

Holiness



Week Thirteen

inTro



Read This Week's Passage:
Leviticus 19

POSITIONAL AND PRACTICAL

Before we begin our study, we must remember that holiness is both positional and practical, for when we put our faith in Jesus and get baptized, the Bible says we are in a spiritual *and* very real sense included “in Christ” (Gal. 3:26, 27). In other words, because He is holy and we are positionally in Him, we are holy as well. Let that sink in! The gospel tells us that God replaces our unrighteousness with His holiness when we put our trust in Christ.

Being positionally in Jesus makes us holy in a practical way from the inside out. Not only do we live in Christ, but He lives in us through the Holy Spirit! Holiness, then, is God's work for us and in us through sanctification, which is the process of being made holy, or like Jesus. We know this is happening in our lives when we begin to have holier thoughts, motives, and plans, and when living for Jesus and serving Him becomes desirable and satisfying.

Our responsibility is to surrender ourselves to the Lord every day and cooperate with what He is doing in and through us. God teaches us how to live holy lives for Him through Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16, 17), and Leviticus 19 provides some pointed examples of how to do it. This chapter is all about living practically in this world because we are positionally holy in Christ. God provides specific examples of how we can be holy in our relationships with others, some of which are our parents, the poor, the rich, the blind, the deaf, the elderly, employees, neighbors, immigrants, the opposite sex, land, and even animals. This entire chapter is about Jesus manifesting Himself in us through practical holiness.



inScribe

Write out Leviticus 19 from the translation of your choice. If you're pressed for time, write out Leviticus 19:11–18, 28–37. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map it.



Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

Circle repeated words/phrases/ideas

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

Which areas in your life need holiness?

Which areas in society need holiness?



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www.inverseible.org/stw13-3

SUNDRY HOLINESS

Parents

Secular entertainment often portrays parents as naive, hypocritical, closed-minded, and immature—obstacles to overcome rather than springboards to a young person's success in life. Assuming that the parents fear God and raise their children according to His instructions, nothing could be further from the truth. In Leviticus 19, biblical holiness is a call to “show great respect for your mother and father” (v. 3, NLT). Holiness is first and foremost reflected in the homelife starting with the parental relationship.

Rich and Poor

God calls on those who own property and who use it for business purposes to be holy by leaving some of the crop behind for those who are poor to glean (vv. 9, 10; see also Deut. 24:21). Notice that those who are poor had an opportunity to be holy as well. They did not get food delivered to their door for free; they went out and gleaned what the farmer had left for them. Holiness is about not only sharing what we have with those in need but also working hard and providing as best we can for ourselves and our families.

Justice

Holy people never corrupt justice, but instead make it unconditionally available to all. Verse 15 teaches that justice should be administered to those who are rich as well as those who are poor. In other words, disparity of wealth should have no bearing on the verdicts given in a court of law. Justice that delivers a verdict based on sympathy for poor persons or fear of rich ones always leads to corrupt justice.

Spiritualism/The Occult

God wants His holy people to stay away from spiritualism in all its forms (vs. 26–31). Drinking blood, talking with the dead, tattooing the body, prostitution, and child sacrifice were frequent pagan practices in the days when Leviticus was written. These things still happen in occult gatherings today, but are also often publicized on a global level through music, movies, and books. God's holy people will have nothing to do with spiritualism in any of its forms.

Elderly

In verse 32 we learn that God's holy people are to treat elderly persons among them with deep respect. Sadly, some cultures promote ageism – favoring youth and beauty above age and experience. Regardless of culture, God's holy people will honor the presence of the older generation and learn from their experiences. The healthiest churches are those with strong cross-generational relationships that blend the energy and daring spirit of youth together with the experience and wisdom of seniors.

(Cont. on p. 109.)

DISPUTED LAWS OF LEVITICUS

There are some interesting passages in Leviticus 19 that are real debate starters, and that’s OK! It is not necessary that we understand everything in Scripture, just the things God wants us to. Sometimes we have to simply trust His wise and good heart. This does not mean we shouldn’t try to understand (2 Tim. 2:15), but we should not be discouraged or humiliated when we don’t have the answers for everything.

