

A Sanctified Life

Listed Scriptures

Lev 11:27; 2 Cor 6:14-18; Jer 15:16; Rev 12:15; Jn 17:17; Eph 4:29; Heb 11:24-26; Col 2:12; Jas 5:7; Mk 16:15; Rom 8:23

Lesson Aim

1. To understand the laws of cleanliness and the seven annual feasts found in Leviticus
2. To be determined to lead a sanctified life

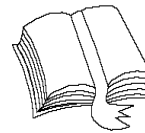
Memory Verse

“Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the Lord your God.”
(Lev 20:7)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Leviticus 11-15, 21-23

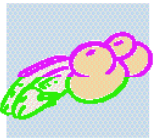
B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



The second half of Leviticus (Chapters 11-27) can be divided into three sections. The first segment discusses in great length the different laws concerning personal cleanliness (i.e. foods that can or cannot be eaten, personal hygiene, infectious diseases). The second section covers general moral laws and the seven annual feasts the people had to observe. These rules reminded the Israelites that they were a people set apart to be holy and therefore, they needed to demonstrate that in their lives. The third section supplements other regulations and also reveals the blessings and retribution as consequences of obedience or disobedience to God's commands. In this lesson, the more prominent laws and feasts will be highlighted.



Most of us need to take a bath or shower once a day. Perhaps some of us have gone a day or two without cleaning ourselves for one reason or another, but after a while, we feel dirty. Thank goodness for water and the bathtub. But this is only a physical cleanliness. What about the things that can make us filthy inside? How often do we feel “dirty” from within? Probably not enough to even think about cleaning ourselves once a day like we take showers. God wants us to lead holy and sanctified lives. How can we be sure that we are just as clean inside as we are out? Today’s lesson will take a look at some of the Old Testament laws concerning cleanliness and we will see how they apply to us.



Part 1
Law of Cleanliness (Lev 11-15, 21-22)

A. Clean and Unclean Food (Lev 11)

As outlined by the laws, there were certain foods that were considered unclean by God and were not to be eaten. For example, all land animals could be eaten if they chewed the cud and had split hoofs that were completely divided. But the Israelites were forbidden to eat any animal that did not meet these strict requirements (i.e. a camel which chewed on the cud but did not have split hoofs was considered unclean). For sea animals, as long as they had fins and scales, it was permissible to eat them. Birds that consumed carcasses or were characterized by violence (i.e. eagle, raven) were to be detested and avoided. In addition, flying insects that walked on all fours were considered unclean except for those that walked with joint legs for hopping (i.e. locusts). Why was God so specific when it came to what the people could eat or not eat? By abiding by these regulations, it reminded the Israelites that they were a people set apart by God, holy and pure. As well, each of the laws held special meaning.

- a. To have split hoofs represents how we need to be set apart as holy and pleasing to God (2 Cor 6:14-18; Jn 17:19).

- b. To regurgitate the food means we need to constantly reflect on the words of God and obey them (Jer 15:16; Ps 1:1-2, 119:97; Lk 1:29).
- c. Fins provide the animal with the ability to swim against currents and with direction. As Christians living in this world, we are surrounded by many temptations. But with the power of the Holy Spirit (much like the fins), we can conquer these temptations (Rev 12:15; Heb 2:1; Eph 4:14; 1 Jn 2:16).
- d. Scales on fish form an outer layer of protection. Likewise, believers need to rely on God. God’s words, like scales, can shield us from Satan and his temptations (Jn 17:17; Gen 39:6).
- e. Carcasses represent death and sin. Believers should leave their sinful lives behind and pursue spiritual and sanctified lives (Eph 4:29-32; 1 Thess 4:3-5).
- f. Flying insects that are land-bound stand for a person’s emphasis on worldly matters and his pursuit of this present life. Therefore, these animals were considered unclean (Mt 6:24). In contrast, insects that could hop and leap represent the desire to reject the world and look toward heaven, thus they were considered clean (Heb 11:24-26; Col 3:1).

