

# Leviticus - Truth and Evangelism

by Paul Washer

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*Paul Washer emphasizes the relevance of Leviticus in understanding God's holiness and the importance of integrating evangelism into everyday life through genuine relationships and prayer.*

**Duration:** 25:14

**Scripture:** Leviticus 19:32, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Evangelism"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of personal evangelism and shares practical tips on how to engage with others about the Gospel. He encourages believers to be discerning and prayerful for opportunities to share their faith. The speaker also highlights the significance of being respectful and polite when discussing spiritual matters, recognizing that not everyone may be open to hearing the message. He emphasizes the need to listen to others and show genuine interest in their lives as a way to build relationships and find opportunities to share the Gospel.

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## Transcript

Well, they say that Leviticus is the one book most responsible for keeping people from reading through the Bible. But honestly, the book of Leviticus a few years ago came more to life for me. A good thing to try to do is study the book of Leviticus in light of the book of Hebrews.

And the fact that all those tedious laws are there actually are a great encouragement to me in that they prove to me just how free we are in Christ and just how much Christ accomplished on our behalf. Now, there are principles throughout the book of Leviticus where a lot of people get in trouble. The book of Leviticus is kind of like people take it to extremes.

Either they go in there and try to find all sorts of dietary laws and everything that Jesus Himself said didn't apply to us today, or they take it and just totally discount the book as something that's of no use to a Christian. But what we find there in the book of Leviticus, first of all, is that God is holy. That's the main thing of that book.

And that's why it's so important to study it in light of the book of Hebrews. Because we see how the demands of God's holiness were met in the person of Christ. But also in the book of Leviticus, there are all sorts of sundry laws that can be the means for us to obtaining biblical principles.

I'll give you an example. That the young are to stand up in the presence of the aged. Things like that.

Also, the punishments that we see for certain types of sins show us how serious we ought to take our social relationships. For example, today, children are not in danger of being stoned for their rebellion against their parents. But if you look at how much God hates the rebellion of children against their parents in the book of Leviticus, as a child you can begin to see, I don't need to do this.

I should not do this. So the book of Leviticus can be quite tedious. At the same time, it can reap a great deal of benefit for us.

So we could take a look at the law and how it applies to the Christian today. Sometimes we lament at how little the truth has changed us. But I don't know, guys.

Sometimes I look back on what I was prior to coming to know Christ and I say, well, I may not be all that, but I'm definitely not what I was. Another thing that I think is important to understand is you say you feel like the truth has changed you so little, but how much have you worked at the truth changing you? You see, what we do is we get something in our head. We learn something.

And we think, okay, we learned it. It should change us. That's not really how it works.

There's the discipline of prayer, of constantly renewing our mind in that truth, of repenting, things like that. Well, with regard to evangelism, we have to be very, very careful about certain things. Anytime you institutionalize something, you know, I'm going to go to church.

Have you ever thought about that statement? I mean, if there ever was an unbiblical statement, I'm going to go to church. It's not nearly as bad, but we also have to be careful with the phrase let's go do evangelism. It turns into almost like we're going hunting.

Now, I know that the metaphor is used in the New Testament of fishing, and that is appropriate, but we need to be careful that evangelism doesn't become some ministry independent or additional to our life. What we want to have is a life. Not something that, you know, someone has their quiet time, and they go, well, I did that, and then they turn it off and they go do the rest of their day, or I'm going to go do evangelism, so at 4.30 I'm going to turn on evangelism, and that's what I'm going to do.

And then on the way home, when I'm pumping gas in my car at 8.30 at night and someone says hello to me, I don't really think about evangelism because I already did that. I'm coming back from there. So evangelism, it must be a lifestyle.

And a lifestyle requires something very important. It requires... I'm hearing sounds everywhere. That's alright.

I thought I was hearing angels or something. I didn't know what that sound was. No, that's no problem.

Do you need to talk to Tim? Okay. Where was I? Oh, yes. It needs to be a lifestyle.

You know there's something terrible about a lifestyle. You can't fake it. You can't fake it.

