

Life Group Lesson

Soul Detox Week 6 • Week of February 20

Introduction

Several years ago, stopped by a traffic signal at a busy intersection in Greensboro, I recall looking out the passenger window and noticing a little flock of birds pecking away at whatever was tucked down in the roadside patch of grass—seeds, small insects—not sure. But as I watched the little birds pecking away in this tiny patch of vegetation, Jesus' words in Matthew 6:26 immediately came to mind, as well as *this* thought: Even though God provided food for these little birds, they are also doing their part. The birds are making the effort to eat it! Jesus said, "Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to Him than they are" (Matthew 6:26).

We are valuable to God and God loves us. Yet, we become sidetracked when we obsess over self and indulge in the wrong things – when we worry over things we can't control, obsess over money, weight or appearance, bow to unhealthy appetites or lusts of the flesh, when we forget the narrow road that leads to life and instead, exhaust ourselves in the never-ending search for beauty (Matthew 7:13-14). Hell wants to draw each of us away from the greater purpose to which God calls His children—a life of holiness, centered on Christ, loving God and loving others, and intent on Heaven (see Matthew 6:25-34, Matthew 13:44-45, also Colossians 3:1-4).

Too often we misunderstand grace. Although God's grace is seen throughout the Old and New Testaments (ultimately demonstrated through Christ's death on the cross) we somehow think we are entitled to grace. God's Word is clear: Grace is *not* earned, *not* something we are entitled to. Grace is not a pass to live life *our* way. But God's commands are beautiful and graciously given out of love in order to maximize the gift of salvation. God on His part has given instructions and we, on our part, are required to apply God's directives to our lives every day. Like a nice meal placed before us, someone put forth the effort to provide the food. We must be grateful and put forth the effort to eat it.

Background

Earning and effort are two different things. We cannot earn salvation. God has generously provided salvation through the birth, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. No one can refute or change what God has done. But it does take effort on our part to enjoy salvation. Grace plus effort equals holiness. Though we all fall short in *perfectly* obeying God's Law, we can press on toward perfection. We can ask the Holy Spirit to help us and actually experience God's presence as we *do* His will. Jesus said, "Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the Law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose" (Matthew 5:17). God's Law is an expression of God's Kingdom. His Word is foundational to citizenship in Heaven (see Psalm 19:7-11 and Philippians 3:20).

What does it mean to be holy? The Levitical Law was given to the Israelites in the wilderness in order to prepare them to be God's People, a people set apart for Him and ready to occupy the land He had promised their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For us today, holiness is a fully devoted Christ-follower resolving to be 'set apart' and live for God's glory through the ups and downs of life. Does this imply a 'Holier-than-thou attitude'? Absolutely not; pride like this bumps up against idolatry if we try to take Christ's place as Judge. Holiness is simply asking the Holy Spirit to fill you, take the lead, and shine through you in a practical, genuine way. The first commandment—"I am the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. You must not have any other god but me" (Exodus 20:2-3) is the watershed for all other nine commandments. Put God first. Jesus said in Matthew 6:33: "Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need" (see also Mark 12:28-34).

Reading the Text

Read Leviticus 19:1-19a

Deeper Application

(for discussion purposes, what 1-2 words stand out *to you* as you hear the Scripture read aloud)

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

2. What are you going to do about it?

3. How can we help you?

Close in a Time of Prayer

How can I pray for my fellow Life Group participants this week?



Text: Leviticus 19:1-19a, Matthew 6: 25-34,
Colossians 3: 1-4

PLAIN TRUTH:

A _____ obsession _____ the soul and brings
us _____.

One Year Bible Readings

Feb. 20: Leviticus 9:7-10:20, Mark 4:26-5:20, Psalm 37:30-40, Proverbs 10:6-7

Feb. 21: Leviticus 11:1-12:8, Mark 5:21-43, Psalm 38:1-22, Proverbs 10:8-9

Feb. 22: Leviticus 13:1-59, Mark 6:1-29, Psalm 39:1-13, Proverbs 10:10

Feb. 23: Leviticus 14:1-57, Mark 6:30-56, Psalm 40:1-10, Proverbs 10:11-12

Feb. 24: Leviticus 15:1-16:28, Mark 7:1-23, Psalm 40:11-17, Proverbs 10:13-14

Feb. 25: Leviticus 16:29-18:30, Mark 7:24-8:10, Psalm 41:1-13, Proverbs 10:15-16

Feb. 26: Leviticus 19:1-20:21, Mark 8:11-38, Psalm 42:1-11, Proverbs 10:17