are NOT ours to do with as we wish! God decides the number of days we're going to live, and He doesn't want us to try and "short circuit" our lifespan!
- Suicidal BEHAVIORS are also prohibited by the sixth commandment – promiscuous sex in the age of AIDS, drunk driving, drug abuse, overeating, not taking care of our health, etc.
- Most of us at different times have felt enough despair to wonder, "Is my life worth living?" If you have considered suicide, remember that THERE IS HOPE! You matter to God! Along the ocean coast, you can watch the tide. When it goes out, it always comes back in. The tide may be out in your life right now, and when the tide is out, the beach is ugly. But wait for the tide to come back in! The sun always shines after the darkness.

3. God says "NO" to mercy killing

- The technical term for mercy killing is EUTHANASIA. It means to cause the death of someone because of deformity, old age, or an incurable disease. It does NOT refer to allowing death to occur naturally by removing artificial life support.
- Mercy killing is currently receiving a great deal of favorable press in North America, mainly due to the efforts of Michigan doctor Jack Kervorkian. He has now coined the term "OBITIATRY" to describe his practice of physician-assisted suicide. "Dr. Death" left so many bodies in motel rooms that the motel association complained about the cost of cleaning up after his visits! He finally went too far by allowing one of his assisted suicides to be filmed and aired on US national television. As a result, he was convicted of second degree murder by a Michigan court and sentenced to 10-25 years in prison. However, 55% of Americans believe that the jury should never have convicted Kervorkian. If the current trend toward legalizing assisted suicide continues, he will probably become a "martyr" of sorts.
- Diane Culbertson (USA Today): "If Kevorkian's type of killer medicine becomes accepted, what horrors the future could hold. The progression is obvious; from assisted death to suggesting death to insisting on death."
- An unbelievable scenario? Not at all! What many North Americans do not realize is that another country has run the full gamut when it comes to euthanasia. "Mercy killing" has been practiced in Holland for the past twenty years.

- New England Journal of Medicine: As of 1995, more than 1 in 42 deaths in Holland were assisted suicides. Even more alarming, 1 in 4 doctors admits killing patients without the patient's request.
- Tony Snow (Washington Times): Most requests for euthanasia in the Netherlands [where it has been legal since 1973] come not from patients, but from their families. It is the ultimate form of Baby-Boomer selfishness: If mom and dad seem less vibrant and more expensive than they did in the good old days, Dutch kids get on the phone and summon the angels of death.
- In 1990 there were 13,506 cases of "passive" euthanasia in Holland, but 8,750 (65%) were killed without patient consent. Also in 1990, there were 11,800 cases of "active" euthanasia, but 5,941 (50%) were killed without patient consent.
- This week (June 28, 2000), the Christian Science Monitor reported that the Dutch government is considering a proposed law that would allow terminally ill children as young as 12 to request mercy killing or assisted suicide, even if their parents object.
- Almost 80% of Dutch physicians have now had experience with euthanasia. Those who do kill often report nightmares afterwards. Why? Because they are taking on a responsibility that God never intended them to have! Only God has a right to determine when I should stop living!
- **Job 12:10 (GN)** *It is God who directs the lives of His creatures; every man's life is in His power.*

4. God says "NO" to abortion

- Just last week, a beautiful little girl named Sophie Eloise was born to Mike and Liz Long, on Thursday, June 22. She arrived six weeks early. Can you fathom that this precious little life that has brought such joy to her Mom and Dad over the past 10 days would be a possible candidate for abortion if she were still in the womb?
- This year on planet earth, there will be 46 million children aborted. The lifetime average in our world is now one abortion per woman. Three out of every ten pregnancies in North America end in abortion; that's one abortion every 15 seconds! In North America alone, around 35 million babies have been aborted in the last 25 years; that's more deaths than all this century's wars put together. Every year, Canadian abortionists kill enough babies to populate the city of Saint John. And this year, nearly 500 babies in North America will continue to live even after they are cruelly aborted!

- 97% of abortions are not because of rape or incest, or because the life of the mother is threatened. They occur simply because the mother feels that the child will be "inconvenient" to her lifestyle.
- From a human viewpoint, we may have unplanned pregnancies – but there are no accidental conceptions with God! No matter what the circumstance of the conception, God can bring good out of it! A pro-abortion bumper sticker says: "Every child a wanted child." The fallacy of that is that GOD WANTS EVERY CHILD! There is no such thing as an unwanted child with God.
- These terminations of human life are justified by our self-centered culture, which sees a fetus as simply a "blob of tissue." However, God alone reserves the right to decide when or what makes someone a human person. **THIS WAS THE GREAT ERROR OF SLAVERY!** Look at the four arguments set forth by the US Supreme Court in the 1857 case of Dred Scott ...
 - A. Slaves are human, but not persons.
 - B. Slaves become legal persons only after they are set free.
 - C. Before then, slaves have no legal rights.
 - D. A slaveholder has the right to choose what to do with his property, including slaves.
- These arguments were wrong, because the court was stepping into the sacred arena of life, and taking away the personhood of an entire class of Americans. Though this decree was later nullified by an act of Congress, the precedent had been set. It is obvious that the Supreme Court did not learn its lesson, because they once again took away the personhood of an entire class of Americans, in the 1973 case of Norma McCorvey, better known by her alias – Jane Roe. In doing so, they advanced the same four arguments ...
 - A. Pre-borns are human, but not persons.
 - B. Babies become legal persons only after they are born.
 - C. Before then, babies have no legal rights.
 - D. A woman has the right to choose what to do with her own body, including the fetus.
- Denying personhood to human beings was wrong in 1857. Denying personhood to human beings is still wrong today! Why? Because it breaks God's sixth commandment by "taking away" someone's life!
- Samuel Armas: (1) Look at this photo taken almost one year ago of a baby that was 21 weeks old – that is, 21 weeks from conception! His brave parents are allowing him to undergo surgery to close a gap in his spine, because he was diagnosed with spina bifida.

