

## Leviticus Chapter 15 – John Karmelich

1. The good news is this is our last lesson on horrible diseases. The bad is we still have to get through this last lesson on bad diseases. ☺
  - a) I call this lesson, “Understanding what is inside of us”. I’ll come back to that.
  - b) On the surface, this lesson is primarily about preventative health issues. It is God’s remedy for dealing with specific diseases. It also deals with issues regarding normal bodily functions. This chapter deals with things that are normally considered “private” such as menstrual periods, sexual diseases and semen “discharges”. There are underlying word-pictures that have applications to our lives as well.
  - c) If you thought the last two lessons were gross, you’ll love Chapter 15. ☺
2. Let me summarize the key points of this chapter:
  - a) Verses 1-15 deal with a male “bodily discharge”. Some believe it refers to everything from diarrhea to mucus. Some argue God is talking about venereal diseases such as gonorrhea. I warned you Chapter 15 is bad. ☺
    - i) The verses mostly deal with prevention so the disease does not spread.
    - ii) There are no verses on actually curing the disease. More on that later.
  - b) Verses 16-18 deal with “wetting the bed” from semen. This covers “accidents” as well as semen that spills during intercourse.
    - i) The primary issue is disease prevention. This is not condemning sexual acts.
  - c) Verses 19-24 deal with women’s menstrual period. The verses are about health practices during this time frame. It also discusses ceremonial “cleanness” during this time.
  - d) Verses 25-28 deal with women’s blood emission over and above normal menstrual periods (i.e., a female blood emission caused by an illness or injury).
  - e) Verses 29-33 are some summary verses and other points.
  - f) Still with me? Good. Hold off eating lunch and let’s finish the rest of the lesson. ☺
3. OK, John, what’s really going on here and why should I know this stuff?
  - a) First of all, there are health issues. This is more proof that God loves us. If He loves us, then He cares for us and wants us to be in good health. This chapter is full of verses about washing and quarantining someone during sickness. That practice was unheard of in the ancient world. It shows how God cares for those He loves even during times of sickness.
  - b) Next, there are the word-pictures God is trying to show us. This leads back to my title for this lesson: “understanding what is inside of us”.
    - i) First there are the word-pictures of sickness as sin.
    - ii) Over the last two chapters, we have dealt with the issues of leprosy and mold. Having leprosy mold does not mean one is going to hell. Leprosy and mold are word-pictures of sin. It is the idea that these things start small and grow. They are incurable on their own. The sin must be isolated to prevent it from spreading. These diseases can ultimately lead to death.
  - c) There is another pattern I want you to see:
    - i) First we dealt with the issue of leprosy. This is a skin disease. Skin is a word-picture of “the flesh”, which is our human nature. Sin mixed with “the flesh” is a deadly disease. Paul makes that point in Romans 6:16.
    - ii) Next, we dealt with mold. This is a living substance that can grow on clothing or on a house. It refers to what “covers” us. The word picture ties to sin “on the outside” affecting our lives.
    - iii) In this Chapter, we deal with “disease on the inside”. This is about our human nature inside of us. The word-pictures deal with our internal “sin problem”. It is the idea that even a forgiven Christian still sins because of what is inside of us.

