Leviticus 18

“Walking w/God in Holiness!”

1. **Intro:**

1.1. Chapters 1-17 in Leviticus dealt with “How to Approach God!” – Now Chapters 18-20 deal with “Walking with God!”
   1.1.1. Some call these ch’s(18-20) “The Holiness Code”.
   1.1.2. Chapters 18,19 contain the precepts & ch.20 states the punishments.

1.2. After dealing with Physical uncleanness now, what naturally follows is moral impurities.
   1.2.1. I heard today that there is a church in our Valley that is a “Polygamist church”…w/it’s own web site & all.
   1.2.2. We definitely live in a sex-saturated society!
       1.2.2.1. Fulton J.Sheen was right when he said, “The Victorians pretended sex didn’t exist; the modernist pretend that nothing else exists.”

2. **HOLINESS IN MARRIAGE RELATIONS! (1-5)**

2.1. Holiness is best realized in connection w/the nature & character of God.¹

2.2. The Basis of Holiness! (1-4)
   2.2.1. “I am the Lord your God”(2) – God’s character & claim on us form the foundation of true life.
       2.2.1.1. This reminds us we are “under” His authority!
       2.2.1.2. Q: Are you under His authority? If so, does that change when you “disagree” w/God?
   2.2.2. If you’re going to belong to a Holy God then you will be expected to be holy yourself! (19:2; 20:7)

2.3. The Principle of Holiness! (3)
   2.3.1. “you shall not do” – There needs to be a separation form surrounding life!
   2.3.2. “Unlikeness to others based on likeness to God.”
   2.3.3. Don’t do as they do!
       2.3.3.1. As, “but Johnny down the street does it” doesn’t fly with you, neither does it fly w/God!
       2.3.3.2. You are different from your neighbors!
       2.3.3.3. It is like when our dad would tell us “remember you’re a Bell!”

¹ Griffith Thomas
2.3.4. **SEPARATION** - The key Hebrew term is *badal*.
   2.3.4.1. It means to **remove** from something, and thus to make a distinction between them.
   2.3.4.2. In Genesis 1 God separated light from dark, land from sea.
   2.3.4.3. Now God separated Israel from all other nations of the world to be His own covenant people.
   2.3.4.4. A separation to God linked **every thing** in Jewish life to her Lord.

2.4. **The Evidence of Holiness!** (4,5)
   2.4.1. "observe My judgements, keep My statutes, live by them" – Obedience in heart & life, character & conduct.
   2.4.2. **Every area of life**: family relationships, worship, sexuality, the treatment of the poor, even personal grooming were to **reflect the purity** of God’s character.
   2.4.3. Q: How are you different? How have you changed? Are you different by what you don’t do, or, by what you do do?

2.5. (5) This verse is an oft quoted verse: (by Neh., Jesus, & twice by Paul)
   2.5.1. See Lk.10:25-29

3. **INCESTUOUS RELATIONSHIPS!** (6-18)

3.1. Remember that Sex is a **wonderful gift** of God to the human family.
   3.1.1. **Used in His will** it is **wonderful** & brings **blessings**.
   3.1.2. **Used out of His will** it is **destructive** & brings **tragic consequences**.
   3.1.3. Like fire, **controlled** in a fire place is **good**. Fire **uncontrolled** in a forest is **bad**!
   3.1.4. **1 Thes.4:3-5,7** "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God,"..." For God did not call us to **uncleanness**, but in **holiness**.

3.2. “Near of Kin” – is the key-thought or general principle of the whole chapter.
   3.2.1. Marriage to the near of kin is forbidden.
   3.2.2. A detailed list of these marriage prohibitions follows.
   3.2.3. **Interesting, All societies studied by anthropologists have rules against incest.**

3.3. “uncover their nakedness” - to have sexual relations with.
3.4. These breaches of the law were common in both of these other countries (Egypt & Canaan).

3.4.1. God didn’t want the children of Israel to “look back” & imitate the sins of Egypt, not “look around” & imitate the sins of the Canaanites, but to “look up” & observe God's commands.

3.4.2. God could not except the moral standards of either Egypt or Canaan.

3.4.3. Note: Tamar’s plea to her ½ brother Amnon, when he sought to lie w/her, “No, my brother, do not force me, for no such thing should be done in Israel. Do not do this disgraceful thing!” (2 Sam.13:12)

3.4.4. Q: What are your “standards” based upon?

3.4.5. Q: If you could choose your own standards, wouldn’t your “standard” be pretty low?

3.4.6. Isn’t the world asking Christians today? To be tolerant to others!

3.4.6.1. Worse yet, isn’t that what some Christians are using today for an excuse for these immoral lifestyles?

3.5. (8) Paul speaks to the Corinthian church about this in 1 Cor.5.

3.6. (9) “sister” – Q: Ok, where did Cain & Abel get their wife’s?

3.6.1. Adam lived to be 930 years old. - He had other sons & daughters. - He & Eve were ordered by God to “fill (populate) the earth”. – It is reasonable to assume they had children for a long period of time.

3.6.1.1. W/o question it was necessary for the generation following Adam to pair off brothers & sisters to serve as parents for the ensuing generation. – It would have been soon where this wasn’t necessary any more & soon it was forbidden.

3.6.1.2. There is no mention of incestuous relations until the time of Abraham when he assures Abimelech that Sarah was his sister, implying to them she couldn’t have been his wife.

