

Living Life To The Max



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Presbyterian Youth



A Series of 6 studies from Leviticus



1 Peter 1:13-16 *“¹³Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. ¹⁴As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you live in ignorance. ¹⁵But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."”*

Summarise this verse in your own words.

Contents

Study One 5

Study Two 11

Study Three 15

Study Four 19

Study Five 23

Study Six 27

Thinking a bit harder:

Read **Colossians 3:1-17**

1. Describe what holiness looks like and is it possible to live up to that standard? (note verse 16) What do you think the phrase “Let the word of God dwell in you richly” mean in practical terms?

Ephesians 4:32 *“³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”*

2. What does this verse call us to do? How do we practically do this?

4. Sitting behind God's laws is his immense love for his people. Who is more loving: God in setting boundaries for sex, or our culture in saying anything goes?
5. Read **Leviticus 25:8-55**. In a sentence describe what happened in the year of Jubilee. We still worship a Jubilee God - what does this mean for us?

Study One

Leviticus 1

Have you ever met someone really important –the Prime Minister, a movie star, Guy Sebastian? Do you think you ever will?

Psalm 89 tells us that God is awesome- he is the Almighty Creator who sustains all of creation and it belongs to him.

Psalm 89: 5-8 “ *The heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones.*

⁶ *For who in the skies above can compare with the LORD? Who is like the LORD among the heavenly beings?*

⁷ *In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him.*

⁸ *O LORD God Almighty, who is like you? You are mighty, O LORD, and your faithfulness surrounds you.”*

Look at how God describes himself in Exodus 33.

Exodus 33: 12-23 “¹² *Moses said to the LORD , "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favour with me.'* ¹³ *If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favour with you. Remember that this nation is your people."*

¹⁴ *The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."*

¹⁵ *Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. ¹⁶ How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"*

¹⁷ And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name."

¹⁸ Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."

¹⁹ And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. ²⁰ But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

²¹ Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. ²² When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. ²³ Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."

Now Read **Leviticus 19:1-2**

General Questions

1. What does "God is holy" actually mean? Does God ever make mistakes? What is holiness?
2. The book of Leviticus was written for a specific purpose. Why was it given to the Jews and where were they when Moses received these instructions? (**Leviticus 20:22-24, 27:34**)
3. How did the average Jew have access to God?
4. How we get to God has changed, but the basic principal is the same. How do we access God? How is the idea of sacrifice the common link between us and the Ancient Jews?

Study Six

Leviticus 18 – 25

Chapter 18 tells us the boundaries the creator of the universe has set for sex. Because he is the creator, God knows what is good for his creation and what is harmful to it. God required the Jews to have a different view of sex from both the Egyptians (who they had come from) and the Canaanites (who they were going to).

God wants his people to be loyal to him and to demonstrate that loyalty in the way they live out their relationships with each other. These commands from God haven't changed. The way our society views sex doesn't sound much different from the Canaanites' view. But many Christians either ignore what's happening in society or just want to focus on being loving and accepting of the way people choose to live. Although those are noble virtues, God requires something more from us - obedience!

General Questions:

1. Using a large piece of butcher's paper, brainstorm what the world tells us about sex. Think about TV shows, movies, video hits, magazines and the internet.
2. Now brainstorm some of the things different churches around the world are saying about sex.
3. What does Leviticus 18 say instead?

Challenge:

Read **Colossians 3:1-15** and write out for yourself firstly what holiness doesn't look like, and secondly what it should look like.

Let's now investigate Atonement.

Mark 10:45 *"⁴⁵For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

Romans 3:23-24 *"²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."*

Hebrews 2:14-18 *"¹⁴Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil-- ¹⁵and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. ¹⁶For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. ¹⁷For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted."*

5. As a group develop a short statement that easily describes what atonement is, what it achieves and how it is that Jesus changes places with us.

Now read **John 10:10**

6. What do you think Jesus means by life to the full (or life to the max)?

Thinking a bit harder:

God is holy, we are not. God always does what is right, we do not. The bible tells us that even though we try not to displease God, we continue to do so – we have a ‘fallen’ nature. To put it simply, compared to God we are bad.