B. Personal Hygiene (Lev 12-15)

Interestingly, God gave many laws regarding personal hygiene (i.e. what to do after a woman gave birth or had her regular monthly period; how to clean oneself after having sexual intercourse). The person was considered unclean for a period of time (from one to several days depending on what the situation was) and then after that time was up, he or she usually had to make a sacrificial offering to God to make himself or herself clean again. In particular, there were very strict laws concerning leprosy, as it was a dreaded and incurable disease at the time. Leprosy was a general term for many types of infectious skin diseases. These were characterized by swellings, rashes or bright spots on the skin. If a person was thought to be inflicted with leprosy, he was brought to the priest and examined. If anything appeared to be more than skin deep, the person was declared unclean. After that, his life would be forever changed. He had to wear torn clothes, leave his hair unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and live outside the camp. If at any point the disease was healed, the person had to be examined once again by the priest outside the camp. Once deemed clean, he would make a sacrificial offering to God. Leprosy was highlighted in great detail because it has symbolic relevance to a Christian’s life.

- a. Leprosy symbolizes sin because it spreads rapidly and cannot be healed other than through the power of God. Once a person was identi-

fied to have the disease, he was quarantined and everything he had come into contact with was burned. Likewise, we must rid ourselves of sin.

- b.** The priest symbolizes the Lord Jesus because only He is qualified to condemn us of sin and also to purify us to make us clean again.
- c.** Once a person was healed, he had to make an offering that required two birds. One was to be killed and the other released (Lev 14:1-7). This symbolizes the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

C . Rules for Priests (Lev 21-22)

Priests were held to very high standards when it came to ceremonial cleanliness. This was because they were holy and set apart by God to be used as His vessels. Below are just some of the regulations they needed to follow:

- a.** could not touch a corpse unless it was a close relative (21:1-2)
- b.** could not shave their heads, the edges of their beards or cut themselves (21:5)
- c.** could not marry a prostitute, a widow or a divorcee; if his daughter were to become a prostitute, she would have to be burned in fire (21:7, 9)
- d.** any priest with a defect or deformation was forbidden to offer food to God, although he could eat of the food (21:16-22)

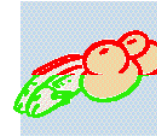
Part 2 **Moral Laws** (Lev 17-20)



This section instructs the Israelites to live godly and moral lives. These laws are important to us because we live in a society today that doesn't always recognize some of these regulations. Below is a quick summary:

- a.** forbidden to eat blood since it contains life (Lev 17:1-15)
- b.** must not practice incest, homosexuality or any sexual relations with animals (Lev 18; God needed to remind the people of this because they were going to enter the land of Canaan and these were common practices for the Canaanites)
- c.** need to live in harmony with others around us, show compassion to the poor and not to pervert justice (Lev 19:15-18, 35)
- d.** anyone who sacrifices his children must be put to death (Lev 20:2-3)

Part 3 **The Seven Annual Feasts and Other Celebrations** (Lev 12-27)



The Israelites observed seven annual religious feasts: the Passover, the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, the Feast of the First Fruits, the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah), the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) and the Feast of the Tabernacles (or Booths/Tents). The people would observe these feasts by assembling themselves to listen to the teachings of God and demonstrate their love for Him through spirited worship. Although we are no longer required to keep these feasts, they do have great implications to our spiritual lives. The Passover and Unleavened Bread have already been discussed in previous lessons. We will take a look at the remaining five as well as some other celebrations of importance.

A . The Feast of First Fruits (Lev 23:9-14)

This event took place on the 16th of the first month, the day after Sabbath. This date falls somewhere in March or April today. By presenting their first harvests, the Israelites remembered to thank God for His grace. Believers today should also give their best to God and bear good fruit as an offering pleasing to Him (Col 2:12).

B . The Feast of Weeks (Lev 23:15-22)

This celebration began on the sixth day of third month, the day after Sabbath, and it was to last for 50 days. In the New Testament, it was called Pentecost and today, it is celebrated in either May or June (since calendar year fluctuates from year to year). It was such a long feast because its purpose was to give thanks to God for sending autumn and spring rain to provide for a bountiful harvest. We know that rain represents the downpouring of the Holy Spirit. The autumn and spring rains correspond to the two periods of the downpouring of the Holy Spirit in establishing the church (early and latter rain; Jas 5:7).

