

Week 7

February 12 - February 18

Exodus 35-40; Leviticus 1-8; Numbers 7-9

This week's readings continue in the detail of the covenant that God established with Israel. You will read about the building of the tabernacle and the details associated with it. Following the construction of the tabernacle, the Lord gives instruction as to how He is to be worshipped. In all of these instructions we find an underlying need for us to do things God's way. Whether it is a willingness to give or submit, it is dependent upon a heart that is willing to do things God's way.

February 12th

Exodus 35-36. "Stop Giving!"

I have yet to visit a church that has more money and resources than it can truly put to use. However, that is exactly what we see take place today. God's people give above and beyond what is needed to build the tabernacle.

Now, my intent with today's devotional is not to go off on the importance of giving, but I do want to note something interesting in Ex. 35:20-22. What largely catches my attention is not what they brought or even how much they brought, but rather how they brought it. Everyone whose hearts were willing brought what they could. I think it is safe to say that not every Israelite gave to the building of the tabernacle, rather only those whose "hearts were stirred and desired to do so" gave their offerings.

This is how it is to work in our own lives. God doesn't want us to give out of compulsion or obligation. If that is why you give then you should keep your money. Look at Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11. They gave out of a wrong motive and were dishonest in their giving. May we give as the Israelites gave, with willing hearts.

February 13th

Exodus 37:1-39:31. "Lost in the Details"

Not long ago, I went on a retreat with some middle school boys. While at this retreat, I discovered that they can easily get lost in the details of a story and totally miss the point. I hope that isn't the case for you as you read this passage today. I say that because, in the middle of all those details, is a simple phrase "just as the Lord had commanded Moses." All of those details were important because they were commanded by God. It is not as though the craftsmen could have changed their minds and disregarded the instructions from God. They followed every single detail God had given them

God gave them great detail on the tabernacle and He gives us detail on how to live as well. So, are you willing to live life God's way, or are you going to ignore God's instructions on how to live? The craftsmen of Israel were willing to follow God's instruction and build His way. If you will do the same, your life will be one of beauty just like the tabernacle was.

February 14th

Exodus 39:32-40:38; Numbers 9:15-23. "Time to Go Again"

Pastor David Curtis wrote, "In our first seven years of marriage, my wife Kristi and I had seven different addresses. We would often make jokes about being part nomadic or having the "year-and-a-half itch." However, through those years and all the moves, one thing was consistent – it was always our decision when we moved.

As you read today, that was not necessarily the case for the Israelites. How would you like it if every day you woke up and had to check if the cloud had moved to know if you were leaving or staying? It didn't matter how much you liked your current spot, if the cloud was moving, it was time to go. I would imagine that many of us would begin to complain and grumble if we had to live like that. And yet in a way we do live this way. If you are at all concerned with being in God's will and He says "go," then you will go.

Are you willing to follow God's direction? If God were to say "go," would you go? How will you go? Will you complain and grumble or will you go joyfully, knowing that God is leading you?

February 15th

Numbers 7:1-89. "A Living and Holy Sacrifice"

Over the course of twelve days the twelve tribes of Israel gave their gifts of dedication for the tabernacle. You probably noticed that all twelve gifts were identical. To me this is a remarkable thing. Bible Commentator Matthew Henry notes that this points to the "equal share" that each tribe had in the tabernacle and altar. I am sure that it was tempting to those tribes with greater resources to out-give the other tribes. And yet none of them did.

Under the Old Covenant, all people came to God through the system of sacrifices. Today, under the New Covenant, all people come to God through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

The tribes gave their dedication offerings in recognition of the importance of the tabernacle. So, what is an appropriate offering for us to give in recognition of Jesus? Romans 12:1-2 says that we are to give our whole life as a "living and holy sacrifice." Now that is an offering that truly shows we all have equal share in the sacrifice of Christ for our salvation.

February 16th

Numbers 8:1-9:14; Leviticus 1-3. "Willing to Believe"

There were numerous types of sacrifices in the Old Covenant system of worship. In our modern mindset, we might wonder why all these sacrifices were necessary. It is difficult for us to relate to and understand this system of worship and forgiveness that God had ordained. However, there is a connection between their receiving of forgiveness and our receiving of forgiveness, and that connection is Christ.

Leviticus 1:4 says that a man was to "lay your hand on its head so the Lord will accept it as your substitute, thus making atonement for you." Why would killing an animal while placing a hand on its head atone for sins?

As people, we generally want to make up for our mistakes. We also want to attempt to earn God's favor and forgiveness. However, this is impossible for we cannot repay the debt we owe to Christ. Forgiveness is only received by a willingness to believe according to God's system, whether that is belief that God would forgive based on an Old Testament sacrifice, or if it is trusting in Christ's sacrifice for us today.

February 17th

Leviticus 4-6. "Seeking Forgiveness"

Is it possible to sin without knowing it? Absolutely. Many times, when we sin against another person, we may not be aware of it for some time. And sometimes no one else is aware either. The instructions regarding the sin offering we read today were to be followed "when they became aware of their sin" (4:14; 23; 28; 5:5; 17). God does not expect us to seek forgiveness for sins we are unaware of. However, how we respond to the realization of sin in our life is critical to our spiritual health. In the Old Testament they were to bring a sin offering in order to seek the Lord's forgiveness.

For the New Testament believer, the command is still to seek forgiveness. 1 John 1:9 tells us that "if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong." When you become aware of sin, are you willing to seek forgiveness from the Lord? What about seeking forgiveness from a person you may have sinned against?

February 18th

Leviticus 7-8. "Worship with a Willing Heart"

The theme that has been running through this entire week is a willingness to do things God's way. Worship for Israel was very detailed. God had directed through Moses how they were to worship Him.

As Christians and members of the new covenant, we do not have this amount of detail from the Lord for our worship services. At best we have some principles in the New Testament and the model of the first century church in the book of Acts. Even though the amount of detail differs, the need for a willingness to worship God according to His way remains.

In your worship, is it more about God or more about your wants and needs? Are your preferences in worship more important than God's desires? What are you doing to cultivate a willingness to do things God's way? Spend some time with God today, as Moses did, asking Him to show you where you need to submit more to His way.

General Questions for each day:

Summarize the day's Bible passage in your own words.

What thoughts, actions, attitudes or beliefs are addressed in the passage?

How is the Holy Spirit leading you to apply this passage to your life today?

Week 7— February 12th-19th

Exodus 35-40; Leviticus 1-8; Numbers 7-9

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Bible Discussion Guide:

Chapters 35 and 36 of Exodus deal with a willingness to give to God's plan and program. What is it about giving that is easy for you?

What is it about giving that is difficult for you?

Why do you think the leaders had to ask the people to stop giving?

How can you cultivate a deeper willingness to give?

God gave the Israelites great detail in how to build the tabernacle. He also gives us details in how to live our lives. Are you willing to follow God's instructions just as the craftsmen of Israel did?

What do you find the most difficult about submitting to God's way?

Describe a time in your life when you had to consciously make a decision to follow God's way and not the world's way?

How did God respond to your decision?

Personal application: While submitting to God's way isn't always easy, it should result in increased joy in our lives. Are you experiencing this in your life today? If not, is there something in your life that is stealing away that joy?