

LAWS THAT GOVERN DAY-TO-DAY BEHAVIOUR, PERSONAL CONDUCT: THE DUTY TO LIVE A LIFE OF SEPARATION, A LIFE OF REAL DEVOTION TO GOD LEVITICUS 19:01–22

Introduction

The most important document ever written is *The Ten Commandments*. The influence of the Ten Commandments upon nations and societies could never be measured; indeed, the importance of the Ten Commandments could never be over-stressed (see notes, Exo 20:1-26). In this chapter, all Ten Commandments are either repeated or pointed to as the rules that are to control the day to day life of God's people. The laws of this chapter, like the Ten Commandments, cover every area and facet of human life. God wants His people to live holy and pure lives, lives that are different from the immoral and lawless lives of unbelievers. The laws discussed in this chapter tell a person how to live for God, how to live a holy life that is separated, set apart to God. These laws bring the holiness of God right down to where people live, right down into the hearts and lives of believers. This is the subject of this chapter: *Laws That Govern Day-to-Day Behaviour, Personal Conduct: The Duty to Live a Life of Separation, a Life of Real Devotion to God*, Leviticus 19:1 -37.

- I. Man's duty to God (vv. 1-8).
- II. Man's duty to his neighbour (vv. 9-22).
- III. Man's duty in different life situations (vv. 23-36)
- IV. Man's duty to God's laws: to keep and follow all His laws (v. 37).

I. Leviticus 19:01–08 Man's duty to God

The first set of laws govern man's duty to God. God gave five very specific laws to govern man's behaviour toward God. Note that God called His messenger to proclaim these laws to the entire assembly of people. It is important for every person to keep these laws.

1. A person must be holy. This is the basic duty of a person to God (v. 2). God gives three reasons why His people must be holy:
 - a. The believer must be holy because God is the LORD. He is the great Creator, the Sovereign LORD and Majesty of the universe. He demands holiness; therefore, His creatures are to do exactly what He says, "Be holy!" As the Creator and Sovereign LORD, He expects and deserves to be obeyed.
 - b. The believer is to be holy because God Himself, His very nature, is holy. God is distinct and different, totally set apart from all other creatures. God is perfect in righteousness and purity. He dwells in the perfection and light of righteousness and purity. Therefore God expects His people to be holy: distinct and different, righteous and pure in all that they do.
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- c. God's people are to be holy because the LORD is their God. Believers are to be distinct and different in this one thing: they are to be followers of God. The believer is to be distinct and different from the unbeliever and from the impure people who surround him. When the people of the world see a believer, they are to recognize that he is a follower of God. God is holy; therefore, the believer is to imitate God. The believer is to live a life that is holy, righteous and pure — a life that is distinct and different from that of the people of the world.
2. A person must respect God's appointed order within the family, one's mother and father (v. 3). This is one of the Ten Commandments (Exo 20:12). In the eyes of a small child, the parent is the ultimate authority. However, a problem often arises as a child grows older. He becomes rebellious and disrespectful of his parents. This is what God is combating in this law. Just as a young child respects his parents, so the child is to fully respect his parents as he grows older. This is God's appointed order within the family. Note this: if a parent teaches a child as he should, to obey God, then the child will grow up obeying God and reverencing his parents. Then, as an adult, he will teach his children, passing down the truth of God's commandments from generation to generation.

Tragically, so many parents within the world do not live godly and holy lives themselves. This is the reason for so much juvenile delinquency and lawlessness. Moreover, this is the reason so many young people disrespect their parents, ignoring God and His commandments. A child's behaviour is learned through his contacts and through what he sees, especially through his parents. This is the reason God connects this commandment dealing with parents to the commandment to be holy. Parents are to live holy lives before their children. So much of the child's growth is determined by what the mother and father do. A mother and father must live holy, righteous and pure lives. If they do, the likelihood is that the child will respect his parents.

But note this striking fact: even if the parents do not follow God, a child is to respect his mother and father. Of course, a child is not to respect the evil deeds and behaviour of his parents. This is not what God means by the commandment. God does not want any person respecting and following unrighteous or evil behaviour. What God means is that a child is to respect the authority and the good things that a mother and father do. A child is to have within his heart an inward reverence and respect for his parents. In fact, a child is to grow up with an inward reverence and esteem for every human being. A child — in truth all of us — is to be a follower of God; and in following God, he is to respect his father and mother.