C . The Feast of Trumpets (Lev 23:23-25, Num 29:1-6)

This took place on the first day of the seventh month (September or October today). For this feast, the people assembled for the sacred gathering where trumpets were

blown. This reminded them that God was calling them into a land of their own. Today, as God's followers, we have the commission to preach the gospel to other people so that they may enter the heavenly kingdom (Mk 16:15; Acts 26:18; Rev 14:6-7).

D. The Day of Atonement (Lev 23:26-32; Num 29:7-11; Lev 16)

This was a solemn day in the calendar year for the Israelites. It took place on the 10th of the seventh month (September or October today). On this day, the high priest entered the Most Holy Place and made atonement for his sins and also that of the people so that everyone would be sanctified before the Lord. Jesus Christ is our high priest and our atoning sacrifice today (Heb 9:11-14). Because of Him, we are freed from the bondage of sin. As the Israelites were cleansed from their sins, we should live a godly life as we wait for Jesus Christ's return (Rom 8:23; Eph 4:30; 2 Pet 3:11-13).

E. The Feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23:33-44; Num 29:12-40)

Between the 15th and 22nd of the seventh month (September or October today), the people had to live in booths made of tree branches. This reminded the Israelites of the time they wandered in the wilderness and lived in tents, their temporary homes until they reached the promised land. We should also remember that we are only travelers passing through the world. Our hope lies in the heavenly kingdom (2 Cor 5:1; Rev 21:3-5).

F. Other Celebrations

In addition to the annual feasts, there were other regular celebrations (Lev 25). There was the Sabbath Year, celebrated once every seven years and the Year of Jubilee, observed once every fifty years. In particular, during the Year of Jubilee, people sounded off trumpets to announce their freedom from bondage because during this time, the Israelites were required to set slaves and/or people in debt free. Properties were also restored to the poor. As a result, there was great joy and thanksgiving throughout the land. These celebrations taught the people that everything belonged to God and not to any one person.

Note: Chapters 24-27 contain some other regulations regarding the tabernacle

and tithing. There are also some thoughts on the consequences of obedience or disobedience to God. The students can be encouraged to read up on them during their free time but they will not be covered in this lesson.

Teaching Tips

There is a lot of information contained within this lesson. After reading through the content, feel free to choose specific sections to share with your students, depending on what you think they may already know or find interesting. You can also assign other sections as homework, giving the students an opportunity to study the Bible on their own.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



- 1 Take a look at Leviticus 11-15 closely and list five kinds of animals that could not be eaten because they were considered unclean.
- 2 What are the spiritual significance of split hoofs and regurgitated food?
- 3 How is leprosy like sin?
- 4 List four things priests were forbidden to do.
- 5 Read about some of the moral laws found in Leviticus 17-20. Do you think most of them are common sense regulations? What was the purpose of spelling them out so clearly?
- 6 What were the seven annual feasts? List the purpose for each celebration.
- 7 What were the Israelites required to do during the Year of Jubilee?
- 8 Imagine yourself as an Israelite at that time. How do you think you would have felt having to abide by so many laws each day? It seems as if almost everything had a rule. Would you have felt restricted or do you feel you would have been closer to God as a result?

A Sanctified Life



Dear Diary,

I was shocked today when I was returning from shopping for E2 year-end prizes at Sonshine. A car bumped into me from behind as I was turning from Culver to Harvard. It was a red light, so I had stopped and was about to go when I heard a loud thump from behind. The first thing that came to my mind was, "Did that just happen?" And the second was to hurry and shout hallelujah! The third was, "Oh, I'm okay." But what about the car? So I pulled over after turning, and so did the guys who bumped into me. Thank God, when they came out to check with me, they were very calm and sorry. The first thing they said was, "Are you okay?" I said I was fine, but what about my car? I turned and looked, expecting a large dent into the trunk, but to my surprise, there wasn't. I searched for the damages, and I finally saw that the paint from the rear bumper, driver's side, was scratched off. I gently touched it and some paint fell off. I turned and looked at the damages on the other car. The front bumper on the passenger's side was completely caved in and the headlight was probably damaged.

