

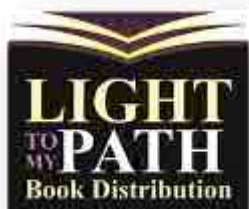
# UNEQUAL YOKES *and* MIXED SEED

**LESSONS FOR TODAY  
FROM THE  
OLD TESTAMENT LAW**

**F. WAYNE MAC LEOD**

# Unequal Yokes and Mixed Seed

*Lessons for Today from the  
Old Testament Law*



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## Unequal Yokes and Mixed Seeds

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## Preface

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Don't let the fact that this is a study of some relatively obscure Old Testament laws keep you from reading. I am absolutely convinced of what the apostle Paul said to Timothy:

16) All Scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17) that the man of God may be complete, equipped, for every good work. (2 Timothy 3)

The laws I want to examine in this passage relate to the will of God concerning different species of animals and seeds. While there were very practical reasons for these laws, they also have much to teach us about God and how to walk with Him. The principles behind these laws are as applicable to us today as they ever were. The lessons we learn from them are extremely important.

I know that as I prepare this study I can only present the material in a way that is easy to understand and applicable to life. The challenge for us is to take these simple lessons and apply them. For this, I am dependant on the Holy Spirit who alone can take what He has given me and reveal it to each reader in a way that can actually change lives.

The principles are very simple, but their simplicity must not be overlooked. As you study these laws and the requirements of God, take the time to ask Him to help you to see what they have to do with your life today. Ask Him to help

you apply these principles to your life so that you can be drawn closer to Him. I commit this work into the hands of the Lord and pray that He would be pleased to use it to draw each person who reads it into a deeper walk and relationship with Him. May God be pleased to bless as you read.

F. Wayne MacLeod

# 1

## THE SEPARATION OF SPECIES

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There is a set of Old Testament Laws which appears strange to our modern minds. These laws have always perplexed me, and so I decided to take the time to seek the Lord about their purpose and application. This study is an attempt to understand and apply the principles of these laws to our day.

The laws I am speaking about are found in two Old Testament passages. The first is Leviticus 19:19 which says:

(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 made of two kinds of material.

The second similar passage is in Deuteronomy 22:9-11:

(9) You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed, lest the whole field be forfeited, the crop that you have sown and the yield of the vineyard.



(10) You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. (11) You shall not wear cloth of wool and linen mixed together.

Let me summarise God's requirements of God for Israel as found in these two Old Testament passages:

- Israel was not to breed two different kinds of animals together
- Israel was not to plant a field with two different kinds of seed
- Israel was not to wear clothes made with two different kinds of material
- Israel was not to plough a field with two different kinds of animals yoked together

The requirements of these commands are simple enough. The problem, however, is to understand why God forbid these actions. The purpose of this study is to grasp the intent of these laws in the life of Israel. I am convinced that a more thorough understanding of these verses will also be a great blessing to us in our day as well.

As we begin, let's take a moment to do a brief word study. Notice from Leviticus 19:19 and Deuteronomy 22:9 that the word "kind" or "kinds" is used. The Hebrew word used in both of these passages is the word "kilayim." "Kilayim" literally means "separation." It comes from the word "*kele*" which means "prison." The word "*kele*", in turn, comes from the word "*kala*" which means, "to restrict," "to hold back," "to shut up," or "to restrain." It is interesting to note that the word "kilayim" is only used in the two passages we

are considering now. It does not appear anywhere else in the Old Testament in this form.

The objects God required to be shut up, separated or held in prison are species of animals, seeds and materials. The word *kilayim* refers to the way in which God put boundaries on each species of plant and animal. He gave them distinct characteristics and abilities. They were constrained to those boundaries. The papaya tree would never produce apples. The banana tree would never produce coconuts. The elephant would never fly in the air. The whale would never walk on dry ground. They were "imprisoned" by their own characteristics and instincts.

This lines up with what Genesis 1 teaches us about creation:

(11) And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind on the earth." And it was so.

Notice that God created the plants and fruit trees, "each according to its kind." The word "kind" here is a different Hebrew word from that used in the Leviticus 19 and Deuteronomy 22 but refers to a "species." In other words, God created a variety of plants with unique qualities. These plants were distinguished and separated from one another by these unique characteristics.

What is true of plants is also true of fish, birds, and wildlife. Consider these further passages in Genesis 1:

(21) So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every

winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

(24) And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. (25) And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

The phrase "according to their kinds" is repeated seven times in these three verses. Notice also that the verses conclude with the words: "And God saw that it was good." God was pleased with the variety of species He had created. Each species had a purpose and provided a perfect balance for the earth. Some plants would grow well in the sun while others grew better in the shade. Some animals preferred to eat one type of food while others preferred something else. God created the earth and all the species to function in harmony with His eternal purpose. This balance of different kinds (or species) of animals and plants was perfect.

On a very basic level, the laws of diverse kinds protected animal and plant species and assured that they would continue as God intended. These laws also protected God's people from the effects of the imbalance that the mingling of these species would bring to the earth and to the physical health of His people.

While this, in a nutshell, summarises these laws, there is much more to consider. As we continue this study, we will take the time to break down these laws individually and

see what they teach us about God and His purpose for this world.

For Consideration:

- What do we learn here about creation, the order and purpose of God in creating the various species of plants and animals?
- Take a moment to think about the various species God has created on this earth. How do the different species of animals and plants work together to create a healthy balance?
- What do you suppose would be the effect of tampering with the order and balance that God has created in the universe?

For Prayer:

- Ask the Lord to help you to see the importance of every part of His world.
- Thank the Lord for the order He has created in the world. Thank Him for the variety of animal and plant species and how they all work together to accomplish His purpose.
- Thank the Lord for the incredible wisdom that put this world together with all its harmony and balance.



## 2

# GOD'S PERFECT WAYS

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You shall keep my statutes. You shall not let your cattle breed with different kind. (Leviticus 19:19a)

In the first chapter, we examined the laws of the Old Testament regarding different species of plants and animals. Let's now take the time to examine the various aspects of these laws in an attempt to discover what is behind them and what they teach us about God and His purpose.

Leviticus 19:19 begins with God's requirement for cattle. The law of God specifically stated that Israel was not to breed their cattle with a different kind. For example, they were not to breed a cow with a horse. The Old Testament word for "breed" is the Hebrew word "*raba*." It is only used two other times in the Old Testament (Leviticus 18:23, Leviticus 20:16). Let's consider these two verses:

And you shall not lie with any animal and so make yourself unclean with it, neither shall any woman give herself to an animal to lie with it: it is perversion. (Leviticus 18:23)

If a woman approaches any animal and lies with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them (Leviticus 20:16)

These use of the word in these verses speak about a sexual relationship between humans and animals. Leviticus 19:19 extends this to the animal kingdom as well. God forbade the intermingling of different species of animals. In fact, from a scientific perspective, in many cases, God has made it impossible for different species to breed and have an offspring.