4. This chapter, tied with the last two teaches us the nature of God and the nature of mankind:
  - a) We worship a perfect God. This perfect God cannot stand any sin whatsoever.
    - i) It doesn't matter if it is something "on us" like a sin we deal with every day.
      - a) That is the word-picture behind "leprosy".
    - ii) It doesn't matter if it is something "around us" (e.g., a temptation).
      - a) That is the word-picture behind "mold".
    - iii) It doesn't matter if it is an internal issue that comes out every now and then.
      - a) That is the model dealing with a temporary internal sickness.
  - b) Remember the big-theme of this section of Leviticus (Chapters 11-15) has to do with "Worshipping God in every day life". It is like asking God, "OK, I know how I am supposed to act when I go to church on Sunday, what about my life from Monday to Saturday?" The answer is this whole section of Leviticus. It is about our behavior with issues such as food, health and sickness. We tend to think of "worship" as the act of getting on our knees and either praying to God or praising God. The term "worship" also encompasses how we behave in everyday life. It is about acting differently in a way that is pleasing to God.
  - c) What about Christians and all of these laws? Are we required to obey them?
    - i) Remember that Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the law. (See Romans 8:4) The New Testament clearly teaches that Christians are not bound by all of the laws of the Old Testament. However, some of the laws obviously still apply. The commandments, "Do not steal" and "Do not murder" (Exodus 20) still apply. The New Testament is our guide on which laws still apply to us.
    - ii) This chapter has laws that are "practical". For health reasons alone, some of them would be good practice. When people are sick today, they are quarantined for the sake of society. It is not a binding requirement to quarantine, but it's a good idea.
    - iii) What we are to grasp from this chapter is the nature of God. It is the idea that God is perfect and can stand no sin whatsoever. While the daily living requirements for Christians are different for that of the Jewish nation of this day, it is important to grasp the idea that "God does not change". He still demands perfection from us in that we are to recognize that sin is wrong and He desires we turn from sin.
    - iv) On a practical basis, what we are to grasp from this final "disgusting" lesson is to understand what is inside of us. It is about understanding that there are issues on the inside of us that comes out every now and then. When they surface, we are to deal with them. This is not about being perfect all the time. This is about when such sins surface, God gives us word-pictures and models of how to deal with those sins. More on that as we approach those verses.
    - v) Again, this is the last chapter dealing with the "grossness" of sin that is inside of us. OK, let's all take a deep breath and start Verse 1. ☺
5. Verse 1: The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,
  - a) Again, Moses is the civil leader of the Israelites. Aaron is the religious leader. God spoke to both of them on this issue. When a person has one of these issues, they are "unclean", which means they are barred from joining public worship. Both the civil leaders and the priests have to be on the lookout for people with these issues.
6. Verse 2: "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: `When any man has a bodily discharge, the discharge is unclean.<sup>3</sup> Whether it continues flowing from his body or is blocked, it will make him unclean. This is how his discharge will bring about uncleanness:
  - a) First, we need to define the term "discharge". That is a polite way of saying some sort of disease that "oozes" out of a male. As I stated in the introduction, it is most likely is a case of diarrhea or mucus at the least, and some venereal diseases at the worst. Many bible commentators believe this discharge is the disease called gonorrhea today.

- i) Notice Verse 3 says whether it is “flowing from his body or is blocked”. In other words, whether or not it is coming out is not the issue. The issue is it is “there”.
  - b) The first half of this chapter is going to deal with male-specific issues. The second half will have to do with female-specific illnesses. That is why many commentators suspect this “male discharge” is more than just say, diarrhea, as any male or female can get this. Many believe the discharge refers to venereal disease issues like gonorrhea.
  - c) The point for you and me is that no matter what it is, the solution is the same: Isolate the person so the problem does not spread. More on that in the next set of verses.
- 7. Verse 4: `Any bed the man with a discharge lies on will be unclean, and anything he sits on will be unclean. <sup>5</sup> Anyone who touches his bed must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening. <sup>6</sup> Whoever sits on anything that the man with a discharge sat on must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening.
  - a) Most people have had diarrhea or some similar “discharge causing illness” at some time in their life. It was also common in that culture. If the person had other symptoms, they should be quarantined so it doesn’t spread. That is the idea being taught in these verses.
  - b) Here in these verses, it says in effect that anything that touches this sick person is also a way the disease can spread. Wash anything and everything that touches this sick person.
    - i) Today, we take such hygiene for grant it. It wasn’t until the late 1800’s when doctors started practicing washing between visiting patients and surgery. Modern medicine only caught up with the bible in recent times.
    - ii) In that ancient culture, this is another way the Israelites were to act differently from other surrounding nations. When Gentiles of that era got sick, all sorts of sacrifices and rituals were performed to other gods. Here, God is saying in effect, “Just keep the guy washed, isolate him and call me in the morning.” ☺
  - c) Notice it is not a death sentence. The text does not say, “If a person catches this disease, go out and shoot them because their lives are pretty much over.” ☺ It just says they are “unclean until evening”. In other words, “go home, quarantine yourself, wash up and you’ll be better soon.” While these verses are word-pictures of internal sin, I don’t want to ignore the practical aspects as well. It is about God protecting the health of the people that He loves. One reason God gives us this bible is for good health and protection.
  - d) Now let’s get back to our word-picture of “internal” sin. Let me try to give an illustration:
    - i) We may have had some terrible incident happen in our past. Let’s say it is some horrible incident from our past that surfaces every now and then. Occasionally that issue comes out and manifests itself with some bad behavior. We are not to blame that past circumstance for our sins and say, “I can’t help it, “this” happened to me and I can’t help how I react”. What we are to do is when such internal problems surface, we are to deal with them and “wash” that issue clean as much as possible. All of us have internal issues we have to deal with. Being aware of them helps us to deal with them. The key is not let our past problems manifest themselves in bad behavior.
- 8. Verse 7: `Whoever touches the man who has a discharge must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening. <sup>8</sup> `If the man with the discharge spits on someone who is clean, that person must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening. <sup>9</sup> `Everything the man sits on when riding will be unclean, <sup>10</sup> and whoever touches any of the things that were under him will be unclean till evening; whoever picks up those things must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening. <sup>11</sup> `Anyone the man with a discharge touches without rinsing his hands with water must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening. <sup>12</sup> `A clay pot that the man touches must be broken, and any wooden article is to be rinsed with water.
  - a) Here we have more verses about quarantining a sick person.

