



God Requires Holy Living

Leviticus 19



LESSON GOAL

Students will seek to be holy by trusting in Christ and obeying His commands.

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

- Honor your father and mother by obeying their instructions.
- 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



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Activity



Q & A



Work Sheet

Teacher Planning Sheet

PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Personal Application

As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to

- _____
- _____
- _____

Three ways students need to apply this passage are

- _____
- _____
- _____

Materials Needed

POINT

Choose from various ideas to point students to the coming Bible lesson.

- _____
- _____

PROCLAIM

Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.

Presentation Ideas

- _____
- _____

Praise/Music Ideas

- _____
- _____
- _____

PRACTICE

Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.

- _____
- _____

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.

What was the name of the special place the high priests were allowed to enter only one time a year?

That place was called the Holy of Holies.

What animals were the Israelite people supposed to bring on the Day of Atonement?

The people were supposed to bring two goats and one ram.

For whom or what did the high priest have to make atonement?

The high priest made atonement for himself, his household, the holy things (the holy place, tent, and altar), and the people of Israel.

What happened to the sins of the people when the high priest made atonement for them?

The people were forgiven and cleansed from their sin when the high priest made atonement for them. One of the two goats was sacrificed for the people's sin, and the other goat was sent into the wilderness to show the removal of the people's sins.

How many times each year did the Day of Atonement take place?

The Day of Atonement took place only one time each year.



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.



What the World Does

Ask students what sinful things the world does. Answers will likely include stealing, murder, and lying. Be sure to add things such as cruel teasing, cheating, and dishonoring parents. Ask students what Christians should do and why they should do it. They should not do these things because God is holy. He wants us to live differently than the world around us. Today, as we learn about Leviticus, we are going to see how God wanted the Israelites to live holy lives. Many of the things that the world did then, it also does now.



Honoring Parents

Ask the students to think about television shows or movies they have seen that show children being disrespectful or disobedient. How does the world portray parents and older people? Often, the world portrays parents as uncool, unkind, or dumb. In many movies and shows, children display disrespectful attitudes toward adults. This is very different from how God thinks of children and parents. God wants children to respect parents. In today's lesson, we will see what God asks from children.



Set Apart

In Leviticus 19, the children of Israel were called to be holy by being different. There were many things that Israel was told to do in order to be different from the surrounding cultures. They were told to not shave the sides of their heads, to keep the Sabbath, love strangers, and to not have tattoos. These were all things that the people around them were practicing. The Israelites were called to be set apart as God's possession for His special purpose. They were to look different because they had a different purpose than the rest of the world. The people of Israel were like a china plate. China is not used everyday as plastic is. Plastic is designed for common daily uses. But on special occasions, we use the beautiful china. It is reserved for a very special purpose, just like the nation of Israel.

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.

Introduction

Many Christians do not understand what it means to have a relationship with God. They think that God exists to give them what they want. They think of Him as a grandfather who is pleased when they do good but when they do wrong, does not get very upset. But having a relationship with God means trusting, loving, and obeying Him.

In today’s lesson, we will see what the Lord told the Israelites about obedience when they were wandering in the desert. He told the Israelites that He would bless them if they obeyed Him and that He would punish those who sinned against Him. God commands obedience and hates sin. Disobedience is sin, and He judges it.

Leadoff Questions (LOQs)

LOQ: What instruction did God tell Moses to give the people of Israel?

Answer: God said to tell them, “You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy” (Lev. 19:2). God was setting a standard by which the children of Israel should live.

LOQ: Why did God command holiness?

Answer: The Israelites were God’s chosen people. They were to be different from the other nations. Their actions and worship were to be different because God was their God. They were also to be an example through their actions to the surrounding nations so that those nations would know that God is real and holy.

LOQ: In what ways were the people of Israel told to be different from the other nations?