We have seen the requirement of God here in this passage. The question that now falls on us is to understand what this teaches us about God, His purposes and its application to us today.

Most commentators are in agreement that this law, on a very basic level, prohibited changing what God had established in the natural order of things. As we mentioned in the last chapter, God created each animal "according to its kind" (Genesis 1:11, 21, 24, 25). God did this for a reason. There was purpose and order in the creation. Each species had a role to fulfil in the chain of life. To break even one link in the chain was to break the chain itself. As God looked at the various species He had created on the earth He saw that it was good (Genesis 1:25). He delighted in the perfection of creation, the order and the balance. He saw how each animal and plant had a place and role to play in the proper functioning of the world and it was good and perfect.

As I grow older I have come to see how each part of my body is so intricately connected. When one part of my body is not functioning as it should, it affects other parts of the

body. What is true of our bodies is also true of a motor. If one part of a motor is not working, the motor will not function as it should. This universe is made in such a way that every part is essential. Take away any part, however unimportant that part may seem to us, and the rest suffers as a result. God knows what He is doing. What He created was perfect. Nothing could be added or taken away. He placed man in this creation to enjoy it and commanded him not to change anything that He had created.

What do we learn from this law? We understand first that God is a sovereign and wise God who has a purpose in all He does. Nothing takes God by surprise. He knows the beginning and the end. He created this world in perfect balance. I look at my body and often wonder at the complexity of each part and how it works together so perfectly. How does my eye see? How do my ears hear? What keeps my heart beating? Consider the interaction of electrical impulses, biological and chemical components that make all this possible. Consider the interaction of human beings with each other and how we form words to communicate. As our vocal cords vibrate and communicate sounds, those sounds travel through the air to the person sitting next to us, who receives these invisible sounds and interprets them in fractions of a second. This is the work of an infinitely wise God. I stand amazed at such wisdom. God created all things perfectly. To change perfection is to corrupt it. To think that we can improve on it is blasphemous.

The laws we are reflecting on in this chapter remind us that God knows what He is doing. He is a perfect Creator. There is nothing we can do to improve on what He has done. We are called on to appreciate this perfection and respect it. We are called on to trust His purpose.



Let's apply this principle to our day. The sovereign God who created this universe and its different kinds of animal species and plants is also involved in your life and mine. He has sometimes allowed difficult circumstances in our lives. Consider Job, who lost his family when Satan inspired an army to destroy them. Consider Joseph, who was sold into slavery because of the jealousy of his brothers. Consider Daniel, who was cast into the lion's den because of a jealous leadership in the nation. All these men suffered at the hands of evil people, but over them, was the hand of God, orchestrating circumstances for the good of His servants. Job was drawn closer to God. Joseph saved his nation from starvation. Daniel was elevated in his position and protected by God from hungry lions. His testimony in the lion's den won the heart of the king to God.

How quick we are to change what we do not like instead of accepting what God has allowed. Did God know what He was doing when He created the universe with its diverse species? Does He know what He is doing when He allows circumstances in your life? Can you trust what He is doing or are you compelled to run from those circumstances, grumble or complain about them or seek to change them?

Some years ago I was in a car accident. The cause of this accident is still unknown today. I simply blacked out and ran my car off the road very close to a pond. The doctor suspended my driver's license until he could determine what had caused this accident. I was no longer able to drive my car to get to ministry events. I lost about 75 percent of my ministry as a result. I remember walking and praying to the Lord, saying: "Lord, I am willing to go through this, but don't let me come out the other side the same. Teach me what I need to learn." I do not want to get into a discussion here about whether it was God or Satan

that caused me to have this accident. This is really not important. What is important, however, is that we recognise that what has happened is under the watchful care of a sovereign God who will teach us and shape us through the circumstances He allows us to face. We can trust Him in whatever circumstance comes our way. Trust Him with what He has allowed in your life. The Creator, who made all things perfect, will shape you through the circumstances He allows and uses them to create something beautiful in you. As the years have passed I have great cause to thank and rejoice in God for what He has done through the circumstances that He allowed into my life.

What applies to circumstances that God allows in life also applies to His Word. It has never ceased to be a subject of grief for me to see how even Christians can take the Word of God and twist it to suit their own needs. They breed the clear and inspired teaching of God's word with the philosophies and ideals of this world. The result is devastating for the church. God has a purpose in what He ordains. We may not understand that purpose but we need to trust that God knows what He is doing. There are things in Scripture that do not make sense to me. That doesn't matter; I still need to do things God's way. I still need to trust in His purpose. I, therefore, commit myself to seek His Word and live by that truth, even when it conflicts with the modern ideals of my society. I trust in the purpose of the sovereign God. I will not breed the inspired Word of God with worldly philosophies and personal ideas.

What God is teaching in this commandment is that He knows what He is doing. He has a purpose in what He does. His ways are perfect not just in ancient history but for all eternity. If we want to experience the fullness of life, we need to respect His ways. You cannot improve on perfection. We can be sure that what God creates, commands

or allows is for a purpose. To accept that purpose is to honour the Creator.

For Consideration:

- What does the law of God in Leviticus 19:19 forbid?
- How does seeking to change what God has created cause disorder and show disrespect for the Creator?
- The law of Leviticus 19:19 teaches that God has created all things for a purpose. What is the implication of this law to the circumstances God allows in your life?
- What is the implication of the law we have considered here concerning the purposes of God as found in His Word? Can we breed the teaching of this Word of God with worldly philosophies? What is the result if we do?
- Can you trust God with your life and the circumstances He allows?

For Prayer:

- Take a moment to thank the Lord that He created all things perfectly.
- Ask the Lord to help you to trust Him when He allows difficult circumstances to come into your life. Thank Him that the One who created all things

perfect is working in you to perfect you and bring you into a closer relationship with Him.

- Ask that Lord to give you the grace to trust in His ways as recorded in the pages of His Word. Thank Him that His ways are perfect.



### 3

## A CALL TO SEPARATION

---

... You shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed... (Leviticus 19:19)

You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed, lest the whole yield be forfeited, the crop that you have sown and the yield of the vineyard. (Deuteronomy 22:9)

The next part of this law of God relating to different species relates to the planting of a field or vineyard. Leviticus 19:19 makes it clear that a field was not to be sown with two different kinds of seeds. Deuteronomy 22:9 adds to this by telling God's people that if they planted two kinds of seed in a vineyard their crop and the vineyard's yield would be forfeited.

Leviticus and Deuteronomy both use the same wording. God forbade planting a field or vineyard with "two different kinds of seed." John Gill in his commentary on Leviticus 19:19 tells us that the Jews of that time would not plant a field with both wheat and barley.<sup>1</sup> The idea is that each seed was kept separate from another and grown in its own

plot of land. Notice from Deuteronomy 22:9 that the people of Israel risked forfeiting their yield if they did not listen to this counsel of God. In other words, the ground would produce less for them and they would suffer as a result.

