

Stay Away From Perverted Practices  
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There's nothing like an UPLIFTING Sunday School lesson to start your day!

- Adultery
- Sacrificing Children by fire
- Homosexuality
- Bestiality
- Sorcery

Aren't you GLAD you came to Sunday school this morning?

I told you last week that Leviticus deals with some TOUGH STUFF but it has application to our lives today just as it did when God gave these laws and rules to Moses in his day

“When in Rome...Do as the Romans Do.”

What does that expression mean?

When St. Augustine asked St. Ambrose to go to Rome on a mission, St. Ambrose became concerned on which holy day to follow, because the Romans fasted on another day than was his tradition. St. Augustine then advised St. Ambrose wisely, saying “When in Rome, do as the Romans do.”

When you are in another culture you have to do some adapting (right Mark and Susan?)

But today we're not talking about CULTURAL POLITENESS when you are visiting a different land

It's more like this slogan:

What Happens in Vegas Stays In Vegas!

It's an advertising slogan that conveys what idea?

Do whatever you want while you're here...no one ever has to know!

That was the way the Children of Israel had begun to live when they were in Egypt and surrounded by PERVERSE ideas...and now they were in danger of observing the people in the land they were inhabiting (the Promised Land) who ALSO subscribed to PERVERSE PRACTICES

God gave them some specific instructions because He knows that the TRUTH is conveyed more in statements like:

- Whatever Goes Around Comes Around
- Be sure your sins will find you out
- You reap what you sow

This morning we'll see that God gave the Children of Israel THEN and US NOW some specific GUARD RAILS to keep us from adopting UNGODLY PRACTICES from the CULTURE around us

Leviticus 18:1-5

### Unlawful Sexual Relations

1 The LORD said to Moses, 2 "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'I am the LORD your God. 3 You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. 4 You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the LORD your God. 5 Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD.

New International Version (NIV)

- Question: Look at the last few words of verses 2; 4; and 5: What do we see three times in a row? What does that tell us about what God is saying in these verses? It tells us the WHY of these verses.
- Remember last week we said that in the first part of Leviticus 11:44 (New International Version) God said: 44 I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy...
- We said last week, if God EXPECTS and COMMANDS us to be holy, He will make a way for us to live holy lives IN SPITE of how our SINFUL NATURE causes us to slip.

Warren Wiersbe said:

*Obedience to God's commandments brings life. If people could perfectly obey God's law, their obedience would save them, but, of course, nobody can. Therefore, salvation is wholly by faith, totally apart from the works of the law (Rom. 3:19–31). However, after we're saved, our obedience to the will of God, as revealed in the Word of God, is the basis for fellowship with God and enjoying the abundant life He wants us to have.*

- But Isaiah said all our righteousness is like "filthy rags."
- So we might be tempted to say: If my righteousness is like "filthy rags", what's the point in trying to be righteous?
- That's like saying: 'My clothes got dirty so I didn't wear any clothes at all.'

R.C. Sproul wrote a children's book intitled: The Priest With Dirty Clothes - Dr. R.C. Sproul tells of a young priest who falls from his horse. The mud ruins his garments, dashing his hopes of appearing before the king. But the great prince offers his own beautiful clothes, echoing the timeless message of the Lord Jesus Christ atoning for our sin and clothing us with the robe of His perfect righteousness, without which no one can see God. (You can access this story in R.C.'s own voice here:

[http://www.ligonier.org/learn/series/priest\\_with\\_dirty\\_clothes/the-priest-with-dirty-clothes/ \)](http://www.ligonier.org/learn/series/priest_with_dirty_clothes/the-priest-with-dirty-clothes/)

The great prince comes into the room and offers to exchange the priest's dirty clothes for his own clean princely clothes. And the prince said to his father the king: "Father, may Jonathan now stand in your presence? He is one of my people. The king was pleased and said, "Yes, my son, as long as he wears your clothes he may stand in front of me." The priest said to the prince...how can I ever thank you! The prince said, "If you are really thankful and if you want to show that you love me, then keep all the commandments that I gave you." Oh, I will!" said the priest, "I want to be good enough to wear your clothes." The prince said: "You cannot be good enough to wear my clothes. You must live your whole life trusting in my goodness while you wear my clothes."

- Yes, our attempts at righteousness are just "filthy rags". But God the Father made it possible for us to "cloak" ourselves in the righteousness of Jesus so that we CAN be Holy in His presence.
- And through his Holy Spirit He will help us AVOID UNGODLY PRACTICES and live holy lives

Leviticus 18:20-26

20 " Do not have sexual relations with your neighbor's wife and defile yourself with her.

21 " Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed [a] to Molech, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the LORD.

22 " Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.

23 " Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion.

