

PASTORAL AND SOCIAL ETHICS
Lecture Outline, Part Five: Exposition of the Law of God:
Sixth through Tenth Commandments

by John M. Frame

VI. The Sixth Commandment: “Thou shalt not kill.”

Q135: What are the duties required in the sixth commandment?

A135: The duties required in the sixth commandment are, all careful studies, and lawful endeavors, to preserve the life of ourselves and others by resisting all thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions, and avoiding all occasions, temptations, and practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any; by just defense thereof against violence, patient bearing of the hand of God, quietness of mind, cheerfulness of spirit; a sober use of meat, drink, physic, sleep, labor, and recreations; by charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness; peaceable, mild and courteous speeches and behavior; forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil; comforting and succoring the distressed, and protecting and defending the innocent.

Q136: What are the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment?

A136: The sins forbidden in the sixth commandment are, all taking away the life of ourselves, or of others, except in case of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defense; the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life; sinful anger, hatred, envy, desire of revenge; all excessive passions, distracting cares; immoderate use of meat, drink, labor, and recreations; provoking words, oppression, quarreling, striking, wounding, and: Whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any.

A. Basic Thrust

1. God as Lord of life: Genesis 1:20ff, 28ff, 2:7, 17, 3:14-20, 4:8-16, 6:3, 11, Deuteronomy 30:20, 32:36f, Psalm 139:13-16, John 1:4, 3:15f, 4:14, 5:26, 6:35-48, 6:63-68, 10:10, 12:50, 14:6, 20:31. Physical, spiritual, eternal.
 2. As creator and redeemer, then, life is in God's hands. We may take human life only with his authorization.
 3. Meaning of *ratzach*: “slay”
 - a) Generally for unlawful, forbidden killing, except in Numbers 35:30, where the use may be ironic.
 - b) Not used for animal killings or for mass killings in war.
 - c) Applies to manslaughter and negligent homicide, even accidental killing Deuteronomy 4:41ff, 19:4ff, Numbers 35: 22ff Joshua 20:3. The “doctrine of carefulness.”
- (1) Distinctions
- (a) Voluntary manslaughter: intent to kill, but no premeditation. Fit of rage in Gen. 34:25, 49:6.
 - (b) Involuntary manslaughter: no intent to kill, but behaving in a way likely to destroy life, as in reckless driving.

- (c) Negligent homicide: failure to take adequate precautions, Ex. 21:29, Deut. 22:8.
 - (d) Accidental killing, Deut. 19:5.
 - (2) These are crimes in Scripture, even (d), which modern law would entirely excuse. One who kills someone accidentally is a “slayer” (*rotzeach*).
 - (3) The penalty: if it is proved that the “slayer” is guilty of manslaughter, not murder, he must remain in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest. If he ventures outside the city, the avenger of blood may kill him without penalty.
 - (4) The point:
 - (a) The slayer is impressed with the need to be careful with human life, to avoid even the possibility of its unjust destruction. The punishment fits the crime. Now he must be very, very careful with his own life.
 - (b) Even accidental killing may not be forgiven until blood is shed (that of the high priest).
 - (5) Similarly, Jesus in Matthew 5:21-26 places a high priority on the sanctity of life. Compare Lev. 19:16-18, 1 John 3:14-16.
 - (a) He tells us to guard against even the causes of murder (anger - only a potential cause). Matt. 5:22, Compare James 1:20.
 - (b) He tells us to avoid even verbal abuse, Matt. 5:22, compare 1 Sam. 25:10, 2 Sam. 16:7-8, Prov. 12:18.
 - (c) He places a higher priority on reconciliation than on worship.
 - (d) The only alternative to murder, then, is love. Any lack of love is a violation of this command (broad thrust).
 - (6) But some anger is legitimate.
 - (a) God’s own jealousy, Num. 5:11-31, Deut. 32:21.
 - (b) Imprecatory Psalms, 69, 109, 137, 139.
 - (c) Temporary anger with another, Eph. 4:26. Tit. 1:7 says we should be *slow* to anger, and God is. That implies there is a legitimate place for anger.
 - (d) Unfortunately, righteous and unrighteous anger are often mixed, or hard to distinguish.
 - 4. The commandment restricts personal vengeance, leaving it in the hands of God and the civil authorities.
 - a) O.T. vs. private vengeance, Leviticus 19:18, Proverbs 20: 22, 24:29, Exodus 23:4.
 - b) N.T.: Matthew 5:21, 38-42, Romans 12:14-21.
 - c) Right of civil magistrate to avenge, Romans 13:4, O.T., Genesis 9:6.
- B. Love of Neighbors and Enemies
1. The OT mandates kindness to enemies, but primarily within Israel, Lev. 19:18, Prov. 24:17, 25:21, and resident foreigners, Lev. 19:34.
 2. In NT
 - (a) The Great Commission mandates outward-facing love—to all nations.

- (b) Even harder: Love to those outside my community-- who cross my path, Luke 10:25-37.
- C. Non-resistance: Matthew 5:38-41, Romans 12:14, 19-21
1. Literal interpretations
 - a) Invite someone to hit you back? That would be inducing the aggressor to greater sin.
 - b) Forego self-defense? But cf. Exodus 22:2-3, biblical teaching concerning war, punishment. [Note, however, the sacredness of life, in that if someone breaks into your house in the daytime, you should protect *his* life (Douma)!]
 2. Contextual considerations
 - a) Verses 43ff deal with love of enemies, of which 38-41 describes an example. But love is opposed to hatred, not self-defense.
 - b) The issue in 38-41 seems to be a distortion of the law of *talion*. That law, intended as a principle of public justice, has been used to justify personal vengeance and vindictiveness. Self-defense is not vengeance.
 3. Summary of the teaching
 - a) If someone hits you, do not hit him back out of vengeance or anger.
 - b) Be prepared to forgive.
 4. Seen in this way, the passages do not oppose self-defense or the use of force by civil magistrates.
- D. War
1. War in O.T.
 - a) Peace, not war, is glorified in Scripture as the consummation of redemption (Isaiah 2:4, 9:6f, 11:616), Psalm 46:9, 120:6f). David, the man of war (though a man after God's own heart!) is not permitted to build the temple, I Chron. 22:18f, 28:3. War is the result of sin, James 4:1f.
 - b) *Herem* warfare, Deuteronomy 20:16-18; cf. 7:1ff, Joshua 6-8.
 - (1) Total destruction of all people and animals.
 - (2) No booty
 - (3) Against all cities of the promised land.
 - c) Non-herem warfare (against cities "at a distance"), Deuteronomy 20:1-15, 19f, Numbers 21:14, Deuteronomy 7:1.
 - (1) Priestly address, verses 2-4: God will give victory.
 - (2) Ritual cleanness, 23:9-14, Joshua 3:5.
 - (3) Priests blow trumpets, Joshua 6:4, Numbers 31:6.
 - (4) Offer of peace (demands capitulation), Deuteronomy 20:10-12.
 - (5) If offer refused and Israel gains victory, put men to sword (20:13), take women and children prisoner, plunder for yourselves (14), cf. 21:10-14.
 - d) Exemptions from military service, Deuteronomy 20:5-9, 24:5, Numbers 1:49 (?) new vineyard, engagement, recent marriage, fear, Levites.
 - e) Do not destroy fruit trees during siege, Deuteronomy 20:19f.
 - f) Note that all Israel's wars are holy. In that regard, it would be unwise for us to import the principles of Deut. 20 into modern warfare.
 2. War in N. T.:
 - a) War from sin, James 4:1f.
 - b) Non-resistance: above, B.

- c) Soldiers: exhorted to justice (Luke 3:14), but not told to leave the army.
 - d) Sword not given to the church, Matthew 26:52, John 18:1-11
 - e) Gospel will provoke violence, Matthew 10:34, Revelation 11:7, 12:7, 17, 13:7, 19:19.
 - f) War as metaphor for the Christian life, Ephesians 6, II Corinthians 10:3, I Timothy 1:18, II Timothy 2:4, I Pet. 2:11.
 - g) Sword given to civil magistrate, Romans 13, Acts 25: 11.
3. Pacifism
- a) In early church? Evidence weak either way. Some opposition to military service based on the pagan oaths and celebrations. Some who opposed it (Justin, Origen) were willing to pray for military victory. Thus the objection does not seem to center on the illegitimacy of all force.
 - b) Tenets
 - (1) O.T. wars represent a divine condescension to Israel's hardness of heart, a primitive stage in progressive revelation.
 - (2) The state is outside the will of God, though God uses it for his purposes. (Cf. discussion of *Yoder* under Fifth Commandment) Pacifists differ among themselves as to the extent to which a believer may participate in the state.
 - (3) The Christian's first loyalty is international, to the world-wide body of Christ. We cannot kill our brothers and sisters in Christ, or indeed potential converts.
 - c) Reply
 - (1) Inadequate view of Old Testament.
 - (2) Wrong view of the state, especially Romans 13.
 - (3) The state has a right to kill even professing believers in the just exercise of its authority. If we say that no one has such a right, we are denying to God the right to do this in his chosen way.
 - (4) Just War Theory (Cicero, Augustine, Suarez, Grotius)
 - (a) Tenets (as summarized by Arthur Holmes in *War, Four Christian Views*)
 - (i) Just cause (only defense)
 - (ii) Just intention (to secure just peace, not revenge, conquest, economic gain, ideological supremacy)
 - (iii) Last resort (after all other methods have been tried and failed)
 - (iv) Formal declaration (to indicate that the war is an act of government, not individuals only. Only government may wage a just war.)
 - (v) Limited objectives (not total destruction, surrender)
 - (vi) Proportionate means (limited to what is necessary to repel, deter future attacks), probability of success.
 - (vii) Noncombatant immunity (POW's, wounded, civilian noncombatants immune from attack).
 - (b) Derived from natural law plus biblical elements.
 - (5) Some Conclusions
 - (a) Use of the O.T. Law

- (i) Israel, as God's holy nation, was given a divine promise of victory (contingent, of course, upon its faithfulness to the covenant), Deuteronomy 20:4 - not only for *herem* war, but for normal wars as well. I don't believe that any modern nation can claim that promise.
- (ii) Notice also the role of the priesthood, ceremonial cleansings. Thus, not only the *herem* wars, but all wars in Israel are "holy" wars, "wars of the Lord" (Numbers 21:14).
- (iii) Restrictions on Israel's military might (above; see also Deuteronomy 17:16).
 - (a) The anti-militarist strain in the O.T. is partly a means of enforcing, underscoring the special divine promise of victory. The war is won by God's promise, not by horses, Psalm 20:7, 33:12-22, 76:6, 147:10f, Isaiah 30:15-18, 31:1-3, 36:8-10, Exodus 15:1-5. Since our nation does not have such a promise, it is not evident that our defenses ought to be similarly restricted.
 - (b) Another reason for the restriction against chariots and horses seems to be that Egypt was the source of such weapons. Israel is not to trust in alliances with Egypt, but must remember what God did to Egypt and its chariots in delivering Israel, Exodus 15:1ff.
 - (c) On the other hand, these restrictions also seem to be aimed at discouraging the development of a war-centered culture, where defense takes priority over all other aspects of life (worship, family life, production). War is a necessary evil, not a suitable focus of community life (so I Chronicles 22:18f). This concern seems to be as valid now as in the O.T.
 - (d) The principle, then should be that a nation should acquire the minimum military might which will give it an adequate defense.
- (iv) Clearly, *herem* warfare is no longer in effect. Thus no modern nation should seek the total annihilation of another culture.
- (b) Just war tenets (Natural law basis is a weakness)
 - (i) Just cause
 - (a) Clearly Scripture warrants warfare only in a just cause. God is a God of justice.
 - (b) Since civil obedience is limited by God's law, (I), Christians should refuse to serve in an unjust war.
 - (c) A pluralistic society ought to allow the right of selective conscientious objection, to allow its citizens to object conscientiously to a particular war.
 - (d) Rights of soldiers to disobey unjust orders should be upheld (*contra* the Nuremberg defense).

