

OR

LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the Evil Foe may have no power over me. **AMEN.**

LARGE CATECHISM – FIFTH COMMANDMENT START

¹⁸⁰ We have now completed both the spiritual and the temporal government, that is, the divine and the paternal authority and obedience. But here now we go forth from our house among our neighbors to learn how we should live with one another, every one himself toward his neighbor. ¹⁸¹ Therefore God and government are not included in this commandment, nor is the power to kill, which they have, taken away. For God has delegated His authority to punish evil-doers to the government instead of parents, who aforesaid (as we read in Moses) were required to bring their own children to judgment and sentence them to death. Therefore, what is here forbidden is forbidden to the individual in his relation to any one else, and not to the government.

¹⁸² Now this commandment is easy enough, and has been often treated, because we hear it annually in the Gospel of St. Matthew 5:21 ff, where Christ Himself explains and sums it up, namely, that we must not kill, neither with hand, heart, mouth, signs, gestures, help, nor counsel. Therefore it is here forbidden to every one to be angry, except those (as we said) who are in the place of God, that is, parents and the government. For it is proper for God and for every one who is in a divine estate to be angry, to reprove and punish, namely, on account of those very persons who transgress this and the other commandments.

¹⁸³ But the cause and need of this commandment is that God well knows that the world is evil, and that this life has much unhappiness; therefore He has placed this and the other commandments between the good and the evil. Now, as there are many assaults upon all commandments, so it happens also in this commandment that we must

live among many people who do us harm, so that we have cause to be hostile to them.

¹⁸⁴ As when your neighbor sees that you have a better house and home [a larger family and more fertile fields], greater possessions and fortune from God than he, he is sulky, envies you, and speaks no good of you.

Thus by the devil's incitement you will get many enemies who cannot bear to see you have any good, either bodily or spiritual. When we see such people, our hearts, in turn, would rage and bleed and take vengeance. Then there arise cursing and blows, from which follow finally misery and murder. Here, now, God like a kind father steps in ahead of us, interposes and wishes to have the quarrel settled, that no misfortune come of it, nor one destroy another. And briefly, He would hereby protect, set free, and keep in peace every one against the crime and violence of every one else; and would have this commandment placed as a wall, fortress, and refuge about our neighbor, that we do him no hurt nor harm in his body.

¹⁸⁶ Thus this commandment aims at this, that no one offend his neighbor on account of any evil deed, even though he have fully deserved it. For where murder is forbidden, all cause also is forbidden whence murder may originate. For many a one, although he does not kill, yet curses and utters a wish, which would stop a person from running far if it were to strike him in the neck [makes imprecations, which if fulfilled with respect to any one, he would not live long]. ¹⁸⁷ Now, since this inheres in every one by nature and it is a common practise that no one is willing to suffer at the hands of another, God wishes to remove the root and source by which the heart is embittered against our neighbor, and to accustom us ever to keep in view this commandment, always to contemplate ourselves in it as in a mirror, to regard the will of God, and with hearty confidence and invocation of His name to commit to Him the wrong which we suffer. Thus we shall suffer our enemies to rage and be angry, doing what they can, and we learn to calm our wrath, and to have a patient, gentle heart, especially toward those who give us cause to be angry, that is, our enemies.

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