It's just like when someone says... someone never renews their mind in the Word of God, and then they need to know what God's will is, so they go to the Bible. They haven't developed a lifestyle of renewing their mind in the will of God, so they really don't know the will of God. But they're going to go to the Word

now as though it had an index in it to tell them where to go exactly in order to know the will of God.

You see, we're to constantly be renewing our minds so that we might know the will of God. In the same way, a person who's constantly renewing his mind in the Word and a person who is praying and a person who is filled with the Holy Spirit is going to witness. And when they don't witness and there's an opportunity to do so, the Spirit is going to make it quite clear to them.

Do you remember some of you when you were brand new believers and how the Spirit of God would be leading you to witness to your friends and things? And an opportunity would come up and you didn't do it and you knew immediately you were wrong. Isn't it amazing that now opportunities can come up and you're dull to the fact that you missed a great opportunity? That tells you how cold our hearts can become. Now, in evangelism, I think there is something very, very important that needs to be said today and that is the idea of being respectful and polite.

I sit down in a plane beside someone and usually what I'll do is I'll have my Bible with me and I'll lay my Bible out there and be reading it or something like that and usually the person will look over and if I start a conversation, we begin to talk. But if I begin to talk to that person about spiritual things and they don't want to hear it, they don't care, either I can tell it by the fact they just clam up or they say, listen, I just don't want to talk about that. I'm not going to talk about it.

It's not a badge of honor because I keep going to the point of being obnoxious. I have opened myself up to witness to them and things like that, but when they say no, they don't want to hear it, then I'm not going to keep going. Neither am I going to clam up.

What am I going to do? I'm going to serve them. I'm going to talk about the things that they want to talk about. Why? Because when they get off that plane, I do not want them saying, man, to their friend that they meet in the bar after they get out of the airplane, they go, man, I was sitting for three hours with this obnoxious evangelical.

No, what I want is I want them to get off the plane thinking, you know, I really did wrong. That guy just wanted to talk to me about his religion. I was rude.

And in the rest of the plane, he was still very kind to me and open and wanting to know everything about me. You see? It is our kindness that brings about repentance in the life of people. Now, with evangelism, some people will, and it's true, I've heard this statement, I forget who said it, but they said work your way around the rim of someone's life until you find a crack.

Look for a door to go through in their life through which you can witness. So you get in a conversation and maybe you bring up like something, man, I just don't know where the world is going to today. You know, things are bad.

Yes, they are bad. And then you try to direct that toward a Gospel presentation. Well, there's some truth in that, and that can be done, but be very, very cautious.

We are not about tricking people into letting them let us share the Gospel. Sometimes what I have done after I've talked to people, and really nothing naturally came up that would open the door to the Gospel like what do you do, or tell me about yourself, I'll look at them and I'll simply say, and this has worked on a plane and in many, many different situations, I'll just look at them and say, you know, we've been talking for a long time and I've really enjoyed the conversation, but I'm a Christian and would it be alright if I

shared with you about my faith for a few minutes? I'm not trying to sneak in through the back door. I'm not trying to manipulate the conversation.

I'm simply being honest. I had a guy one time, he told me, and I had no reason not to believe him, he told me that he had been an assistant aide to George Bush Sr. I got on the plane, sat down beside this guy, began talking to him, and he asked me what I did, and I told him, and I asked him if I could share my faith with him, and this is what he said. He said, we've got about six hours or more until we arrive in Dulles, Washington D.C. And he said, you know, I've always wondered about Christianity.

I mean, my folks are Dutch Reform and things like that, but could you just take the time that we've got and share with me about the history of Christianity? You know, that doesn't come along all the time, but it does come along. And what I want you to see is that don't be fake. Don't have a sales pitch.

Just be, hopefully, what you are. A Christian filled with the Holy Spirit, genuinely concerned in setting out to serve someone. I used to tell, when I teach university students on doing evangelism, I told them that a testimony from my own life is that before I became a Christian, I mean, there got to a point where I really did become very introvert, but normally it wasn't that difficult for me to speak with someone.

