

LEVITICUS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Leviticus chapter 19 as we continue our study through the Word of God. The focus of this chapter is holiness through love. Listen to how Allen P. Ross summarizes this chapter for us in his book, *Holiness to the LORD*.

He wrote:

It is no surprise that in a section emphasizing so strongly loyalty to the LORD, the God of the covenant, a chapter should be given over completely to reminding the people of God's law. This chapter may seem too difficult to expound because it appears to be one long list of laws selected at random. But if it is studied carefully, an exposition of the whole can be developed rather well. In spite of its many details, its theme, well known to most Christians thanks to its citation by Peter (1 Pet. 1:15-16), is "Be holy because I am holy." The chapter provides a "rapid panoramic tour" of what it means to be holy.

It is not, however, simply a list of laws to be followed. It is an exhortation to the people of God to live out the holiness of God as a natural part of their lives. And the means by which they are to do this is love, which is in harmony with Deut. 6:4-5: "Hear O Israel, the LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

On the basis of this instruction, Jesus explained that the greatest commandment was to “love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matt. 22:37-38). Then he added that the second command was like it: “Love your neighbor as yourself” (22:39). These are the two greatest commandments, for they summarize the whole law. One can thus say that the way to become holy is to keep the commandments, but the way to keep the commandments is by loving God and loving people.

- Allen P. Ross, *Holiness to the LORD*, p. 351

With that as our background this evening, let's begin reading in Leviticus chapter 19, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

LEVITICUS 19**VERSES 1-2**

1. God is holy, He is set apart from all human beings and now He calls His people to be like Him. Today people tell us that morals change depending on the society and the period of time you are living in. Yes, morals may change but not according to God! He has established what is right and what is wrong and it was for back then as well as for today! You see, human morality is based upon and it rests upon the unchanging name of God! Thus, sin is still sin today and God calls us as He called the children of Israel to walk in holiness and not in sin! In fact, think of the word “**holiness**” as wholeness because that is what God wants in our lives and that is what will flow as we walk in His ways, we will be whole! May we not be like the world but like the LORD!

VERSE 3

1. Interestingly enough, holiness to the Lord begins in the home as children respect their parents, which speaks of their attitude. When this is out of order then the foundations of society will begin to crumble!

2. Also, a house in order will obey the Lord. Here they were to keep the Sabbaths. Thus, if you are not respecting your parents you are not submitting to the Lord, even if you are going to church!

VERSE 4

1. The Hebrew word for “**idol**” is ELIYL (el-eel) and it speaks of being good for nothing, empty, of no value. Here is the true and living God who offers to us all things that are good, He wants to bless us, and man goes after idols, which are nothing. Then why do we make idols for ourselves? We make them to justify our sin, for pleasure, self-worship, financial success and-so-on. And in the end they will only bring you into captivity, they are worthless!

VERSES 5-8

1. The peace offering spoke of fellowship with God and thus, it was a freewill offering. You were not forced to fellowship with God because that is not true fellowship. And God wants this fellowship to be fresh, not stale, that you would partake of it the same day you offered it to the Lord. You could even partake of it the next day but after that, God would not accept it!

VERSES 9-10

1. This was a good welfare system you might say. If you owned land you were not to completely harvest it. You could go through once, don't completely harvest the corners and then when you were done, the poor could come in and glean from what was left for themselves. If they wanted to eat they needed to work! That sounds good to me. I wish that principle were put into practice today in our country. And here we see the farmers who had a generous heart and the poor had good work ethics, they worked for their food.

VERSES 11-13

1. God wants us honest in all that we do. You see, in all that we do we are representing Him!

VERSE 14

1. Did God even need to say this? I guess He did for man tends to put down those who have a handicap!

2. How does that relate to us? Besides the obvious of treating people kindly and with respect, there is a spiritual principle here. The deaf are the unsaved in a sense, for they can't hear the voice of God. We are not to put them down but we are to show them the love of Christ! The blind are those again that are not saved, they can't see the things of God and instead of tripping them up, let them see the love of God. In I John 4:9-11 John tells us, **“In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”**

VERSES 15-16

1. We are not to show partiality to anyone but in all our judgments, we are to be fair, we are to do what is right. Also, a talebearer is not of God! Telling tales does no good but it hurts the person you are speaking about, it hurts the person you are telling it to and it will hurt you!

