

LEVITICUS

LIVING WITH A HOLY GOD



Leviticus

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Overview

The Big Theme of Leviticus – How do sinful people live in the presence of a holy God?

Key Verses:

“You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.” (Lev 20:26)

“For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.” (Lev 17:11)

Why Leviticus?

Why are we spending an entire term in Leviticus? Isn't it outdated? Irrelevant? Boring? Just too hard to read and understand? Why do I have to know how to sacrifice an animal? Or which animals are kosher? There are certainly some things which are hard to understand in Leviticus, and yet it is placed in the very centre of the Torah signifying its importance. In fact, our very understanding of the Gospel itself is grounded in this book, for without it we wouldn't understand the need for Jesus' atonement and sacrifice.

Leviticus reminds us what we may have forgotten (or never learned): that sin cannot stand in the presence of God. Peter knew this well when cried out to Jesus “Get away from me Lord, I am a sinful man!” (Luke 5:8), as did Isaiah when he met God in a vision “Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.” (Is 6:5)

As evangelical Christians, we have perhaps forgotten, or at least take for granted, the amazing treasure we have received in Christ's work on the cross that we can now call God 'Abba' Father, and approach Him with freedom and confidence. In Leviticus we see what it was like for sinners to approach God before Christ's work was accomplished. It was like working in a nuclear powerplant. You'd need to have the right gear, the right training, and it's not something you'd want to get wrong. If you approach it haphazardly or lazily, people die! But get it right, and you have access to power and life for millions. We see this played out in Leviticus. Nadab and Abihu approach God on their own terms instead of God's terms and they are consumed by fire. But learning to live with God on his terms results in the promise of his presence, protection, prosperity and peace in the land.

Leviticus in the context of the Pentateuch

The Pentateuch, or Torah, or “Law of Moses” are the first 5 books of the Old Testament. And to understand Leviticus, we need to understand how it fits in this context. Here is a helpful summary to explain the story of the Bible so far.

Genesis – Humanity was created with access to God in the Garden of Eden, but due to sin humanity lost this intimacy and access.

Exodus – God’s desire is to restore this broken relationship, and *redeems* His people from Egypt, so that they again may have relationship with Him and access to His presence. God dwells amongst his people *in the Tabernacle*.

Leviticus – Now that Israel have been redeemed as God’s people, how does a sinful people live with a holy God in their presence?

Notice the familiar New Testament pattern of salvation -> works, not works -> salvation. Israel is saved by faith (Exodus), which results in obedience (Leviticus). Not, they must do good *so that* God will save them. They are now learning *how* to live in a relationship with God *because* God has saved them.

Note for Group Members

I’ve tried to keep the studies short, but I’m sure you’ll find they’re still quite long! To make the most of these studies, PLEASE read the passages listed at the top of teach study (the ones on the contents page) before coming to the group. Even better is to read all the passages listed in the daily reading section, although this isn’t necessary you should find them quite enlightening.

Reading the passages at home in your own quiet times, trying to understand it and get your head around it means the whole group can jump quicker into the passage.

- Marcus

Study #1 Chapters 1-7 (focus on 1:1-17)

Study Focus:

The purpose of the sacrificial system was to point to fellowship with God through atoning sacrifice.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Monday: Lev 1-2, Rom 12:1
- Tuesday: Lev 3, Luke 14:15-24
- Wednesday: Lev 4:1-5:13, 2 Cor 5:21
- Thursday: Lev 5:14-6:7, Luke 19:1-10
- Friday: Lev 6:8-7:38, Rom 3:21-26

A Brief Overview of The Sacrificial System

There were 5 key offerings prescribed to the Israelites which performed several functions: to atone for sins; to express praise and thanksgiving to God; to provide for the priests; and to enjoy fellowship with God and with one another over a meal.

A brief summary of the 5 offerings are described below:

Sin Offerings (Lev 4-6): The sin offerings were mandatory and atoned for sins committed against God. Some parts of the animal were offered to God, while other parts were roasted for the priests to eat as this was a main source of their food.

Guilt Offering (Lev 5-6): The guilt offerings were mandatory and addressed sins that people committed against others and included paying damages with interest.

Burnt Offering (Lev 1) This sacrifice was voluntary and represented complete dedication and surrender to God. The entire animal was burned up as a gift to God. This was used as a more general symbol of atonement for sins, as opposed to the more specific sins that the Sin Offerings covered.

