

Small Group Guide SACRIFICE 101

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. Jim Shaddix

April 6, 2014

Leviticus 1-7

Use this resource as a tool to help Christ-followers move forward in their spiritual growth. To do this well requires that the Small Group Leader is building a relationship with the individuals in the small group and has identified where the people are in their relationship with God. Are they Christ-followers? Are they growing in Christ? If so, in what areas do they need to grow further? As disciplinarians, Small Group Leaders shepherd people to know the truth of Scripture, to understand why it matters, and to apply it to their lives. Small Group Leaders come alongside those whom they disciple to discover how loving God, loving each other, and loving those not yet in the Kingdom should shape how they live. The structure of this resource coincides with moving people from knowledge (Main Truth) to understanding (Why It Matters) to application (Now What Do We Do?). Utilize this Small Group Guide as a flexible teaching tool to inform your time together and not as a rigid task list.

GETTING STARTED

Before Small Group

Readings for April 7-13

Leviticus 10-17

Psalm 11-21

Where We Are In The Story ~ Old Testament (Leviticus & Psalms)

Background of Leviticus: Everything in Leviticus points to the holiness of God. His perfection and man's sinfulness stands as the reason for all of the sacrifices, laws, and regulations included in this book, for Leviticus explains how a covenant between a righteous God and a sinful people practically plays out in everyday life in the era before Christ's resurrection. Written by Moses as Israel wandered in the wilderness, it contains divine speeches that Moses delivered to the people of Israel about how to worship God and how they should live. Modern readers of Leviticus may tire of reading the many laws and regulations, but for Israelites in the Old Testament era, Leviticus provided relevant information for how they were to go about their day-to-day lives.

Structure of Leviticus:

- Leviticus 1-7 explains the rituals of the different sacrifices.
- Leviticus 8-10 gives instructions for the priests of Israel.
- Leviticus 11-15 instructs the people on cleansing and purification.
- Leviticus 16 details the sacrifice and instructions for the Day of Atonement.
- Leviticus 17-27 provides directions regarding the festivals, the holy days, and how the people should live.

This Week in Leviticus: Leviticus 10 tells how Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons who were also priests, received the death penalty from God for bringing "unauthorized fire" into the sanctuary. While we do not know what was wrong about the fire, the point is that these two priests disobeyed God's instruction and faced His judgment. As a result of this incident, the priests were especially cautious, which is why they did not eat the sacrifice portion. Since priests had engaged in sin, they did not think it would please God for them to partake of the sacrificial meat.

Leviticus 11-15 contains laws that distinguished between what is clean and unclean and that provided instruction on how to respond when defiled or made unclean. These chapters of Leviticus encompass food (Lev. 11), childbirth (Lev. 12), skin diseases (Lev. 13-14), and bodily discharges (Lev. 15). If something was unclean, it did not mean that it was necessarily bad or sinful; for example, a woman was considered unclean after she gave birth, but childbearing occurs by God's design and is part of the creation mandate in Genesis 1. Uncleanness was not a permanent state, for Leviticus explains the process by which the unclean individual

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can be made clean. This process involved either a prescribed time to pass (7 days, 66 days, etc.) and/or a ritual to be performed. However, anyone who was impure for whatever reason could not worship in the sanctuary, for impurity bars a person from entering God's presence. Also, just because something was clean did not make it holy (set apart), so for something to become holy where it could be used in the service of the Lord, it had to be dedicated to the Lord with a blood sacrifice.

In Leviticus 11:44, God instructs the people to "be holy, for I am holy." Because He is holiness or set apart from all others, God requires that His people reflect His holiness in the way that they live. While Christ-followers today do not have to observe all of the instructions in Leviticus 11-15, 1 Peter 1:16 reiterates God's command from Leviticus 11:44-46 in charging Christ-followers to be holy as God is holy. We are to live distinct from the world, for God desires that His people imitate and reflect Him.

Leviticus 11 provides the basis for Jewish dietary laws, and it establishes that God's people should honor Him even in the way that they eat (see how this theme continues in 1 Cor. 10:31). However, this chapter does not prescribe kosher laws, which stipulate that dairy and meat products cannot be eaten together. Kosher laws come from rabbinic interpretation of Exodus 23:19 and Deuteronomy 14:21; however, the rabbinic interpretation of these verses is probably incorrect since the practice of boiling a kid in its mother's milk was a Canaanite practice. Therefore, God's instruction served as a distinctive between His people and the practices of the surrounding people. Leviticus 11 taught the people to distinguish between clean and unclean foods, and because of their distinct diet, it prevented the Israelites from establishing close relationships with the neighboring nations since an inability to eat with another inhibits fellowship with that person. The organization of the animals in Leviticus 11 corresponds with the three groups of animals in Genesis 1 – those who fly in the sky, those who swim in the water, and those who walk on the land, and this structure in Leviticus 11 reflects God's design in creation and what was incompatible with the order of creation.