Let's consider this in greater detail. From an agricultural point of view, this law makes perfect sense. God has created each species of plants to have different requirements. Each plant thrives in different kinds of soil. Some plants need more water than others. Some require shade and others require sun. The nutrients each plant needs is also different. If a farmer wants to get the best yield he needs to prepare that soil for each kind of seed. The practice of placing seeds of different kinds in separate soil makes perfect sense and guarantees the best harvest. To plant seeds with different requirements in the same field would only risk a poor harvest.

There may be another reason for this prohibition. When plants of different species are planted together in the same field there is a risk of incompatibility. A simple internet search will reveal lists of incompatible garden plants. Consider the following information:

### *Beans*

Beans are incompatible with chives, onion, garlic, fennel, and leeks. Garlic and onion can stunt the growth of beans.

### *Beets*

Keep beets away from pole beans and mustard in your vegetable garden. Beets and pole beans stunt each other's growth.

*Broccoli*

Broccoli is incompatible with lettuce and tomato. Both lettuce and broccoli attract the same aphids.

*Celery*

Celery is incompatible with corn, as they both attract beetles.

*Corn*

Keep your corn rows separate from your tomato and celery plants; they attract the same insects.

*Onions*

Onions grow best when they are planted away from beans and peas in your vegetable garden, as they can stunt each other's growth.

*Peas*

Peas prefer to be planted away from garlic, leeks, onions, potatoes, and shallots. Garlic and onions can retard the growth of peas.

*Peppers*

Do not plant peppers near fennel or kohlrabi as they all attract the same insects.

*Potatoes*

Potatoes are incompatible with a variety of vegetables in your garden. Tomatoes, turnips, pumpkins, squash, radish, and cucumbers can impede potato production. Potatoes and tomatoes are attacked by the same blight, so planting them close together creates double incentive for disease.



*Tomatoes*

Plant your tomatoes far away from broccoli, cabbage, corn, cauliflower, fennel, kohlrabi, and potatoes. Corn attracts a worm that also enjoys tomatoes; kohlrabi can stunt the growth of tomatoes. <sup>ii</sup>

To protect the harvest, God required separation between species of seed. The Creator knew that certain species could be harmful to each other and made this law so that they would receive the greatest blessing from their harvest.

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, in their commentary, believe that there may also have been a spiritual reason for this law:

This also was directed against an idolatrous practice, namely, that of the ancient Zabians, or fire-worshippers, who sowed different seeds, accompanying the act with magical rites and invocations; and commentators have generally thought the design of this and the preceding law was to put an end to the unnatural lusts and foolish superstitions which were prevalent among the heathen. The Lord wanted His people to make a clear separation between themselves and the pagan practices of the nations around them. Perhaps this law was to give an illustration of this separation. <sup>iii</sup>

What is the practical application of the principles of this law for us today? First, notice the concern of God for the blessing and fruitfulness of His people. The law about not planting two kinds of seed in the same plot of land was to guarantee the best harvest for God's people. God was concerned for the fruitfulness of the land. He is a generous

and merciful God who delights in the well-being of His children.

God's interest is not just in our gardens and fields; He is also interested in us personally. Listen to what the Lord Jesus said in John 15:

(2) Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

(8) By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

God wants to see us produce fruit for His glory. He has placed us on this earth and planted His Word and His Spirit in us to empower and guide us in the production of much fruit. God's delight is to see a great harvest for His glory. When we produce great fruit for the Lord and His kingdom we reveal His glory to the nations. They see His power in us and glorify His name because of that fruit.

Secondly, consider the temptation to compromise in our spiritual life. It is quite possible that a person might sow his field with many different types of seeds with the intention of making more money. To this end, he uses every centimetre of soil to make the biggest profit. What this man fails to understand is that by compromising the seed in this way he only hinders the yield and damages the crop. He sacrifices long term sustainability for short term profit. God calls us to respect and care for His creation. In this case, it required more land for the planting of different seeds, but in the end, guaranteed the health of the seed and the harvest. In a similar way, maintaining purity is costly. It means that there can be no shortcuts or compromises. God's work

must be done in God's way if we are going to see the greatest fruit.

Thirdly, God teaches the principle of separation in these laws. Just as some seeds were incompatible with each other and needed to be planted on separate plots of land, so there are incompatible seeds in our day as well. Listen to what Paul told the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 6:17:

(17) Therefore go out from their midst,  
and be separate from them, says the Lord,  
and touch no unclean thing;  
then I will welcome you.

What happens when we begin to mingle with people who do not respect the things of God? What happens when we begin to compromise our faith and allow the influences of the world to come into our church? Paul would go on to say to the church of Corinth:

(15) What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?  
(16) What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the Living God...

God calls the believer to make a clear separation from the evil ways of the world. He wants His seed to be pure and undefiled by the sinful ways of the world. This is a conscious decision we must continue to make each day. We are to be holy before God. We must do all we can to walk in obedience and faithfulness to God lest the holy seed is defiled in our lives.

## For Consideration:

- How did the law of God about not planting two kinds of seed in the same field protect the crop and guarantee the best harvest?
- What do these laws teach us about the desire of God to bless His people?
- How does compromise blind our eyes to future blessing and fruitfulness? Can we expect great blessing if we are willing to compromise with the Word of God or His standard?
- What has God created you to do? What is His particular purpose for you? Have you been faithful to that purpose?

## For Prayer:

- Thank the Lord for His desire to bless?
- Ask the Lord to help you to see any way in which you have been compromising and allowing evil seeds to be planted in your life.
- Ask the Lord to show you if there are any alliances in your life that you need to deal with. Ask Him to help you to maintain the purity of your faith and walk with Him.
- Ask God to enable you to produce even more fruit for His glory in your life.



## 4

### UNEQUAL YOKES

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(10) You shall not plough with an ox and a donkey together. (Deuteronomy 22:10)

As we continue our examination of the laws of the Old Testament about different species we come to the law of God which forbade ploughing a field with two different kinds of animals. The example is used of a farmer yoking an ox and a donkey together to cultivate his field.

What is behind this command of God in Deuteronomy 22:10? In this study, we have seen that God has made each species of animals with its unique abilities and strengths. An ox is much stronger than a donkey. A donkey could certainly be used to plough a field but an ox, being stronger, has more endurance. What would happen if these two animals were yoked together to a plough? The donkey would soon become tired while the ox was still full of strength. The ox, being much stronger, would quickly wear the donkey out. If this continued, the life of the donkey was at stake, for he would certainly not be able to keep up with the ox. The task of the ox would also be more difficult as the slower and weaker donkey would be holding him up. Both animals would be frustrated in the process.

The law of God demanded that Israel recognise the uniqueness of each species and not demand of them more than they were able to give.

This requirement of compassion for animals is found elsewhere in Scripture. Solomon connects compassion for animals with righteousness in Proverbs 12:10:

(10) Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel.

In Exodus 20:8-10 God's Sabbath rest was also for the animals of the land:

(8) Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. (9) Six days you shall labour, and do all your work, (10) but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God, on it you shall not do any work, you or your son, or your daughter, or your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.