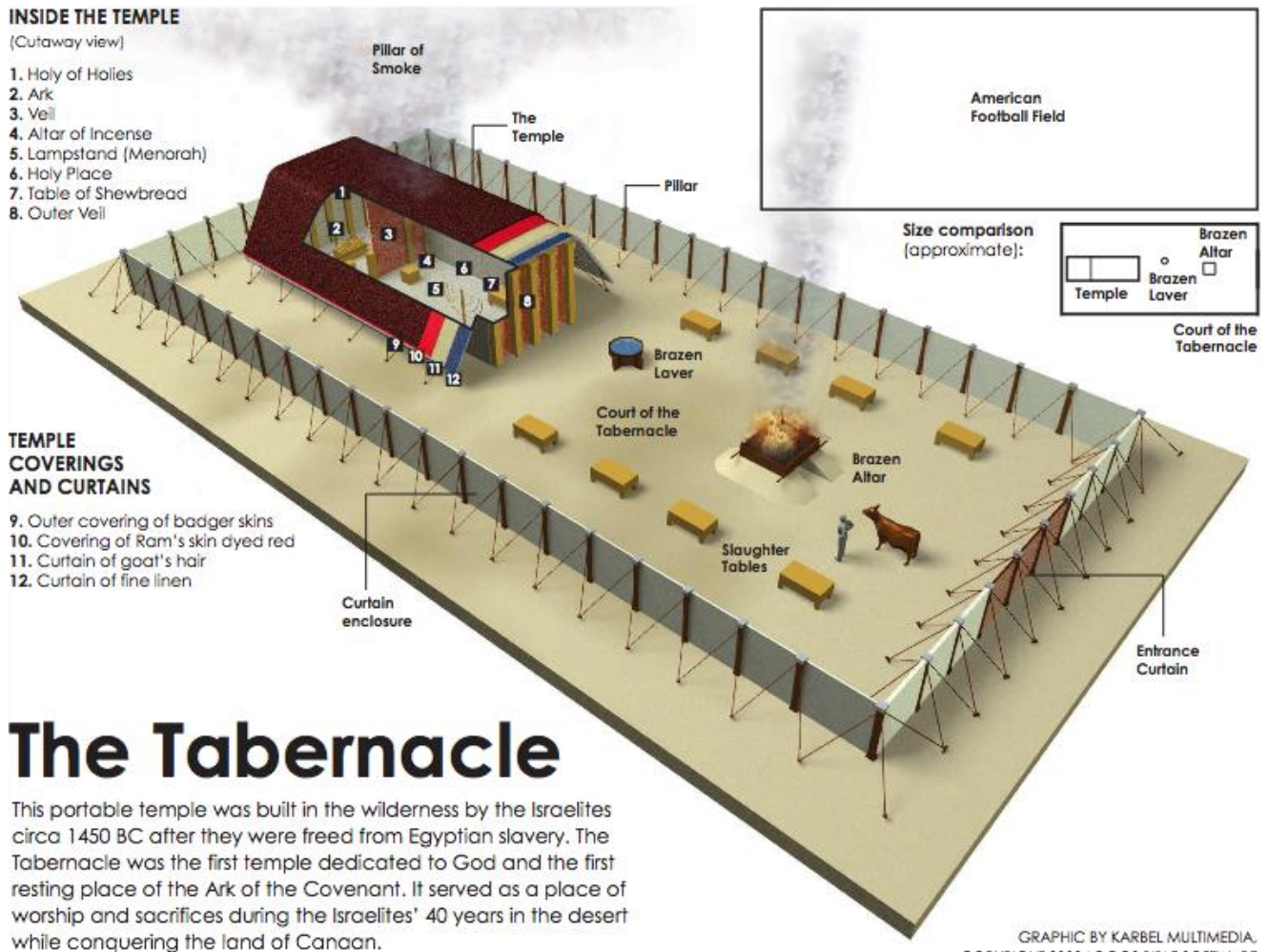
Grain Offering: This offering was given to God in thankfulness. The people brought fine flour, unleavened cakes, or roasted grain to the priests. The priests burned a symbolic handful at the altar, and then could partake of the rest. This was also a means to provide for the priests.

Fellowship Offering: This offering symbolised fellowship and peace with God through shed blood. After some meat was ceremonially waved and given to the priests, worshippers and their guests could share in the feast as a meal with God. This was a wonderful way to express having fellowship and relationship with God enabled through atonement.

Some Background Information

The Tabernacle

These sacrifices were to be performed at the Tabernacle (also called the Tent of Meeting) with clear instructions on how they were to be performed.



The Tabernacle

This portable temple was built in the wilderness by the Israelites circa 1450 BC after they were freed from Egyptian slavery. The Tabernacle was the first temple dedicated to God and the first resting place of the Ark of the Covenant. It served as a place of worship and sacrifices during the Israelites' 40 years in the desert while conquering the land of Canaan.

Two types of rituals

Scholars who study ancient religions observe two kinds of rituals. One is “instrumental” (or magical) rites. These sought to manipulate divine power from the earthly realm. For example, a rain dance. The other category of rituals is “analogical” (or sacramental) rites. Old Testament rituals were not to be used to manipulate divine results (as magic) but as “acted theology”. Where the people of God expressed and passed on what they believed about sin and atonement through ritual. Today, baptism and communion fit into this category. One of the common errors of both Old and New Testament worshippers has been the misuse of worship as a way to win heaven’s blessings rather than as a means to identify by faith in blessings already secured for us in heaven.

Getting into detail

For this study, we're going to focus on two main concepts behind these sacrifices: atonement and fellowship.

1. Read 1:1-17 (the burnt offering). What is your first reaction?

The purpose of both the burnt offering and the sin offering (4:1-5:13) is to make atonement for sins. Atonement literally means 'at-one-ment', the idea of being reconciled to God. However, reconciliation is not possible while there is sin. The animal acts as a substitute for us, dying in our place, it's blood acting like a detergent to wash us clean from our sins.

2. Sometimes we can fall into the danger of considering some sins as 'not that bad'. Have a read of 4:1-3. What does this say about the sins we make in ignorance or unintentionally?
3. The rituals for the burnt offering and sin offering are full of symbolism. What do you think the following symbolises?
 - a. Offering an animal 'without defect' (1:3)
 - b. 'Presenting the animal at the entrance to the tent of meeting'? (1:3)
 - c. 'Lay your hand on its head' (1:4)
 - d. 'Blood' (1:5, see also 17:11)
 - e. 'Washing internal organs' (1:9)
4. What is the result from this sacrifice?
 - a. In 9b?
 - b. 4:20

The Fellowship Offering

5. Why do you think so many of our important celebrations involve eating food together? E.g birthday cakes, Christmas meals, Australia Day BBQ's?
6. Read 3:1-5. The fellowship offering is unique from the other sacrifices in that it was the only one which the worshipper also ate. God symbolically shared in the meal (the fatty portions because these were the best parts) with the priests and the worshipper. This was often done with the whole family, or even village. What do you think this symbolises?

Understanding through Jesus

"I have not come to abolish the law, but to fulfil it." (Jesus – Matthew 5:17)

7. Jesus regularly describes heaven as a feast, or as a wedding banquet. E.g Matt 8:11
"Many will come from the east and west and will take their place at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven." Why do you think heaven is often described as a feast?
8. From what we've learned in Leviticus so far, what must first be done *before* we can be reconciled to God and share in fellowship with Him?
9. Read the following passages and discuss what similarities you see between the way Jesus is described and the way the sacrifices were described?
 - a. Romans 3:21-26
 - b. 1 Peter 1:19
 - c. 1 Peter 3:18

Application for us

God's will has always been for us to be reconciled to Him through the sacrifice of Christ so we can enjoy Him forever. Spend some time reflecting and sharing on:

- a) Heaven as joy, intimacy and fellowship with God and with others, like that of a celebratory banquet.
- b) What it cost God, through the death of His Son to accomplish this.

PRAYER and PEDALS!

Discover is only 3 weeks away starting on Tuesday 21st May at 10am and Wednesday 22nd May 7:30pm. Write down a few friends names on the PEDALS! Page at the end of the booklet who you would also like to come to Discover so they too can share in the Heavenly feast forever.

