

Heavy Duty

Preparation for Sunday, May 19, 2013 “Living in Holiness”

Monday - Tuesday

1. Separate from Society’s Standards – Read Leviticus 18:1-5

- Four times in five verses, God said, “I am Yahweh.” Why such an emphasis?
- Where had the Israelites come from? Where were they going? What belief systems did those two societies have?
- While most people wouldn’t describe our society as “polytheistic” (the worship of many “gods”), we are at least “pluralistic” (the toleration of many belief systems). How does a Christian walk the line between tolerance of what other people believe and embracing what other people believe? Is there a difference?
- If the standards of your society conflict with the standards God has set for you, what are your options? (You can **ignore** God’s standards and blend with the culture. You can **withdraw** from society and only spend time at your church. You can attempt to **reinterpret** God’s standards to make them more compatible with society’s standards. Or you can work to **transform** culture to bring it in line with God’s standards)
- Which option does Leviticus 18 advocate?
- How do you reconcile this position with Jesus’ teaching that we are to be salt and light in the world (see Matthew 5:13-16)?

Wednesday - Thursday

2. Separate from Sinful Practices – Read Leviticus 18:20-26)

- Have you ever thought to yourself that some things just go without saying, that it ought to be obvious to anyone that such-and-such is wrong? What is usually the case with things that “go without saying?”
- A common argument in our society is that “People should be free to do what they want in the privacy of their own homes, as long as they aren’t hurting anyone else.” Why is sexual sin such a big deal to God?
- Do you see “cause and effect” in verse 24? In other words, was God saying that the reason He drove the Canaanites out of the land was because they had defiled themselves in these ways?
- What does this suggest for our society today?
- Verse 26 specifies that these commands were not merely for the Israelites. They were for any foreigner who lived in Israel. What does this suggest for us today? Many would say that Christians have no right to “impose their morality” on non-Christians. But according to this verse, these sins were wrong for everyone, not just members of the faith community.
- Homosexuality is not just condemned in Old Testament. Paul also addressed it in Romans 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:8-10.
- What does it mean to “profane God’s name” in verse 21?
- How does the prohibition against child sacrifice fit with the other prohibitions in this passage?

- None of us would ever consider literally sacrificing one of our own children. But are there ways we have sacrificed them for the sake of other things? What might some of those other things be?

Friday - Saturday

3. Separate from False Spirituality – Read Leviticus 20:6-8

- Why would God describe consulting a medium as “prostituting” oneself?
- Have you noticed that all three of our lesson passages today have followed a similar pattern? First, there is a list of things not to do (Lev. 18:3; 20-25), followed by a command of what to do instead (Lev. 18:5, 26). How is that pattern expressed in this passage?
- In our world today, what do you think is the driving force behind people seeking advice from mediums psychics, or fortunetellers?
- What is the difference between seeking wise counsel vs. putting someone over and above God and trusting them more? How do you know when you have crossed that line?
- How does God’s Word help you filter the advice you would get from any of these sources?

Summarize: God warned His people not to turn to mediums or spiritists, lest He turn against them. He commanded them to be holy and reminded them that He is the One who made them holy. Spirituality today comes in many forms. Its various themes appear in books, television programs, movies, and music. Celebrities are noted for being involved in edge forms of spirituality and taking many down those roads with them simply because of their overwhelming influence. As Christians we must be discerning regarding what we watch and listen to.

Additional Reading for this Week:

1. Abomination – A Word Study
2. Egypt’s Many Gods
3. Israel’s Understanding of the Land
4. Who Were the Canaanites