

**Sunday: A Day of Rest**

Exodus 20:8-11

**Honor Father and Mother**

Exodus 20:12

**Do Not Murder!**

Exodus 20:13

**Sexual Purity**

Exodus 20:14



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*Reformed Witness Hour*

([www.reformedwitnesshour.org](http://www.reformedwitnesshour.org))

**Station Listings**

Station	Location	Frequency	Time/day
KARI	Blaine, WA.....	550AM.....	8:00 P.M./Sunday
KCWN	Pella, IA.....	99.9FM.....	3:30 P.M./Sunday
KDCR	Sioux Center, IA.....	88.5FM.....	5:00 P.M./Sunday
KGDN	Tri-Cities Walla Walla, OR.....	101.3FM.....	5:00 P.M./Sunday
KLOH	Pipestone, MN.....	1050AM.....	8:00 A.M./Sunday
KLTT	Denver, CO.....	670AM.....	1:30 P.M./Sunday
KPRO	Riverside, CA.....	1570AM.....	11:30 A.M./Sunday
KSPO	Spokane, WA.....	106.5FM.....	5:00 P.M./Sunday
KTAC	Moses Lake, WA.....	93.9FM.....	5:00 P.M./Sunday
KTBI	Wenatchee/Moses Lake, WA.....	810AM.....	5:00 P.M./Sunday
KTRW	Spokane, WA.....	630AM.....	9:30 A.M./Sunday
KYAK	Yakima, WA.....	930AM.....	5:00 P.M./Sunday
WFDL	Fond Du Lac, WI.....	1170AM.....	8:00 A.M./Sunday
WFUR	Grand Rapids, MI.....	102.9FM.....	8:00 A.M./Sunday
WFUR	Grand Rapids, MI.....	1570AM, 92.9FM ...	4:00 P.M./Sunday
	NYC-Long Island, NY.....	101.5FM, 94.9FM, 104.5FM, 96.5FM ...	8:30 A.M./Sunday
WORD	Pittsburgh, PA.....	101.5FM.....	10:00 A.M./Sunday
WPGF	Carlisle, PA.....	91.3FM.....	8:00 A.M./Sunday
<b>UK</b>			
GOSPEL	Northern Ireland.....	846AM.....	8:30 A.M./Sunday
<b>Canada</b>			
CKNX	Wingham, ON.....	920 AM.....	7:00 A.M./Sunday

**THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR**

March 5, 2017  
No. 3870

Sunday: A Day of Rest  
Rev. Rodney Kley

Dear radio friends,

Today we consider the fourth of the Ten Commandments. We find this in Exodus 20:8-11:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

“Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.” This is one of the ten requirements of the moral law of God. Today, our secular society rejects the idea of a Sabbath Day of rest, and instead this day is used for sports, recreation, work, and every other selfish pursuit of man. Sadly, this has also come into the church. Though they

may go to church for an hour or so on Sunday morning, most who call themselves Christian will use the remainder of the day for themselves—for work or pleasure. Sunday is viewed as no different from any other day of the week.

This is sad. It is sad because it speaks to the spiritual condition of the church and the influence that our secular society has had on the church. The world rejects the idea of a day of rest because it rejects the idea of a creation week. It says that there was no creation in six days, no measurement of time in a seven-day week, no creation of man by God. But instead that all that we have and all that we are today is the result of evolutionary chance. As the church adopts the world views on the origin of all things, it also rejects the idea of a seven-day week, with one of those days set aside by God to be a day of worship and rest.

The world’s teaching of evolution has led to immorality in many other areas of life. Just as it rejects the Sabbath, so it rejects the creation of man

as male and female and rejects the creation of marriage as the union of one man and one woman for life. Sadly, too, this has come into Christian circles.

Some, in relation to the fourth commandment, put it this way: “We are not Sabbatarians.” The implication is, of course, that to teach the requirements of the fourth commandment, is to be legalistic—to teach salvation by works. That sounds like a good argument. We are not under law but under grace. But, in the end, it is a dismissal of any and of all the requirements of the law of God.

Today, I want to begin by giving five reasons that we should still, in our modern day, keep the Sabbath Day, that we should do this on Sunday—the first day of the week—and that we should keep the entire day holy to the Lord by laying aside the normal activities of the labor and work of the other six days, and devoting this day as a day for worship.

The first reason to do that is that God created a seven-day week. Not only did God create this universe in six days and rest on the seventh day, but God created the seven-day week itself as a basic measurement of time. In that creation of a seven-day week, God ordained and set aside one day of the seven as a day of rest. God Himself rested on the seventh-day, not because

He was weary, but as a pattern for man to follow. He created a day of rest because man would need a day of rest—spiritually, mentally, and physically. He created a day of rest as a day for man to find his rest in Him, in God. The first reason to keep this commandment is creation.

The second reason is that the fourth commandment is one of the moral requirements of God’s law. There were, in the Old Testament, also civil and ceremonial laws that had to do with Israel’s life as a society and Israel’s worship with a view to the coming of Jesus Christ. Those civil and ceremonial laws were expansive and comprehensive, and for the most part they passed away with the coming of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. In contrast to those laws that had specifically to do with the life of the nation of Israel, God established His moral law of Ten Commandments, which He wrote with His own finger on two tables of stone to be a permanent statute for all of mankind. The Sabbath requirement is one of those ten permanent, moral requirements. As we look at the fourth commandment from a New Testament perspective, we do acknowledge that there is a ceremonial aspect to the fourth commandment, namely, that the Sabbath was kept on the seventh day of the week. But this does not mean that we dismiss the entire commandment.

in *heart*: for they shall see God. We see here that the battle for purity and the battle for contentment is not only a matter of the mind, but it is a matter of faith. This is a spiritual warfare. In faith we need to think less of the delights of sin and of temporary pleasures and more of the delights of being with God and of seeing Him.

In Lamentations 3:25-27 we read this: “The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.” Think of all the ways that faith is described here: as waiting on God; as seeking God; as hoping in Him; as quietly waiting; as even bearing a yoke.

Contentment. Contentment does not mean that I squash all my desires, but it means that the good desires I have, perhaps a good desire for marriage, for a spouse, these good desires do not consume me. I do not make an idol of something that I do not have. Rather, I rest in the Lord and I find fulfillment in Him. Our strength for doing this, our power to do this, to overcome sexual temptation and to find contentment and to be faithful in marriage, comes in James 4:6 in four simple words: He giveth more grace. God gives grace.

He gives grace upon grace. He gives more grace so that we have power not only to resist temptation, to be faithful in marriage, but also to know that we are forgiven for whatever sins we have committed with regard to this commandment. God’s grace is stronger than any sin. God’s power is greater than any temptation. We must believe that. Then we have hope for overcoming and for victory in the end.

