



Lecture # 4 Part 2

The Ten Commandments, The Laws Governing Man's Duty To Others (Part 6):

Commandment Six Concerns Man's Life—Never Murder, Exodus 20:13

The Sixth Commandment Sanctity of Human Life

“Lo Tirtzah” (Exodus 20:13) “Thou shalt not murder”

DEEPER STUDY # 1

Exodus 20:13 (BHS)

¹³ לֹא תִרְצַח: ט

“Lo Tirtzah”

Exodus 20:13 (KJV)

¹³ “Thou shalt not **kill**.”

Exodus 20:13 (NASB)

¹³ “You shall not **murder**.”

(Exodus 20:13) Abortion— Children— Pregnancy— Unborn, The— Murder—

Ministry: abortion, the killing of unborn babies, is one of the major indictments against the human race down through the centuries. The sanctity of life has been and still is under lethal attack. Tragically, the tide of public opinion usually runs counter to the clear commandment of God, “**You shall not kill.**” Because abortion is legal in so many societies and is so prevalent, it is being discussed at length here.

1. What does the Bible say about the creation of man and the fetus or unborn baby in the womb?

2. What does the medical profession say about the fetus or unborn child in the mother's womb? The excellent Bible teacher **Stuart Briscoe** says this:

“Physicians have given us a wide variety of suggestions about when the fetus becomes human. Seven of them are outlined by **Oliver O'Donovan** and quoted in **Norman Anderson's *Issues of Life and Death***.

“1) The first group says the fetus becomes fully human at the point of conception. Among those some would say ‘the point of conception’ rather unguardedly, while others would describe it not as a moment, but a process that we cannot accurately measure. But both would agree that, whenever it takes place, the child becomes invested with the divine image.”



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“2) Others claim that the problem with the first theory is that 50 percent of all impregnated ova disappear in the natural course of events. If that is the case, then 50 percent of unborn, unformed, unimplanted ova have the divine image and simply drift off into eternity without having existed in any sense that is meaningful to us. These people state that the person starts to be formed at implantation; before that it has no meaningful existence at all.”

“3) A third group says the fetus becomes human when it takes human shape. They say it will measure at least three centimeters, which will happen between forty-five and forty-nine days after conception.”

“4) Still another group claims the fetus becomes human at animation. Old-time theologians used to try to figure out when the body got the soul and when the soul left. They thought of the body having a soul, as opposed to thinking that humans are body, soul, and spirit. When it came to animation, people believed—and in some circumstances still do believe—that a time exists when the fetus becomes ensouled. To give you an idea how things have changed, Aristotle said that took place twenty-five to forty days after conception for the male, but fifty to eighty days after conception for the female.”

“5) A fifth way of thinking says the fetus becomes human at viability—the point at which it could survive without its mother. We have a problem with this today because with our rapidly advancing technology the fetus's viability point changes all the time. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor said, 'Fetal viability in the first trimester of pregnancy may be possible in the not too distant future.' If that happens, it will make the Supreme Court's ruling palpable nonsense.”

“6) Another set of people would try to get the problem out of the way simply by declaring the fetus human at birth, not before. If so, how do you take into account the biblical passages we've considered?”

“7) Finally, some would claim that the fetus becomes fully human one year after birth. They say that at this stage the human child is comparable to all other animals at the moment of birth, because human children are much more helpless than other animals.”

3. Now, when does the unborn child become a human being? When is the fetus made in the image of God? Having looked at what the Bible says and at what different people in the medical profession say, when does the fetus actually become human? **Stuart Briscoe** gives an excellent discussion of this question as well.

“All this speculation leaves us in a great, big fog—because when we look at Scripture, medical science, and our knowledge, we find it very difficult to pinpoint the moment the unborn becomes a human made in the image of God.



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Because of this difficulty, people argue about whether the fetus is a person, is fully human, is subhuman, or is potentially human. Those in favor of aborting call it subhuman. They would compare it to an appendix—simply a pile of useless tissue, lacking importance. In the light of Scripture, we cannot accept this position under any circumstances.

