

Do Right When You Do Wrong
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- For the next three weeks we study the book of Leviticus.
- Leviticus: The third book of the Old Testament
- Leviticus: The perpetual stumbling block of “read through the Bible in a year” plans since the beginning of time!
- You know what I mean if you’ve tried it...Genesis reads pretty well; Exodus reads pretty well; then you get to Leviticus
- It’s a handbook for the Levites
- It talks about:
 - Mildew
 - Skin diseases
 - Bodily discharges
- It makes you want to say: “Can we just flip over to Psalms? How about 1 Corinthians? Even Amos!
- But Leviticus also talks in great detail about the Old Testament SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM of the shedding of the blood of animals in dealing with SIN

The Believers Study Bible says this about Leviticus:

Leviticus is one of the most important books of the Old Testament. Without an understanding of the principles of atonement and holiness found in Leviticus, much of the New Testament has no foundation on which to rest. To say that Leviticus is one of the “most New Testament” books of the Old Testament would hardly be an exaggeration, for it foreshadows the Person and work of Christ in a most remarkable and elucidating manner.

Believer's Study Bible. 1997, c1995. C1991 Criswell Center for Biblical Studies. (electronic ed.) (Le 1:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

- People get uncomfortable when you talk about blood
- All this killing of animals...bet you won’t find ‘em doing a study of Leviticus at a meeting of PETA
- But, this book of very detailed information on Old Testament sacrifices points the way to what Jesus did for us on the cross
- Leviticus is all about how we as SINFUL people can have fellowship with a HOLY GOD
- The word HOLINESS appears 87 times in the King James Version of this book

19 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

² Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.¹

¹*The Holy Bible : New Revised Standard Version. 1989 (Le 19:1-2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.*

- So why must there be all this BLOODSHED?
- The problem is that SINFUL PEOPLE have to have a COVERING when exposed to a HOLY GOD...the shedding of blood IS that COVERING

Hebrews 9:22 says

22 Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

The Holy Bible : New Revised Standard Version. 1989 (Heb 9:21-22). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Leviticus 17:11 says

11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you for making atonement for your lives on the altar; for, as life, it is the blood that makes atonement.

The Holy Bible : New Revised Standard Version. 1989 (Le 17:10-12). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

- Basically, to cover SIN either the sinner dies or a SACRIFICE dies
- Question for you Bible Scholars: - What do we mean by the term: SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT?
- A sacrifice was SUBSTITUTED...the sacrifice died so the people didn't have to experience ETERNAL DEATH...separation from God
- Here's something to help us with that word ATONEMENT...break it into three parts: AT-ONE-MENT. ATONEMENT means we can be AT-ONE with God...He has provided a way we can have AT-ONE-MENT
- The Old Testament SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM was just a SHADOW of things to come.
- Question: Why do you think in the Old Testament SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM they had to keep sacrificing animals over and over again?
 - Animal sacrifice was TEMPORARY...not a lasting sacrifice.
- Question: Why do we no longer have to sacrifice animals?
 - Christ's death on the cross was the PERMANENT SACRIFICE for ALL

Nelson's New Bible Dictionary says:

Although Old Testament believers were truly forgiven and received genuine atonement through animal sacrifice, the New Testament clearly states that during the Old Testament period God's justice was not served: "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins" (Heb. 10:4). Atonement was possible "because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed" (Rom. 3:25). However, God's justice was served in the death of Jesus Christ as a substitute: "Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12). "And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant" (Heb. 9:15).

- So as DIFFICULT as it might be to study Leviticus...it's IMPORTANT to understand this book if we are to understand the New Testament
- The next three weeks of study in Leviticus are under the banner of: DESIGN FOR RIGHT LIVING
- Basically, how can we live GODLY LIVES?
- We've heard it said that it's not only HARD to live the Christian life...it's IMPOSSIBLE to live the Christian life...in our own strength.
- But why would God demand that we do something that is impossible to do?