VERSES 17-18

1. To sum this up, Jesus put it like this in John 13:34-35, **“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”** We are to love people unconditionally, from the heart. Yes, when a brother is in sin he needs to be rebuked, but that is done in love and it is done because you love him!

2. Paul, in Romans 12:19 tells us, **“Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.”**

We like to get back at people for the wrong they have done to us, get even but God tells us He will take care of it, we are to love them, not condone their sin as I have said, but extend the love of Christ to them. And when you do, don't bear a grudge, let it go and let love flow! Too often people bury the hatchet and leave the handle sticking out just in case they might need to use it. God is telling us we are not to be like the world that does those things, we are to be like Him!

VERSE 19

1. Why did God say this? Because the pagan world did this and they saw it as a source of magical powers and thus, God did not want His people to practice it.

2. How does that apply to us? We are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. You see, light and darkness don't mix.

VERSES 20-22

1. This is speaking of a slave girl who was to be married but another man has sex with her. For this there was no death penalty, she was not free. But a trespass offering was needed to be made by the man and this man then, it would seem, had to marry her.

VERSES 23-25

1. So when they came into the land of Canaan and planted fruit trees, they were not to eat of the fruit for three years, and in the fourth year it was to be given to the Lord. Then, in the fifth year it was there's to eat. Now, from what I understand, this practice allowed the trees to bear more fruit.

VERSES 26-31

1. First of all, as we have seen in previous studies, the pagans would drink the blood of animals and people they sacrificed believing they would receive their life energy! Thus, God did not want His people practicing these things.

2. This hair thing, shaving the sides of your head and-so-on, was a pagan mourning practice and once again God did not want His people to do this.

3. Cutting your flesh, tattoos were once again part of this pagan mourning practices.

Does that mean we should not get tattoos? That is not what the text is saying. I don't think I would get a tattoo, but that is me and that is just a personal choice, not a Scriptural command. But let me also say this. If your tattoo is pagan, occultic, evil, then you should not have it. And folks, keep in mind that some standards change in a society that are not necessarily in the Scriptures, they just change. Like the length of your hair, women wearing a covering on their heads, and-so-on, those things change. In Paul's day, if a woman did not wear a head covering then people would think she was a prostitute because prostitutes had their heads uncovered in Corinth. Thus, Paul encourages the women to wear a head covering so that you don't confuse people. (I Corinthians 11:5-6). Yes, you have the freedom in Christ not to, but don't use your liberty to cause another to stumble! We don't need to do that today.

4. Who would prostitute their daughter? I think the context here is to give them over to the temple to be temple prostitutes, a religious experience you might say in the pagan world. And God is saying don't even think about it! For us today, do you prostitute your daughters by the way you let them dress?

5. God forbids necromancy or communicating with the dead, why? Because you are not communicating with your dead loved ones, but with a demonic spirit who can pretend to be your dead relative! In Isaiah 8:19-20 we are told, **“And when they say to you, ‘Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,’ should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”** Why seek the dead when you can seek the living God! Folks, as Christians we are to stay away from these practices, this garbage. We should not seek out our horoscope, go to fortune-tellers, use tarot cards, and-so-on! Israel did and God removed His light from them and they walked in darkness!

VERSES 32-36

1. I kind of like verse 32 now, since I am getting just a little gray, well, maybe more than just a little! Today, in our society there is a lack of respect for the elderly, but in God’s economy, He tells us it is not only right to hear them, but it is wise to listen to them!
2. You are to treat the stranger fairly, love them, care for them.
3. You are to have honest scales or sell things fairly.

VERSE 37

1. We see some 15 times in this chapter “**I am the LORD.**” And because He is YAHWEH, He has the right to tell us how we are to live. And, because He loves us He does tell us how to live and then He gives us the power to obey by His Spirit!

