



GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH

God's Law and Our Hearts

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Many people are familiar with the Ten Commandments found in the Bible. It is not a surprise that a list of 10 commandments would include one that says:

"Thou shalt not murder"

The principle found in this command, that murder is wrong, is almost universally accepted by humans all over the world. It is clear and it makes sense. Yet when Jesus came to earth, He brought clarification to God's intent when He gave this commandment. Jesus said the following:

"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell."

(Matthew 5:21-22)

Jesus took the time to expound upon this commandment. He didn't nullify it, but instead, clarified its full meaning.

He shows us that our anger towards others, our negative statements about them, and our negative actions regarding them are just as bad as murder in God's eyes. This seems radical.

Why would Jesus make such a statement? In Jesus time, the religious leaders had been instructing the people for generations regarding the meaning and application of God's laws. In a lot of ways they had consolidated them into a series of rules and regulations, that if you followed, you would be ok with God. They failed to connect the condition of one's heart to their actions, nor did they catch that God looks at the heart of an individual even more closely than their actions. Jesus taught that it is from one's heart that evil actions come from. His teaching showed the spirit of the law supersedes the letter of the law

God is after our hearts. He is very concerned about what goes on inside us. His intent is that we wouldn't just follow a bunch of rules so we can feel right with Him. He wants us to be changed on the inside. He wants us to pay attention to what we think, what our attitudes are, as well as what we say and do. He actually judges and evaluates people by what is in their heart. This is reflected in the following passage:

"For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

-1 Samuel 16:7

If God is so concerned with what is in our hearts and judges us accordingly, shouldn't we be motivated to have hearts that are pleasing to Him? Shouldn't we have a desire to do all we can to make sure that what is in our hearts is pleasing to Him?

The following passages talk about the condition of the heart. They also elaborate on the meaning of the command "Thou shalt not murder" that God gave us.

As you read them, take the time to consider the following:

- What is the condition of my heart?
- Why is it so easy to give us a pass on the things in our hearts that are not as they should be?
- Why is God so concerned about the condition of our hearts?
- What does it mean to have a heart after God?
- How can we get our heart "cleaned"?
- How do these passages further explain the meaning behind "Thou shalt not murder"?
- How can you put the truths in these passages into practice in your life?

**THE CONDITION OF
THE HEART**

MATTHEW 12:33-37
MATTHEW 15:18-20
PSALM 51:10
JEREMIAH 17:9-10
HEBREWS 4:12-13
EZEKIEL 36:25-27

**THE DEEPER MEANING OF
"THOU SHALT NOT
MURDER"**

MATTHEW 5:21-26
MATTHEW 5:43-48
ROMANS 12:9-21
ROMANS 14:19
MATTHEW 5:38-42
EPHESIANS 4:26
1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-8



Notes

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