



God Requires Holy Living

Leviticus 19



LESSON GOAL

Students will seek to live holy lives by obeying God and loving others.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Give examples of holy conduct in Leviticus 19.
- Describe what holy living looks like today.
- Explain why believers are to be holy.

KEY VERSE

“Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy’” (Leviticus 19:2).

APPLICATION

- Obey your father and mother.
- Demonstrate your love for God by loving others.
- Respect and honor weak and elderly people.

NEXT WEEK

Israel Rejects God’s Provision
Read Numbers 11–12.

Symbol Key



Craft



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Activity



Q & A



Work Sheet



2 Grade Level

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul.... You shall teach them to your children” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

The book of Leviticus is unified by the theme of God’s holiness. The first 16 chapters explain how God, in His holiness, can live among and have communion with sinful people. God taught the Israelites that His holiness required sacrifices, priestly mediation, and purification on the Day of Atonement. The rest of Leviticus can best be summarized as God teaching the people how to reflect His holiness in their lives.

The Israelites could reflect God’s holiness by being different from the Canaanites, the pagans who lived in the land God promised Abraham. Unlike the Canaanites, who worshiped their idols wherever they wished, God commanded Israel to bring perfect sacrifices to the tabernacle only and to show proper regard for the atoning work of shed blood (Lev. 17; 22:17–33). The priests, especially the high priest, were to be examples of holiness and to live lives particularly separated from uncleanness (21–22:16). The Israelites were also to separate themselves unto God by refraining from the Canaanites’ sexual perversion (Lev. 18). God instituted a 50-year cycle of religious feasts (which were celebrated yearly) and special Sabbath years so that the Israelites would remember His past works, give thanks, and trust in His future provision (Lev. 23, 25). Israel’s pilgrimages to the tabernacle and their allowing the land to rest would be a stark contrast to the worried and greedy surrounding nations. God taught the Israelites the necessity of holiness by demanding the death penalty for various rebellious actions (Lev. 20), by warning against disobedience through the example of a man stoned for cursing God (Lev. 24:10–23), and by establishing national blessings for obedience and curses for rebellion (Lev. 26).

Leviticus 19 is particularly useful in understanding how the Israelites were to reflect God’s holiness in their daily lives. God’s commands in this chapter reveal much about who He is and how He wanted the people to be. In the second verse, God commanded Moses, “Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.’” Israel’s belonging to God provided the motivation for them to be holy. God repeatedly reminded them of who He is (“I am the LORD”) and whose they were (“I am the LORD your God”). God’s holiness requires that His people be holy.

Leviticus 19:3–10¹: Be Holy by Obeying God from the Heart

The first aspect of being holy was faithfulness to the covenant God made with Israel. Leviticus 19:3–4 summarizes four of the Ten Commandments: to have no other gods (Ex. 20:3), to make no idols (20:4), to keep the Sabbath (20:8), and to

¹ Allen Ross, *Holiness to the Lord* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2002), 352–4. The division of this chapter into sections is difficult because of the wide array of commands given by God. Ross’s division of the chapter into four sections has been used here. His commentary is useful in understanding what the common themes in these sections may be.

Additional Reference Materials

The MacArthur Study Bible by John MacArthur

Holiness to the Lord by Allen P. Ross

honor parents (20:12). The Ten Commandments set the standard of obedience for Israel. But faithfulness to the covenant included more than just obeying the commands. God desired the people's hearts as well as their actions. Of all the sacrifices, the peace offering epitomized heart devotion (Lev. 19:5–8). It was an offering freely given, primarily to celebrate God's faithfulness and goodness. The Israelite whose heart was rejoicing in God's goodness still had to show God's holiness by obeying the sacrificial laws. He also showed God's holiness by having right relationships with others, including the poor. A proper respect for God's holiness ensured that the Israelites would provide for the poor (19:9–10).

