

Loving Levites

Cheryl Harris

PURPOSE: In this lesson, we will seek to learn what is wrong with our hearts that we resent Levites (who collect tithes).

MUSIC: (Hymns of Heritage & Hope) #634 “Trust & Obey,” #401 “Love Lifted Me,” and #620 “Take Me Life and Let It Be” If it is not possible to sing, read the words together.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 10:32; Mark 10:17-29

PREPARATION Needed:

Skit: Run off a copy of the opening skit and assign the needed readers. You may choose to make signs for the various characters to wear during the skit. Keep these signs to use in all the other skits.

Music: If using music, acquire enough hymnals for each person to have one. Optional: Have a recording or an instrumentalist play accompaniment.

Scripture: Have Bibles ready for use. Assign Scripture pieces at the start, to make reading through them smoother. Ask someone to have the Scripture Hebrews 13:1-3 open to read when asked.

Hook

This devotional will focus on Loving Levites. In the Scripture about the Good Samaritan, we do not have much information on him. He was simply called a Levite. As the Scripture is being read the characters will act out the reading. At the end of the reading the character who is the Levite will stand and share her part.

To introduce this lesson, share the skit below: **Loving Levites**

(Luke 10:25-37)

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind;’ and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

The one who is the Levite will look at the audience and say,

“Do you know who I am? I’m a Levite. We are special because we are descendants of the tribe of Levi. Only Levites can ever become priests. We are indeed blessed. We have important jobs in the tabernacle and in the community. We are special! I saw that man who was there on the side of the road, and I felt so sorry for him. But I saw the priest walk on by, so I knew I shouldn’t stop. The priest always knows the right thing to do. Besides, the priest is more responsible than me! He’s much higher ranking than I am. I’m just a Levite, he’s a priest. If the priest had stopped, I would have been honored to stop and help the priest. Besides, I knew SOMEBODY would stop! I just didn’t have time! I can’t do everything you know!

Book

Comparing Bible versions often yields interesting information. The key verse for the Levite man — Luke 10:32 — is very short in most versions. I found the variations provided some useful pieces of information. Different translators do bring out unique points. The basic text tells that when the Levite approached the injured man, he saw him but kept his distance as he continued on his way. My favorite translation was the VOICE, which reads, “Then a Levite who was on his way to assist in the temple also came and saw the victim lying there, and he too kept his distance.”

Is being a servant in the temple reason enough for a Levite to not help a hurting person? Let's explore.

READ Numbers 1:47.

ASK: What does God make clear to Moses about Levites here? What couldn't they do? What were they supposed to do instead? (They are not to serve in the army. Instead, God specifically ordained them to be in charge of the Ark of the Covenant and all that went with it. They were also responsible to assist in temple worship with sacrifices, grain offerings, musical tasks, bookkeeping tasks and more.)

READ Numbers 3:5-13.

ASK: What does God say the Levites are to do? (They were given to Aaron and his sons to serve the priests. They were not priests – a later issue God had to settle – but served the priests.)

Look

READ Exodus 32:25-29.

ASK: What problem among the Israelites was Moses addressing here? (Aaron had let the people get out of control, and they had become laughingstocks.)

ASK: When Moses called for all who loved the Lord to come to him, who answered, and what did Moses ask them to do? (The Levites answered, and Moses asked them to take up swords and kill all who refused to stand for God.)

This loyalty from the Levites is what led to their service in the temple. Originally, all Israelite firstborns were designated as the ones to serve in the temple, but God sets up a new set of temple servants here. The ones who chose God became God's chosen servants. As such, they had no land inheritance because God was their inheritance. (Many pastoral families today still understand this concept, first dealing with owning their own homes or property at retirement.)

Took

We have seen that Levites were helpers in the temple. They were not priests but helped the priests. Thus, they also had to be pure for service in the Lord's House.

ASK: How has God called you to serve in his house?

ASK: Who has God called you to care for, to love?

As we travel through life, there are many joys and sorrows. Sometimes, we reach our destinations with no delays. Other times, we are delayed by an accident. Sometimes, we don't make it all.

ASK: How has God called you to help others on this journey of life?

Close with one or more song(s) of your choice and prayer together.

Shared by: Cheryl Harris lives in a trailer in the woods in Ashland, Maine nearby the school where she works. Her husband, William Harris, has joined her at the school and serves as a bus driver, coach, and custodian. They share their home with three pets, their beagle-boxer dog Daisy, clever tuxedo cat Doria and lovable, fluffy tabby cat Ariel.