Leviticus 19:19 is one such passage that causes much debate and stands out as unique for its time. There are various interpretations for what was meant by not allowing mixing in cattle breeding, seeds, or clothing (cf. Deut. 22:9–11). Some may argue that if this law is no longer important to keep, we cannot be sure the others have not become obsolete as well. We must exercise discernment and scholarship when studying Leviticus, comparing the teachings of the Old Testament with those of the New Testament to discover which laws are still applicable to us today. We must also be careful not to build a doctrine on just one passage of Scripture, especially if its meaning is not clear to the modern reader. What we do know is that God drew strong boundaries around certain holy mixtures such as the mixture of anointing oil and the incense (Ex. 30:32, 37, 38). These special mixtures for the sanctuary were never to be imitated in any way outside the holy sanctuary. The high priest’s holy garments included another mixture of intricately designed colors and linens (Ex. 28:2, 5, 8). The law prohibiting certain mixtures in clothes prevented people from counterfeiting the uniform of the high priest. Such laws kept the two domains separated between the holy functions of the priesthood and the common person at home. Without a Levitical sanctuary on earth today, these laws no longer apply.

Another commonly disputed item is whether Christians should get tattoos (Lev. 19:28). Yes, Christians should most definitely get tattooed, but with God’s kind of tattoo! The Holy Spirit will gladly give you one, and His tattoo will grow clearer and more beautiful the longer you have it! In 2 Corinthians 3:3 the apostle Paul tells us about God’s kind of tattoo: “Clearly you are an epistle of Christ [a letter written by Christ], ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.” These things will be far more beneficial to you than any ink you might add to your bodily temple (1 Cor. 6:19).

The reason Leviticus 19 forbids God’s holy people from being tattooed is that it identifies them with the world. Doesn’t the Bible say, “Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31)? Does God get more glory from a tattooist or from His Spirit writing the attributes of Jesus on your heart and making them visible in your life? The theme of this week is holiness, and its simplest definition is to be “set apart” from the world.



inTerpret

After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks seem to point to overall?



What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

What are other debated or disputed passages in Leviticus that you can think of that point to separation from the world?



Read more at www.inversebible.org/stw13-4

inSpect



What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

1 Peter 1:16

1 Thessalonians 3:12, 13

Matthew 22:36–40

Luke 10:30–35

Exodus 20:1–18

Matthew 25:31–46

What other narratives come to mind in connection with Leviticus 19?

Review your memorized verse from Leviticus 19.

(Cont. from inGest, p. 107):

Immigrants

In verses 33 and 34 God's holy people are reminded to show love to the immigrants among them. Not only are they to not "mistreat" them, they are to love foreign individuals as much as they love themselves. In Matthew 25 the Bible differentiates saved individuals from lost persons by how well they treated those who are foreign: "I was a stranger and you took Me in" (v. 35).

Integrity

This chapter also displays holiness through integrity (Lev. 19:35, 36). Be holy in public as well as in private. And according to Leviticus, integrity is doubly important when it comes to working with blind people, deaf people, immigrants, and those living closest to you. Taking advantage of people who are vulnerable to exploitation puts you in real danger with God. Holy people fear God and live by a principle of strict integrity (vv. 13, 14, 34).

(Cont. from inSight, p. 111):

"God leads His people on step by step. The Christian life is a constant battle and a march. There is no rest from the warfare. It is by constant, unceasing effort that we maintain the victory over the temptations of Satan. As a people we are triumphing in the clearness and strength of the truth. We are fully sustained in our positions by an overwhelming amount of plain Scriptural testimony. But we are very much wanting in Bible humility, patience, faith, love, self-denial, watchfulness, and the spirit of sacrifice. We need to cultivate Bible holiness. Sin prevails among the people of God. The plain message of rebuke to the Laodiceans is not received. Many cling to their doubts and their darling sins while they are in so great a deception as to talk and feel that they are in need of nothing. They think the testimony of the Spirit of God in reproof is uncalled for or that it does not mean them. Such are in the greatest need of the grace of God and spiritual discernment that they may discover their deficiency in spiritual knowledge. They lack almost every qualification necessary to perfect Christian character. They have not a practical knowledge of Bible truth, which leads to lowliness of life and a conformity of their will to the will of Christ. They are not living in obedience to all God's requirements" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948], vol. 3, pp. 253, 254).

"If God has made provision for man to have eternal life, He has means to meet the requirement that man shall practice holiness in this life. All who would evidence that they have a hold on the future life will give practical demonstrations in their life, their character, that they are living in newness of life, in purity and holiness here, following that which is revealed.

"The way to heaven has been laid open at infinite cost to the Father and the Son. Are we individually walking in that way, complying with the conditions? Are you in the way? Are you following the Leader, the Light of life?" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers* [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1923], p. 453).

