



# GOD VALUES LIFE

*God values human life and expects His people to value it as well.*

## **DEUTERONOMY 5:17; 19:4-13**

Do you ever become tired of people on television or on the Internet trying to convince people some sins are all right? They say abortion is OK. They say sex before marriage is normal. They say all people are guilty until they can prove they are innocent. Or they say the highest value is personal freedom. Almost never does our culture turn to God for answers. As believers, the only place we can find the true answers is in God's Word. He gave us rules to live by. Some of the rules may be hard to understand, but they are always fair.

Today's session teaches us God's view of human life. God made people in His own image. Whatever else that might mean, it means people are of great value. The laws and rules we see in Deuteronomy help us understand what God thinks about this subject. Really, there should be no doubt. One of God's laws teaches us to never murder. Today we will study about God's command that all human life is sacred. We should protect life from pre-birth to old age.

# DEUTERONOMY 5:17; 19:4-13

17 “You must not **murder** ④ anyone.”

4 This is the rule for someone who kills another person and runs to **one of these cities** ⑤ in order to save his life. But the person must have killed a neighbor without meaning to, not out of hatred. 5 For example, suppose someone goes into the forest with a **neighbor** ⑥ to cut wood and swings an ax to cut down a tree. If the ax head flies off the handle, hitting and killing the neighbor, the one who killed him may run to one of these cities to save his life. 6 Otherwise, the dead person’s relative who has the duty of punishing a murderer might be angry and **chase him**. ⑦ If the city is far away, the relative might catch and kill the person, even though he should not be killed because there was no intent to kill his neighbor. 7 This is why I command you to choose these three cities. 8-9 Carefully obey all these laws I’m giving you today. Love the LORD your God, and always do what he wants you to do. Then the LORD your God will enlarge your land as he promised your ancestors, giving you the whole land **he promised to them**. ⑧ After that, choose three more cities of safety 10 so that innocent people will not be killed in your land, the land that the LORD your God is giving you as your own. By doing this you will not be guilty of allowing the death of innocent people. 11 But if a person hates his neighbor and, after hiding and waiting, attacks and kills him and then runs to one of these cities for safety, 12 the **elders of his own city** ⑨ should send for the murderer. They should bring the person back from the city of safety and hand him over to the relative who has the duty of **punishing the murderer**. ⑩ 13 Show no mercy. You must remove from Israel the guilt of murdering innocent people so that things will go well for you.

- a. Murder means to kill someone because you meant to kill them. The Hebrew word is not the same as kill like what might happen in an accident.
- b. God set aside cities to be safe places for people who accidentally killed someone. God commanded them to divide the lands He gave them into three sections. God told them to choose safe cities in each section.
- c. Neighbor means any person who is not a relative. Usually it was a person who also lived nearby.
- d. God gave protection for an innocent person from angry relatives of the person who was killed.
- e. God promised their ancestor, Abraham, much more land than they would conquer at first. God gave them a requirement in order to possess the larger land. They must love the Lord their God and faithfully obey Him.
- f. This is not a relative that hunts down the murdered and gets revenge. This is an action by leaders of government rightly punishing an intentional murderer.
- g. Moses emphasized the cities would not protect guilty persons.

# EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. What makes human life so valuable?
2. What does it mean to murder?
3. How is murder different from accidental killing?
4. What is the major requirement for a person to run to the cities of safety?
5. Who do these verses say should be responsible for punishing a person who kills someone on purpose? Is that true today?
6. Who is responsible for deciding punishment in today's world?
7. What were God's requirements for success for the Israelites?
8. Why is it important to protect people who are innocent?
9. What are the responsibilities of believers to ensure all life is sacred? How can we accomplish this responsibility?

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## **BIBLE SKILL:** *Matching statements and verses.*

Below are Bible verses about murder. Read each verse. Draw a line from the verse to the words that are in the verse.

1 John 3:15	God made humans in His own image.
Exodus 20:13	You have heard it said...you must not murder anyone.
Genesis 9:6	You must not murder anyone.
Matthew 5:21	Everyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer.

## IN MY CONTEXT

- God forbids premeditated murder.
- God provides grace and protection.
- God's people must work for justice.