- (e) In general, the only just cause is defense. But this fact should not be taken to preclude a preemptive strike against a nation which clearly threatens our security. The “normal war” of Deuteronomy 20 (a siege war) seems to presuppose such a situation.
- (f) Is it ever legitimate to conscript troops (or give other military assistance) to defend another nation? (Cf. the U.S. role in Vietnam.)
 - (i) A nation is obligated to keep the treaty commitments it makes, even when those turn out to have been unwise (Psalm 15:4, Joshua 9, 10:115).
 - (ii) There is, however, no clear Scriptural authorization for such treaties, unless they are necessary to the defense of the nation agreeing to supply such assistance.
- (ii) Just intention: “securing a just peace” is the goal, but achieving that may involve conquest or drastic cultural reconstruction (Deuteronomy 20:11-15).
- (iii) Last resort: Yes (Deuteronomy 20:10), unless of course, as defense against present attack.
- (iv) Formal declaration
 - (a) Scripture does restrict war-making to governments.
 - (b) Cf. the “offer of peace” (Deuteronomy 20:10), the blowing of trumpets (Joshua 6:4, Numbers 31:6).
 - (c) But lack of a declaration should not slow defensive response when a nation is attacked.
- (v) Limited objectives: Yes, but note reservation above under ii. No more *herem*.
- (vi) Proportionate means: Yes. Note argument above under a, iii.
- (vii) Noncombatant immunity
 - (a) In O.T. “normal war,” some noncombatants were killed, evidently: Deuteronomy 20:13, Numbers 31:15-17.
 - (b) Preservation of women, children and livestock in Deuteronomy 20:14 seems to be by permission rather than commandment. In Numbers 31:15-17 (which was not a *herem* war since there was not total destruction), there was a broader range of killing.
 - (c) The pattern, then, seems to be that a just war justifies sufficient killing to achieve its objective - which may sometimes involve, again, drastic social reconstruction.
 - (d) Scripture, then, is more realistic than much “just war” theory, and more applicable to modern problems:
 - (i) Problem of guerrilla wars where children and women carry rifles and where combatants and noncombatants are indistinguishable.

- (ii) Problem of situations in which a government will intentionally plant its military forces and equipment in the midst of civilian populations.
 - (iii) Nuclear war (see below).
 - (e) Still, the sixth commandment and the “doctrine of carefulness” require most scrupulous attention to the question of whether a given attack is necessary to the objective.
- (6) Nuclear War and Deterrence: The following discussion is an attempt to apply the above principles. It owes much to Michael Novak's “Moral Clarity in the Nuclear Age,” *National Review* (April 1, 1983).
- (a) Nature of the Soviet Threat
 - (i) Communism by its own statements and by its internal logic requires world conquest.
 - (ii) Soviet military might
 - (a) Far superior to west in conventional arms.
 - (b) Geared to offensive war (while west is geared to defense) in Europe.
 - (c) The arms race: “When we built, they (USSR) built; when we stopped building, they built” (Harold Brown, Defense Secretary under President Carter.)
 - (iii) Marxism justifies, and the USSR has always practiced, the breaking of agreements when in their interest. They express contempt for “bourgeois formalism.”
 - (iv) On-site inspection to verify an arms-control agreement would require an openness drastically foreign to Soviet custom. Satellite and other long-distance verification can be foiled.
 - (b) Our Obligation to Defend the Innocent
 - (i) Defense is a fundamental responsibility of government, Romans 13:3f, Genesis 9:6.
 - (ii) U.S. is committed to the defense of Europe and Japan, as well as its own territory.
 - (c) Problems in Nuclear Deterrence
 - (i) Possibility of failure, even provocation of attack by USSR
 - (a) So far it has been successful (35 years!)
 - (b) Soviets do not fear conventional war, but they appear to be genuinely afraid of nuclear exchange.
 - (c) Deterrence, like any strategy, is imperfect; but what alternative is more likely to work? [see d, below]
 - (ii) Expensive: a “war on the poor”
 - (a) It is difficult to justify from Scripture the attempt to make government responsible for welfare programs.
 - (b) Nuclear deterrence is far cheaper than an equivalent conventional deterrent would be.
 - (c) From 1960-1980, military spending as percentage of GNP and federal budget declined by nearly ½.

- (d) Nuclear weapons in 1983 constitute only 9% of the military budget, 2.9% of the federal budget, 0.6% of GNP.
- (iii) “Psychological Damage” of Deterrence Policy (Provoking sense of terror, despair in society): What if we reinstated the draft, sought to raise taxes to produce a comparable conventional deterrent? What if we simply surrendered?
- (iv) Lack of Proportionality: Use of nuclear weapons seems unthinkable. Would a nuclear war not be a *herem* war in the biblical sense - the total destruction of one nation (and likely of many)? In the “normal wars” of Israel, God commanded them to preserve even the enemy's fruit trees (Deuteronomy 20:19-20)!
- (a) The decision facing us is indeed a terrible one. We must earnestly seek, and pray for, an alternative [below, d].
- (b) The intent of a nuclear deterrence policy, however, is that it is the best way to prevent a nuclear exchange. If this is correct, then it is the abandonment of deterrence which will place the world in the greatest danger.
- (c) But doesn't a deterrence policy require a “secondary intention to use nuclear weapons” (i.e., if our first intention, to prevent nuclear war, fails, must we not be prepared to do the unthinkable? Yes, as a policeman carrying a gun hopes to thereby deter any exchange of gunfire, but if that hope fails must be prepared to shoot.
- (d) It has not been established that one nuclear exchange (say, the use of tactical nuclear weapons in a European conflict) will immediately lead to the destruction of all life on earth. Those who claim this is certain and that we should not prepare for life after such an exchange are irresponsible.
- (e) Destruction of non-combatants: see 5, b, vii, above.
- (f) Destruction of fruit trees: would nuclear war be a “war on the earth?” The commandment to preserve the trees in Deuteronomy 20 is in context of a siege war. In such a situation, the enemy (locked in the city) has no access to the fruit trees. Destroying them would give Israel no strategic advantage, nor would it help in Israel's defense. The only motivation for destroying them would be to ruin the enemy's economy after the war, perhaps to destroy even the possibility of using the land again. But such wanton destruction is forbidden in “normal” war. The situation in a nuclear exchange, however, is very different. If nuclear weapons are used (as a last resort, of course!) then they must be necessary for defense. Destroying fruit trees in this case is not *herem* desolation) it is defense.

- (v) Summary. The problems involved in nuclear deterrence are formidable. But if there is no alternative, nuclear deterrence, even the use of nuclear weapons, can be justified.
- (d) Possible Alternatives
 - (i) Simple abandonment of nuclear deterrence without any strategy to replace it. This would increase the risk, as I see it, of war and lead eventually to our enslavement.
 - (ii) Pledge of no first use: could encourage Soviets to undertake conventional war. Since our conventional deterrent is inadequate, we would be forced to surrender or to break our pledge, in which case nuclear war would be made more likely.
 - (iii) Nuclear freeze:
 - (a) Would, most likely, allow Soviets to keep their present advantage.
 - (b) This could motivate them to use that advantage, contrary to the wishes of freeze advocates.
 - (c) They would not be sufficiently motivated to enter arms reduction negotiations or to make significant concessions in such negotiations.
 - (iv) Arms reduction agreement: desirable, but
 - (a) An adequate one may be many years off.
 - (b) Adequate inspection may not be acceptable to USSR in any case.
 - (c) Granted the history and principle behind Soviet deceitfulness, we dare not adopt an agreement without more-than-adequate verification.
 - (v) Anti-ballistic system: Defensive weapons against nuclear attack.
 - (a) In general, this is morally far superior to the present system. What we have now is not a true defense, but a policy of retaliation. We cannot stop an attack, only retaliate after the fact. "Mutual assured destruction" - MAD. This system is a deterrent and a successful one. But biblical ethics demands a search for a more strictly defensive system - one which would prevent loss of life in a nuclear attack, not double it.
 - (b) However, ABM systems were halted by SALT I. Although SALT I has expired, both US and USSR have promised to continue observing its terms. Thus there may be complications involved in reviving the ABM idea.
 - (c) ABM development would certainly proceed on both sides, suggesting an increased arms race, each side seeking ways to foil the other's ABM
 - (d) Technological problems may be too great; but we should not assume that at this early date.
 - (vi) Increased commitment to conventional deterrence

- (a) This may be necessary to reduce the “nuclear threshold”:
If we can counter Soviet conventional attack with conventional weapons, this will reduce the number of possible occasions (and temptations) to push the nuclear button.
- (b) But costs of such a commitment are enormous, and such an increase could take many years. And it would not even then erase the need for nuclear deterrence.
- (e) Conclusion: horrible as is the thought of a nuclear war, the policy of nuclear deterrence seems, for now, the best hope for avoiding it. That policy ought to be maintained until/unless an adequate arms control agreement is reached or a reliable ABM system is developed.

E. Abortion

1. Exodus 21:22-25

a) Three Interpretations

(1) “Live birth” interpretation (OPC Report, Frame in Thou Shalt not Kill)

(a) Case A (vs. 22)

(i) “fruit depart” - *yeled, yatza'*

- (a) Not a technical expression for abortion
- (b) Can naturally describe a premature birth
- (c) Other terms (e.g. *nefel, shakol*) would more naturally describe abortion or miscarriage.

(ii) “no harm” – indefinite (no *lah*), so applies to both mother and child.

(b) Case B (verses 23-25)

(i) “If any harm follow” - to either mother or child

- (a) Since referent not specified
- (b) Since it applies to either in verse 22.

(ii) Law of *talion*. implies that destruction of fetus or mother is capital crime; no difference between them.

(c) Thus on this interpretation the text is strongly anti-abortion.

- (i) The situation described is not even abortion *per se*; there is an element of accident in it (most likely).
- (ii) A fully intentional destruction of the child would, if anything, be even more heinous.

(2) “Miscarriage” interpretation (Early Kline)

(a) Case A

- (i) Language is parallel to extra-biblical miscarriage texts, so it suggests that a miscarriage has taken place as a result of the blow.
- (ii) Therefore, the “no harm” can pertain only to the mother.

(b) Case B

- (i) Apparently, then, this case differs from Case A in that here harm is done to the mother.