Despite the complexity of the issue and the degree of uncertainty that surrounds it, if we allow the fetus to go full term, it will become a human being. Therefore under no circumstances should we feel comfortable in agreeing to any callous or careless interference with that. If I cannot categorically say when something is made in God's image, I'm not even going to get close to tampering with it. It would seem we need to take that minimal position at the very least."

4. What about the mother whose life is in danger if she bears the child? Or whose unborn child is due to rape or incest? Or who had an abortion without any knowledge of what God says about the mother? Are we as believers to minister to them? Again, **Stuart Briscoe's** discussion of this point is so excellent that it is well worth quoting at length:

"If we are in favor of life, we must favor not only the life of the unborn, but also that of the mother. We need to express concern for the mother, her physical well-being, her emotional situation, and her spiritual state.

We need to care for the young woman whom we tell, 'In having an abortion, you murdered something made in the image of God.'

- a. "What will that do to her emotions?"
- b. "How does that affect her spiritually?"
- c. "How can she look the world in the face again?"

"If we aggressively go after women who have had abortions, we may well drive them to the point of emotional breakdown or even suicide. Among those who have experienced abortions, there exists a high incidence of depression and an increasingly high level of suicide. It seems to me that if we call ourselves prolife, we must be prolife for the unborn and the born as well. We've got to be for the fetus and for the mother, which complicates the abortion issue quite dramatically."

"In some cases that means we must balance out the rights of the unborn against those of the living."

- a. "The Roman Catholics have arrived at a simple answer for this: They see the rights of the fetus as the primary ones."
- b. "Those in the feminist tradition and with more liberal thinking call that nonsense, saying the rights of the living are far more important than the rights of the potentially living."
- c. "Others who grapple with the Word of God ask, 'How do we put these together?'"



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“Can we countenance abortion on demand? Emphatically no! Can we ban abortion, period, for all circumstances and conditions? It would seem to me that by doing so we could get ourselves in situations where we cannot adequately deal with the needs for the life of the mother and the life of the unborn. Some people would probably agree that if the mother has a very major medical problem, and carrying the child threatens her life, action needs to be taken. To balance this out, let me quote a British physician: ‘In forty years of gynecological and obstetric practice, I can only remember a handful of occasions in which the mother’s life was in danger because of the birth of the fetus.’ We need to bear that in mind.

“I believe we must uphold the sanctity of life for both the born and the unborn. I believe we must take that position. If we wish to take a stand for the rights of the unborn, potentially made in the image of God, we must be ready at the same time to care for those who have had abortions and feel depression and overwhelming guilt and who might commit suicide. We need to cultivate compassion for both. When we persuade women not to abort the unborn, we should be prepared to help with the steps of the pregnancy that follow. But we also need to aid those who need forgiveness—we must help human lives in many dimensions, not only in the right to be born”

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(Exodus 20:13) Suicide— Murder— Ministry: suicide is viewed differently by different people and societies.

For example.....

1. Can a Christian believer commit suicide? Become so despondent, depressed, and discouraged that he takes his own life?

2. Can a person be justified if he is so heroic that he undertakes a suicide mission for his nation or for some great cause? This has happened often down through history. The Japanese kamikaze pilots of the Second World War are a prime example. In fact, many of the surviving men who have fought in war would know of men who gave themselves to undertake suicidal missions.



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One thing is sure: a deliberate suicide *to escape* this life with all its trials and problems is a desperate crime, a crime that should never be committed. Suicide happens, happens far too often, but it is never the answer. God has stamped His image upon every human life, and no person should ever destroy himself.

There are three strong reasons why a person should never commit suicide.

1. God forbids murder, and suicide is the murdering of oneself.

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Romans 13:9 (NASB)

⁹ “For this, “YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.”

1 Peter 4:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ “Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler.”