

Leviticus Chapters 11-15: Holiness Makes You a Good Kind of Different

In Leviticus, Chapters 11-15, God instructed Moses about the ritual that the Israelite priests were to undergo to cleanse themselves to enter the tent while the Lord was present.

Getting Started:

Begin by “checking in,” with each person introducing themselves (if needed) and sharing “high, low, buffalo.”

Expect to experience God together in prayer:

Invite God to reveal any areas in your life that you need God’s help to become more holy or where you need to ask God where there could be areas in your life that aren’t holy.

Expect to experience God together in fellowship:

Icebreaker Activity: Sanitation Station

Items needed: container of hand sanitizer sufficient for everyone in the group to use

Say: In today's exercise, we will simply apply hand sanitizer, so we all start off with good, clean hands.

After everyone who wants to participate does so, ask:

- Do you think your hands are clean?
- How clean do you think they really are?
- What indications do you have that your hands are clean...or cleaner?
- How do you *know* that your hands are sanitized?
- What about the rest of your body? How clean is it?
- What about your insides...your heart, your mind, your soul? How clean are they?

You see, many times, we are unclean and unaware. We can harm and defile our bodies without realizing it. Furthermore, this uncleanness creates separation from God. In Chapters 11-15, God instructed Moses on what is considered ritually clean and unclean.

Expect to experience God together by reading and discussing God’s Word:

Background:

Chapters 11-15 focus specifically on the priests and their requirements for entering the tent. However, this is not just a message for a small group of ancient holy men. The Israelites needed to maintain their purity, not just for themselves, but also to show other nations and tribes that they were distinct in a very good way. God set apart the Israelites as a special people because they would one day bring forth the perfect, spotless Lamb who would be the Savior of the world.

Leviticus 11-15 takes place after the Israelites had broken their covenant with God.

Read Exodus 19:5-8

- What was the covenant?
- What was Israel's response to God's promise?

Read Exodus 32:1

- The Israelites made a promise in return and then broke it. How?

Read Exodus 40:34-35

As a result of breaking this covenant, the priests were unable to enter the tent when the Lord was present. When Israel worshipped an idol, the priests were no longer able to be in God's presence, so God created a means for them to be ritually clean again.

Leviticus 11

In chapter 11, God instructed the Israelites to eat "clean" meat, explaining what is and isn't considered clean.

- What does chewing the cud mean?
- Why do you think pigs were excluded?
- Why not shellfish?

While there is no conclusive consensus about the distinctions, God had set apart Israel, and this specific diet set them apart from other peoples.

- Why is it important to eat healthily?

Putting unclean things in our bodies or introducing impurities into our systems affects all aspects of the body's functions. Eating healthy makes you feel good. When you feel good, you can focus your time and energy on more productive things.

Read aloud 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

- Why should you care about what you eat?

Read aloud 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Matthew 5:16

- How do you honor God with your body?

By abstaining from certain foods, you honor your Creator and show your devotion to him.

Leviticus 12

This chapter explains purification after childbirth.

There were three requirements:

- 1) For 7 days after having a male child or 14 days after having a female, the mother was unclean.
- 2) For 33 or 66 days, a woman was in the process of purifying
- 3) Give two sacrifices: a sin offering of a pigeon or a dove, and a burnt offering. The burnt offering was to be a lamb, and if the family couldn't afford a lamb, they were to provide two pigeons or two turtle doves.

Read aloud Luke 2:22-24

- After Mary gave birth to Jesus, what was her offering?
- Why is this significant? (Jesus wasn't born into royalty, nor was He born to be a ruler, but rather to serve as a humble servant)

Leviticus 13-14

Chapter 13 provides specifics on how to *recognize* leprosy, and Chapter 14 explains *how to care for someone* with it. Notice what the scriptures don't say and what we know now: Leprosy is a bacterial infection that can now be treated with antibiotics. In the time of Leviticus, deadly germs weren't known and neither was a cure. It's essential to recognize that the separation required for those who displayed leprosy wasn't a consequence of condemnation; rather, it was intended to contain the infection and limit its spread.

- Have you ever felt judged because you were different in some way?

Sadly, most of us have at some point in our lives. As Christians living out God's word, we must make sure we don't do the same. Remember, Jesus healed many sick and disabled people during His ministry.

Read aloud John 9:2-3

- What did Jesus say when the question was asked as to why people were born lame?

If you find yourself quick to judge someone, ask Jesus to allow you to see that person through his eyes and notice how quickly your perspective can change.

Leviticus 15

This chapter covers laws related to bodily discharges. These discharges include a woman's menstrual cycle, a man's semen, and any other bodily discharge.

Read aloud Leviticus 17:11

- What is the reason why some of these things are considered unclean outside the body? (perhaps, because they carry life or germs that kill life)

Conclusion

Leviticus 15:31 explains that the Israelite priests were required to be clean so that they would not defile the sanctuary. Being unclean is not a sin. Coming into contact with things considered unclean is a part of life. In the following chapter, look for where the Israelites were once again able to enter the tabernacle when the Lord was present.

Experiencing God together by applying His Word to life:

Holiness means to be set apart from the common or sinful. The Israelites were to be set apart from the common, also known as Gentiles. By abstaining from sin and things that defile, we can be salt and light to others (Matthew 5:13). Salt of the earth gives flavor and preserves. As salt, with a sincerely devoted heart, we are to enrich the lives of others and help to restore them. By sharing God's truth, we provide light to a world desperate for meaning, purpose, and hope.

Throughout the week, remember to let your light shine!

Expect to experience God by closing in prayer together:

Pray that God will bless us with the strength and courage to change areas of our lives where we can be more holy for His glory. Let's ask God to help us set ourselves apart, to be in the world, but not of the world, as ambassadors for Christ.