Answer: They were told to respect their parents; to keep the Sabbath; to not worship idols; to take care of the poor and helpless; to not steal, swindle, swear, or profane God’s name; to not cheat their neighbor, gossip, or murder.

LOQ: Why do you think God told the people to not reap the corners of the fields or take all the grapes in the vineyard?

Answer: The people who were poor and could not afford food would be allowed



to take all the extra produce. This was an example of how the weak or needy were taken care of.

LOQ: Many of these instructions involve relationships between people. Why do you think God says so much about how to treat others?

Answer: People are selfish and proud. We want to do things our way, and other people get in the way. Our hearts tell us to do what is best for ourselves, but God told Israel to take care of others, loving others as they loved themselves.

LOQ: What do you think people would do if they saw an entire nation being kind to one another and taking care of those who needed help?

Answer: They would see that something was very different. They would see God reflected in His people. When people see a difference in someone's life, they want to know why that person is different.

LOQ: Can all these instructions be simplified?

Answer: Yes. Love the Lord and love others.

LOQ: What have you been called to do if you are a true Christian?

Answer: We have been called to be holy as God is holy. Our lives should be different from the lives of unbelievers. Others should see that there is a difference in us. From the way we speak and treat one another, the world should see that God is alive and active in our hearts.

LOQ: What are some ways we can be different from the world?

Answer: We can be different in the way we talk (not cursing, taking God's name in vain); in the way we treat believers, unbelievers, and those who need help; in dressing modestly; and in the joy that overflows from our lives.

Summary

God is holy and expects holiness from His people. When we read the Bible and see what happened to Israel when they sinned by disobeying God's commands, it is clear that God keeps His word. He told Israel that He would bless them if they obeyed Him, and He did. He told them that He would punish Israel if they disobeyed Him, and He did. More than just obedience, God expects willing hearts. He desires holy living, separate from the world. Although believers today do not have to follow the same laws that the children of Israel did, God is still the same and has the same high standards for His children. God still demands obedience from the heart, love for one another, hate of the world's system, and honor and protection for the weak. We can see what God expects for us today through His character shown in Leviticus. As we apply Leviticus to our own lives, two main principles are important. Believers are called to love God and to love their neighbors (Matt. 22:37–40).

Application

"You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy" (Lev. 19:2). Believers are called to be holy. Living a holy life according to God's Word with a willing heart will cause others to wonder what makes you different. You can be a living witness and testimony to the world by the way you act. If you are a Christian, you are to obey God's word by living a holy life with a willing heart. Although we no longer have to follow all the laws that the children of Israel followed, we do have the same God, and He still has the same high standards for us. This week, show those around

you that God is alive in you by living a holy and separate life. Watch what you say and what you do. If you were to step out of your own shoes and look at your life and how you act, would it be obvious that you are God's child?

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

Great Are You, Lord

Holy, Holy

Holy, Holy, Holy

O-B-E-D-I-E-N-C-E

Trust and Obey



Class Discussion: Remember to “Be Holy!”

Review the “Be Holy” acronym from Leviticus Lesson 2. Write a second acronym (“HOLY”) vertically on the board. Explain that in today’s lesson we will learn four similar ways to live a holy life that is pleasing to the Lord. During the application portion of the lesson, fill in the following reminders for students to live holy lives. Encourage the students to take notes during the discussion. Give specific examples of how they can honor the weak, obey God from the heart, love others, and live differently than the world around them.

Honor God

Obey God

Listen to God’s commands

Yearn to be holy

Honor the weak

Obey God from the heart

Love others

Yearn to be different from the world



Love God and Love Your Neighbor

Write these two categories on the board. Read through Leviticus 19 out loud. Pause after reading each command, and ask the students whether the command falls into the category of “Love God” or “Love Your Neighbor.” Paraphrase the command on the board under the correct category label.



