

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Leviticus 18: 6-18

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we will continue to read Leviticus 18:6-18.

Leviticus chapters 18 to 20 provide essential moral statutes that God instructed the Israelites to follow in their daily lives. He first warns them not to imitate the ways of the Egyptians, from whose land they had come, nor the practices of the Canaanites, to whose land they were going. They are to be set apart, holy, and dedicated to God. Repeatedly, God declares, "I am the LORD your God." This statement emphasizes His authority and the covenant relationship that obligates Israel to follow His laws and decrees for a holy life. If they obey, they will "live by them," showing that God's laws lead to true life.

The first subject of God's moral laws is sexual purity, starting with prohibitions against incestuous relationships. This emphasis on sexual morality aligns with God's original design for marriage in Genesis chapter 2, established even before humanity's fall in Genesis 3. This divine institution, created by God, represents His ideal for humanity, later culminating in a cosmic marriage described in Revelation 21 and 22, where Jesus Christ takes the Church as His bride. Thus, Scripture begins with the establishment of marriage and ends with the ultimate, heavenly marriage.

However, in between these two points lies the story of Satan's persistent attempts to disrupt God's plans by leading humanity into sin, beginning in Genesis 3 and continuing until Revelation 20, where he is cast into the lake of fire. Throughout the Bible, we see Satan's relentless attempts to corrupt humanity and sabotage God's purposes, while God, through His redemptive plan, brings His purposes to completion through the salvation offered by Jesus Christ.

Maintaining marital purity reflects God's ideal for humanity. Conversely, one of Satan's primary strategies to undermine God's will is through immorality. As Paul states in 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, "Flee from sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

Understanding that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit highlights the need to honor God with our bodies. Thus, we must avoid immorality to keep ourselves pure before marriage and, once married, uphold the purity of the marital relationship.

Furthermore, the structure of the family is foundational to marriage, human continuity, and moral order. One of the most destructive behaviors to this structure is incest, or illicit relationships among close kin. Such acts not only defile the individuals involved but also disrupt the family unit, negatively impacting all members.

For this reason, God's moral laws for daily living begin with a detailed listing of forbidden incestuous relationships, spanning Leviticus 18:6-18. These prohibitions are clear and absolute, needing no nuanced interpretation—they are straightforward commands from God, meant to be obeyed as part of Israel's covenant with Him.

Verse 6: "None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his nakedness: I am the LORD."

Verses 6 through 18 address prohibitions on sexual relations with close relatives. These instructions are conveyed in a more reserved manner, using the phrase "to uncover nakedness," which essentially means engaging in sexual relations. God emphasizes this command with the phrase, "I am the LORD." As a holy and glorious God, He requires that His people honor His holiness in their daily lives. Particularly

within family relationships, where close physical contact may naturally occur, God commands the strict avoidance of inappropriate sexual conduct. Crossing this boundary would not only damage the structure of family relations but also negatively impact the entire family. Thus, from the outset, God warns against "uncovering the nakedness" of close kin, meaning that no sexual relations should occur between those who are related by blood.

Verse 7: "The nakedness of your mother you shall not uncover. She is your mother; you shall not uncover her nakedness. That would dishonor your father."

This verse addresses relationships with one's mother, forbidding any sexual relations, as this would dishonor one's father. While directed at men, it can be extended similarly for women not to have sexual relations with their fathers, which would dishonor their mothers. This verse addresses relationships with one's mother, forbidding any sexual relations, as this would dishonor one's father. While directed at men, it can be extended similarly for women not to have sexual relations with their fathers, which would dishonor their mothers.

Scripture itself records examples of such behavior. In Genesis 19:30-38, after being rescued by angels from Sodom's destruction, Lot and his two daughters took refuge in a cave in Zoar. Seeking to preserve their father's lineage, the daughters got him drunk and slept with him, resulting in the births of Moab, ancestor of the Moabites, and Ben-Ammi, ancestor of the Ammonites. Raised in morally depraved Sodom, a society steeped in unchecked lust, the daughters reflected its corrupting influence. God's judgment was inevitable, as Sodom's practices endangered not only its inhabitants but also surrounding cities and humanity itself.

Dear brothers and sisters, consider if today's society mirrors Sodom in some ways. This calls us to remain vigilant, keeping ourselves pure. As Jesus warned about the end times in Luke 17:24-30, comparing them to the days of Noah and Lot, verses 28-30 say, "Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of

Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.”

