



LESSON 31

God requires holy living

LEVITICUS 19:1-37



God requires holy living.



“You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy” (Lev 19:2).

Supporting Truths

1. God’s people are to be holy.
2. Holy means loving God in purity.
3. Holy means loving other people in purity.
4. Holy means being distinct from the rest of the world.
5. Holiness is a response to God’s grace, not a way to earn His grace.

Objectives

1. State the command to be holy because God is holy (Lev 19:2).
2. List two laws that illustrate the need to love God in purity.
3. List four laws that illustrate the need to love others in purity.
4. List three laws that illustrate how Israel was to be different from their neighbors.
5. Compare the reason for being holy in Lev 19 with the reason in 2 Cor 5:14 and Rom 6:22.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God requires holy living • *Leviticus 19:1–37*



Lesson Summary

After graciously providing the way for Israel to live in His holy presence, God then showed them that they needed to respond to His grace by living holy lives. The reason for being holy is because God is holy. His people are to reflect His character. There are many particular laws in Leviticus, but they are summed up by loving God, loving others, and being distinct from the world.

Spotlight on the Gospel

God saved Israel so that they would serve Him in holiness. And God saves all who believe in Jesus Christ so that they will display His glory by living holy lives. Both for Old Testament believers and New Testament believers, God saves as a gift of His grace. But then those who are saved are to go on to do good works, loving God and loving others in purity. In this way they display the glory of Christ.

LAST WEEK



God Ordains the Day of
Atonement
Leviticus 16:1–34

THIS WEEK



God requires holy living
Leviticus 19:1–37

NEXT WEEK



Israel rejects God's
provisions
Numbers 11:1–12:16

DELIVERANCE

REBELLION

Lesson Commentary

God requires holy living.

In the first half of Leviticus (chapters 1–16), God provided the means for His people to dwell in His presence, even though He was holy and they were sinful. At all times the means of coming into God's presence is given as a gift of God's grace. But now that the Israelites were able to dwell in God's presence, God expected them to live a holy lifestyle in response to His grace. Leviticus 19 is a glimpse into what it meant for Israelites—and for us today—to live holy lives.



THINK ABOUT IT
Israel's conduct was to be shaped by God's character.

Be holy by treating the LORD as holy (19:1–8)

The reason for being holy is to reflect God's own character (Lev 19:2). The way we ought to behave (our ethics) is based on who God is (our theology).

The world likes to create its own standards of right and wrong, or it denies that there is such a thing as right and wrong. But God's character is the standard. Since God is holy, God's people are to be holy. **Holy** means *pure and separate*, so God's people are to be pure and separate from the world around them in order to reflect God's own character.

The first command is to honor one's father and mother (19:3). The word for "honor" also means "fear" or "respect," and it is usually applied to God, not to humans. It comes first in this list because it is very important. It shows that holiness starts at home. What happens in the home will shape the entire culture. Where children of any age do not honor their parents, they are not likely to honor God or any other authority.

Next, the Sabbath command is an important spiritual duty (19:3). Although it has been fulfilled in Christ and is no longer binding (Rom 14:5), the principle of the Sabbath is rooted in the created order (Gen 2:1–3). In order to be holy, God's people must look to Him for rest and provision (Isa 30:15), and they must remember what all their work is for (Col 3:23–24).

Holy worship must also be free from idolatry (Lev 19:4). The word for idolatry includes the sense of something worthless. False gods are worthless because

they promise much but produce nothing. So those who worship idols are also worthless.

Finally, to treat God as holy a person must be pure in presenting his offerings to God (19:5–8). Only the fellowship offering is listed here because it involves the greatest participation by the offerer. If he is unclean when he eats of it, or if he eats it after the second day, he defiles the offering. Therefore, in the home, at all times, and in all worship, God's people must be holy because He is holy.

Be holy by loving your neighbor as yourself (19:9–18)

Holiness is not just about how a person relates to God; it is also very much about how people relate to each other. God cares for the poor (Ps 146:7), so to be holy like God, His people must also care for the poor (Lev 19:9–10). By leaving grain or other produce in the field, the Israelites provided food for the poor. This allowed the poor to survive by their own labor, without being tempted to be lazy and without having to be humiliated by begging.