Thought 1. Jewish scholars explained this commandment as follows: "What is this fear that is owing to a father?... It is not to stand in his way nor to sit in his place, not to contradict what he says nor to carp at it, not to call him by his name, either living or dead, but 'My Father,' or 'Sir;' it is to provide for him if he be poor, and the like." (*Mathew Henry's Commentary*, Vol. 1, p. 518).

3. A person must worship God on the Sabbath (v. 3). This, too, is one of the Ten Commandments (see notes, Exo 20:8). There is a close connection between this commandment and the two commandments already discussed. The believer — a true believer — will worship God on the Sabbath because he wants to live a holy life before God, because he wants to set an example for his family.
4. A person must not turn to idols or false gods created by the imaginations of people (v. 4). The Hebrew word for *idols* (*eliyl*) means an object that is empty, meaningless, weak, without power, without value; a false object that is no god. The believer must not turn from the true God to false gods, from the Mighty God to impotent gods, from the God of holiness to the god of deception and ruin (*Mathew Henry's Commentary*, Vol. 1, p. 518). Simply stated, the believer is not to turn to false gods that are meaningless and powerless. The believer is to worship and serve the only living and true God.
5. The believer must seek the fellowship and peace of God — through the sacrifice: he must approach God in the right way for God to accept him (vv. 5-8). Remember, the sacrifice is a symbol of the death of Christ. Note that the focus of this law is the eating of the fellowship offering. When a person brought the fellowship or peace offering to the LORD, he was to eat a portion of the meat. This law stresses that the sacrifice must be eaten on the day it is offered or at the latest on the next day. No meat was to be eaten on the third day: it was impure and would not be accepted by God. It had to be burned. Obviously, the reason for this was spoilage and contamination, and God wanted His people protected. Note that the violator was to be judged and held accountable by God: he was to be cut off from God's presence and from other believers. Why so severe a judgment? Because he had desecrated the holy sacrifice offered to God. Keep in mind that the sacrifice was a symbol of Christ and His sacrifice upon the cross. No person must ever desecrate the sacrifice.

Thought 1. The believer has a relationship with God. He has turned away from the world and trusted the LORD Jesus Christ, His sacrifice, to reconcile him to God. Furthermore God has accepted his trust and adopted the believer to become a part of the family of God. God has become the Father of the believer and the believer has become an adopted son or daughter of God. As stated, the believer now has a relationship with God; therefore, the believer is to obey the Father just as any son or daughter obeys his or her earthly father. The believer is to obey the five rules or laws spelled out in this passage.

- (1) The believer is to live a holy life, a life that is set apart to God, that is righteous and pure. God is holy; therefore the believer is to be holy.

Luke 1:74-75 *To rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.*

1 Pet 1:16 *For it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."*

2 Cor 7:1 *Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*

Heb 12:14 *Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.*

2 Pet 3:11 *Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives.*

Psa 99:9 *Exalt the LORD our God and worship at his holy mountain, for the LORD our God is holy.*

(2) The believer is to respect his mother and father.

Eph 6:1-2 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honour your father and mother” — which is the first commandment with a promise. “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”*

Col 3:20 *Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.*

Prov 1:8 *Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.*

Prov 6:20 *My son, keep your father’s commands and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.*

(3) The believer is to worship God on the Sabbath: he is to keep the day of worship holy.

Exo 20:8 *Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.*

Exo 34:21 *“Six days you shall labour, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the ploughing season and harvest you must rest.*

Acts 20:7 *On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.*

1 Cor 16:2 *On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.*

Heb 10:25 *Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Isa 56:2 *“Blessed is the one who does this — the person who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps their hands from doing any evil.”*

Isa 58:13-14 *“If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD’s holy day honourable, and if you honour it by not going your own way and not doing as you*

please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.” The mouth of the LORD has spoken.

(4) The believer must never turn to idols or false gods.

Exo 20:4 *You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.*

1 Cor 6:9-10 *Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

1 John 5:21 *Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.*

Rev 21:8 *But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars — their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.*

Deut 11:16 *Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them.*

Isa 42:8 *“I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols.”*

(5) The believer must seek to grow in the fellowship and peace of God through the sacrifice of the LORD Jesus Christ.

Rom 5:1 *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.*

Heb 10:22 *let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.*

James 4:8 *Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

1 John 1:3 *We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*

Rev 3:20 *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.*

Psa 34:18 *The LORD is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

Psa 145:18 *The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.*

II. *Leviticus 19:09–22 Man’s Duty to His Neighbour*

The second set of laws govern man’s duty to his neighbour.

