Refreshed IN THE WORD
For thy word hath quickened me
PSALM 119:50

Torah Studies

Connecting the Torah and Jesus

STUDY 11

Honoring God with a Listening Heart

Day Eleven · Leviticus 10

Read Leviticus 10 a passage at a time. Learn about God’s holiness, listening with care, and the way Jesus brings us near to the Father. Respond with trust and willing obedience.

For personal reading and study with friends

King James Version · Complete Scripture passages

Read and share online

Read one section at a time. Take turns reading the verses aloud, discuss the questions, and choose one practical response. Every passage referenced in the teaching is included in full.

Let’s begin together

Let’s pray: Father, help us hear Your Word with humble hearts. Teach us to honor You, care for people, and trust Jesus. Give us understanding as we read a difficult part of Israel’s story. Help us put Your truth into practice. In Jesus’ name, amen.

In Study 10, we read about God’s glory appearing as Aaron began serving as priest. Leviticus 10 continues that story with the death of two of Aaron’s sons. We will read slowly, a passage at a time, and pay attention to what the chapter actually says.

Torah means instruction. These commands were given within God's covenant with Israel, a relationship with promises and responsibilities. First we learn what the passage meant for Israel. Then we follow the teaching of Jesus and the apostles to understand how to live as His people today.

Our main truth: Because Jesus brings us near to our holy Father, we respond with trust, careful listening, and willing obedience.

1. God's holiness matters

Leviticus 10:1-3

1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.

2 And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

3 Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

Nadab and Abihu were Aaron’s sons and served as priests. Each took a censer, a container for burning incense. They presented “strange fire,” an offering of fire that God had not commanded. The passage describes fire coming from the Lord and their deaths. This is a serious judgment.

The text identifies their offense: they brought what God had not commanded. It does not explain every detail of their intentions. We should stay with what is written instead of adding a story about what they were thinking.

“I will be sanctified” means God must be recognized and treated as holy. He is completely pure and worthy of honor. The priests represented Him before the people. Their closeness to sacred things came with responsibility to listen to Him.

Aaron “held his peace,” meaning he remained silent. The chapter does not tell us everything he felt. This account describes a specific judgment in Israel’s worship. It does not give us a reason to accuse a person who suffers today of being punished by God.

When I want to serve God, do I first listen to what He has said?

2. Read the grief within its setting

Leviticus 10:4-7

4 And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said unto them, Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp.

5 So they went near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp; as Moses had said.

6 And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled.

7 And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses.

Moses asked relatives to carry the bodies outside the camp. Aaron and his remaining sons received special instructions while serving at the tabernacle, Israel's sacred tent. Uncovering the head and tearing clothing were outward signs connected with mourning.

The rest of Israel was allowed to mourn. These commands belonged to the priests' particular responsibility at that moment. They do not make grief a sin or tell grieving families today to hide their tears. We can take God's holiness seriously and care tenderly for people who hurt.

3. Serve with a clear mind

Leviticus 10:8-11

8 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying,

9 Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations:

10 And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;

11 And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.

The Lord now spoke directly to Aaron. The priests were not to drink wine or strong drink when entering the tabernacle to serve. They needed clear judgment to tell the difference between holy and common things, and between what was clean and unclean for worship.

“Holy” means set apart for God. In these instructions, “clean” and “unclean” describe a person’s or thing’s condition under Israel’s worship laws; they are not simply words for being washed or dirty. The priests also had to teach God’s instructions faithfully.

The rule about drink appears after the deaths of Nadab and Abihu. However, the chapter never directly says they were drunk. We can explain the command without claiming more than the text tells us.

1 Peter 1:13-16

13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Peter teaches followers of Jesus to prepare their minds, practice self-control, and place their hope in God's grace. "Gird up the loins of your mind" is a picture of getting ready to think and act. "Conversation" here means our whole way of life.

Peter calls them obedient children. Holiness grows in the life of people who belong to their Father. A clear mind helps us notice what God says and make wise choices. At home, at school, or at work, we can pause before acting and ask what would honor Him.

4. Receive God's provision with care

Leviticus 10:12-13

12 And Moses spake unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons that were left, Take the meat offering that remaineth of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and eat it without leaven beside the altar: for it is most holy:

13 And ye shall eat it in the holy place, because it is thy due, and thy sons' due, of the sacrifices of the LORD made by fire: for so I am commanded.

Moses reminded Aaron and his sons about the grain offering. The older expression “meat offering” means a food or grain offering here. God had assigned part of it to the priests, to be eaten without leaven in the holy place. Even their meal was part of their service.

Leviticus 10:14-15

14 And the wave breast and heave shoulder shall ye eat in a clean place; thou, and thy sons, and thy daughters with thee: for they be thy due, and thy sons’ due, which are given out of the sacrifices of peace offerings of the children of Israel.

15 The heave shoulder and the wave breast shall they bring with the offerings made by fire of the fat, to wave it for a wave offering before the LORD; and it shall be thine, and thy sons’ with thee, by a statute for ever; as the LORD hath commanded.

Other portions came from the peace offerings and could be eaten by the priest's sons and daughters in a clean place. "Thy due" means the portion assigned to them. The instructions both honored God and provided food for the priestly household.