Holiness means keeping all of God's commands as an act of love towards others. Both the attitude and the specific commands continue to apply

today. It is wrong to steal, cheat, or lie (19:11–12; Col 3:9). It is wrong to harm others for one's own benefit or take advantage of others' weaknesses (Lev 19:13–14; Jas 5:4). Even though it is good to provide for the poor, it is wrong to distort justice for anyone, whether poor or rich, because God is just (Lev 19:15; Ps 85:10; Jas 2:1). It is wrong to speak badly about others, or do anything that would unjustly put another person's life in danger (Lev 19:16; Col 3:8).

This kind of holiness comes from the heart, so God's commands addressed the heart. The Israelites were not even to hate another person in their heart (Lev 19:17), but were instead to fulfill the second greatest command: love your neighbor as yourself (19:18). This command is repeated many times in the New Testament, because it sums up every law about how people are to act towards each other (Matt 19:19;

THINK ABOUT IT
True love for God will manifest itself in a love for others.



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22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27; Rom 13:9; Gal 5:14; Jas 2:8). Some try to twist “love” to make it mean that we must show tolerance for everything our neighbor does. But between the command not to hate and the command to love comes the command to rebuke those who do wrong. Whoever fails to correct wrongdoing also fails to love his neighbor.



THINK ABOUT IT

Holiness is to be a defining characteristic that differentiates the believer from the world.

Be holy by being different from the world (19:19–31)

This next section tends to focus on laws specifically for Israel in its time. They were to keep God’s commands in order to be holy, distinct from the nations surround-

ing them (Lev 19:19). They were not to mix animals in breeding, seeds in sowing, or material in clothing, perhaps as a symbol of Israel’s separateness (19:19).

Unlike the nations around them, they were to be pure in marriage. Although immoral behavior with a slave did not require the death penalty, it was still adultery (19:20–22). The man, not the slave girl, was held guilty, because he was free and she was not.

Israel was also distinct in patiently honoring God, unlike its neighbors who frantically sought to satisfy their greed. After planting trees, an Israelite was to let it mature for three years, then after all that waiting, he was to give God the fruit of the fourth year, waiting one more year before enjoying its fruit himself (19:23–25).

Israel was distinct in the way they related to death and the spiritual world. Unlike their neighbors, they were not to eat flesh with blood in it (19:26). They were also to trust God to reveal the future if He saw fit, unlike their neighbors, who examined animal parts to try to figure out the future (19:26). As God’s people, they were to hope in Him for life after death, rather than mutilate their bodies in mourning for the dead (19:27–28). They were to keep their land holy by avoiding the immoral worship practices of their neighbors, practices like prostitution and trying to speak to the dead (19:29–31).

Be holy by respecting the weak and being fair to everyone (19:32–37)

The last set of commands again returns to being holy by loving one’s neighbor. This love is especially toward those who tend to be taken advantage of. The Israelites were to honor the elderly as a way to honor God (19:32). When the elderly are no longer honored, it is a sign that society is about to crumble (Isa 3:5). The Israelites were also to love the immigrant, the foreigner who came to live in the land (Lev 19:33–34). This reflects the character of God, who loved Israel when they were strangers in Egypt.

The final command is to be just and honest with measurements (19:35–36). It was tempting for a baker, for example, to make extra money by selling what appeared to be a pound of bread but was actually less than a pound. But God forbids such deception and requires integrity.

The final verse is a conclusion to the whole chapter, urging Israel to observe God’s commands and do them (19:37). Throughout the chapter, obedience is required based on the deliverance God had already accomplished. That is why the chapter repeats “I am the Lord your God” over and over again. Obedience was the fitting response to God’s redemption. Leviticus gives many particular laws, but Micah summed them up in just three: do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God (Mic 6:8). Jesus summed them up in two: love God and love one another (Matt 22:37–40).

Everyone who has been redeemed by Christ has become a servant of God (Rom 6:22) and is controlled by the love of Christ (2 Cor 5:14). They keep Christ’s commands (John 15:10) by depending on the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:16). They do so because they have been saved for a holy calling (2 Tim 1:9), to serve God without fear in holiness and righteousness forever (Luke 1:75–76). But for those who have not been redeemed, their righteous deeds are filthy rags (Isa 64:6).