- (ii) It seems as if the penalty for harming the mother, then, (*talion*) is far more severe than the penalty for harming the child (a fine).
- (c) Implications
 - (i) Some would argue that the difference in penalty indicates a difference in nature: the mother is a person, the child something less. Supporting this conclusion is the fact that monetary penalties are generally not considered sufficient to avenge the loss of human life.
 - (a) However, there are exceptions to the last-mentioned principle. In verse 32 of this chapter we find (in effect) monetary atonement for the killing of slaves. It would be precarious to argue from this that the slave is not considered to be a person.
 - (b) Thus the difference in penalty does not entail a difference in personhood.
 - (c) It can be argued that there is not even a difference in penalty here. See “Later Kline” interpretation, discussed below.
 - (ii) More significantly: Even on this interpretation, the passage contains a protection for unborn life. The woman is given a specific protection by the law because she is pregnant. Loss of the child is a crime. Wanton, intentional destruction of it, we may presume, would be worse. Thus, even on this interpretation (dear to “pro-choice” advocates), the text has a pro-life thrust.
- (3) “Later Kline” interpretation (“A Study of Exodus 21:22-25,” *Journal of the E.T.S* , 1977.)
 - (a) Case A
 - (i) *Beplym* (translated “as the judges determine”) actually indicates “liability to death.”
 - (ii) Thus the husband has the right to demand any penalty up to the death penalty.
 - (iii) The “fine” mentioned would be, in effect, a ransom for the life of the man who struck the woman see 21:30, Numbers 35:21, Leviticus 24:18.
 - (iv) Most likely, the “harm” in this case is done to the woman not the child. (Opposite of the “live birth” interpretation)
 - (a) *Nagaf* suggests a sharp, even fatal blow.
 - (b) Injury to the woman explains the husband's involvement in setting the penalty.
 - (b) Case B
 - (i) The law of *talion* here is equivalent to the penalty of Case A.
 - (a) *Talion* is not a precise, literal principle. It is consistent with ransom procedures: Numbers 35:31, Leviticus 24:18, Deuteronomy 19:15-21.

- (b) Thus there is no difference in penalty between the two cases.
 - (ii) Most likely, harm to the child is in view here
 - (a) Since the mother is in view in Case A
 - (b) Since the “harm” is likely not indefinite.
 - (c) Since parallel middle-Assyrian texts put the woman first, then the fetus
 - (iii) No qualification as to the age of the fetus; any unborn child is in view.
 - (iv) The language suggests that the fetus is human
 - (a) “Life for life” in Leviticus 24:18 does apply to animals.
 - (b) But “eye for eye” and “tooth for tooth” not used for animals.
 - (c) Implications
 - (i) No difference in penalty between death of the mother and death of the child
 - (ii) Positive evidence of the child's humanity.
 - (iii) Legal protection of the child in effect a death penalty for his destruction.
 - (d) Significant postscript: Kline notes that this text does not deal with voluntary abortion. That crime, he says, “was so abhorrent to the Israelite mind that it was not necessary to have a specific prohibition dealing with it in the Mosaic law. The Middle Assyrian Laws attest to the abhorrence that was felt for this crime even among the heathen nations around Israel, lacking the illumination of special revelation though they were. For in those laws a woman guilty of abortion was condemned to be crucified (Tablet A, law 53). Even if she managed to lose her own life in producing the abortion, she was still to be impaled and hung up in shame as an expression of the community's repudiation of such an abomination. It is hard to imagine a more damning commentary on what is taking place in enlightened America today than that provided by this legal witness out of the conscience of benighted ancient paganism.”
- b) Conclusions
- (1) On all three interpretations (even the seemingly more liberal “miscarriage” interpretation) the passage protects unborn life.
 - (2) Nothing in this discussion warrants the conclusion that the child is of less value than the mother; certainly there is no implication that he is less than a person.
 - (3) Since there is no mention of the age of the fetus on any interpretation, we must assume that all unborn life of whatever age is protected, i.e from conception.

- (4) Which interpretation is right? The “Later Kline” view is the most ingenious, but the “live birth” view still seems more natural. I defended the latter some years ago, but the former attracts me.
2. Psalm 139:13-16
- Use of personal pronouns: David sees himself (“me,” “my,”) in the womb.
 - He exists as a person in the womb from conception (v. 15).
 - Might this usage be anachronistic? (We say “The Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock,” realizing that it wasn't called “Plymouth Rock” at the time. Maybe David uses “me” and “my” because he doesn't have any other language to designate the fetus.)
 - This is possible; thus the present argument is not watertight.
 - It is significant, however.
 - This passage reflects a constant pattern of Scriptural usage. See Jeremiah 1:4, Genesis 25:23ff, 38:27, Job 31:15, 18, Psalm 22:9, Hosea 12:3.
 - Scripture never suggests that the unborn child is anything less than a human person.
3. Psalm 51:5
- The passage is a confession of David's sin. David traces that sin back to conception.
 - To suppose that verse 5 speaks of his mother's sin would be entirely out of keeping with the context and the overall purpose of the Psalm.
 - But sin is a quality which pertains only to persons. It is not a quality of mere cells or protoplasm or of a part of a woman's body.
 - Thus the text assumes that David was a person from conception.
 - Might this text be a non-literal, poetic description? Yes; but see 2, c above.
4. Judges 13:3-5
- Samson is to be a Nazarite from birth, even before birth.
 - Thus his mother, during her pregnancy, must keep the Nazarite abstinence (from wine, strong drink, unclean food).
 - This abstinence begins immediately, before the child is conceived, v. 3. Thus the supposition is that Samson is a Nazarite from conception.
 - But being a Nazarite (like being a sinner') seems to presuppose personhood.
5. Luke 1:35: Jesus becomes incarnate through an act of the Holy Spirit. This act causes Mary to conceive. Thus from his conception, Jesus is “God made flesh.” Could he have been, from conception, any less than a person?
6. Obligation to defend the weak and helpless: Psm. 41:1, 72:12, 82:3-4, Amos 4:1, Isa. 58:5-7, 9-10.
7. Conclusion from Scriptural Evidence
- Scripture does not say explicitly that unborn children are persons from conception.
 - Passages which suggest this conclusion do contain exegetical difficulties, so the case is not water-tight.

- (c) Still, there are passages which, on their most reasonable interpretations, imply (“good and necessary consequence”) the personhood of the unborn.
 - (d) These passages form a regular Scriptural Pattern.
 - (e) No passages contradict this pattern.
 - (f) Thus, we have a “highly probable” case for the personhood of the unborn.
8. Scientific Evidence
- (a) This is not a matter than can be resolved by scientific evidence alone (i.e. without value-presuppositions derived from Scripture).
 - (i) Recall “naturalistic fallacy” argument.
 - (ii) “Personhood” is an ethical concept. A person is (among other things) someone with a right to life. The presence of a right (or the basis of one) cannot be deduced from statements about chromosomes, implantation, etc.
 - (iii) Thus the Scriptural evidence must carry the primary weight.
 - (b) Still, the scientific evidence is consistent with what we have said already.
 - (i) Each fertilized egg contains a full compliment of chromosomes which differ from those of its mother and those of its father. Thus in the most obvious sense, it is a distinct individual, not merely part of its mother's body.
 - (ii) To be sure, the unborn child is dependent upon his mother's body for sustenance. But this does not make him less than a person.
 - (a) It is conceivable that one day a fertilized egg might be raised entirely outside the womb. Only technological limitations prevent this. Thus the connection between the unborn child and the mother for life support is not inevitable.
 - (b) Even after birth, a child is dependent on others for life-support. In one sense, that dependence never ends. Thus such dependence may not be taken to refute the personal nature of the child.
 - (iii) Science cannot draw a line between a period during pregnancy when the child is not a person and another period when he is. (This is related to point a, above.) Some have tried to draw such a line at various points (implantation, beginning of brain-wave activity, quickening, viability, birth, after birth), but without success.
9. The “Doctrine of Carefulness” (VI, A, 3 above)
- (a) Is the case for the personhood of the child, then, only probable? Yes, though highly probable.
 - (b) Yet it is possible to say with certainty that abortion, in most all cases, is a sin.

- (i) The “doctrine of carefulness” warns us against acts which may even possibly result in the loss of innocent life.
- (ii) Since the unborn child is very probably a human being, we dare not strike it down. We cannot kill it “out of faith” (Romans 14:23).
- (iii) Some: “If you can't prove it from Scripture, we are free to act as we like.” Reply: Imagine a hunting trip. I see a shape in the woods, but I'm unsure as to whether it is a man or a deer. I can't prove it is a man (let alone prove from Scripture that it is a man). Do I then have the right to shoot? Of course not. I must apply principles of Scripture to my situation according to my best judgment. If I don't, I am guilty of negligence at best.

10. Can Abortion Ever Be Justified?

- (a) Rape, incest, population control, economic need, psychological health, physical health of mother, possibility (or certainty) of deformity.
 - (i) We ought not to brush aside these situations. They can be terribly traumatic. We must reply to these concerns with love, gentleness, understanding.
 - (ii) However, they do not, in the end, provide substantial arguments for abortion [cf. OPC Report for extensive discussion).
 - (iii) The crucial point: none of these situations justifies the killing of a person. Most people would hesitate to kill an infant already born for any of these reasons. No one can show that an unborn infant is in any different ethical category.
- (b) To save the life of the mother.
 - (i) This situation rarely occurs. An ectopic pregnancy would be one example.
 - (ii) When it does, however, I would say that abortion is legitimate.
 - (A) As a means of self-defense, with the child in the role of unjust aggressor.
 - (B) Since both persons will otherwise die, it is not wrong, I think, to put one to death to save the other. But that is a difficult point.
- (c) General rule: abortion can be justified only in situations where, in an analogous case, one would be justified in killing a person already born.

F. Death and Dying

1. Definitions of Death

- a) Theologically
 - (1) Separation of soul and body.
 - (2) Consequence of sin: thus physical death is a symptom and image of spiritual death and eternal death.
- b) Empirically

- (1) Scripture contains no explicit criteria for determining when death has occurred.
- (2) It does, however, warrant the recognition of death. There is a point after which the proper treatment of a body is to dispose of it, not to seek its healing. After that point, contact with the corpse in the Old Covenant rendered one “unclean.”
- (3) The general idea seems to be that someone is dead when signs of life (generally breathing in Scripture: Genesis 2:7, 6:17, 17:15, 22, I Kings 17:17-22, Job 27:3, 12:10, etc., Mark 15:37) are absent and there is no possibility of restoring them through current technology.
- (4) The “doctrine of carefulness”
 - (a) A problem arises here. If God's people are to avoid even the possible destruction of a human life, how can we ever cease treatment? How can we ever recognize the occurrence of death?
 - (b) Reply:
 - (i) The problem here is not, as in the case of abortion, the problem of whether the cells in view constitute a human person. Here the cells do constitute a person, whether that person is dead or alive. Even the corpse is a person (“the person as respects his body-“ J. Murray).
 - (ii) A distinction must be drawn between “killing” and “allowing to die” (see below). The former is always ruled out by the “doctrine of carefulness.” The latter is only sometimes ruled out. And a third category, “recognizing death,” is never ruled out.
- (5) Modern criteria
 - (a) “Brain death”: irrevocable brain damage causing irreversible cessation of respiration (even if heart is still beating). Generally indicated by flat EEG, though not always. A flat EEG can sometimes be restored. But when it is irreversible, then there is brain death. This is the usual modern medical criterion.
 - (b) I see this as a refinement of the more phenomenological biblical criterion (breathing). Brain death is the cause of irreversible cessation of breathing. With this refinement, we can make better judgments as to when breathing is irreversibly stopped - when brain damage of a certain kind is present.
 - (c) The fact that heartbeat and other organs may be “kept alive” by artificial means despite brain death should not lead us to question in these cases whether the patient is truly dead. Clearly, a corpse does not become alive when we move its heart back and forth. A distinction must be drawn between natural and artificial sources of function.
 - (d) Thus Christians ought to accept the modern concept of brain death, recognizing, of course, that the concept of irreversibility is technology dependent, and that it is the responsibility of medical science to seek ways of reversing presently irreversible cases. We

should also recognize that “cessation of all functions of the entire brain” (*Uniform Determination of Death Act*) is difficult to determine unless we are also able to ascertain that heart and lungs have irreversibly ceased to function.