- i) Verse 7 says the sick person must wash and bathe and be “unclean” until evening.
  - a) That means the person is essentially isolated from society.
- ii) Verse 8 says if the sick person spits on someone, the “spit receiver” must wash.
  - a) We know today that germs can be spread through saliva.
- iii) Verse 9 says if the saddle of the sick person must be cleaned. The germs spread through the thin clothing of the desert climate.
- iv) Verse 10 says any clothing the sick person wears must be washed and cleaned.
- v) Verse 11 says that anybody the sick person touches must also wash.
- vi) Verse 12 says a clay pot the sick person touches must be broken and a wood article must be washed. Clay items are much easier to replace than wood items. Possibly the germs stick better to the clay than wood. I’m speculating on that one.
- b) Again, all of this sounds practical in today’s knowledge. Most of this is standard practice when going to a hospital. For 3,500 years, this was unpracticed by everyone other than in religious Jewish cultures. Historically, the Jewish nation has been spared of many of the great plagues through the centuries simply because they practiced this hygiene.
- c) OK John, I wash up before I eat, I wash my sheets and I rest when my stomach hurts. I know all of this. Why should I care about these verses? ☺
  - i) The word-pictures here are about how we deal with sins. The only way to kill a sin is to isolate it.
  - ii) James said, “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” (James 4:7-8 NIV).
    - a) Notice that James associates the avoidance of sin with “washing your hands”. See, I’m not the only one tying sinful behavior with “washing”!
  - iii) How does one “isolate” sin? The idea is to avoid it. James said, “Resist the devil and he will flee”. The idea of “resist” is to avoid the temptation in the first place.
  - iv) The classic illustration is that of charcoal. A bunch of hot charcoal briquettes together stays hot. Put one by itself, it will grow cold. One must isolate themselves from the sin itself.
  - v) Gee, does that mean the 20-year alcoholic just stops drinking? Of course not. There are usually other issues as well. At the same time, if they are serious about recovery, they must avoid the places that are tempting. Recovery centers isolate the person from what is causing the problem. They are “washed” and quarantined. The idea is similar to these verses.
  - vi) Every now and then Christians need to stop and take an inventory of sins that keep popping up from the inside. If you are not sure of your faults, ask your spouse. ☺ Pray to God the issues that He wants you to deal with. If you are single, ask your friends. A good friend will tell you the truth. To better ourselves as people we occasionally need to realize what is “inside of us” so we can deal with those uses.
  - vii) God desires a healthy relationship between Himself and us. That not only applies to physical health, but mental and emotional health. Any problems can block that relationship. We can’t draw close to God if we are busy dealing with such problems. Yes, we can and should ask God for help. If anything, God wants us to “wash ourselves” of this problem so we can live better lives.
  - viii) Will it go away in one moment? No. That doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try or at least take steps in the right direction. A good witness for Jesus (which should be all of our goals) requires us to check ourselves for sin and problems that stem from the “inside”. That is the overriding lesson of Chapter 15. Meanwhile, we still have many more disgusting verses to go! ☺

9. Verse 13: "When a man is cleansed from his discharge, he is to count off seven days for his ceremonial cleansing; he must wash his clothes and bathe himself with fresh water, and he will be clean.<sup>14</sup> On the eighth day he must take two doves or two young pigeons and come before the LORD to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and give them to the priest.<sup>15</sup> The priest is to sacrifice them, the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. In this way he will make atonement before the LORD for the man because of his discharge.
- a) In Verse 13 through 15 is what happens after the disease goes away. Notice there is no discussion of how to get better. These verses say in effect, "When the disease is over, here is what I want the no-longer-sick person to do in gratitude to God.
    - i) The mistake Christians make when we get better from a sickness is we just go on with our lives and never stop to thank God when we get better. When we are sick, we tend to pray for the sickness to end. When we get better, we tend to think it was "just our bodies naturally recovering on its own". We never stop to think that it is God that created our bodies in the first place and designed our bodies to fight diseases and recover from sickness.
    - ii) In other words, these verses are about gratitude. It is about showing gratitude to God when we recover from the illnesses described in the earlier verses.
  - b) As I stated in previous lessons, it is impossible to make it through a Leviticus bible study without at least once hitting the barbeque pit. ☺ The text says the person who is now "cleansed from his discharge" must go to the tabernacle and sacrifice two doves or pigeons. One bird is to be for a sin offering and one bird is to be for a burnt offering. This was the Old Testament method of showing gratitude for their recovery and then making a new commitment to God.
  - c) Did the person "sin" by getting sick? Do we have to confess our diarrhea as a sin? ☺ No.
    - i) Yes, the "discharge" is a word-picture of sickness, and in that sense, it is a sin. In reality, it is not a "true" sin as if there was a commandment that was violated.
    - ii) If you recall from early lessons, when a person offered say a sacrifice for sin, it was usually an expensive animal like a calf or a lamb. If the person couldn't afford such an animal, God would accept a "cheap" sacrifice like two birds. Here the only requirement is two birds. It is God's way of saying this "sin" is not as severe as others being described in the bible.
  - d) So why a sin sacrifice at all? The disease has made the person "unclean" for a short time period. I believe it is to remind the ex-sick person that sin still exists inside of us. Just because the sickness went away does not mean we are now sinless. We are still sinners by nature and need to be reminded of that every now and then.
    - i) It would be like a person wrongfully thinking, "I'm cured of my disease, now I can go live however I want. Or, I've been forgiven of all my sins. Now I can go out and sin all I want". Forgiveness is not a license to go sin. Receiving one's health after a period of illness does not mean we can go sin all we want. If anything, one needs to show gratitude to God for making us healthy again. This simple sacrifice is a word-picture of that gratitude.
  - e) Not only is there a sin sacrifice, but a "burnt offering". Again, a burnt offering is where a whole animal is burnt up. It is about making a commitment where our "whole" self is dedicated to God. Here is a formerly sick-person who is now healthy. The person can now say, "Thank You God for making me healthy again. Lying in bed, I was dependant upon You to make me better. Now that I am well again, let me commit my life toward serving You.
  - f) Does that mean every time we get sick and better we have to go sacrifice birds? No. ☺ What we should do is say in effect, "Thank You Lord for making me healthy and may my new healthy life be used for Your glory and Your will be done this day!"

