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# The Sixth Commandment

Family Study Guides • The Ten Commandments Series

# Six

## The Sixth Commandment



*“You shall not murder.”*

*We suggest that as you use this Family Study Guide, select and focus on a main portion or two that you feel will help your family’s study into the commandment. You do not need to cover every aspect, discussion or scripture presented in this guide. Select the aspects or principles most relevant or helpful to your family.*

*Additionally, each Study Guide has suggested lessons and activities that can be used in a classroom setting. These are found at the end of each guide.*

### **Objectives:**

- Discover how God intends for us to understand and apply the scriptures related to the Sixth Commandment, “You shall not kill.”
- Review how Jesus expanded on the Sixth Commandment to help show how to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39).



### **Memory Verse**

“Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him” (1 John 3:15).

While Exodus 20:13 states simply “Thou shalt not kill” (King James Version), the Bible reveals that the Sixth Commandment is vitally important and broader than many people understand. This Family Study Guide will help you explore the deeper meaning of this commandment.

### **1. Old Testament Example**

The story of Cain and Abel shows how an attitude of jealousy can lead to hatred (1 John 3:15 shows that hatred is murder). Read or summarize the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4:1-16 from a child-friendly Bible version.

Use the following talking points to review and study the story of Cain and Abel:

- a. The KJV Bible says “Thou shalt not kill.” Is God’s intent in this commandment that we should not kill animals? How would you use the story of Cain and Abel defend your answer?

b. Cain and Abel were showing their love and respect for God by giving an offering. This was one way people worshiped God at that time. God wanted animal sacrifices because they were symbolic of the sacrifice Jesus would make for mankind.

- Whose offering was pleasing to God?
- Why do you think Abel's sacrifice was more pleasing to God than Cain's?
- Was Cain happy that God was pleased with his brother Abel? Can you think why he may not have been happy?

c. Instead of being happy for his brother, or thinking of how his own offering could be better, Cain became jealous of his brother and was very unhappy.

- How would you define the word "jealousy?" (If needed, give a kid-friendly definition, including concepts such as being resentful and envious of someone's success, achievements or belongings; comes from suspicious fears or envious resentment.)
- Ask family members if they have ever been jealous of someone. What attitudes did it generate? (It is not unusual for a child to take a toy, iPad, etc. from another family member or friend, which can cause a fight or war of words to break out. This is very similar to what happened with Cain and Abel.)



d. What **could** Cain have done to make things better between him and God? (Genesis 4:6-7) What **should** Cain have done? (Cain should have tried to give a right offering in the first place and then change when he learned God was not happy. He should not have been jealous of his brother for his brother's good deed.)

e. Do you think God was fair with Cain? Did He treat Abel as His favorite? Talk about why God may not have been pleased with Cain. Show from verse 7 that God does not show favoritism, but is very fair.

f. What do you think is going to happen next? Will Cain tell God he is sorry for feeling this way? Will Cain apologize to his brother? (Read verse 8.) Being jealous can bring feelings of anger and hatred and even end up hurting others, even family members.

g. Did Cain try to lie his way out of his sin? (Read verses 9-12.) Cain ended up receiving a curse to show that jealousy and envy can lead to hatred and murder, which is wrong.

h. At what point in this story would you say Cain violated the 6th commandment? Where in this story could Cain have made a different decision?

i. Can you think of a time when you had an opportunity to make a different decision? How did your choice at that point make a difference in what happened at the end?

## 2. Christ's New Testament Example

Jesus warned that if we get angry without cause, we are in danger of being punished. If we hate our brother, God says that, in principle, it is murder. We can violate God's Law by attitude and intent.

Read Matthew 5:21-22 and discuss the following:

a. What does "Raca" mean? Some Bible versions say this in verse 22:

- "And if you call someone a fool [idiot; moron] . . ."
- "You cursed fool! [You empty-headed idiot!] . . ."
- "Whoever speaks contemptuously and insultingly to his brother"
- "You good-for-nothing!"

b. Why does Jesus compare the statements in Matthew 5:22 to murder?

- Read Ephesians 4:31-32.
- How do these verses compliment what Jesus said in Matthew 5:22?

c. What does it mean to "be in danger of the judgment?"

- Why is the penalty for calling someone a "fool" or an "idiot" so severe?
- Why should murder and being angry with a brother have the same penalty?

d. Why is it so important to God that we live in peace with one another?

- "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live in peace with all people" (Romans 12:18, International Standard Version).
- "But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you" (Luke 6:27-28).
- If Cain had used this attitude, how would it have changed his entire life?
- What do these verses teach us about using personal hurts and how that is spiritual "murder?"

d. Is it easy to follow this commandment taught by Jesus?

