

# Explore the Bible: Valued

January 1, 2020

- *The Explore the Bible lesson for Jan. 19 focuses on Deuteronomy 5:17; 19:4-13.*

In 2017, I registered for the half Ironman race, which consists of a 1.2-mile swim, 56 miles cycling and a 13.1-mile run. My excitement for this race was palpable. I was an average runner and a horrible swimmer. The last time I rode on a bicycle was when I was 15 years old. I didn't own a bicycle, so I decided to go online and find a decent bike to help me achieve my goal. A few days later, after searching and consulting with a friend of mine, I decided to buy a Fuji Road Bike located in the Dallas area.

I was skeptical about going alone to pick up the bike. So, I phoned my friend Bill and asked him to come with me. When we were close to our destination, Bill asked to stop at a fast-food restaurant to buy coffee, and I consented. We ordered our coffee and sat at a table. Suddenly, we heard people yelling at each other. For a moment, we thought it was just a minor quarrel and would be resolved quickly, but we were wrong. Soon, two women exited the building, ready to fight. The customers at the restaurant gathered around the two contenders with their phones ready to capture the show. All of a sudden, without hesitation, one woman pulled a gun out of her purse and aimed it toward the other woman's head. Fortunately, a guy from the audience approached the armed woman and asked her to put down the weapon.

According to the [Gun Violence Archive](#), there were 406 mass shootings in the United States during 2019, as of Christmas Day. Even as I am writing this study, I learn about another shooting at a church in White Settlement, near Fort Worth. In our time, it seems as if human life no longer is valued. We see it all around us—in the news, in our Facebook feeds and so forth. It

seems the sacredness of life is no longer what God intended when he created humans.

## **Prohibition (Deuteronomy 5:17)**

When God gave Moses and the people of Israel the Ten Commandments, he intended for us to have a healthy relationship with God and our neighbor. The first five commandments have to do with our relationship with God; the other five deal with our relationship with our neighbor. The first commandment that deals with the relationship with our neighbor is “you shall not murder.” In Genesis 4:8, when Cain murdered his brother Abel, God cursed him.

We have been created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27), and to murder someone is to diminish the sacredness of life. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reemphasized the significance of preserving life by stating: “Anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell” (Matthew 5:22).

## **Grace (Deuteronomy 19:4-10)**

In this section, God directed Moses to set apart three cities of refuge. The purpose of these cities was to protect a person who killed a neighbor unintentionally, without malice. This was to keep the avenger from shedding innocent blood.

This section shows God’s grace to preserve human life goes beyond these three cities. In these verses, God reminds the people that once he enlarges their territory as promised, they need to set aside three more cities. But before this could happen, they had to obey these two commandments:

*“Love the Lord and walk always in obedience to him.” How have you experienced God’s grace in your life?*

## **Justice (Deuteronomy 19:11-13)**

In this section, God commands Moses that if someone motivated by hate attacks and kills another person, the killer should be brought back from the city and handed over to the avenger of blood to die. This was a rigorous command—so rigorous that even God ordered them to “show no pity.” Throughout the Old Testament, there have been other instances where God commands to show no pity or mercy (Deuteronomy 13:8).

God not only commanded them to show no pity, but also instructed them to purge the guilt caused by shedding innocent blood. By purging, God meant to purify, to remove any contamination. This needed to happen so the people could enjoy the blessing from God. Occasionally, we forget that God is a God of justice who cannot abide sin. One day, all will stand before the throne of God to be judged.

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