Leviticus 19:11–18: Be Holy by Loving Others

The Old Testament text most often quoted in the New Testament is Leviticus 19:18b: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." It would be impossible to love one's neighbors while breaking the commands in these verses. The commands prohibited stealing, lying, and swearing falsely (19:11–12); cheating, robbing, and taking advantage of laborers or disabled people (19:13–14); showing partiality in court and slandering others (19:15–16); and hating one's brother, not rebuking sin, and failing to forgive (19:17–18). Being holy as God is requires conforming to His character. These commands provide powerful insight into God's character. It is awesome that when God commanded the Israelites to reflect Himself, He commanded them to love their neighbors.

Leviticus 19:19–31: Be Holy by Being Different from the World

Leviticus 19:19–25 is more difficult to fit into the context of reflecting God's holiness. Perhaps the commands to keep animals, crops, and cloth distinct were to reflect distinctions God had made in creation (Lev. 19:19)². Such commands would be a reminder that the same holy God who had ordered creation could order Israel. Verses 20–22 explain the punishment for when a man slept with a betrothed slave girl. While sex between a man and a betrothed woman was to be punished by death (Deut. 22:23–24), the punishment was negated when the woman was a slave (Lev. 19:20). The best explanation may be that God was protecting the slave girl, who may not have been able to resist. The command concerning the fruit of a newly planted tree is fascinating (Lev. 19:23–25). For the first three years of meager production, the fruit of the tree was not to be eaten. The fruit from the fourth year, the first year of good production, was to be dedicated to the Lord. The Israelite could not eat of the fruit until the tree's fifth year. The fruit for which the Israelite had been waiting four years first went to God, and then the Israelite got to enjoy the blessing of God's provision.

These commands would make Israel stand out among the surrounding nations. God's holiness affected how the Israelites tended animals, planted crops, wove clothes, treated slaves, and harvested fruit. Verses 26–31 present a more direct contrast to the Canaanites. As Israel worshiped the holy God, they were not to participate in pagan rituals. They were to forsake divination, sorcery, and mediums (19:26, 31). They were not to participate in practices particularly associated with pagan worship, such as shaving the sides of their heads, disfiguring their beards, cutting their flesh (in respect for the dead), or tattooing their bodies (19:27–28). Neither could they prostitute their daughters, probably referring to service in an idol's temple (19:29). Instead of such false worship, the Israelites were to reflect God's holiness by keeping the Sabbath and revering the tabernacle (19:30). The Israelites were to live worshipful lives that showed they belonged to the God of Israel. Whether sacrifice or agriculture, all was to be done in submission to God.

² F. Duane Lindsey, "Leviticus," in *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Chariot Victor, 1985).

Leviticus 19:32–37: Be Holy by Honoring the Weak

The next section particularly prohibits exploitation of less powerful people. While elderly people and foreigners were often ostracized, God commanded the Israelites to honor the elderly (and thus show their fear of God) and to treat the foreigners as native-born Israelites and love them as the Israelites loved themselves (Lev. 19:33–34). Verses 35–36 command that whoever was selling had to use honest measurements and not cheat people who were without the power to check the seller's calculations.

Conclusion

The book of Leviticus does not regulate New Testament saints. Christ has become their sacrifice, has made atonement for their sin, and continues to serve as their great high priest. New Testament saints are not a theocracy like Israel. God has not given them power to enforce the Law on others. Human government now enforces laws. New Testament saints are not called to follow standards of clean and unclean as described in the Law. There is not a tabernacle in which to bring the fruit from the tree's fourth year of growth. The Law does not regulate the behavior of New Testament saints.

But the God who gave the Law has not changed. What the Law reveals about God remains true. God still demands obedience from the heart, still demands that we love others, still demands that we hate the wicked world system, and still demands that we honor and protect the weak. In Leviticus, God both regulated Israel and revealed His character. In Leviticus, God continues to reveal His character to New Testament saints. As New Testament saints prayerfully apply Leviticus, the Law must be reduced to its underlying principles. Four principles are given above. But those four principles could be further reduced to two: love for God and love for neighbors (Matt. 22:37–40). Those principles are the heart of the Law and apply to New Testament saints. All we do should be out of love for God and for our neighbors.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth"
(Psalm 78:1).