1. The believer must make opportunity for the poor to work and eat, even if they are foreigners or immigrants (vv. 9-10; see Lev 23:22; Deut 24:19-22). This was known as the law of gleaning. Note that the poor were not fed by handouts nor fed by the crops that had been harvested by the property owners. During harvest, the property owners were to reap their crops and vineyards only one time. The gleanings that were left belonged to the poor. The poor were allowed to go out into the fields and vineyards to glean or harvest whatever was left. But note: they had to harvest their own food. Also note that this law applied to the foreigners or immigrants as well. God loves the poor, and God insists that the property owners and wealthy of this world give opportunity to the poor to work and provide for themselves (see Ruth 2).

Mat. 19:21 Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

Gal 2:10 All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.

Deut 15:7 If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your poor brother.

Psa 41:1 Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the LORD delivers him in times of trouble.

Psa 82:3 Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.

2. The believer must not steal, lie, or deceive (v. 11). This law is taken from two of the Ten Commandments (see notes, Exo 20:15; 20:16). Believers must be fair and honest in all their dealings. They must always be truthful, never lying or deceiving.

Exo 20:15 “You shall not steal.”

Eph 4:28 He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

Col 3:9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices.

Titus 2:10 And not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive.

Rev 21:8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars — their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.

Psa 5:6 *You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the LORD abhors.*

Psa 101:7 *No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence.*

Prov 12:22 *The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful.*

Prov 19:5 *A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will not go free.*

3. The believer must not swear nor use profanity or vulgarity (v. 12). This law has to do with one of the Ten Commandments as well (see notes, Exo 20:7). Note the words *swear falsely*. This law refers to using God's name in business dealings, taking oaths in court trials or other situations and making vows — using God's name in such situations when one knows he is lying. This law also refers to profanity and vulgarity, using God's name to curse or using it in some profane way. Note the warning: "I am the LORD." As the LORD, God's name deserves respect and honour. Moreover, as the LORD, God has the power and the authority to defend His name, to execute the most severe judgment upon those who profane and curse His name.

Exo 20:7 *"You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name."*

Lev 19:12 *'Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the LORD.'*

Jas 5:12 *Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear — not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple "Yes" or "No." Otherwise you will be condemned.*

Psa 109:17 *He loved to pronounce a curse — may it come back on him. He found no pleasure in blessing — may it be far from him.*

4. The believer must not cheat or steal. This includes stealing the wages of a person who works for him (v. 13). This law is also taken from two of the commandments (see notes, *Commandments*, Exo 20:15; 20:17). Note that in antiquity a person was paid daily. The employer was not allowed to keep his wages overnight. An employer is to pay his workers and pay them on time. No employer is ever to short-change his workers, neither his hours nor his wages. The employer must pay a fair wage.

Deut 24:15 *Pay him his wages each day before sunset, because he is poor and is counting on it. Otherwise he may cry to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty of sin.*

Jer 22:13 *Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his countrymen work for nothing, not paying them for their labour.*

Mal 3:5 *"So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud labourers of their*

wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me,” says the LORD Almighty.

Col 4:1 Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

James 5:4 Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.

5. The believer must not mistreat the handicapped (v. 14). A deaf person could not hear someone cursing him; therefore, he did not know that he needed to defend his name or position. A blind person, of course, could not see a stumbling block placed in his path. The point is this: no person is to take advantage of the handicapped, neither by ridicule nor in business dealings. The believer must show compassion and care for the handicap person. Note that God is the protector and avenger of the handicapped. The person who mistreats the handicapped had better fear God. He is the LORD who will execute judgment upon those who take advantage of and mistreat handicapped people.

Mat 10:28 “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Mat 25:35-36 “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

Acts 20:35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’

Rom 15:1 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

1 Th 5:14 And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

1 Pet 2:17 Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honour the king.

6. The believer must be just and fair: he must never pervert justice, never show partiality to the poor nor favouritism to the great (v. 15). Justice is to be administered impartially without any regard whatsoever being shown to any person. False information and rumours are not to be spread about a person in order to damage a person’s reputation. People are to be treated fairly and justly in all situations. Partiality is not to be shown to the poor because of their poverty; neither is

favouritism to be shown to the great because of their wealth and position. Justice and fair treatment are to be equally executed upon both the poor and the great. No partiality or favouritism is to be shown to any person — no matter who the person is.

