

LEVITICUS 19

GUIDELINES FOR DAILY LIVING

This chapter is largely devoted to the repetition of certain laws which had been given to God's people. However, because of their intrinsic importance, the Lord's wisdom saw fit to insist upon these things with special emphasis. It will be seen that most of them have more reference to moral obligations than to specific duties. Human beings have never devised a law code such as this one, which was so well calculated to promote the well-being of mankind.

The following thoughts are some brief expositions upon the guidelines laid out in this chapter. We might say that these guidelines are like further explanations upon the Ten Commandments. The Lord requires His people to be holy people, because He is a holy God (verse 2). The words in this chapter were intended to teach real separation from the world and the flesh, and entire devotedness to God. This is the purpose of the law of Christ; may the Lord bring every thought within us into obedience to it!

In verse 3, we are taught that children are to be obedient to their parents. They ought to show them inward reverence and esteem, as well as outward respect and obedience; and they must take care to please them. The next verse declares that God alone is to be worshiped. He alone makes us holy and happy; why would we turn away to serve idols that will deceive us and make us forever miserable? We must not even turn our eyes to them, much less our hearts. Verses 5-8 give a reminder that the meat of a peace offering was not to be eaten after the second day, if it was offered upon the fulfillment of a vow or as a purely voluntary offering (chapter 7:16-21). The gleanings of the harvest in the fields were to be left for the poor (verse 9); for works of piety must always be attended with works of charity, according to our ability. We should not be covetous or greedy of everything that we can lay claim to, nor insist upon our rights in all situations. Yet we are to be honest and true in all our dealings (verse 11). Whatever we have in the world, we must see to it that we get it honestly. Reverence to the sacred name of God must always be shown, according to verse 12. And we must not keep back what belongs to someone else, particularly the wages of those who work for us (verse 13). The Lord also desires for us to be mindful of the safety of those who cannot help themselves (verse 14), and to take heed of doing anything which may cause our weaker brother or sister to stumble. Judges and all who are in positions of authority are commanded, in verse 15, to give judgment without partiality. And verse 16 tells us that to be a talebearer, and to sow discord among neighbors, is the worst office a person can put himself into. When it is necessary to rebuke our neighbor, it must be done with love; for we are to put off all malice, and to put on brotherly love (verses 17, 18). The 19th

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ The Lord requires His people to be holy, just as He is holy – verses 1, 2
- ❖ He gives His people various precepts to govern their daily life – verses 3-37

verse proceeds to utter a prohibition against the sowing of mixed seeds and the wearing of linsey-woolsey garments – perhaps because these actions were superstitious customs of the heathen. At any rate, God’s people should be very careful to not mingle themselves with the heathen, nor to weave any of the customs of the world into the Lord’s ordinances. Verses 20-22 contain a law for punishing adultery that was committed with a maidservant who was already betrothed. There was also a law concerning fruit-trees (verses 23-25). For the first three years after they were planted, no use was to be made of the fruit. Whatever fruit the trees produced in the fourth year was to be devoted to the Lord – either given to the priests, or eaten before the Lord with joy. And after that, the fruit could be freely enjoyed. God also gave laws against the superstitious and abominable customs of the heathen (verses 26-29, 31). It is unthinkable for the Lord’s people to ask counsel of the devil; for such actions would be an intolerable affront to Jesus, Who has destroyed the works of Satan. However, not only was such witchcraft forbidden; but also such things as eating the blood of animals, idolatrous customs and superstitions like cutting or printing marks on the skin, and lewd behavior. The 30th verse gave a reminder that one day in seven is to be dedicated to the Lord, and that His house must be approached with proper respect. We ought to respect the solemn assemblies of Christians for religious worship, for they are held under a promise of our Savior’s special presence in them. Verse 32 issues a charge to younger people to show respect to the elderly; the ways of the Lord oblige us to honor those to whom honor is due. A charge was also given to the Israelites to be very kind to sojourners in their land (verse 33), for sojourners and the widows and fatherless are particularly cared for by God Himself; it is at our own peril, therefore, if we do them any wrong. Even sojourners and foreigners are welcome to God’s grace, so we should do what we can to witness to them of Christ. Towards the end of this chapter, justice in weights and measures is commanded (verses 35, 36).

It is good for us to make a deliberate effort to obey God’s Words (verse 37); for truly, the nearer our lives are conformed to the precepts of God’s law, the happier we shall be, and the happier we shall make all around us. And as we read about the extensiveness of the Divine laws, how blessed it is to call to mind how faithfully *all* the law was fulfilled by Jesus! In His life, He answered all its righteous demands; by His death, He confirmed the law; in His resurrection, He has proved the validity of His obedience; and in His return to glory, He has shown that the Father is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake.

O Lamb of God! By all these precepts, You have prohibited everything that has a tendency to seduce our souls from Yourself. We beseech You to put Your fear in our hearts, so that we may not depart from You. Lead us into all truth; enable us to crucify the flesh, with all its affections and lusts; and grant us grace to be holy in our thoughts, words, actions, and lifestyle! Amen.