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

Use these questions to review and reinforce key truths.

Did God make special rules for Israel to obey? Why?

Yes. It showed that He was holy.

What does *holy* mean?

Holy means "sinless." It also means that God is very, very different from everything else.

Did God make rules about eating animals? What were the rules?

Yes. God said some animals were clean and some were unclean. These animals

were not sinful, but it was against the rules to eat the unclean ones. The Israelites could not eat pigs, spiders, or clams, to name just a few.

Why else did God make special rules to obey?
So the people from other countries would see that the true God was different from the false gods.

What special day did Israel celebrate to be cleansed from their sin?
The Day of Atonement.

What happened to the two goats?
One goat was killed for the people's sin. It showed that their sin was paid for. The other goat was let go. This showed that the people's sin was taken away.

How are we cleansed from sin today?
By trusting in the Lord Jesus and believing that He died for our sin. We are cleansed every day when we confess our sin to Jesus.



Holiness Review

Over the last three weeks, we have learned about God's holiness. Review the fact that God is sinless and different. Review the object lessons from previous lessons.



Different Hats

God wanted the Israelites to be noticeably different from the world. When they did the things God told them to do, other people would notice and know they were God's people. Here are some hats for people we know who are different. When the people wear them, we know what those people's jobs are. Ask the students to identify each hat.

Fireman's Hat: Besides his special hat, a fireman also wears a uniform, a badge, and boots, and he drives a fire truck with lights and loud sirens. These things help us identify who he is when he comes to do his job. If he came to rescue someone without these things, people might not let him through or know to go to him for help. When Christians live the way they should, other people notice and might ask them about God.

Captain's Hat: The captain of a ship wears a special hat along with his uniform. Without this identification, the ship's workers would not know their leader. When Christians live the way they should, they are under God's authority and have His clear plan, the Bible, to follow.

Baseball Team Cap: A baseball player wears a special cap with a logo on it. His hat identifies him as a member of a certain team. Otherwise, all the men running around on the field would get confused about who was on their team. When Christians live the way they should, people know they are on "God's team."



Different Rules

God wanted His people to be holy. They were to turn from sin and be different from the rest of the nations. God gave them special rules that would show they were different. In your class today, make up one or two rules that will show that your class is different. For example, you might make a "thank you/you're welcome" rule. Every time a student receives something from a teacher or another student, he should say a clear and kind "thank you." The one giving something should respond with a clear and kind "you are welcome." Sit in a circle and pass

a stuffed animal around. Have the students practice saying “thank you” and “you are welcome.” When children use good manners at a restaurant or store, people can see a difference. Make up other rules that fit your class.



Holy Living

Discuss with the students things that people do today that make God sad and things that Christians do that make God glad. In Leviticus 19, God instructs the children of Israel to be set apart as a holy nation. They were told to live apart from the world in nearly all that they did. Ask the children, “What are things people do today that are against God’s instructions to be holy?” [specific examples—lie, cheat, steal, covet, hate, hurt your body, hurt others, etc.] “What are some ways in which Christians should live apart from the world?” [loving and honoring God, loving others, helping, reading the Bible, taking care of their bodies, etc.] Take the discussion one step deeper. Ask the students whether God is concerned with more than just being good. “Does God only want us to be good? God wants us to be good because we love Him. Which is better, picking up toys because your mom tells you to, or picking up your toys because you love your mom? We should be obedient to God because we love God and want to please Him.” To continue this theme, take old magazines and cut out things people do that are not holy. Also cut out pictures of people doing things that could be holy. Make two collages using the cutouts.



