

February 19-25

Week 8

This week we will continue with Act 2, scene 3. As you read this week, watch for an emphasis on the holiness of God and for ways holiness shapes the behavior of God's people toward him and toward one another. Meditate this week on the need for holiness in keeping covenant with God. First Peter 1:15 says, "As the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct." Think about our need for holiness and appropriate patterns of holiness as God's people today. We do not keep all of the same laws the Israelites were commanded to keep in Leviticus and Numbers, but our attention to holiness is to be just as vigilant. How do we pursue holiness today?

Day 1

Read Leviticus 11-14

Act 2 - Scene 3 - Reading 12

It is important to understand that the word clean in these chapters means “able to approach God in worship,” and unclean means “unable to approach God in worship.” Laws about food and skin diseases partly addressed hygiene and partly symbolized the unique relationship Israel had with God, depicting his holiness and the care needed when coming to him in worship.

Identify laws that emphasize Israel's separation to God.

Day 2

Read Leviticus 15-18

Act 2 - Scene 3 - Reading 13

Read Mark 5:24-34 in light of Leviticus 15:25-30. Think about the terrible social and religious implications for a woman who had this kind of physical illness. According to the law, what happened when the unclean woman touched Jesus? Yet power went out from Jesus, cleansing the woman and reversing the curse. Rather than being made unclean, Jesus made the woman clean.

What does this incident tell us about Jesus?

What are the implications for your life?

Day 3

Read Leviticus 19-22

Act 2 - Scene 3 - Reading 14

Leviticus 19 is one of the most practical chapters in the Old Testament. Prescribing ways God's people were to treat one another, these guidelines set the Israelites apart as very distinct from the pagan peoples of the land of Canaan and showed that they had a special covenant with God. God shapes the way his people live in relationship with others.

In what specific ways is God shaping your life through your relationship with him?

Day 4

Read Leviticus 23-25

Act 2 - Scene 3 - Reading 15

This passage establishes “appointed times” (Leviticus 23:2), including Sabbath days (see 23:3), one of which was the Day of Atonement (see 23:26-32); festivals (see 23:4-44); and Sabbath years (see 25:1-7), among which was the Year of Jubilee (25:8-55). The Sabbath days and years provided rest for the people and the land. Jubilee highlighted freedom and restoration. As you read, reflect on the role rest and celebration play in a healthy life.

How are you experiencing rest, liberation, and celebration in your life?

What patterns in your life and the lives of those around you discourage rest, freedom, and celebration?

Day 5

Read Leviticus 26-27; Numbers 1-2

Act 2 - Scene 3 - Reading 16

Leviticus 26 begins to conclude the explanation of the covenant God made with the Israelites at Mount Sinai. Notice the progression of God's discipline if the people hardened their hearts. Notice especially the culmination of God's discipline. This judgment occurred half a millennium later when the Babylonians drove the Israelites into exile at the beginning of the sixth century BC. Meditate on the consequences of an increasingly hardened heart.

Do you have a hardened heart in any area of your life?

Do you know someone who is hardening his or her heart toward God? Pray for yourself and that person, asking God to grant the grace of a softened heart toward him.

Day 6

Read Numbers 3-5

Act 2 - Scene 3 - Reading 17

Much of the book of Numbers shows that God's presence among his people demanded careful attention. Because he is holy, they were to do things a certain way. A passage like Numbers 5:11-31 can seem strange to us. We might be tempted to read this teaching as harsh or unfair, asking, "What about the man committing adultery?" Yet the passage assumes at least three things about the Lord:

1. He is holy and demands holiness.
2. He is all-knowing.
3. He is completely fair and will bring about a just outcome.

Trust God today with the portions of the Bible that seem odd to you. Focus on principles that are clear in light of the broader testimony of Scripture.

Worship God today in light of his attributes revealed in Numbers 5:11-31.

Day 7

Reading Summary for Week 6

Leviticus 11–16 focused on what was “unclean” (both “unfit for God’s presence” as well as “unhealthful”) in a variety of ways. Chapters 17–27 presented other laws for the Israelites about holy living. Thankfully, the thrust of these chapters was summarized by Jesus: “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:31). The detailed account of the census of Israel revealed that every individual counted, not only in the life of the nation but also in the presence of the Lord.

Prayer/Meditation

Lord God, I’ve read these chapters and they seem so odd. Help me not to lose the thrust of what I’ve learned, that forgiven people maintain fellowship with you by living by the precepts you establish. Today I ask for your power to help me do as Ephesians 4:1 asks, that I “walk worthy of the calling” that I have received. Thank you that according to Galatians 4:24-25 and Hebrews 8:13 these Old Testament promises prefigured in the sanctuary types and symbols have been fulfilled with the actual reality of what Christ has done for us. It is finished! Amen.