24 " Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. 25 Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. 26 But you must keep my decrees and my laws. The native-born and the aliens living among you must not do any of these detestable things,

- Unlawful Sexual Relations
- Fulton J. Sheen said:
- *"The Victorians pretended sex did not exist; the moderns pretend that nothing else exists."*
- We live in a world DRENCHED in sexuality, don't we?
- We might tend to think that is a result of the SEXUAL REVOLUTION of the 1960s

- But the Children of Israel during their time of captivity in Egypt were surrounded by SEXUAL PERVERSION usually as a part of IDOL WORSHIP
- Now, as they came into the land God promised them...again, they were witnessing other societies with a perverted view of God's GIFT of sexuality and IDOL WORSHIP
- So God is giving them some specific guidelines
- Verse 20 says: "You are not to have sexual intercourse with your neighbor's wife, defiling yourself with her."
- Let's try to analyze the complex meaning of that verse. It may take some hard study to get it...let's see.
- Don't commit adultery! That's it.
- So many times people say "Well, I just don't understand the Bible." And there are some "hard places" in scripture that need prayerful study. But don't you love it when God makes it so plain NO ONE can deny what He said.

Statement:

*In some verses of scripture God makes it so plain, you can DEFY what He said but you can't DENY what He said.*

- Verse 20 on adultery is like that
- The other verses in this section are like that.
- So PLAIN. So straightforward.
- Verse 21 "Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed [a] to Molech, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the LORD.
- Anyone know who Molech was?

Smith's Bible Dictionary says

Molech

*The fire-god Molech was the tutelary deity of the children of Ammon. Fire-gods appear to have been common to all the Canaanite, Syrian and Arab tribes, who worshipped the destructive element under an outward symbol, with the most inhuman rites. According to Jewish tradition, the image of Molech was of brass, hollow within, and was situated without Jerusalem. "His face was (that) of a calf, and his hands stretched forth like a man who opens his hands to receive (something) of his neighbor. And they kindled it with fire, and the priests took the babe and put it into the hands of Molech, and the babe gave up the ghost."*

- Verse 21 talks about INHUMANE child sacrifice.
- Aren't you glad we don't have anything like that going on today! But wait.
- Question: How might we today see the modern day equivalent of child sacrifice?
- Abortion: Now before we get into this touchy subject, I realize there are many who carry around painful scars related to this issue but let me stress that God offers FORGIVENESS and HEALING for those who are haunted by this issue of abortion.

- Question: Look at verse 21 - What does the second sentence in verse 21 say?
- “Do not profane the name of your God.”

Kay Arthur:

*The children that you have He has given you, He has put in your womb. You are not to give them to another, to sacrifice them, to abort them. The children are yours. When you do not treat your children right, you profane the name of God.*

- To mistreat much less KILL a child that is a GIFT OF GOD CREATED in His VERY IMAGE...is like BLASPHEMING His very name...whew!
- Another Question: What other ways might people “sacrifice their children” to “the fires” of a modern day version of Molech today?
- What about when we refuse to raise our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord? Aren't we handing them over to the fires of hell?

Statement:

*God gave us children made in His image. When we toss them aside either by physical abortion or spiritual neglect, we destroy His image and profane His name.*

- Verse 22: Homosexuality.
- We could do a whole series of lessons on this one verse.
- The verse is plain and I believe God means what He says; now WHAT DO YOU AND I DO ABOUT IT?
- Instead of doing an exhaustive study on the issue, I thought we'd explore the question of how a Christian should deal with this issue?

My friend Steve Brown always comments in a way that shakes people up. On this issue he said:

Steve Brown:

*I have a friend who says that you see a lot of fat preachers yelling at gay folks, but very few gay folks yelling at fat preachers. He was making the point that nobody has the luxury of speaking as an outsider of the human race and that our subculture has certain “acceptable sins” and others that are just not the ones for which Christ died.*

*(We should deal with the issue of homosexuality) With great compassion—a compassion that can come only from those who are aware of their own sin and their own need.*

*So grace is the operative word. I don't think we can compromise any truth of Scripture, but self-righteousness is also a major compromise of that truth.*

*Jesus said, “The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at Him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’” (Matthew 11:19) Today Jesus would be accused of being a friend of gays and lesbians, too. That's because He is.*

*If we have "fat" preacher friends, we should also have gay and lesbian friends. Jesus hung out with sinners and called us to do the same thing.*

Billy Graham gave this answer:

*Center your attention on God and His wonderful plan for your lives. Ask Him to fill you with His Holy Spirit and help you to radiate His love, joy, and peace. The manifestation of the love of Christ is much more effective than argument in assuring others of our great love and concern. Also, ask God to give you wisdom to deal with the situation (James 1:5).*

John Piper adds:

*We want to combine compassion and conviction.*

*We don't want to lose the conviction that God says that to relate to a man or a woman in an unnatural way is sin.*

