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

Torah Studies

Connecting the Torah and Jesus

STUDY 19

Love That Honors God

Day 19 · Leviticus 18

Learn how belonging to God shapes our relationships. Read Leviticus 18 with clear explanations, Jesus' teaching about marriage, questions, and prayer.

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

Father, help us listen with humble hearts. Teach us to honor You with our bodies and relationships, protect others, and receive Your guidance. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Leviticus 18 speaks to Israel after God rescued them from Egypt. It sets boundaries for family life, sexual relationships, and worship. Some wording is difficult. We will explain it respectfully, remembering that these commands first belonged to God’s covenant with Israel.

Main truth: Belonging to God changes how we treat people and how we use our bodies.

1. Let God guide your choices

Leviticus 18:1-5

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the LORD your God.

3 After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances.

4 Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the LORD your God.

5 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD.

Israel was not to copy every custom of Egypt or Canaan. The repeated words “I am the LORD” explain why: they belonged to Him. A popular choice is not automatically a wise choice. God’s instruction was meant to shape their whole life, including choices made in private.

2. Family relationships need protection

Leviticus 18:6-11

6 None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the LORD.

7 The nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover: she is thy mother; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.

8 The nakedness of thy father’s wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father’s nakedness.

9 The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, whether she be born at home, or born abroad, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover.

10 The nakedness of thy son's daughter, or of thy daughter's daughter, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover: for theirs is thine own nakedness.

11 The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father, she is thy sister, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.

The expression "uncover nakedness" describes sexual relations in these laws. God forbids such relations with close family members. Family is meant to be a place of care and trust. No one should use family closeness, authority, or secrecy to take advantage of another person.

Leviticus 18:12-18

12 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father’s sister: she is thy father’s near kinswoman.

13 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother’s sister: for she is thy mother’s near kinswoman.

14 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father’s brother, thou shalt not approach to his wife: she is thine aunt.

15 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter in law: she is thy son’s wife; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.

16 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother’s wife: it is thy brother’s nakedness.

17 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, neither shalt thou take her son’s daughter, or her daughter’s daughter, to uncover her nakedness; for they are her near kinswomen: it is wickedness.

18 Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time.

The instructions continue through other family relationships and forbid taking a wife’s sister as a rival while the wife is alive. These are serious limits, not permission to search for loopholes. Someone who has been harmed by another person is not responsible for that person’s wrongdoing. Tell a safe, trusted adult if someone is hurting you.

3. Honor life, worship, and faithfulness

Leviticus 18:19-23

19 Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for her uncleanness.

20 Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour’s wife, to defile thyself with her.

21 And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.

22 Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.

23 Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion.

These verses address several distinct matters: Israel's rules about menstruation, adultery, giving children to Molech, sexual relations between males, and relations with animals. The chapter forbids these practices within Israel's covenant life. We should read what each command says without using these verses to insult, threaten, or mistreat anyone.

Adultery means breaking marriage faithfulness through a sexual relationship with someone else's spouse. The command about Molech rejects sacrificing children in false worship. Our desires never give us permission to betray a promise or harm another person. Love includes faithfulness, self-control, and care for vulnerable people.

4. Israel was accountable too

Leviticus 18:24-30

24 Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you:

25 And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants.

26 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you:

27 (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;)

28 That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you.

29 For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people.

30 Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the LORD your God.

The warning about the land “vomiting out” its people is a strong picture of judgment and removal from the land. Israel could not assume that being God’s people made disobedience harmless. Native Israelites and foreigners living among them were both addressed. God’s people were called to practice holiness, not simply claim a special name.

5. Follow Jesus in faithful love

Matthew 19:4-6

4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

When asked about divorce, Jesus pointed back to God's creation of male and female and the joining of husband and wife. He called people to honor the marriage bond. Following Him means treating covenant promises seriously and refusing to treat another person as disposable.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

Paul teaches believers to turn away from sexual immorality and live in holiness and honor. “Sanctification” means being set apart for God and learning to live His way. God gives His Holy Spirit to help His people. This is a call to an honest, changed life, with respect for others and obedience to God.

Talk it over with friends

1. Why is popularity a poor guide for deciding right and wrong?

2. How can a family protect trust and safety?

3. What do Jesus and Paul teach us about faithful relationships?

Put it into practice

Choose one boundary that helps you honor God and respect others, such as refusing a harmful secret, avoiding sexual content, or keeping a promise. Ask God for help to follow through.

A verse to carry with you

1 Thessalonians 4:7

7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

God calls us to a life that belongs to Him.

Let’s pray together

Father, shape our relationships with Your truth and love. Help us be faithful, protect others, and ask for help when we need it. Give us courage to turn from wrongdoing and follow Jesus through the strength of Your Spirit. In Jesus’ name, amen.

I love you, my friends.

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