Although everyone recommended abortion, that was not a consideration for Alex and Julie Armas, his parents. So Dr. Joseph Bruner was called upon to perform this experimental surgery and prevent serious brain damage before birth. Special miniature instruments had to be created to perform such a delicate operation by Casarean section.

(2) Then, as Dr. Bruner was probing the incision, it happened – a baby's fully-developed hand wrapped itself around the finger of the surgeon and held on! This picture was sent around the world to most media outlets, but the liberal media elite have refused to run it. Why? Because it is an unmistakable reminder that growing in the womb of every mother is a baby, not a "product of conception" but a human person with an eternal soul being formed in the image of God! Fortunately for Samuel, abortion was not an alternative for the Armas family. His mother said, "We have always believed life begins at conception, and we never wavered, not even when it was actually our decision to make and not mere words that we say. My husband's first words after we received the news were, 'Well, we wanted a baby and this is the one God has chosen to give us.'" During the highly sensitive operation, Dr. Bruner even had to tell his staff, "Shh! You'll wake the baby!"

(3) Little Samuel was delivered from the womb at 36 weeks, on December 2, 1999. He did not have to spend any time in a neonatal unit, and went home on Monday, December 6.

(4) His neurosurgeon was very optimistic, as his brain malformation had resolved and he was moving his legs very well, all things considered. With some physical therapy, he now has a good chance for a normal life! And he could have been aborted!

- **Psalm 139:13-16 (NLT)** ¹³ You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—and how well I know it. ¹⁵ You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. ¹⁶ You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.
- **By now, you may think that the sixth commandment has absolutely nothing to do with your family. However, there is one last way God wants us to "VALUE THE INDIVIDUAL." And this one "hits home" in every home ...**

5. God says "NO" to verbal abuse

- Child abuse cases in Canada have seen a staggering rise of over 1700% since the 1970's. Many abortionists claimed that the dramatic rise in abortions during the last 30 years would practically eliminate such abuse, but they were obviously sadly mistaken. As well, the Canadian divorce rate has increased more than 5 times in the same period, with more than 200 now occurring every day. **OUR HOMES HAVE BECOME A BATTLEGROUND, AND VERBAL ABUSE IS THE WEAPON OF CHOICE IN MANY FAMILIES.**
- Jesus taught that there is little difference between murder, gossip and verbal abuse, because they all flow from the same source – a hateful heart. And they all kill! There's more than one way to murder someone! Here's what Jesus said about command #6:
- **Matthew 5:21-22 (NEB)** ²¹ You have learned that our forefathers were told, "Do not commit murder; anyone who commits murder must be brought to judgment." ²² But what I tell you is this: Anyone who nurses anger against his brother must be brought to judgment. If he abuses his brother he must answer for it to the court; if he sneers at him he will have to answer for it in the fires of hell.
- When unresolved anger is present in a relationship, it will not rest until it has displayed itself in a hateful attitude that demeans the other person. The Aramaic word "RACA" that appears in the KJV means "good for nothing." **When MURDERERS kill, they usurp God's right to measure a man's DAYS. But when ABUSERS kill, they usurp God's right to measure a man's WORTH.**
- **1 John 3:15 (CEV)** If you hate each other, you are murderers, and we know that murderers do not have eternal life.
- A Christian home should not exemplify this kind of behavior! So what happens when the inevitable conflicts come? Here are some great pointers on how to have **F.I.G.H.T.S.**
 - **F - Face each other**
 - Walking off or involving yourself in something else leaves no room for discussion because you are absent
 - **Proverbs 15:1 (CEV)** A kind answer soothes angry feelings, but harsh words stir them up.
 - **I - Ignore distractions**
 - Don't resort to "rabbit trails" to throw your spouse off the subject and keep you from facing the facts

- **James 1:19 (NLT)** *My dear brothers and sisters, be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.*
- **G - Guard your tongue**
 - Once personal attacks or name-calling begin, your spouse is too busy defending themselves to listen to you
 - **James 3:6 (NLT)** *And the tongue is a flame of fire. It is full of wickedness that can ruin your whole life. It can turn the entire course of your life into a blazing flame of destruction, for it is set on fire by hell itself.*
- **H - Halt the history**
 - Bringing up the past tells your spouse that nothing will ever change and the past has not been forgiven
 - **Luke 6:37 (CEV)** *Jesus said: Don't judge others, and God won't judge you. Don't be hard on others, and God won't be hard on you. Forgive others, and God will forgive you.*
- **T - Touch**
 - Somehow this position softens the heart, making us more vulnerable, reasonable and caring
 - **Ephesians 4:31-32 (CEV)** ³¹ *Stop being bitter and angry and mad at others. Don't yell at one another or curse each other or ever be rude.* ³² *Instead, be kind and merciful, and forgive others, just as God forgave you because of Christ.*
- **S - Stay in there**
 - Surgeons can't quit while there is an open wound, or they invite infection – finish the fight the same day
 - **Ephesians 4:26-27 (NLT)** ²⁶ *And don't sin by letting anger gain control over you. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry,* ²⁷ *for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil.*
- Do you feel like you've broken God's sixth commandment in some way? If we don't "VALUE THE INDIVIDUAL" in the way God says, we become murderers in His sight. **But God forgives murderers if they repent!** In fact, most of the Bible was written by three men who were once murderers: Paul, David and Moses.
- **1 John 1:9** *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*