If I was walking across campus and needed to sit down and look at a book for a while, someone was sitting on a park bench, I could sit down beside them, open my book, start studying, talk to them, normal conversation. But I noticed that after I became a Christian, I'd be walking across the campus and if I saw someone sitting on a park bench, I'd freak out. I'd start getting all nervous.

I'd start getting butterflies. It's like I've got a witness to this person. What do I do? What do I say? And what if they reject me? And one day I just realized this is absolutely insane.

Why don't I just sit down beside the person like I used to? Why don't I just talk to them? And why don't I just pray for an opportunity? Be discerning. And just be a nice person. And God opens up the doors.

Because usually it's always going to come around to what do you do or what do you like or what are you all about? Another thing about evangelism that's very important is there are times when you're going to meet someone and you know you only have a few minutes. Then you need to be direct and say, listen, may I share the Gospel with you or hand them a track or something. But if you know that it's sort of a thing that could be an ongoing relationship, then you still need to be urgent, but you need to think about that ongoing relationship.

You know, we don't really do that and you want to know why? It's because we're so superficial and we're so lacking in love. You know, we just want to do it and then get away from them. One time I was witnessing at the University of Texas and this guy looked at me and he goes, and it was really cutting, he looked at me and he goes, you're just witnessing.

You don't care about me. He goes, you don't want to be my friend. You don't want to know anything about me.

And you see, that's sometimes how we come off and maybe sometimes it's how we truly are. Do we really care about the person to build a relationship with them? You see? Serve them? And in a context like what we have here, we live in this area. This is not a gigantic area.

This is not New York City. If we meet someone, we could meet them again. We need to work on building relationships.

Now, another thing that is very important is this. You get what you pray for. People who say, you know, I really want to witness, but I never get the opportunity.

First of all, I believe they're probably not looking for the opportunity. But also, you pray and ask God to open up doors to allow you to witness, He is going to open up doors faster than you can go through them. You know, Colossians 4, Paul says pray for an open door for the Word and then pray that they have wisdom.

They might be able to share the Word clearly and boldly. You need to start asking God to give you opportunities. Now, when you talk about your faith, I'll give you a few more things and then we're just going to have to cut off.

When you talk about your faith, don't be giddy. Don't be cool. Don't be trite.

Don't even be nonchalant about it. And what I mean is, you know, I see attempts today to mimic the foolishness or the coolness of the world. Don't do that.

You need to be a person who's friendly. You need to be a person who can laugh, a jovial person. But when you start talking about your faith, have a seriousness to you.

Not a sternness, not a coldness, but it's like when I look at someone and I say, you know, man, we've had a good time talking and I've really enjoyed it, but can I share with you my faith in Jesus Christ? Because I want you to know it's the most important thing to me that there is. And being the most important thing, I most certainly would want to share it with you. When you talk about sin and things like that, don't be trite.

Don't be silly. Don't kind of tap them on the shoulder and smile and go, hey, you know, we're all sinners. Don't do that.

It's like telling someone, you know, slapping them on the shoulder and saying, well, you know, we all got cancer. It's not what we do. It's a serious, serious matter.

A serious matter. Another thing, and this is so funny, this happened to me years ago. The first time I ever preached a so-called revival or evangelistic meeting, it was in northern Ohio.

And I was with this pastor and we're just going door to door. Well, we're walking down the sidewalk and there's this big evergreen tree. And I was getting ready to go around it and I saw on the front porch there, there was a man, an old man seated there.

And I got ready to walk down the path and the pastor just grabbed me from the back and pulled me behind the tree and he said, don't go up there. I said, why? He said, man, that old man, he'll cuss you out. He'll yell and all this stuff.

And I said, he's an old man. What is he going to do to me? So he calls me a few names, you know. So, I went up there and he was sitting on a swing and there was kind of a seat in front of that and I just sat down.

It was like a bench. And I sat down. And he looked at me real grumpy, you know, and I said, hey.

He goes, hey. You could tell he was putting up this big front, you know. So I started talking to him.

I said, so, what's your name? He goes, you don't care. And I go, yes I do. I wouldn't be sitting here if I didn't care.