**How can you explain the idea of “premeditated murder” to a Deaf friend? As a believer in Jesus, why is it so important that you understand this law?**

**Discuss with your group how God provides grace and protection today. How can you help other people know God's grace and protection?**

**What do you think justice means for Christians? How can you help innocent people have true justice in the world today?**

## MEMORY VERSE

You must not murder anyone. – Deuteronomy 5:17

# DAY ONE

## **Read Deuteronomy 5:17, looking to understand the word “murder.”**

In Deuteronomy, Moses reminded the Israelites of the commands God gave him on Mount Horeb (also called Mount Sinai). This included the command not to murder. Murder means to make a plan and then kill someone on purpose. When someone kills another person accidentally, it is called manslaughter. Manslaughter is not murder. When one person kills another by accident this is a terrible thing. But it is not the same as murder.

There are other times when killing is not murder or manslaughter. Sometimes a death happens because of self-defense. The Bible permits governments and elected authorities to punish by putting someone to death. That is known today as capital punishment or punishment by death (Deuteronomy 13:5,9; Exodus 21:12,14-17). Killing in times of war is tragic, but it is not the same as murder (Deuteronomy 7:2; 20:13,17). Murder is never permitted.

God created human beings in His image. If a person murders another person, it is a sin against God Himself (Genesis 9:6).

**How do you explain the idea of murder? How do abortion, euthanasia, and assisted suicide break this command from God?**

# DAY TWO

## **Read Deuteronomy 19:4, finding why God made cities of safety.**

God gave instructions about cities of safety. (See Deuteronomy 19:1-3.) God told Moses to divide the land into three sections. He should choose a city in each area to be a city of safety. The cities must be in places where a person could run to them quickly. Any person from any tribe could run to a city of safety.

The purpose of these cities was to protect someone who killed another person by accident. Verse 4 is clear—the safe city was not available for someone who committed a murder. It was for someone who accidentally killed another person. The custom of that time was the family of the

dead person could chase the innocent person, and they could kill him in revenge for their family member's death.

Moses wanted the people to understand that this custom was not right. If the death was an accident, the family should not do a revenge killing. They could not go into the cities of safety to get the innocent person. In all situations, God forbids premeditated murder. God created humans in His image. It is the main reason God does not allow murder.

**Why is murder wrong? How can you help protect innocent life today?**

## DAY THREE

**Read Deuteronomy 19:5-7, thinking about God's grace.**

Moses gave an example of accidental killing. Moses' example tells about a death that happened when an ax head came off the handle and killed another man. In this example there was no intent to kill. This was not murder but an accident.

A young Deaf woman was driving home from work. She obeyed the speed limits and other traffic laws. A car went through a red light in front of her. She tried to put on her brakes but could not stop in time. Her car hit the smaller car on the driver's side door. The man in the smaller car was killed. The Deaf woman's car accidentally killed the other driver. The police came and investigated the accident. They said it was not her fault.

Today law enforcement and the courts decide if a person is guilty of murder. The courts will or will not give punishment. In Old Testament times, it was the responsibility of the family leader to give punishment to a person who killed a member of his family. The cities of safety were established to protect innocent people. They were an example of God's grace in action.

**How does God show grace and protection in our world today?**

## DAY FOUR

### Deuteronomy 19:8-10, underlining two requirements to receive all the land.

Long before Moses' time, God promised Abraham much more land than just Canaan. God promised Abraham that his descendants would have the land from the river of Egypt to the River Euphrates (Genesis 15:18). Fulfilling this promise depended on the Israelites' obedience to God. First, they must love the Lord their God. Then they had to obey all His commands. History shows us they were not able to conquer all the land because they did not keep the promise they made to God.

If God did give this extra land to them, they must choose three more cities of safety. That would be a total of nine cities of safety. They never chose three more cities. God did not give them the rest of the land because they did not obey Him.

The purpose of the new cities was the same as the purpose of the first six cities. A person who killed another person by accident could go to the cities to be safe. God provided these cities as places of grace and protection. They protected the one doing the accidental killing and the dead person's family from being guilty of a revenge murder.

**How can we put together a plan to protect human life in future generations?**

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### **KEY DOCTRINE:** *The life of a person is sacred.*

God created people in His own image. They have thoughts, feelings, and action. A person is very important to God because God made them in His image. Every person has great worth. Even the lives of pre-born babies, very old people, and very sick people are important to God. Every person is worthy of respect and Christian love. It is a sin to take the life of another person. God expects a person who kills another person out of hate to be punished.