Notice in this law how the Lord commanded that on this day of rest, not even the animals were to work. It was a day of rest for them as well.

Deuteronomy 25:4 speaks about the practice of oxen treading on grain to separate the stocks from the grain. Notice the requirement of God in this verse:

(4) You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.

The idea here is that the ox was to be permitted to eat the grain it was treading. The reason a farmer would muzzle

the ox was to keep it from eating the grain it was treading. The ox was to be given the privilege of eating what he was treading.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 10:29:

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

God sees each sparrow fall to the ground and knows everything about them.

Psalms 104:25-28 speaks about how God provides for each fish in the sea:

(25) Here is the sea, great and wide,  
which teems with creatures innumerable,  
living things both small and great.  
(26) There go ships,  
and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it.  
(27) These all look to you,  
to give them their food in due season.  
(28) When you give it to them, they gather it up;  
when you open your hand, they are filled with  
good things.

It is quite clear in Scripture that God's compassion and mercy reach out to all His creation. In Matthew 10, Jesus reminds His disciples that they were not to be afraid. He reminds them of how His Father cared for every sparrow that fell to the ground. He certainly would care for them as well:



(31) Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

The law of God found in Deuteronomy 22:10 against yoking an ox and a donkey together shows us that God is concerned about cruelty even to animals. It also teaches us that if God cares for the animals He created, how much more does He care for us? There is a children's' hymn I used to sing when I was a child that expressed this very well:

God sees the little sparrow fall,  
it meets his tender view;  
if God so loves the little birds,  
I know he loves me too.

Refrain:

*He loves me too, he loves me too,  
I know loves me too;  
because he loves the little things,  
I know loves me too.*

2 He paints the lily of the field,  
perfumes each lily bell;  
if he so loves the little flow'rs,  
I know he loves me well. [Refrain]

3 God made the little birds and flow'rs,  
and all things large and small;  
he'll not forget his little ones,  
I know he loves them all. [Refrain] <sup>iv</sup>

While it is clear that this law teaches us something about the wonderful compassion and mercy of God for all of His creation, there is yet another important point we need to make about this law.

Writing to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 6:14-16 the apostle Paul has this to say:

(14) Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? (15) What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? (16) What agreement has the temple of God with idols?

We have in Deuteronomy 22:10, an illustration of an ox, which was considered to be clean animal according to the Law of Moses, being yoked together with a donkey which was an unclean animal. Paul told the Corinthians that this was not to be.

The donkey was not to yoked together with an ox, not only because of their physical incompatibilities but also because of the spiritual requirements of God. Israel was not to mix clean and unclean. There was to be a clear separation between the two.

In the passage quoted above from 2 Corinthians 6:14-16 Paul reminds us that God still has the same requirements today. He challenges us to be clear in our commitment to the Lord. He reminds us that there is a difference between the believer and the unbeliever and between the temple of God and the temple of idols.

All too often the church has looked to the world for its inspiration. Many churches use the same principles as secular businesses to grow and increase in number. Many Christian counsellors are using the same techniques taught to secular society. I am not saying we cannot learn from these techniques, but the temptation for us is to look

to the world for answers instead of looking to God and His Word. Have we come to the point where we have more confidence in our human methods than in the teaching of Scripture and the leading of the Holy Spirit? Has our education replaced our need for God's Word and His Spirit? Is this an unequal yoke? Have we been seeking to harvest the fields of the world by yoking ourselves together with the ideas and methods of a godless society?

The law of the unequal yoke as found in Deuteronomy 22:10 reminds us that if we are going to advance the kingdom of God and harvest the fruit of the fields to which God has sent us, we need to be careful not to yoke ourselves together with people or methods that are incompatible with God's purpose for our lives.

For Consideration:

- What does Deuteronomy 22:10 teach us about the compassion of God toward all of His creation?
- What does God's care even for the animals teach us about His care for us as His children?
- What is an unequal yoke? How is this illustrated in Deuteronomy 22:10?
- How can we be unequally yoked? Are there examples of an unequal yoke in your life? What has been the result?

## For Prayer:

- Take a moment to thank the Lord for the assurance of His tender care in your life? Thank Him for how He has provided for you and cared for you in the past.
- Ask the Spirit of God to help you to see if there are any unequal yokes in your life. Ask for wisdom to know how to deal with these yokes.
- Take a moment to ask the Lord to reveal any ungodly methods or philosophies that you have adopted. Ask Him to reveal His purposes. Ask for strength to cast of any ungodly yokes so that you can walk in His full blessing.



## 5

### RESPECTING WHAT IS HOLY

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(19) ... nor shall you wear a garment made of two kinds of material (Leviticus 19:19)

(11) You shall not wear cloth of wool and linen mixed together. (Deuteronomy 22:11)

The final aspect of the law as contained in Leviticus 19:19 and Deuteronomy 22:9-11 deals with wearing cloth that was made from a linen and wool mixture. Let's begin by examining Leviticus 19:19.

(19) ...nor shall you wear a garment made of two kinds of material.

In Leviticus 19 the prohibition seems to be against wearing a garment of two kinds of material. This could lead us to believe that any garment made from different types of material was forbidden. The key to understanding this law, however, comes in the use of the word "material" in verse 19. The Hebrew word is the word "*shatnez*". This term is a common term in Judaism and refers to two very specific kinds of material –wool and linen.

The only other occurrence of this word "shatnez" in the Old Testament is found in Deuteronomy 22:11 which is even more specific:

(11) You shall not wear cloth of wool and linen mixed together

The word "shatnez" is translated into English in Deuteronomy 22:11 by the word "mixed." The particular mixture of cloth that was forbidden is clear in Deuteronomy 22:11. It is a mixture of wool and linen. Having understood what was forbidden by the law of God it now falls on us to examine the reason for this and its application to the Jewish faith and ultimately to us today.

The question we have to deal with here is this: What was it about this mixture of wool and linen material that caused God to forbid its use? There has been much debate over this question. Some suggest that there was a practice in the pagan religions of wearing garments with a wool and linen mixture. God wanted to separate His people from these pagan religions.<sup>v</sup> Others suggest that the combination of these two materials caused a health risk for the people of God.<sup>vi</sup> Still further suggestions state that God was protecting His people from vanity and pride and calling them to dress with modesty as His people.<sup>vii</sup>

While there may be some value to these suggestions it is important that we examine what the rest of Scripture has to say about this particular mixture in cloth. Consider what God commanded Moses in Exodus 28:6-8 concerning the priest's garment:

(6) And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and of fine twisted linen, skilfully worked. (7) It shall have two shoulder

pieces attached to its two edges, so that it may be joined together (8) And the skilfully woven band on it shall be made like it and be of one piece with it of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen.

Notice particularly the type of materials that were to be used in making the priest's garments –dyed yarn (wool) and fine twined linen. These are the two types of material forbidden by God in both Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

Later in Exodus 28, we read about the breast piece the priest was to wear. Listen to the instructions of God about how it was to be made:

(15) You shall make a breastpiece of judgement, in skilled work. In the style of the ephod you shall make it—of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen you shall make it.