*Yet we want to be compassionate because these are human beings created in the image of God.*

*For those reasons we want to express to them our love.*

*You want to somehow keep communicating to them through emails, letters, personal contacts, and lunches in which you are saying to them, "I want your best."*

*If the person is a professing Christian then you've got a complicated issue, because then the Bible calls for a kind of holy ostracism. It says you don't hang out with a brother who is living in sin. You say to that person, "You need to change, or we can't hang out together." But if the person is not a believer then you treat it like evangelism, and you move forward in the kinds of outreach that can exist even within the family*

- Here is my own conviction about how to deal with the issue of homosexuality.
- First, I believe scripture is truth and that this is not an "outdated" truth.
- As to how to relate to and reach out to those in a homosexual lifestyle I look to Jesus.
- In dealing with sinners...
- How did Jesus handle the truth of scripture?
- He never compromised truth in dealing with sinners.
- How did Jesus relate to sinners?
- With compassion and love and the reality that there is forgiveness of sin.
- He quoted Isaiah 61:1
- So if we follow Jesus' example then we
- Wont compromise truth
- But we WILL approach those in a homosexual lifestyle with compassion, love, and a witness that there is hope and forgiveness.

- Verse 23: Bestiality - Don't have sexual relations with any animal.
- Any questions? 'Nuff said. As far as I'm going with that. Again, very plain.
- Look at Verses 24 and 25 of Chapter 18
- Question:
- What did God say about the people he was driving out of the Promised Land so that the Children of Israel could inhabit it?

24 " Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. 25 Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. 26 But you must keep my decrees and my laws.

- The very reason God was willing to DESTROY these people and give the land to HIS people was because they had DEFILED THEMSELVES with perversions
- Punishment for sin
- “the land vomited out its inhabitants” – You can't get much more GRAPHIC than that!

Leviticus 20:6-8

6 " I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute himself by following them, and I will cut him off from his people.

7 " Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the LORD your God. 8 Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the LORD, who makes you holy. [a]

- Verse 6: Mediums and spiritists...we can drive down the roads of this area and see these houses with signs saying there's a PSYCHIC or FORTUNE TELLER inside waiting to take our money and give us guidance for the future.
- Here's a question: Why doesn't God tell us in advance what's going to happen to us? Can you IMAGINE if God told you tomorrow morning everything that was going to happen to us over the next day; week; month; six months?
- Why does He choose to spare us that view into the future?
- Number one: It's a Jack Nicholson moment: “You can't handle the truth!”
- More importantly: He wants us to TRUST HIM day by day
- PSYCHIC and FORTUNE TELLER seem like harmless terms
- Question: What's another term that describes these kinds of people?
- THE OCCULT
- Some might say, “Hey I went to one of these folks and they're not all fakes...they seem to know stuff!”
- You bet! Ever read ACTS 16:16 about Paul and Silas

16As we were going to(A) the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had(B) a spirit of(C) divination and(D) brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling.

- You bet some of these people know some things: **THEY'RE IN CONTACT WITH EVIL SPIRITS...this stuff is FROM THE PIT OF HELL and SMELLS LIKE SMOKE!**
- You want to break open a "fortune cookie" at a Chinese restaurant for fun...go for it...I did it just last night.
- But if you want to know what the future holds...get to know **WHO HOLDS THE FUTURE!**
  
- Verses 7 & 8 and we're done.
- What does God command **THEM** and **US** to do in verses 7&8?
- **CONSECRATE** yourselves; **SET YOURSELVES APART**
- So if God didn't want **US** to become **DEFILED** by the culture around us what do we **DO** about the culture around us?
- It would be safest just to **ISOLATE** ourselves from the people who live in **UNGODLY PRACTICES** right?
- Is that what Jesus did?

John MacArthur said:

*"It makes no difference if an unsaved person is for or against abortion, a political liberal or a conservative, a prostitute or a police officer, he will spend eternity apart from God unless he repents and believes the gospel. God has above all else called the church to bring sinful people to salvation through Jesus Christ."*

We can't be **OF THE WORLD** (in other words participate in their **UNGODLY PRACTICES** to **FIT IN**) but we **MUST** be **SALT AND LIGHT** IN the world.

What's the **TAKEAWAY**?

- God called us to **BE HOLY** as **HE IS HOLY** and though it sometimes seems impossible...He makes it possible if we're under the power of His Spirit.
- God has called us as **BELIEVERS** to live by **HIS** standards rather than the standards of a worldly society and culture.
- Much of God's word on these matters is so plain (like this passage) that we **MIGHT DEFY** them but we **CAN'T DENY THEM!**
- Finally,
- We're not to be **OF** the **WORLD**...but we're here to be **SALT** and **LIGHT** IN the world showing the love of Christ to everyone around us.