

# Leviticus 15 Commentary

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## LEVITICUS THE BOOK OF SANCTIFICATION AND WORSHIP

Adapted and modified from C. Swindoll

Leviticus 1-17	Leviticus 18-27
<b>The Way to God Access</b>	<b>The Walk with God Lifestyle</b>
<b>The Approach:</b> Offerings	Practical Guidelines
<b>The Representative:</b> Priest	Chronological Observances

<b>The Laws:</b> Cleansing Physically & Spiritually	Severe Consequences Verbal promises
<b>Ritual for Worship</b> Worshipping a Holy God	<b>Practical for Walking</b> Living a Holy Life
<b>Location:</b> Mt Sinai for one full year	
<b>Theme:</b> How sinful humanity can approach and worship a holy God	
<b>Key Verses:</b> Lev 17:11, 19:2, 20:7-8	
<b>Christ in Leviticus:</b> In every sacrifice, every ritual, every feast	
<b>Time:</b> about 1446 BC	

### Leviticus 15:1 The LORD also spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying

Leviticus 15 focuses on male and female discharges...

#### **The Uncleaness of Human Discharges**

Unnatural Male Discharges (Lev 15:1-15)

Natural Male Discharges (Lev 15:16-18)

Natural Female Discharge (Menstrual) (Lev 15:19-24)

Unnatural (Long-Term) Female Discharges (Lev 15:25-33)

**Leon Hyatt** - Introduction A fifth type of uncleanness was from bodily discharges. The discharges in question were all from the genital organs of the body. (1) abnormal discharges of fluid (vs. 2-15); (2) discharges of semen (vs. 16-18); and (3) discharges of menstrual blood (vs. 19-31). It is wrong to immediately assume that the first type of discharge was gonorrhea or some other kind of sexually transmitted disease, as many have done. Many conditions can cause abnormal discharges from the genital organs. Nothing in the chapter indicates that the discharge was a result of sin or wrongdoing. It is also wrong to state that these discharges were "foul" or "repulsive." The first type of discharge might have been distasteful, but it is not so stated in the text. To make the charge that the second and third types are repulsive reveals a negative, even unhealthy attitude toward the normal, God-given processes of reproduction. Like the unclean conditions described in previous chapters, these discharges did not cause uncleanness because of some inherently evil or ugly quality in them but because Jehovah chose them in His holy will as symbols of sin.

The most striking fact about uncleanness caused by semen and menstrual blood is its contrast with the attitude of other Semitic peoples of that day, especially devotees to fertility cults. Those cults glorified, even deified, sexual functions. For them, sexual functions were the highest flowering of man's abilities and the secret to health, strength, and eternal life. The pagans found in sex the mystical solution to the riddle of life. To Jehovah worshipers, Jehovah Himself was the giver of life and the secret to meaning in life. Jehovah did not dishonor sex and its normal functions, such as the production of semen and menstruation. Neither did He deify sex beyond its intended purposes. In Jehovah worship in Israel, sexual functions were accepted as normal processes of life. They could be used unworthily, or they could be used worthily; but in themselves they were normal parts of life. They were more honored than dishonored when Jehovah chose to use them as symbols to teach spiritual truths; but they were not honored by exalting them beyond measure in the manner that the pagans did. Jehovah made some sexual functions to be symbols of sin. In so doing, He neither condemned those functions as evil nor honored them as glorious. He chose them as symbols of truth, just as he chose for the same purpose some living creatures (MESSAGE 14 in Lev. 11), childbirth (MESSAGE 15 in Lev. 12), and some diseases (MESSAGES 16-18 in LEV. 13-14).

Verse 1. Then Jehovah spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, This verse introduces a new message from Jehovah. It was addressed to Moses and Aaron, probably on the last of the days of fillings as a part of the hallowing ceremonies for the new priests (see Introduction to MESSAGE 14 and comments on Lev. 8:33-36 in MESSAGE 10 and on Lev. 11:1 in MESSAGE 14

**Matthew Henry Concise** - We need not be curious in explaining these laws; but have reason to be thankful that we need fear no

defilement, except that of sin, nor need ceremonial and burdensome purifications. These laws remind us that God sees all things, even those which escape the notice of men. The great gospel duties of faith and repentance are here signified, and the great gospel privileges of the application of Christ's blood to our souls for our justification, and his grace for our sanctification.

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**William MacDonald Notes on Leviticus 15** - This chapter deals with the uncleanness arising from discharges from the human body, either natural or diseased. Lev 15:1-12 seem to refer to a running issue from a man, resulting from disease. The ritual for cleansing is given in Lev 15:13-15. Lev 15:10-18 refer to the emission of semen, involuntary (Lev 15:16, 17) and voluntary (Lev 15:18). Lev 15:19-24 deal with menstruation. Lev 15:25-30 describe an issue of blood from a woman, but not connected with menstruation—therefore a diseased issue. Lev 15: 31-33 summarize the chapter.

**Leviticus 15:2 "Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, 'When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean.**

## UNCLEAN DISCHARGES

### Key Words

- Discharge: 25x in 18v
- Seminal Emission (KJV = seed of copulation) - 4x in 4v - Lev 15:16, 17, 18, 32
- Spit - Once Lev 15:8
- Wash - 11x in 11v

**KJV Bible Commentary** Whether this issue was sexual is not stated and should not necessarily be inferred. It could be any of a number of general issues, such as a discharge of blood, pus, or other fluid from a wound, lesion, boil, etc. All would be covered, and any would render a man unclean.

**Discharge** (02101) (**zub**) means a flowing and refers to a discharge, to semen, to menstrual flow.

**Zob** - 40x - Ex 3:8, 17; 13:5; 33:3; Lev 15:2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 19, 25, 32; 20:24; 22:4; Nu 5:2; 13:27; 14:8; 16:13f; Deut 6:3; 11:9; 26:9, 15; 27:3; 31:20; Josh 5:6; 2 Sam 3:29; Ps 78:20; 105:41; Isa 48:21; Jer 11:5; 32:22; 49:4; Lam 4:9; Ezek 20:6, 15. NAS =discharge(14), flow(1), flowed(1), flowing(19), flows(1), gushed(2), has(1), has a discharge(1), pine away(1).

**Criswell has a pithy comment:** Bodily discharges, representative of secret sins, were mostly related to the generative organs and would have been known only to the person involved. To the Jew they were especially abhorrent, because they indicated pollution and uncleanness in the area of the seal of circumcision (the sign of the covenant).

**Ryrie:** These verses (Lev 15:2-15) describe a diseased condition of the male sexual organs resulting in bodily discharge. After he became well, the man had to offer a sin and a burnt offering (Lev 15:15).

The specific disease is not mentioned but as a physician this certainly sounds like gonorrhea and Chlamydia infections both of which can produce discharges.

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**Hyatt** - A. From bodily discharges (15:2-15) 1. From an abnormal discharge (15:2-3)

Speak to the sons of Israel, and you shall say to them, Moses and Aaron were told to relate this message to all the sons of Israel, women as well as men. It concerned a practice that was to be observed by everyone in the nation.

**A man who.** The use of the word "man" in this verse was used in the generic sense. It applies to men and women (Ex. 34:3,24; Eze. 14:4,7). This type of discharge could be experienced by a man or a woman (see comments on v. 33 below).

**is discharging from his body.** Since the other discharges mentioned in this chapter were from the genital organs, and since the menstrual discharge was said to be "in her body" (v. 19), it must be assumed that the discharge in question here also came out of the genital organs. However, it does not necessarily follow that "his body" was a euphemism for "genital organ," as some have supposed. The discharge came from the body through the genital organs. Since semen and menstrual flow are mentioned later, they could not have been included in the discharge mentioned in this verse. The discharge mentioned in this verse also could scarcely include the discharge of waste materials from the body. In that case, every person would have been unclean all the time. It seems necessary to conclude that this discharge was an abnormal one. Evidently it could be any kind of abnormal discharge. It could be caused by an infection or an injury that caused bleeding. However, it is going quite beyond the evidence to assume that the

discharge always was caused by a sexually transmitted disease. Any kind of unusual discharge from the genital organs is what is referred to here.

[because of] his issue he [is] unclean. The discharge made the person “unclean,” not “foul,” “loathsome,” or “repulsive.” Its effect was ceremonial, not spiritual or moral.

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**TODAY IN THE WORD (Moody Bible)** - Leviticus 15:1-33 [K]eep the Israelites separate from things that make them unclean, so they will not die in their uncleanness for defiling my dwelling place. - Leviticus 15:31

Until recently, the Colombian army encouraged Marxist rebels to surrender by distributing photos of glamorous women. Since the rebels are not allowed to date without permission from the commanders, the implication was that as soon as they gave up fighting they could have their pick of the beautiful women in the photos. The new defense minister, a woman, put an end to that policy!

We live in confused times. The world has no idea what to do with issues of sexual morality and behavior. By contrast, the Law provided clear guidelines for God’s people. Today’s reading focuses on standards for cleanness and uncleanness related to sexual hygiene.

What was at issue here? Leviticus 15:1–15 discuss abnormal male conditions, possibly the result of an illness or sexually transmitted disease. Leviticus 15:16, 17, 18 describe the appropriate procedures for male hygiene under normal circumstances. And Leviticus 15:19-24 deal with a woman’s menstrual period. Finally, Leviticus 15:25-30 cover abnormal female symptoms in which a woman experiences a chronic hemorrhage (called “menostaxis”). The woman Jesus healed in Mark 5 suffered from this condition (see “Today Along the Way”).

The text here is pretty straightforward about the guidelines under normal circumstances, and only minimal times of purification were required. Disease-related complications, by contrast, were more serious. They contaminated all who came in contact with them, and required burnt and sin offerings to be made for purification. (Again, it may be better to think in terms of purification rather than atonement.) The bottom line is that these rules reflect a respect for blood (as symbolic of life) and reproductive organs (as generative of life).

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** - As a supplementary Scripture passage today, we encourage you to read and reflect on Mark 5:25-34, the story of Jesus’ miraculous healing of a woman with a chronic bleeding condition. According to the Law, how would she have suffered from her condition physically, socially, and spiritually? In light of this, consider not only the power but also the great love and compassion Jesus showed in healing her. How might the Jewish people in the crowd, who would have known the Law, have perceived and responded to this miracle?

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**QUESTION - [What are the bodily discharges mentioned in Leviticus 15, and why did they make a person unclean?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Leviticus 15 contains rules for the Israelites under the [Mosaic Law](#) concerning various bodily discharges. The end of the chapter sums up: “These are the regulations for a man with a discharge, for anyone made unclean by an emission of semen, for a woman in her monthly period, for a man or a woman with a discharge, and for a man who has sexual relations with a woman who is ceremonially unclean” (Leviticus 15:32–33).

The four bodily discharges mentioned in Leviticus 15 all rendered a person ceremonially unclean and required a cleansing. The discharges are as follows:

- 1) A running discharge from a man (Leviticus 15:2–15); based on the context, we assume the discharge flows from a man’s sexual organs, although the text speaks only in general terms of “an unusual bodily discharge” (Leviticus 15:2).
- 2) An emission of semen, whether involuntary (Leviticus 15:16–17) or occurring during sexual intercourse (Leviticus 15:18).
- 3) The monthly period of a woman (Leviticus 15:19–24).
- 4) An issue of blood from a woman unrelated to menstruation (Leviticus 15:25–30).

These conditions fall into two groups: two of the discharges are the result of some type of disease or malfunction of the body, and the other two are natural, the result of normal bodily function, with no hint of pathology.

In every case, cleansing a person after one of these bodily discharges required washing clothes and bathing. But, if the discharge was related to a malady or a chronic condition, the affected person had additional steps to take: he or she had to wait seven days after the end of the discharge and on the eighth day “take two doves or two young pigeons and bring them to the priest at the

entrance to the tent of meeting. The priest is to sacrifice one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. In this way he will make atonement . . . before the LORD” (Leviticus 15:29–30). Normal bodily discharges, such as happens when a married couple has sex, did not require a sacrifice and did not require a seven-day wait; for a normal discharge, the uncleanness only lasted one day.

Some of the rules concerning bodily discharges obviously helped promote personal hygiene and prevent the spread of disease. But in Leviticus 15:31 God gives a higher purpose: to “keep the Israelites separate from things that make them unclean, so they will not die in their uncleanness for defiling my dwelling place, which is among them.” The [tabernacle](#) was a sacred place—the place where the people would meet with God—and the Israelites were to approach God with the utmost veneration and respect. The rules in Leviticus 15 remind the people that they are flesh and [God is spirit](#); that they carry a personal pollution even when they do not sin outright; that they are privileged to be set apart by God and invited to His tabernacle; and that what happens in secret is seen by God.

The laws concerning bodily discharges did not concern *morality* any more than those concerning diseases of the skin (Leviticus 13) and childbirth (Leviticus 12). There’s nothing immoral about a [husband and wife having sex](#) or a woman having a period. The laws in Leviticus 15 governed [ceremonial](#) purity, not *moral* purity. Of course, if a person spurned the rules and approached the tabernacle unwashed, at that point it became a moral issue, as then it was a matter of [disobedience](#) to God’s direct command.

Christians are not under the Law of Moses (Romans 6:14) and are not bound by the law’s strict requirements concerning bodily discharges. However, the principles contained in Leviticus 15 are still valid: we reverence God; we remember that we are flesh and God is spirit and must be worshiped in spirit and in truth (John 4:24); we are unrighteous in and of ourselves and need God’s cleansing (1 Corinthians 6:11); we are privileged to be set apart by God and made part of His church (1 Peter 2:9); and God sees what happens in secret (Psalm 139:12).

**Leviticus 15:3 'This, moreover, shall be his uncleanness in his discharge: it is his uncleanness whether his body allows its discharge to flow, or whether his body obstructs its discharge.**

- Lev 12:3 Eze 16:26 23:20

[KJV Bible Commentary](#) 3–6. As long as the condition continued, even if the issue stopped flowing temporarily, he was unclean. In addition, any bed or chair touched by him became unclean, and any person who contacted those items also, became unclean until evening, subsequent to a ritual bathing and washing of clothes.

[Hyatt](#) - An intermittent discharge made a person unclean until it completely stopped. The person was unclean even in the periods of time between discharges. Until the discharge stopped altogether, the person remained unclean. Unlike uncleanness from tsaraath, uncleanness from bodily discharges did not have to be examined by a priest. The person was to recognize his uncleanness and act accordingly.

**Leviticus 15:4 'Every bed on which the person with the discharge lies becomes unclean, and everything on which he sits becomes unclean.**

- be unclean (KJV): 1Co 15:33 Eph 5:11 Titus 1:15

[Hyatt](#) - on vv4-12 - Three actions were required to cleanse a person made unclean by this contact: washing the clothes, bathing the body, and waiting until the evening. Those requirements are not mentioned only in verse 11 but also in verses 5,6,7,8,and 10). Those requirements are similar to those required for cleansing from contact with an unclean creature (see comments on Lev. 11:24-28,31-32,39-40 in MESSAGE 14) or from contact with a house infected with tsaraath (see comments on Lev. 14:46- 47 in MESSAGE 18). The difference is that only washing the clothes and not bathing was required in those cases. The lesson in the difference is that some sins are of such seriousness that additional effort is required to remove their effects from the person’s life. Washing and waiting until the evening symbolized that it takes human effort and the passing of time to erase the effects of sin on a believer’s life (see comments on Lev. 11:24 in MESSAGE 14).

**Leviticus 15:5 'Anyone, moreover, who touches his bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening;**

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- Lev 11:25,28,32 13:6,34 14:8,9,27,46,47 16:26,28 17:15 Nu 19:10,22 Ps 26:6 51:2,7 Isa 1:16 22:14 Eze 36:25,29 Heb 9:14,26 10:22 Jas 4:8 Rev 7:14

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**Leviticus 15:6 and whoever sits on the thing on which the man with the discharge has been sitting, shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening.**

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- Isa 1:16 Jas 4:8

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**Leviticus 15:7 'Also whoever touches the person with the discharge shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening.**

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[KJV Bible Commentary](#) 7–12. Naturally, direct contact with the unclean individual caused the uncleanness to spread further, whether to persons (vs. 7), or to objects (vss. 8–9). Even the secondary touch of those objects would render one unclean and require the ritual washing.

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**F B Meyer (Our Daily Homily)** Leviticus 15:7 He that toucheth ... shall be unclean.

There were doubtless great sanitary reasons for many of these enactments. This book is one of the greatest sanitary codes in existence. God made religious duty enforce regulations essential to the physical health and well-being of his people. But there were deeper reasons yet. The whole of these arrangements were contrived to teach profound lessons to us all of the nature and evil of sin, and of the need of being continually cleansed in the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

The unclean soul spreads uncleanness. — Whatever the ceremonially unclean touched, used, or sat on, was polluted. Even those who came into contact with him were defiled. How wary all true Israelites must have been of their associates, lest they should contract pollution! Let us adopt similar precautions, and not voluntarily associate with the unholy or unclean. And if our business calls us into their daily company, let us seek cleansing for ourselves as we return to our homes, that any adhering germs of evil may be removed.

The urgent demand for holiness. — The ordinary processes of life are not necessarily clean because they are natural. The foul heart may vitiate the most natural functions. We must bring the thought of God into the simplest, the commonest, and the most secret acts. Nothing is outside his jurisdiction. Though hid from sight, yet He is ever near the child of God. His grace, and blood, and cleansing, are always requisite, and ever ready. Amidst and after every act, incident, and episode of life, we should be quiet before God, considering if we have aught to confess, and asking to be ever kept from staining our white robes.

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**Leviticus 15:8 'Or if the man with the discharge spits on one who is clean, he too shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening.**

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- Isa 1:16 Ga 1:8,9 1Ti 4:1-3 Tit 1:9,10 2Pe 2:1-3 Jas 4:8 Jude 1:4

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**Leviticus 15:9 'And every saddle on which the person with the discharge rides becomes unclean.(**

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- saddle (KJV): The word {merchav,} from {rachav,} to ride, here rendered by our translators saddle, and frequently chariot. Mr. Harmer thinks rather means a litter, or {coune,} of which we have already given a description in Ge 31:34. Ge 31:34

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**Leviticus 15:10 'Whoever then touches any of the things which were under him shall be unclean until evening, and he who carries them shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. (**

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- Lev 15:5,8 Ps 26:6 Jas 4:8
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**Leviticus 15:11 'Likewise, whomever the one with the discharge touches without having rinsed his hands in water shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening.'**

- whomsoever (KJV): It is rather doubtful whether the words hath not rinsed his hands in water refer to him who was diseased, or to him who had his hands touched. Most understand it of the former, that if the person who had the issue rinsed his hands in water, just before he touched any one, he did not communicate any pollution; otherwise, he did. But the Syriac refers it to the person touched by him, though it seems strange that he should be cleansed by washing his hands, when perhaps some other part was touched.

**Leviticus 15:12 'However, an earthenware vessel which the person with the discharge touches shall be broken, and every wooden vessel shall be rinsed in water.'**

- vessel (KJV): Lev 6:28 11:32,33 Pr 1:21,23 3:21 2Co 5:1 Php 3:21
- shall be broken (KJV): Ps 2:9

[Hyatt](#) - Verse 12 describes cleansing ceremonies for object made unclean by touching a person with an abnormal discharge. It specifically mentions only vessels, but it must be assumed that the same requirement applied to other objects the person touched, such as beds (v. 4a), chairs (v. 4b), and saddles (v. 9). A pottery vessel that became unclean was to be broken, whereas a wooden vessel was to be rinsed. This requirement was in accord with similar instructions given previously. The reason was that clay vessels were porous, and the uncleanness could penetrate into them (see comments on Lev. 11:32,33,35 in MESSAGE 14). A wooden vessel, which uncleanness would not penetrate, was to be washed in water. No mention was made of a waiting period for the cleansing of vessels, though it possibly was implied. Washing of objects made unclean by touching a person with an abnormal discharge symbolized that a person who had allowed one of his possessions to be used for a sinful purpose needed to take some action to dispel the wrong impression that had been given by his action.

**Leviticus 15:13 'Now when the man with the discharge becomes cleansed from his discharge, then he shall count off for himself seven days for his cleansing; he shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in running water and shall become clean.'**

- seven days (KJV): Lev 15:28 8:33 9:1 14:8,10 Ex 29:35,37 Nu 12:14 19:11,12
- wash (KJV): Lev 15:5,10,11 Jer 33:8 Eze 36:25-29 2Co 7:1 Jas 4:8 Rev 1:5

[KJV Bible Commentary](#) 13–15. After the issue was healed, seven days were counted; and then the ceremonial bathing was performed. The next day two birds were offered to make an atonement, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering.

[Hyatt](#) Cleansing a person healed of an abnormal discharge (15:13-15) This verse describes cleansing ceremonies for the person who had the discharge, in contrast to people or objects that touched that person. "Cleansed of his discharge" refers to the cessation of the discharge, that is, to healing the cause of the discharge. Even after the person was cleansed by the healing of the discharge, a cleansing ceremony was required. The cessation of the discharge represented a believer who ceased to sin, certainly making him cleaner. The cleansing ceremony represented a different and equally valid concept, which was removing the effects left by sin even after he stopped the sinful practice. The cleansing ceremony was different in detail from previous cleansing ceremonies, but it contained the same elements. First, the healed person was to wait seven days. Then, he was to wash his clothes and bathe himself in water from a spring or running stream. The elements of time and personal effort are again portrayed by these cleansing ceremonies. A longer period of time was required for cleansing the person who had the discharge than for the person who touched him, showing that the effects are deeper and more difficult to remove from the life of the sinner than from the life of one who simply associated closely with sinners.

**Leviticus 15:14 'Then on the eighth day he shall take for himself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and come before the LORD to the doorway of the tent of meeting, and give them to the priest;'**

- Lev 15:29,30 1:14 12:6,8 14:22-31 Nu 6:10 2Co 5:21 Heb 7:26 10:10,12 Heb 10:14

[Hyatt](#) vv14-15 - On the eighth day, the man was to go to The Tabernacle and offer two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one pair

for a sin-offering in the manner described in Leviticus 5:7-10 (see comments on those verses in MESSAGE 2), and the other pair for a rededication-offering, in the manner described in Leviticus 1:14-17 (see comments on those verses in MESSAGE 1). Inexpensive forms of these offerings are prescribed here, so that the ceremonies would not be beyond the financial reach of any person. Offering these offerings showed that more than time and human effort were required to remove the effects of sin from a person's life. The forgiveness and grace of Jehovah were also required. The sinner also had to repent of his sins and commitment himself completely to God for the marks of sin to be completely removed. When a sinner made the commitments symbolized by those offerings, the functions of the priest in the offerings symbolized that the sinner was covered or protected by God from the effects of his sins (see comments on Lev. 1:4 under the heading to cover over him).

**Leviticus 15:15 and the priest shall offer them, one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf before the LORD because of his discharge.**

- the one (KJV): Lev 5:7-10 14:19,20,30,31  
an atonement (KJV): Lev 4:20,26,31,35 12:7 14:18 Nu 15:25 25:13 Mt 3:17 Eph 1:6 Heb 1:3

**Leviticus 15:16 'Now if a man has a seminal emission, he shall bathe all his body in water and be unclean until evening.'**

- Lev 15:5 22:4 De 23:10,11 2Co 7:1 1Pe 2:11 1Jn 1:7

## NATURAL MALE DISCHARGE

**Seminal Emission.** KJV is more literal "seed (zera) of copulation (shekabah = lying down, copulation) Notice that this refers to natural secretion for which no offerings had to be made.

[KJV Bible Commentary](#) 16–17. Any man's seed of copulation refers to a seminal discharge, whether voluntary or involuntary. It produced uncleanness until the next sunset; but no offering was required, only the ceremonial washing.

**Hyatt** From a discharge of semen and its cleansing (15:16-18) And a man, if a laying of seed proceeds to go out from him. These words refers to a discharge of semen from a man's body. Evidently it referred to any manner by which the discharge occurred, whether sexual intercourse or other. It is not said that a discharge of semen brought "foulness," "loathing," or "corruption," as most interpreters have contended. It is said that it brought uncleanness, which was a ceremonial condition, not a spiritual or moral condition. Nothing is implied here concerning the rightness or wrongness or the act itself. Like most of the experiences of life, on some occasions this act could be very evil, while on other occasions it could very right. The conditions under which it could be right or wrong are not dealt with here, only the ceremonial condition that resulted from it. The fact that uncleanness could be admitted and practiced as a result of a discharge of semen shows that the ancient Israelites, with the Lord's approval, were less inhibited on these matters than we are, not more superstitious as most interpreters have contended.

Defining this type of uncleanness and the method of its cleansing are both described in this one verse. Cleansing was accomplished by bathing and waiting until the evening, once again showing that human effort and the passing of time were required to remove the effects of sin from a person's life (see comments on Lev. 11:25 in MESSAGE 14).

**Leviticus 15:17 'As for any garment or any leather on which there is seminal emission, it shall be washed with water and be unclean until evening.'**

- skin (KJV): The poorer class of Arabs of our times make use of mats in their tents; and other inhabitants of these countries, who affect ancient simplicity of manners, make use of goat-skins. Dr. R. Chandler, in his Travels in Greece, tells us, that he saw some dervishes at Athens sitting on goat-skins; and that he was afterwards conducted into a room furnished in like manner, with the same kind of carpeting, where he was treated with a pipe and coffee by the chief dervish. Those that are at all acquainted with Oriental manners, in these later times, know that their dervishes (who are a sort of Mohammedan devotees, a good deal resembling the begging friars of the church or Rome) affect great simplicity, and even sometimes austerity, in their dress and way of living. As these dervishes that Dr. Chandler visited sat on goat-skins, and used no other kind of carpet for the accommodation of those who visited them: so it should seem that the Israelites in the wilderness made use of skins for mattresses to lie upon, and consequently, we may equally suppose to sit upon in the day time, instead of a



carpet.

**Hyatt** Anything touched by the semen became unclean and was to be cleansed by washing in water and waiting until the evening (see comments on Lev. 11:25 in MESSAGE 14).

**Leviticus 15:18 'If a man lies with a woman so that there is a seminal emission, they shall both bathe in water and be unclean until evening.**

- the woman (KJV): Lev 15:5 Eph 4:17-19 5:3-11 2Ti 2:22 1Pe 2:11
- unclean (KJV): Ex 19:15 1Sa 21:4,5 Ps 51:5 1Co 6:12,18 1Th 4:3-5 Heb 13:4

**KJV Bible Commentary** Normal husband-wife relations also rendered the couple unclean and required the same bathing. This is why Exodus 19:15 and 1 Samuel 21:4–5 inquire regarding this. Ceremonial purity was required for certain feasts, etc. This does not mean that the marriage act is impure any more than chapter 12 condemns childbirth. But such is connected with the passing on of a sinful nature in the creation of a new life. See Hebrews 13:4 and 1 Corinthians 7:3–5 for the normative New Testament teaching on this subject.

**Hyatt** A woman with whom a man had intercourse and who, therefore, was touched by his semen, also became unclean. This requirement applied even when the woman had legitimate sex relations with her husband. Coming in contact with semen was a symbol of sin, not a moral or spiritual evil in itself. She was cleansed in the same manner as the man.

**Leviticus 15:19 'When a woman has a discharge, if her discharge in her body is blood, she shall continue in her menstrual impurity for seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening.**

- and her issue (KJV): Lev 12:2,4 20:18 La 1:8,9,17 Eze 36:17 Mt 15:19 Mk 5:25
- put apart (KJV): Heb. in her separation

## NATURAL MENSTRUAL DISCHARGE

Lev 15:19-24

Note that Lev 15:19-24 refers to natural menstrual discharge and no offering was required.

**KJV Bible Commentary** 19–23. The woman's normal menstrual period is indicated in this section. Seven days is given to cover all normal cases sufficiently, and because of the prominent symbolic use of that number. She passed her uncleanness only to persons she touched or to things upon which she sat or lay. Thus, she was not restricted from performing her normal household duties.

**Hyatt** From a discharge of menstrual blood and its cleansing (15:19-31) 1. From a normal menstrual period and its cleansing and its cleansing (15:19a)

A third type of discharge that brought uncleanness was a discharge of menstrual blood. The word translated "impurity" has the same meaning as "uncleanness." Her uncleanness was ceremonial and symbolic, not moral in and of itself (see comments on Lev. 12:2 in MESSAGE 15).