10. Verse 16: "When a man has an emission of semen, he must bathe his whole body with water, and he will be unclean till evening.
- a) The topic is still on things that come out of the body. Now we deal with semen. I assume this applies to "wet dreams" as well as semen that spills when having sex.
  - b) Just when you thought this lesson was disgusting enough, we now hit a new low. ☺
  - c) OK, it's time to talk about physical sex itself:
    - i) God is not anti-sex. "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral." (Hebrews 13:4, NIV). This verse implies that marital sex is not a sin.
    - ii) God designed the idea of marriage. (Ref. Genesis 2:24) If our parents did not have a strong desire for sex, you and I wouldn't be around today. ☺
    - iii) Proverbs says, "May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth". (Proverbs 5:18 NIV). God desires that a married couple express their love for each other through sexual intercourse. It is not just for producing children, but as a way of expressing one's love to one's spouse.
  - d) OK, now that I've gotten that out of my system, let's talk about this verse. ☺
    - i) First, there is the issue of disease. It can be spread through semen. This is another practical issue of helping the Israelites stay healthy.
    - ii) The underlying word-picture has to do with our sin-nature. It is passed on from generation to generation. It is a genetic defect in all human beings. This genetic defect is literally passed on through the semen. God is getting that point out there to remind us of that fact.
    - iii) Finally, there is the issue of "life" itself. One of the big-picture ideas to get across in Leviticus is God cares about our lives here on earth. He wants us to have healthy productive lives that glorify Him. Wasted semen represented "wasted life". It is symbolic of death and must be cleansed.
      - a) If you ever feel "unlucky" in life, remember that the average ejaculation has several million sperm. Only one makes it to the egg. You and I are that lucky, fast sperm that outran millions. If you don't think you are special, consider yourself in that context! ☺
11. Verse 17: Any clothing or leather that has semen on it must be washed with water, and it will be unclean till evening.<sup>18</sup> When a man lies with a woman and there is an emission of semen, both must bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening.
- a) This chapter only has two verses on washing out the semen. Verse 17 says the clothes that have semen stains must be washed and the clothes themselves are "unclean" until evening. I guess that means you can't wear them to church right after sex. ☺
  - b) Verse 18 says both the man and woman must bathe right afterward and are "unclean" until that evening. It simply means they are to be isolated from the culture until evening.
    - i) Can't you just see a religious Jewish man coming home from work and trying to be funny, look at his wife and say, "Hey honey, how about you and I get ceremonially unclean until the next evening rolls around?" ☺
  - c) Notice there are no animal sacrifices to be performed after sex. There is no hint at all that somehow, marital sex is sinful practice. It is only "unclean" in that the time spent making love with one's spouse is to focus on one another and not God. When we come to church is the time to focus as a group upon God and He wants us "clean" during such times.
  - d) Some argue God does not want a couple to have sex right before going to church. The idea is to have some time to focus upon God before joining in worship. Let's face it, right after sex we are mentally focused on our spouses for a while. We don't feel like jumping out of bed and going to church right after making love to our spouses! For the Christian this is not a law requirement, just a "word-picture" to see in this context of these verses.