Serving the President

Imagine that the president is going to come to our class today. Imagine that he has chosen you for a very special job. Everyone will know that you work for him. What if you wear dirty and torn clothes? What if you don’t speak nicely to others? What if you aren’t prepared to do the job when you are needed? Would that show the proper respect for the president? Being a president is a very serious job. And the people who work for him need to be serious about serving too. Would you be serious about serving the president? More importantly, would you be serious about serving God? We’ve been learning that God is holy. Because God is holy, He must punish sin. The Israelites had to give sacrifices because of their sins because that is what God required. The people needed a priest because of their sin. God requires that people be holy. God is perfect and hates sin, and we should also hate sin. Believers should show their love for God by obeying Him and being holy.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

“Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done” (Psalm 78:4).

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students’ understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Reading of the Text

Read portions of Leviticus 11–19.

Today we are going to talk about being obedient. That is something I am sure you have heard about from your mom and dad, and maybe your grandpa and grandma. How about your Sunday school teacher? All these people talk to us about obeying God. Did you know that God told the Israelites about obeying, too? In today’s lesson, we are going to see just what God expected of the Israelites, whom they were to obey, and why.

Our story today comes from Leviticus 19. God told His people, the Israelites, that to obey was the best way to show how much they loved Him. He gave some very specific things for them to remember, and it would be good for us to remember them, too. We can learn a lot about how we should behave by looking at what God told His people to do.

In the first part of the chapter, God tells the people that it is important for them to obey because their heart is right with Him. We must have a right relationship with God to be obedient with an open heart. God had given the people of Israel a list of important commands to obey. We call them the Ten Commandments. But God wanted the people to obey with a happy heart. That means that their attitude and actions show that they loved God. Would that be important for us, too? Yes. God wants us to love Him more than anything else in the whole world, and He wants us to show how much we love Him by doing what is right. We have to choose to obey. When Mommy says, “It is time for bed,” do you go with a glad heart, or do you fuss and complain? Do you remember that God is watching how we act and that He also can see our hearts? God knows when we say “yes” with our mouths and “no” with our hearts. Be careful how you do what you are told to do.

Going on in the chapter, we see that God gives some special instructions about showing His love. Leviticus 19:18b says, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” You need to show the children you play with and the people that you are around that you love God by treating them with respect and showing kindness to them. God said so. We cannot cheat in a game we play or be greedy with our toys or use bad language. None of those things would show that we love God and want to obey His rules. People always notice how we behave at home, at church, or even at preschool. Did you know that God is watching our moms and dads, too? They are to be examples of Jesus, too. God wants us all to show how much we love Him by our actions. Sometimes our actions speak a lot louder than our words. We will be very different from those we are around if we practice these things.

That is another reason that God told the Israelites to be obedient. They were to be different from all those people who lived around them. Do you ever notice when another child acts differently than you? I am sure that you do, and maybe you say to your mommy or daddy, "Did you see what that kid did?" We often see how others behave and forget that people are watching us, too. God knew that all the people around Israel were watching how Israel acted and how they treated each other. It is very important for us to remember that people are always watching us. No matter where you are, someone is watching you. We want Jesus to be pleased with us and how we act, so we must practice obedience every day.

There is one more group of people that God told Israel to honor. That group was people who were different from them. Some were weaker, some were sicker, some were not from Israel, and some were not from their town. Some were very old, and they did not have everything they needed to live. God had not given them as much as He did others. God said to show them honor, to be their friend and treat them as you want to be treated. All around us, we find people who are different from us. God tells us to be kind to them and help them if we can. Always be honest with them in whatever you are doing. We must remember that God has made all of us and that we are special to Him. We should honor God by being kind and generous to all people around us.

That means sharing our toys, our lunch, or whatever we have with someone who is in need. You should ask your parents how you can do this.

God want us to be examples to the world around us of who He is and to show it by the way we live. [Sing *O-B-E-D-I-E-N-C-E* with the students.]



Lesson Questions

Does living holy lives mean acting differently than the world?

Yes; it means loving God more than sin and loving others more than yourself.

Why were the Israelites supposed to live holy lives?

