

Holy Character

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Leviticus 19:1-2 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.

- I. The theme of this whole chapter is that the people of God shall be holy.
 - A. The aim of the law is to produce a certain type of moral and spiritual character; holiness essentially consists of a spiritual likeness to God: "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy."
 - 1. That phrase is repeated 16 times in this chapter.
 - B. This is a truth for all the ages – not particular commandments that were for a certain period of time, or for a certain group of people.
 - C. What holiness looks like is laid out in the rest of this chapter.
 - D. First, how holiness is manifested in our attitude, concept, and actions toward God and others.
 - E. The very first thing mentioned about holiness is that it will lead you to honor and fear your father and mother.
 - F. Holiness keeps you from idols and you worship God.
 - G. Holiness leads you to sacrifice to God and give to Him of what He has given you.
 - 1. Money, children, strength, time.
 - 2. And it leads you to sacrifice to God according to his law and commandments, and not your own heart and mind.
 - H. Holiness will lead you to be benevolent to others and not greedy and heaping to yourself.

Leviticus 19:9-10 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God.

- I. When you harvest your land you will not greedily heap to yourself every little piece of everything to yourself, but will leave some for the poor and the stranger.

- II. So one of the evidences of holy character is that it is benevolent.

BENEVOLENCE – The disposition to do good; good will; kindness; charitableness; the love of mankind, accompanied with a desire to promote their happiness.

1 John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

- A. Love and charity are synonymous in the Bible, yet we understand more clearly what love is when the word charity is used.
 - 1. Charity is understood by us to be “giving.”
 - 2. Not only that, but it is understood and giving to those who cannot repay, and with no expectation of being repaid.
 - 3. It is giving without an eye to self at all, but to others.
- B. This exists only in a holy character – it is not an act we perform.
- C. It is not something we do from time to time, but it is the principle thing that comes to our minds when we are engaged with other people in any way.
 - 1. We look at things from their point of view and not just from ours.

- D. It is about our heart's attitude in all our dealings with other people.
- E. Holiness will cause a person to think of others before himself.
- F. Holiness will cause a person to do what is right no matter the cost to himself.
- G. All these same attributes are outlined in Psalm 15:

Psalm 15:1-5 A Psalm of David. LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

- H. Holiness is God's number one attribute and from it springs his love, mercy, longsuffering, and kindness.
 - 1. God really does desire good toward others.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

- 2. Holiness is the number one attribute that God wants to produce in us.
- 3. He wants us to be like him in our disposition and character toward others.

III. In order to understand this truth more clearly it is helpful to contrast it with the opposite kind of character.

- A. The opposite of benevolence is malevolence, wish is desiring evil on others.
- B. Most people who are not benevolent are really not malevolent either.
 - 1. They do not wish evil on others, they simply are not concerned about others.
 - 2. They are concerned about coming out best they can for themselves with no regard for the needs, or the welfare of others.
- C. Most people who are not benevolent are greedy when it comes to material things.
 - 1. They have an insatiable appetite for things that they can possess and call their own.
- D. Holiness in the heart and mind will not allow this in a person.
 - 1. Holiness will cause you to see the other person's side of things first.
 - 2. Holiness will prevent you from taking advantage of others to benefit yourself.
 - 3. Holiness will keep you from worrying about being defrauded by others.
- E. Holy character in a person puts others first and trusts God to take care of him.
 - 1. He does not trust in his own wits and wiles to outmaneuver others to come out ahead for himself.

1 Corinthians 6:7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?

- F. Holy character is the basis for a society like our forefathers had where a man's word was his bond and a handshake meant more than a contract on a piece of paper.
- G. Holy character is necessary for safety and security among any group of people.
 - 1. It is only when people have a true love and concern for others that they will stop lying to them, stealing from them, and trying to take from them whatever they can, by hook or by crook.
- H. When God is forgotten and there are no people with holy character to represent Him here among men it becomes a jungle and its every man for himself.
- I. If the law was meant to produce order and peace among the people, how much more should the fulfilling of the law in Christ, the grace of God, and the Spirit of God do so now!