During this little accident, another incident from earlier today came to mind. Earlier today I went to Movatto, a small shop that sells cute stuff in University Center, to shop for E2 prizes, and as I was browsing through the greeting cards for fun, I accidentally broke part of a very fragile greeting card. I felt bad and wanted to pay for it, but instead, I somehow put it back, pretending nothing had happened, and walked out of the store without doing anything about it. Immediately after I left the store, I felt a little funny, but I somehow suppressed that feeling and thought that I should just go on with my life. About 2.5 hours later, the little accident on my car occurred. I knew it was no coincidence. I immediately repented for being so slow to God's warning and for quenching the fire of the Spirit.

Although the two guys who bumped into my car were very sorry, in my heart I felt that I couldn't blame them for it. It was completely the consequence of my disobedience to God. However, for some reason, God was very nice to me in that the guys who bumped into me were very nice and willing to pay for my paint and help me out. I truly thank God that as I was talking to them, I felt tranquility in my heart; I felt God moving me to speak very kindly to them.

Instead of yelling and calling them names or acting very upset, I found myself asking them if they went to UCI, and if they lived in the apartments nearby, etc. I believe that they were relieved that they bumped into someone who was able to speak such nice words.

Later I decided to go back to Movatto to pay for the damages I had caused, because I was afraid of anything else happening to me. (It was clear to me that the accident was no accident at all.) So I went into the store and found the exact card I had torn. Then I grabbed a few rolls of wrapping paper for the E2 year-end prizes and went to the lady at the cash register (I know her very well since I shop in her store quite often). As she was ringing up my purchases, she asked me if I had a friend who was getting married (the card I had broken was a wedding card). I ashamedly admitted that I had broken the card and felt bad about it, and so I wanted to pay for it. She was really nice and understanding, so she gave me a 10% discount for the card. I paid, and then I told her that the wrapping paper was actually for prizes for kids at church. (She is a Christian and knows that I teach kids at church, because I had been shopping around for journals in her store earlier this month.) So she said, "You should have told me it's for church. I give 10% discounts for Sunday School." That was very sweet of her.

God does work in miraculous ways. I really thank God for this lesson He taught me. I'm just a little (or maybe more than a little) upset at how I reacted so slowly to the warnings. This incident reminded me of these verses we studied during the last Sabbath afternoon Bible Study (the E2 class also read these verses in Hebrews 12:5-6): "My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline, and do not resent His rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those He loves, as a father the son He delights in" (Prov 3:11-12).

These words remind me that God truly loves me. This incident strengthened my faith in God and I know that He watches my every move, testing me and refining me as gold, molding me as clay. During these trials, I should remember to not put out the Spirit's fire (1 Thess 5:19). The Holy Spirit is always guiding me to do the right thing, but I am the one who needs to make the right decisions and to carry out the right actions.

Winnie Chen, September, 2003

All the laws that are found in the book of Leviticus were meant to help the people of God lead sanctified lives. We tend to think of being sanctified as something so holy that it is almost unattainable. But as the testimony above shows, we become

sanctified a little bit at a time. The more we try to draw closer to God, the more holy and pure we become. And even though what she did seems insignificant, it is one way she is standing up for her faith and what she believes in. Our character is shown through our actions, both big and small. And although it is not easy to remain pure in this world, the sister in the testimony also reminds us that God is always watching and guiding us. It is up to us to heed His warnings and teachings.

Being honest about everything is something quite difficult to do in this world. We are all told that little white lies are okay and damaging a greeting card is no big deal. But our decision at that moment to pay or walk out the door is crucial. Below are some other things that society says is okay for us to do. Think about whether they are okay for Christians to be a part of. Be ready to support your answers and more importantly, reflect on whether your answers will lead you to a more sanctified life. If you have been faced with something similar before, share your experience with the rest of the class to encourage everyone to remain pure and holy.

1. *Listening to Christian rap and/or rock music*
2. *Watching all the latest movies*
3. *Going dancing in clubs and/or favorite hangout places*
4. *Cursing someone who cuts you off on the road*
5. *Keeping extra change given to you by accident*
6. *Kissing or being similarly intimate with your boy or girlfriend*
5. *Others*

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



The Israelites had to follow many rules and regulations. Although they may seem cumbersome to us, they served at least one purpose and that was to remind the people how important they were in God's kingdom. Today, we know that Jesus Christ has chosen us to be a part of that special group. What truly sets you apart from the rest of the world? If Jesus Christ were to know you by one distinguishing feature, what would it be?