

Exodus 20:13 Choose life!



A very short verse, but, as you would probably expect, a very profound one. So not quite as simple to keep as you might expect at first reading.

Where do these laws fit into the big scheme of things in Exodus, at this half-way point of the book? God has delivered his people ... but now he is preparing them for him to dwell among them (Exodus 29:46).

➤ **What doesn't it ban?**

I don't think that this verse bans ...

... eating meat (Mark 7:19)

... war

... capital punishment (Genesis 9:6),

though you can in good conscience be a vegetarian, a pacifist and an abolitionist (or any combination of the three) for other reasons. Would you (or are you)? Can you give a *Biblical* reason for this? Do you need to?

➤ **Don't be limited to the literal**

Jesus plainly extended this beyond the literal in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:21ff). There is an "axis of evil", running from anger all the way through to murder.

Do you know what "presses your buttons"?

How righteous do you really think any of your anger is?

(remember James 1:20)

What steps are you taking to challenge anger in your life?

"Jesus is teaching that if every person dealt with anger quickly and rightly, there would be no need for the Sixth Word at all"

Jen Wilkin, *Ten Words to Live By*

➤ **Flip it over!**

Are we living in "a society of death" today?

Instead of taking life, how can we affirm it?

"Because we are accepted in the Beloved, we will not be content to simply be not-murderers, or not-contemptuous, or not-angry. We will not merely refrain from taking life — we will run toward giving it. Let us read in the sixth word's prohibition of murder the exhortation to take every care to preserve life. Let us run to be life-protectors and esteem-givers and peacemakers."

Jen Wilkin, *Ten Words to Live By*