Study #2 Lev 8-10 (8:1-21; Hebrews 4:14-5:4)

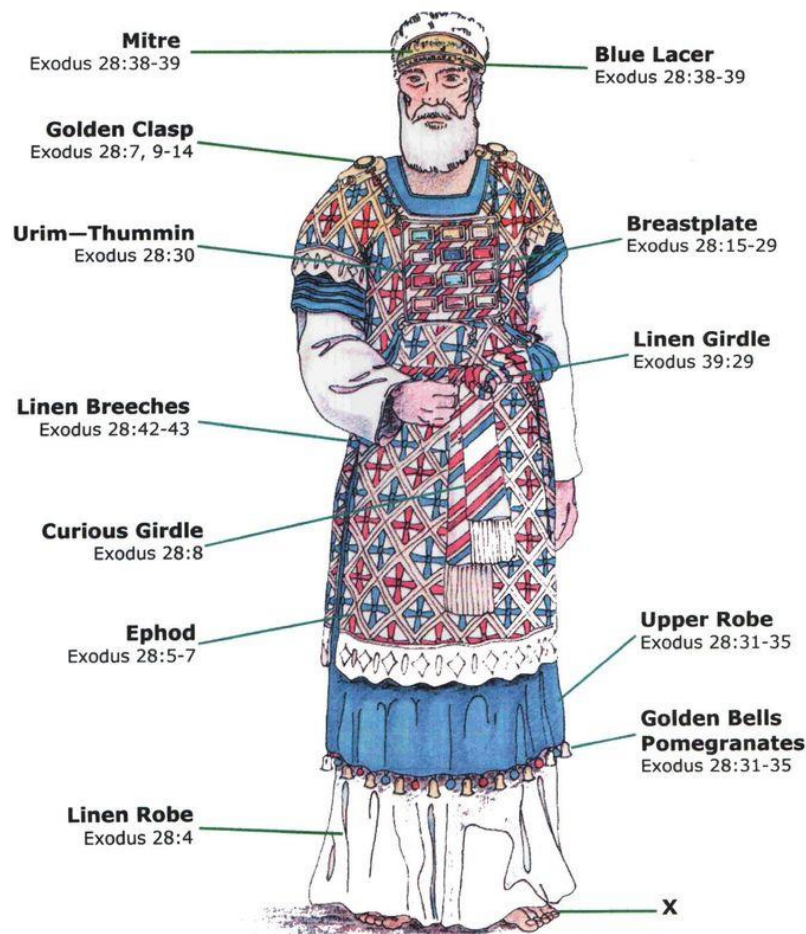
Study Focus:

God's gift of atonement must be accomplished for us by a faithful priest.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Monday: Lev 8, James 3:1
- Tuesday: Lev 9
- Wednesday: Lev 10
- Thursday: Heb 4:14-5:10
- Friday: Heb 7:23-28

The first seven chapters of Leviticus describe the offering God's people were to bring to him. This next section focuses on who would present these offerings. This is the priesthood. Chapter 8 describes how these priests were set aside or 'consecrated' for this divine task.



Vestments

Exodus 28:2-4

Getting Started

1. What kind of situations in life might you need a 'mediator'?

Getting into it

2. Describe the scene that is set in 8:1-4.
3. Read verses 5-9. What ceremony is happening? Can you think of any similar ceremonies in modern day?
4. Read verses 10-15. Consecration is the idea of putting things aside for a special and holy purpose. Here, the priests, the high priest Aaron and the altar are consecrated. Can you think of other things that we might put aside for a particular purpose because we wouldn't want it used for a more common purpose?
5. Read verses 14-21. Why did the priests have to make sacrifices? (see also 8:34)
6. In verses 22-24. What do you think putting blood on the ears, thumbs and big toes of the priests symbolises? (HINT: what would God want priests to do with their ears, hands and feet?)
7. Chapter 9 describes what happens when the priests follow their instructions (having committed themselves to listen, do, and follow God's commands). What is the result when priests follow God's commands in 9:23-24?
8. Chapter 10 describes what happens when the priests approach God disobediently. What do they do wrong, and what happens in 10:1-3?
9. From all this, what kind of a priest do we need to mediate between us and God?

Understanding through Jesus

Readers are often stunned that Nadab and Abihu died for their infraction. This shows us that confronting the presence of God is a life or death matter, and our sins deserve the fire of his just wrath. But what should amaze us more is that we are now able to approach God without fear of the same outcome because Jesus is our Perfect Great High Priest who mediates for us!

1. From the following passages, what do we learn about Jesus as our Great High Priest?
 - a. Hebrews 2:17
 - b. Hebrews 4:14-16
 - c. Hebrews 5:1-10
 - d. Hebrews 7:23-28
 - e. Hebrews 8:1

For us

2. Do you ever fear that God may respond to you like he did to Nadab and Abihu?
3. How does having Jesus as our perfect mediator change that?
4. Are there ways that you can sometimes treat God lightly like Nadab and Abihu?

PRAYER

Give thanks that Jesus is our Great High Priest, and pray that we don't fall into the same trap of Nadab and Abihu of treating God lightly.

PEDALS!

Discover is only 2 weeks away starting on Tuesday 21st May at 10am and Wednesday 22nd May 7:30pm. Pray for the friends you've listen on the PEDALS! Page, and pray that God will give you an Evangelistic Opportunity to talk about faith with them.

Study #3 Lev 11-15 (11:1-47, Mark 7:1-23)

Study Focus:

To be in God's presence, His people need to be clean. These laws were a reminder of their need to be spiritually cleansed, ultimately accomplished through Jesus.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Monday: Lev 11, Mark 7:1-22
- Tuesday: Lev 12, Luke 1:16-24
- Wednesday: Lev 13, Luke 17:11-19
- Thursday: Lev 14, Matt 8:1-4
- Friday: Lev 15, Heb 10:22

Introduction

For many, the most confusing aspect of Leviticus are all the various rules in this section about being clean, dealing with mould, which animals to touch or not touch, etc. The purpose of these laws was to teach Israel to be different from the nations around them. Like sacrifices, we no longer practise these because the reality to which they pointed to in Jesus Christ has been fulfilled. But, like sacrifices, they still offer rich insights into the work Christ and the holiness of his people.

Getting Started

What is your top tip for keeping your house clean?

Getting into it

Read Leviticus 11:44-47 (it's a good summary of the section)

1. How does God describe himself? What does he command his people to be?

2. Why were Israel asked to distinguish between unclean and clean animals?

3. Read Leviticus 11:1-14 (take turns in your group) and complete the following table.

	Clean Animals	Unclean Animals
Land Animals		
Sea Animals		
Sky Animals		

4. Can you observe any pattern from the table above that would suggest why some particular animal types are clean, but others are not?

