

Dec 13, 2015



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks
Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
We disarm the power of money
by giving it away

POEM FOR THE WEEK:
Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee,
Repaid a thousand-fold will be;
Then gladly will we give to Thee,
Who givest all—who givest all. —
Wordsworth

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
*I have shown you in every way, by
laboring like this, that you must
support the weak. And remember
the words of the Lord Jesus, that He
said, 'It is more blessed to give than
to receive' (Acts 20:35 NKJV)*
(from "Our Daily Bread", Feb 21, 2014)

**Series: SACRED GIFTS AND
HOLY GATHERINGS**

UNIT: What We Bring to God

NEXT WEEK

**Dedication of the
Firstborn
(Lev 22:17-25, 31-33)**

Acceptable Offerings

Lev 22:17-25, 31-33

Aim and Application of the Lesson

The lesson provides the principles behind God's requirements for **Acceptable Offerings**. The **study's aim** is to show that when we comply with God's instructions and expressed principles, we are obeying Him and owning Him as our God. The **study's application** is to arrange our thinking and actions so that when we do give, we will do it as God instructed, not as we think best.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Lesson Introduction and Background

If a survey were taken of Christians regarding which of the 66 books of the Bible is the least appealing or most confusing, Leviticus would probably rank in the top three. Who knows how many well-meaning individuals have determined to read through the Bible in a year, only to find themselves bogging down when they reach Leviticus! They are bewildered (and perhaps a bit upset) by the constant references to the sacrificing of animals and to blood. Further, regulations about ceremonially clean and unclean foods seem far removed from life in the twenty-first century. Rather than focusing on the details of the laws and regulations when studying Leviticus, perhaps it is more helpful to consider the book's primary themes of sacrifice and holiness, both of which play prominent roles in the New Testament as well. Sacrifice is important because of Jesus' supreme, once-for-all offering of himself on the cross (Hebrews 9:24-28) and because of the responsibility of his followers to offer themselves as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1). Holiness is crucial because the holiness imperative in Leviticus 19:2 is repeated in 1 Peter 1:15, 16 in instructing Christians how to live.

Why did an offering have to be perfect if it was going to be burned up anyway? Wouldn't the concept of grace be taught more effectively by accepting offerings with flaws? And aren't God's standards teaching his people to look down on individuals who have certain "flaws," whatever they might be (compare Leviticus 21:16-23)? One must keep in mind when studying the laws concerning Old Testament offerings that undergirding all of them is the holiness of God. Throughout the book of Leviticus, the principle stated in Leviticus 22:32 in today's text is emphasized. It is vital that God's holiness not be compromised in any way and that His people learn to honor that holiness in every detail of their lives. So the requirements given in the Law of Moses regarding offerings are not there because God is a demanding, ruthless tyrant. Rather, they are there to impress upon those who present offerings the nature of the one being worshipped. And in the bigger picture of humanity's redemption, God's requiring "the best" prepares for how he one day offers his own best—his sinless Son—as the perfect sacrifice to die for imperfect people (1 Peter 1:18, 19). Under the new covenant, giving is not measured in terms of the kind of animals we offer. The New Testament's teaching on giving is centered more on certain principles, one of which is that the heart or motivation of the giver must be in tune with God's desires. Paul tells the Corinthians, for example, "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). Of course, we should be quick to add that sincere motivation and heartfelt obedience mattered under the old covenant too. As Samuel told King Saul, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22; compare Mark 12:33). Victor Hugo (1802-1885) wrote, "You can give without loving, but you can never love without giving." If we love God and make obedience to his will a daily priority, the proper kind of giving will follow.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

COMMAND REGARDING OFFERINGS (LEV 22:17-19)

Keeping vows and freewill promises (17-18)

Keep vows because they are a witness before God (Josh 24:14-22)

Keep vows because we must do everything we say (Num 30:1-2)

Keep vows because God will demand completion (Deut 23:21-23)

Never hastily or rashly give a vow (Proverbs 20:25)

Firstfruit offerings (19)

Giving of firstfruits that honors God (Prov 3:9)

Giving of firstfruits that are offered to God (Lev 2:12)

Giving of firstfruits that come from what God has given (Deut 26:1-2)

Giving of firstfruits as tithes to the Church (Mal 3:10)

Giving of firstfruits that come from abundance to supply the lacking of others (2 Cor 8:14)

RESTRICTIONS REGARDING OFFERINGS (LEV 22:20-25)

No defects (20-24)

No defects because it is wrong (Mal 1:8)

No defects because God is not pleased with them (Hos 8:13)

No defects because God will not accept them (Mal 1:10)

No defects because they are detestable to God (Deut 17:1)

No defects because it is cheating God (Mal 1:14)

No corrupted offerings received from others (25)

Because the same rules apply even for offerings from others (Num 15:14-16)

Because the accountability is on the believer (Num 16:40)

Because it could cause desecration of the offering (Ezek 44:7)

PRINCIPLES BEHIND ACCEPTABLE OFFERINGS (LEV 22:31-33)

Keeping holy commands (31-32)

Keeping commands through love (John 14:15)

Keeping commands is an obligation (Rom 8:12-14)

Keeping commands regardless of circumstances (Dan 3:16-18)

Keeping commands through suffering (Heb 5:8)

Keeping commands that lead to righteousness (Rom 6:16)

Keeping commands that show love for God (1 John 5:2-3)

Being sanctified by God (32-33)

Sanctification by the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:2)

Sanctification through the blood of Jesus (Heb 9:13-14)

Sanctification by setting apart Jesus as Lord in your heart (1 Peter 3:15)

Sanctification by presenting our bodies as a slave to God (Rom 6:19)