OBSCURED AND REVEALED

As with every other chapter in Leviticus, Jesus is present in chapter 19. He can be found in the law that commands those who harvest crops to leave some behind for poor individuals instead of gleaning thoroughly (Lev. 19:9, 10). Amazingly, this command made it possible for Jesus to come and save the world, a fact that becomes clear when we read the book of Ruth and discover how Boaz’s obedience of this law made it possible for Jesus’ lineage to continue. If Boaz had harvested everything from his fields and not left any behind for those who had little, Naomi and Ruth might have starved to death. This would have halted or significantly altered Jesus’ lineage as found in Matthew 1:1–5, which came through Ruth!

One of Jesus’ most significant Old Testament quotes came directly from Leviticus 19! Jesus quoted from the 19th verse of this chapter when he said “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” He included this commandment among the greatest! “There is no other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:31). There was nothing that Jesus would rather have his listeners study, comprehend, and practice than the Leviticus 19 law to love your neighbor as yourself. A closer study of this law in its context will challenge us to relate to each other in more Christ-like ways.

Jesus is revealed clearly in Leviticus 19:21, 22, where we are given an example of how Jesus, who is both our priest and ram sacrifice, forgives us for harming others with our sins. We live in a world that wants to divide people into oppressed and oppressor, but the Bible tells us that we have all sinned and therefore have all wronged our fellow humans. In other words, we are all both the victim and the victimizer.

However, when we come to Christ in repentance, sincerely sorry for hurting our brother or sister and ready to make things right when possible, Jesus, by His blood and intercession as our High Priest in heaven, is more than willing “to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9; see also Lev. 19:22).

The good news of the gospel is that Jesus not only takes the sins of the victimizer (you and me) upon Himself but also becomes a close and compassionate friend to those who have been victimized. Jesus knows how we feel regardless of what we’ve been through, and He longs to comfort us so we can turn and comfort others (2 Cor. 1:4). Though Jesus may seem to be hidden in the Old Testament, He appears clearer and clearer the more we understand it in light of the New Testament.



inVite

Meditate on Leviticus 19 again and look for where Jesus is.



How does the knowledge that God is orchestrating your life for a higher purpose just as He did with Ruth affect your relationship with Him?

Is there someone in your life who needs the comfort of a friend? What can you do to help them?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer Response:



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Review the memory verse.
How does it apply to your
life this week?

After this week's study of the
chapter, what are some personal
applications you are convicted
of in your life?

What are practical applications
you must make in your school,
family, workplace, and church?



Read more inSight from the
Spirit of Prophecy at
www.inverseible.org/stw13-7

PRACTICAL HOLINESS

"These directions relating to the duty of the people of God, to one another, and to the stranger were only the principals of the Ten Commandments amplified and given in a specific manner, that none need err" (Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890, 1908], p. 364).

"Personal responsibility, personal activity in seeking the salvation of others, must be the education given to all newly come to the faith.... Personal faith is to be acted and practiced, personal holiness is to be cultivated, and the meekness and lowliness of Christ is to become a part of our practical life. The work is to be thorough and deep in the heart of every human agent.

"Those who profess to receive and believe the truth are to be shown the deadly influence of selfishness and its tainting, corrupting power. The Holy Spirit must work upon the human agent, else another power will control mind and judgment. Spiritual knowledge of God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent is the only hope of the soul. Each soul is to be taught of God, line upon line, precept upon precept; he must feel his individual accountability to God to engage in service for his Master, whose he is, and whom he is required to serve in the work of saving souls from death" (Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946], p. 354).

"Christ's work was not done in such a way as to dazzle men with His superior abilities. He came forth from the bosom of the All-wise, and could have astonished the world with the great and glorious knowledge which He possessed; yet He was reticent and uncommunicative. It was not His mission to overwhelm them with the immensity of His talents, but to walk in meekness and lowliness, that He might instruct the ignorant in the ways of salvation. Too great devotion to study, even of true science, creates an abnormal appetite, which increases as it is fed. This creates a desire to secure more knowledge than is essential to do the work of the Lord. The pursuit of knowledge merely for its own sake diverts the mind from devotion to God, checks advance along the path of practical holiness, and hinders souls from traveling in the way which leads to a holier, happier life. The Lord Jesus imparted only such a measure of instruction as could be utilized. My brethren, your way of representing the necessity for years of study is not pleasing to God" (Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* [Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1923], p. 338).

(Cont. on p. 109.)



Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



In your own words, what is holiness?

How can holiness positively impact a world crying out for social justice?

In what ways does this chapter make holiness practical and relevant?

Which of God's holiness laws in Leviticus 19 challenges you the most?

Who makes us holy and how does it happen?

What's the difference between positional holiness and practical holiness?

Which command in Leviticus 19 is most relevant today?

Can you match one of the Ten Commandments to each of these holiness practices?

Since the Holy Spirit wants to tattoo your heart with the new covenant, what Christlike attribute would you like Him to draw?