Many people have suggested possible reasons why some animals are clean and not others, e.g health reasons, ground proximity, early sacrificial acceptability. While there may be some truth to some of these, another approach is to look at the result of the restrictions. By restricting themselves to some types of food and not others, the Jewish people were clearly differentiating themselves from the nations around them. Thus being 'set apart', or 'holy' in a visible and practical way.

It is essential to note that not all things that make someone unclean are unethical or immoral, but are simply realities of day to day life, e.g having babies.

5. Other rules are highly practical. What logic do you think is behind the following laws?

a. 13:1-8

b. 13:45-46

c. 13:47-52

d. 14:33-42

Understanding through Jesus

Jesus pointed out that in the New Testament times the things that made someone clean or unclean were no longer to do with ritual uncleanness, but rather the moral purity of the individual.

Read Mark 7:1-23

6. What point is Jesus making to the Pharisees about their adherence to food laws?

7. What does Mark intend for us to understand about the food laws?

For us

Even though we can no longer be called ritually unclean, and have been made spiritually clean by Jesus, we are still called to clean ourselves from evil within. In the same way that Israel was called to be different, holy, or 'set apart' from the nations, Jesus also calls his followers to be different to the point of standing out like a light on a hill.

8. What are some areas in your life that you're not as different to non-Christians as you should be? (use the list Jesus uses in Mark 7:21-22 as a starting point). You might like to break up into smaller groups for accountability and ask each other next week how they're going in that area.

PRAYER

- Thank God that he has washed you clean and you are clean in His sight.
- Pray that you will become more like Christ, and less like the world around us, particular in the area of....

PEDALS!

Discover starts next week on Tuesday 21st May at 10am and Wednesday 22nd May 7:30pm. Pray for the friends you've listen on the PEDALS! Page, and pray that God will give you an Evangelistic Opportunity to Invite them to come along to Discover. You can always invite them to just try the first week, and not have to commit to the whole 5 weeks.

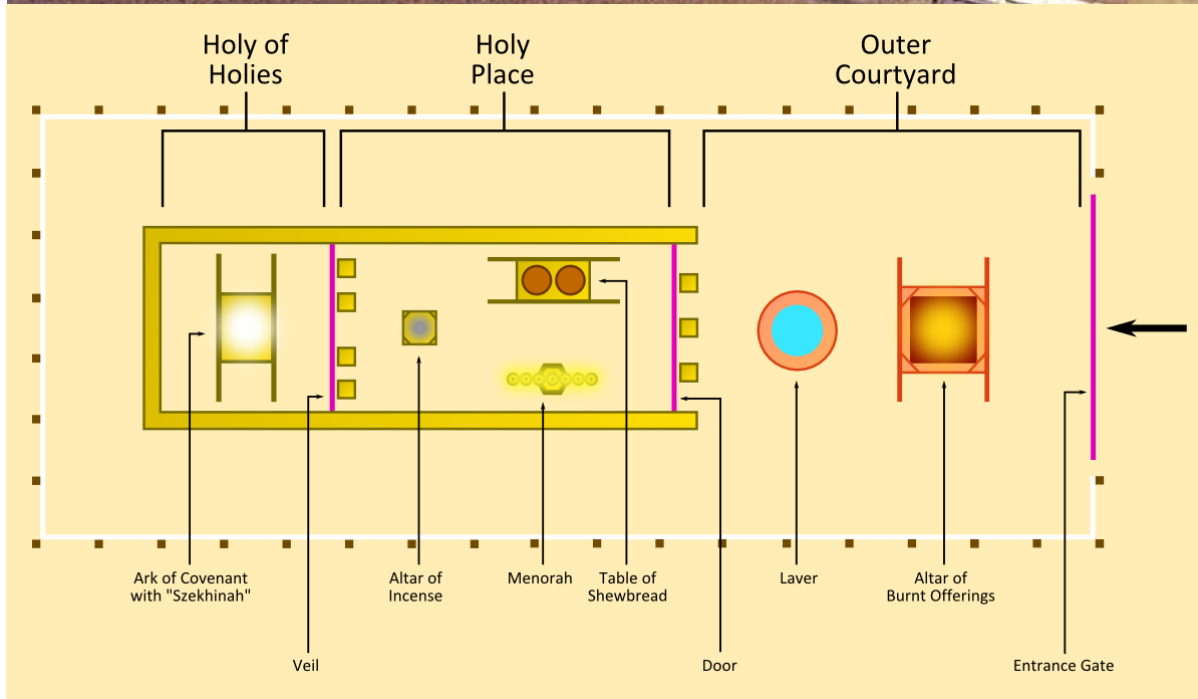
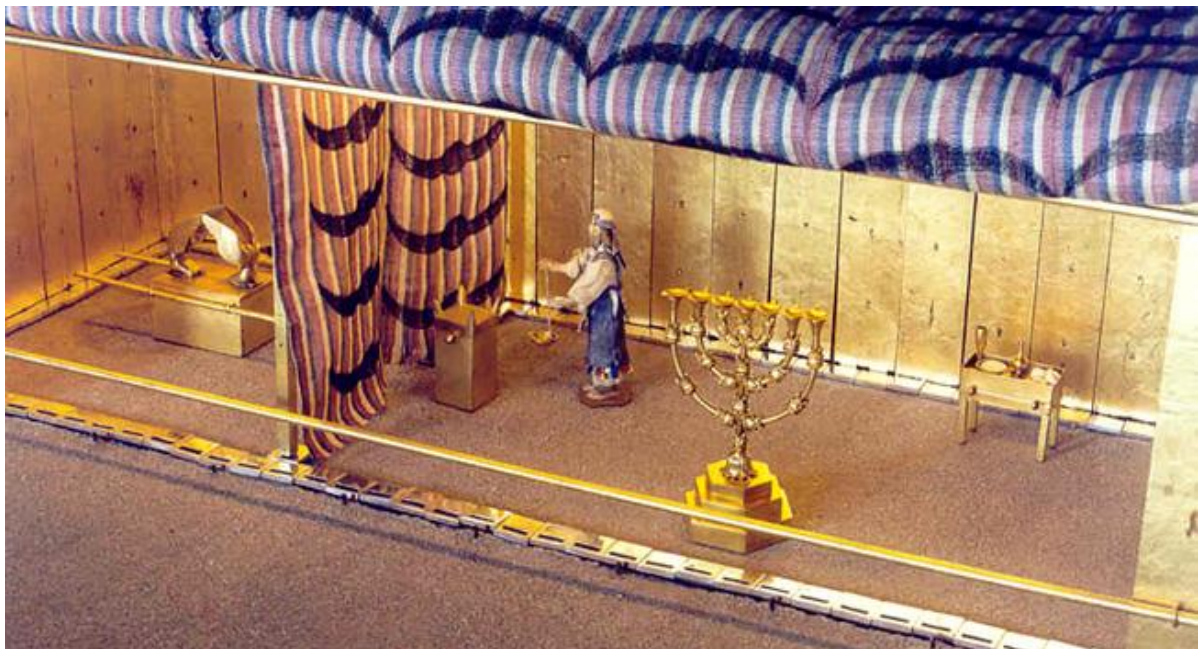
Study #4 Leviticus 16-17 (16:1-22, Heb 9:6-15)