- e) There is another reason for this practice as well. It had to do with the culture of that time. Most of the pagan religions treated sex with religious-like status. For example, there are several references to “Baal worship” in the Old Testament. (E.g., 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 16:31-32, 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 10:28.) There were Baal-temple prostitutes that encouraged sex in these temples in order to sexually excite Baal. God is implying with these verses that sex is to be enjoyed by a married couple, but it is to be a private act between them.
    - i) In other words, God does not want marital sex to be part of public worship. It is designed to be a private matter between a married couple.
12. Verse 19: `When a woman has her regular flow of blood, the impurity of her monthly period will last seven days, and anyone who touches her will be unclean till evening.
- a) OK, we now switch topics again. We change topics from male semen ejaculation to female menstrual blood flow. Obviously, this chapter is not improving. ☺
    - i) Just so you know, things get better in Chapter 16. We switch topics completely.
      - a) Chapter 16 deals with the issue of all of Israel coming together for public worship. Before God can clean everyone “collectively”, He wants to deal with us individually. That means even dealing with personal, hygienic issues and diseases within us.
    - ii) In practical terms, God wants to clean what is inside of us in order to help us have a better relationship with Him.
  - b) Now, back to menstruation: ☺ For the male bachelors who flunked high school biology, every month of an adult female’s life from about the age of 13-55 (more or less) a woman’s body prepares for pregnancy. If she does not get pregnant during that 30-day cycle (more or less), the body releases some excess blood that was prepared for the baby during that cycle. There is usually a seven-day period where some blood is discharged. This time frame is called a “period”, which is short for a menstruation period.
  - c) What Verse 19 says in effect is, “Guys, back off your wives during this seven-day period”.
    - i) Because of this verse, practicing Orthodox Jewish men avoid having sex with their wives during this seven-day period. In such Jewish communities, there are women’s bathhouses to ritually cleanse themselves after their period ends. It is also common for young Jewish husbands to wait outside such bathhouses with flowers for their wives to come out so they take them home and attack them. ☺
  - d) The word-picture is about “life”. The idea is “dead blood” flows out that was not used for life. The same way “wasted semen” makes a male ceremonial unclean for a day is the same idea as women being unclean during their menstrual period.
    - i) It is God’s way of reminding us how precious life is and we are to cherish it.
    - ii) Whenever animal sacrifices are made, it is always “living” blood as the animals are killed. Here, “dead blood” comes out and the woman is temporarily unclean.
13. Verse 20: " `Anything she lies on during her period will be unclean, and anything she sits on will be unclean. <sup>21</sup> Whoever touches her bed must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening. <sup>22</sup> Whoever touches anything she sits on must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening. <sup>23</sup> Whether it is the bed or anything she was sitting on, when anyone touches it, he will be unclean till evening. <sup>24</sup> " `If a man lies with her and her monthly flow touches him, he will be unclean for seven days; any bed he lies on will be unclean.
- a) If you recall from earlier in the chapter, when a man “wets the bed” from semen, anything that dead semen touches must be washed. It is as if the dead semen is contaminated. It is treated as if it is a deadly disease to be eliminated. The same principal applies to blood on the sheets or on the clothes from menstrual periods. It is to be treated as if it has a disease.

- b) Just like the other requirements of this section, the first issue is the public health. By practicing this sanitary procedure, it protected the Israelites from spreading diseases. Again, there was no understanding of germs or contamination until the late 1800's. The bible was several thousand years ahead of modern medicine in hygiene practice.
  - c) The punishment for touching this blood is simply to be "unclean" for a period of time. If a woman touches her own blood, she is "unclean" until that evening. If a husband does it, he is "unclean" until the period is over. (That'll teach the husband for attacking her period! ☺) To be "unclean" means one has to be quarantined (isolated) from public life and one cannot go to public worship.
  - d) Does this mean Christians have to do the same practices? For health reasons we should. Guys, if the wife is home and bloated during this time, "lay off" for her sake. Technically Christians are not required to keep these laws, but for practical sake, it wouldn't hurt.
  - e) So why is menstrual blood "unclean"? Is it a sin?
    - i) Notice what is not said in this section: No sacrifices. There is no text saying in effect, "Girls, take a couple of birds and sacrifice them after your period ends".
    - ii) God laid out this set of rules for hygiene purposes and as a word picture. One's regular menstrual cycle is not shown as sinful.
    - iii) The word-picture is "dead blood" is ceremonially unclean. It represents God's gift of "life" that was not used. Again, since having a menstrual period is not a sin, therefore it is not a sin to be pregnant every month.
    - iv) The big word-picture being portrayed here is the fact that we are born "sinful" people on the inside and sometimes part of that "disease" comes to the surface. That is why spilled semen for men and "spilled" menstrual blood for women make one temporarily "unclean" to remind us of the sinful nature within us.
  - f) I want to take a quick side-trip for a partially-related story to this topic:
    - i) Back in Genesis, there was a story of Jacob's wife Leah. This took place over 400 years prior to the time of Leviticus. There was a point where Jacob, his two wives and his twelve children were fleeing from Leah's father Laban. Leah stole her father's "household gods". These were statues that represented pagan gods. When Laban caught up with Jacob and Leah, Laban searched the family for the missing gods. Leah hid them between her legs, above the saddle where she was sitting. She told her father she was on her period and couldn't get up from the animal. (Ref: Genesis Chapter 31).
    - ii) I mention that because a woman on her period was not only considered unclean in Jewish cultures, but also in the pagan cultures in that area. Her father did not ask Leah to get off her donkey (or whatever animal she was riding) out of respect for her menstrual period. Her father couldn't imagine Leah being so disrespectful as to put his gods "under her" during her period.
    - iii) It could also indicate that Leah had so little respect for her father's "gods" that she was willing to put them under her during that time period.
    - iv) This has very little to do with this lesson, other than the tie-in to a woman being "unclean" during her period. What it does it give us a whole new perspective when reading that story in Genesis.
14. Verse 25: " `When a woman has a discharge of blood for many days at a time other than her monthly period or has a discharge that continues beyond her period, she will be unclean as long as she has the discharge, just as in the days of her period. <sup>26</sup> Any bed she lies on while her discharge continues will be unclean, as is her bed during her monthly period, and anything she sits on will be unclean, as during her period. <sup>27</sup> Whoever touches them will be unclean; he must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening.