2. “Mercy Killing”
 - a. = Killing somebody “for his own good.”
 - b. Motives
 - i. To relieve pain. But medications can handle most all pain today.
 - ii. To prevent a “life not worth living:” severe handicaps, illnesses, injuries.
 - (A) In Jesus’ kingdom: lepers, the blind, deaf, and lame.
 - (B) We have no right to decide when life is worth living.

3. Killing and Letting Die
 - a) This distinction is sometimes described as “active/ passive euthanasia,” when referring to a case of great suffering or terminal illness. The term “euthanasia,” however, is very controversial and probably generates more heat than light in this discussion. It is not very appropriate for cases in general where “letting die” occurs.
 - b) Is there a moral distinction between “killing” and “letting die?”
 - (1) In some cases, yes.
 - (a) People die every moment without our exerting any effort to save their lives. Sometimes (e.g., starving children in India) this fact may be a sin on our part, though I think not always. In any case we surely cannot be accused of “killing” these people.
 - (b) In choosing to save one drowning swimmer, we may let another die. If we are doing all we can, surely no blame occurs.
 - (c) If in case B we do not do all we can to help, we have sinned, but we are not guilty of murder.
 - (2) In other cases, no.
 - (a) Refusing heart pills to a person suffering a heart attack. Morally, in this case, “letting die” is a form of killing.
 - (b) Unplugging respirator of a rich uncle to inherit his money.
 - (c) Unplugging respirator too abruptly, without
 - (d) Withholding “ordinary means” of support for dying person - e.g. refusing to feed a deformed newborn, so that he dies of starvation rather than of his affliction. (Note: Distinction between “ordinary” and “extraordinary” means is not sharp. “Extraordinary,” in general, means either (1) expensive or difficult or (2) promising no reasonable hope of benefit.)
 - c) Terminal illness
 - (1) When a patient is brain dead (above), both “ordinary” and “extraordinary” (above) treatment may cease. Organs may be preserved for transplants.
 - (2) In patients which are not brain dead, ordinary means of care ought not to be withheld.

- (3) Is it ever legitimate to withhold extraordinary care (in the sense of care which is very expensive, difficult)?
- (a) According to Scripture, prolonging one's physical life, though desirable, is not an absolute priority. John 10:11, 15:13, I John 3:16, II Corinthians 4-5 (note 5:6ff), 11:21-27, Philippians 1:20-26. Other principles, then, must be considered:
 - (b) Relieving suffering.
 - (i) "Mercy killing" as such is contrary to Scripture.
 - (ii) Still, medical treatment has the function, not only of prolonging life, but also for relieving suffering. These two goals aren't always consistent.
 - (iii) Might it be better to give a treatment that would maximize freedom from suffering at the expense of reducing life-span? The apostle Paul (Philippians 1:20ff) would probably have considered such treatment.
 - (c) Burdens of others.
 - (i) Expense of treatment must also be considered in comparison with the benefit likely to result.
 - (ii) Would the apostle Paul have wished to bankrupt the diaconate in order to prolong his physical life in a useless state?
 - (d) Availability of Resources: It would be wrong to use a respirator indefinitely for a dying patient when it might be used for another patient who under such care would recover fully. Benevolence must always be "selective" because of our finitude and the finitude of our resources.
4. Suicide
- a. Five instances in Scripture: Saul (1 Sam. 31:3-51), Ahitophel (2 Sam. 17:23), Zimri (1 Kings 16:18-19), Judas (Matt. 27:3-5).
 - (i) Scripture says nothing good or bad about these acts themselves.
 - (ii) 1 Chron. 10:4, 14 tell us that the *Lord* killed Saul.
 - (iii) But the larger context of their lives, that led to their suicides, receives the critique of Scripture.
 - (iv) But if murder is sinful due to the destruction of God's image, then suicide is sinful for the same reason. (Douma)
 - b. We should try to understand the often tragic situations of those who commit suicide, without condoning the act. Remind people that in Christ there is hope for the desperate.
 - c. Suicide is not the unforgivable sin.
 - d. Giving up one's life for one's friends is actually commendable: Judg. 16:23-31 (Heb. 11:32, 39), John 15:13.
5. The Dead Body: Cremation, burial
- a) Early church resisted cremation
 - (1) Burial was the biblical custom.
 - (2) Burial gives more honor to the body as God's image.

- (3) Burial is a testimony of faith in the resurrection.
 - b) Modern argument against burial: lack of space, need of space for other things.
 - c) In general, it seems to me that the argument for burial still carries weight. We should avoid superstitions in this area, however. God is as able, e.g., to resurrect a cremated body as to resurrect a buried one.
- G. Obligation to Help
- 1. Leviticus 19:16 in Jewish translation: "...neither shalt thou stand idly by the blood of thy neighbor."
 - 2. Psalm 50:16-22. "When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him."
 - 3. Prov. 24:11, "Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter."
 - 4. Luke 10:30-37.
- H. Health and Safety
- 1. O.T. laws concerning public health: Leviticus 13-15, Numbers 5:1-4, Deuteronomy 24:8ff.
 - 2. Laws concerning drunkenness.
 - 3. But, again, physical health is not the highest priority (cf. earlier discussion of terminal illness).
 - a) Risking health in pursuit of one's calling often necessary: persecution; breathing smog.
 - b) All travel entails risk; but without it, normal life is impossible.
 - c) Alcoholic beverages are considered legitimate in Scripture (Psalm 104:15, Ecclesiastes 10:19, Isaiah 55:1, John 2:3ff, I Timothy 5:23) even though a little - alcohol destroys brain cells.
 - d) The benefit of wine is "merriment." Sometimes even recreation may take precedence over physical perfection.
 - e) Illegal drugs are obviously in a different category.
 - (i) Usually more dangerous, more addictive.
 - (ii) A major social problem.
 - (iii) Christians should abstain in deference to government.
 - (iv) But in my mind, legalization is an open question.
- I. Biological Research (genetic engineering, attempts to increase intelligence, cloning, test-tube babies, stem cell research, etc.) In general these are valuable developments of science. Still, there are dangers:
- 1. Using fertilized eggs for experimentation or therapy, freely destroying them.
 - 2. Danger of elite or government dictating genetic matters, limiting reproductive freedom.
 - 3. Manipulating people through drugs, behavior therapy, etc. (Slavery).
 - 4. Genetic engineering
 - a. I have no general objection to the use of genetic engineering to improve the food supply or to produce new therapies. Obviously much care should be taken.
 - b. Genetic selection of human traits:
 - (i) Should not proceed in such a way that human embryos are destroyed.

- (ii) Not wrong to manipulate genes to minimize genetic disease.
- (iii) Selecting for desirable physical and mental traits? That too can be defended.
- (iv) Manipulating genes to grow “spare parts” for transplants, etc., illegitimate in my view. Each child must be respected and helped to realize his full personal potential.

J. Ecology

1. Does the Sixth commandment pertain only to human life?
 - a) *Ratzach* is used only of humans.
 - b) Yet Scripture teaches that even animal life has the breath of God.
 - c) God cares for all life, Job 39-40, Psm. 104:11-30, Prov. 6:6-8, Jonah 4:11, Matt. 6:26-30.
 - d) Animals and plants in the coming kingdom, Isa. 11:6-8, Rev. 22:2.
 - e) Scripture mandates kindness to animals, Ex. 20:10, 23:5, 12, 25:4, Prov. 12:10, care for trees, Deut. 20:19.
 - f) Kline argues (Images of the Spirit) that the animals and plants reflect God's theophany in various ways.
 - g) Scripture protects the lower creation (below). Man is lord of creation, but he is a steward, responsible to keep, not exploit, the earth.
 - h) Since human life is dependent on the created environment, respect for human life entails respect for creation.
 - i) Therefore, the sixth commandment, though directed specifically to human life, involves other creatures by patterns of analogy and logic in Scripture.
2. Cultural mandate
 - a) “Replenish” - the earth is to be maintained so as to give life to many generations.
 - b) “Work” (Genesis 2:15) - service of land (*abad*). Man not only rules the earth; he serves (Matthew 20:26).
 - c) Thus the cultural mandate does not justify exploitation of the environment.
3. O.T. Laws (for pollution, see “Health and Safety,” above).
 - a) Animals may eat freely of land during seventh year (Exodus 23:10f, Leviticus 25:3-8).
 - b) Do not muzzle the ox, Deuteronomy 25:4, I Timothy 5:18.
 - c) Animals receive Sabbath rest, Deuteronomy 5:12ff, Exodus 20:8-10.
 - d) Kindness to animals, Proverbs 12:10, Exodus 23:5, Deuteronomy 22:4ff, Hab. 2:17, Jonah 4:11.
 - e) Good shepherd, John 10:11.
 - f) Do not destroy fruit trees during siege, Deuteronomy 20:19f.
 - g) Give rest to the land, Exodus 23:10ff., II Chronicles 36:21.
4. Comments
 - a. There is a strong biblical basis for ecological responsibility, contrary to Lynn White, et al. Still, the earth is to be developed, not left in a “pristine state.” Resources are to be used. God has given men sufficient creativity that we are able to find ways of using without depleting. Human technology can enrich the environment.
 - b. No biblical basis for vegetarianism or trans-species egalitarianism.

K. Racial Justice

1. Imperative of reconciliation is part of the Sixth commandment (Matthew 5:21-26, Murray, *Principles*, 162-167).
2. Question of racial justice is essentially a question of reconciliation.
 - a) No serious biblical argument for establishing dominance for one race or another. The curse on Canaan is fulfilled in the Israelite conquest of the promised land.
 - b) Similarly, there can be no justification for the view that God established permanent barriers between the races. Racial intermarriage is not contrary to Scripture, however many practical problems it may create.
 - c) The issue:
 - (1) Africans were kidnapped and sold into slavery in America.
 - (2) Both kidnapping and the form of slavery found in the American south are evil, sinful.
 - (3) Thus, African Americans have a justified grievance that has not been adequately resolved.
 - (4) The history of segregation has brought further hardship.
 - (5) Matthew 5 puts a high priority on resolving this grievance.
 - d) Problems
 - (1) Hard to assess blame at this temporal distance.
 - (2) Hard to find anyone who can speak credibly for blacks or for whites in general.
 - (3) But in specific relationships, we can try harder to make up for historical injustice.
 - (a) Voluntary affirmative action.
 - (b) Pressing our own comfort zone in our churches and social circles.
 - (c) Showing hospitality.
 - (d) Giving generously.
 - (4) The goal:
 - (a) purging of enmities. "Integration" of the races in and of itself is not imperative.
 - (b) Godly empowerment (Ellis, *Free at Last*).

L. Denominational Reconciliation. (*Evangelical Reunion*)

1. Christ wants the church to be one, John 17.
 - a) "One in spirit, but not in organization?" No hint of any such distinction in the text. The church is the body of Christ and is also an organization with divinely appointed leadership.
 - b) Vs. the idea of "pluriformity" (B. B. Warfield, R. B. Kuiper) that divisions in the church are desirable expressions of diversity.
 - c) Denominations are always due to sin: When some leave one denomination to start another, either they are guilty of sin, or those in their previous denomination are, or, more likely, both.
2. Without organizational unity, Presbyterianism is impossible.
 - a) Scripture gives no authority to "denominations." "Churches" exist on the house-level, the city-level, the universal level. A denomination is not a church.