Lev 19:15 *Do not prevent justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favouritism to the great but judge your neighbour fairly.*

Deut 16:20 *Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the LORD your God is giving you.*

Job 13:10 *“He would surely call you to account if you secretly showed partiality.”*

Psa 82:3 *Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.*

Prov 21:3 *To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.*

Mal 2:9 *So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but have shown partiality in matters of the law.*

Rom 13:7 *Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour.*

Col 4:1 *Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.*

1 Tim 5:21 *“I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favouritism.”*

7. The believer must love his neighbour as himself (vv. 16-18). Note the five things said here:
 - a. The believer must not spread slander or gossip about his neighbour.
 - b. The believer must not do anything that endangers his neighbour's life.
 - c. The believer must not hate his brother in his heart for any cause (v. 17).
 - d. The believer must rebuke and correct his neighbour when the neighbour is doing wrong (v. 17). Very simply, if a person is doing something wrong or offends a believer personally, the believer is to go to the person and discuss the matter with him. If the person is allowed to continue in his wrong or sinful behaviour, he may become so entrenched that he can never recover himself. He may become enslaved to some sinful behaviour and be lost to God forever. For this reason, the believer must go to his friend or neighbour — go in love — and correct him.

Mat 5:23-25 *“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison.”*

- e. The believer must not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone (v. 18). The believer is to love his neighbour as himself.

Mark 12:31 *“The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”*

Rom 13:10 *Love does no harm to its neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.*

Rom 15:1-2 *We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbour for his good, to build him up.*

Gal 5:14 *The entire law is summed up in a single command: “Love your neighbour as yourself.”*

James 2:8 *If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbour as yourself,” you are doing right.*

8. The believer must keep God’s laws and live a life of total separation, a life that is distinct — totally separated to God (v. 19). Note that this commandment was symbolized by keeping all things separate in their daily lives. The truth of *spiritual separation* was driven into their minds and hearts through everything they did. God wanted His people separated, set apart to Him, not to the world and its sinful ways. Therefore God commanded...

- that there be no cross-breeding of animals
- that there be no mixing of seed when sowing a field
- that no person wear any clothing woven of two kinds of material

These items were not to be mixed; each item was to maintain its difference and distinctiveness. Each item was to maintain its own identity and be separate from all other items. Again, this was to teach the great spiritual truth of separation. There was to be no mixture of truth and error; no mixture of godliness and ungodliness; no mixture of morality and immorality. This law was to protect God’s people from becoming mixed with the worldly people of this world. God’s people were to remain distinct and different, totally separated and set apart to God. When the world looked at God’s people, they were to see a people who were totally separated to God *in all they did*. God’s people were to be set apart to God *in every area of life*.

Rom 12:1-2 *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

2 Cor 6:17-18 *“Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters,” says the Lord Almighty.*

Eph 5:11 *Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.*

1 John 2:15-16 *Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world.*

9. The believer must not sexually abuse nor mistreat a slave (vv. 20-22). When a person enslaves another person, the slave is often tragically abused, especially sexually. This law is not condoning slavery; it is dealing with the sexual abuse of a slave. In antiquity, the slave-owner had full rights to the slave. He could do what he wanted without any fear of retribution. He could sexually abuse, beat or mistreat the slave — and even kill the slave if he wished. This law corrects the sexual abuse; other laws corrected the abuse of slavery. But for now, note the example given: a man had intercourse with an engaged slave-girl (v. 2). He was to be punished. Note that they were not to be put to death, which was the penalty in most adultery cases. In this particular situation, the man and woman were not to be put to death because she had not yet been freed. But the man was to pay compensation, that is, the bride money, to the girl's father. Moreover, the man had to make a public confession of his sin and seek the forgiveness of God through the Guilt Offering. Once he had done this, he was reconciled to God; his sin was forgiven. (See note, Exo 21:2-6; see notes, pts. 8 and 10, *Laws to Protect the Slave*, Exo 21:12-27.)

Exo 20:14 *You shall not commit adultery.*

Lev 20:10 *If a man commits adultery with another man's wife — with the wife of his neighbour — both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death.*

Mat 5:27-28 *“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”*

1 Cor 6:9-10 *Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

Rev 21:8 *But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars — their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death. ■*