

God's Laws For Living Justly

Exodus 22

Faith Portal Church

ADULT

Unit 11 Lesson 11

Supplemental Texts

Exo 21

Focus Verse

“If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury.” – Exodus 22:25

Introduction

God descended on Mount Sinai to meet with the Israelites, and His presence and splendor terrified everyone. Only Moses and Aaron were invited by God to come up to the mountain (Exo 19:24). He gave Israel the ten commandments, of which the first four deal with our relationship toward God, while the last six commandments deal with our relationship with fellow men. God is first, followed by parents, and then others. The order is crucial for a better outcome.

Deeper Look

Restitution – Exo 22:1-15

The Israelites were given more principles to value the ten commandments and grasp how justice would be dispensed. For stealing, restitution was mandated plus an additional penalty. If the thief was unable to pay back, he was sold as a slave to pay for what he stole. If a burglar was killed while breaking in, the property owner would be guiltless, unless it was during the day. A man who destroyed another man's field or vineyard deliberately or not by livestock or fire must retribute. In certain situations, judges were used to investigate a man in whose custody another man's property was stolen (*vv.* 7-8) and to decide ownership disputes (*v.* 9). If an animal in the care of a man died, was hurt, or stolen (with no witness), the man's oath was taken as true unless proven otherwise. If it was torn to pieces, its remains must be shown as evidence to be guiltless.

Love Your Neighbor – Exo 22:16-31

The Israelites were instructed to abstain from pre-marital sex. The law stated that if anyone engaged in witchcraft, bestiality, and offering sacrifices to any god except the Lord, death was the punishment. The law prescribed to the Israelites that foreigners, widows, or orphans should never be mistreated or abused. God promised to avenge the abuse of the widows and orphans. Interest was forbidden on loans to the poor, and the security for loans had to be reasonable. Our words should honor God and our rulers, and we should give God His due (Rom 13:1). Israel was reminded to give God her firstborn sons and the first of their grain and animals (Exo 13:11-12).

Questions

1. If a man stole an ox and killed or sold it, he must pay back. What percentage would he repay of what he stole? If he could not repay, what option would he have? What was the central ethics of this principle?
2. When a man allowed his livestock to graze in another man's field or vineyard, there was a consequence. What was it? Was such a consequence necessary? Why, or why not?
3. Issues with no stipulated resolution were taken to the judges. Why? How should we deal with issues between two Christians or between a Christian and an unbeliever?
4. Why was restitution, as a principle, instituted in judging Israel's civil matters? Why was an additional penalty required in certain matters?
5. Why did God prohibit the Israelites from sacrificing to any other gods? Why did He give Israel His commandments as soon as three months after He delivered them out of Egypt?
6. What warning did God give to the Israelites regarding their widows and orphans? Why was the warning needed? Does God care for the widows and orphans today?
7. What is usury? Why did God disallow the Israelites to impose usury when they lent money to the poor among them? Should this principle be used among Christians?

Personal Meditation

God puts so much weight on human relationship, and He pays attention to how we treat one another. The essence of these laws is love, and love is a demonstrable attribute. The laws given to the Israelites enjoined them to be good neighbors to one another, thereby fostering a proper human relationship. The laws detailed in the text emphasize that we must love our neighbors as we love ourselves (Lev 19:18). This idea is conveyed throughout the Bible. The word “neighbor” extends beyond the people you know and love. In fact, we are asked to love our enemies (Matt 5:44; Luke 6:35). How we do in loving our enemies reflects how much we love God. If we rightly love God (Matt 22:37), the challenge to demonstrably love others will disappear.

The laws made a provision for restitution should a person suffer a loss or hurt as a result of what another person did. Restitution was necessary as a guardrail, preventing the Israelites from wronging their neighbors. The word of God is our guardrail and guideline by which we live to prevent us from wronging others and sinning against God (Psa 119:11).

DAILY STUDY

Monday	Exo 22:1-5
Tuesday	Exo 22:6-11
Wednesday	Exo 22:12-15
Thursday	Exo 22:16-20
Friday	Exo 22:21-25
Saturday	Exo 22:26-31



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