- b) Without a unified church, it is impossible to appeal a case to the Christians in a particular area.
- 3. Refusal to merge with another body is equivalent to our placing of that body under discipline. Thus, refusal should never be entertained without judicial procedure (safeguards). And union should never be refused for reasons of a less serious character.

VII. The Seventh Commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Q138: What are the duties required in the seventh commandment?

A138: The duties required in the seventh commandment are, chastity in body, mind, affections, words, and behavior; and the preservation of it in ourselves and others; watchfulness over the eyes and all the senses; temperance, keeping of chaste company, modesty in apparel; marriage by those that have not the gift of continency, conjugal love, and cohabitation; diligent labor in our callings; shunning all occasions of uncleanness, and resisting temptations thereunto.

Q139: What are the sins forbidden in the seventh commandment?

A139: The sins forbidden in the seventh commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are, adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections; all corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereunto; wanton looks, impudent or light behavior, immodest apparel; prohibiting of lawful, and dispensing with unlawful marriages; allowing, tolerating, keeping of stews, and resorting to them; entangling vows of single life, undue delay of marriage; having more wives or husbands than one at the same time; unjust divorce, or desertion; idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, unchaste company; lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, stage plays; and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others.

A. Marriage

1. Sexual differentiation is an aspect of the image of God, since the body as well as spirit belong to the image, Genesis 1:27ff, 5:1f, 9:6, 2:7, Psalm. 94:9.
 - a. God as unity and diversity.
 - b. Vs. feminist concept of the interchangeability of roles. See discussion under fifth commandment.
2. Marriage is a creation ordinance, Gen. 2:21-25.
 - a. Leaving: the beginning of a new household, authority structure.
 - b. Cleaving: sexual, and more:
 - (i) Non-sexual cleaving: loyal service, Ruth 1:4, 2 Sam. 20:2.
 - (ii) "One flesh:" compare flesh as whole person in Eph. 5:22-23, 29, 31.
3. Purpose of marriage
 - a. Help for a common task, Gen. 1:28-30.
 - b. Bringing forth children, same passage.
 - c. After the Fall, protection against immorality, 1 Cor. 7:2.
 - d. Sexual pleasure (below, 7).
4. Marriage a good thing.

- a. Don't forbid, 1 Cor. 7, 1 Tim. 4:3, 5:14.
- b. In some situations ("the present crisis," 1 Cor. 7:26) it may be inadvisable. But even then it is better to marry than to be overcome with lust (verse 9).
- 5. Marriage is a covenant, Ezek. 16:8, Mal. 2:14.
 - a. Human (Ruth 4:7-13) and divine (Mal. 2:14-16) witnesses.
 - b. Implies the necessity of a public ceremony.
- 6. Marriage reflects the covenant between God and his people.
 - a) Fall, Genesis 2:22-25, 3:7, Jer. 3:8-9, 5:7, Ezekiel 16, 23:37, Hosea 2-3, Romans 1:23-27. The attitude of rebellion against God defiles also the marriage covenant. [Cf. discussion on Fifth Commandment] and vice versa.
 - b) Redemption, Genesis 3:21, Isa. 62:5, Hosea 2, II Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:22ff, I Corinthians 6:15-20, I Timothy 3:2, 5:9.
- 7. So a believer should not marry an unbeliever, Deut. 7:3-4, Ezra 9-10, 1 Cor. 7:39, 9:5, 2 Cor. 6:14-18.
- 8. Polygamy
 - a) Not explicitly forbidden in the OT.
 - b) But polygamy creates problems: Gen. 16:4-6, 29:16-24, Deut. 21:15-17, 1 Sam. 1:6-8, regulated.
 - c) NT forbids church office to polygamists, 1 Tim. 3:6, Tit. 1:6, but evidently not church membership or the sacraments.
 - d) But the kind of exclusive, lifelong love characteristic of marriage excludes polygamy.
 - (i) God ordained marriage between one man and one woman.
 - (ii) He forbade adultery; but polygamy necessitates a similar sort of disloyalty.
- 9. Sex in marriage
 - a) A delight, not a necessary evil, Gen. 26:8, Prov. 5:18-19, Song of Songs, Isa. 62:5.
 - b) Though parents often choose mates for their children in Scripture, love is also a prominent motif in creating and maintaining marriages: Gen. 24:67, 29:18-30, 1 Sam. 18:20, 28.
 - c) Priests, Levites, and Apostles had the right to marry. Not contrary to exemplary holiness.
 - d) Wrong to abstain, except for a short time for prayer and fasting, 1 Cor. 7:5-7.

B. Adultery

- 1. In Israel, this term is limited to cases in which "a man who is either married or unmarried has sexual intercourse with a married [or engaged] woman" (Douma, 243). See Deut. 22:24.
 - a. A married man who has intercourse with a woman who is neither married nor engaged, he is not considered an adulterer. Bigamy, polygamy, and extra-marital sex of this kind were tolerated in men. In Gen. 38, Tamar is charged with adultery, but Judah is not.
 - b. Like a crime of property (compare Lev. 19:20-21), then; but the death penalty indicates something much more serious.

2. In view of the covenant nature of marriage, we may compare adultery to treason. So the death penalty is appropriate, understandable in the context of Israel's special relation to God as his holy people.

C. Prostitution

1. Not treated as seriously as adultery in OT. Seems to be condoned in Gen. 38:15, Josh. 2 (Rahab) Judg. 16:1, 1 Kings 3.
2. But going to a married prostitute is folly and a road to disaster in Prov. 6:26, 34-35, 7:19-27.
3. Adultery and prostitution in the same category, Isa. 57:3, Ezek. 16:15-19, 23:1-49.
4. Prostitution and God's presence (cultic prostitution):
 - a) The daughter of a priest should never be a prostitute, Lev. 21:9
 - b) Do not bring a prostitute into the presence of God, Deut. 23:17-18. Even marital sex is inappropriate when God draws near, Ex. 19:15.
5. Certainly, then, prostitution is in the category of *ervath dabar* (Deut. 24:1) or *porneia* (Acts 15:20, 29, 1 Cor. 6:18.). Explicitly forbidden in 1 Cor. 6:13-14.

D. Pre-marital Sex

1. Rape of married or betrothed woman: death penalty for rapist, Deuteronomy 22:25-27. Her only responsibility is to cry for help.
2. Rape (seduction) of virgin, Deuteronomy 22:28f, Exodus 22:16f: He must marry her without possibility of divorce or pay a dowry, as the girl's father requires.
3. Otherwise, a woman found not to be a virgin before marriage is considered in the same category as the adulteress, Deuteronomy 22:13-21. If she did not raise the issue [as 1, 2 above], she is assumed to have consented.
4. According to I Corinthians 7, marriage is the only solution to pre-marital sexual urges.
5. Thus all premarital intercourse is included in the *porneia* prohibited in I Corinthians 6:18.

E. Lust, Matthew 5:27f, I Corinthians 7:9.

1. The above discussion, for the most part, pertains to sexual intercourse as such. Many, however, who would not be guilty of extra-marital intercourse are involved in sexual activity in a broader sense: necking, petting, kissing, masturbation, use of pornography, etc. outside of marriage.
 - a) Scripture says little about these activities as such. Women were chaperoned in biblical times before marriage, and they did not have the mobility of young people today. Thus it is unlikely that there was much opportunity for sexual activity short of intercourse.
 - b) Are there, then, any biblical principles which apply to these matters? It seems the best we can do is to analyze the biblical teaching concerning lust.
2. Negatively:
 - a) Lust is not sexual desire as such. That is something good, a God-given incentive toward marriage.
 - b) Nor is it sexual desire for a particular person other than a spouse.
 - (1) I Corinthians 7:9 does not condemn the desire as such, only a desire which cannot be controlled.

- (2) There is no condemnation of either (A) sexual desire which leads to marriage or (B) sexual desire which remains controllable and controlled.
- c) Nor is it lustful merely to imagine sexual relationships. If such imaginings are forbidden, it is difficult to conceive of how sex education could proceed.
- d) Similarly, lust should not be confused with temptation. One may be tempted without sinning (cf. Jesus in Hebrews 4:15). We ought to avoid temptation and to seek release from temptation in prayer. But if temptation comes, we are not guilty on that account. (Note: if “homosexual orientation” is used to refer only to persons who frequently experience homosexual temptations, then in that sense “homosexual orientation” is not sinful.)
- 3. Positively, Lust is the desire to break God's law.
 - (1) Cf. Tenth Commandment, Jesus' condemnation of anger.
 - (2) One may see a certain sexual relationship as desirable without wanting to break God's law for it. Eve was not wrong in thinking the fruit desirable, but in thinking that breaking God's law was desirable.
 - (3) In the spirit of the WLC, we should surely also avoid *occasions* of lust, situations in which we are likely to be tempted.
- 4. Sexual activity short of intercourse.
 - a) Some forms of sexual activity (kissing, etc.) might take place without any desire to break God's law. Thus such activities do not necessarily involve lust.
 - b) People differ as to the situations in which they are exposed to temptation.
 - c) However, we need to guard ourselves in such activities.
 - d) Where draw the line? Discernment needed, honesty, maturity. Remember that lust is a matter of the heart, not merely of “crossing a line.”
 - e) Masturbation, even orgasms in sleep, almost always involve lust in this sense. These are very common and are not as serious as adultery, but they do illustrate the depth of sin in the human heart.

F. Birth Control

- 1. The Roman Catholic Argument
 - a) Based on natural law, primarily.
 - b) Procreation is the essential purpose of sexual activity; frustration of this purpose is “unnatural.”
- 2. Scriptural considerations
 - a) The cultural mandate (“replenish the earth”) militates against birth control.
 - (1) Conception is gift from God.
 - (2) Blessing on large families: Abraham, Psalm 127:3-5.
 - (3) The family as channel of God's grace.
 - b) But one's calling may not allow for marriage, in which case he is excused from literal compliance with the cultural mandate, I Corinthians 7.
 - c) If this is the case, then surely the calling of a married couple might be inconsistent with their having a maximum number of children.
 - d) Procreation in Scripture is not the only function of sexual activity, nor is it clearly a necessary function (else we would expect prohibitions against sexual activity for women following menopause, etc.)

- e) It is not clear that condoms, etc., are any more “artificial” or “unnatural” than the “rhythm method” sanctioned by the Roman Church. Indeed, abstinence itself, within marriage, is quite unnatural.
- 3. “Overpopulation argument” invalid
 - a) We will always need a new generation.
 - b) It is best that there be a large percentage of young people in the population.
 - c) The “population problem” is essentially a problem of economic organization. New Jersey is more densely populated than India.
 - d) Each child will either be part of the problem or part of the solution. We have good reason to believe that children from Christian homes, in general, will be part of the solution. They will not exploit, but multiply, the earth's resources.
- 4. Conclusion: birth control permissible, but probably overused among Christians.

VIII. The Eighth Commandment: “Thou shalt not steal.”

Q141: What are the duties required in the eighth commandment?