## DAY FIVE

### Read Deuteronomy 19:11-13, learning God's value for justice.

The cities of safety were for an innocent person who killed another person by accident. The innocent person did not mean to hurt him. If a person hated someone and murdered him, that person should not be safe in a city of safety even if he fled there.

The Law of Moses ensured proper justice. If a true murder happened, the cities of safety would not stop true justice. You can see how the law protected everyone in this case. The city leaders where the murder happened would judge guilt or innocence. In case of murder, the leaders could send for the killer and bring him back to justice.

The verses in this session help us understand how God feels about life and about justice. Justice means doing the right thing for all people. Justice today could mean doing right for innocent babies. Justice could also be working for right race relationships. All God's people must work together for justice. We must be sure guilty people are punished. We must be sure innocent people are protected.

**What are two ways you can work for justice for innocent people?**

## CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Deuteronomy 5:17; 19:4-13. Meet with one or two members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned. You might meet by VP if you need to.

**Discuss together why God is against murder. What are some cases of murder that happen in our culture today?**

**How would you explain God's grace and protection to your Deaf friends who are not Christians? How does God provide grace and protection today?**

**What can you and your small group do to help victims and innocent people?**





# GOD VALUES LIFE

*Deuteronomy 5:17; 19:4-13*

## PLAN AHEAD

**Pray** for the group. Ask God to help us all have His view of and love for human life.

**Enlist** a volunteer to study the Introduction to Numbers; Deuteronomy and summarize it for the class.

**Look** for places in your community that provide services for pregnant women, children, and elderly people. See if there are volunteer opportunities for your group.

**Choose** some questions from Explore the Text to use for discussion.

## FOCUS ATTENTION

**EXPLAIN** that the next few lessons will come from the Book of Deuteronomy. **INVITE** the volunteer to share the information from the Introduction to Numbers; Deuteronomy.

**ENCOURAGE** the group to find John 3:16 in their Bibles. **SIGN** the verse together. **EXPLAIN** that we usually interpret “the world” to mean people. **ASK:** *How much does God love people? What does that mean for us? How should we feel about human life?*

**EXPLAIN:** *Today is Sanctity of Life Sunday. It is a day to remember that God made people in His image (see Genesis 1:27). We must respect human life because we are made in God’s image.* **ASK:** *How is valuing other people a way of showing we value God and His image?*

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

### 1. The Command (Deuteronomy 5:17)

**CALL FOR** a volunteer to sign Deuteronomy 5:17. **LEAD** in a discussion of the word murder. **EXPLAIN** that murder means to plan with a purpose to kill someone. There is no doubt how God feels about murder.

**ASK:** *What kinds of murder does the world approve today? (Abortion, euthanasia, and doctor-assisted suicide.) Euthanasia means to kill someone who is dying of a sickness or is suffering. Sometimes the person wants to die and asks a doctor to help them by killing them. Abortion is the most common murder that is legal in many countries. ASK: Why do you think laws permit these kinds of murder?*

## 2. Grace (Deuteronomy 19:4-10)

**SIGN** Deuteronomy 19:4-10. God knows all things. He made a plan for the Israelites for the event of accidental death. He knew if a person accidentally killed someone, the dead person's family might want revenge. They might try to kill that person. **ASK:** *What was God's plan? (He told Moses to set up cities where people could go to be safe. Cities like this are called cities of safety or cities of refuge.)*

**NOTICE** in verses 8-9 God reminded the people to love Him and obey Him, then their land would continue to grow. As their country became larger, they were to add more cities for safety. **ASK:** *In verse 10, who are the "innocent people" who needed protection?*

God's plan showed His grace. It showed His desire to protect people.

## 3. Justice (Deuteronomy 19:11-13)

**SIGN** Deuteronomy 19:11-13. **ASK:** *What was God's plan for a murderer? How was it different from an accidental killing? (The murderer must die. If the murderer went to the city to save his life, the elders in the murderer's city could send for him.)*

**EXPLAIN:** *In our world today there are laws and courts to take care of murderers. But we, as God's people, can help people who are weak. Some cannot help themselves. SHARE the information you found about volunteer opportunities in your community. DISCUSS ways to help people respect life as holy.*

## IN MY CONTEXT

**REVIEW** the main points from In My Context in the Personal Study Guide. **DISCUSS** the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share. **CLOSE** with prayer, asking God to help us show respect for all people.