In Mark 7:14-22, Jesus nullified the Jewish dietary laws, and He emphasized that a person's uncleanness stems from his heart rather than what he or she ingests. As the gospel spread to the Gentiles after Jesus' resurrection and ascension, God gave Peter a vision in which He clearly declared all foods to be clean (Acts 10:9-48). Even with this vision, the issue of food laws remained unsettled in the early church, which prompted the Jerusalem Council to advise the Gentile believers to abstain from food that had been sacrificed to idols, from blood, and from that which had been strangled in order not to offend the Jewish believers (Acts 15:1-34). Whereas the dietary laws were meant to separate the Israelites from the nations under the old covenant, the dietary laws were abolished under the new covenant in order to encourage the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles and to unite the Jews and the Gentiles, for according to Ephesians 2:11-22, under the new covenant Christ made one new person (the body of Christ) out of two (the Jews and the Gentiles).

Celebrated once a year, the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur* in Hebrew) served as the holiest day of the Jewish calendar (Lev. 16), for on this day, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies and made atonement for himself and for the sins of the people of Israel. To prepare for this day, the people bathed, fasted, and prayed in order to spiritually prepare and to become clean before the Lord. After the high priest offered bathed and offered a sin offering for himself, this ceremony involved the high priest burning incense on the Altar of Incense in front of the veil to the Holy of Holies. By sprinkling the blood of his sin offering and of the sin offering for the people on and in front of the mercy seat, the high priest made atonement for the holy of holies because of the people's uncleanness (Lev. 16:16). The sin of the people polluted the sanctuary, requiring that the sanctuary be purified by blood. By cleansing the sanctuary, God enabled the people to continue to come into His presence.

Two goats were selected on this day – one that was sacrificed and one that was sent away into the wilderness (a.k.a. the scapegoat). By laying hands on the goat's hands and confessing the wickedness of the nation, the high priest symbolically transferred the sins of the people onto the animal. When Isaiah prophesies about the Suffering Servant, he points back to this image in his description of how "the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6). The scapegoat pointed to Christ in its picture of a substitute who takes on the sin of the people. By sending this goat away to the wilderness, God represented how the guilt and condemnation of the people was totally removed from them. After this ceremony, burnt offerings were made

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for the high priest and for the people, and the remains of the bull and the goat that were offered were taken outside the camp and burned in order to signify the complete removal of defilement and sin.

The Day of Atonement provided a picture of what Christ would accomplish through His death and resurrection, for His sacrifice satisfies the wrath of God against sinners and makes amends and reparations for our sin (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 2:17; 1 Pet. 2:24). Year after year, the people celebrated the Day of Atonement, yet the fact that this sacrifice had to be repeated pointed to its insufficiency. Furthermore, the presence of God could *only* be accessed through the blood of the sacrifice being sprinkled on the mercy seat. Yet, Romans 3:25 and Hebrews 9:11-10:18 explains how Christ offered Himself, took our sins, and by His blood made it possible for us to enter God's presence. This was represented by the tearing of the veil in the Temple when Jesus died on the cross, and because of His sacrifice, we have unrestricted access to God.

Background & Structure of Psalms: God used many different writers to write Psalms: David, Moses, the sons of Korah, Asaph, etc. The book is arranged in five parts, and this arrangement occurred after the people of Israel returned to the land after the Babylonian exile. A doxology concludes each book or arrangement of psalms (Psalm 41:13 for Book 1, Psalm 72:18-19 for Book 2, Psalm 89:52 for Book 3, Psalm 106:48 for Book 4, and Psalm 150:6 for Book 5), and the entire book of Psalms climactically ends with a grand doxology of several psalms (Ps. 146-150).