A statement:

If God commands us to “be Holy as I am Holy”, it stands to reason that He has made a way for us to be Holy .

R.C. Sproul writes:

No human is holy in himself. Holiness is foreign to us. It is alien. That is why we require the righteousness of another to cover our moral nakedness. The Holy One has given us the holiness we need in the cloak of Christ's righteousness.

- There IS a design for right living and we'll learn more about it in this study of Leviticus
- Let's begin in Chapter 5 reading verse 1 and then verses 4&5

Leviticus 5:1; 4&5

Leviticus 5

1 " If a person sins because he does not speak up when he hears a public charge to testify regarding something he has seen or learned about, he will be held responsible.

4 " Or if a person thoughtlessly takes an oath to do anything, whether good or evil—in any matter one might carelessly swear about—even though he is unaware of it, in any case when he learns of it he will be guilty.

5 " When anyone is guilty in any of these ways, he must confess in what way he has sinned

New International Version (NIV)

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- Verse 1 in the NIV reads: “If a person does not speak up” when called to testify.
- This paints a picture of being aware of a crime that has been committed and staying silent when the authorities are asking for people to come forward with information.
- When we witness something wrong or bad, how many times do we say to ourselves and each other: “The best thing you can do is stay out of that mess!”

- Question: Have you ever thought about keeping quiet as a sin?
- Keeping quiet when you know the facts could cause the innocent to be imprisoned or the guilty to go free. If you keep quiet is that a sin?
- Verse 1 says that person will be HELD RESPONSIBLE
- By the way, here's one that convicted me. Other than testifying about a crime or wrong-doing; when is another time that keeping our mouths shut can be a sin?
 - Not sharing the Gospel
- What does verse 4 talk about?
 - Making RASH promises
- How many times do we just say something off the cuff taking an oath to either help or hurt someone and then never think about it again.
- God's people should never make promises we don't intend to keep.
- That's why we need to consider our words before we speak RASHLY
- Contrast these two concepts: Keeping your mouth shut and running your mouth too much.
- In both cases, our conduct may seem harmless.
- Here's the point: Sometimes we commit UNINTENTIONAL SINS
- We're all pretty aware of when we COMMIT a sin INTENTIONALLY, right?
- What do we call sins when we don't really DO anything?
 - Sins of OMISSION
- And these are even easier to ignore because OTHER PEOPLE can't see them!
- Other HUMANS can't see them...but who CAN? God.
- What does verse 5 say about these UNINTENTIONAL SINS?
 - When we become aware that we are guilty of an unintentional sin we need to confess it.

Psalm 90:8...the Psalmist writes:

8 You have set our iniquities before you,
our secret sins in the light of your countenance.

The Holy Bible : New Revised Standard Version. 1989 (Ps 90:8). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

- SECRET SINS...not only secret from others but sometimes SECRET FROM OURSELVES...UNINTENTIONAL SINS
- Still they harm our relationship with a Holy God and must be CONFESSED

Statement:

When we're confessing sins to God we need to ask Him "What have I missed?"

Even when a sin is UNINTENTIONAL and NOT EVIDENT to others we need to OWN IT; ACKNOWLEDGE IT; and CONFESS IT!

Leviticus 5:14-16

The Guilt Offering

14 The LORD said to Moses: 15 "When a person commits a violation and sins unintentionally in regard to any of the LORD's holy things, he is to bring to the LORD as a penalty a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value in silver, according to the sanctuary shekel. [a] It is a guilt offering. 16 He must make restitution for what he has failed to do in regard to the holy things, add a fifth of the value to that and give it all to the priest, who will make atonement for him with the ram as a guilt offering, and he will be forgiven.