A141: The duties required in the eighth commandment are, truth, faithfulness, and justice in contracts and commerce between man and man; rendering to everyone his due; restitution of goods unlawfully detained from the right owners thereof; giving and lending freely, according to our abilities, and the necessities of others; moderation of our judgments, wills, and affections concerning worldly goods; a provident care and study to get, keep, use, and dispose these things which are necessary and convenient for the sustentation of our nature, and suitable to our condition; a lawful calling, and diligence in it; frugality; avoiding unnecessary lawsuits and suretyship, or other like engagements; and an endeavor, by all just and lawful means, to procure, preserve, and further the wealth and outward estate of others, as well as our own.

Q142: What are the sins forbidden in the eighth commandment?

A142: The sins forbidden in the eighth commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are, theft, robbery, man-stealing, and receiving anything that is stolen; fraudulent dealing, false weights and measures, removing land marks, injustice and unfaithfulness in contracts between man and man, or in matters of trust; oppression, extortion, usury, bribery, vexatious lawsuits, unjust enclosures and depopulations; engrossing commodities to enhance the price; unlawful callings, and all other unjust or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbor what belongs to him, or of enriching ourselves; covetousness; inordinate prizing and affecting worldly goods; distrustful and distracting cares and studies in getting, keeping, and using them; envying at the prosperity of others; as likewise idleness, prodigality, wasteful gaming; and all other ways whereby we do unduly prejudice our own outward estate, and defrauding ourselves of the due use and comfort of that estate which God hath given us.

A. Place in the Decalogue

- 1. The creation ordinance of labor-property, following those of worship-Sabbath and marriage-family.
- 2. Relations among these:
 - a) Normative, existential, situational
 - b) Faith, love hope

- c) Pattern of responsibility
 - (1) Worship is comprehensive.
 - (2) Family is to be respected “unto the Lord.”
 - (3) Property is a stewardship given to the family. It represents the blessing sanction of the Fifth Commandment. Obligation and enjoyment.

B. Property

1. Stewardship

- a. God is the ultimate owner of all things (Ex. 19:5, Psm. 24:1, 50:10, Hos. 9:3).
- b. But he gives property to human beings, to administer in his name (Gen. 1:28-30, 1 Sam. 2:7, Job 1:21, Psm. 8:6, 115:16).
- c. So we are pilgrims on the earth, Lev. 25:23.
- d. So land in Israel cannot be sold in perpetuity, Lev. 25:10-55.

2. Private Property

- a. We own property, not in relation to God, but in relation to other people (Gen. 23:3-8, 1 Kings 21:3-6, Acts 4:4, 12:12, 16:14-15, 21:8). The land is Israel’s (Ex. 32:13), but ultimately God’s (Hos. 9:3).
- b. Not sinful to be wealthy: Luke 8:3, 1 Cor. 1:26, 1 Tim. 6:17, Jas. 2:2.
 - (i) Wealth is a blessing from the Lord, Prov. 10:4, 32.
 - (ii) Great saints were sometimes wealthy: Abraham, David. None is rebuked for his wealth as such; rather, their wealth is a good gift of God.
 - (iii) Not wrong to desire material things (Mark 10:29-30), but we shouldn’t be preoccupied with that desire (Matt. 6:19-20, 1 Tim. 6:7).
 - (iv) Israel commanded to feast before the Lord, Deut. 12:6-7, 17-19, 14:22-23, Job 1 (though Job is generous, 31:16-17).
 - (v) Jesus
 - (a) attended a wedding feast, supplied additional wine (John 2),
 - (b) ate with the wealthy, Luke 7:36-50, 11:37, 14:1, 12, Mark 14:7.
 - (c) Praised Mary’s extravagant homage, John 12:7-8, against Judas’s rhetoric of compassion.
 - (vi) God has given us all things richly to enjoy, 1 Tim. 6:17.
- c. But there are spiritual dangers in both wealth and poverty. The best state is contentment with whatever the Lord supplies. Prov. 30:8, 1 Tim. 6:8-10.
- d. We should be willing to lose our material goods for God’s purposes (Matt. 19:16-29, 1 Cor. 7:29-31).
- e. We are accountable to God for our use of wealth, Matt. 25:14-31.
- f. God expects us to use our resources compassionately, Acts 2:44-45, 32-37, Eph. 4:28.

C. Work

- 1. Work ethic necessitated by cultural mandate, Gen. 1:28-30.
- 2. After the fall, toilsome, Gen. 3:17-19, Psm. 90:10.

3. Work, nevertheless, continues to be necessary and beneficial, Deut. 16:15, 1 Thess. 4:11-12.
 - a) Vs. laziness, Prov. 6:6-11, 12:24.
 - b) Work as alternative to theft, Eph. 4:28.
 - c) No work, no food, 2 Thess. 3:10.
4. Obligation to increase resources committed to us, Matt. 25:24-30.

D. Stealing

1. “Property rights” are human rights. To take one's possessions is to take his inheritance, to attack his dignity, his freedom.
2. In biblical law, the penalty for theft is restitution. Where restitution cannot be made, slavery. See Fifth Commandment under “punishment.”
3. Range of application
 - a) Kidnapping, 1 Tim. 1:10. A capital crime, Ex. 21:16, Deut. 24:7.
 - b) Swindling, Jer. 22:13-17, Amos 8:4-6, Hab. 2:9-12.
 - c) Stealing from widows, orphans especially heinous, Matt. 23:14.
 - d) Defrauding employees, James 5:4.
 - e) Land theft, Isa. 5:8.
 - f) Unjust weights, Lev. 19:35, Deut. 25:15.
 - g) Misleading someone for economic gain, Prov. 20:14.
 - h) General oppression of the poor, James 2:6.
4. “Broader” applications:
 - a) Robbing God of tithes and offerings, Malachi 3:8-12, Joshua 7:11.
 - b) Stealing affection, II Samuel 15:6
 - c) False shepherds as thieves and robbers, John 10:1ff
 - d) Lack of punctuality (stealing time)
 - e) Stealing honor (plagiarism, gossip)
 - f) Failure to meet any obligation (stealing as a “perspective” on all sin)
5. May we steal to keep from starving? Prov. 6:30-31: not as serious a sin as others, but restitution should be made.

E. Economic Systems

1. Socialism no biblical warrant (f earlier discussion of Marx, Part I).
 - a) O.T.
 - (1) Government in Israel was limited, supported only by the half-shekel head-tax and the tribute of foreign nations (including spoils of war. No income tax, property tax, sales tax. Thus government simply did not have the resources to “manage” the nation's economy.
 - (2) Government's assigned functions are limited to defense and the carrying out of the judicial penalties.
 - (3) Private property is affirmed and protected by the law [above].
 - (4) Care of the poor is done by family, church and individuals [below].
 - (5) Education is the responsibility of the family, primarily. Education in specialized fields is carried on by the institutions that function in those fields. Hence the Levites are involved in teaching religion, farmers in teaching farming, the state in teaching statecraft, etc. “Apprenticeship

model.” Surely there is no place for a state monopoly on education as we see developing today.

- (6) Government-induced inflation, economic controls, eminent domain, inheritance tax, other unjust taxation, fit the biblical definition of theft.

b) N.T.

- (1) N.T. repeats the O.T. prohibition of stealing, work-ethic: Ephesians 4:28, I Thessalonians 4:11f., II Thessalonians 3:8-15.

- (2) The “massive sharing” of Acts 4:32-5:11.

(a) Strictly voluntary, therefore non-socialistic: 5:4.

(b) It had nothing to do with government.

(c) Most likely, an emergency situation in view.

(i) Large numbers of new believers, immature.

(ii) Persecution.

(iii) Displacement from homes.

(iv) Famine?

(d) This pattern not repeated elsewhere in the N.T.

(e) A model for us? Yes, in the sense that we ought to be willing to respond as readily as they in the situation of need.

c) More general considerations

- (1) Move toward socialism in modern times represents a turning away from God, regarding the state as Lord and Savior. (Rushdoony).

- (2) Socialism has never been economically successful. “Planning” is best done by all the people, not an elite.

- (3) Socialism always tends toward totalitarianism. You cannot have a truly “planned” economy unless everything is controlled.

- (4) Socialism tends toward war and world conquest: A state cannot have full control of its own economy. Thus socialism presupposes a divine state: omnipotent, omniscient, benevolent.

- (5) Is socialism “compassionate?” Many compassionate people misguidedly become socialists. However:

(a) Socialist states are not compassionate with their own resources; rather they seek to maximize their own possessions and power. They are “compassionate” only with other people's money, which they take away by force.

(b) Some short-term gains in equity may result from socialism.

(i) Often at an enormous price: mass murders in Russia and China.

(ii) Claims to advances in the condition of the poor must be taken with a grain of salt. Cuba is now highly literate; but it was the most literate Latin-American nation before Castro, and there is no proof that his policies created the gains.

(iii) In the long run, socialist nations survive only through the generosity of the free world.

(c) In fact, socialism's appeal is entirely selfish: people wanting more for themselves. Its philosophical background is economic determinism.

- (d) Capitalism, though often criticized (and praised!) for its appeal to self-interest, also has altruistic elements (George Gilder, *Wealth and Poverty*). An entrepreneur is one who seeks to meet a need in society, and/or to satisfy desires of other people.
- 2. Scriptural limits on free enterprise: Biblical economics is not socialist, nor is it *laissez-faire* in the sense of granting us autonomy in the use of wealth.
 - a) Stewardship: God is the primary owner of all wealth.
 - b) Laws governing economics, treatment of the poor (below). Probably these would have tended to lessen the gap between rich and poor.
 - c) Biblical teachings about the proper attitude toward wealth.
 - d) “Just price,” or “what the market will bear?”
 - (1) Usually we determine the latter by the former. What other measure is there?
 - (2) But is it just to take windfall profits in market distortions, e.g. from disaster victims?

F. Tithing, Taxation

- 1. For description of the several kinds of biblical tithes, see Rushdoony-, *Institutes of Biblical Law*.
- 2. Tithes are on income, not wealth.
- 3. Tithes are on agricultural production, not general income
 - a) This fact suggests the need for some adjustment in a non-agricultural society.
 - b) It also suggests a connection between the tithe principle and Israel's unique stewardship over the land of promise.
- 4. Still, it is helpful to have a general idea of what God wants us to give for the needs of the church-organization.
- 5. The N.T. principle: free-will offering, from the heart. But can we claim to be giving freely, without covetousness, if we give even less than the O.T. people of God?
- 6. Purposes of the tithe:
 - a. To the Levites, who have no material inheritance, but have responsibilities in teaching, leading worship, Num. 18:21.
 - b. They also tithe to the Lord, Num. 18:28, particularly to the priesthood.
 - c. Also, the stranger, fatherless, and widows are to benefit, Deut. 26:12-13.
- 7. Very little money authorized in taxes for government purposes. The “poll tax” (Exodus 30:11-16) was a half-shekel of silver, the same for all. No land tax, income tax, sales tax, inheritance tax. Limited government. But of course government always takes what it wants.

G. Usury, Exodus 22:25-27, Leviticus 25:35-38, Deuteronomy 23:19f, Luke 6:34f.

- 1. Interest on commercial loans is legitimate, Luke 19:23, Matthew 25:27.
- 2. Interest-free loans are mandated for charitable purposes.
- 3. In my view, this legislation presupposes an inflation free society. Thus the “general equity” of these laws would permit the taking of sufficient interest to keep pace with inflation.
- 4. Compassionate lending:
 - a) The borrower gets his cloak back so he can keep warm, Ex. 22:26-27.

b) Don't take a person's means of livelihood as collateral, Deut. 24:6.

