



“I shall always be ready to remind you of these things...”
2 Peter 1:21



CABOT WESTSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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When We Meet

Sunday

Bible Classes – 9:00 am
 Worship – 10:00 am, 5:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Classes – 7:00 pm

Our Elders

R.D. Hopper
 Norman Kemper

Our Deacons

Troy Hunter
 Kelly Kendall
 Tony Ramick

Our Preacher

Alex Hale

Thou Shalt Not Murder

By Alex Hale

One has said that our society has become a “culture of death.” Statistics show that on average, three murders occur every hour of the day. In addition to actual murders, for many people murder has become a form of entertainment. One college president stated, “By the time the average child finishes elementary school, he or she has watched 8,000 televised murders and 100,000 acts of on-screen violence.” Many video games look so life-like that those who play them get a sensation as if they had actually killed someone. David Walsh, former director of the National Institute on Media and the Family, said, “What happens when a teen spends a lot of time playing violent video games is the aggression center of the brain activates, but the emotional center of the brain deactivates – exactly the combination that we would not want to see.”

Psychologist and former army colonel David Grossman agrees, stating that modern video games are chillingly effective at desensitizing teens to the act of killing other human beings. As evidence of his claim, Grossman cites the example of Michael Carneal. In 1997, then 14-year-old Carneal opened fire in the lobby of his Paducah, Kentucky high school, killing three and seriously injuring five others. A police investigation later discovered that his parents had converted their two-car garage into a playroom lined with point-and-shoot arcade games. In other words, years of playing violent video games had contributed to the emotional training needed to kill another person.

Those video games also provided Carneal with the physical training needed to use a deadly weapon. Prior to the night before his killing spree, he had *never* shot an actual pistol. However, when he opened fire on his fellow students, he did so with an incredible degree of accuracy. Grossman said, “Carneal had kneeling, scrambling, screaming targets. He fired eight shots at eight of those targets. Five of them were head shots; the other three were upper torso. I have trained the FBI. I have trained Navy SEALs, Green Berets, and Texas Rangers. And when I tell them about this case, they’re simply stumped. Nowhere in the annals of law enforcement, military, or criminal history can we find equivalent achievement.”

Grossman goes on to say that the data linking violence in video games, movies, and TV shows to violence in society is stronger than the data linking tobacco use to cancer. The American Medical Association is on record as claiming that violence in media is causally-related to about 10,000 homicides annually.

Our society has made murder a form of entertainment. Popular musicians who sing about rape and brutality make millions, and we are bombarded with violent images on our TV and computer screens. It is no wonder that God, the creator of human life, saw the need for the sixth commandment (Exodus 20:13). The word used in this verse is dealing exclusively with murder. We are talking about the intentional ending of innocent life. This is the unjust, premeditated taking of a human life. The Israelites needed this law because for 400 years prior to receiving the law they had been living in a “culture of death.” Life had been undervalued for them because for all that time they had been treated as slaves – as things, not people. However, God is now calling them to live differently than their culture. He has given us the same command.

In addition, Jesus prohibits the evil thoughts which lead to murder. Jesus taught that murder is more than an act – it is an attitude fueled by anger. Anger led to the first murder (Genesis 4:6-7) and anger continues to cause us to have evil thoughts about others (Matthew 5:21-22). Murder is wrong because humans are made in the image of God. Since we bear God’s image, to murder (or to hate) another human being is an attack against God Himself. God valued us enough to send His Son. What value do we place upon people in our lives?