

Old Testament Law

How Does It Apply Today?

1. Identify what the particular law meant to the original audience

- What was the historical context of the specific law in question?
- Did it govern how the people were to approach God? each other?
- Did it relate to agriculture or commerce?
- What did the law mean for the people at that time in that setting?
- Was the law given in response to a specific situation?
- How does this particular law relate to the Old Covenant?

2. Develop universal principles from the text

- What is the over-arching principle being expressed by this law?
- What does the rest of Scripture say about this subject?
- What is the truth communicated here that is applicable to all God's people, regardless of where they live or the covenant they live under?
- Usually related directly to the character of God, the nature of sin, the issue of obedience, and the concern for other people

3. Filter the principle through the New Testament

- How does the New Testament speak about this universal principle?
- In what way did Jesus address this subject?

4. Apply the principle to life today

- How am I to incorporate this into my life?
- What does obedience to this principle look like for me today?

Example #1:

Exodus 20:14

You shall not commit adultery.

1. Instructions on how people are to relate to one another in marriage.

2. Honoring God in your marriage involves faithfulness to your spouse sexually.

3. *Matthew 5:27-28...* "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Honoring God in your marriage involves faithfulness to your spouse sexually – with your physical body and your mind.

4. Don't sleep with someone who is not your spouse, and don't think about sleeping with someone who is not your spouse.

Example #2:

Leviticus 5:2

'Or if a person touches anything ceremonially unclean-- whether the carcasses of unclean wild animals or of unclean livestock or of unclean creatures that move along the ground-- even though he is unaware of it, he has become unclean and is guilty.

1. One in a string of laws outlining how the Israelites were to live in relationship with a God who is holy. This section of Leviticus deals with the offerings that were needed after a person committed an unintentional sin. If a person touched a dead animal then God classified that person as unclean and therefore unable to approach God and worship Him.
2. God is holy. People commit sin, sometimes unintentionally. God's holiness demands a cleansing of the people from their sin.
3. *Mark 7:20-23...He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'"*

We are no longer made unclean by touching dead animals but by participating in evil in word, thought and deed.

Hebrews 10:19-22...Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

We are made clean not by the blood of a goat sacrificed by a human priest but by the blood of Christ our Great High Priest.

4. I should seek to live a holy life before a Holy God. I should be grateful for the blood that was shed on my behalf. When I sin I should be quick to confess and repent.

For further study:

www.the-highway.com/law1_Wenham.html

www.cVOICE.org/torahholiness.html

Book: *The Christian and the Old Testament* by Walter Kaiser