H. Wealth and Poverty; World Hunger (Sider vs. Chilton)

1. The Current Problem (situational perspective)

a) Statistics

(1) Inequalities

- (a) 6% of the people use 33% of the resources
- (b) 1/3 of the world's population has annual income of under \$100 (vs. \$5600 in the US - 1976).

(c) Problems with these statistics.

- (i) Population estimates difficult
- (ii) May not take some things into account.
 - (a) Barter
 - (b) Communal labor (help from neighbors, etc.)
 - (c) Underground economy
 - (d) Psychic income (How rich do you feel?)
 - (e) Relative self-sufficiency (through hunting, fishing, gathering, gardening)
 - (f) Different need levels in different locations (heat, clothing, taxes, etc.)
 - (g) Government social services
 - (h) Different kinds of "consumption" (industrial vs. private, defense spending, etc.)

(iii) Scripture does not mandate absolute equality (see below).

(2) Hunger

- (a) 460 million not getting enough calories to live ('76)
- (b) ½ billion not getting enough protein.
- (c) Problems
 - (i) Margins for error
 - (ii) Some may have a poor diet simply because of ignorance, or because of a free decision to spend their resources on something else.
- (d) Still, these statistics are alarming. Scripture doesn't mandate "equality," but does call us to feed the hungry, to have compassion on real need.

b) Possible Causes

(1) Lack of natural resources

- (a) Natural resources are unevenly distributed.
- (b) But some nations, relatively poor in natural resources, have flourishing economies: Japan, Taiwan, Germany. (These import nearly all their oil.)
- (c) Sider himself says that the nations of the third world have much to offer the rest of us, but are held down by unjust economic structures.

(2) Population growth

- (a) Striking statistics here; previously thought to be a crucial "cause."

- (b) Lately, though, calls for population control have been attacked as racist.
 - (c) Actually, richer countries are often most densely populated (Sider, 53).
 - (d) Poor countries can cut population growth quickly as education, health services improve (Sider).
 - (e) Chilton: population is an advantage when the people are productive; hence biblical encouragement to large covenant families.
- (3) Consumption by the Rich
- (a) Argument: US use of beef pushes up price of grain, harms the poor.
 - (b) Response
 - (i) In general, it is not the case that wealth causes poverty. If it were, then why doesn't US wealth cause poverty in Japan?
 - (ii) Sider admits (204f) that even if America abstained from beef, this would make little difference. It would simply result in less production of grain or larger surpluses.
 - (iii) Certainly if many people ate more simply, that would help some - if they gave the money saved to relief programs. But this raises the question of how much one ought to give away. (See "Tithing" above, also discussion below.)
 - (iv) Profit-Seeking
 - (a) Argument: American companies make enormous profits from cheap third-world products and labor
 - (b) Mavrodes: what are the alternatives?
 - (i) Paying higher wages would result in higher prices which the third world, among others, would have to pay.
 - (ii) Providing goods at lower costs to the third world would discourage local production, create a situation of permanent dependence.
 - (iii) If American business stayed out of the third world, the result would be greater unemployment.
 - (iv) Sider's suggestion: food for work.
If the work is useful work, they can earn their food.
If it is not, then we ought not to encourage it.
 - (v) Government Actions: tariff policies, commodity agreements which often have bad effects on the poor.
 - (a) Chilton: This is socialism; eliminate
 - (b) Frame: Yes, but as long as we have these things, we ought to try to make them more just. (Theonomy is weak in providing interim solutions - suggestions on improving society short of total reconstruction.) "Negative income tax."
 - (vi) Fraud, bribery
 - (a) Should seek to avoid this.

- (b) But is probably has little impact on the total picture
- (c) Vs. limited liability corporations in which no one is answerable (Hebden-Taylor)

(vii) Religion

- (a) India's sacred cows eat enough grain to feed 1,200,000 people.
- (b) Work-ethic, faith in the future. Galbraith: The main problem in poor nations is the accommodation to poverty, the perception of the people that nothing can be done. Adjustment to welfare-states

2. Biblical Principles

- a) God and the Poor: Is God “on their side?”
 - (1) Some rich favored by God (Abraham, David)
 - (2) Wealth is a covenant blessing.
 - (3) God forbids favoritism, either to poor or to rich, Exodus 23:3, Leviticus 19:15.
 - (4) Still, the poor are often oppressed in this sinful world.
 - (5) God will vindicate the believing poor who are oppressed.
- b) Private property
 - (1) Scripture affirms this.
 - (a) Inheritance, possession
 - (b) Implicit in eighth commandment
 - (2) Sider also affirms this (113f, 100, 209), but Chilton doesn't seem to believe him
 - (3) But Scripture does not endorse *laissez faire*. We do not have the right to do anything we like with our property.
 - (a) Stewardship
 - (b) Laws governing economics, treatment of the poor.
 - (c) Chilton, too, opposes “anarchic,” “antinomian” or “autonomous” capitalism (6, 181).
- c) Attitude toward wealth
 - (1) Possessions not inherently evil (Sider, 125ff; Chilton thinks he doesn't really mean it, 895.)
 - (2) Wealth is a blessing [above, a]
 - (3) We ought not to set our heart on riches.
 - (4) Be prudent, plan; but don't be “anxious.”
 - (5) Be generous. [See d, below].
- d) Individual use of wealth
 - (1) O. T. Poor Laws
 - (a) Principle of family inheritance not compromised by taxations, eminent domain.
 - (b) Interest-free loans [D, above], Deut. 15:8, 11.
 - (c) Gleaning, Ex. 23:11, Lev. 19:10, 23:22.
 - (d) Loans remitted in Sabbatical year
 - (e) Sale of land remitted in Jubilee

- (f) Household apprenticeship [See “slavery” under V. Biblical slavery was a way of (among other things) helping financial incompetents to develop the ability to support themselves as free persons.]
- (g) Tithes: Levites provided educational, diaconal services. Deuteronomy 14:27-29.
- (h) Instruction about wisdom in spending.
- (i) Prohibition of any favoritism on economic grounds, bribery in administration of justice [above, a]
- (j) “There should be no poor among you” (Deut. 15:4-5) but there will be (Deut. 15:11, John 12:8).
- (k) Present relevance:
 - (i) Jubilee probably cannot be reinstated, since it was dependent upon God's original parceling out of the promised land. The church today does not have the responsibility to parcel out land.
 - (ii) For interest-free loans, see “Usury,” above.
 - (iii) Much remains that ought to be imitated today.
 - (iv) As with O.T. Israel, the church can provide a “model” of responsibility to love. Inner-city communities of Christians.
- (2) N.T. “Massive Sharing,” Acts 2:44f, 4:32-5:11.
 - (a) Not forced (5:4), but spontaneous.
 - (b) No support here for government-imposed economic control.
 - (c) Perhaps related to special economic problems.
 - (i) New believers being fired from jobs, persecuted.
 - (ii) Preparation for the disaster of A.D. 70.
 - (d) Still, their openness, willingness to share at great sacrifice, is a model for us today.
- (3) Inheritance: Still, Scripture says that supporting one's family and leaving them an inheritance is a worthy use of one's resources, Proverbs 22.
- (4) Dominion: We ought not to feel guilty about enjoying the fruits of our labors, a blessing of God.
 - (a) If no one were rich, there would be no money available for investment, which would harm everybody.
 - (b) Consumer spending does contribute to the economy.
 - (c) Consumer spending (a nice house, car, etc.) is a way to invest, to protect one's resources so as to pass along a larger inheritance.
- (5) “Where do I draw the line?” Spiritual discernment needed. Do not pass by some one who is dying by the road!
- e) Principle of Selective Benevolence (cf. II)
 - (1) “Lifeboat ethics” of Garrett Hardin, “triage”: Help only those who will benefit from help, abandon the rest.
 - (2) No one has past the point where all help is useless.
 - (3) Still, we ought not to feel guilty when we find that we can't help everyone. Our resources are limited.
- f) The Goal

- (1) "Equality" in II Corinthians 8:13-15. Not absolute equality, but meeting of needs. No Christian ought to go without food, shelter.
- (2) Serious implementation of the diaconate could certainly wipe out hunger among Christians, Cf. Mormons.
- (3) The love shown in the Christian community and the success of that love in relieving basic needs could serve as a powerful witness to the world.

I. Mercy Ministry

1. Do good to all, especially of the household of faith, Gal. 6:10.
2. That is, our first responsibility is to our own families, 1 Tim. 5:4-10, then to the poor of the church, 5:3, then to any needy person who comes across our path, Luke 10:30-37.
3. Emperor Julian the Apostate: The Christians fed their own poor, and then they fed ours.
4. When we have time only for a handout, give food, bus tickets, etc., rather than cash.
5. If a longer term relationship is possible, offer to a poor person an opportunity to change his life.
 - a) Through the gospel.
 - b) Discipleship, including work experience.
 - c) Counseling, including employment and financial.

J. Gambling

1. Arguments against
 - a) Can be linked to worship of fate, chance.
 - b) Can be psychologically addictive.
 - c) Can involve covetousness.
 - d) Can be a waste of time and money, a cause of poverty.
 - e) Can be thought of as a substitute for useful work.
 - f) Even where legal, often controlled by organized crime, etc.
2. Reply: Although all of these things can be linked with gambling, I don't think that gambling necessarily involves any of them. One might regard it simply as a game, spending no more on it than upon any other amusement. One can avoid organized crime by restricting oneself to private football pools or Church Bingo games. But promoting gambling in the public square does more harm than good.

IX. The Ninth Commandment: “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”
(Exodus: *sheqer*, falsehood; Deuteronomy: *shaw* vanity [cf. III])

Q144: What are the duties required in the ninth commandment?

A144: The duties required in the ninth commandment are, the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man, and the good name of our neighbor, as well as our own; appearing and standing for the truth; and from the heart, sincerely, freely, clearly, and fully, speaking the truth, and only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice, and in all other things whatsoever; a charitable esteem of our neighbors; loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name; sorrowing for, and covering of their infirmities; freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces, defending their innocency; a ready receiving of a good report, and unwillingness to admit of an evil report, concerning them; discouraging talebearers, flatterers, and slanderers; love and care of our own good name, and defending it when need requireth; keeping of lawful promises; studying and practicing of whatsoever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report.

Q145: What are the sins forbidden in the ninth commandment?

A145: The sins forbidden in the ninth commandment are, all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbors, as well as our own, especially in public judicature; giving false evidence, suborning false witnesses, wittingly appearing and pleading for an evil cause, outfacing and overbearing the truth; passing unjust sentence, calling evil good, and good evil; rewarding the wicked according to the work of the righteous, and the righteous according to the work of the wicked; forgery, concealing the truth, undue silence in a just cause, and holding our peace when iniquity calleth for either a reproof from ourselves, or complaint to others; speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a wrong end, or perverting it to a wrong meaning, or in doubtful and equivocal expressions, to the prejudice of truth or justice; speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting, tale bearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling, rash, harsh, and partial censuring; misconstruing intentions, words, and actions; flattering, vainglorious boasting, thinking or speaking too highly or too meanly of ourselves or others; denying the gifts and graces of God; aggravating smaller faults; hiding, excusing, or extenuating of sins, when called to a free confession; unnecessary discovering of infirmities; raising false rumors, receiving and countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears against just defense; evil suspicion; envying or grieving at the deserved credit of any, endeavoring or desiring to impair it, rejoicing in their disgrace and infamy; scornful contempt, fond admiration; breach of lawful promises; neglecting such things as are of good report, and practicing, or not avoiding ourselves, or not hindering: What we can in others, such things as procure an ill name.