THINK ABOUT IT

The holiness God requires can only be found in Christ.



Lesson Outline

God requires holy living.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Be holy because God is holy (19:1–2).
2. Be holy by honoring your father and your mother (19:3).
3. Be holy by not stealing, lying, cheating, or hurting others (19:11–16).
4. Be holy by loving your neighbor as yourself (19:18).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. **Be holy by treating the LORD as holy (19:1–8).**
 - Be holy because God is holy (19:1–2)
 - Honor your father and mother (19:3).
 - Worship God the right way (19:3–8).
2. **Be holy by loving your neighbor as yourself (19:9–18).**
 - Help the poor and the stranger (19:9–10).
 - Do not steal, lie, cheat, or unjustly risk harm to others (19:11–16).
 - Do not hate others, but rebuke those who do evil (19:17).
 - Love your neighbor as yourself (19:18).
3. **Be holy by being different from the world (19:19–31).**
 - Keep God's decrees and be different from the world (19:19).
 - Be pure in marriage (19:20–22).
 - Do not be hasty and greedy, but give to God first (19:23–25).
 - Do not copy the way the world worships (19:26–28).
 - Do not fill the land with wickedness (19:29–31).
4. **Be holy by respecting the weak and being fair to everyone (19:32–37).**
 - Honor old people (19:32).
 - Treat immigrants with love (19:33–34).
 - Be just and honest with money (19:35–36).
 - To sum up, keep all God's commands (19:37).



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God requires holy living • Leviticus 19:1–37



Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why are we supposed to be holy?**
We are to be holy because God is holy.
- 2. How do you treat your parents in order to be holy?**
Holiness means obeying and honoring parents.
- 3. What are some bad things that you shouldn't do to other people?**
We should not steal, lie, cheat, or hurt other people.
- 4. How should you treat others to honor God?**
We should love other people as ourselves.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Are we told to be holy in order to earn God's favor?**
No. We are to be holy because God is holy. Our holiness is a response to the grace He has already shown.
- 2. If we have not yet been redeemed by God, what are our righteous deeds like?**
They are like filthy rags.
- 3. How can you be holy at home?**
We should honor our parents.
- 4. How can you be holy in worship?**
We should worship God in just the way He tells us to.
- 5. How can you be holy towards other people?**
We should not steal, lie, cheat, hurt, or hate other people.
- 6. How does the Bible sum up the way we treat others?**
We are to love them as ourselves.
- 7. Can you give some examples of how Israel was to be different than other nations?**
They were to dress differently, be pure in marriage, give God the first good fruit from their trees, not be obsessed with death, and worship God in purity.
- 8. Why does holiness involve treating strangers with love?**
God treated us with love when we were strangers, so we reflect His character by doing the same.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

HOLINESS REVIEW

Review “holiness” with the children. Explain that holiness means being separate from sin. Help the children picture this by bringing in two small containers full of salt. In one container, mix in a little pepper. Fill the other with salt only. Only one of these containers is pure, separate from pepper (sin).

DIFFERENT HATS

God wanted the Israelites to be noticeably different from the world. When they did the things God told them to do, other people would notice and know they were God's people. Here are some hats for people we know who are different. When the people wear them, we know what those people's jobs are.

Fireman's Hat: Besides his special hat, a fireman also wears a uniform, a badge, and boots, and he drives a fire truck with lights and loud sirens.

Captain's Hat: The captain of a ship wears a special hat along with his uniform.

Baseball Team Cap: A baseball player wears a special cap with a logo on it. His hat identifies him as a member of a certain team. Otherwise, all the men running around on the field would get confused about who was on their team.



ILLUSTRATE

LOVE LETTER

Write a letter to God, telling Him how you love Him. Put it in an envelope, seal it, address it to God, and bring it to class. After reading your letter to the class, ask the children why they love God. Explain that your desire to live a holy life is because you love God.

PUPPET APPLICATION

Think of situations that children struggle with at home or with their friends and that are related to today's lesson. Examples include disobeying parents, lying, being disrespectful, tattling, and not sharing. Have the puppet talk to the children about different struggles he has in these areas. Have the puppet ask children for advice on what he should do.



