

Heidelberg Catechism LORD'S DAY 40

Q105. What is God's will for you in the sixth commandment?

A. I am not to belittle, hate, insult, or kill my neighbor—not by my thoughts, my words, my look or gesture, and certainly not by actual deeds—¹ and I am not to be party to this in others; rather, I am to put away all desire for revenge.² I am not to harm or recklessly endanger myself either.³ Prevention of murder is also why government is armed with the sword.⁴

1. Matt. 5:21–22 – “You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder,’ and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment, and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council, and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell of fire.”

Gen. 9:6 – “Whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human shall that person's blood be shed, for in his own image God made humans.”

Matt. 26:52 – “Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place, for all who take the sword will die by the sword.”

2. Eph. 4:26 – “Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,”

Rom. 12:19 – “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord.’”

Matt. 5:25 – “Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison.”

Matt. 18:35 – “So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

3. Rom. 13:14 – “Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”

Col. 2:23 – “These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-imposed piety, humility, and severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in checking self-indulgence.”

Sirach 3:27* – “A stubborn mind will be burdened by troubles, and the sinner adds sin to sins.”

Matt. 4:7 – “Jesus said to him, ‘Again it is written, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”’”

4. Gen. 9:6 – “Whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human shall that person's blood be shed, for in his own image God made humans.”

Exod. 21:14 – “But if someone willfully attacks and kills another by treachery, you shall take the killer from my altar for execution.”

Matt. 26:52 – “Then Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword back into its place, for all who take the sword will die by the sword.’”

Rom. 13:4 – “for it is God's agent for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the agent of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer.”

*Sirach is a deuterocanonical book, treated with respect but not as canonical by the 16th century reformers.

Q106. Does this commandment refer only to murder?

A. By forbidding murder God teaches us that he hates the root of murder: envy,¹ hatred,² anger,³ vindictiveness. In God's sight all such are disguised forms of murder.⁴

1. Rom. 1:29 – “They were filled with every kind of injustice, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips,”
2. 1 John 2:9 – “Whoever says, ‘I am in the light,’ while hating a brother or sister, is still in the darkness.”
1 John 2:11 – “But whoever hates a brother or sister is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and does not know the way to go, because the darkness has brought on blindness.”
3. James 2:[13] – “For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.”
James 1:20 – “for human anger does not produce God’s righteousness.”
Gal. 5:20 – “idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions,”
4. 1 John 3:15 – “All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them.”

Q107. Is it enough then that we do not murder our neighbor in any such way?

A. No. By condemning envy, hatred, and anger God wants us to love our neighbors as ourselves,¹ to be patient, peace-loving, gentle,² merciful,³ and friendly toward them,⁴ to protect them from harm as much as we can,⁵ and to do good even to our enemies.⁶

1. Matt. 22:39 – “And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”
Matt. 7:12 – “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”
2. Eph. 4:2 – “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,”
Gal. 6:1–2 – “My brothers and sisters, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”
Matt. 5:9 – “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”
Rom. 12:18 – “If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”
3. Matt. 5:7 – “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.”
Luke 6:36 – “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”
4. Rom. 12:10 – “love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor.”
5. Exod. 23:5 – “When you see the donkey of one who hates you struggling under its burden and you would hold back from setting it free, you must help to set it free.”
6. Matt. 5:44–45 – “But I say to you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven, for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.”
Rom. 12:20–21 – “Instead, ‘if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink, for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.’”