Study Focus:

The stain and power of sin are removed when the high priest enters God's presence with the blood of our atonement.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Monday: Lev 16
- Tuesday: Lev 17
- Wednesday: Heb 9:6-15
- Thursday: Heb 7:26-28
- Friday: Heb 10:11-25



The Day of Atonement described in this chapter is the centre of Leviticus in the centre of the Torah. This chapter could be regarded as the heart of the entire Old Testament law. Here it anchors the law to this festival day when one man – the nation’s high priest – enters the throne room of God (the Most holy place) to make atonement for the whole nation.

Getting Started

1. What is the most inventive thing you’ve done (or heard other people do) to say sorry or to make up with someone when you’ve done the wrong thing?

AND/OR

2. What makes an apology real? Is saying ‘sorry’ enough?

Digging in

Read Leviticus 16:1-10

3. Atonement is too complex for a single ritual to express. In addition to the five types of sacrifice, numerous festivals contribute to the Levitical picture of atonement. Which is one of the unique features of the Day of Atonement, highlighted in the opening verses (2-3) of this passage?

4. In verses 11-14 why must Aaron first make atonement for himself?

5. After Aaron offers a bull to atone for himself (verse 6), he then presents two goats before God. What is to happen to these two goats? (verse 10)

6. In verses 15-17, where does Aaron make this sacrifice, and who does the first goat make atonement for?

7. In verses 20-22. What happens to the scapegoat and why?

Understanding through Jesus

The New Testament frequently alludes to the Day of Atonement and connects it to what Jesus does for us on the cross. We will focus here on two aspects. Jesus the sin offering and Jesus the scapegoat.

8. Jesus the sin offering:

	What do we learn about Jesus' death in connection with our sin?
Matthew 26:27-28	
Romans 3:23-25	
Heb 9:11-14	

9. Jesus the scapegoat:

	What do we learn about Jesus 'taking away' our sin?
John 1:29	
1 John 3:4-5	
Heb 13:12	

All of the work of Jesus at the cross is to give us assurance that in him our sin has been forgiven and removed. This has life-changing consequences and radically affects our approach to God.

Read Hebrews 10:11-25

10. What is the difference between the Old Testament sacrifices and Jesus' sacrifice?

11. With what kind of attitude should we approach God now?

For us

12. If someone is struggling to believe that their sin can be forgiven, what would you tell them?

PRAYER

Spend some time in reflection and thanksgiving that Jesus' sacrifice has taken away your sins, and when you meet God you will be sinless.

Study #5 Lev 18-22 (19:1-37, Eph 4:20-5:7)

Study Focus:

The Law of Love. In the way that God's people treat God and others, we are to reflect the moral character of God. Love God, and love others.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Monday: Lev 18, 1 Cor 7
- Tuesday: Lev 19, Matt 22:34-40
- Wednesday: Lev 20, 1 Cor 5
- Thursday: Lev 21
- Friday: Lev 22, 2 Cor 9

How should I understand the law in Leviticus?

Leviticus is full of many, many laws. Some we still uphold, e.g “do not steal, do not lie” (Lev 19:11), others we don’t “do not clip the edges of your beard” or “tattoo yourself” (Lev 19:27-27). So how do we know which to keep, and which not to keep?

The purpose of all the laws is to demonstrate God’s holiness, to teach His people how to live holy lives, and to point forward to Christ who fulfils the laws both morally and functionally. Christians over the centuries have divided the laws into at least two parts: Moral and Ceremonial. The purpose of the moral law is to promote the welfare of those who obey, and includes laws like the 10 commandments. The heart behind these laws is to ‘love God’ and ‘love one another’. Ceremonial Law includes laws on purity, sacrifice, festivals, which have ultimately found their fulfillment in Christ and Christians are therefore not bound.

G. Geoffrey Harper argues that the Torah, and other equivalent contemporary legal systems (i.e. The Hammurabi Code of ancient Mesopotamia) is more akin to Common Law than Statutory Law. That is, rather than being a full and final statement of everything that must be done or not done, the laws form a repository of past decisions aimed to instruct future decisions. For there will *always* be cases which existing legal codes don’t cover (think of the Pharisees and Sadducees trying to trap Jesus in random hypotheticals). The laws therefore provide *wisdom* for judges and jurors to guide their decisions.

The laws are therefore to form people ethically. They define the outer limits of acceptable behaviour (e.g Do not murder), and give *purpose* to many rules. Old Testament rules are saturated with purpose statements, e.g Sabbath is there for *our* rest, and *for* the Lord. The Pharisees turned this into a form of legalism, and missed its purpose. Other laws existed for the purpose of being different from the surrounding nations, ‘be holy as I am holy’. Laws on sex existed to keep sex and marriage holy. Do not make idols and worship other gods, because there is only one God YHWH, etc.

To start with

1. What might be some people's 'number one' rule to live by?

Digging in

This chapter is a list of rules for Israel. One way of helping understand the types of rules here would be to fill out the following table as you read it.

2. Read Leviticus 19

Rules relating to God	Rules relating to people	Neither or unsure

3. Discuss possible reasons for the rules in column 3. Which do you think are the 'main rules'?
4. What do you think would have been the result if Israel kept all these rules? What would the nations around them have thought?
5. Are these rules binding on Christians today? Why or why not?

Understanding through Jesus

Jesus provides a commentary on these verses for us in the gospels. Jesus reiterates the importance of living with love toward God and others. Jesus perfectly fulfils the law on our behalf. This does not remove the obligation for us to love, but it changes the context. We are now free to love because Jesus has set us free from the law (Matt 5:17).

