

## Leviticus 19:1-18 | Sunday July 13, 2025

As believers in the church, it can be hard for us to think about and engage with the law in a truthful manner. The church historically has been tempted to involve following the law with salvation. Then others include following the law by our own strength with sanctification, a person's growth with Christ. Scripture is clear on both points that **keeping the law did not save us** and **relying on our flesh to pursue the law will not help us grow**.

### Romans 3:20 ESV

(20) For **by works of the law no human being will be justified** in His sight, since **through the law comes knowledge of sin**.

### Galatians 3:2-3 ESV

(2) Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit **by works of the law or by hearing with faith?**

(3) Are you so foolish? **Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?**

God is clear that by our own human efforts, through our flesh, the law shows us our sin and shows how often we fail at following it. Our walk with Jesus did not start through human effort and does not continue through human effort. The law does a masterful job of showing how inadequate and filthy we truly are. Our flesh has no value in our relationship with Jesus. **Our relationship with Him starts and continues based on faith.**

### Galatians 3:11 ESV

(11) Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for **“The righteous shall live by faith.”**

We are declared righteous by faith and we continue to walk and grow through faith. The Jews struggled with this and the early church did as well. The modern church is no different. **Living by faith draws us to Jesus and a daily reliance on Him.** We need to be careful how we view the law; it was not the problem our sin is.

### Romans 7:10-14 ESV

(10) The very commandment **that promised life proved to be death to me.**

(11) **For sin**, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

(12) **So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.**

(13) **Did that which is good, then, bring death to me?** By no means! **It was sin**, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

(14) For we know that **the law is spiritual**, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin

Paul is clear that the core issue is not with the law but in our sin nature. **The law is called holy, righteous, good, and spiritual.** It is our sin nature that caused it to be death to us. So, as we study the law in Leviticus, we must understand how fruitless trying to live out the law on our own strength is. It is impossible and we need Jesus' perfect righteousness. **We also cannot make the law the enemy but seek to find God's timeless holiness at the heart of each command.** These laws are presented in a specific culture to a specific people, but underneath this context is

God's holiness. His holy standard has not changed and has so much application for us today.

### Leviticus 19:1-37 ESV

(1) And 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.** (3) Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and you shall keep My Sabbaths: **I am the LORD your God.** (4) Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves any gods of cast metal: **I am the LORD your God.** (5) "When you offer a sacrifice of **peace offerings** to the LORD, you shall offer it so that you may be accepted. (6) It shall be eaten the same day you offer it or on the day after, and anything left over until the third day shall be burned up with fire. (7) If it is eaten at all on the third day, it is tainted; it will not be accepted, (8) and everyone who eats it shall bear his iniquity, because he has profaned what is holy to the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from his people. (9) "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. (10) And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: **I am the LORD your God.** (11) "You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another. (12) You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: **I am the LORD.** (13) "You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning. (14) You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, **but you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.** (15) "You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. (16) You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: **I am the LORD.** (17) "You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. (18) You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: **I am the LORD.** (19) "You shall keep My statutes. You shall not let your cattle breed with a different kind. You shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor shall you wear a garment of cloth made of two kinds of material. (20) "If a man lies sexually with a woman who is a slave, assigned to another man and not yet ransomed or given her freedom, a distinction shall be made. They shall not be put to death, because she was not free; (21) but he shall bring his compensation to the LORD, to the entrance of the tent of meeting, a ram for a guilt offering. (22) And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering before the LORD for his sin that he has committed, and he shall be forgiven for the sin that he has committed. (23) "When you come into the land and plant any kind of tree for food, then you shall regard its fruit as forbidden. Three years it shall be forbidden to you; it must not be eaten. (24) And in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, an offering of praise to the LORD. (25) But in the fifth year you may eat of its fruit, to increase its yield for you: **I am the LORD your God.** (26) "You shall not eat any flesh with the blood in it. You shall not interpret omens or tell fortunes. (27) You shall not round off the hair on your temples or mar the edges of your beard. (28) You shall not make any cuts on your body for the dead or tattoo yourselves: **I am the LORD.** (29) "Do not profane your daughter by making her a prostitute, lest the land fall into prostitution and the land become full of depravity. (30) You shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary: **I am the LORD.** (31) "Do not turn to

mediums or necromancers; do not seek them out, and so make yourselves unclean by them: **I am the LORD your God.** (32) “You shall stand up before the gray head and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: **I am the LORD.** (33) “When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. (34) You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: **I am the LORD your God.** (35) “You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measures of length or weight or quantity. (36) You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin: **I am the LORD your God,** who brought you out of the land of Egypt. (37) And you shall observe all My statutes and all My rules, and do them: **I am the LORD.”**