Guess the Penalty

Have several teachers, helpers, and students prepared to stand in front of the class

to give penalty signs from various sports, such as football, soccer, and basketball. You may want to include props, such as a referee shirt, whistle, and ball. Have each person call a penalty, and see if any student can guess which penalty was called.

Ask the students the following questions: Why are penalties necessary in sporting events? Do you think playing a game would be more or less fun if there were no penalties? Can you see why God gave penalties for His commands?



Do You Love Me?

How do you show your love to others? Have the students share ways that they express love. Write their ideas for display. Some ways are serving others, spending time with others, and giving words of encouragement. Explain that the Bible tells us how to express love to God. Love for God equals obedience to God (John 14:15).



“Then and Now”

Have the students complete the “Then and Now” work sheet at the back of this lesson. In Leviticus 19, the children of Israel were called to be holy by being different. They were called to be set apart as God’s possession for His special purpose. They were to look different and act differently because they had a different purpose than the rest of the world.



“God Requires Holy Living”

Use this work sheet to reinforce the key truths of this week’s lesson. The work sheet is located at the back of the lesson.



Journal Page: “Holy Living”

God commands Christians to be holy just as He commanded the Israelites. Send this work sheet home with the students to complete with their parents during the week.

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).

Then and Now

In Leviticus 19, the children of Israel were called to be holy by being different. They were called to be set apart as God's possession for His special purpose. They were to look different and act differently because they had a different purpose than the rest of the world.

Christians, too, should look and act different from the world. Below is a list of ways to be set apart from the world. In the space provided, write "then" by the ways the Israelites showed they were set apart and "now" by the ways Christians today can show they are set apart.

Ways to Be Set Apart

honoring parents _____

sacrificing an offering _____

obeying the law _____

being a good example to others _____

not eating fruit of a tree until fifth year _____

reading the Bible _____

not shaving sides of head _____

not disfiguring edges of beard _____

Then or Now?

Then and Now

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Then or Now?

Ways to Be Set Apart

Then or Now?

going to church

not cutting your flesh

helping others

sharing God's gift of salvation

not having tattoos

keeping the Sabbath

honoring the elderly

praying

obeying God's commands

giving money to the church

Write out Leviticus 19:2 in the space provided.

Ways to Be Set Apart

Then or Now?

going to church

not cutting your flesh

helping others

sharing God's gift of salvation

not having tattoos

keeping the Sabbath

honoring the elderly

praying

obeying God's commands

giving money to the church

Write out Leviticus 19:2 in the space provided.

God

Requires

Holy Living



Leviticus 19

Name _____

1. Write out Leviticus 19:2.

2. Write out one command from Leviticus 19:11.

3. God commanded the Israelites to _____ their neighbors.

4. Should we love our neighbors? Why or why not? _____

5. God commanded the Israelites to _____ the weak and elderly members of society.

6. Write out Leviticus 19:37.

Holy Living

Following are eight ways the Israelites were to live holy lives. Read these verses with your parents this week. Think of ways the world today commits the sins Israel was told to stay away from. Use the blanks to write down specific ways to live differently than children do today.

1. Honor parents (Leviticus 19:3):

2. Give to the poor (Leviticus 19:9–10):

3. Do not mock the disabled (Leviticus 19:14):

4. Love your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:18):

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2. Give to the poor (Leviticus 19:9–10):

3. Do not mock the disabled (Leviticus 19:14):

4. Love your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:18):

5. Do not spread rumors (Leviticus 19:16):

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6. Be kind to strangers (Leviticus 19:33–34):

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7. Honor the aged (Leviticus 19:32):

7. Honor the aged (Leviticus 19:32):

8. Do not mark your bodies in idol worship (Leviticus 19:27–28):

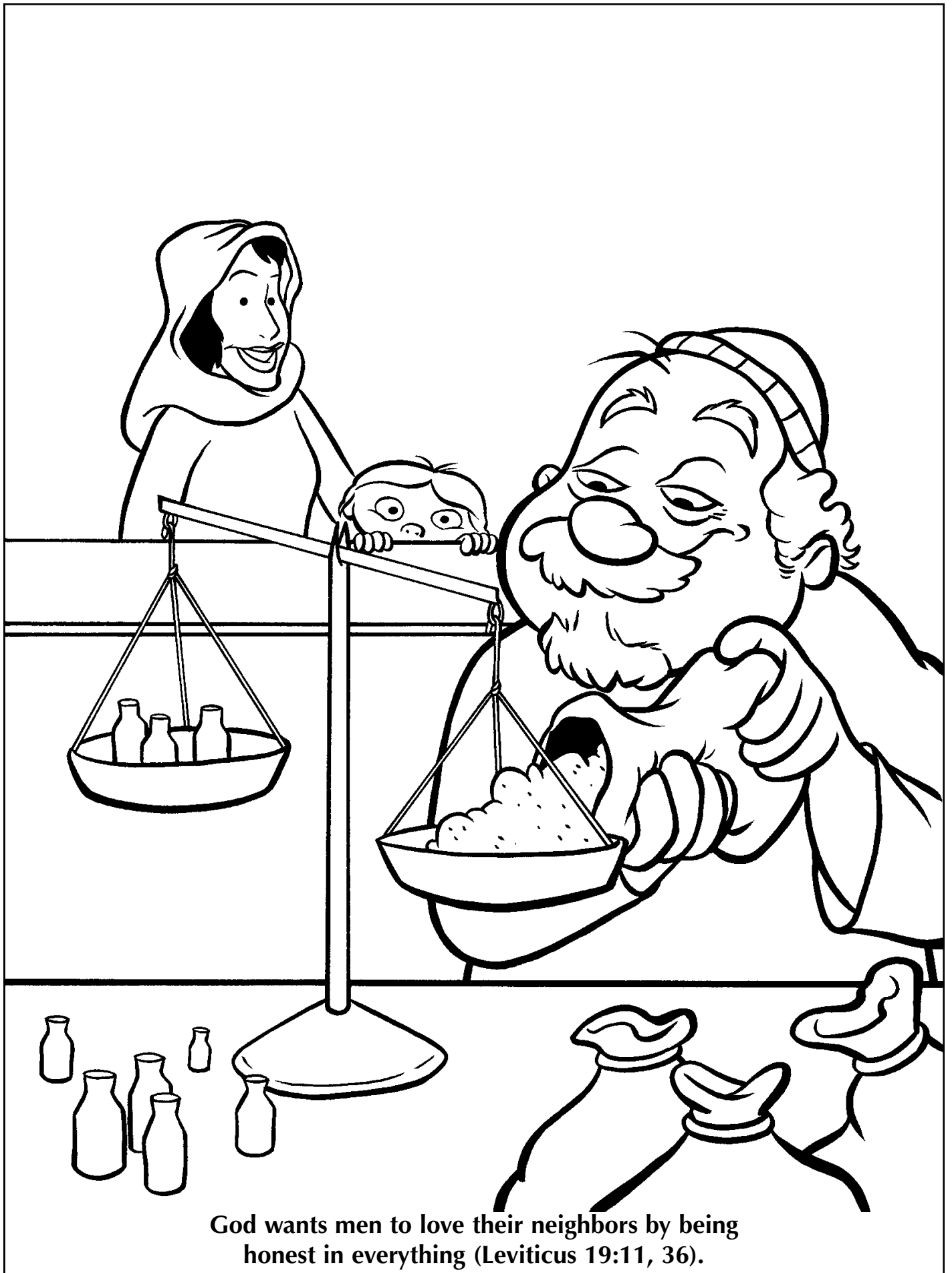
8. Do not mark your bodies in idol worship (Leviticus 19:27–28):

In what other ways did God call Israel to be holy in Leviticus 19?

In what other ways did God call Israel to be holy in Leviticus 19?



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).