Read Matthew 22:34-40

6. What should characterise our relationship toward God and toward others?

Read Ephesians 4:20-5:7

7. How should we now live because of what Jesus has done for us?
8. What is the relationship between being forgiven by Jesus and living a life of love?

Application to us

9. If someone said, “does it matter how I live, if I’ve been saved by Jesus?” How would you respond?
10. When have you most noticed Christian love in action in your life? What difference or effect did it have on you?
11. What need is God putting before you today that will require you to show costly love to others?

PRAYER

- Spend some time praying that God will help you love others (the more specific the better)

PEDALS!

- If you were unable to invite someone to Discover this term, discuss with one another how you might be able to DROP a Christian word in a sentence to let them know you’re a Christian, or go fishing for a conversation.

Study #6 Ch 23-24 (23:1-22, Matt 26:1-4,17-30)

Study Focus:

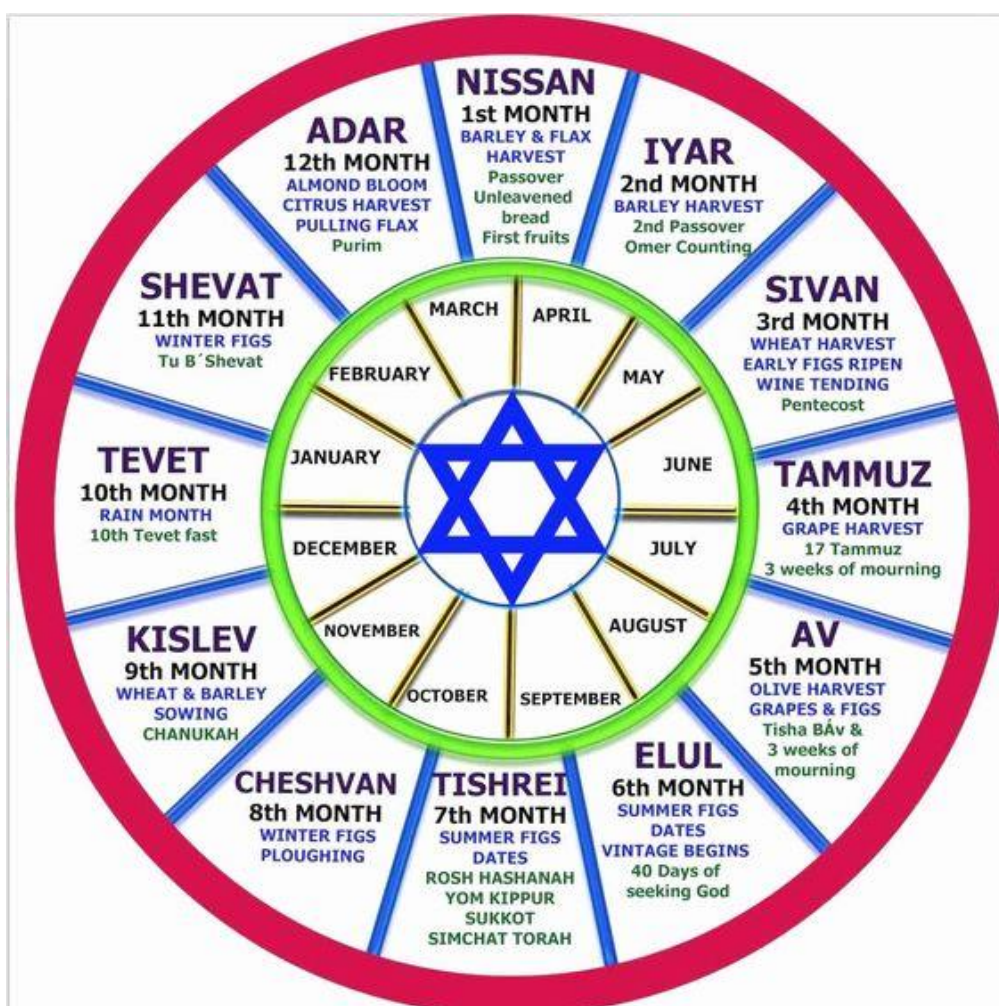
God gives his people an annual rhythm of worship to keep their lives and labours anchored in the blessings of redemption

Daily Bible Readings:

- Monday: Lev 23
- Tuesday: Lev 24
- Wednesday:
- Thursday:
- Friday:

Electricity, food preservation technologies, and climate control have enabled modern societies to operate almost unrestrained by the natural seasons. But in the ancient world, far more than in our own day, the seasons set the cadence for life and labour.

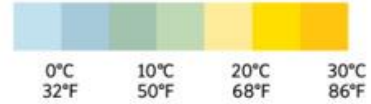
Calendars were used in biblical times to track the changing seasons of the year and manage one's farm in cooperation with seasonal cycles. Because each nation sought blessings on their labours from their god/s, worship festivals were attached to key points in their agricultural calendars. Each nation's worship calendar revealed what they believed about the relationship between their yearly labours and the heavens. In Israel, the agricultural calendar was attached to festivals commemorating the events of the exodus from Egypt, because Israel understood their labours as service to the true God of redemption.



B15

Hebrew Calendar

AVERAGE TEMPERATURE



APR.	NISAN (ABIB)	14 Passover 15-21 Unleavened Bread 16 Offering of firstfruits	Jordan swells from rains, melting snow		Barley	
	IYYAR (ZIV)	14 Late Passover	Dry season begins, mostly clear skies		Wheat	
MAY	SIVAN	6 Festival of Weeks (Pentecost)	Summer heat, clear air		Wheat, early figs	
JUNE	TAMMUZ		Heat increases, heavy dews in areas		First grapes	
JULY	AB		Heat reaches maximum		Summer fruits	
AUG.	ELUL		Heat continues		Dates, grapes, and figs	
SEPT.	TISHRI (ETHANIM)	1 Trumpet blast 10 Day of Atonement 15-21 Festival of Booths 22 Solemn assembly	Summer ends, early rains begin		Plowing	
OCT.	HESHVAN (BUL)		Light rains		Olives	
NOV.	CHISLEV	25 Festival of Dedication	Rain increases, frost, mountain snows		Flocks wintered	
DEC.	TEBETH		Maximum cold, rainy, mountain snows		Vegetation developing	
JAN.	SHEBAT		Cold weather lessens, rain continues		Almond blossoms	
FEB.	ADAR	14, 15 Purim	Frequent thunder and hail		Flax	
MAR.	VEADAR	Intercalary month added seven times in 19 years				

Israel had seven annual festivals, four in the spring (4-22) and three in the autumn (23-44). Compare the following chart to the passage and note any observations. (NOTE: The Hebrew year began in the spring, around March/April).