A. Theological Background

1. Legal witness is the focal meaning. Note connection with property, Leviticus 6:1-7.
 - a. Legal witnesses held sway over life and death, 1 Kings 21:13, Matt. 26:60-61, Acts 7:13-14. Witness must cast first stone, Deut. 17:7.
 - b. One witness insufficient for death penalty, Deut. 17:6, 19:15.

- c. A witness found to be false receives the punishment the accused would have received, Deut. 19:16-19.
 2. Similarly, vs partial judges, Lev. 19:15, Ex. 23:1-3. Vs. bribes, Ex. 18:21, Deut. 16:18-20.
 3. The commandment also deals with lying more generally.
 - a) Note relation to other commandments in Hosea 4:2, Proverbs 6:19.
 - b) General biblical polemic against lies, Psalm. 31:18, 63:11, 101:7, 119:29, 163, Proverbs 6:17, 12:22, 13:5, 19:5, 9, Ephesians 4:25, I John 2:21, Revelation 21:27, 22:15.
 - c) Satan as father of lies, John 8:44.
 - d) Sinners dominated by lies, Rom. 1:25, 3:8-18, 2 Cor. 4:2-4, 2 Thess. 2:9-12.
 - e) False prophecy, Deut. 13:1-18.
 4. Other verbal ways of harming one's neighbor
 - a) Gossip, slander, Psm. 15:3, Prov. 11:13, 16:28, 20:19, 25:23, 26:20, Rom. 1:29, 30, 2 Cor. 12:20, Gal. 5:19-20, 1 Tim. 5:13, 3 John 10, Jude 9 (!)
How we love it: Prov. 18:8, 26:22!
 - b) Judging rashly, 2 Sam. 16:4, 19:24-28, John 9:2, Matt. 7:1-3.
 - c) Twisting someone's words, Matt. 26:61, John 2:19.
 - d) Failing to mind your own business, 1 Thess. 4:11.
 - e) Putting the worst construction on someone's words or actions. We have the responsibility to give one another the benefit of the doubt; "innocent until proved guilty." No accusation unless witnesses.
 5. The power of the tongue for evil, Jas. 3:2-10, Rom. 3:10ff. Neighbor
 - a) Fellow Israelite, even when enemy, Ex. 23:4-5, Prov. 24:1, 7, 25:21.
 - b) NT
 - (1) In church, first of all: Rom. 15:2, James 4:12, Eph. 4:25.
 - (2) But also those outside, Luke 10:25-37, Rom. 13:8-9, Tit. 3:4.
 6. Broader perspectives: Witness is not only something we do (with the lips); it is something we are, Isaiah 43, Acts 1:8, Rev. 3:14, John 18:37. Any sin, therefore, is a "false witness."
- B. Are Lies Ever Justifiable?
1. "Jocular" lies: jokes and fictitious stories not wrong. There are some in Scripture. But we should avoid those that really hurt somebody, Prov. 26:12-13.
 2. "Polite" lies: petty flatteries required by etiquette.
 - a) "Sincerely yours" "I've had enough, thanks."
 - b) Such expressions are not normally understood literally, but are conventional means of maintaining civility in place of brutal honesty.
 - c) These expressions can be abused; some flattery is destructive.
 - d) Some forms of language misunderstood: creedal subscription often taken as merely formal.
 3. "Necessary" lies: for my neighbor's *benefit*. Hiding Jews from Nazis.
 - a) Scripture examples:
 - (1) Ex. 1:15-21, the Israelite midwives in Egypt.
 - (2) Joshua 2:4-6, Heb. 11:31, James 2:25, Rahab.
 - (3) Josh 8:3-8, ambush at Ai, at God's direction.
 - (4) Judg. 4:18-21, 5:24-27, Jael and Sisera.

- (5) 1 Sam. 16:1-5: Samuel misleads Saul as to the reason for his mission.
 - (6) 1 Sam. 19:12-17: Michal deceives her father's troops.
 - (7) 1 Sam. 20:6: David's counsel to Jonathan.
 - (8) 1 Sam. 21:13: David feigns madness.
 - (9) 2 Sam. 5:22-25: another military deceit.
 - (10) 2 Sam. 15:34, Hushai counseled to lie to Absalom.
 - (11) 2 Sam. 17:19-20, women deceive Absalom's men.
 - (12) 2 Kings 16:14-20, Elisha misleads the Syrian troops.
 - (13) Jer. 38:24-28, Jeremiah lies to the princes.
 - (14) Luke 24:28, Jesus acts as if he intends to go further.
- b) Augustine, John Murray
- (1) Augustine: no lie is of the truth (1 John 2:21, Psm. 5:6), so never lie.
 - (2) Murray: Deceit is never justified. The midwives were commended, not for deceiving, but for preserving life. God authorized Samuel to withhold the truth, not to deceive.
- c) Hodge: Truth is required only where there is a "virtual promise."
- (1) Difficult to define "virtual promise" or to identify one.
 - (2) This approach puts the burden of proof on those who would show, in some situation, that truth is required. In my view, Scripture teaches the opposite: the burden of proof is on those who would show that lying is permitted.
- d) Douma, Frame
- (1) Rahab wouldn't be praised for her faith in total abstraction from the methods she used to accomplish the result. How else could the spies have been "sent out another way" (James 2:25)?
 - (2) Murray's distinction between deceiving and withholding truth is legitimate. But when we withhold truth (or even state it) in such a way as knowingly to create a false impression in the mind of another, that is surely a form of deceit. To press Murray's distinction in such a case is merely to play with words.
 - (a) "Athanasius is not far away."
 - (b) Hans Busscher: "Is Hans Busscher *sitting* among you?"
 - (3) Remaining silent is usually not a remedy.
 - (4) One must simply admit that Scripture admits exceptions to the general meaning of the commandment.
 - (a) like the eating of consecrated bread (Lev. 24:9, 1 Sam. 21:3-6, Matt. 12:5),
 - (b) disobeying authorities when they require sin.
 - (c) Capital punishment and war as exceptions to VI.
 - (5) In such situations, there is such a breakdown in language that it is difficult, even if you try, to speak truth to your enemy.
 - (a) Would the Nazis believe you if you said you were hiding Jews in the basement? Most likely they would suspect a trick.
 - (b) There are certain specific conventions which are needed in wartime to communicate truth. E.g., the raising of a white flag: in "wartime ethics" it is considered dastardly for one to carry a white flag to the

enemy and then open fire with a concealed weapon. Yet even those conventions are not always observed.

- (c) Thus the scriptural justification of deceit in wartime is both a divine norm and a recognition of a de facto breakdown in communication.
- (6) We should be conservative with this principle. It does not justify, for example, lying to a patient about terminal disease.
- (7) God sometimes announces actions that he does not ultimately intend to carry out, in order to motivate his people to prayer and repentance. Cf. Jesus in Luke 24:28. These are not deceptions, for it is understood in Scripture that God's announcements are often conditional (Jer. 18:6-10).

X. The Tenth Commandment: "Thou shalt not covet." (Exodus: *chamad*; Deut.: *avah*)

Q147: What are the duties required in the tenth commandment?

A147: The duties required in the tenth commandment are, such a full contentment with our own condition, and such a charitable frame of the whole soul toward our neighbor, as that all our inward motions and affections touching him, tend unto, and further all that good which is his.

Q148: What are the sins forbidden in the tenth commandment?

A148: The sins forbidden in the tenth commandment are, discontentment with our own estate; envying and grieving at the good of our neighbor, together with all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.

- A. Inward origin of all sin: Here the Decalogue emphasizes the point often made elsewhere in Scripture that God is concerned not only with outward acts, but with inward attitudes as well ("the existential perspective.") All sin begins with evil desire. Thus God calls us to guard the thought-life.
- B. Traditional distinctions
 - 1. Spontaneous desire (catches you off guard)
 - 2. Nursing that desire (*tittilatio*)
 - 3. Making a plan to achieve it (involvement of the will)
 - 4. Accomplishing your desire (the deed).
 - 5. Roman Catholic ethics: 1 is not sinful, 2-4 are.
 - 6. Calvin:
 - a) Other commandments deal with 3-4; this deals with 1-2.
 - b) 1-2 as sinful as 3-4, in God's sight. The depth of depravity.
 - 7. Heidelberg Catechism: vs. "least inclination or thought."
- C. Douma:
 - 1. Literal thrust of the commandment is between the disposition (B, 2) and the deed (B, 4).
 - 2. To covet is to "set your desire on" something, so that you "can't keep your hands off it."
 - a) Eve in the garden, Gen. 3:6.
 - b) Israel wanted to go back to Egypt, Ex. 16:3.
 - c) Achan in Josh. 7:21.
 - d) The rich man in Nathan's parable, 2 Sam. 12:1-2.

- e) Ex. 34:24, Deut. 7:25, Mic. 2:2.
- 3. So not *merely* private. Cf. disruption in society caused by conspiracies, even those that don't accomplish their goals.
- 4. NT on covetousness, Luke 12:15, Gal. 5:16-26, 1 John 2:16-17.
 - a) Col. 3:5, greed is idolatry.
 - b) Eph. 4:19, 5:3, connected with sexual license.
 - c) 2 Pet. 2:3, 14, motivates false prophets.
- 5. Still, there is sin even at level B, 1. Were we free from sin, we would not have the slightest desire for anything evil.
 - a) Imaginations, Gen. 6:5, 8:21.
 - b) Secret sins, Psm. 19:12, 90:8, 139:23-24, Jer. 17:9.
 - c) Covetous disposition- with no specific object mentioned, Rom. 7:8.
- 6. JF: That depends on what you mean by desire.
 - a) Not wrong to merely contemplate something as good or desirable.
 - b) Wrong to see disobedience to God as a desirable way of achieving it.
- D. Related biblical concepts
 - 1. Envy: Gen. 4:7, Mark 4:19, 1 Tim. 6:9-10.
 - a) A major force in contemporary culture, especially politics. See Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction on resentment*, Rushdoony, *Politics of Guilt and Pity*, Schroeck, *Envy*.
 - b) *Ressentiment* (Nietzsche): not only wanting something that belongs to someone else, but hating him, wanting to bring him down.
 - 2. Contentment: Psm. 78:18-19, Luke 3:14, 2 Cor. 9:8, Phil. 4:11, 1 Tim. 6:6-8, Heb. 13:5.
 - a) Based on trust in God's providence.
 - b) In both poverty and wealth. People of all social conditions violate this command.
- E. Good desires (contra Buddhism)
 - 1. Not wrong to desire food (Matt. 4:2), drink (John 19:28-29), sleep (Luke 8:23), sex (Gen. 2:22-23, Song of Songs), children (Gen. 30:22-23, 1 Sam. 1:17, Psm. 127:3-5), improved position (Prov. 24:27).
 - 2. The blessings of God include material provision, and we should desire those (Mark 10:29-31). The covenant promises of land, seed, long life, prosperity.
 - 3. Thirst for God himself, Psm. 42:1-2, 73:25, Phil. 2:23.
 - 4. Think on these things, Phil. 4:8.