

CHANGING WANDERERS INTO WORSHIPERS

From the Exodus to the Promised Land

Priority One: Taking God Very Seriously

Selections from Leviticus and Numbers

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

After the Israelites spent nearly ten months constructing the tabernacle—adorning its features with gold, silver, and bronze along with scarlet thread, tanned ram skins, and acacia wood—God didn't tell them to pack up and depart from Mount Sinai.

God made them wait. He made them watch for His movement, listen to His words, follow His instructions, worship according to His dictates, and celebrate according to His calendar. Now that God had taken the Israelites out of Egypt, He needed to take Egypt out of the Israelites. God did this by teaching them how to take Him seriously.

In this study, we'll review with Chuck Swindoll selections of Leviticus and Numbers to reflect on how we can take God seriously in our walk with Him.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Typically, these *Searching the Scriptures* studies include four components that follow Chuck's Bible study method:

1. *Observation:* We read what the text says, perceiving how each word fits in sentences, how each sentence fits in paragraphs, and how each paragraph fits in the book.
2. *Interpretation:* We understand what the text means, delving into word studies, ancient cultural practices, history, and theology.
3. *Correlation:* We compare our passage with other biblical passages on the same topic to complement our understanding of the topic.
4. *Application:* We integrate into our lives the biblical truths and principles, obeying Jesus' commands, believing Jesus' promises, and walking with Jesus always.

Quotable

*The top
priority for us
all is that
we take God
very seriously.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Because this study will cover a longer section of Scripture, we'll focus only on observation, interpretation, and application. We'll explore Leviticus 1:1 through Numbers 10:10. While we'll cover only a small piece of these chapters in this study, we invite you to read through the book of Leviticus as well as Numbers 1:1–10:10, slowing down to interpret those passages you find interesting or confusing. To begin, let's gain an overview of both Leviticus and Numbers.

Leviticus

Get a bird's-eye view of the book of Leviticus with Chuck's overview chart below.

LEVITICUS

	The Way to God Access <u>The approach: offerings</u> <u>The representative: priest</u> The laws: cleansing <i>Physically</i> <i>Spiritually</i>	The Walk with God Lifestyle <u>Practical guidelines</u> <u>Chronological observances</u> <u>Severe consequences</u> <u>Verbal promises</u>
	CHAPTERS 1–17	CHAPTERS 18–27
Emphasis	Ritual (for worship)	Practical (for living)
Location	Mount Sinai . . . one full year	
Key Word	“Holy” (appears 90 times)	
Theme	How sinful humanity should worship a holy God	
Key Verses	17:11; 19:2; 20:7–8	
Christ in Leviticus	Pictured in each sacrifice and ritual	

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After reviewing how Leviticus fits together, peruse this [book introduction](#) on the Insight for Living Ministries website. Record below what you learned about Leviticus that you didn't realize before.



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Numbers

Let's now get the big picture of Numbers with Chuck's overview chart.

NUMBERS

	Preparation Census Organization Sanctification CHAPTERS 1-9	Pessimism Complaining Doubting Promised Land rejected CHAPTERS 10-14	Punishment Wandering Old generation dies New census CHAPTERS 15-36
Location	Mount Sinai	En route to Kadesh-barnea	Wilderness wandering
Time	20 days	Several months	38 years
Key Word	Wilderness		
Theme	The price of disbelief and disobedience		
Key Verses	14:22-23		
Christ in Numbers	Pictured in manna (compare John 6:31-33); water from rock (compare 1 Corinthians 10:4); bronze serpent (compare John 3:14); in Balaam's prophecy (Numbers 24:17); pillar of cloud and of fire; cities of refuge		

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After reviewing how Numbers fits together, read this [book introduction](#) on the Insight for Living Ministries website. Record below what you learned about Numbers that you didn't notice before.





Observation

Use your study time this week to read as much of Leviticus and Numbers 1:1–10:10 as you're able, or you can focus only on Leviticus 19:1–18 which we'll examine together below.

God gave the law through Moses to form the Israelites into a nation which would inherit the full blessings of Abraham—on the condition that the nation kept God's covenant. God gave the law to the Israelites so they would learn how to take Him seriously, to enjoy His presence, and to conduct themselves as a nation through which other nations could experience and come to know the one, true God.

Rightly Dividing the Law of Moses

Theologians have helpfully distinguished the law of Moses into three categories.