And he told me. And I said, so, how are you doing? Horrible. Well, why? I have to admit that in my flesh one of the reasons why I was being so inquisitive is because I enjoyed the fact that the pastor was having to stand this whole time behind that evergreen tree.

That is really true. But what went on, though, for the next hour and a half, I asked him one question after another about him. Now here's something I want you to see.

Everybody wants to share about themselves. Everybody wants to talk about themselves. And no one wants to listen.

No one wants to listen. And so I listened to that man from somewhere around an hour and a half to an hour and 45 minutes. I don't know exactly how long it was, but it was long.

And when we got done, he said, well, you've listened to me. Now, alright, I'll listen. What do you want to tell me? Now, he didn't come to Christ, to my knowledge, at least while I was there, but I got to share the full Gospel with him.

So one of the things about sharing Christ with people, and I really don't like to use this word, but I have to, is just be normal. Be a human being. Folks, I mean, they can tell, can't they, the moment you come up with some canned approach.

They can tell. Now there are certain things you can do and certain even questions and ways of presenting the Gospel that you can learn that are very beneficial. But be very, very careful.

These are people. They bleed when they get cut. They have different color eyes, different color hair.

They have different needs, different problems. So just love them. Love them.

Sit down and let them talk to you. And God will use that. He really will.

You talk about, they're going to look at you like, what is the deal? They really are, because they're going to sit there and go, you know, nobody cares. This guy is sitting here talking to me, not talking about himself, but listening to me. Now, just to close, I want you to think about this.

How many people, the moment they start into some witnessing, they just take over the conversation? You ever notice that? It's all about just, I'm going to get this message to you. Well, it is all about us getting a message to them, but I would submit to you that if we would spend a lot more time listening and inquiring, not just... I have a question for you. If you died right now, where would you go? But I have a question for you.

Who are you? What do you care about? I mean, that will shock people. It will literally shock them. It will.

I think it's important too when you're witnessing or when you're talking to someone, sometimes I will use humor in this way. I'll go, listen, I don't want you to get scared or anything or jump out of the plane, but I'm a Christian. And I said, I know when I say that to you, I know all the things that are probably popping up in

your head.

You're thinking TV evangelist. You're thinking some radical, fundamental, right-wing, conservative, this and that. And I said, so when I say Christian, I'm probably not meaning what you're thinking.

So can I explain to you what I mean by that? And a lot of the things that the hippies thought and that even people today, more liberal think, but do not practice, are actually Christian ideals that have been separated from Christ. And so, you know, I'll say, just ask me some questions. Ask me about war.

What do I think about war? Ask me about poverty. You know, and get them to see, hey, you guys didn't come up with this stuff. Christ did.

Because you always have to be very, very careful because if they're defining terms in a different way than you are, then they're turned off and offended by you for something you're not even trying to teach them. Something you're not. And you've heard the best offense is a good defense.

Well, the best defense is a good offense. And what I mean by that is you just start instead of that person looking at you and asking you and bombarding you with questions about your faith, ask them about theirs. Start asking them why.

Why do you believe that? You give someone enough rope and they'll hang themselves. I mean, when we were in India, this one man, he was this religious guide or whatever, and he was telling us all this stuff. And then he just made the statement, you know, all these people who are burned, these dead bodies that are burned here on the Ganges River, the flame is taken from that funeral pile there, that torch, which is an eternal torch.

And that flame must be taken from that torch in order to light the bodies and set them on fire. And he says it's eternal. It's been there for 3,000 years, some estimate.

And so I have a question. Yes. How can it be eternal and 3,000 years old at the same time? And you could just see him.

It just shook his world. It was like, well, I never thought of that before. You might want to think about that.

You give someone enough rope and they'll hang themselves. I was reading in Proverbs today, and we ought to keep this in mind when we're witnessing, a lot of words, there's going to be sin in there somewhere. And we need to be careful.

Don't make some claim that you then can't pull primary sources to back it up, or you will look very, very foolish. ...the ministry, our purpose, beliefs, and methodologies, and extensive information about the missionaries we are privileged to serve.

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