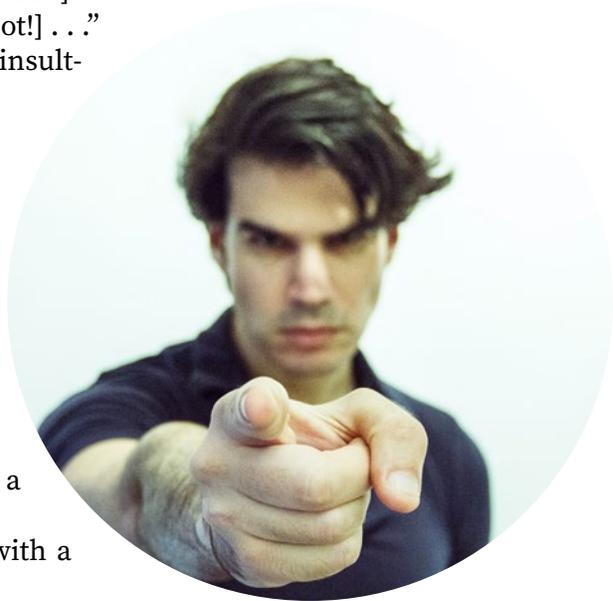
- What has been your experience?
- Do you think such love is natural?
- If not, where does one get such love?

## 3. What does this commandment mean for us?

Jesus magnified the sixth commandment by showing that the proper attitude towards human beings is more than just refraining from killing those who try to harm you. We need to be happy when someone does good things, is blessed or is honored. We should not be jealous of others.

Remember Cain and his attitude toward his brother. Remember Christ's example while he was on earth.

Since Jesus came to save all life—who are we to take that life away?



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## Project: Write a Report

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### What is Character Assassination?

A good example to discuss from the New Testament is the character assassination against Jesus Christ. Beginning with His birth until His death the Pharisees would find ways to talk badly about Him or accuse Him of breaking God's laws or misinterpreting the Bible.

Discuss how Christ's reputation and character were "murdered."

How did Jesus respond? Read 1 Peter 2:21-24.

Assign your family members to give a short report on "character assassination."



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## Family Discussions and Activities

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### **The Sanctity of Life**

Why is human life sacred?

- “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27).
- “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:16-17).

### **Defining Murder**

How do you define “murder”? (Murder is the killing of another person. Murder begins with hate and complete disregard for a precious life that God gave to humans. To murder is to not show love.)

- What does “jealousy” mean? Think about how you might be jealous of someone (a sibling, friend or classmate). What should you do about that? Talk about how God’s way is not being jealous. How does thankfulness help us in these situations?
- Why is gossip, slander, and making fun of someone a type of murder?
- Would recklessly endangering a person’s life violate this commandment? Why or why not?
- Read Leviticus 19:16-18 from different Bible translations and discuss how the verses can apply to our topic of “murder.”

### **Consequences**

Why is it important to have consequences for law breaking when someone breaks laws? What would happen if we did not have laws against killing another person?

### **Bible Examples**

Give an example from the life of Jesus or Paul where they did not get angry when someone treated them badly. How did they react instead? Do you think you could do that?

### **Ten Commandments Journal**

If you are keeping a journal, as a family write your thoughts about the Sixth commandment.



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## Additional Resources for Your Family Studies

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### **UCG Study Aid “The Ten Commandments”**

<https://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets/the-ten-commandments>

### **UCG Teen Bible Study**

<https://www.ucg.org/teen-bible-study/teen-bible-study-volume-3-ten-commandments/sixth-commandment-do-not-murder>

### **Video: The 10 Commandments in the New Testament**

<https://www.ucg.org/beyond-today/beyond-today-daily/the-10-commandments-in-the-new-testament-part-6>



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## Two Challenging Conversations Related to the Sixth Commandment

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### **Suicide**

If you feel that your family would benefit from a serious discussion about suicide, the United Church of God has many helpful resources available. We suggest you start with this short article which provides links to other resources that would be helpful to your family.

<https://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/bible-questions-and-answers/what-does-the-bible-say-about-someone-who-commits-suicide>

### **Abortion**

Another important issue that parents need to discuss with their children at the appropriate time is the topic of abortion. You may want to use the following article from the *Compass Check* Magazine as a starting place.