It appears from this that the priest was dressed in material made from wool and linen mixed together.

Not only was the priest dressed in robes made of dyed wool (yarn) and linen but consider also the command of God to Moses regarding the construction of the tabernacle:

(1) Moreover, you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen and blue and purple and scarlet yarns; you shall make them with cherubim skilfully worked into them. (Exodus 26)

At the front of the tabernacle was a screen this too was to be made of this mixture of material:



(36) You shall make a screen for the entrance of the tent, of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, embroidered with needlework. (Exodus 26)

What do these verses tell us? They tell us clearly that the robes the priests wore and the tabernacle were all made of the particular mixture of wool and linen that was forbidden in Leviticus 19:19 and Deuteronomy 22:11.

This brings us to the next question we need to consider: Why would God forbid wearing a garment made from wool and linen and then command His priests to wear a garment made of this same material? Why would He construct the tabernacle from this material but forbid anyone to wear this same combination of material?

The answer to this appears in two other laws of God found in Exodus 30. In Exodus 30 God instructs Moses in how he was to make anointing oil and incense for the tabernacle worship. In Exodus 30:22-25 God gives Moses the recipe for the anointing oil:

(22) The Lord said to Moses (23) Take the finest spices of liquid myrrh 500 shekels, and of sweet-smelling cinnamon half as much, that is 250, and 250 of aromatic cane, (24) and 500 of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary and a hin of olive oil. (25) And you shall make of these a sacred anointing oil blended as by the perfumer, it shall be a holy anointing oil.

Notice also, however, that God wanted this particular mixture to only be used for the worship in the tabernacle. In fact, He forbade anyone else to use this recipe:

(31) And you shall say to the people of Israel, "This shall be my holy anointing oil throughout your generations. (32) It shall not be poured on the body of an ordinary person, and you shall make no other like it in composition. It is holy, and it shall be holy to you. (33) Whoever compounds any like it or whoever puts any of it on an outsider shall be cut off from his people.

God forbade making oil like the oil used in the tabernacle. The anointing oil was to be unique and respected. Anyone who used this oil for any other purpose or who made this oil using the same recipe was to be cut off from the people of God because they had shown disrespect for the holy things of God.

What was true for the anointing oil was also true of the incense used in the worship of the tabernacle. In Exodus 30:34-36, God instructs Moses in how to make the fragrance the priests were to use. Notice, however, in Exodus 30:37-38 what God has to say about this particular fragrance:

(37) And the incense that you shall make according to its composition, you shall not make for yourselves. It shall be for you holy to the Lord. (38) Whoever makes any like it to use as perfume shall be cut off from his people.

While this incense was to be used by the priests in the worship of the Lord, it was not to leave the tabernacle or ever be used for anything other than what the Lord had decreed.

A similar thing is happening here with the type of material used for the priest's garments and the curtains of the tabernacle. Just as the recipe for the anointing oil and the incense were never to be used by the common person, neither was the type of material used for the tabernacle and priest's garments ever to be used by the common person.

There were certain things reserved for God alone. These things were to be respected. They were never to be confused with ordinary or common things.

In 2 Samuel 6, we read how the ark of God was being transported by oxen. On one occasion the oxen stumbled and the ark risked falling to the ground. A man by the name of Uzzah reached out his hand to steady the ark. When he did, the Lord struck Him dead. The Ark of the Covenant was so holy it could not be touched with human hands.

By forbidding Israel from wearing the same kind of material as the priests and the tabernacle, God was teaching them respect for His holy name. Is this something we have lost in our day? Have we trivialized the things of God?

Who among us has not heard that name of the Lord being used in vain in our society? To the Jewish mind, the name of God was holy and was to be used only with great respect and dignity. This name represents a holy and all-powerful God. Let us honour it.

What about the Word of God as found in the pages of the Bible—do we honour this Word in our personal lives? I have found it very upsetting to see how even believers can twist the Word of God to suit their personal preferences. Some even ignore the clear teaching of this Word because they are not ready to listen to what it says.

What we need to see here is that the Lord was teaching His people to respect His name and to treat the holy things of God with deep reverence and honour. To wear the type of cloth a priest wore was forbidden. To use the kind of incense used in the tabernacle was a crime that would get you banished forever from the people of God. Do we treat God and His Word with the reverence and respect they deserve? Do we come before Him in reverence and awe? Or have we made Him so common that He is just like one of us?

I have no doubt of the personal nature of God. He is very concerned for me and the struggles of life. He reaches down to me, touches me in my trouble and comforts me in my sorrow, but He is bigger than me. He is one I need to fear, reverence and respect. May God give us the grace to see Him as He is. The law about wearing clothing mixed with wool and linen is a reminder to us that while our God has reached out to us and saved us from our sin, He is yet a God to be deeply reverence, and feared.

For Consideration:

- For what was the material made from wool and linen used in the Old Testament?
- Why did God forbid that the common person wear cloth made from wool and linen?
- Is it possible for us to treat the holy things of God as common or ordinary? What is wrong with this?
- Have we lost a sense of the holiness of God in our day? Explain.

## For Prayer:

- Thank the Lord that He is a holy and awesome God who is separated from all that is unclean and impure.
- Ask the Lord to show you if there is any way you have been treating Him as common or with disrespect.
- Ask God to help you to walk in deeper respect for His name, His Word, and His calling on your life.
- Ask God to forgive you for times you have not treated Him with the respect He deserves. Thank Him for His patience with you in those times.

# 6

## NEW TESTAMENT

### APPLICATION

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In the course of this study, we have examined the laws of God related to different species with an attempt to understand them and their significance in the life of the Old Testament believer. We have also examined what these laws teach us about God and His requirements.

These Old Testament laws give us a greater understanding of our God and His purpose for us today. In fact, the principles of these laws are still found in the New Testament. Let's take a moment to examine the principles as they concern our walk with God today.

#### **PRINCIPLE #1: ACCEPTING GOD'S PURPOSE**

The first law we considered had to do with breeding two different species. There are a number of practical reasons behind this law. One of the key principles we examined had to do with the fact that what God created and ordained is perfect. God created each animal and species with a purpose. All of these species contribute to the incredible

balance He created on this earth. Not one part is without its purpose in the healthy functioning of the whole.

God still has a purpose in what He ordains. It is true that sin has had devastating effects on this earth and its inhabitants. Not all circumstances are from God. Some are purely the result of sin and rebellion against His purpose.