These were specific rules for Israel's priests. A practical lesson for us is to receive God's gifts with gratitude and use what He entrusts to us carefully. Food, time, abilities, and opportunities to serve deserve thankful attention.

5. Listen before reaching a conclusion

Leviticus 10:16-18

16 And Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin offering, and, behold, it was burnt: and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron which were left alive, saying,

17 Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD?

18 Behold, the blood of it was not brought in within the holy place: ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place, as I commanded.

Moses discovered that the goat for the sin offering had been burned. He became angry because he expected the priests to eat its appointed portion. The blood had not been taken inside the sanctuary, so he believed the instructions required them to eat it in the holy place.

The words about bearing the people's sin describe the priests' God-given role in the sacrifice and atonement. They did not mean the priests could personally remove sin by their own power. They were carrying out the service God had assigned.

Leviticus 10:19-20

19 And Aaron said unto Moses, Behold, this day have they offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD; and such things have befallen me: and if I had eaten the sin offering to day, should it have been accepted in the sight of the LORD?

20 And when Moses heard that, he was content.

Aaron answered by pointing to the terrible loss he had suffered that day. He asked whether eating the offering under those circumstances would have pleased the Lord. Moses listened and accepted his answer. The chapter ends with a conversation and understanding.

Aaron's concern was still what would be acceptable to God. This is not a general permission to set aside His instructions whenever we wish. It does remind us to listen carefully when a situation involves real suffering and responsibilities we may not fully understand.

James 1:19-22

19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

James tells us to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry. “Meekness” means a humble willingness to receive instruction. The difficult words in verse 21 call us to put away evil and welcome God’s Word into our lives.

Hearing should lead to doing. Imagine a friend misses a responsibility. Before accusing them, ask what happened and listen. You can care about doing what is right while also treating your friend with patience. Then work together on the next right step.

6. Jesus opens the way to the Father

Hebrews 10:15-18

15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

Hebrews brings us to God’s covenant promise: His instruction written in hearts and minds, and sins forgiven. A covenant is a relationship established by God with promises and responsibilities. His mercy reaches our inner life and changes how we respond to Him.

“Remission” means forgiveness. The passage says that where sins have been forgiven, another offering for sin is no longer needed. The verses that follow show us why we can approach God: Jesus has opened the way through His own blood.

Hebrews 10:19-23

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

21 And having an high priest over the house of God;

22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

Our confidence comes from Jesus giving His life for us and serving as our High Priest. Hebrews uses the language of the sanctuary and its curtain to explain the way He has opened. Because of Him, we are invited to draw near with sincere hearts and trust.

God’s holiness and this invitation belong together. We come through the way He provides and take His words seriously. The passage tells us to hold firmly to our faith because the One who promised is faithful. Our hope rests on Him.

7. Let love become willing obedience

John 14:15-17

15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Jesus connected love for Him with keeping His commandments. To keep them means to treasure and obey what He teaches. In the same passage, He promised the Holy Spirit, called the Comforter and the Spirit of truth, to remain with His disciples.

We can ask the Holy Spirit to help us live what Jesus taught. Obedience is a response to the Lord we love. It becomes practical when we tell the truth, listen patiently, turn away from wrongdoing, and care for another person.

1 John 2:1-2

1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

John writes so that believers will not sin. He also tells them where to turn if they do: to Jesus Christ the righteous. An “advocate” is someone who speaks on another’s behalf. Jesus represents us before the Father.

“Propitiation” speaks of Jesus as the sacrifice that deals with our sins before God. His mercy is good news for the whole world. We can take sin seriously, turn from it, and trust Him for forgiveness. A listening heart keeps returning to Jesus and learning His way.

Talk about it with friends

1. What does the chapter actually say Nadab and Abihu did wrong? Why should we avoid adding details it does not give?

2. What were the priests responsible for teaching? How can a clear mind help us serve others?

3. What happened when Moses listened to Aaron? Where do you need to listen more patiently?

4. According to Hebrews, why can we approach our holy God with confidence?

5. How do Jesus and John connect obedience with love, help, and mercy?

Put it into practice today

Take a quiet moment to thank the Father for the way Jesus has opened. Read one passage again and ask, “What does this show me about God? What response does it call for?” Keep your answer connected to what the passage actually says.

Choose one step of obedience: listen before answering, speak honestly, ask forgiveness for a wrong choice, or help someone who is grieving. Ask the Holy Spirit for help and take that step today. You can discuss what you learned without sharing private details.

A verse to remember

John 14:15

15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

Read these words of Jesus aloud. Remember one thing He teaches you to do, and let your love for Him shape your response.

Let’s pray together

Father, You are holy, faithful, and good. Thank You for bringing us near through Jesus. Give us clear minds, humble hearts, and patience with people. Teach us to listen carefully and obey Your Word. When we sin, help us turn to You and receive the mercy You provide. Holy Spirit, help us honor Jesus in our choices today. In His name, amen.

I love you, my friends. Come near to the Father through Jesus, listen with a humble heart, and take the next step of obedience with His help.

Scripture and sources

Scripture text was checked against the King James Version published by eBible.org. The complete verses are reproduced with their historical wording. Verse numbers and layout are adapted for reading; editorial footnotes are omitted. Tap any Scripture reference to view its source.

Bible edition and text