

# Holiness

“When Leaders Aren’t Holy”  
Leviticus 21-22 – November 23, 2025

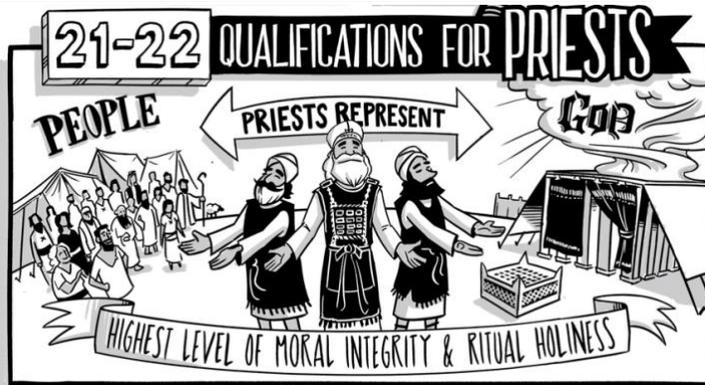
## Our Sermon Series

HOLINESS		
A Meaningful Study of a Book in the Bible That Most People Skip Over		
Date	Bible Text	Message Title
Oct 5	Leviticus 1:1	Holiness
Oct 12	Leviticus 1-7	Holiness Starts by Saying Please, Sorry, and Thanks
Oct 19	Leviticus 8-10	Holiness is Serious Business!
Oct 26	Leviticus 11-15	Holiness Makes You a Good Kind of Different
Nov 2	Leviticus 16-17	The Key to Holiness
Nov 9	Leviticus 18	Holiness and Sex
Nov 16	Leviticus 19-20	Holiness, Love, and the Poor
Nov 23	Leviticus 21-22	When Leaders Aren’t Holy
Nov 30	Leviticus 23-25	Holy Celebrations
Dec 7	Leviticus 26-27	Holiness as a Way of Life

## Church Hurt and Fallen Leaders

- How have you been affected by fallen leaders?
- **James 3:1** (NLT) – *Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly.*

## God’s Old Covenant Standards for Jewish Priests (Lev. 21-22)



- **Leviticus 21-22 outlines the holiness standards for the OT priests:**
  - (1) Priests must give up their normal funeral and **grieving** privileges in order to stay ceremonially clean for priestly service (21:1-6, 10-12).
  - (2) Priests shall only marry a virgin (21:7-9, 13-15).
  - (3) Priests may only serve in the sanctuary if they are ritually clean, and their families may only eat of the offerings if they are ritually clean (22:1-16).
  - (4) Priests may only sacrifice offerings that have **no blemishes** (22:17-33).
  - (5) Priests who have physical defects or handicaps may not serve in the sanctuary (21:16-24).

- Remember: These regulations were ceremonial and only applied to Jewish priests in the old covenant (Romans 7:1-6; Galatians 3:24-26).
- Kenneth Matthews: “Since God is perfect in all His attributes, it would be unfitting to ritually approach God with anything that would manifestly appear imperfect. Therefore, the priests who served the Lord (and the animal sacrifices they brought) were not to have any obvious physical disorder. This passage does **not** teach that persons who have handicaps are any less valuable to God; they have the same access to the Lord and are a welcomed part of the church and community because the Perfect Lamb of God was sacrificed as a Substitute for all of us. The Bible teaches the great importance of the infirmed (Leviticus 19:14; Job 29:15; Jeremiah 31:8; Luke 14:12-15).”
- The unblemished offerings point our eyes to the perfect, blameless, spotless **Lamb of God** who (in His perfection) was sacrificed in our place on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins and the imputation of perfect holiness onto believers (John 1:29; 1 Pet 1:19; Heb 10:14).
- **Application #1** – Receive Jesus’ sacrifice on your behalf:

Lord Jesus, I am sorry for my sins. I repent. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins and that You rose from the dead. I receive Your forgiveness of all of my sins, and I receive Your free gift of eternal life. I choose to follow You. Now, please make me into a new person.

## God’s New Covenant Standards for Church Leaders

- Titus 1:6-9 outlines 11 expected qualities in our church leaders

Leadership Quality	Description
<b>Above reproach</b> (1:6,7)	unimpeachable; full of integrity; absence of charges against you
<b>Healthy family life</b> (1:6)	healthy marriage; faithful in marriage; celibate in singleness; lead your children well
<b>Humble</b> (1:7)	not arrogant; not proudly self-interested
<b>Peaceful</b> (1:7,8)	not quick-tempered; not violent; gentle; uncontentious; peaceful; not-overbearing
<b>Healthy relationship with alcohol</b> (1:7)	not a drunkard; not addicted to alcohol or other controlling substances; has self-control with alcohol+
<b>Healthy relationship with money</b> (1:7)	not greedy for gain; does not seek wealth and financial prosperity at any cost without regard to honesty or integrity; not using church for financial gain
<b>Hospitable</b> (1:8)	gives practical help to those in need whether friend or stranger
<b>Lover of good</b> (1:8)	having strong affection for that which is intrinsically good; a friend of virtues
<b>Upright and holy</b> (1:8)	sensible; sober-minded; cool-headed; prudent; just; proper; fitting; fair; devout; obedient to God’s will
<b>Disciplined</b> (1:8)	self-controlled; submits to the Holy Spirit’s control on the inside; accountable
<b>Person of the Word</b> (1:9)	knows God’s Word; holds fast to God’s Word; devoted to the Gospel; shares God’s Word with others; lovingly confronts others who are straying from God’s Word

- **Application #2** – The reason that God commands these qualities for NT church leaders is that He wants all believers to walk in these godly qualities. He wants it to cascade from leaders to all of us. Among the 11 qualities, my growth areas (by depending on God’s Spirit) are...