Let us pray.

Father, we give thanks for the gift of human sexuality, that Thou hast made us male and female and that through the rich relationships of marriage, husband and wife coming together, Thou dost give children, not only the responsibilities that come with them but also the joy that there is in family and home. We pray, Lord, for Thy blessing to be on Christian homes and Christian marriages, especially in a day when there is such great opposition to this in our world. We pray this also for the sake of our children and for them as they go forward in the future in this world in which we live. Give us strength in the face of temptation also and satisfaction in our situations in regard to marriage. We pray, for Jesus’ sake, Amen.

Exodus 20:11 says, not that God blessed the seventh day, but that He “blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.” This means that the Sabbath is not necessarily Saturday. But it does mean this, that one day of the seven is created by God as a rest day and that He hallowed that day—He set it apart, which means that He set apart the whole of it as distinct from the other six days as a day of worship and a day of rest. This is what He requires in the fourth commandment.

The third reason we are to keep the Sabbath Day is that this is a pattern and requirement throughout the Scriptures. The prophets, later in the Old Testament, spoke to this. In Isaiah 58:13 and 14, Isaiah contrasts using the day for yourself and for your pleasure and for keeping it your way and according to your words; he contrasts that to using it as God’s and finding your delight in Him and honoring Him in that day. So, when Jesus came, we see that He customarily entered the synagogue on the Sabbath Day to worship God (Luke 4:16). Also we see that in His disputes with the Pharisees, Jesus did not speak dismissively of the Sabbath Day itself, but He spoke against the legalistic abuses of the Sabbath Day, which denied mercy and the gospel (Mark 3:4). So, Isaiah speaks of God’s blessing remaining on the New Testament church from one Sab-

bath to the next (Is. 66:23). If nothing else, this means that the New Testament church would continue to keep the Sabbath and to measure time according to the creation week of seven days, punctuated with a day of rest and worship. God’s blessing would come especially on the Sabbath, the day of worship in the New Testament church.

Fourth, we are to keep the Sabbath Day holy—and now especially Sunday, the first day of the week—because this was the day in which Jesus not only arose from the grave, but also the day on which He gathered with His disciples—that Sunday, the Sunday that He arose, and subsequent Sundays until His ascension. In the book of Acts, we find that the church had gathered on the first day of the week when Christ came and poured out the Holy Spirit. Later we find that where the churches were established in Troas and Corinth, the church continued to gather for its public worship around the Word and the sacraments on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7 and I Cor. 16:2). When Jesus said in Mark 2:28, “Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath,” He meant that the weekly day of rest belonged to Him, the Lord. It is in light of that that we are to read Revelation 1:10, in which John says that he “was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.” John was saying that on the day of the

week that belonged to the risen Lord, the first day of the week, he was “in the Spirit,” that is, worshipping God in spirit.

Added to this, and here is our fifth reason for keeping the Sabbath, is that, historically, the New Testament church has worshiped God on the first day of the week, and it has rejected the idea of Saturday as the Sabbath as cultic and heretical. The church’s practice throughout history, we know, is not determinative, but it is weighty. It is only in the last fifty years or so that the practice of keeping Sunday as the Christian Sabbath, a practice that lasted for two thousand years, has been rejected. There is in that rejection a certain spiritual arrogance that modern Christianity sets itself up above those that have preceded and rejects the leading of the church by the Spirit into ways of truth. In connection with this, we should note that the rejection of the biblical idea of the Sabbath has quickly led the church away from the Word of God in many other areas, including the Bible’s teaching on marriage, the Bible’s teaching on worship, the Bible’s teaching on authority, the Bible’s teaching on work and possessions, and so on.

We have here five reasons for keeping the Sabbath, for doing it on Sunday, and for dedicating the entire day as a day of worship. 1) God created it to be so. 2) This is included in the moral law. 3) This was the practice of both the Old and New Testament church. 4) The first day is the Lord’s Day, the day He arose and gathered publicly with His disciples. 5) This has been the practice of the church from the time of the apostles until recent times.

However, keeping the Sabbath Day should not be a chore and a duty for the believer. Rather, it should be a joy and a blessing. The word “Sabbath,”

means “rest.” This is what God gives us to enjoy all our days but especially on and never apart from the Sabbath Day. The

idea of rest we find throughout Scripture, too. God brought Israel from Egypt into Canaan, the land of rest. When all the Canaanites had been destroyed and conquered, we read in I Kings 5:4, then David had rest from his enemies. This rest was not only physical, but it was also a picture of the rest that is ours in Jesus Christ. Hebrews 4 tells us that once Joshua had given the Israelites rest in the land of Canaan, he spoke to them of an-

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ing water out of your own well. You could do that and say, “But I think my neighbor’s water is colder. I think my neighbor’s water is sweeter.” Scripture is calling us here to focus on, to have a single eye in, marriage, not to look across the fence. God has given the delight and the intimacy of marriage as a weapon against the temptation. Drink waters out of thine own cistern.

This applies to much, much more than finding sexual satisfaction in the spouse that God has given. It refers also to finding emotional satisfaction and affection and friendship in your marriage. How many marriages begin the road to ruin and divorce with one or both of the couple becoming independent, not sharing their lives, looking for fulfillment somewhere else and in someone else than the spouse whom God has given! Drink waters out of thine own cistern.

God demands dedication, commitment, and faithfulness in marriage.

But someone may say, “You don’t have to live in my marriage. You don’t have to live with my husband or my wife.” As a pastor, I have heard that before. And that brings us to the third area of application, which is contentment. The application

here is very broad. To the married and to the single. To the widowed and to those who have never married.

What is contentment? It is a state of mind, a state of peace in the mind, which is not dependent on external circumstances of life. It is a gift of God’s grace to those who have faith. With regard to marriage and the seventh commandment, it means that my personal happiness is not dependent on my marital status or on whether my marriage is a good and satisfying one or one that is demanding and not rewarding. Life for the child of God is not all about being married. Fulfillment for the Christian woman is neither in a career nor in childbearing. Happiness for the believing man is not bound up in having an adoring wife. Rather, the delight of the child of God is in his Lord.

Our satisfaction is in the wellsprings of life and salvation that come through faith

in Jesus Christ.

Jesus says in Matthew 5:8, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” We fight carnal desire with spiritual desire. Satan tempts us with carnal, earthly pleasures. But God holds before us an eternal and supreme joy that we shall see Him. Blessed are the pure

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from the house and refusing to be anywhere near Potiphar's wife lest she seduce him. This young man, Joseph, knew the dangers and knew the power of sexual temptation. He knew himself. This is where the battle against sexual sin begins. Young people, do not feed the beast of lust. Flee fornication. Get away. Solomon warns his son not to pass by the way of the harlot, not to go anywhere near her because she will seduce you. She brings many strong men down into destruction.

