

Session 7

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS

Leviticus 1; John 14:21-26; Romans 12:1-2

Memory Verse

Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship.

– ROMANS 12:1, CSB




Introduction to Leviticus


THEOLOGICAL THEME: Sin is a big deal to God and should be to His people. He has called us to be holy as He is holy. This happens as we are transformed by the renewing of our minds.

CALL TO ACTION: Is there anything in your life that God has told you clearly to do, and you have refused? Have you surrendered your time, talents, treasures, and testimony to the lordship of Jesus?

There is power in finding the right motivation as a leader. Many coaches have been remembered for iconic speeches right before their teams stormed onto the field or court. Many military leaders have inspired and emboldened their troops before a major conflict. Parents work hard to find the right way to motivate their kids to obedience.

There is no perfect way to motivate all people all the time, but all people are motivated by something. Christians also need motivation to spur us on to godly living. Today we will look at some Old Testament and New Testament passages that can and should motivate the choices we make daily.

 What value have you found in motivation in your life? What types of tactics motivate you the most?

 In what area of do you most need spiritual motivation right now?


Session Summary

Leviticus stresses the vast difference between a holy God and His sinful people. It addresses the problem of how people can be in right relationship with God despite our sins. Specific instructions were given about the different sacrifices that people could and should bring to the tabernacle. The priests administered the sacrifices on behalf of the people and set a precedent about dealing with sin in a timely manner.


As those living after the events of the New Testament, Jesus came as the once for all sacrifice for our sins. Yet, there remains a temptation to take that for granted and live however our flesh desires. We are called to be holy as God is holy. Leviticus demonstrates how sinful people can fellowship with our holy God and reminds us of the seriousness of sin. Jesus made it clear that we pursue holy lives because we love Him and want to obey His commands. Because it is impossible for us to do that on our own power, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to teach, guide, and empower all who choose to follow Him.

1. Why the Law? (Leviticus 1:1-17)

After the Israelites left Egypt, they spent a year at Mt. Sinai where God gave them the law, confirmed His covenant, established organization, and dwelled with them. Much of the book of Leviticus answers the basic question: *How do sinful people come into the presence of a Holy God?* Genesis records the fall man and introduction of sin into the world (Genesis 3). Exodus covered the deliverance of God's people from Egypt and the time that followed. Leviticus reveals the way God's people were instructed to worship.

 What do you think of when you hear the word holy? Does this stir up positive or negative images in your mind? Why?


The word holy means to be “set apart.” Holiness is about being pure, living according to God’s standard, as one who is consecrated. The word holy is mentioned repeatedly in Leviticus. As we saw with the Passover, the Israelites obeyed. They believed that, through the sacrifice of an unblemished sacrifice, death would pass over them. Following their obedience and deliverance from Egypt, God established His covenant with His people and in Leviticus we see how He instructed them to continue toward personal holiness.

 **Would you describe your life as holy? Why or why not?**

The title of the book of Leviticus gives a glimpse into the book as whole. The Levites were the priests, and this book is full of instructions about how they would intercede for sinful people before a holy God. Just as the Passover hinged on the blood sacrifice of an innocent lamb, in Leviticus we see the continuation of the need for sacrificial death as the payment for sin. Sin breaks our fellowship with God, and we restore that fellowship through sacrifice.

Ultimately, Jesus became the once and for all innocent sacrifice for our sins. The sacrifices of the priests throughout the Old Testament pointed the people forward to the promised final sacrifice that would come. Leviticus covers very specific instruction about each of the types of sacrifices including what they were for and how to perform each of the rituals.


There was significance and symbolism in every sacrifice to make clear how seriously God takes sin and that we should do the same. All people face the temptation to make light of sin and disregard the importance of our daily decisions. There is nothing more serious than the reality that sin separates all people from God.

 **Application: How seriously do you view your own sin? Where might you have turned a blind eye to sinful patterns in your life? What needs to change?**


2. Sacrifice Today (Romans 12:1-2)

Though the book of Leviticus was written in the time before Christ there is still application today. We still need to prioritize the role of sacrifice in our lives. Paul's words in this passage in Romans offer insight into what sacrifice has to do with us today.