God is directly applying His holiness in practical ways to His people. The entire chapter is the expansion of verse 2 because God is holy, they should be holy. **16 times in the chapter God reminds them that He is the Lord their God.** They are called to reflect His holiness. Our culture, and customs have changed so the application will look different at times but the call for God’s people to reflect His holiness has not changed.

### 1 Peter 1:13-19 ESV

(13) Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, **set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

(14) As obedient children, **do not be conformed** to the passions of your **former ignorance,**

(15) but **as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,**

(16) since it is written, **“You shall be holy, for I am holy.”**

(17) And if you call on Him as Father **who judges impartially** according to each one's deeds, **conduct yourselves with fear** throughout the time of your exile,

(18) **knowing that you were ransomed** from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,

(19) **but with the precious blood of Christ,** like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

As believers we are called to set our hope fully onto the grace that is found in Jesus Christ. We do not trust in our ability to follow the law of even in our ability to pursue holy living. Our confidence is found in His grace. Then as we trust in His grace we are to be holy and not be conformed to the world. We were ransomed by the blood of Jesus we should not take that lightly. **Our lives should reflect His holiness. This is not an abstract idea but a guiding standard for each area of our life.** No part of our life is off limits or not influenced by God’s holiness.

### Leviticus 19:3-4 ESV

(3) Every one of you shall **revere his mother and his father,** and you shall keep My Sabbaths: I am the LORD your God.

(4) Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves any gods of cast metal: **I am the LORD your God.**

God expands on the 5th commandment and changes the key word **from honor to the word fear** and elevates the role of mother by listing her first. Parents have a unique job in that they are the first authority in a child’s life. The goal of parenting is not to raise a great child. The goal of parenting is to faithfully raise an adult who has a great walk with Jesus. We are to train our children to have a fear, reverential awe, respect of us as parents so that they will have that same type of fear for God. Children are not to be afraid their parents, but respect them and follow their

leadership. This is why not worshipping idols is listed immediately after. **When we have a fear of God why would we ever turn to idols?**

#### **Ephesians 6:1-4 ESV**

- (1) **Children, obey your parents in the Lord**, for this is right.
- (2) **“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise**  
**),**
- (3) **“that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”**
- (4) **Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**

Children are called to obey, this helps them learn how to obey God. Even as adults we are called to honor our parents. This command comes with a promise. There is a blessing for walking in our family relationships in a way that honors God. Fathers are not to provoke our children, this is inciting them to anger. We are not to antagonize our kids, instead we are called to **nourish** them in the **training** and **council of God**. Fathers do we spend more time training our kids in earthly things or spiritual things? Parents need to aim to be worthy of this reverence, as it will help their children have a growing walk with Jesus.

#### **Leviticus 19:9-10 ESV**

- (9) **“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest.**
- (10) And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. **You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God.**

When Israel goes into the promise land they were not to completely harvest every last bit out of the field but to leave the edges. Leaving parts of the field unharvested **was a common practice in the cultures around Israel** yet these cultures left parts of the harvest as an offering to their gods. As God reveals the law there are certain practices that He forbids so that Israel would look wholly different from the neighboring people. **Then there are other practices like this one that God redeems.** What Israel was called to do looked similar on the outside but the end result and heart were very different. The parts that were left in the field were to help provide for the poor, and the sojourner. **This whole chapter is filled with laws to protect and care for the weak and powerless.**

#### **Deuteronomy 24:17-18 ESV**

- (17) **“You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, or take a widow's garment in pledge,**
- (18) **but you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt** and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this.

**God cares for the ones who were most mistreated by society.** The sojourner would not have the same rights as a citizen, the fatherless do not have an earthly protector, and a widow had few opportunities to provide for herself. God never wanted Israel to lose sight that they lived as slaves in Egypt. They knew what it was like to be oppressed and He wanted his people to act different. He wanted them to know that they were still sojourners on this earth.