We should realize that every sexual sin, even the ones that are committed in private, even the ones that are simply stimulating the mind and the eyes, have consequences. We have to fight for purity in our minds.

The second area of application has to do with faithfulness, faithfulness in marriage. Here I want to emphasize the positive requirement of this commandment. Not only is it true that adultery and fornication and sexual expression outside of marriage are forbidden in this commandment. But in this commandment, God is talking about marriage and about living in a positive way in marriage. A good marriage does not just happen. We are not keeping this

commandment by simply having a correct teaching on marriage. Rather, there needs to be, in a marriage, on the part of the Christian who is married, a commitment, a love, and a faithfulness to the spouse. That is much more than simply refraining from physical relationships with someone else. Faithfulness in marriage means loving with a love that is patterned after God's love for us; a love that is like the love of Jesus Christ, sacrificial; a love that, like God's love, is forgiving; a love that is committed; a love that serves; a love that loves, not because of the worthiness of the object (the

spouse), but out of love for God. Faithfulness means giving pri-

ority to your marriage relationship over everything else in this world.

In Proverbs 5:15, and then again in 18 and 19, Solomon writes this: "Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.... Rejoice with the wife of thy youth.... Let her breasts satisfy thee at all things; and be thou ravished always with her love." These verses describe a devotion to and a satisfaction in one person, the one person whom God has given to you as your spouse in marriage. The illustration used is one of drink-

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other rest that was yet to come, which is the rest of the heavenly Canaan, which is heaven. This rest comes to us through Jesus Christ, who says to us in Matthew 11:28, 29, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

It is our souls that need rest. They need rest from the burden and toil of sin. Sin brings trouble. The guilt of sin weighs on the mind, and one cannot rest. The power of sin dominates in one's life and there is no calm but only turmoil. The consequences of sin bring one into misery in his life. The One who provides rest is Jesus.

In connection with the provision of that rest, He gives to us the Sabbath Day, the day of rest, with all of its spiritual activities. He gives it to us as a day to reflect on our rest in Him, to enjoy that rest in peace that we have in Him, and to look ahead to that rest that will be ours in heaven.

He does this especially through the preaching of the gospel in which He speaks peace to our souls, and through the sacraments that He ordains for the strengthening of our faith and trust in Him. All the activities of the Lord's Day should lead us into the enjoyment of that

eternal rest and that spiritual rest.

That we rest on the Lord's Day does not mean that we stop working, but it means that we engage ourselves in a spiritual labor in which we develop and maintain our spiritual existence. We work the other days for our physical existence. But now God gives us this day to focus on our spiritual well-being. So, through prayer and through hearing God's Word and through the private study of Scripture and other good Christian literature, and also in our fellowship with other believers, we begin to enjoy the eternal rest that will be ours together in heaven, and we grow spiritually.

Now, thinking about the Sabbath Day, what a joy it is to focus on such eternal realities and blessings. It is with this perspective on Sunday that keeping the Sabbath should be a delight. Paul says in Romans 7:22, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." And John says this: "The commandments of God are not grievous or burdensome" (I John 5:3). If salvation and the joy of salvation and fellowship with God are ours through Sabbath-keeping, then there is nothing burdensome at all about this commandment. Then we see what Jesus means when He says that man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath for man. The Sabbath

was made for the advantage of man. In the beginning, when God made the Sabbath, He had in mind our advantage, our salvation, our delight in the blessings of rest in Jesus Christ.

What wonderful blessings are ours through keeping the Sabbath! We have the blessing of knowing God, of experiencing nearness to Him; the blessing of knowing that we are His; the blessing of peace in our consciences; the hope of glory; the joy of the communion of the saints. There are blessings that come to our families as we

sit together and read and discuss God's Word and pray. There are blessings that we enjoy immediately, and there are blessings of everlasting value. Inasmuch as we miss the Sabbath, we miss also these blessings. Where one does not gather with fellow believers to hear God's Word but instead uses the day in selfish ways, he will grow ignorant of God's Word. That selfishness will begin to affect his life and relationships in other ways. Not only will he deteriorate spiritually, but this will affect his family and ultimately the church will be affected. Church attendance will wane. The

practices of Christian living will become a burden. Soon one will walk away from the Lord and run with the world.

In the Sabbath Day, God is giving us something that the world with all its pleasures and delights can never give—a blessing that is of eternal value.

Think of the words of Isaiah: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy

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pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD" (Is. 58:13, 14a).

Let us pray.

Oh, God, preserve us. Preserve in us a love for and a delight in Thee. Keep us so that we keep the Sabbath. Keep our eyes on the eternal Sabbath. Fill us, Lord, with the joys and the blessings of the Sabbath and give us rest, rest eternal in Thy Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

be equipped with the Word of God, and so, as we make these applications, I want also to bring specifics of God's Word, specific Bible passages, into the discussion. These are the tools to fight against the temptation.

The three areas of application are lust, faithfulness, and contentment.

What is lust? Lust is a sinful desire that controls you to the point that you are led into sin. The desire, sexual desire, in itself is not wrong. God has created us with a sexual appetite. But when we seek to fulfill that sexual desire outside of the God-ordained place of marriage, or when we fantasize constantly about sex, then we have fallen into sinful desire or lust.

James helps us to understand the danger of lust when he says in James 1 not only that when a person falls into sin he cannot blame God for being tempted. Rather, James says this: "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (vv. 14, 15). The point here is that if we give room for lust in our minds, it will conceive and bring forth sin in our lives. So, the battle for sexual purity begins in our minds. We do not keep this commandment simply by avoiding having sex outside of

marriage, but obedience to this commandment begins with our thoughts. Jesus makes this very clear in Matthew 5 when He says that a man who looks on a woman to lust after her in his heart has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

It is essential that we realize this. Society today says that the problem is not pornography and the problem is not immodest dress and using sex for advertising, but, instead, the problem is men and that men objectify women and that this is male-oppression. But the problem is both. Yes, lust is a problem in the heart, but the feeding of that lust with immodesty and sexual content is also a problem. We cannot fill our minds, we cannot browse the Internet and pornography and think that this will not affect us. We have to understand that lust is like a beast. The more that we feed this beast, the stronger it becomes. When the mind is exposed to sexual content, it becomes perverted. And a person's view of the beautiful gift of sex, which God has given for marriage, becomes warped. And all of this comes into marriage and into the bedroom, so that expectations in marriage with regard to sexuality become unreal. So, the Bible says that there is one way to deal with sexual sin and with lust, and that is to flee. I Corinthians 6: Flee fornication! We think of Joseph running

their wives as Christ loved His bride—and wives are to submit to their husbands and love them as the church does Christ, her Redeemer. So, this wonderful, rich relationship, which comes in salvation between God and His bride the church, His saved people, is described as marriage. Our goal in marriage should be to reflect the joy of God's relationship with His people in Jesus Christ.