<https://www.ucg.org/members/compass-check/how-do-we-approach-abortion>

Some of you may also find this article helpful in addressing abortion with your smaller children:  
<https://freerepublic.com/focus/news/830540/posts>

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## Optional Classroom Activities

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### Discussion: Bullying

*Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.*

—U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

What do people do when they bully someone? Bullying often involves name-calling and spreading hurtful information (true or false) about others. Wouldn't ridicule and putting someone down like this be like calling someone a fool? Talk about bullying—whether one is being bullied, bullying others or witnessing bullying. Read and consider Matthew 5:21-22.

- Find more resources on bullying at <https://www.stopbullying.gov/index.html>
- Watch the video by Nick Vujicic Video on bullying and discuss how it ties into Matthew 5:21. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qrE2hmITVoNick>

### Discussion: What would you do?

a. A kid on the bus is being mean to you and calling you names. It makes you so mad and you want to hurt him.

- What should you do and think before you act by pushing him or calling him names back?
- What commandment should we be thinking of?
- How should we react to anger-provoking situations?
- Is it hard to control anger? Why or why not?
- Read Matthew 5:21-22.

b. You're really close with your group of friends. One person in the group starts to regularly gossip about another friend in your group, and even admits to anonymously posting mean comments on social media about the way your friend looks.

- How do you handle the situation?
- You realize that you have been bullying people in order to feel better about yourself or have control. What do you do now?

c. Discuss the examples set by Joan and Bobby below:

- Joan tries to be friendly with everyone and lets others make decisions when they are playing even if that wasn't what she wanted to do.
- Bobby gets mad at people a lot and often stomps away yelling "I hate you!"

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## Sixth Commandment Summary Lesson

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### Learning Goal

Describe the ways the Sixth Commandment can be violated or kept according to Jesus Christ's New Testament explanation of murder.

### Why do we keep this commandment? (2 min)

What is the difference between what someone might think breaking the Sixth Commandment includes and what it really includes? Why might we violate the Sixth Commandment, and what can we do to keep it instead? (Ask students to think about the answer in their head.)

### What is this commandment? (5-8 min)

It may seem like the Sixth Commandment is a no-brainer, and that most people wouldn't actually violate this commandment. Start with the students' definition of murder according to what they learned. Then read:

- Exodus 20:13
- Matthew 5:21-24
- 1 John 3:15

Discuss the difference between what people might think this commandment means and what it actually means. To kill or murder can include angry or hateful thoughts, rude comments, name calling, gossip, bullying, physical aggression, etc. How often is it possible that we might do one of those things?

### Case Study (15 min)

Show students the YouTube video clip of Nick Vujicic on bullying: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qrE2hmlTVo>

Ask students to look for one "takeaway" lesson before showing the clip. Then ask for a few "takeaways" after the video.

### Apply It (10-15 min)

Break students into pairs or small groups and give each a scenario. For each scenario, have them answer: How is this breaking the Sixth commandment? How can we keep the Sixth commandment in this situation? Give five minutes for discussion. Then have each group report what they discussed.

- Your brother and sister are playing with you, and they decide they are going to play a different game than the one you picked. It's super frustrating. You think about stomping away and yelling "I hate you!" since they're not listening to you anymore. Maybe that will get them to do what you want. How do you handle the situation?
- You're really close with your group of friends. Then you notice one friend that everyone liked stops hanging out with you. One person in the group starts to regularly gossip about that person, and even says they post mean comments on social media about the way your

friend looks. How do you handle the situation?

- A kid on the bus is being mean to you and calling you names. It makes you so mad and you want to hurt him or call names back. What can you do to handle the situation without breaking the Sixth Commandment?

- When you take the bus home from school, you push people or call them names so other people don't mess with you. You think it makes you look good in front of other people. Plus, you get attention by being "funny." What do you do now?

### **Reviewing the "Why" (5 min)**

Call on one or two volunteers to answer each question.

**Person 1:** What is the difference between what someone might think breaking the Sixth commandment includes and what it really includes?

**Person 2:** Why might someone violate the Sixth commandment?

**Person 3 and anyone else in group:** How can we be different and keep this commandment?

Conclude by telling students that they are the light of the world and they can be different by showing love instead of anger or hatred.



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## Cain and Abel Coloring Activity

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### True or False?

Circle "TRUE" if the sentence is correct and "FALSE" if it is wrong.

The brothers' names were Caleb and Abel.	TRUE	FALSE
Abel's offering pleased God.	TRUE	FALSE
Cain was angry at Abel.	TRUE	FALSE
Abel killed Cain.	TRUE	FALSE
God punished Cain.	TRUE	FALSE
At the end of the story, Cain stayed at home.	TRUE	FALSE