### My Journey with Fallen Leaders

- Over my lifetime, I have seen many significant Christian leaders fall:

Jimmy Swaggart – sexual immorality	Jim Bakker – sexual immorality/\$
Perry Noble – alcohol abuse	Bill Gothard – sexual immorality
Rob Bell – left the faith	Ted Haggard – sexual immorality
Joshua Harris – left the faith	Bob Coy – sexual immorality
Marty Sampson – left the faith	Mark Driscoll – power abuse
Bill Hybels – sexual immorality	Ravi Zacharias – sexual immorality
Mike Bickle – sexual immorality	James McDonald – power abuse
Robert Morris – sexual immorality	Tony Evans – undisclosed
Darrin Patrick – suicide	

- How the falling of these leaders has affected me: disappointment, depression, intimidation (how can I make it!!!), anger, resolve, pressing into the Lord, and lots of questions.
- **One of my questions:** God, You used that person significantly in my life!!! How is that? Was that “fruit” not really fruit?
- John Stott: “There are three tests to consider when thinking about a person’s ‘fruit’: 1) their character and conduct; 2) the actual teaching that is given; and 3) the effect their teaching has on others. We think passing the third automatically means they have passed the first. It doesn’t.”
- James Emery White: “It leaves us saddened, disappointed, even disillusioned when any individual’s life is so deeply disconnected from their teachings and writings, but it does not make their teachings or writings inherently false or of no value. Yes, it blunts their edge considerably, as we cannot help but think of the hypocrisy behind so many of the words, but the value they brought to our lives should be seen as a gift from God independent of the source (James 1:17). While we are all called to faithful and holy living, let’s be collectively grateful that the work of Christ does not depend on the faithfulness and holiness of any of us. No leader, no minister, is anything less than a sin-stained, sin-soaked man or woman in desperate need of grace. It is beyond disconcerting when a deeply entrenched shadow life is revealed about someone we admire but, in truth, we all have a shadow life of some kind that God continues to work through. This does not justify the shadow life, and there are certainly degrees to which some have allowed the shadow life to operate, but shadow lives we all have. Faithfulness **does** matter. Do not fall prey to thinking that since God seems to use people given over to sin, you might as well not worry about fighting it too hard yourself. No, there will be judgment on their lives, ‘fruit’ notwithstanding. Faithfulness is about love for God, not about how it plays into temporal levels of success. The ‘well done, My good and faithful servant’ is all about the ‘well’ not the ‘done.’ In other words, it will not be about how **much** was done, but how **well** it was done.”

- **Application #3** – How has your life been impacted by a fallen leader? How have you been affected by church hurt?

#### **Here are some helpful steps to take:**

- With God’s help, speak your hurt aloud to someone (Eph. 4:15).
- With God’s help, forgive the people or entities that have hurt you (Eph. 4:32). Extend the same grace to fallen leaders that God has extended to you.
- With God’s help, embrace the messy-middle of risking trusting a leader who has earned some trust and yet putting your ultimate trust and faith in Jesus, not humans.
- With God’s help, be part of the solution through prayer, support, volunteerism, positive talk (vs. cynicism), and faith-sharing.
- Paul David Tripp: “Everybody believes in grace until **a leader** needs it. Every church or ministry leadership community must be a restorative community if it’s going to have long-term spiritual health and ministry effectiveness. I am not arguing that there aren’t times when a leadership community must separate from a fallen and recalcitrant leadership, but I am arguing that this should happen at the end of a wholehearted, gospel-saturated attempt at restoration to the church body, even if it means the relinquishing of that leader’s position of authority. My prayer is that every ministry leadership community would model the restorative heart of the Lord. Restoration never minimizes the damaging reality of sin, but while taking sin seriously, it also believes in the power of restorative grace.”

### Best Practices For All of Us to Live Above Reproach

- Howard Hendricks interviewed 246 men in full time ministry who had experienced moral failure. He heard four common characteristics:
  - (1) None of the men were involved in any kind of real personal accountability.
  - (2) Each of the men had ceased having a daily time of personal prayer, Bible reading, and worship.
  - (3) Eighty percent of the men became sexually involved with a woman that they were counseling.
  - (4) All 246 were convinced “it would never happen to me.”
- **Application #4** – **In order to live an above reproach life, I am going to...**
  - Pursue a relational, consistent daily time of personal prayer, Bible reading/meditation/application, and worship (Mark 1:35).
  - Establish real, authentic accountability in my life (Prov. 27:27).
  - Not be alone with or build an emotionally intimate relationship with a person of the opposite gender that I am not married to (Eph. 5:3).
  - Walk in a reverent fear of the Lord knowing and believing that (without vigilance) “it could happen to me” (Proverbs 16:6).
  - Pray fervently for my leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-2).