

Be Unclean until Evening



The Torah contains a true abundance of ritual purity, and as some would have it, hygiene laws. The ways to become unclean are many, and the methods of returning to cleanness particular, and occasionally lengthy. We have the uncleanness we can get from unclean animals, the uncleanness of touching their corpses, the uncleanness of touching anything which has been touched by their corpses. We also have the uncleanness of childbirth and the long recovery period afterward. We have the many laws of leprosy, the careful examination by the priest, the possible

isolation of the apparent patient. We even have the leprosy of objects, even the leprosy of walls in the home which can make one unclean. We have the isolating, the cleaning and even the destroying we need to do with such unclean objects.

Chapter 15 of Leviticus is a true LITANY of uncleanness and methods of returning to purity. Not only does the bodily discharge make one unclean, but objects which the person with a discharge touches become unclean and the person who touches those objects becomes unclean also. Just to describe a few, it tells us “whoever touches his bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.” It goes on at length, continuing, “He who sits on anything on which he who has a discharge sat shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.” Then again, “If he who has the discharge spits on him who is clean, then he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.” That’s the common and apparently fairly simple method of returning to purity in this category of things. It seems pretty easy. You wash your clothes. You bathe in water. Then you will be unclean until evening.

Many believers within the New Covenant breathe a sigh of relief they don’t have to follow such an array of practices just to avoid uncleanness or to return to cleanness. We are happy to say that we understand the principles behind ritual purity, and we apply those principles today. We have no use for the practices themselves. Now that sounds realistic. It is fair to say that today we should understand the need for spiritual purity and holy living and staying away from unclean things. We also have good health and hygiene practices, some of which truly mimic the patterns found in Leviticus.

However, while this explanation is very good in theory, it is not very convincing in fact. How is it true that the Body of Messiah is seeking the same kind of purity but in spiritual ways? How is it visible that the holy Bride that Messiah is to bring to Himself is carefully avoiding uncleanness and purifying herself from it? This is not evident, and a simple look around will suggest something very different. To put that in practical language and to get specific, how is the holy Bride of Messiah interacting with modern institutions which promote and perpetrate all variety of moral evils? How is it interacting with a society and mass media which promotes the humanistic worldview and either misrepresents or mocks the biblical one? If we are averse to touching unclean things in the New Covenant, it seems we should be averse to touching THESE things. Averse to sharing them with others, because they're impure. Because they're unclean. Yet strangely we touch this uncleanness over and over and over again. We share it with others, including sharing it with our children. We go to the places and touch the object this uncleanness itself has touched. How is that purity? How is that cleanness?

Just to bring up a few examples, an average search on an average internet search engine for the word "men" will bring up any number of pictures of mostly-undressed and sexualized men. It will also bring up pictures of men engaged in physical intimacy together, or at the minimum suggestive acts. That's to say nothing of all the hyper-feminized ones. At most government schools, children can and are taught sexual acts in detail, including homosexual ones, and the ultimate goal of the surrounding society is to penalize young children for not affirming immorality. Of course most of that sexual indoctrination has been going on for decades, and it is only the homosexual promotion which is relatively new. One more: You can walk into your average public library and someone can legally be on a public computer there watching hardcore pornography. That's right. Hardcore pornography.

Now I think you get the idea. And of course I could go on at length. But let us agree, if the Body of Messiah, His pure and holy Bride, has a New Covenant understanding of the purity we read about in Leviticus, then it should certainly include avoiding the many unclean things the world promotes. Yet I mean to go a step further than this common observation. I mean to also tell you this: The scale to which the world has embraced moral insanity is large enough that if we care about purity, if we care about cleanness, we will need our OWN institutions, our own businesses and our own communities to do it. The idea that we will sanctify this society by participating in it on a large scale has failed. It looked good for a while. But it is a failure now.

Therefore, I am suggesting, and I would even say pleading, that we come together into our own communities for the sake of preserving moral virtue. I do not claim to have all the details of managing a project of that scale, but I believe it is a necessity and I invite you to consider it as our possible future. Even our likely future. Forming our own communities to seek godly ways would certainly include many or all of these facets:

- Living close together, in some instances sharing living space and playing space
- Writing up our own regulations for businesses, which allow the business owner and employees to follow good biblical ethics
- Having our own education network or turning entirely to homeschooling
- Having our own financial system, including regulations based on biblical principles and ethics
- Establishing our own local laws
- Having and enforcing standards in our congregations and communities, one of the simplest of which would be actually practicing holy modesty.
- Returning to following some of the ethics believers have tragically abandoned; to name a handful or major ones; a return to biblical standards on marriage, divorce and remarriage; and a return to the prohibition we have had from the beginning against the use of contraception. Restoring morality in those two areas ALONE could be a life-giving remedy of immeasurable proportion.
- A restoration of religious orders, though not necessarily monastic ones
- A restoration of communal living, at least for some committed believers
- Caring for our extended family, not merely our immediate one.
- A return to the respect for biblical financial principles, such as the prohibition on usury.
- Having a heavy filter on mass media from the world at large and a set of moral codes governing our own publications both for print and pictures.
- Having a certain amount of separation of the sexes throughout home, congregational and community life.

Now I'm sure the list I've provided here is incomplete, and of course it does not attempt to deal with all of the implementation or application questions. However, are these things which we should be doing? Are they things a sacred community serious in its faith ought to be doing? Is there anything you see above which is not either a) biblical teaching or b) common sense methods of upholding biblical teaching? It seems to me that's all that they are. And of course millions of believers throughout history sought very diligently to do much of what I describe to you. Now why shouldn't we?

I realize a multitude of professed Christians would STRONGLY object to much of the above. Yet isn't it this same multitude of professed Christians who have led us to where we are at right now? Leaders and pastors will LOUDLY declare that the society around us is wicked. Yet what changes are they putting in place? They will declare this nation a pagan one for its rejection of God, but why do they not restore the standards which the Body of Messiah long knew? For a Christian to cry out against this godless culture, and then demand a divorce, is sheer hypocrisy. Let's face that. For people to cry out for revival, and then demand their contraception is also appalling. That is why I write as I write to you now about the need to form our own communities and live holy lives; because for all that TALK you hear about holiness to mean something, we have to actually be trying to do much of the above.

The state we are in right now, brothers, is much worse than the state of the unclean Israelite we read of in Torah. We haven't just handled the unclean object. We haven't just sat where the unclean man sat. We have become truly covered with the unclean legions it describes and are unclean deep into the fabric of our souls. A leper would shudder to see us. That is why I beg you to consider the proposal above. To consider forming our own communities as believers with our own, holy laws. The book of Leviticus gives us instructions for how the impure Israelite would return to normal; it is to wash his clothes. To bathe in water. And then he would be unclean until evening. Well I think in the New Covenant it is far more strenuous than that. And we have not even washed our clothes. We do not bathe in water. And it is a very long road until evening.