Because God is holy. God wanted others to see what He is like by watching the Israelites.

Did God want the Israelite children to love others?

Yes. Children were supposed to honor their mothers and fathers, be kind to people who had physical problems, not cheat or lie, and honor elderly people.

What kind of attitude are we supposed to have when we obey?

We are supposed to obey with an attitude that pleases God.

Who are our neighbors?

Any person we can see or talk to.

How can you love your neighbors?

By being kind to other children and being their friends. You can love your parents by obeying them.

How can you love God better?

By loving Him more than toys, friends, and having your own way.



Presentation Ideas

A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.

Praise and Worship

Holy, Holy

Love, Love

This Is My Commandment

Trust and Obey



Love

"L" is for the Lord,
(Make an L with your index finger and thumb.)

The life, the truth, the way.
(Point up.)

"O" is for obedience;
(Make an O with your fingers and thumb.)

Read and think and pray.
(Hold hands like a book, point to temple, and palms together and bow head.)

"V" is for the victory
(Make a V with index and middle finger.)

Through Jesus Christ, God's Son.
(Make a cross with fingers.)

"E" is for the people;
(Bend fingers at knuckles; hold thumb in under fingertips.)

God loves everyone.
(Hug self.)



Holy

"H" is for the honor
(Point sideways with your index and middle fingers)

Our Heavenly Father deserves.
(Point up)

"O" is to obey
(Make an O with your fingers and thumb.)

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

“That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments” (Psalm 78:7).

Choose ideas from this section that review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.

And to listen to God’s words.

(Cup hands behind ears.)

“L” is for the love

(Make an L with your index finger and thumb.)

We should have toward God and man.

(Trace a heart with your fingers on your chest.)

“Y” is for you, dear child;

(Hold up pinky and thumb; point toward students.)

Your life is in God’s hands.

(Cup hands together.)

The hand gestures used above for letters are American Sign Language.



Puppet Application

Think of situations that students struggle with at home or with their friends and that are related to today’s lesson. Examples include disobeying parents, lying, being disrespectful, tattling, and not sharing. Have the puppet talk to the students about different struggles he has in these areas. Have the puppet ask students for advice on what he should do.



Love Letters

Materials: construction paper, scissors, heart stickers or stamps, crayons or markers, glue sticks, envelopes

Directions: Have the students write letters to God, telling Him how they love Him. Be sure to read your own letter to God as an example. (Your letter should reflect the age group you are teaching. For example, 6- or 7-year-olds might write, “Dear God, I love you. I will obey you. Love, [student’s name].” Older students might compose something longer. When the students are done writing, have them decorate their letters with crayons or markers and stickers or stamps. Be sure to put the letters in the envelopes, seal them, and address them to God.



Obey God from the Heart

Materials: copies of heart puzzle (see back of lesson), sheets of white paper, glue, crayons

Directions: Give the students copies of the heart puzzle at the back of this lesson. Have them color the pieces and then cut them out and glue them to a separate piece of paper. Talk to the students about obeying God with a right heart.



“Be Holy” Hopscotch

Material: pictures from magazines and newspapers, tape, sheets of white paper

Directions: Before class, cut out pictures that show people being kind to others. Also find pictures of idols and other items that would demonstrate unholiness. (Use only age-appropriate materials.) Glue these pictures on blank sheets of paper. Draw a large X over the things that do not please the Lord. Draw a large smiley face over the things that do.

During class, discuss things we should do to be holy, such as obeying mom and dad, always telling the truth, and never taking something that is not ours. Hold up an X paper when you talk about bad things and a smiley face paper for the good things. Tape a picture trail on the floor using sheets of the paper with Xs (to represent things we should not do) and smiley faces (representing good things to do). Ask students to move from one end of the room to the other, trying not to stop on a disobedience picture. Remember, we always want to do what is right, obeying Mom and Dad at all times.

Coloring Pages

Give each student a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of this lesson. The students can color the pages in class or at home.