1. How has God told us how to live? How has he shown this life-style to us?

2. Do you think it's impossible for us to keep from doing bad and committing sin? (**Romans 3:23**)

3. We are welcome to enter into God's presence – any day, any time. God has removed the barrier that separates us from him. The barrier is sin – but Christ's death has knocked it down. What access do we now have to God? How does that make us different from Aaron?

4. We have a tendency to put the barrier of sin back up – sort of like a curtain in the heart. We do this by allowing our mistakes or guilty conscience to become a barrier which separates us from God. Why do you think we do this?

5. How can you prevent guilt from being a curtain that separates you from God?

Thinking a bit harder:

1 Peter 2:24 *“²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.²⁵For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”*

1 Peter 3:18 *“¹⁸For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.”*

Galatians 3:13 *“¹³Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.””*

1. What did Jesus do with our sins, according to **1 Peter 2:24**? What was the result?

2. How was the law a ‘curse’ to us as described in **Gal. 3:13**? How was this curse removed?

3. If you feel comfortable doing so, describe the last time you did something you knew you shouldn’t do only to wonder later why you did it.

4. Despite the fact that we’re so far short of what God wants us to be he still provides a way for us to become part of his family – but only on his terms. How do you feel about that?

Challenge:

Let’s test out question 2 above – a 24 hour personal challenge. See if between now and this time tomorrow you can prove the theory wrong that we can’t help committing sin by living a sinless 24 hours. That means no bad thoughts, no ill thoughts about someone; no actions taken that would upset someone, but rather being kind, generous, thoughtful, good and loving. Remember that even the way we look at each other can be sinful. Try to make a complete list of everything - record each instance when you sin. This is important for tomorrow’s study.

Study Five

Leviticus 16

The great Day of Atonement – the basic idea is that no matter what had happened during the year, this was the day when all their sins were carried away, all uncleanness was wiped out and they were free to have access to God. This ceremony provided a clean slate (whiteboard), a fresh start. In verse 8 we see for the first time the idea of a ‘scapegoat’ – an amazing provision of grace by God.

In **Hebrews chapters 9-10** we read how Jesus has become our high priest, entered the heavenly ‘high place’ to give his blood to take our sins away forever. In fact, the book of Hebrews goes to some bother to point out that the new covenant God has made with us is better for several reasons: (look up the passages and fill in the blanks)

Read **1 Peter 3:18**

4. What is the significance of the phrase “once for all” and why is this crucial to remember?

5. To whom is this offer of ‘sanctification’ open?

Challenge:

Identify the three biggest challenges you face in the area of holiness/godliness. Spend some time taking these to God in prayer, asking him to help you be like Christ in these areas. If you like, share one of these with your group.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Study Two

Leviticus 2-3

Imagine you’re in a courtroom. A man has appeared on murder charges and pleaded guilty. The judge has handed down his sentence – in this case, death. If the murderer is truly sorry and asks for forgiveness, he can get that from the judge (and the victim’s family), but the sentence still stands. A judge who just wipes the sentence is a bad judge.

For a Christian, in the courtroom scene where God is the judge, Jesus takes our place and he receives the penalty of our sin. We are set free from that judgement, a one time action effective forever. We are justified by Jesus Christ. But, the sentence didn’t go away. A ransom had to be paid.

General Questions:

1 Peter 1:18-20 *“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.”*

1 Corinthians 6:19,20 *“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.”*

1. What does the Bible mean when it talks about being bought or redeemed?

2. What was our purchase price?

3. What is the implication of not being your own?

Read **Romans 3:22-25**

4. What does it mean to fall short of the glory of God? Who has done this?

5. What does it mean to be justified? How was this accomplished?

Thinking a bit harder:

Read **Mark 7:1-23**. The use by date of restricted foods was reached about 2000 years ago.

1. According to Jesus, what really makes a person 'unclean'?

2. Considering the list in verses 21 & 22, how clean would you rate yourself?

3. What does 'sanctification' mean? What is our role, and God's role in the process of sanctification?

Read the following verses:

1 Timothy 2:5 *“⁵For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all men--the testimony given in its proper time.”*

Hebrews 8:6 *“⁶But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.”*

Hebrews 9:15 *“¹⁵For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance--now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.”*

Hebrews 12:24 *“²⁴to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.”*

4. How is Jesus our mediator?

From Leviticus 11-15 we can see that the Jews had a lot of choices to make in regards clean or unclean. The result of these choices directly affected their access to God.