- Book 1: Psalms 1-41
- Book 2: Psalms 42-72
- Book 3: Psalms 73-89
- Book 4: Psalms 90-106
- Book 5: Psalms 107-150

This Week in Psalms:

- Psalm 11 describes how the righteous stand firm despite attacks from the wicked because they trust in God's sovereignty and righteousness. While He allows evil to exist, He will ultimately destroy all wickedness and all evildoers.
- Psalms 12 depicts the psalmist as crying out to God because of the plight of the poor and needy (v. 5) yet expressing confidence in God's deliverance and faithfulness to His promises. His words alone are true and pure in a world of deception and oppression.
- As a lament psalm, Psalm 13 begins with an introductory cry to God (vv. 1-2) followed by a description of the situation (vv. 1-2), a confession of trust in God (v. 5), a petition (vv. 3-4), and a vow of praise to God, for the psalmist promises to praise the Lord when he receives the answer to his prayer. In a lament, the psalmist cries to God in a time of need such as war, persecution, or illness, and in this psalm, the lament concerns the psalmist's enemies, his sorrow, and God's apparent absence (vv. 1-4). This psalm presents an example of how believers should earnestly and confidently pray to God in times of trouble.
- Psalm 14 portrays the godlessness of the world and the folly of denying God, but despite the corruption, the righteous can have hope because the Lord will deliver His people. Romans 3:10 quotes this psalm in its assessment of humanity's utter sinfulness.
- In contrast to Psalm 14, which depicts the ungodly, Psalm 15 characterizes the righteous by listing ten attributes of a true worshipper. This psalm may have been part of the liturgy used at the gate of the sanctuary, for before worshippers could enter the grounds of the sanctuary, they were asked who could enter and commune with God. The worshipper's response to the question served as a reminder of God's standard of holiness for those who seek to commune with Him.
- Psalm 16 stands as a psalm of trust in God. The psalmist recognizes the goodness of God and praises Him for His provision, both in this life and the next.
- In Psalm 17, King David petitions God for protection as his accusers and persecutors close in on him. Because of his uprightness, David confidently appealed to God's justice, for his cause and his life was upright while that of his enemies was not. James 5:16 and Revelation 6:10 provide confirmation from the New Testament that the prayers of a righteous person are effectual, particularly prayers for vindication.

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- As a royal thanksgiving psalm, Psalm 18 records King David's praise of God for rescuing him from the hand of Saul, and David also points back to God's history of supernaturally delivering the faithful. The psalmist describes why God is worthy of praise, and he expresses his gratitude and love for God. With some variation, this psalm is also recorded in 2 Samuel 22, which provides a context for the psalm.
- Psalm 19 can be divided into three parts: God's revelation of Himself in nature (vv. 1-6), the value and sufficiency of the written revelation of God (vv. 7-11), and a prayer for preservation of sin in light of God's revelation (vv. 12-14). Increased understanding of God and His Word should lead believers to greater commitment and faithfulness to Him.
- As an intercessory prayer for the king's victory in battle, Psalm 20 expresses assurance of God's saving might.
- While Psalm 20 sought God's protection of the king in battle, the king in Psalm 21 rejoices in God's deliverance and blessings. The psalmist links God's actions to His loyal love and to the trust of the righteous in the Lord (v. 7). Because of God's character, the righteous can know security, even when facing great opposition.

During Small Group

Welcome – Incorporate time for greeting one another, enjoying any refreshments, and making announcements. If guests are visiting, make introductions and help them feel welcomed. Ask for their contact information, so you can follow up with them.

Looking Back – Provide an opportunity for small group members to share what God is teaching them, how they are applying what they are learning, and how He has given them opportunities to share the gospel with others. This can be done as a whole group or in smaller groups. Do the people know each other well enough to share more than surface level information? How can time together be used to foster deeper relationships among those in the small group? Also, what are the struggles and needs of the people in the small group? How can the people in the small group sacrificially serve each other?

Looking Up – Hold prayer as fundamental to small group time rather than supplemental to it. Give adoration and thanksgiving to God in prayer. Submit yourself to Him, confessing sin. Petition God for personal needs and other requests. Pray for the disciple-making efforts of those in the group and for the salvation of the lost in each other's families, spheres of influence, and in the world. The Weekly Prayer Focus below can also be incorporated in the group's prayer time.

Weekly Prayer Focus (from Our Worship Guide)

- **Pray for Our Lives:** Praise God for the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, through which we are made holy. Pray we will all respond by living sacrificial lives in obedience to God's commands. Ask God to help us live holy lives as well, set apart from the world even as we live in it. Pray others will see our love and good deeds and glorify God in Heaven as a result. Ask God to help us be forgiving toward others who have wronged us without demanding recompense. Thank God for His conviction of our sin and our need for our Savior, Jesus Christ.
- **Pray for Our City:** This week we are praying for Brook Hills' summer Rock the Block ministry in the Birmingham area. Rock the Block exists to help families build relationships with their neighbors in order to make disciples where they live. Many members of our Faith Family will share the gospel with neighborhood children through crafts, Bible stories, and games during a week-long Rock the Block at their home. To serve as a host home or to volunteer with Rock the Block, register at brookhills.org/rocktheblock. We are also praying for Lakeside Baptist Church and Greg Corbin, Pastor.