Paul stressed the importance of recognizing we have a choice every day of whether we will live for God or not. The motivation for the way we live should be based on all God has done for us. When we treasure the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross and the abundant life God gives us, it will affect the choices we make daily. Paul exhorted his readers to choose God's way over the ways of the world.


 **How does reflecting on the sacrifice of Jesus affect your decision making each day?**

When we consider the mercy God has shown us, a natural response is to present ourselves as living sacrifices to God. This reminds us of the priestly work described in Leviticus and of the importance sacrifice today. Spiritually speaking, we should bring our bodies to the altar and offer them to God. God is more interested in your being than your doing, and it is possible to do things for the Lord without giving yourself to Him. Presenting yourself as a living sacrifice means offering your entire life for His purpose and His glory.

 **How is it possible to do good things for God but still not present yourself as a sacrifice for Him? When has this been true in your life?**

Presenting yourself as a living sacrifice is a daily challenge. Each day we are faced again with the decision to die to ourselves and our will in favor of God's will and ways. Each day our flesh and the world rise again to tell us there is a better way.

The enemy seeks to use the influence of the world to pull us away from the Lord and keep us from fellowship with Him. Paul warned against giving in to the pressure to be conformed to the world, but instead seeking to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. The mind is the battleground where the war between these two choices occurs. When we continually renew our minds with the Word of God, we have more inclination to fight sin. Transformation into God's image brings the blessings and fruitful life He has promised.

 **Application: Where do you currently need to fight against conforming to the world and seek to be transformed by the Word?**

3. Ultimate Motivation (John 14:21-26)

People are motivated into action in many ways. Paul wrote about God's mercies in Romans 12. In John 14, Jesus taught His followers the ultimate motivation for obedience to God. Simply put, Jesus said anyone who loves Him will keep His commandments.

It is not just about having a head knowledge of the commandments but about them being part of our lives. Ultimately, obedience is not motivated by legalism but by love. Jesus loved us and died for our sins, and that prompts us to love Him back and show our love through daily obedience and surrender. When we live as Christ calls us to, we show Jesus to the people around us and make Him more visible in the world.

 **What is the difference between knowing God's will and living according to His will?**

You may feel overwhelmed by the idea of living a life of continual sacrifice before God. Jesus knew we would not be able to do this on our own and that's why He promised to send His Spirit following His death, resurrection, and ascension. Jesus promised that the Helper who was to come would remind and guide His people in everything they needed. This promise extends to Jesus's followers now and forever.

Where do you feel most lacking when it comes to a life of sacrifice and obedience before God?

The Holy Spirit empowers and equip us to live as God desires. The Spirit would be sent to help the disciples live for Jesus each day. The Holy Spirit would carry on the work of training the disciples and empowering them to fulfill the call of God on their lives.

We benefit greatly from the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. He helps, trains, teaches, guides, and reminds us of Jesus. The more that we put God's Word into our hearts and minds, the more the Spirit reminds us. Jesus loved His followers and never planned to leave them on their own. He loves us and doesn't want us to live on our own either. Jesus sent the Spirit to be with all believers in a real and powerful way.

Application: How do you need to trust and lean on the Holy Spirit more? What changes do you need to make to open yourself to this?

Conclusion

Sacrifice is important for believers. We need to understand the role sacrifice played in the Old Testament so that we can better understand why it matters today. Because sin entered the world and separated man from God, sacrifice was necessary to atone for sin and reestablish fellowship with God.

The book of Leviticus explains the necessity and specific practices of the different sacrifices. We may read Leviticus and feel grateful we live in the world after Jesus came as the final sacrifice on the cross. While it is true that Jesus has done everything needed for us to be accepted and forgiven by God, there is more to Leviticus to learn that just that. One of the biggest lessons is that God takes sin seriously and expects us to do the same. It should matter to us that our sin breaks our fellowship with God and needs to be addressed. Followers of Jesus are motivated by love for Christ to live a holy life and make choices that please the Lord instead of following the world.

❓ What is your primary takeaway regarding sacrifice and holiness today?

❓ How can we as a group support and encourage one another in obedience to Jesus?

❓ How could you have a gospel conversation with another person by sharing about the system of sacrifice in the Old Testament?

Memorize

Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship.

- Romans 12:1, CSB