5. What factors influence the choices you make? A desire for popularity? What your parents say? Fear? A sense of right and wrong? The effect on your relationship with God? Explain.

6. Think about the challenge over the last 24 hours and your list of harsh words, uncaring attitudes or selfish actions or thoughts. Imagine that list multiplied over your whole lifetime. Now tear up the list and put it in the bin – that’s what God does for a Christian because of Jesus. How does that make you feel?

Thinking a bit harder:

1. Why is death the penalty for sin? Isn’t that a little too harsh?
2. What one thing did the meal or grain offering teach the Jew and what 3 things did the Jew learn from the peace offering (fellowship offering)? How do we learn these things?

3. We said at the start that Jesus can take our place. How? What did he do?
4. How can we get Jesus to stand in our place in the courtroom and take our sentence? Just what is faith?
5. Have you put asked Jesus to stand in your place? If so, describe how. If not, why not?

Challenge:

Perhaps you did not participate in the previous challenge for whatever reason. Please reconsider and have a go at living a sinless 24 hrs, making a careful list of sins over that period. If you have already done this, you may have begun to appreciate the enormity of what God has done by forgiving you for a whole lifetime of sin and amazingly, most of them you haven't even done yet! Since God has forgiven you, is there someone in your life you need to forgive? Someone who needs to hear you say "I forgive you"? Think about that person or persons and how you might go about forgiving them.

Study Four

Leviticus 11-15

In chapters 11-15 we see that the Jews were meant to imitate God's holiness in every aspect of their lives. The process of moving from clean to unclean and then back to clean was extremely important to a Jew. From being clean you could move to holiness. God's promises were clear that they would enjoy life to the max in the Promised Land if they would follow him. This was lived out through obedience to the sacrificial/purification laws. What the Jew was learning was the process of 'sanctification' – an ongoing life long process of striving towards holy living in every aspect of their lives.

General Questions:

1. God provided a way for the Jews to become clean in a way that Lady Macbeth could not. How did God manage this?
2. Why is God so intent on communicating his holiness to us? Why is this so important?
3. What is a mediator? Who plays the role of a mediator between men and God in chapters 11-15?

Study Three

Leviticus 4-10

In the illustration from Philip Yancey's book "*What's so Amazing about Grace?*" the whole family turned up at the bus stop to greet the runaway girl. The father of the girl is overwhelmed to have her back and simply wants to celebrate. In the same way, the Bible tells us that God is overwhelmed to have us back as his grace floods into our lives through faith in Jesus Christ his Son. But, just as the love of the family for the runaway girl has come at great cost, so has God's love for us.

General Questions:

The basic message of chapter 4 is that God forgives sin on the basis of the blood of the sacrifice. Fill in the table below. How does the passage show that everyone requires forgiveness, and that it comes at great cost?

1. Notice the word 'unintentional' in the passage – what does that tell us about sin? Even if it's accidental sin, is it fair that God gets upset about it?

2. How does the illustration about Ben at Coolah Tops help us to understand God's perspective on sin, no matter what sort of sin it is?

Look up **Romans 5:6-11**

3. When did Christ die for 'the ungodly'? Who is included in 'ungodly'?
4. What example does the passage use to demonstrate the love of God?
5. What does it mean to be 'saved from God's wrath' through Jesus?

Thinking a bit harder: (still on **Romans 5:6-11**)

1. What is the connection between being "reconciled" and being "saved"? How are they different from one another?
2. How should we respond to being reconciled to God?
3. Through the process of repentance and forgiveness, not only our sin is removed but our guilt is as well. How does this impact our potential to live life to the max?

Leviticus 10:1-3 ¹ *Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, contrary to his command. ² So fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. ³ Moses then said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke of when he said: "Among those who approach me I will show myself holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honoured." Aaron remained silent".*

4. What does this passage teach us about the way that God should be approached? Is it fair?

Challenge:

If you have already made the choice to receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord, try and put in writing your personal testimony (one that you can share with others) focusing on how you came to that choice. See if you can write down what God did to win your heart. Also, think about how a relationship with Jesus Christ can lead to life to the max regardless of circumstance – how can this be expressed? If you have not yet made that step of faith, see if you can journal why that might be and what you think it is about Christianity that is holding you back from accepting Jesus Christ as your Saviour.