In the last days, society will resemble the days of Lot, as it does today. God did not command Lot to reform Sodom but to leave it. Likewise, in these end times, God’s purpose is not for us to execute judgment but to maintain our purity.

Verse 8: “The nakedness of your father’s wife you shall not uncover; it is your father’s nakedness.”

Here, the term "father’s wife" refers to any wife or concubine of one's father, including a younger wife. For example, Reuben, Jacob's eldest son, lost his birthright after lying with Jacob’s concubine. In the New Testament, Paul also rebukes the Corinthian church for allowing a man to take his father's wife.

Verse 9: “The nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father, or the daughter of your mother, whether born at home or elsewhere, their nakedness you shall not uncover.”

Siblings—whether half-siblings or those living separately—share a blood relationship and must not engage in sexual relations.

Verse 10: “The nakedness of your son’s daughter or your daughter’s daughter, their nakedness you shall not uncover; for theirs is your own nakedness.”

Granddaughters are blood-related descendants, and sexual relations with them would bring shame upon oneself.

Verse 11: “The nakedness of your father’s wife’s daughter, begotten by your father—she is your sister—you shall not uncover her nakedness.”

Like in verse 9, this prohibits sexual relations with a half-sister.

Verses 12-13: “You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father’s sister; she is near of kin to your father. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother’s sister, for she is near of kin to your mother.”

These verses address collateral blood relations. A father’s sister is a kin to the father, and a mother’s sister is a kin to the mother, so sexual relations are prohibited. Similarly, a woman must not have relations with her uncle, as they are her mother’s kin.

Verse 14: “You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father’s brother’s wife; it would dishonor your uncle.”

Although this is an in-law relationship, sexual relations are still prohibited. This applies to aunts and uncles by marriage, as with both men and women.

Verse 15: “You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law; she is your son’s wife. You shall not uncover her nakedness.”

As a daughter-in-law is a junior family member, sexual relations would dishonor both the son and oneself.

Verse 16: “You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother’s wife; it is your brother’s nakedness.”

Relations with a sister-in-law, though not blood-related, would still dishonor the brother.

Verse 17: “You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, nor shall you take her son’s daughter or her daughter’s daughter, to uncover her nakedness. They are near of kin to her. It is wickedness.”

Engaging in relations with a woman and then with her daughter or granddaughter disrupts the ethical order and is seen as great wickedness by God. This ethical order stabilizes family relationships, fostering a healthy environment for future generations and allowing God’s purposes to be fulfilled. Therefore, God commands adherence to a sound ethical framework.

Verse 18: “Nor shall you take a woman as a rival to her sister, to uncover her nakedness while the other is alive.”

Marriage, as long as both spouses are alive, is binding; thus, one should not marry a wife’s sister during the wife’s lifetime. Should the wife pass away, this restriction does not apply. This reminds us of Jacob, who married both Leah and Rachel, who were sisters. Although this occurred over 300 years before Mosaic law, Jacob did not initially intend this outcome, as he loved only Rachel. Jacob was tricked by his uncle Laban, who made him work fourteen years to marry Rachel after marrying Leah through deceit. While Jacob’s experience was unusual, it was divinely permitted to form the foundation of Israel’s twelve tribes.

The law establishes order and requires human obedience. But the Lawgiver, God, has ultimate authority and may allow exceptions for specific divine purposes. “Nor shall you take a woman as a rival to her sister...” indicates that doing so would make life difficult for one’s wife. Indeed, we see this in Jacob’s life. In Genesis 29-30, Jacob’s two wives, Leah and Rachel, struggled for affection, competing to bear children, and involving their maidservants in the rivalry. These chapters recount the

birth of eleven sons, whose names reflect the emotional state of Jacob's wives amid this challenging family life.

This was God's unique arrangement to shape Jacob from a grasping man into Israel, who would bless others. Through Moses, God provided laws, rules, and statutes to spare people from such troubles.

Let us pray: "Lord, thank You! You are a God of order, establishing ethical boundaries within family life that provide a stable structure for healthy growth in future generations. Through these laws and decrees, You have set fitting boundaries that allow us to live in Your holiness, bringing blessings to us and our descendants. Help me live a disciplined life, praying in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ."