

Catechism  
5<sup>th</sup> Commandment  
You shall not murder

*What does this mean?*

- We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.

*What does God forbid in the Fifth Commandment?*

- God forbids us to take the life of another person (murder, abortion, euthanasia) or our own life (suicide). Check out Genesis 9:6 and Matt. 26:52

**Abortion:** Luther says the living but unborn are persons in the sight of God from the time of conception. Since abortion takes a human life, it is not a moral option except to prevent the death of another person, the mother. Check out Jeremiah 1:5 and Psalm 139:16.

**Euthanasia:** The severely handicapped, infirm, helpless, and aged are persons in the sight of God with life given by Him and to be ended only by Him. Check out: Proverbs 6:16-17, Proverbs 31:8 and Acts 17:15.

**Suicide:** My own life is a gift of God to be ended only by HIM. Check out Jeremiah 31:3 and Luke 12:22.

- God forbids us to hurt or harm our neighbor physically, that is, to do or say anything which may destroy, shorten, or make his or her life bitter. Check out Deut. 32:39 and Romans 12:19
- God forbids us to keep anger and hatred in our hearts against our neighbor. Check out: Matt. 5:22, 1 John 3:15, Matt 15:19, Eph 4:26.

*Does anyone have authority to take another person's life?*

- Yes, lawful government, as God's servant, may execute criminals and fight just wars. Check out Romans 13:4

*What does God require of us in the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment?*

- We should help and support our neighbor in every bodily need. Check out Romans 12:20
- We should be merciful, kind, and forgiving towards our neighbor. Check out Matt. 5: 5, 7, 9 and Matt. 6:15 and Eph. 4:32
- We should avoid and assist our neighbor in avoiding the abuse of drugs and the use of any substance that harms the body and the mind. Check out 2 Cor. 7:1.

Luther writes in the *Book of Concord*: pages 389-391 Many persons, though they may not actually commit murder, nevertheless call down curses and imprecations upon their enemy's head, which if they came true, would soon put an end to him. This spirit of revenge clings to every one of us, and it is common knowledge that no one willingly suffers injury from another. Therefore God wishes to remove the root and source of this bitterness toward our neighbor.

Martin Luther goes on...this commandment is violated not only when a person actually does evil, but also when he fails to do good to his neighbor, or, though he has the opportunity, fails to prevent, protect and save him from suffering bodily harm or injury.

God's real intention that we should allow no man to suffer harm, but show to everyone all kindness and love. Here again we have God's Word by which he wants to encourage and urge us to true, noble, exalted deeds, such as gentleness, patience, and in short, love and kindness toward our enemies.

Read Psalm 148

Prayer: God, who creates and gives energy to all that exist; inspire us to conserve, not destroy; to protect, not exploit; and to encourage, not harm our neighbors nor life around us. Help us so to champion the creation, that all who breathe might praise your holy name. Amen

Devotion: Dearest Lord, help me so to treasure life that I resist doing harm to others. Take from me all fear, anger, and prejudice, that I may support with love even those who hate me. Receive my prayer for the sake of Jesus who forgave his enemies from the cross. Amen.

“Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation” (NIV edition), Concordia Publishing House 1991 with illustrations 2005, 296 pages ISBN 13: 978-0-7586-1121-5 ISBN 10: 0-7586-1121-5

“The Book of Concord” The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church: Fortress Press Philadelphia ISBN 0-8006-0825-9