There is one more important principle, and this

applies to every one of us personally. It is this, that God has made us body and soul and that Jesus Christ, by His blood, has redeemed us body and soul to belong to Him. So, I Corinthians 6, speaking about human sexuality, says, in verse 15: "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid." And verses 19 and 20: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." This passage is telling us that, in salvation, not only is our soul redeemed, but also our body is redeemed, and it belongs to the

Lord, and so we are to glorify Him in body as well as soul. Sexual expression outside of the place that God has ordained for it in the bond of marriage is a sin against the salvation that we have in Jesus Christ.

For the remainder of the message, I want to apply this commandment regarding human sexuality. What is applica-

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tion? Application is asking, How does this matter for my life? Our tendency when it comes to applica-

tion is to make the application to the lives of others. If we are parents, then we think of our children and the application of this commandment to our children. If we are married, we tend to think of how this applies to our wife. If we are Christians, we want to apply this to the culture and the world in which we live. If we are single, we think of the application of it to the married. If we are older, we think of how this applies to the young. But it is important for us to see, in this message today, how this Word of God applies to us as individuals. So, I have chosen to make the application of this sermon in three specific areas, three areas where we engage in the battle against this sin. These should cover all the different groups of people that there are. Because the battle is fierce, we need to

**THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR**

*March 12, 2017  
No. 3871*

*Honor Father and Mother  
Rev. Rodney Kleyn*

Dear Radio Friends,

In our treatment of the Ten Commandments of the law of God, we come today to the fifth commandment. We find that in the book of Exodus, chapter 20, verse 12: "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

The law of the Ten Commandments is commonly divided into two groups: the first four, which have to do with our love for God, and the second six—from commandments five through 10—which have to do with our love for the neighbor. Sometimes these are labeled the first and second tables of the law of God.

It is important for us to understand the relationship between the first and the second tables of the law. Sometimes we might think that obedience to the law of God is this, that so long as we love God, it does not matter how we treat others. Or, we might tend to think, so long as we love people, it does not matter what we say or think about God. However, the Ten Commandments fit together as a whole, and the Scriptures teach

us that if we truly love God, that will manifest itself in our love for the neighbor. They also teach us that, if we are going to truly love our neighbor, we can do that only as those who first love God. John speaks of this relationship very clearly in his first epistle (I John 3:14ff.). He says,

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

The point is this, that our love



for God will show itself in a love for others. And that love is not just being nice to others, but it has the spiritual well-being of the other in view. Jesus says that we should love our enemies and pray for them.

As we come to the fifth commandment, we are dealing with the subject of authority. “Honor your father and your mother.” One of the main expressions of sin in the fallen world in which we live is rebellion to authority. This was true of the very first sin of Adam and Eve. They rebelled against the authority of God’s command concerning the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. We also live today in a day and age that is marked by a rebellion against authority. II Timothy 3:2 tells us that the last days will be marked in part by this, that people will be disobedient to their parents. We see this aversion to authority in every sphere of our society. It is important for us to hear about it, not only so that we recognize this in the world around us, but especially so that we may be humbled ourselves and hear the Word of God and apply it to ourselves.

Behind the fifth commandment are several principles.

First. That God Himself has all authority in heaven and in earth, that God is sovereign, and that the right to rule belongs to Him. In Psalm 103:19 it is put

this way: “The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.” That authority God has invested in His Son, the ascended Lord Jesus Christ who said in Matthew 28, as He ascended up into heaven, “All authority is given to me in heaven and in earth.” Ephesians 2 tells us that all things have been put under His feet, that is, under His rule.

Another principle is this, that God administers His authority through the Scriptures, that is, through His Word. The Scriptures are God’s revelation in this world and they are the supreme authority for faith (what we should believe) and for life (how we should live). So, Isaiah 40:8 says this: “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”

God administers His authority through others. That is, He delegates authority in our relationships here on the earth. We can say there is a chain of command from God down into our relationships here on the earth. This means that all of us are under authority in some relationship. One who is a police officer and has authority on the street, and who is perhaps also a member of the church, is under the authority of the elders and the leaders in the congregation. It is important for us as we come to this commandment and try

about marriage—not only that marriage is between a man and a woman, and that marriage is a lifelong institution. This is Jesus’ point here in Matthew 19. He goes on to say that whoever puts away his wife, except for fornication, commits adultery. And whoever marries her that has been put away or is divorced commits adultery. He teaches that there is only one ground for divorce and that is unfaithfulness, and that the one who is divorced may not remarry. This is the permanence of marriage and the Bible’s teaching on the permanence of marriage.

God created marriage for companionship. This is the idea of the two becoming one. One flesh means that they are one in every way. In the context of this unity God has given the gift of human sexuality to be expressed. So strong is this union that I Corinthians 7 tells us that in marriage a husband no longer has power over his own body and a wife no longer has power over her own body, and that they must willingly give themselves physically to the relationship. So, God established marriage as the place for the expression of human sexuality. And He says in I Corinthians 7 that, to avoid fornication, each should marry and have her own husband and his own wife. God has given this pleasure to marriage, and God has given it also with this purpose that, through this pleasure

in marriage between a man and a woman, there will be a father and a mother, there will be the bringing forth of children. This is the responsibility that goes with the expression of sexuality in marriage.

What this commandment is teaching us is that any sexual expression outside of the bond of marriage is a violation of marriage. We must understand that there is no such thing as recreational or casual sex. In fact, the expression of sexuality does not work that way. It can only bring misery and brokenness and is a violation of self and of the other.

The third principle is this, that God created marriage—the marriage of a man and a woman—to be a reflection of His own relationship to His people. Throughout the Bible, God’s love for His church is described in terms of the love of marriage. God is committed to His church and lives closely with her as a husband and a wife are one in marriage.

Ephesians chapter 5 zooms in on this when it says that there is a mystery. The mystery is not just a mystery of marriage, but the mystery of Christ and the church. Christ loved and gave Himself for His bride, the church. And the church loves and submits to Christ her Head. This is the way it should be in marriage—husbands are to love

God's Word that have to do with human sexuality.