MEMORY VERSE

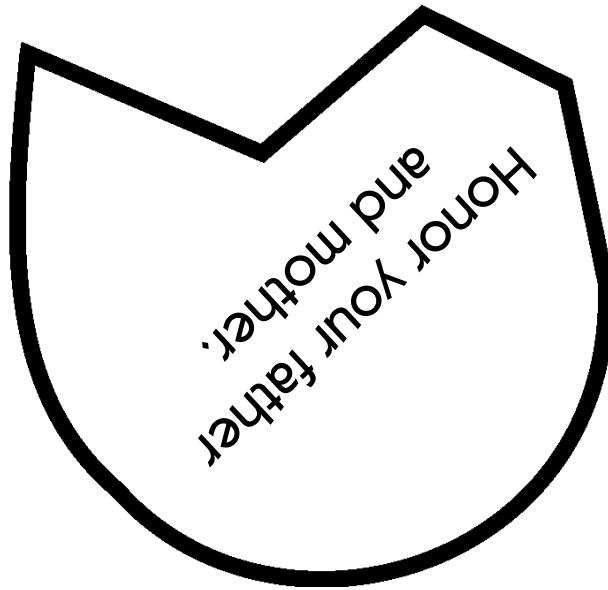
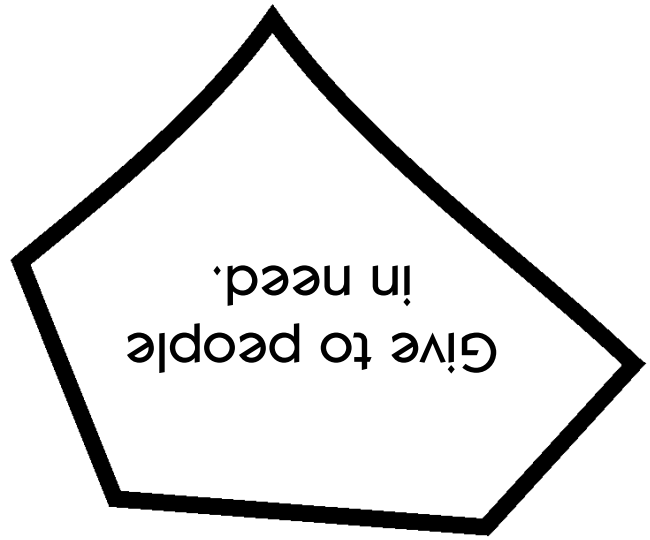
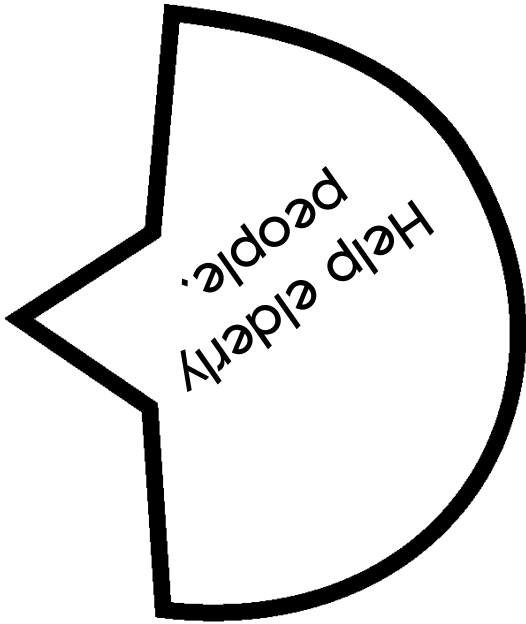
“Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: “You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy” (Leviticus 19:2).