SPRING Festivals

The Passover: (Read verses 1-5)

Date: 1st month, 14th day. And leads directly into the feast of unleavened bread.

Agricultural significance: First full moon of the year, and spring equinox. i.e. time to plant.

Exodus Story Connection:

1. Read Exodus 12:1-14, 24-30.

What are they celebrating, and what is the significance that this happens at the start of the new year?

New Testament Connection:

2. Read 1 Cor 5:7, Matt 26:2 and 26:17-30

How do we celebrate the Passover today?

The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Read verses 6-8)

Date: 1st month, 15th day and lasts for a week. Follows directly from the Passover.

Agricultural significance: First full moon of the year, and spring equinox. i.e. time to plant.

Exodus Story Connection:

3. Read Exodus 13:3-10. What was unleavened bread a symbol for?

New Testament Connections:

4. Read 1 Corinthians 5:6-8. What does unleavened bread symbolise here? How is it related to Exodus?
5. What might keeping the heart of this festival look like today?

The Festival of Firstfruits (verses 9-14)

Date: First sabbath of harvest season

Agricultural significance: Time of the barley harvest

6. Read verses 9-14. What was the purpose of this festival?

New Testament connections:

7. What does celebrating this festival look like today?
 - a. James 1:17-18
 - b. Colossians 3:17

Festival of Weeks, also known as Pentecost (verses 15-22)

Date: 7 weeks, or on the 50th day after firstfruits.

Agricultural significance: The end of the barley harvest and beginning of wheat harvest

Exodus Story Connection:

Read 15-22.

In addition to all the reasons that we've looked at above for the festival of firstfruits, the New Testament makes more connections.

8. Read Acts 2:1-4, what occurs 50 days after Jesus' death?

9. In Romans 8:23 and Ephesians 1:11-14 what is the significance of this being on an agricultural firstfruits festival?

10. How does celebrating Pentecost look today?

Application for us

Thinking creatively, are there any other ways you can structure your week, or your year, in thanksgiving and celebration of what God has done for you?

PRAYER

- Spend some time giving thanks to God for all that he has done for you.

PEDALS!

- If you were unable to invite someone to Discover this term, discuss with one another what questions you might be able to ASK your friends that could lead into deeper things.

Study #7 Leviticus 25, Hebrews 4:1-13

Study Focus:

Central to the concept of life for God's people was the concept of rest. In this study we will look at what the Sabbath is, and God's intention for rest.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Monday: Leviticus 25, Colossians 2:13-17
- Tuesday: Genesis 1:1-2:3
- Wednesday: Exodus 16
- Thursday: Hebrews 4:1-13
- Friday: Mark 2:23-3:6, 1 Sam 21:1-6

Chapter 25 Sabbath Rest (focus on 25:1-13, Heb 4:1-13)

To start with:

1. How often do you intentionally rest? Why? What does rest look like?

The Sabbath principle finds its origin in God himself resting from his work. God set apart the seventh day (made it holy) to be different from every other day, just like Israel were to be different from the nations. However, there was also a practical use of the Sabbath. It was for worship and for rest. It also was a demonstration of Israel's trust toward God to provide.

Digging in:

What reasons are we given to have a Sabbath from the following passages?

- a. Exodus 16:21-30
- b. Exodus 20:8-11
- c. Leviticus 23:1-3
- d. Mark 2:27

Read Leviticus 25:1-7

2. What was Israel supposed to do when they entered the promised land?

3. How does the Sabbath 'year' compared with the Sabbath 'day' we read about before?

Read Leviticus 25:8-17

4. What was supposed to happen after 49 years?

5. What would have been the result for Israel after doing this?

Read Leviticus 25:18-22

6. What did God promise to provide his people?

Understanding through Jesus

The extension of the Sabbath principle to the land and to property was to enable a community to be compassionate toward the poor and to provide a new start for people. This was a reflection of the compassion that God had on Israel when they were freed from Egypt. They were given a new start. In this way, the Sabbath and the 'Jubilee year (50th year) were a shadow of BOTH the permanent freedom Jesus would bring from slavery to sin AND the entrance into the promised land with eternal rest.

Read Matthew 11:28-29

1. Where do we find rest?

Read Hebrews 4:1-11

2. What is the ultimate rest that the Sabbath day and Jubilee year are pointing forward to?
3. What should the Christian do and remember in order to receive the rest God offers?

Application to us

4. The 'Sabbath' observed by Israel corresponds to our Saturday. The early church used to meet on the 'Lord's Day' (the day of the week that Jesus rose) – which is our Sunday. Do we need to observe the Sabbath now? Why or why not? Read also Romans 15:5-6
5. Spend some time discussing practically how you can have a Sabbath and help your family members have one too.
6. The practice of Sabbath and Jubilee was also to provide some rest for the poor and disadvantaged. How can you practically care for the poor and disadvantaged today?

PRAYER

- That you, and those in your family, will be able to rest well and enjoy God and his good things.

PEDALS!

How have your efforts gone to DROP a Christian word or, ASK your friend a question? Pray for courage to do so, and the patience and wisdom to LISTEN.

Study #8 Leviticus 26, Revelation 21:1-8

Study Focus:

The entire Bible presents only two outcomes for people: life and blessing with God for those who love Him, or destruction and curses for those who reject Him.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Monday: Gen 12:1-9, Galatians 3
- Tuesday: Gen 15, Matthew 26:17-30
- Wednesday: Gen 28:10-22, Luke 13:22-30
- Thursday: Jeremiah 31:31-34, Rom 8:1-17
- Friday: Ezekiel 36:24-28, Rev 21:1-8

The Covenant

Much of Leviticus is about how to maintain the relationship between a holy God and sinful people. This relationship did not come by accident. It was a covenant that God made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants. Covenants are different to simple agreements. They contain binding obligations and therefore responsibilities. To fail to meet your side of the covenant would also incur consequences. Chapter 26 is a reminder of aspects of this covenant between God and Israel.