In the gospel of Matthew, chapter 19, Jesus gives instruction concerning this commandment when He says: "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female?"

(v. 4). God the Creator made us male and female. That is the first principle. God made the animals. He made them male and female after their

kind. He brought them to Adam. Adam realized that *he* did not have a woman, and then God made a woman to complete the man, to be a help that was meet or suited to him. The woman was created different from the man, but she complemented him physically and emotionally and in every way. Every one of us needs to have a proper attitude towards our own human sexuality. You are either, by the creation of God, a male or, by the creation of God, a female. This is how God has made you. We must accept what God has made us biologically. This is part of obedience to this commandment.

Homosexuality is against God's creation. God did not create a man to be with a man. And God did not create a woman to be with a woman physically. Romans 1 says that this is unnatural, that it is a change of the natural use. There is a natural use in the creation. So, sexual

identity and sexual preference and sexual orientation and sexual expression fall under the commandment of God's law here. This is not an area where

we have a right to freedom of expression.

The second principle is that God created the gift and the privilege of sexual intimacy for marriage. What is marriage? Marriage is a lifelong union and bond between one man and one woman. Again Jesus teaches us this in Matthew, chapter 19, when He says: "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (vv. 5, 6). Jesus teaches us several important things there

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to understand its application to ourselves, that we recognize the different spheres of life in which there is authority—the different relationships in which God has set up this structure of authority and submission.

I want to mention six different spheres. The first is the home. This is the one that is mentioned in the commandment: Honor thy father and thy mother. Why is this relationship the one that God chooses to speak of specifically in the commandment? The reason is that this is the most basic unit of human relationships and of society—the home. Not only the relationship between parents and children but also the relationship between husband and wife. In the very beginning, when God created Adam and Eve, He created Adam to be the head of his wife. What we see as we look at the home and family is that the

home should be a place where Christian parents create an environment in which the children learn to respect authority. Not only the authority of the father, but also the authority of their mother: Honor thy father *and* thy mother. Now we see this principle, that the reason we are to submit to authority does not

have to do with the worthiness or the strength or the apparent qualifications or the age of the one who has authority. Rather, it has to do with appointment—God's appointment. God appoints in the home a man and his wife to have authority over their children. Ephesians 6 says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." This is the first sphere—the home.

The second sphere is really an extension of the home and that is the school. In the school, children come under the authority of others besides their parents. But, in the school environment, we have an extension of the home. It should be this way, that children, in the school environment, obey their teachers or they receive consequences from their parents. Education and

school teachers stand in the place of parents. It is the duty of the home to educate children. It is not the

duty of the state to educate our children. This is the way that totalitarian societies do it. They say that it is their responsibility to educate your children and that they control the education of the populace. But we should see, as believers, that it is parents who have this responsibility, and teachers and

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the school stand in the place of parents. Children need to learn to submit to authority in other spheres than just the home, and the school is the place where they learn to do this.

A third sphere is the church. There is ecclesiastical authority. This is mentioned in the New Testament Scriptures in regard to the rulers that Christ appoints in the New Testament church, so that we read in Hebrews 13:17: “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” This verse is obviously speaking about those that have authority in the church—they watch for your *souls*. It really should not be difficult for us to trace or recognize the authority of God and of Jesus Christ in the offices in the church. Those who lead in the church represent the kingly rule of Jesus Christ, His prophetic rule by His Word, and His priestly rule in the mercy that He shows to His people.

The fourth sphere of authority is the civil government—from the civil government in the highest offices in a society, as for example the White House and the Presidency or the Congress and the senators and representatives, all the way to the places where the law interacts with

our own life, the bureaucracy or the police officer on the streets. Romans 13 tells us that the powers that be are ordained of God, that is, they have their authority from Him. They may be elected officials, but their authority and their right to rule comes not from the people, but from God Himself. So, Romans 13 says of them that they are the ministers of God, the servants of God in their position of civil authorities.

Another sphere, and perhaps one that is most common to the majority of us, is the sphere of the workplace. It is clear from the Scriptures that we are called to submit to authority also in the workplace. Think, for example, of Ephesians 6, which speaks not only of authority in the home but also of authority in the workplace. It says in verses 5 and 6: “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.” In the workplace, we are under the authority of Jesus Christ as we work for somebody else. When we agree to work for someone, we pledge this, that we will be obedient to him. To strike against the employer or to revolt against his authority is to strike and revolt against the authority that God has placed

### THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR

March 26, 2017

No. 3873

Sexual Purity

Rev. Rodney Kley

Dear Radio Friends,

We have been considering the Ten Commandments of the law of God as we find them in Exodus 20. Today we come to the seventh commandment, Exodus 20:14: “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” This commandment concerns marriage and the family and human sexuality and homosexuality. We live in a society today that is saturated with sex. Adultery is the stuff of jokes and entertainment. Sex outside of and before marriage is accepted as the norm. Divorce and remarriage after divorce are assumed and accepted. Homosexuality is legalized. Industries make millions of dollars off sexual content, feeding a hungry lust in man through the eyes and the ears at every opportunity. Sexual content fills billboards and shopping malls, TV shows and advertisements, radio music, the sides of busses, and the sidebars of Internet web pages. Behind it is the sinister and dark side of the Internet and the pornography industry—the

trafficking of sex slaves, the abortion of unwanted children, and secret online profiles and sexual encounters.

This commandment calls us to be counter-cultural—to recognize that God’s Word places demands on this aspect of our life. We do not have freedom of expression with regard to sexuality. The Scriptures are our guide, and we must be different, not only standing against sexual deviations—homosexuality—and in defense of marriage and the family, but also in our own entertainment, jokes, and humor, in our own desires and thoughts, striving for sexual purity because none of us is immune to the dangers and temptations of sexual immorality. We must be frank. This is a problem, a problem in Christian circles, and a problem particularly for Christian men.

We begin to look at this commandment by recognizing some important principles that stand behind it. These are truths from

individualism, is the watchword and the way of our society. When there is an act of kindness, we are surprised by it. Yet, the Scriptures say this is how we should love one another. We should also love the neighbor.

Then, a third category of fellow human beings is those who are our enemies. We mentioned this from Matthew 5 already. Here, though, we not only expect nothing in return, but, as we love our enemies we can expect hatred in return. We can expect that they will spitefully use us and persecute us. Yet, we must maintain an attitude of love and of pity and of prayerfulness towards them, as David loved Saul. Saul wanted to take the life of David, and yet David preserved the life of Saul. This, of course, is a deeper, spiritual love. The Scriptures say, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

It is only as we understand that God is sovereign over life that we will be able to keep this commandment. It is in our experience of the love of God for us in Jesus Christ that we will love others. Because we know the love of God, because we know that Jesus gave His life for us in love, because we

know forgiveness, because we know that God does not reward us according to our sins, we are willing to forgive and to love and to serve those around us. It is in the knowledge and experience of the love of God that we will keep this commandment of love for others. May God so help us.