While sin has ravaged this earth and been the source of tremendous abuse, hurt and chaos, there is still one thing we can be sure of as believers –God's ways are still perfect. What God ordains will be for the good of those who love Him. Admittedly, some of the things God brings into our lives will be difficult. Jesus knew what it was like to face deep struggles as He surrendered to the will of the Father. Listen to His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, just before His crucifixion:

(39) And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." (Matthew 26)

As Jesus prayed that day, He committed Himself to follow and trust the sovereign will of the Father for His life. He knew that the will of the Father was perfect. He knew that what God ordained had a purpose and He refused to do anything that would alter that purpose. The God who created this universe with all its balance and perfection also ordained the cross He had to bear. He would trust that purpose and walk in it no matter how difficult it proved to be. God is always reliable and trustworthy.

This principle is not only true for the circumstances the Lord ordains but also for His authoritative Word. The book

of Revelation ends with a strong warning about changing anything in the Scripture that God inspired:

(18) I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, (19) and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. (Revelation 22)

God's words are perfect. Will we dilute this perfect Word with the pagan philosophies and ideals of this world to make it more appealing to the modern mindset? Will we refuse to trust God in the circumstances He ordains for our lives, missing out on the blessings He intends through them?

If we are to become all God intends us to be, we must first surrender to His sovereign will and purpose. We must accept what He has decreed and ordained without question, to be our one true authority and guide. We must not allow our ideas and preferences to stand in the way. The God who created the world with all its species in perfect balance is a perfect God who knows what He is doing. Will we trust Him and that purpose in our lives?

## **PRINCIPLE #2: DEAL WITH INCOMPATIBILITIES**

The second law we discussed forbade the planting of two different kinds of seed in the same field. We saw that there was a very practical reason for this in that some seeds are incompatible with each other and only hinder growth and fruitfulness. The New Testament speaks of incompatibilities as well. Listen to what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 9:



(16) No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made. (17) Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved. (Matthew 9)

An unshrunk cloth and an old garment do not go well together. The first time you wash the garment the new cloth will shrink and rip the weakened old cloth. If you put new wine, which has a tendency to expand, into an old brittle wineskin, the old wineskin will not be strong enough to hold up to the expanding new wine and it will inflate and break. Jesus used these words to teach the Pharisees that they could not follow Him and maintain their old ways. The two were incompatible.

Jesus would go on in Matthew 6 to say:

(24) No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. (Matthew 6)

There are choices to make in life. This is especially true if we are serving the Lord. If we are to follow Jesus, we must root out anything that is incompatible with Him and His purpose for our lives.

The apostle Paul taught that anyone who wanted to be a leader in the church needed to separate themselves from drunkenness, violence, quarrels and the love of money (see 1 Timothy 3:1). These things have no place in the life of a Christian worker and were incompatible with the pursuit of Jesus and His glory.

Paul would say something very similar to the Corinthians when he wrote:

- (14) ...Or what fellowship has light with darkness?  
(15) What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?  
(2 Corinthians 6)

Believers are called to separate themselves from the works of darkness:

- (12) The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the work of darkness and put on the armour of light. (13) Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarrelling and jealousy. (14) But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (Romans 13)

All who desire God's will for their lives will be required to weed out anything that is incompatible with that will. The apostle James reminds us that even the tongue will need to be controlled:

- (9) With it, we bless our Lord and Father, and with it, we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. (10) From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. (James 3)

According to James, those who belong to Christ need to separate themselves from ungodly speech and thoughts. Evil thoughts and words were not to be allowed to grow in the heart of the believer. They are to be rooted out so that the fruit of righteousness will not be hindered.

If we are to be all that God intends us to be, not only do we need to accept His will for our lives without compromise but we also need to separate ourselves from anything that is incompatible with His purpose in our lives. Jesus reminds us in John 15 that the Father will cut away from our life anything that does not bring Him glory and produce godly fruit:

(2) Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. (John 15)

There is a lot of pruning that needs to be done in the life of the believer. Like that garden with incompatible seed growing together, unfruitful branches only hinder spiritual growth and fruitfulness. We must allow nothing to be planted in our life that is incompatible with the call and purpose of God.

### **PRINCIPLE #3: REMOVE UNEQUAL YOKES**

The third law we examined had to do with yoking a donkey and an ox together. Not only did this show compassion for the animals themselves but it also taught an important spiritual lesson. The apostle Paul speaks about this in 2 Corinthians 6:

(14) Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

What Paul was saying here is that there are certain types of alliances that will only hinder us and the work of the kingdom of God. Just as an ox was not to be yoked to a donkey, so a believer was not to yoke himself or herself

with the unbeliever. The idea of a yoke here invokes a sense of binding oneself to another. This could be a business partnership or a marriage where decisions need to be jointly made by people who do not have the same values. One partner is governed by Christian principles and the other by worldly or pagan principles. This unequal yoke will only cause compromise for the believer. Listen to what the apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:

(33) Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins morals." (1 Corinthians 15)

The apostle James would take this a step further when he declared:

(4) You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (James 4)

These are strong words but they show us just how important it is for us to yoke ourselves together only with those of like spiritual mind who can support us and stand with us in a strong commitment to God and His ways.

An unequal yoke is not just with an unbeliever. Sometimes even believers can fall and become an unequal yoke for us. Consider what Paul told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 5:

(9) I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— (10) not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of this world. (11) But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears

the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. (12) For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? (13) God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you." (1 Corinthians 5)

Scripture makes it clear that even believers who wander from the truth can become unequal yokes and negatively impact the work of the kingdom.

The work of the kingdom of God is not done in isolation. We are called to partner with one another in the expansion of the kingdom. This will require yoking ourselves together with others for this purpose. The challenge for us is to be sure that we are associated with those who will actually help us accomplish what God has given us to do. Associations with those who do not know the Lord or who choose not to walk faithfully with Him will only hinder us in our own spiritual walk. As we seek to do the will of God we need to surround ourselves with those who love God and walk faithfully with Him. As we do, we are built up and encouraged by each other in the call of God on our lives. Let us cast off any unequal yokes that weigh us down and keep us from becoming all God has intended us to be.

#### **PRINCIPLE #4: RESPECT GOD AND HIS HOLY THINGS**

The final law we considered in this study related to wearing material made of wool and linen. We saw that this was the material used in the garments made for the priests and the curtains of the tabernacle. Out of respect for God and His place of worship, this cloth was not worn by the average person.

The New Testament also teaches this principle of respect for God and His holy things. Let's take a moment to consider this.

### *Respect for the Word of God*

One of the most powerful passages that speaks to our need to respect the Word of God is found in Revelation 22, a passage we have already examined in this chapter. As the apostle John concludes his prophecy he says:

(18) I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, (19) and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. (Revelation 22)

What a tremendous obligation there is on us to honour the Word of God. We do this by accepting God's words as they are and living in obedience to them. We must not take away from these words by choosing what we want to believe and what we don't. We must not add our interpretations to suit our desires and wishes. We must not compromise these words to suit our society. They are the words of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit. We must learn to respect and walk in what they say, even when we do not understand. God's Word is to be honoured lest the warnings of John's prophecy become true for us.