When a woman's menstrual period occurred, her cleansing required a waiting period of seven days. Verse 28 explains that this seven-day period of impurity was to be counted after her menstrual discharge had ended, so it definitely applied to the time required for her cleansing. A longer time was required for her cleansing than was required for a man after the discharge of semen because a menstrual period lasts longer than a discharge of semen, and it symbolized a longer involvement in a sinful practice. The period of waiting after the woman's menstrual period ceased reminded the Israelites that the damaging effects of sin lasted even after the person had ceased a sinful practice, and the longer a person persisted in a sinful practice the longer it took to remove those effects from his life. No mention is made of a requirement that the woman wash her clothes or her body as a part of her cleansing, but those actions must be implied since washing was a standard requirement for cleansing ceremonies, and they were required of someone who touched her while she was unclean (see comments on vs. 21-22 below). They were also required of a woman who had an abnormally long menstrua

**Leviticus 15:20 'Everything also on which she lies during her menstrual impurity shall be unclean, and everything on which she sits shall be unclean.**

- Lev 15:4-9 Pr 2:16-19 5:3-13 6:24,35 7:10-27 9:13-18 22:27 Ec 7:26 1Co 15:33

**Hyatt** From touching a woman during her menstrual period and its cleansing (15:19b-23) Anyone who touched the woman during her period of uncleanness and anyone who touched the bed on which she lay or any article on which she sat was made unclean.

**Leviticus 15:21 'And anyone who touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening.**

- Lev 15:5,6 Isa 22:14 2Co 7:1 Heb 9:26 Rev 7:14

**Leviticus 15:22 'And whoever touches any thing on which she sits shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening.**

**Leviticus 15:23 'Whether it be on the bed or on the thing on which she is sitting, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening.**

**Leviticus 15:24 'And if a man actually lies with her, so that her menstrual impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days, and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.**

- Lev 15:33 20:18 Eze 18:6 22:10 1Th 5:22 Heb 13:4 1Pe 2:11

**KJV Bible Commentary** This verse must refer to a case where the menstrual flow comes on initially and unexpectedly during the marriage act, because Leviticus 20:18 categorically forbids any wilful practice of the marriage act within the seven days of uncleanness.

**Leviticus 15:25 'Now if a woman has a discharge of her blood many days, not at the period of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond that period, all the days of her impure discharge she shall continue as though in her menstrual impurity; she is unclean. (**

- Lev 15:19-24 Mt 9:20 Mk 5:25 7:20-23 Lu 8:43

Not at the period of her menstrual impurity - This refers to an abnormal condition and does require sin and burnt offerings.

**BSB** - (vv25-30) This section deals with an abnormal menstrual period and elucidates the loneliness and isolation of the woman with the issue of blood who came to Jesus for healing (Matt. 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48).

**KJV Bible Commentary** 25–30. Unnatural issues from the woman are treated next (vss. 25–27). For these the customary sacrifices are required on the eighth day after cleansing (vss. 28–30), but none were offered for her normal monthly issue of blood.

**Hyatt** From an abnormally long menstrual period and its cleansing (15:25-27) If a woman should have a long menstrual period that did not occur normally or if her normal menstrual period extended longer than usual, her uncleanness would last as long as the bleeding continued. The rules were exactly the same as those practiced during the seven “days of her impurity.” “The days of her impurity” means the full length of her menstrual period. “She shall be unclean” means she will be ceremonially unclean during the whole time. Interpreting this statement to refer to a different kind of discharge and a different kind of uncleanness, as Meyrick, Keil, and Peisker did, is unwarranted.

Her cleansing required washing her clothes, bathing in water, and waiting until the evening after the bleeding had stopped. The waiting period was shorter than that required after the end of a normal menstrual period, probably because she had already been

unclean for such a long time (see comments on vs. 19a above).

**Leviticus 15:26 'Any bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her like her bed at menstruation; and every thing on which she sits shall be unclean, like her uncleanness at that time. (**

**Leviticus 15:27 'Likewise, whoever touches them shall be unclean and shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening.**

- Lev 15:5-8,13,21 17:15,16 Eze 36:25,29 Zec 13:1 Heb 9:14 10:22 1Pe 1:18,19 1Jn 1:7

**Leviticus 15:28 'When she becomes clean from her discharge, she shall count off for herself seven days; and afterward she shall be clean.**

- Lev 15:13-15 Mt 1:21 1Co 1:30 6:11 Ga 3:13 4:4 Eph 1:6,7

**Hyatt** Fire-offerings required as a part of the woman's cleansing (15:28-30) As in verse 13, "cleansed" is used in this verse to refer to the ceasing of the blood flow (see comments on Lev. 15:13 above). However, "shall be clean" in this verse means removing the ceremonial condition of uncleanness. After the woman was clean by the ceasing of her menstrual period, she was to wait for seven days as a part of her cleansing ceremony. This verse applies to a woman's regular menstrual period, since cleansing from a normal period required seven days (see comments on v. 19a above), while cleansing from an abnormally long menstrual period required only waiting until the evening (see comments on v. 25- 27 above). No mention is made of her washing in water as a part of her cleansing, but it is probably implied. Both waiting and washing are now familiar symbols in cleansing ceremonies (see comments on Lev. 11:25 in MESSAGE 14)