Let us pray.

Father, we thank Thee for the gift of life, which includes this, that we have relationships, relationships with one another that are fulfilling and rewarding, and especially a relationship with Thee, the God of heaven and earth. We thank Thee, Lord, that Thou dost condescend to us in our low estate and that, in Thy love, we also may love. We may love Thee and we may have a love in our

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hearts for one another. Keep us, Lord, not only from the acts of murder, but also from evil, sinful thoughts against others—hateful, jealous thoughts—which are the causes of murder. And we confess, Lord, sin in our hearts. We pray for forgiveness. And we pray for the joy of knowing that we are forgiven so that we, in the experience of that, will be willing to serve and to love others even when they may not seem worthy of it to us. We pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen.

over us. In I Peter 2, Peter says, What praise is there in submitting yourselves to those employers who are good to you? He says we must also do it to the froward, to those who might abuse us as employees. This is our calling, and so we should approach work prayerfully on a day-to-day basis in order to submit to the authority in the workplace.

There is one more sphere of authority, one that is often forgotten in our day and that is that we are called in the Scriptures to have a respect for those who are older than ourselves. In Leviticus 19:32 we read this: "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD." There was a day and there are cultures where you would never speak ill of one who is older than yourself. We do well to remember this and to instill this into our children. What we teach them with regard to respect not only for parents in the home but even other adults will have an impact on their ability to function in relationships and under authority later in life. Our children must understand that adults are not their equals.

When we look at the fifth commandment, we see that the requirement is not only a duty, it is not only a behavior, but also an attitude. The commandment says not: "Obey your father and mother," but "honor your father and mother." This teaches us that what is required in keeping the commandment has to do with the heart and requires thought and wisdom and maturity. Obedience to this commandment is not mindless doing of what one is told to do. One can obey without honoring the one who is in authority. Proverbs 30:17 speaks of the eye of the child that mocks his mother.

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So the child obeys, but he is angry and he despises his mother. Or perhaps we are willing to obey the speed limit but we despise the speed limit sign and the authority of the law.

It is important to understand that this attitude of honor is something that we have to grow into, and it is something that we teach our children to grow into. When they are very young (because rebellion is in their heart), they have to be taught to obey. Ephesians 6: "Children, obey your parents in



the Lord.” But, as they grow, we have to teach those children that this obedience must come from a deeper respect in their heart, not only for the parents but for God who places authority over them.

So, the word “honor” is really an umbrella term for all the proper attitudes that we ought to have to those in authority. Perhaps another word that we could substitute is the word “love,” that we love those who are in authority. It is by our honoring them and obeying them that we show our love. When we love someone, we put their interests before our own. We renounce our will in order to follow their will. We put their well-being before our own. So, in the workplace, under an employer, we put the boss and the company before ourselves. In the home we put our parents and what their will is before our own. This is what it is to honor and to love. It is to serve selflessly, to put others before one’s self.

This love also includes a commitment and a faithfulness to those in authority. I Timothy 5 speaks of those who are not faithful to their parents or do not care for those of their own household, and it says that one who fails in this regard is worse than an infidel. It is important to point out here that, regardless of our age, so long as our parents

are living, we owe them an honor and a care and a respect.

This is true, even though our parents may have faults and those in authority may have sinful failings. We have to bear patiently with the weaknesses and the sinful infirmities of others. When a child becomes a teenager, he starts to think for himself. Yet, even though that is the case, and even though the child may, as he thinks for himself, begin to think that he knows better than his parents and that his dad is out of touch with reality, still he is called to bear with the weaknesses and the infirmities of the one in authority. This does not mean that the one who has authority and the father in the home has a right to rule with an iron fist, like a tyrant, or to selfishly lord things over his wife and his children. No, the one who is a Christian leader also has a duty to love those who are under his authority. He recognizes his sinful weaknesses. He admits his faults. He says to his wife, “Help me in this task of leading and ruling in my home.” He confesses his sins to his children. He prays with them about sin—his own sin. He asks them for forgiveness. You see, the home is like this. The home is a place of covenant. It is a place of relationship. The children are covenant children. And despite the weaknesses of those in authority (parents), we must

it” (Eph. 5). And we are to love others and care for them as we would for ourselves. Who has ever loved another as he loves himself? This, of course, means that our love must be sacrificial, it must be self-less, it must be complete, we must be willing to love the whole person—physical and emotional needs of the other person—and to do that with our entire being. So, first, this love is selfless.

Then, in the second place, this love is spiritual. Jesus says in Matthew 5 that we are to love our enemies and to pray for them that spitefully use us and persecute us. What is that? It is a spiritual love, a love for their souls, in which we pray for their salvation. What is it to love your children? It is not only to feed them and to clothe them but it is to teach them in the ways of the Lord. It is to have a spiritual concern for their eternal aspect, their soul. This is true love. And this is what the commandment requires.

And this is a love we are to have for every other human being that God puts in our lives. We could categorize all of the people that come into our lives into three groups. There are first the closest ones—people

that we would call brothers and sisters (brethren, in the Bible). So we have family members. We have fellow church members. In some ways loving these people, the people we would call our brethren, is the easiest. These relationships are the most rewarding. But, at the same time, they can be the most demanding, because we have an awareness of the faults of the other and living with them requires a constancy and a faithfulness and a willingness to forgive. Also, in our closest relationships we find it the easiest to get away with hateful behaviors. A man who treats his wife with disdain in private and really hates her may treat her quite well in public. What we are reminded of here is the calling that we have in the closest relationships—to love with all that we are, to love as ourselves.

A second group of people would be called in the Bible “our neighbors.” Who is your neighbor? Your neighbor is anyone and everyone that God puts in your life. What is unique about loving the neighbor is that you oftentimes do not have a relationship with this person and there is no return in a relationship then as you love them. Here society fails most in love for others. Each to his own,

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playmates. That is murder. But adults are more refined and more devilish in the covering up of this sin. These verses that Jesus gives us here tell us that the looks and the gestures and the thoughts and the anger that we have towards another are murders. That is because they come from a desire to get rid of the other person from our lives, to get them out of our existence. They are in the way. That is murder.

So, there is a murder that can take place also in

our thoughts, not only because those thoughts may, in the end, lead to murder, but those thoughts themselves are murderous. Just as lust is adultery, so evil thoughts concerning the other are murderous.