LEVITICUS 20VERSES 1-5

1. We dealt with this back in Leviticus 18:21, and God is once again warning the children of Israel not to sacrifice their children to the god Molech. As we have seen, they would place their child in the outstretched arms of this god, after it was heated red-hot and they burned their children to death. If anyone did practice this they were to be put to death and if they weren't, the Lord says that He will deal with it, “. . . **I will set My face against that man and against his family; and I will cut him off from his people, and all who prostitute themselves with him to commit harlotry with Molech.**” Leviticus 20:5.

2. I find it interesting that God tells us we are not to ignore sin because by doing so you are condoning it. In other words, by watching sin, listening to sin, you may not commit the act but you are just as guilty. Paul picks up on this in the New Testament when he tells us in Romans 1:32, “. . . **that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.**”

3. Did Israel listen to what God said to them? Not at all! In fact, Solomon built a temple to this idol, (I Kings 11:7). And King Manasseh, who was the king in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, offered his son to Molech. We are told in II Kings 21:6, “**Also he made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger.**” In fact, it was idolatry that brought both the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah into captivity. May we learn the lesson!

VERSES 6-8

1. Once again God is coming against these occultic practices and is warning His people to stay away from them. Tragically, we are seeing New Age and eastern mysticism come right into the church and few see anything wrong with it!

2. I like verses 7 and 8. First of all we are told to “**consecrate yourselves,**” that is our part, obeying the Lord. But it is not just us, we also read, “**I Am the LORD who sanctifies you,**” That is God’s part, but we must walk. Yes, He does the work but He does it as we yield to Him! It is as Paul reminds us in I Thessalonians 5:23-24, “**Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.**” He will finish the work He has begun in our lives!

VERSE 9

1. This of course is not speaking of a small child but a rebellious adult and where there is no respect in the home, then there will be no respect anywhere. Now please don't get the idea that a parent can just fly off the handle and kill his child if he is disobedient! Listen to what we are told in Deuteronomy 21:18-21, **“If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and who, when they have chastened him, will not heed them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city. And they shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.’ Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear.”** There was protection for the child as well as protection for the society as a whole!

VERSE 10

1. The penalty for adultery was death of both people involved, why? Because God has established the family unit and this kind of activity destroys the family, and God was not going to tolerate that!

VERSES 11-12

1. Here we see the penalty for incest – DEATH!

VERSE 13

1. Homosexuality is as much a sin as these other sexual sins and it was the death penalty for those who practiced this.

VERSE 14

1. Now I don't believe they were burned in the fire for this, but I tend to agree with how Adam Clarke see this. He wrote, "It is very likely that the crime mentioned in this verse was not punished by burning alive, but by some kind of branding, by which they were ever after rendered infamous. . . . Branding with a hot iron would certainly accomplish every desirable end both for punishment and prevention."

VERSES 15-16

1. Here again we see the death penalty for bestiality.

VERSES 17-21

1. Here we see the penalty for these sins as not being death, but cut off from the people until their sin was atoned for. But there was still a penalty.

VERSES 22-26

1. God wanted His people to be holy, to be set apart from the wickedness of the Canaanites who were living in the land. And just as God was calling the children of Israel to be holy, set apart for His glory, He is calling us to do the same. It is as R. E. Clements wrote, “Every biblical statement about God carries with it an implied demand upon man to imitate Him in daily living.” You see, that is what is best for our lives and thus, that is what God desires of us!

VERSE 27

1. If you went to a medium, the penalty for that was you would be cut off from your people, (Leviticus 20:6). But, if you practiced this occult activity, then you were to be put to death! Why is this penalty so strict? Because the penalty for leading someone else into sin is greater, you are responsible. In Matthew 18:6 Jesus made this very point as He tells us, **“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”**

LEVITICUS 21VERSES 1-4

1. Death is a result of sin in this world. Thus, dead bodies made a person ceremonially unclean and thus, a priest was not to touch or be around a dead body unless it was a close relative.

VERSE 5

1. Like the people, the priests were not to practice the pagan mourning practices.

VERSES 6-9

1. The priests were only to marry virgins, which spoke of purity. So not only were the priests to have this purity but also were the woman they were to marry!