#### **Leviticus 25:23 ESV**

(23) “The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is Mine. **For you are strangers and sojourners with Me.**

This world and whatever country we live in is not our true home. We are exiles, sojourners, **this is not home**. God wants our lives to reflect this truth. **This changes what we value and how we view our future. This is the country of our exile.** So the Israelites were not to try and make every cent they could out of their fields, but to leave the edges for those in need. Ruth was a direct beneficiary of this practice. God’s system provided for people with dignity and offered them an opportunity to work. The early church continued this heart for the needy and was part of the first instructions that James, Peter, and John gave to Paul as He was starting out in ministry.

#### **Galatians 2:10 ESV**

(10) Only, they asked us **to remember the poor**, the very thing I was eager to do.

Believers should be known for our loving and caring attitude and heart toward people. The people society forgets about we are called to remember, **keep in mind, think of**. As we care for people it needs to be based on truth. **The world gives indiscriminately and without wisdom.**

#### **2 Thessalonians 3:6; 10-12 ESV**

(6) Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother **who is walking in idleness** and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.

(10) For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: **If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.**

(11) For we hear that some among you **walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies.**

(12) Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

**The world does not have a resource problem it has a sin problem.** Humanity will constantly look for ways to cheat the system and take advantage. Some were relying on the generosity of others instead of working. **This idleness was not to be supported.** God’s system of leaving the edges of the field is masterful in its wisdom because there is an ownership and dignity that someone is able to work for what they need. Our society makes it hard to get the help and support to those truly in need. This is why the command to remember the poor is so important. Another way the world sins is by taking advantage of others.

#### **Leviticus 19:11-12 ESV**

(11) “You shall not **steal**; you shall not **deal falsely**; you **shall not lie** to one another.

(12) **You shall not swear by my name** falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

These laws present a progression of sin. **Sin always leads to more sin.**

After you steal or deal falsely with someone, cheat them, you lie to cover it up. The lie is not believed so you swear by God’s name to prove your point. Each sin leads to the next sin, and more hurt and damage.

#### **Leviticus 19:13 ESV**

(13) “You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. **The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning.**

God desired His people to have a system that did not keep people in a position that was near impossible to get out of. A day laborer needed to be paid on the day of their work. Holding it to the next day leveraged them so they had to come back.

#### **Exodus 22:26-27 ESV**

(26) If ever you take your neighbor's cloak in pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down,

(27) **for that is his only covering**, and it is his cloak for his body; in what else shall he sleep? **And if he cries to Me, I will hear, for I am compassionate.**

The poor would sometimes give up their only jacket as collateral for a quick loan. God only allowed this for one day, because that person needed the jacket to sleep with that evening. God has compassion on people, and hears them in their needs. The predatory loans in our economy violate this principal. As believers we are called to treat people with justice and care.

#### **Leviticus 19:14 ESV**

(14) **You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind**, but you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

In keeping with protecting the powerless God put in provisions for the deaf and blind. The deaf person might not be aware they had been cursed but God is. The blind were to be helped not tripped.

#### **Leviticus 19:14-16 ESV**

(15) "You shall do no injustice in court. **You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great**, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor.

In our decisions we are to use biblical justice. **The poor are not to be shown partiality because of their situation.** God has shown so much care for the poor this law can seem out of place, but it shows God's heart for justice and truth. Even if someone is poor justice must be sought. Conversely the rich should not be given a pass. In our sinfulness both extremes poverty and riches can get in the way of truth and justice.

#### **Leviticus 19:16-18 ESV**

(16) You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

(17) "**You shall not hate your brother in your heart**, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him.

(18) You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, **but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.**

Verse 18 provides a great summary statement. God was calling His people to reflect His holiness, and **one of the main ways His holiness would show through in their lives is through love.** The world lies, cheats, steals out of a selfishness. Their home is the here and now and they will go to great lengths to protect it and make it better even at the cost of others. We are called to let God's holiness show. **We are to have a love and care for people that reflects this is not our home and who our Holy God is.**

#### **Romans 13:8-10 ESV**

(8) Owe no one anything, except to love each other, **for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.**

- (9) For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, **are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”**
- (10) Love does no wrong to a neighbor; **therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.**
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