Judicial Law

God provided judicial law to instruct Israel how it must govern itself, politically and civically, as the nation of God. Examples of judicial law included regulating warfare (Deuteronomy 20) along with instructions on marriage, divorce, and business (Deuteronomy 24–25). We, as part of Jesus' church, are not a political entity, so we're not bound by these laws; nevertheless, they're still helpful for understanding God and His ways.

Ceremonial Law

God provided ceremonial law to instruct Israel how to approach and worship Him. This category of law included instruction for both individual and national worship. Examples like the sacrificial system (Leviticus 1–7), priestly instructions (Leviticus 16), and the annual feasts (Leviticus 23) fall within this category. Jesus' sacrificial and substitutionary death fulfills the ceremonial laws of Israel, thereby granting all Christians better, more intimate access to God. Though Christians are no longer bound by Mosaic law, these laws are still helpful for understanding God and His ways.

Moral Law

God provided moral laws to instruct the Israelites how to relate to each other, to foreigners, and to God. These laws reflect how morally fallen humans could live as representatives of God. Christ fulfilled the moral requirements of God's law, extending to Christians not only the righteousness God requires of His image-bearers but also newfound power through the Holy Spirit to help us live God-honoring lives. In the new heaven and earth, God will perfect Christians according to Christ's image.

As Christians, we can still learn about God and His ways through the moral instructions of the Mosaic law, which we'll explore below in Leviticus 19:1–18. This passage shows how the Israelites would need to reprogram their values, personal habits, and social practices to take God seriously and to live as His people.



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A New Way of Living—Leviticus 19:1–18

Slowly read *Leviticus 19:1–18*. Record any key observations you find.

Which verses contain moral instructions? _____

Which verses contain ceremonial instructions? _____

Which verses contain judicial instructions? _____

According to Leviticus 19:1–2, why did God want the Israelites to be holy?

Did you notice the last command in 19:18? It's part of the great commandment that Jesus taught throughout His ministry. The chief indication that we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength shines through the way we love our neighbor.



Interpretation

For interpretation, we'll look up two key words found in our Leviticus passage. These will help us understand how the Israelites took God seriously in their relationship with Him.



In your Bible dictionary, review the word *sacrifice*, and record notes below that help you understand why sacrifice was significant to the Israelites and how it is significant for us today.

Next, look up *holy*. The Israelites took God seriously by being holy; they had to understand the holiness of God before they could live holy lives. Record what you learn about God's holiness and how the command to be holy applies to us today.



Application

In his sermon, Chuck helpfully provided five principles for those who want to take God seriously today:

1. God occupies the first place, not another place.
2. God's Word is the final word, not another opinion.
3. Our worship is deep and meaningful, not superficial.
4. The values we embrace transcend culture, rather than being based upon it.
5. The integrity of the family is protected, not compromised.



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Think carefully over what you observed and interpreted in this study. Yes, we explored some foreign concepts and dozens of chapters, but they all point toward the single application: *take God seriously*. Also, consider Chuck's principles, and write about just one of them that is most meaningful to you in your current season of life. Write how your life might change for the better if you deeply implemented that one principle.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I pray that You bless and protect me. I want to take You seriously with my entire being, so I ask that You graciously strengthen me to do so because my flesh is weak and easily tempted to turn away. This week, please shower Your favor upon my life and give me peace. I pray this in the strong name of Your Son, amen.



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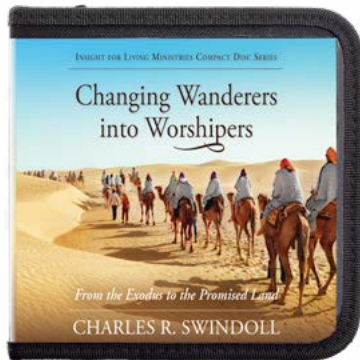
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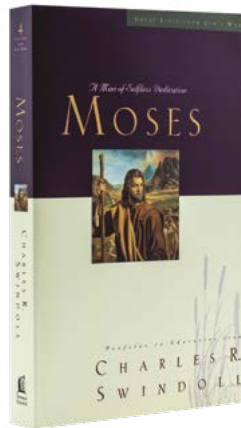
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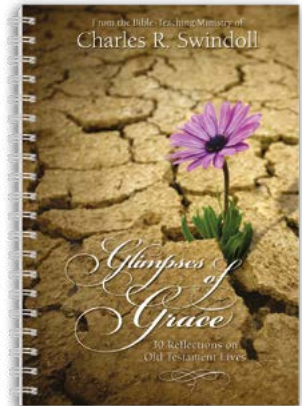
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For the 2018–2019 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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