2. Even the priest's daughter was held to a high standard. If she played the harlot she would, probably not be put to death, but branded with fire to make her as one who is unfaithful and to let all around her know!

VERSES 10-15

1. Here we see the responsibility for the high priest. He was not to do as the pagans did when they mourned for their dead – the uncovering of their head and tearing of their clothes. Again, in taking a wife she must be a virgin, which again speaks of her purity.

VERSES 16-23

1. Here we see the command that the ministering priests must be free from defect. This seems so unfair, why did God say that those who have a handicap couldn't serve Him? I don't think God is picking on the handicap; in fact He is a fighter of the underdog or those that are less fortunate. He was not putting them down but He was portraying for us a spiritual truth, that the high priest and the priests had to be free from spiritual defects if they were going to serve the Lord!

What does that mean? A defect or a blemish speaks of spiritual principles, being obedient, living out the truths of God found in the Word of God. You are not to have a defect or blemish as you serve the Lord!

If you were blind you are not to serve the Lord, for if you lack vision, where are you going to lead the people? In Proverbs 29:18, from The Amplified Bible, we are told, **“Where there is no vision [no redemptive revelation of God], the people perish; but he who keeps the law [of God, which includes that of man] — blessed (happy, fortunate, and enviable) is he. [1 Sam 3:1; Amos 8:11,12.]”** You must lead as God is leading you!

Being lame means you can't walk and if you are going to serve the Lord you must be able to walk in the ways of God and not be carried away by winds of doctrine, jumping here and jumping there.

If your faced is marred, or literally if you have a flat nose, you couldn't serve. In other words, if you can't smell, you can't discern between good and bad and a priest must be able to have good discernment!

If your limb is too long you couldn't serve the Lord. In other words, those who go off on superfluous paths can't serve God; you need to focus on Jesus. You need to keep the main thing the main thing!

If you had a broken foot, you couldn't serve the Lord. Why is that? Because you need to be able to stand strong and the reason is simple. Because as you serve the Lord there will be all kinds of difficult things that will come your way. Don't let anything move you from the path that God has set for you! That is Paul's point in Acts 20:22-24, **"And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."** May we have that kind of passion and not let anything move us from the course that God has set for us!

You couldn't serve the Lord if you had a broken hand. Here I believe the idea is you must be able to reach out to others, to people, you need to touch them as Jesus did!

If you were hunchbacked, you couldn't serve the Lord. In other words, you need to have a backbone and do what is right, not what is popular! Folks, it is not easy, over the last 13 years I have had to make some decisions that were difficult, but I knew what the Lord wanted and I did them, even though they were not popular. Some of you may feel I am not doing things the way you would do them, and that is true, I am not you nor are you God. Sorry, but that is the reality, I have to follow Him and if you are going to serve the Lord you need to have a backbone!

If you were a dwarf, no comments by any of you, you couldn't serve the Lord. Here the idea is that you are not growing and if you are not growing, you will not allow the people you are overseeing to grow because they will not go unless you lead them!

If you have a blemish in your eye, a defect you couldn't serve the Lord because as a priest you need to be able to see clearly the things of God and not have things cloud your vision!

If you have eczema or a scab, the Lord says you couldn't serve Him. This is maybe pointing to the fact that as a priest you had to have thick skin and not let things irritate you. Again, over the past 13 years I have been called a lot of names, some good some not so good. I have had to let it go so I don't get distracted from what the Lord has called me to do!

And lastly, a eunuch couldn't serve the Lord because he would be barren. Thus, a priest was to reproduce, bear fruit in his life by seeing people come to Jesus, to grow in the Lord!

Now, don't be discouraged, because today, none of us are qualified. Our sufficiency is in Christ and as He calls us He will supply us with what we need to carry out the task before us. We must walk in obedience, which is our part and allow God to do His!

2. These people were only prevented from serving; they were still supplied with food by the priesthood.

VERSE 24

1. God told Moses who then passed it on to Aaron and the priests and then finally to the children of Israel. They knew what God wanted and they were now responsible to obey.

It is as Jesus said in Revelation 2:29, “**He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.**” May we hear and obey!