APPLY

“THE LORD IS HOLY”

BRACELET

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*.

Materials: Craft sheet, yellow cardstock, foam decorative pieces, glitter glue, scissors, tape, and glue.

Directions: Prior to class, fold a sheet of yellow cardstock in half lengthwise and cut along the crease. Cut out “The Lord is Holy” piece from the craft sheet. In class, have children glue “The Lord is Holy” piece to the yellow cardstock that has been cut in half. Decorate the yellow cardstock with foam decorations and color in the words with gold glitter glue. Help the children to form a bracelet and tape it together according to the size of their wrist.



“The Lord is Holy” Bracelet
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*.

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

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AGES 6–8



HOLY LIVING

Discuss with the children things that people do today that make God sad and things that Christians do that make God glad. In Leviticus 19, God instructs the children of Israel to be set apart as a holy nation. They were told to live apart from the world in nearly everything they did. Ask the children, “What are things people do today that are against God’s instructions to be holy?” “What are some ways in which Christians should live apart from the world?” Then ask the children whether God is concerned with more than just being good. Which is better, picking up toys because your mom tells you to, or picking up your toys because you love your mom? We should be obedient to God because we love God and want to please Him.”

DIFFERENT RULES

God gave His people special rules to show they were different. In your class today, make up one or two rules that will show that your class is different. For example, you might make a “thank you/you’re welcome” rule. Every time a child receives something from a teacher or another child, he should say a clear and kind “thank you.”



SET APART: RARE CHINA

In Leviticus 19, the children of Israel were called to be holy by being different. The Israelites were called to be set apart as God’s possession for His special purpose. They were to look different because they had a different purpose than the rest of the world. The people of Israel were like a china plate. China is not used every day as plastic is. Plastic is designed for common daily uses. But on special occasions, we use the beautiful china. It is reserved for a very special purpose, just like the nation of Israel.

WHICH CAME FIRST?

Show the class an apple seed and an apple and ask the children which came first. Of course the seed came first. Without the seed there is no fruit! This is just like the fruit of holiness in our lives. Holiness is the fruit of a genuine love for God.



HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.

Materials: Craft sheet, cardstock, crayons, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Have children cut out the puzzle pieces from the craft sheet. Arrange the pieces in their proper place and glue them to the sheet of cardstock. Glue the verse to the bottom of the cardstock. Children may color the picture if there is time.



*Honor Your Father and Mother
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.*

AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

SERVING THE PRESIDENT

Imagine that the president is going to come to our class today. Imagine that he has chosen you for a very special job. Everyone will know that you work for him. What if you wear dirty and torn clothes? What if you don't speak nicely to others? What if you aren't prepared to do the job when you are needed? Would that show the proper respect for the president? More importantly, would you be serious about serving God. God is perfect and hates sin, and we should also hate sin. Believers should show their love for God by obeying Him and being holy.

WHAT THE WORLD DOES

Ask the children what sinful things the world does. Ask the children what Christians should do and why they should do it. They should not do these things because God is holy. He wants us to live differently than the world around us. Today, as we learn about Leviticus, we are seeing how God wanted the Israelites to live holy lives. Many of the things that the world did then, it also does now.



ILLUSTRATE

LOVE GOD AND LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Write these two categories on the board. As you read through Leviticus 19, pause after each command, and ask the children whether the command falls into the category of "Love God" or "Love Your Neighbor." Paraphrase the command on the board under the correct category label.

HONORING PARENTS

Ask the children to think about television shows or movies they have seen that show children being disrespectful or disobedient. How does the world portray parents and older people? Often, the world portrays parents as uncool, unkind, or dumb. In many movies and shows, children display disrespectful attitudes toward adults. This is very different from how God thinks of children and parents. God wants children to respect parents. In today's lesson, we are learning what God asks from children.



APPLY

DO YOU LOVE ME?

How do you show your love to others? Ask the children to share ways that they express love. Write their ideas for display. Some ways are serving others, spending time with others, and giving words of encouragement. Explain that the Bible tells us how to express love to God. Love for God equals obedience to God (John 14:15).