3.6.1.3. Thus as for Cain & Seth & all the other sins of Adam who married, they must have chosen their sisters as wives. (again this multiply’s out very quickly)

3.6.1.3.1. It would only have been necessary during the lifetime of Cain (approx. 800 yrs.).

3.6.1.3.2. Henry Morris says, possible 7 billion people by the time of the flood.
3.7.  (16) The only exception is in the case of levirate (lev-ir-it) obligation (Deut 25:5-10).
3.7.1.  When a man’s brother dies he was required to take his sister-in-law to wife in order to continue his brothers line.

3.8.  Q: Why is God concerned with…sexual hygiene, sexual morality, & marriage?
3.8.1.  1] The Creator Knows Best! - The Creator knows what’s best for his creation!  
3.8.1.1.  As any inventor, designer, architect, wants you to follow his directions for the optimum results!

3.8.2.  2] A Sanctified Channel! - God choose Israel to be the channel in which His Son would come into the world, & thus it was important for this channel to be sanctified.

3.8.3.  3] Godly marriages! - When God sought “godly offspring” (in Malachi 2:15) that could only come though Godly marriages.

3.8.4.  4] A Witness! - A Christian Marriage should be a witness to the world, of the love that Christ has for His Church.

3.8.5.  5] Terrible consequences! - He also wants us to avoid terrible consequences that come as a violation of His laws. (including: physical, spiritual, emotional, mental consequences)

3.8.6.  6] His Inventions! - Since God invented sex & ordained marriage, He has every right to establish the regulations that control them.

3.8.7.  7] Science concurs today that “there is a tendency for children birthed from an incestuous relationship to inherit the recessive detrimental genes, & bring out the worst in the family tree rather than the best.”

3.9.  Q: Do we have, & give, answers to why God says no(when we know)?

4.  PROHIBITIONS OF SEXUAL CRIMES! (19-23)
4.1.  Further prohibitions are placed here because the worship of idols & licentiousness were regularly associated(see vs.21 Molech).

4.2.  (19) Deals w/a woman on her menstrual cycle(see ch.15)

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2 Warren Wiersbe
4.3. (20) Deals w/Adultery.
4.3.1. I think this is included in the list here because their thoughts might have been, “since my neighbors wife isn’t “family” then it must be legal!”
4.3.2. But he reminds them of the 7th commandment “You shall not commit adultery.”
4.3.3. Notice: God has built a strong fortress around the Love of family (6-19) & now here, around the Love of neighbor (20).

4.4. (21) Deals w/Idolatry.
4.4.1. Q: Why was this placed within the sexual crime category?
4.4.1.1. Because of its association w/Canaanite worship. Sacred prostitution & infant sacrifice were the 2 most degrading of Canaanite culture.
4.4.1.2. It can be explained as a means of promoting fertility (Mic 6:6-7) or as a way of obtaining a military victory (Judg 11:30-40; 2 Kings 3:27).

4.5. (22) Deals w/Homosexuality.
4.5.1. This is in no way an “alternative lifestyle” it is a “lethal lifestyle!”

4.6. (23) Deals w/Bestiality.
4.6.1. “Sexual perversions” – these were not simply the result of human depravity. Sex had been ritually incorporated into worship.

4.7. The good news all of all of these sins mentioned is that these sins can all be forgiven!
4.7.1. Just repent, forsake your ways, abandon your old lifestyle.
4.7.2. Mt.12:31 “And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.”
4.7.3. See 1 Cor.6:9-11.

5. **SOLEMN WARNINGS! (24-30)**

5.1. When Israel would enter the land they’d be faced with immorality to the Nth degree.
5.1.1. They would have to maintain position of separation in order to be pleasing to God.
5.1.2. The church today must maintain that same position!
5.1.2.1. Read - Col.3:1-7

5.2. We see the relation of national life to individual life is emphasized.
5.2.1. (Merick) “Dissolute morals are always a symptom which precedes the ruin of an empire, or the fall of a nation.”
5.3. Remember God was about to give the land of Canaan to Israel as a possession.

5.3.1. The sin of the Canaanites had reached the point where the land was about to vomit them out!(25)

5.3.1.1. Sexual perversions are like a disease…they can make a society & a nation sick.

5.3.1.2. Not only does sexual sin make God sick…but even the earth you stand on knows better!

5.3.1.3. Note: that these were gentile nations that God judges even though God had no covenant with them! – But he still held them accountable for their filthy deeds against nature.

5.3.1.3.1. Rom.1:18 “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,”

5.3.2. Israel was warned that the same would be done to them if they didn’t heed this same warning.(28)

5.3.2.1. Which eventually took place I their captivity to Assyria & Babylon.

5.3.2.2. How much more accountable are those who know His commands, warnings, & consequences?

5.3.2.3. “The judgement is greatest where the light has been the brightest.”

5.3.3. Q: What would the land under your feet cry out about you…if it could speak?

5.4. “abominable” – detestable. tow-ebah. - Expresses strong revulsion, and is used of practices that are morally rather than ritually disgusting to God.

5.4.1. Prov. 6:17-19 lists seven other tow-ebahs, including “A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.”

5.4.1.1. Vs.16 “These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him.”

5.4.2. Q: What tow-ebah do you struggle with?

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3 Warren Wiersbe