We have the example of this in Cain, who, after God had approved the sacrifice of Abel, became angry and jealous. The Bible tells us in Proverbs 14:30 that envy is like a rotteness in the bones, that is, it will soon consume a person and turn to hatred and that hatred will become murder. That is, a hatred that is directed not just at the neighbor, the fellow human being, but in the end at God Himself, because we do not like

that God has put this person in our lives.

So, we have to be warned against anger. We have to deal with our anger. Proverbs 16:32 tells us that the man who controls his temper is better than a man who conquers a city. Ephesians 4:26 tells us that we should not let the sun go down on our wrath, that is, we should

deal with this every day. Yes, there is a righteous anger for the causes of God, but when we are angry for our own cause against another,

then that is murder.

As well as forbidding these attitudes and behaviors, the commandment requires love. Love, we should see, is both a feeling and an activity, and the law of God demands both that we have the proper attitude of love as well as an active obedience—that we love not only in word but also in very deed.

What is this love? Basically it is two things. First, that we put the other first, that we love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Jesus is not, when He says that, endorsing self-love. But He is saying this: “Everyone loves himself. No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes

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honor them. Think, for example, in the Scripture of Noah’s sons when Noah was drunken and lay naked. Shem and Japheth would not look at their father’s nakedness and would not join their brother Ham in mocking their father, but, respectfully, held a blanket behind them and walked backwards and covered their father. Or, think again of the example of David when Saul sought his life and it was within his power to take the life of Saul. He would not stretch forth his hand against the Lord’s anointed. So we must honor even those who have weaknesses and are sinful in their positions of authority.

There is one exception in this commandment. It is this. Even though we are called to honor and obey those in authority, we must ultimately obey God. That is, when the one who has authority calls us to do something that is in direct disobedience to the commandments of God, then we must not obey. In the book of Acts, chapter 5, the apostles were commanded by the Jewish leaders of their day not to preach and speak in the name of Jesus anymore. And they said, “We ought to obey God rather than men.” This is the exception. At the same time, they did not disrespect those rulers. They even sub-

mitted to the consequences of their not being willing to follow the instruction of their rulers. Those consequences for them were persecution. So, even if it means for us that we must be imprisoned and persecuted because we will not obey those in authority, even then we must submit and do this respecting their position under God.

At the end of the fifth commandment, there is a wonderful promise. This promise implies

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that if you want misery in your life, you should rebel. If you want misery in the workplace, rebel against your boss. If you want misery in your marriage, rebel against your husband. If you want misery in the church, rebel against the elders in the church. If you want a horrible relationship with your parents, be rebellious. If you want misery in your position in society, then rebel against the government and the police. If you want misery in your life, rebel against the institutions of marriage and family that God has ordained in Scripture.

Think about this. Is not rebellion the source of so much suffering and misery in our society? That was true for Adam and Eve. That was true for Israel in the wilderness—a rebellious

that if you want misery in your life, you should rebel. If you want misery in the work-

people. Yet, we live in a day and an age where this kind of rebellion is promoted. And we need to be warned. In I Peter 3:20 it says that God destroyed the first world with a flood because of its disobedience. We do not have a freedom to rebel against authority as God has placed that in our lives.

At the same time, as we keep this commandment, we can expect great blessing in our life. The blessing in the Old Testament was a blessing of a long life in the promised land of Canaan. Canaan, of course, is a picture in the Scriptures of heaven. The blessing we can expect is not so much quantitative but qualitative—a blessing of happiness in our home, a blessing of peace in the church, and the blessing of heaven in which we will stand and live in the presence of God in joy to eternity. Jesus Himself came and was subject to the will of His Father. He came to do the will of His Father. He learned obedience through His suffering. It was through His suffering that He entered into glory and into the joyful presence of His Father.

It is doubtful that you or I often feel convicted by this commandment, but we should. How are you really doing with regard to authority in your life? As a child, do you joyfully submit to your parents? As a wife, do you happily put your will under the

will of your husband? Are you patient in the workplace with your boss' bad decisions? Are you patient with the politicians that God has put in authority over us? Are you respectful of the decisions that church leaders make or that the police officer makes when he pulls you over? Or do we grumble to serve the Lord? As we think about this, let us remember where we started—that God possesses all authority and that He is pleased to rule us through the hand of others. So, the hand that rules us *is* the hand of God.

May we have submissive spirits to obey, not with eyeservice as men-pleasers but as unto the Lord.

Let us pray.

Father, we thank Thee for the authority of Jesus Christ, who rules over all things in heaven and in earth. We thank Thee for the authority of His Word and we thank Thee for the rule of His Spirit that softens our hearts. We pray, soften our hearts by this word, too, that we may be willing to follow Thy way and even to submit ourselves to those whom Thou dost place in authority over us. In this way, Lord, give us peace in our relationships. Help us to be those who are willing to show the genuineness of our love for Thee by loving others, whether they be worthy of it or not. We pray this, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

is death, and this is connected to the justice of God, which He executes on Jesus Christ on the cross.

In the world we see the crass and violent breaking of this commandment. But this is not the only thing that is covered by this commandment. This commandment also re-

quires the preservation of life, that we do everything within our power to care for the life that God has given. Not only that we care for others, but also that we take care of ourselves, personally. The Scriptures teach us that, as Christians, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Not only do we not have the right to destroy life and our own bodies, but also should not harm or abuse our bodies. This can be done, not only through taking one's own life, but also by things like gluttony and the use of addictive substances like drugs and alcohol. So, this commandment also requires care for ourselves.

We live in a day and age in which one is encouraged to make an idol of himself and of his body. We ought not keep our bodies healthy in order to

make an idol of ourselves or out of self-worship, but in order to give God the glory in obedience to this commandment, to honor the life that He has given to us.