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- *Pray for Our World: This week we are praying for Brook Hills Mid-Termers, Taylor and Julia, serving in East Asia. Taylor and Julia are currently studying language at a local university among minority peoples. Their goal is to engage unreached people groups as they study language and pursue moving to East Asia long-term. Join us this week as we pray for Taylor and Julia. This week we are also praying for our Short-Term team serving in North Africa. In addition, we are praying for the Uyghur people of China. For more information and ways to pray, visit brookhills.org/weeklyresources.*

MAIN TRUTH

Message Outline

Sacrifice 101 Leviticus 1-7

The Fisher-Price range in Leviticus...

Need	Offering	Text	Reason
<u>Faithfulness</u> to God	Burnt	Lev. 1	<u>Obedience</u> to God
	Grain	Lev. 2	<u>Worship</u> of God
<u>Fellowship</u> with God	Peace	Lev. 3	<u>Communion</u> with God
	Sin	Lev. 4-5	<u>Atonement</u> of God
<u>Forgiveness</u> of God	Guilt	Lev. 5-6	<u>Indebtedness</u> to God

The Hotpoint range in our Lord...

*God graciously shows people the nature of their sin and their need for a Savior, both of which are addressed only in the cross of Christ.
(Hebrews 10)*

The sacrificial system...

- Pictured perfect salvation (1)
- Repeated a reminder of sin (1-3)
- Couldn't compensate for sin (1-4)

The sacrificial Savior...

- Satisfied God fully (5-7)
- Substituted Himself forever (8-9)
- Sanctified sinners finally (10)

Let's cook something!

Need	Picture	Text	Application
Faithfulness to God	Burnt	Rom. 12:1-2	Live a <u>sacrificial</u> life.
	Grain	1 Pet. 1:14-19	Live a <u>holy</u> life.

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Fellowship with God	Peace	1 Cor. 11:26-27	Take <u>communion</u> seriously.
Forgiveness of God	Sin	Eph. 2:13-16	Be <u>reconciled</u> to God.
	Guilt	Mat. 5:23-24	Be reconciled to <u>others</u> .

Message Summary

As we read through Exodus in the Bible Reading Plan that we're walking through as a faith family, it describes the construction of the Tabernacle, and Leviticus 1-7 continues by explaining how the Israelites were to worship in the Tabernacle that God had instructed them to build. Included in these instructions were five types of sacrifices: the burnt offering, the grain offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering (Lev. 1-6). While the sacrifice themselves did not save people (see Heb. 10:1-10), they did express faithfulness to God, fellowship with God, and the forgiveness of God. Ultimately, God used the sacrificial system to demonstrate His holiness and righteousness, the nature of sin, and humanity's need for a Savior, and Christ's sacrifice on the cross accomplished what no burnt offering or sin offering could because He is the only perfect sacrifice. Although Christ-followers do not continue to uphold the sacrificial system, the five sacrifices of Leviticus 1-6 contain application for believers today, for we are to live a sacrificial and holy life, take communion seriously, and be reconciled to others.

WHY IT MATTERS

Digging Deeper

As the leader, there are at least three directions the small group can take in light of the current Bible reading plan. Knowing the people in the group, prayerfully consider what would be the best route to help those in your group grow. The group's meetings could also vary with each week, so if one week's sermon prompts a lot of thought and discussion, option one could be what the group does that week while the next week could be different. As the leader, feel the freedom to take all or just some of the content in this guide and do what is best for your group.

- *Using the discussion questions below, the small group time can focus on discussing the sermon and how to apply it.*
- *The group can discuss the Bible readings from the past week. If choosing this route, ensure that the group does not simply discuss information but also focuses on how to apply what they have learned from the Bible readings. The information in the "Where We Are in the Story" section can assist the leader in knowing the background and context for the readings.*
- *Using the REAP (read, examine, apply, pray) outline for studying Scripture, the group can take one or both passages from that day's readings and discuss them. So if the group meets on Monday, then you could pick one or both of the passages for Monday. This also helps those who are new to studying the Bible or who struggle with reading it learn how to do so. To assist the group with REAP questions, download the Guide to Personal Worship from brookhills.org.*

As we read through Leviticus, those in your small group might express having some difficulty finding the relevance in the descriptions of the sacrifices and the commands of this book. Remind the group that 2 Timothy 3:16-17 teaches us that *all* Scripture - including Leviticus - is profitable for teaching, reproof,

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correction, and training in righteousness. Knowing this, how should we as Christ-followers approach these passages? How do we find the relevance? Pose these questions to your small group. One way would be to ask what that day's reading teaches us about the character of God, about our sinfulness, about how the passage points to Christ, about faith and obedience, and about how it points to eternity.