### *Respect for the Holy Spirit of God*

Speaking in Mark 3 Jesus said:

(28) Truly, I say to you, all sin will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, (29) but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of eternal sin. (Mark 3)

Jesus makes a very strong statement here in Mark 3, stating that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. While we do not have time in this study to deal with what the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is, suffice it to say that the Spirit of God deserves our respect. We respect Him by listening to His prompting and leading. We respect Him by walking in obedience to what He teaches. We dare not turn from Him when He speaks to our heart. There is no way to know the Lord or walk in His purpose apart from the work of God's Holy Spirit. We must learn to honour and obey the Spirit of God.

### *Respect for the Work of Christ*

In John 3 we read:

(16) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life, (17) For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (18) Whoever believed in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

Our only hope of forgiveness and eternal life hangs on the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. To honour Him is to recognise Him and His work and open our heart to it. To dishonour and disrespect His work is to perish.

*Respect for the Table of the Lord*

There is an interesting and passage in 1 Corinthians 11 where Paul speaks about the practice of celebrating the Lord's Table:

(27) Whoever, therefore eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. (28) Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat the bread and drink the cup (29) For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. (30 This is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. (1 Corinthians 11)

Notice in this passage that there were people coming to the table of the Lord without examining themselves. That is to say, they were coming without confessing their sin or turning from it. By coming to the table of the Lord in this manner they were showing their disrespect for the work of Christ who died for their forgiveness. The result was that some became sick and died as a judgment of God for their disrespect.

*Respect for the Servants of God*

Scripture teaches that God calls and places people in authority over us. When He does, He also calls us to respect those He has chosen to be our leaders. This is true in the church as well as in our society in general.

Concerning spiritual leaders, Paul told Timothy:



(17) Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in preaching and teaching. (18) For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and "The labourer deserves his wages." (19) Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. (1 Timothy 5)

God's people were to honour those He had placed over them by being careful about any accusation they brought against them and by paying them well.

Concerning secular leaders Paul would say:

(1) Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. (2) Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed and those who resist will incur judgment. (Romans 13)

Notice that God promises judgment on anyone who would resist the authorities He has ordained.

We could go on with the list of things God has called us to respect. What I have noted here, however, is sufficient to show us that Scripture clearly teaches that we are to honour God and His ways. There is a severe warning for anyone who disrespects God and His purposes.

I fear that we may have lost something of the reverence and respect that God demands in our day. The law we examined about not wearing the same material as the priests or the curtains of the tabernacle, shows us that some things in life are to be given special honour. This is not just

an Old Testament principle but one that follows through into the New Testament as well.

Those who want to serve God and become all He intends them to be must learn to accept and trust Him and what He ordains. They must honour His Word, reverence the ministry of the Holy Spirit and those He has placed in authority over them. They must also deal with any incompatibilities in their relationships and walk with God.

For Consideration:

- Have you ever struggled with God's will for your life? Does accepting God's will mean that everything in life will be easy? Can you trust God's purpose in your life even though it does not make sense?
- Are there things in your life that are incompatible with your walk with God and your spiritual service? How do these things hinder your relationship with God?
- What is an unequal yoke? Are there any unequal yokes in your life? How does an unequal yoke hinder us in our walk with God?
- Can a believer who is not walking with God be an unequal yoke for us? How can such a believer hinder us in our service?
- What does God call us to respect? Have we truly respected the things of God? What in particular do you need to learn to respect?

- Is it possible to advance in our spiritual walk if we do not learn to respect and honour what God has ordained?

For Prayer:

- Thank the Lord that His works are perfect and that all He ordains for life has a purpose. Ask Him to help you to accept His sovereign plan.
- Ask God to show you if there is anything that is incompatible with His purpose in your life. Ask Him for strength to surrender this and uproot it so that you can flourish in your relationship with Him.
- Ask God to help you to deal with any unhealthy relationships in your life.
- Ask God to help you to learn to respect Him and His holy purposes. Ask Him to forgive you for any time you have not shown respect for Him or what He has ordained in your life.

# 7

## A FINAL WORD

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My purpose in this study has been to understand the Laws of Leviticus 19 and Deuteronomy 22 and show their application to us in our day. Let me conclude with a few words of summary.

### THREE IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES

As we examined the laws of Leviticus 19 and Deuteronomy 22, there were three important principles the Lord God taught His people. These three principles are still very important in our day and are vital if we want to grow in our walk with God and become all He intends us to be.

#### *Accepting God's Purpose*

The first principle we see here is that God's ways are perfect. This truth, while easy to say, is not so easy to live. We would all say that the ways of the Lord are perfect but the way we live does not always demonstrate that we truly believe this principle. We pray away those things we do not like rather than learning from them or being content in them.

We have all had dreams for our ministries and personal lives. Those dreams have not always come true. We find ourselves in an ordinary ministry. We discover that our marriages and families are not always perfect. Our bodies do not respond the way they used to when we were younger. Relationships are not what we wanted. Friends and loved ones have left us. There have been tragedies in life. What are we to do in these situations?

The people of God in the days of Jeremiah found themselves in a situation they did not like. They had been removed from their homeland and sent into exile. There in exile, they grieved over their loss. One day the Lord spoke through the prophet Jeremiah and challenged them:

4) Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5) Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. 6) Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that you may bear sons and daughters; multiply there and do not decrease. 7) But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. (Jeremiah 29)

What is God telling His people here? He is telling them to accept His purpose for their lives and make the most of it. They were to live their lives to the full in the land of their exile. I have met individuals who have never fully accepted God's purpose for their lives. They have lived for years seeking something more. They wanted different gifts, a different calling, to be somewhere else or in other circumstances. As long as we fight against God we will never prosper. God places us in difficult circumstances at times.

The greatest blessings can be found in the driest deserts of life. Only when we learn to accept what God has ordained and thrive in the circumstances He has seen fit to place us, can we experience the fullness of His blessing. The first principle these Old Testament laws teach us in one of acceptance. We cannot grow if we cannot accept and trust God's purpose for our lives.

### *Separation*

The second principle we learn from these Old Testament laws is the principle of separation. I want to be careful here because the history of the church has seen many who have taken this principle to the extreme and have ultimately rendered themselves useless for the kingdom of God. God calls us to a community. He has placed us in a world that is ravaged by sin. He calls us to go with the message of the gospel to those who do not know Him. Jesus lived and walked on this sinful earth. People saw Him as a friend of sinners (Matthew 11:19, Luke 7:34).

While we are called to be salt and light to this world (Matthew 5:13), God also calls us to be different from the world (2 Corinthians 6:17). Just as there are some seeds that were not to be planted in the same field, so there are relationships that will only hinder our spiritual growth and fruitfulness. It is important that we seek the Lord about this.

What is true of relationships can also be true of our practices. There are some practices that are not conducive to spiritual growth. I am not speaking here only about sinful practices but also good things that can distract us from the call and purpose of God for our lives. In the book of Acts, the apostles had to deal with a problem that came up in the church. The Hellenistic Jews were complaining that

they were not being treated fairly and were being neglected in the daily distribution of bread. The temptation was for the apostles to get wrapped up in the solution to this problem. In Acts 6: 2-3, however, we read:

2) And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, it is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to served tables. 3) Therefore, brother, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom whom we will appoint to this duty. (Acts 6)

The call of God was such on the lives of the apostles that they needed to separate themselves even from legitimate ministry opportunities so that they could preach and pray.