- a) In these three verses, we are no longer talking about normal menstrual periods. We are now talking about bodily “problems” where the blood flow lasts longer than the normal say, seven-day period. If you read Verse 25 again, it makes that clear.
- b) The verses repeat the pattern that has been common through the last few chapters. God is saying in effect, “OK, ma’am, your period has lasted longer than the normal 7 days? You now have a problem. Go quarantine yourself and wash everything the blood touches.”
- c) For the Christian bible expert, this section might remind you of one of Jesus miracles. There was a woman who had blood flow problems for twelve years. (This story is told in Matthew 9, Mark 5 and Luke 8).
  - i) Some suspect this woman was a Gentile (non-Jew). If she was a Jewish person, she would be “unclean” during this time because of these laws in Leviticus and would not be allowed in public. If she was Jewish, she was “sinning” by being in public.
  - ii) If she was a Gentile, there is an interesting bit of trivia in Luke’s Gospel. It says this woman had a blood flow for 12 years. Jesus was on the way to raise a different 12-year old Jewish girl from the dead. Jesus was “interrupted” on that mission to allow this blood-stoppage miracle. Some like the word picture of Jesus “curing the Gentiles (a picture of this woman) on his way to bring life to the Jewish nation again (a picture of the 12-year old girl Jesus brought back to life).
  - iii) Another word picture is to tie the first three miracles recorded in the New Testament (Gospel of Matthew) with the three main “illnesses” of this section.
    - a) First, we had leprosy in Chapters 13-14. It is a picture of sin on the inside that has surfaced. Jesus first recorded miracle is curing someone of leprosy.
    - b) Next, we dealt with mold on clothing and on buildings. It is a word picture to beware of sin that “covers” us. In other words, sin from the outside world that has affected us. The second miracle is a Gentile Roman soldier asking Jesus to cure his servant. He wanted Jesus to cure something from “outside” the Jewish culture. Jesus performed that miracle.
    - c) The final issue, which is the bulk of Chapter 15, is a word-picture of sin that is inside of us and occasionally surfaces. The third miracle in the Gospel of Matthew is Jesus healing Peter’s mother in law of a fever. A fever is a sickness that occasionally “comes out”. She was quarantined.
  - iv) Grant it, for both of these examples, the word-pictures maybe a stretch of the imagination. It may be a legitimate comparison or it maybe a stretch of the imagination. What is important is for us to understand God’s word-pictures tying to sin and how God wants us to quarantine that which is harmful to us.
  - v) Meanwhile, I believe we are still dealing with women’s health problems. ☺

15. Verse 28: " `When she is cleansed from her discharge, she must count off seven days, and after that she will be ceremonially clean. <sup>29</sup> On the eighth day she must take two doves or two young pigeons and bring them to the priest at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. <sup>30</sup> The priest is to sacrifice one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. In this way he will make atonement for her before the LORD for the uncleanness of her discharge.

- a) Once again, we have a situation where the woman is miraculously cured of this problem and now she has to go take some birds to the tabernacle as an offering.
  - i) There is no mention of “how” the female blood flow was stopped.
  - ii) There is no hint of how to go about curing the disease or injury.
  - iii) The text just says “when” a woman is better here is what should be done.
  - iv) That pattern has been repeated now for three chapters. The only “cure” aspect is how to keep disease from spreading. Those are the verses about quarantining the problem and washing what touches the germs.