To start with

1. What is the biggest promise you have ever made someone, and how did it change your life or someone else's?

And / Or

2. What was the system of rewards or punishments that you had when you were growing up?

Digging in

Read Leviticus 26:1-13

3. What was God asking his people to do? (1-2)
4. What reason did he give them to do it? (13)
5. What would be the result if they followed his ways? (3-12)

Read Leviticus 26:14-39

6. This passage consists of warnings. List the phrases that God uses to describe their failure to follow his ways. E.g. ('not listen to him')

7. What will happen if they don't follow God?

Read Leviticus 26:40-46

8. What does God promise to do when they confess their sins?

God says that he will remember the covenant that he made with Abraham (see Gen 12:1-3 and Gen 15) The covenant was a legal means of establishing a relationship between two parties. God promised to be their God, and to bring blessing upon them. Israel was to follow God solely and worship him. Doing this would bring blessing to them and to the world (Gen 12:1-3), but failure to do this would bring curses upon them.

The longstanding problem throughout Israel's history was how could God both keep his promise to bring blessing to the nations when his instrument (Israel) failed to maintain their side of the covenant? The answer to this was that God would come to us as the true Israelite, a human (one of us), and represent Israel before God with perfect covenant obedience. Even more amazing was that this person would also take up the covenant curses that Israel deserved. This is what Jesus did for us. By his life and death he fulfilled the obligations of the covenant from both the side of God and the side of man.

Understanding through Jesus

The Old Testament (or covenant) looked forward to a New Covenant (see Jeremiah 31:31-34), Jesus brings the new covenant because his obedience and sacrifice fulfils the old covenant. He is the true Israelite, the true worshipper. He does what Israel failed to do. This is why our relationship to God begins with and depends on Jesus rather than our attempts at sacrifice and offerings.

9. Read Matthew 26:26-30. How does Jesus describe his coming death in relation to the covenant?

10. Read Revelation 21:1-8. What similarities do you see in the outcomes of the new covenant?

Application to us

11. What kinds of blessings are ours because of what Jesus has done for us?

12. What will happen to those who haven't found salvation in Christ?

13. What do they need to do to find salvation?

PRAYER and SHARE

- What's one thing that you've learned in Leviticus so far you might be able to share with either a non-Christian, or a Christian at church, and spend some time now giving thanks for what you've learned.

Study #9

Leviticus 27, 2 Cor 8:1-15

Study Focus:

This final chapter demonstrates how Israel could express their extraordinarily thankfulness for receiving God's blessings in the form of supporting the work of God's house.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Monday: Leviticus 27, Matt 2:11
- Tuesday: 1 Sam 1, Matthew 26:6-13
- Wednesday: 2 Corinthians 8:1-15
- Thursday: 2 Corinthians 9
- Friday: Acts 10:1-4

Chapter 27 seems a resounding anticlimax following the impassioned plea of the blessings and curses listed in Chapter 26, until we recognise the purposes of these vows (1-13), dedications (14-27), devoted things (28-29) and tithes (30-34). This chapter is all about expressing extraordinary thankfulness for being redeemed and blessed by God.

Getting started

1. In what ways have you expressed deep thankfulness to someone (or someone to you?)

Getting into it

The making of vows is commonplace throughout the Old Testament. Often, a person committed themselves to do something if God delivered them from a crisis or need. For example, Jacob says, 'If God will be with me and will watch over me...then the LORD will be my God and this stone that I have set will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth' (Gen 28:20-22). Or Hannah dedicated her son Samuel to the LORD 'I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked for. So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD.' (1 Sam 1:27-28). Samson too was dedicated to YHWH. To be dedicated to God was a precious thing, as it meant working with the priests, in the tabernacle of temple.

Read Verses 1-25

2. What are all the things that can be dedicated to the LORD?
3. Are these mandatory or voluntary?
4. Why do you think there is a financial valuation given to people in verses 1-8? See also Ps 49:7-8.
5. For what reasons might people choose to dedicate some of these things to God?
6. There was a provision for people in case they changed their mind and wanted to buy back the thing they had dedicated to God. How much was it? Why do you think this existed?

7. Tithes (30-33) or 10%, were regular expressions of ongoing faithfulness. What shortcuts is this guarding against?

Understanding through Jesus

As the penultimate chapter of Leviticus reminded Israel of the amazing blessings and promises they had received in God, the final chapter shows how people are to respond to what God has promised them. In the same way, knowing that Christ is our sacrifice, our high priest, has washed us, forgiven us, taken our sins away, redeemed us, and promised us rest and eternal life with him, we are now called to respond.

8. Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-15. What do you learn about the attitude and method of giving in the Macedonian church?

Applying to us

9. How can we respond in thanksgiving to what we have received in Christ in practical ways? What might you be able to dedicate to him? It might be helpful to think in terms of:
 - a. Time (what time can you give to God)
 - b. Talents (what skills or talents do you have that you can give to God)
 - c. Treasure (money and things you own)

PRAYER

- Spend some time giving thanks to God for what he has done for you in Christ, and for opportunities He's given you to serve Him.

PEDALS!

- Discover starts next term on 13th August. Keep praying for those people you've listed – for their salvation, and opportunities for evangelistic opportunities.

pedals!

What's your next step in pedals!

Name	Friend	Next Step



Pray for their salvation. "Please softens heart so they accept you as their saviour".



Pray that God gives you an **Evangelistic Opportunity**. "Please give me an opportunity to talk about You with"



Do they know you're a Christian? If not, **Drop** a Christian word in a sentence. "How was your weekend?... I went to church...."
Do they know any other Christians? If not, **WHO** would be a good person to introduce them to? **Who** might they get along with? And **HOW** would you introduce them? For a social, coffee, beer, BBQ...? **WHEN** could you arrange this?



Ask. Have you asked them what they believe? If they've had any church experiences?
If it seems too soon for a spiritual convo, have you asked them what their interests are? Have you asked them **WHY** they like those interests? Have you asked them deeper questions? Have you shown a deeper and genuine interest in them?



Listen. Have you listened to their points of view? Their interests? Their struggles? Their loves? Their hates? Their beliefs? Their issues with Christianity?



Share. Have you shared with them why you're a Christian? What it means to be a Christian? The difference that Jesus has made in your life?



Invite. Have you invited them to hear more? What do you think would be best for them? Alpha? Read the Word 121? Read a book or listen to a podcast in their own time? Come to church?

Notes & Prayer Points

www.stfaiths.church