Why is it important to understand the sacrificial system? Just because it was in the Old Testament does not mean that it has no significance for today. You might have either unbelievers or people who are new to Christianity in your small group. How would you help an unbeliever or a new believer understand why we do not practice the sacrificial system today? What questions do you think they would have? How would you explain to them the purpose of the sacrificial system in the Old Testament era? Galatians 3:24 teaches that the law was our "guardian" or tutor until Christ came. It prepared God's people to understand what the Messiah would accomplish, and looking back, it helps us to have a greater picture and comprehension of the severity of our sinfulness and the sufficiency of Christ as both the sacrifice and our high priest (Heb. 7-10). If you need extra information with regards to the five sacrifices of Leviticus 1-6, read the "Where We Are In The Story" from the past two Small Group Guides.

NOW WHAT DO WE DO?

Group Discussion & Application

Use the following questions to help review the application of God's Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).

- Read Hebrews 10:5-7; Psalm 51:16-17; 1 Samuel 15:22; Jeremiah 7:21-23; Micah 6:6-8. What do these passages teach us about what God desires from His people? What implications do these passages have for Christ-followers today?
- Read Hebrews 10:8-9. Christ "substituted Himself forever." Define the term "substitution." How would you explain this concept to an unbeliever or to a small child? Why do we need a substitute? What qualified Christ to be our substitute? What did He do to become our substitute? How does the sacrificial system point to Christ?
- Read Hebrews 10:10. Christ "sanctified sinners finally." Christ's death met God's standard for holiness for us both now and forever. What does the term "sanctification" mean? What is the relationship between sanctification and salvation? How does Christianity differ from other religions in how salvation and sanctification relate to each other? How can you explain to an unbeliever that good works cannot save them? How can you point them to Christ as the solution?
- The burnt offering in Leviticus 1 demonstrated a person's obedience to God, and the New Testament correlation is for believers to live a sacrificial life. Read Romans 12:1-2. What does it look like to live a sacrificial life for God in this culture? What sacrifices are you making in complete obedience to advance the gospel? What sacrifices do you need to make? What should motivate such sacrifices?
- By giving the grain offering (Lev. 2), the individual worshipped God. The sacrifice could not contain any leaven or honey because such things expressed contamination. The application for Christ-followers is to "live a holy life." Read 1 Peter 1:14-19. What does holiness mean? How is God holy?
- Why is it important for us to be holy? Why is it dangerous for Christ-followers to identify with the world and to be like the world? In what ways are you like the world (how you spend money, how you spend time, how you treat people, how you parent, what your priorities are, etc.)? How should holiness affect your lifestyle and your views on sexuality and purity? How can you cultivate holiness in your life? What steps can you take this week?
- We cannot pursue holiness without pursuing God. Why is it important to nurture your relationship with Him? How are you pursuing God in your life? What is an area in which you want or need to grow in your relationship with God? What will it look like for you to grow in that area? What is one action step that you can take this week to grow in that area?

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- With the peace offering (Lev. 3), worshippers celebrated the peace that they had with God, and it involved partaking of the sacrificial meat as a communal meal. As Christ-followers, we celebrate the relationship we have with God when we take the Lord's Supper. It reminds us of Christ's sacrifice that enables peace with God, and it anticipates the future - and the meal - we have with Him in the life to come (see Rev. 19). With this in mind, why is the Lord's Supper important? How should Christ-followers approach this meal? How can you prepare yourself to take this meal?
- The guilt offering of Leviticus 5-6 involved making a sacrifice to God and making reparations to the one whom the worshipper sinned against. In the spirit of the guilt offering, the New Testament points us to be reconciled to others. Read Matthew 5:23-24. Is there anyone with whom you need to reconcile? Is there anyone you need to forgive? Why is it important to forgive those who offend or hurt you? If you do need to forgive, how can you take steps towards forgiveness this week? Is there anyone whom you have hurt or offended that you need to seek forgiveness from? Have you confessed your sin to God and repented of it?
- Is there any sin in your life that you need to repent of? Is there any secret sin that you are carrying that you need to confess to a mature Christ-follower of the same gender (see James 5:16)? Why is it important to confess our sins to each other?