- b) That is also why all of these diseases are word-pictures of sin and our old human nature. They are incurable diseases in that we as humans will never be perfect creatures because of this genetic defect. That doesn't mean we ignore sin. Part of the idea of these chapters is how to "clean" the sins when they surface as well as how to isolate them.
    - i) That is also why these chapters spend so much time dealing with offerings to God. The idea is when the "sin" is taken away, we are to show our gratitude to God and our commitment to serving God.
  - c) Now that I've gotten that out of my system, let's talk about the specifics of these verses.
    - i) Remember we are talking about women who have blood discharge problems longer than the normal seven-day menstrual periods.
    - ii) In such cases, the woman is to remain "unclean" for seven days after the problem stops. On the eighth day, the woman is to bring a sacrifice to the altar.
    - iii) The number "eight" refers to a new beginning. Seven days is a complete week cycle. The eighth day is a new beginning. Here is someone who has been sick for a long time and now has a "new beginning" as they are healed.
    - iv) Like the male "discharge" diseases earlier in this chapter, the cured-woman is to bring two doves or pigeons. One is to be for a sin offering and one is for a burnt offering. The idea of birds is that they are a "cheaper" sacrifice than say, bulls or lambs. They represent a "lower sin" than other issues of earlier chapters.
    - v) So how did the woman sin in the first place? Why was this sickness even considered a sin that required a sin sacrifice? Like the male discharge, the idea is not that they violated some specific commandment. The word-picture is again, we are born with a sinful nature and what is "sinful" has come out of us. The sin sacrifice is to remind us that we are sinful beings by nature and we depend upon God in order cured of all sin. Because this "sin" is nothing intentional, the sacrifice required is much less than one of the issues from earlier chapters.
      - a) In other words, the sin sacrifice is not so much for having the disease, but for admitting that one is a sinful person. If such a woman were home lying in bed for say, a month or a year, they have not been part of public worship for a long time. Before one can approach God again as part of a "church" one has to be cleansed of their sins.
    - vi) The second bird was for a burnt offering. The idea is, "Thank You Lord for curing me of this sin. Let me show my gratitude by committing my life to serving You".
  - d) Finally, I suspect this whole section was a rare occurrence. I don't imagine there were hundreds of women coming to the sacrificial altar every day with birds for relief from long-term blood flow issues.
    - i) There are no bible stories of women having this problem other than the one cured by Jesus Himself. There are no bible stories of women performing this ritual.
  - e) Let's not forget that Leviticus is mainly written for the priests. It is so they knew how to deal with certain situations as they occurred. As I've stated all through these lessons on Leviticus, all Christians are called to be priests. That doesn't mean we go kill a few birds when our loved ones are cured from diseases. ☺ It does mean we pray with them to God to show our gratitude for that person getting better.
    - i) The basic job of the priest is to help people draw closer to God. One way to do that is to help them show gratitude for being "healthy" again.
16. Verse 31: " `You must keep the Israelites separate from things that make them unclean, so they will not die in their uncleanness for defiling my dwelling place, which is among them.' "
- a) We have now come to the wrap up verses for this section of Leviticus.
    - i) This whole section of Leviticus, Chapters 11-15 is what I call "obedience to God in every day life". Again, it is answering the question, "I know I should go to church on Sunday, but how am I supposed to act on Monday through Saturday?"