We see the application of this commandment to be especially penetrating when we look at the words of Jesus in the Gos-

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pel of Matthew, chapter 5, verses 21 and 22. These verses fall in the section where Jesus is point-

ing to the deeper applications of the law and to the fact that sin is not only in the deed. So He says in Matthew 5:21: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time [that is, by the interpreters of the Jewish law], Thou shalt not kill [or murder]; and whosoever shall kill [or murder] shall be in danger of the judgment." Jesus says, "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca [or empty-head], shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

Our children are very honest. They will say things like "You fool, you empty-head, you idiot, you dummy," to their

this points us to a deeper understanding of the commandment. The commandment is not just about the act of killing but it is about murder that comes from the heart of man, man's hatred toward his fellow man. As we look at the Scriptures, we

*The commandment is not just about the act of killing but it is about murder that comes from the heart of man....*

see that man was a murderer from the beginning. We see it in the heart of man from the very beginning. Genesis 4, immediately after the fall of man into sin, records the death of the first human being, that is, the death of Abel. Abel died as a result of murder because his brother Cain was both envious of and filled with hatred towards Abel. So Cain slew his brother. In the same chapter, Genesis 4, we see that a descendant of Cain, Lamech, boasts in the fact that he has murdered another man. In Genesis 6, when we come to the time of the Flood, we see that God destroys the earth with the Flood because the earth is filled with violence, that is, with murderous hatred. This continues throughout Scripture. The sons of Jacob plot to murder their brother Joseph. Pharaoh determines to murder all the male children born to the Israelites. Saul is filled with a hatred in which he goes after David in order to

murder him. Ahab murders his neighbor Naboth for a piece of land. Manasseh, a wicked king in Judah, murders the people of

God with persecution. Herod, when he hears that a king is born in Bethlehem, murders all the children there who are two years old

and younger. And we see this murderous hatred of the Jews against Jesus Christ and also against the early New Testament Christians. Murder is in the heart of man.

It is no different in our day. If we pick up the papers, we read about crime, murder, guns, gangs, and so on. People by the hundreds and thousands die daily in our world as the result of murder. It has become a part of the culture and the society in which we live. It is the way people are entertained today. And murder is legalized in the killing of the unborn by abortion and in what is becoming known as "death with dignity." We are so desensitized to murder in our society that in order for a murder to capture out attention, it must be extreme and extraordinary. But, all these things that we mentioned are murder and they must be punished, not only for the safety of other citizens, but so that justice may be carried out. The wages of sin

### THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR

March 19, 2017

No. 3872

*Do Not Murder!*

*Rev. Rodney Kleyn*

Dear Radio Friends,

Today we consider this brief verse from Exodus, chapter 20, verse 13: "Thou shalt not kill." The word "kill" here refers specifically to the act of murder, which is taking another human being's life unlawfully with premeditation. However, as we will see, this commandment also applies to what we say—our words—and what

*Jesus died on the cross also for those guilty of murder, that is, for you and me and our murderous hearts.*

we think—our thoughts—concerning others. This is the point that Jesus makes in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 5, when He says that we are guilty of murder already when we are angry at and speak derogatively of another. This, says Jesus, is murder. And who of us can escape the personal application of Jesus' words?

When we began this series on the Ten Commandments, I pointed out that one of the things the law will do is uncover our sin and sinfulness. It does that in order to bring us to repentance and to Jesus Christ and

His cross for forgiveness. This commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," shows the depravity and the sin of our hearts and of our nature. Our response should be repentance and seeking forgiveness and salvation in Jesus Christ. This is the only remedy for murder.

This is the only place of forgiveness for murderers. Jesus died on the cross also for those guilty of murder, that is, for you and me and our murderous hearts.

Behind this commandment concerning life, there are several principles. The first is this, that God is a living God. Hebrews 11 says, "he that comes to God must believe that he is," that is, the reality of the existence of God. God reveals His name to be, in Exodus chapter 3, The Great I AM, I AM THAT I AM. This points to the fact that God is a self-existent God. We need Him, but He does not need us. Behind this is the beautiful doctrine that we find in the Scripture of

the Trinity—that the Godhead is made up of three Persons in one Being. In His Being as the triune God— Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—God lives a full and perfect life already. He does not need us. This is the first principle: God is a living God. Without this principle, that God is real and that God lives, there would be no commandment concerning human life.

The second principle is this, that God is the Creator who gives life. This is the way Scripture begins: “In the beginning God created.” He created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, including human life. There is nothing that has life, and there is nothing that can live, apart from God. Not only is He the Creator who is the origin of life, but in His providence He sustains life. In the book of Acts, chapter 17, verses 26-28, the apostle Paul makes this point when he says that God made all the nations to dwell on the earth, He appointed the times and the boundaries of man’s existence. He says that we are God’s offspring and that in Him we live, and move, and have our existence. That is the second principle: God is the Creator who gives life. And that is important also from a

spiritual point of view. We have our spiritual life from God alone.

The third principle behind this commandment is that God is the sovereign over life and death. Or, to put that another way, the right to life and the right to death belong exclusively to God and not to us. We understand that life and the beginning of hu-

man life is never an accident. We understand also that we do not have the choice to terminate life. In Deuteronomy 32:39 the sovereign God says, “I am the one who kills and I am the one who makes alive.” In Job, chapter 14:5, Job confesses that God appoints a man’s days. God determines who will live, when they will live, how long their life will be. He has determined the beginning and the end of our days. So, in Psalm 31:15 the psalmist confesses, “My times are in thy hand.”

Another principle behind this commandment is that human life is different from animal life. That is obvious from the creation in the very beginning. For when God came to the creating of man, He formed man from the dust of the ground, and He breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a living soul. We see in this that there was a two-part creation to man that corresponds to the

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two parts of man’s being. He is a living body and he is a living soul. He is made in the image of God. He is made with an eternal aspect—his soul—that stands in relationship to God to eternity. He is created in a moral and ethical and responsible relationship with his God. While the Bible is dead set against cruelty to animals, we must not place the same value on animal life as we do on human life. The Scriptures teach us that we may kill and that we may eat animals for food.

Another principle is this, that life consists of relationships. Really, that is what life is: relationships. This is the difference between man and his creation in relationship to God and animals in their creation in relationship to God. God puts us in responsible relationships—with Himself and also with one another. We are called to protect the life and promote the life of our fellow human beings. We are called to love them and especially to love the eternal aspect of our fellow human beings—their souls.

Those are the principles behind this commandment.

This commandment forbids the sin of murder: “Thou shalt not kill.” That is, it forbids the sin of unlawfully, with premeditation, hatred, taking the life of another.

Now, we must understand that not all taking of human life

is murder. There is oftentimes confusion here. People will say that if killing is wrong, how can capital punishment be legal and practiced by the state? Here I point to two passages in the Scriptures. The first one is in Genesis 9:6. Here God says to Noah, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.” This tells us the value of human life and also what must be done to those who destroy human life in murder. The other passage is in Romans 13, where we are called to honor the civil authorities because they are appointed by God and they are the ministers of God to us for good. So, Romans 13:4 says that we should be afraid if we do evil, for he, that is, the civil magistrate, “beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.” The sword is an instrument of death. This verse tells us that God gives this instrument of death, the sword, to the civil magistrate in order to stop evil and to curtail crime in society.

So we see from the Scriptures that not all killing is wrong. This applies similarly to situations of war and defense—self-defense, the defense of a nation or the defense of the life of ourselves or somebody else when that life is threatened.

What we see here is that