The Christian life requires a separation from all that is not God's purpose. This requires a clear separation from all that is sinful. It also demands that our practices line up with the truth of God's Word. We would do well to separate ourselves from all that distracts us from the particular purpose of God for our lives and ministries. This may imply rejecting a call to a more prestigious church because God has not released you from your present calling. It may mean a willingness to separate yourself from your present country and friends to travel overseas in obedience to the missionary call of God on your life. It may mean turning your back on certain activities or people who are only hindering you in your walk with God.

Separation requires sacrifice. It involves a willingness to deny ourselves of the things we may even delight in to do what God is asking us to do. There can be no spiritual growth if we do not have a willingness to separate ourselves from those things that will hinder our growth and

fruitfulness. The first lesson the Lord Jesus taught His disciples was that if they were going to follow Him they would have to leave their boats, their fishing nets and their families to be disciples. He did not apologise for this for the blessings that would result in this separation and sacrifice would be far greater than what they left behind.

There can be no true growth in our spiritual lives unless we are willing to separate ourselves from those things that keep us from Him. There can be no growth without sacrifice. Are you willing to separate yourself from anything that is not God's purpose for your life? Will you surrender these things to the Lord today so that His blessing can fall in full measure?

### *Respect*

The final spiritual principle I want to touch on in this context is the principle of respect. The laws we have examined in Deuteronomy and Leviticus taught that God demanded that His people respect His person and purpose. They were not to wear the same cloth as the priests. They were not to use the same oil as was used in the temple worship. There were to honour the holy things of God. It is true that we no longer dress our priests or pastors in special clothes, but there are many things that still demand our respect. We have examined these things in the last chapter. God calls us to respect His name, His servants and his purposes.

Disrespect for God and His ways can be demonstrated in many different ways. The people of Israel grumbled against God and His purpose for them in the wilderness. This led God to destroy a number of them on different occasions. One another occasion Miriam, Moses sister,



spoke out against Moses and God struck her with leprosy (see Numbers 12).

Disrespect for God can also be demonstrated in the way we live. Speaking to the Romans the apostle Paul said:

23) You who boast in the law dishonour God by breaking the law. 24) For, it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." (Romans 2)

We cannot be a light to the world if we do not show the utmost respect for God and His Word. This was what Paul was saying to the Romans. As we learn to respect God in our words, attitudes and actions our light shines brighter. As we walk in respect for God and His purposes we are drawn closer to Him. Listen to what Jesus told His disciples in John 15:

9) As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. 10) If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. (John 15)

Notice the connection between keeping the commandments of God and abiding in His love. God still loves us when we disobey, but the experience of His love is often diminished as we wander from Him in disobedience. A respect for God and His ways will allow us to experience the fullness of blessing in our lives. It will enable us to shine brightly as lights in this world. It will demonstrate to the world the reality of Christ and His work in our lives. There is nothing that destroys the testimony of a believer more than a lack of respect for God and the principles of His Word.

These laws of Leviticus and Deuteronomy teach us some very important principles. What are the lessons we need to learn from these laws today?

First, accept God's purpose for your life. Learn to be content with where God has placed you and the gifts and blessings He has given you. Learn to blossom and bear fruit where He has planted you. Recognise that all He does is perfect. Commit yourself to walk in that purpose and to become everything that He has called you to be with the gifts and circumstances He has given.

Second, commit yourself to the purpose of God by removing anything in your life that would distract you from what God has given you to do. Seek Him about those things that keep you from His purpose. Be willing to sacrifice whatever it takes to excel in what God has given you to do. Understand that the things you may need to weed out of the garden of the heart may be wrong attitudes or selfish ambitions. Surrender everything to the Lord and separate yourself from anything that would hinder God's purpose from being accomplished in your life.

Finally, learn to walk in respect for God, His Word, and His purpose. Make it your ambition to honour Him in attitude and action. Make glorifying Him the greatest ambition in your life. Commit your heart and life to live and think in such a way that in all things His name is respected in your life. Only then can you become the instrument God can use and a light shining brightly for His name.

## For Consideration:

- Have you ever found yourself complaining about the circumstances you find yourself in? What do we learn about God and His purposes here in this chapter? Are you right to grumble?
- What kind of things can hinder you in your personal walk with God? What keeps you from becoming all that God wants you to become?
- Have you ever been guilty of showing disrespect for God, His Word, or his purposes? Explain.

## For Prayer

- Ask God to give you the grace to accept His purpose of your life. Ask Him to help you to flourish where He has placed you.
- Ask God to show you if there is anything in your life that is keeping you from being everything He wants you to be. Confess this to Him and ask for strength and wisdom to know what your response needs to be.
- Ask God to forgive you for any time you may have shown disrespect for His Word or His name. Ask Him to teach you how to overcome.
- Thank the Lord that His ways are perfect. Ask Him to give you the grace to surrender more fully to those purposes for your life.

## **Light To My Path Book Distribution**

Light To My Path Book Distribution (LTMP) is a book writing and distribution ministry reaching out to needy Christian workers in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Many Christian workers in developing countries do not have the resources necessary to obtain Bible training or purchase Bible study materials for their ministries and personal encouragement. F. Wayne MacLeod is a member of Action International Ministries and has been writing these books with a goal to distribute them freely or at cost price to needy pastors and Christian workers around the world.

To date, tens of thousands of books are being used in preaching, teaching, evangelism, and encouragement of local believers in over sixty countries. Books in these series have now been translated into a number of languages. The goal is to make them available to as many believers as possible.

The ministry of LTMP is a faith-based ministry and we trust the Lord for the resources necessary to distribute the books for the encouragement and strengthening of believers around the world. Would you pray that the Lord would open doors for the translation and further distribution of these books?

For more information about Light To My Path visit our website at <http://ltmp-hompage.blogspot.ca>

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<sup>i</sup> Gill, John, The New John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, modernised and adapted for the computer; ed. Larry Pierce, Winterbourne, Ontario, version 1.4

<sup>ii</sup> *From <http://www.gardenguides.com/75407-list-incompatible-vegetable-garden-plants.html>*

<sup>iii</sup> *Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset and David Brown: Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible, Comments on Leviticus 19:19, part of the AndBible app version 2.1.11*

<sup>iv</sup> *Author: Mari Straub as found at: [http://www.hymnary.org/text/god\\_sees\\_the\\_little\\_sparrow\\_fall](http://www.hymnary.org/text/god_sees_the_little_sparrow_fall)*

<sup>v</sup> "Shatnez" at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shatnez>

<sup>vi</sup> Jamieson, Fausset and Brown on Leviticus 19:19

<sup>vii</sup> Treasury of Scripture Knowledge on Leviticus 19:19