- ii) As a Christian living in our times, we don't have to worry about leprosy the same way it was a significant issue thousands of years ago. When it comes to mold, we have modern cleansing products that can remove those issues. As to sickness, medicine has improved greatly. The hygiene issues and the quarantine are still very good practice today as they were back then.
- iii) The important thing for us to understand is the idea that if we are going to commit our lives to serving God, it means we serve God all the time, and not just say, when we go to church. We can't act one way in church and another way the other six days of the week. Obedience to God is a full time commitment.
- b) This gets back to the idea of "Holiness":
  - i) What that means is simply our behavior should be pleasing to God all the time. When we mess up, we have to confess that sin is wrong. Confession is not the idea that we will try harder on our own to avoid it. That is making a little god out of self-discipline. Confession is telling God in effect, "You're right and I'm wrong. I acknowledge Your way of seeing things and doing things is right and I'm not going along with Your game plan at this moment. Through Your power, help me to change from this behavior. Give me the faith and strength to overcome this problem of the moment."
    - a) Does a confessional statement like that guarantee a problem will permanently go away? Of course not. God does work in our lives and He works at His timing and not ours. Such confession does clean us of the sin in the sense we are forgiven. It is the modern equivalent of the "sin offering and burnt offering". Birds are happier as we no longer have to burn them. ☺
- c) This actually leads us back to Verse 31: God wraps up this section of Leviticus by saying in effect, "Here are the things you Israelites must do in order to be "clean". You cannot come into my presence (i.e., collectively go to "church") unless you are clean."
  - i) In a sense, this is not an issue for the Christian. We are "cleaned" by the blood of Jesus and can approach God the Father at any time due to the fact we are ceremonial cleaned by His blood. (Reference: Hebrews 10:19-22)
  - ii) Still, the other big word picture that comes across is the idea that even though we are eternally cleaned, sin has a way of popping up every now and then. It can surface on the "flesh" of our life like leprosy. It can be an outside influence that is causing us to sin like mold. It can be a problem deep inside of us that surfaces every now and then like the diseases of this chapter.
    - a) Even if we can't think of what we did wrong in the past 24 hours, we have to know that we as humans are still sinful creatures by nature. That is why such functions as "normal" semen emission or menstrual periods are pictures of the internal sinful nature within us manifesting itself.
- d) Let me point out one more thing about Verse 31: God says it is a death penalty to approach Him if one is "unclean". Now there's an incentive to be clean. ☺
  - i) Remember that not too long ago God "zapped" Aaron's two oldest sons for disobedience as the High Priest. (Leviticus 10:1-2). I suspect that event was still fresh in their minds when God told Aaron and Moses that the penalty for approaching God while unclean is a death penalty.
  - ii) Notice the particular "sins" of the past few chapters are a death penalty. The other idea is approaching God while being "unclean" is a death penalty.
  - iii) The idea is that "sinful" man cannot approach God on his own. In other words, imperfect man cannot please a perfect God. A perfect God requires "perfection" to be with Him. We have to be perfectly forgiven in order to approach God.

- a) Yes, that is a one-time commitment to Jesus' sacrifice, but it is also a moment-by-moment commitment to be obedient to God's will for our lives. It means to act "differently" from those don't care about pleasing God. That is the basic idea of Holiness and one of the key points of Leviticus.
  - iv) I hate to stop when I'm on a roll, but I still have two more verses to go. ☺
- 17. Verse 32: These are the regulations for a man with a discharge, for anyone made unclean by an emission of semen,<sup>33</sup> for a woman in her monthly period, for a man or a woman with a discharge, and for a man who lies with a woman who is ceremonially unclean.
  - a) The pattern of Chapter 11-15 is for God to comment on a specific issue and then end that discussion with the words in effect, "And that is all I have to say on this matter".
    - i) Notice Verses 32-33 are a wrap up section for the whole chapter, and not just say the last section of an irregular female blood flow issue. It is God saying in effect, all of Chapter 15 is the regulations specific to male bodily issues and female bodily issues and that pretty much all I as God require of you as believers."
    - ii) These wrap up type of verses are a reminder to not add to anything God requires of us. Yes, we can interpret them and interpretations can vary. That is different from adding requirements to these verses or ignoring them in the first place.
- 18. OK, everybody exhale. ☺ We're now finished with arguably the toughest section in Leviticus.
  - a) If it's not the toughest, it is at least the most personal. It deals with issues that are generally not discussed in public. It is God dealing with the "deepest personal things" that are inside of us. On the surface, this is about health issues. A God that loves us cares about our well being and our health. One should not ignore the practical aspects of good health and good hygiene.
  - b) The underlying message is that of dealing with sin. Occasionally what is "deep inside of us" will surface and cause problems. It has to be dealt with when it surfaces.
    - i) I disagree with the idea that the problems rooted inside of us can ever be taken away without God's help. Good counseling can help us recognize internal problems, and help us to cope with our problems. The problem is our sin-nature is still within us. Others sin and hurt us as well. Those issues come to the surface and we have to deal with them. At the same time, we have to recognize that sin is a lifelong, "incurable" disease.
    - ii) These chapters ignore how to cure one of diseases just as one cannot be cured of sin. One simply has to deal with such issues as they hit the surface. That is the underlying word-picture of Chapter 15. We need to "wash" of our sins, which is the idea of confession. Ephesians 5:26 also associates washing with God's word. We also need to quarantine sins so those issues will not spread.
    - iii) There, now we now how to live Monday's through Saturdays. ☺ The easy part is to read and understand it. The tricky part is actually to do it. Let's ask God for some help here:
- 19. Let's Pray: Heavenly Father, We ask forgiveness of our sins. Help us to keep our focus upon You as we regularly commit our lives to serving You. Give us the faith to overcome the sins in our lives. Bring to the surface the issues of our lives that we need to deal with and the power to overcome them. Help us to be on guard against external factors that can cause us to be disobedient as well. As Christians, thank you for making us eternally "clean" so that we can spend eternity with You. At the same time, help us to regularly "bath" in you so that our lives may be a living witness for You in all that we do. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.