- This passage talks about making a RESTITUTION offering to God
- In verse 15 the animal (in this case a ram) is brought to ATONE for the sin
- But in verse 16 God went further.
- Not only do you need to be cleansed from your sin...you need to make RESTITUTION
- Question: What is RESTITUTION?
 - RESTITUTION — the act of restoring to the rightful owner something that has been taken away, stolen, lost, or surrendered.
 - Youngblood, R. F., Bruce, F. F., Harrison, R. K., & Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1995). Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary.
- Believers today no longer follow the Old Testament SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM.
- We didn't come to church to day dragging a RAM behind our car to make up for our UNINTENTIONAL SIN.
- How would we make RESTITUTION to God?
 - Confessing our sin
 - Seeking God's cleansing to restore our relationship with Him
 - Seeking to make the situation right with anyone we've hurt by our UNINTENTIONAL SIN

Leviticus 6:1-7

Leviticus 6

1 The LORD said to Moses: 2 "If anyone sins and is unfaithful to the LORD by deceiving his neighbor about something entrusted to him or left in his care or stolen, or if he cheats him, 3 or if he finds lost property and lies about it, or if he swears falsely, or if he commits any such sin that people may do- 4 when he thus sins and becomes guilty, he must return what he has stolen or taken by extortion, or what was entrusted to him, or the lost property he found, 5 or whatever it was he swore falsely about. He must make restitution in full, add a fifth of the value to it and give it all to the owner on the day he presents his guilt offering. 6 And as a penalty he must bring to the priest, that is, to the LORD, his guilt offering, a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value. 7 In this way the priest will make atonement for him before the LORD, and he will be forgiven for any of these things he did that made him guilty."

- Look at verses 2 & 3: What kinds of sins are we talking about here?
 - Sins that ROB people of something valuable

- Stealing; embezzling; finding lost property and keeping it
- Fill in the blank on this statement: “People are basically _____.”
- Today many people when talking about crime and punishment, say “people are basically good”
- What did God know about fallen humans like the Children of Israel and like us?
- People are basically sinful and will be tempted to take what isn’t theirs

The Word In Life Study Bible says:

He knew that there would be cases of dishonesty among His people. So instead of excusing the offenses as the result of bad upbringing and proposing more education as a preventative, He instituted a system of sacrifices for the sin of the offender and restitution to the offended party

Word in life study Bible . 1997, c1996 (electronic ed.) (Le 6:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

- Sin not only damages our relationship with God, it DAMAGES others
- In our legal system when we say someone must pay DAMAGES what does that mean?
- Look at verse 4: What must the person do when guilty of this kind of sin?
 - Return what was stolen in full
- Back to our legal system...what are PUNITIVE DAMAGES?
- Verse 5: What ELSE must the guilty person do?
 - Pay an additional 20% as a penalty
- Here’s the point about GENUINE REPENTANCE

Our Lesson Commentary says:

GENUINE REPENTANCE involves more than simply asking God for forgiveness.

Believers need to:

- Honestly CONFESS the sin
- Seek God’s help in avoiding sin
- Refocus our life on Him
- And make things RIGHT with those we may have hurt by our sin
- This requires COURAGE and HUMILITY but provides a WONDERFUL BLESSING when we do it.

So what’s the TAKEAWAY?

The Spirit Filled Life Study Bible gives us a good summary:

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| Like cancer, sin can spread quickly and defile a whole church or nation. God commands that we deal with sin forthrightly and thoroughly. Only through confronting sin can we ever be saved from its power. God cannot look upon sin | 5:1; 19:17 <i>Do not conceal</i> wrongdoing you are aware of. <i>Confront</i> sin. 5:2–4 <i>Know</i> that you are accountable even for sins you are not aware of. <i>Be sensitive</i> to the Holy Spirit’s conviction of sin, and <i>repent</i> when convicted. 5:5; 26:40 <i>Confess</i> your sins quickly, frankly, and openly. Hiding them will only harden your heart. 6:5 Whenever possible, <i>make restitution</i> for sins you have committed against others, as a part of genuine repentance. |
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| because of His holiness, so we should not overlook it or deal with it lightly. | |
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²*Spirit filled life study Bible*. 1997, c1991 (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.