Love God, Love Your Neighbor



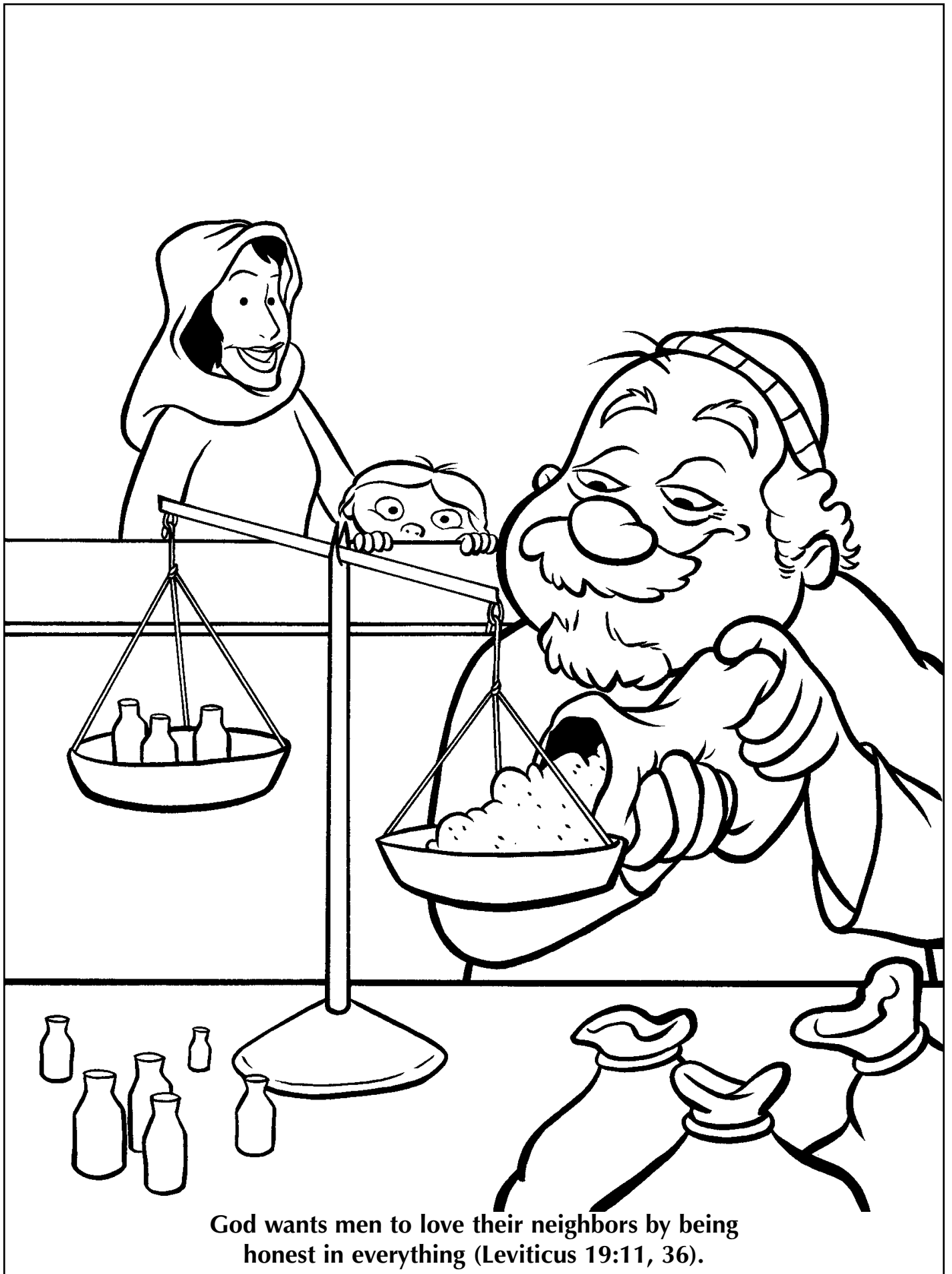
Love God,
Love Your Neighbor

Obey God from the Heart





Children are to honor their mothers and fathers in everything (Leviticus 19:3).



God wants men to love their neighbors by being honest in everything (Leviticus 19:11, 36).