**Leviticus 15:29 'Then on the eighth day she shall take for herself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and bring them in to the priest, to the doorway of the tent of meeting.**

- Lev 15:14

**Hyatt** Verses 29-30. These verses add an additional requirement for the woman's cleansing. A sin-offering and a rededication-offering were also required as a part of the cleansing. Birds were specified as the offering to be offered for both offerings. These inexpensive forms of the offerings were specified so that the cost would not be a burden on a woman every month after her menstrual period (see comments on Lev. 5:7-10 in MESSAGE 2 concerning the use of birds for a sin-offering and on Lev. 1:14-17 in MESSAGE 1 concerning the use of birds for a rededication-offering). The same principle had been followed in offerings to be offered in the case of cleansing from an abnormal discharge (see comments on vs. 14-15 above). The sin-offering and the rededication-offering symbolized that God's forgiveness and grace were required for removing the effects of sin from a person's life, in addition to the person's effort and the passing of time..

**Leviticus 15:30 'And the priest shall offer the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. So the priest shall make atonement on her behalf before the LORD because of her impure discharge.'**

**Leviticus 15:31 "Thus you shall keep the sons of Israel separated from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness by their defiling My tabernacle that is among them."**

- Thus shall (KJV): Lev 11:47 13:59 Nu 5:3 De 24:8 Ps 66:18 Eze 44:23 Heb 10:29 Heb 12:14,15 Jude 1:4
- that they (KJV): Lev 19:30 21:23 Nu 5:3 19:13,20 Eze 5:11 23:38 44:5-7 Da 9:27 1Co 3:17 These laws were principally intended to impress the minds of the Israelites with reverence for the sanctuary; and, on the one hand, to shew them what need they had of circumspection, and purity of heart and life, in order to worship the holy God with acceptance; and, on the

other hand, that being sinners in a world full of temptations and defilements, they would continually need forgiveness, through the great atonement typified by all the sacrifices, and the sanctification of the Spirit, showed forth by all the purifications. While they were encamped in the desert, it would not be very burdensome to bring the prescribed oblations; but after they were settled in Canaan, many of them at a great distance from the tabernacle, this would become much more difficult. We may, however, observe, continues Mr. Scott, that many of the cases stated only required such washings as might any where be performed, and that those, respecting which sacrifices were appointed, would more rarely occur. We may also suppose, that provided these were brought, when the person who had been unclean first came to the sanctuary, it would suffice: though distance or other hindrances prevented its being done immediately, at the expiration of the seven days.

**Paul** gave a similar instruction to the saints at **Corinth**...

2Cor 6:14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?

15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?

16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

17 "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "**AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN**;" And I will welcome you.

18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

[KJV Bible Commentary](#) 31–33. These verses restate the nature of this chapter. It is to teach and impose a ceremonial uncleanness for certain bodily discharges. These are no longer in force in the New Testament.

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[Hyatt](#) Warning against entering The Tabernacle in an unclean condition (15:31)

You must keep separate the people of Israel during their uncleanness. The verb in this statement is plural. Both Moses and Aaron were to teach the Israelites to keep away from The Tabernacle while in an unclean condition

My Tabernacle. The word translated "Tabernacle" in this verse is used here for only the second time in the book of Leviticus (see comments on Lev. 8:10 in MESSAGE 10 The Tabernacle and all that was in it.). The word means a tent used as a dwelling or home. It means that The Tabernacle was Jehovah's home place, though He also was present everywhere. Though "The Tabernacle" is the name we use most often for Jehovah's place of dwelling and worship, in the Book of Leviticus the name "Tent of Meeting" and other names were used much more frequently

and they will not die in their uncleanness by making unclean My Tabernacle that is in their midst. Entering The Tabernacle while ceremonially unclean would show lack of respect for Jehovah's absolute holiness and purity. Ignoring that requirement would show defiance of God and His commandments. Lack of respect for God's presence was essentially the same sin as that committed by Nadab and Abihu (see comments on Lev. 10:1-3 in MESSAGE 11). It amounted to open rebellion. The death penalty had already been promised for open rebellion against ceremonies commanded by Jehovah (see comments on Lev. 8:35 in MESSAGE 10 under the heading And you will not die and on Lev. 10:7 in MESSAGE 11 and on Lev. 10:9 in MESSAGE 12 under the heading and you will not die; see also Introduction .to Lev 20 in MESSAGE 24 and comments on Lev. 20:21 in MESSAGE 24). So taking care to avoid making The Tabernacle unclean would save a person from death.

It is highly instructive that the closing word concerning all the cleansing ceremonies God commanded to remind the Israelites to avoid sinning was a declaration that ignoring those teachings would result in death. God provided Israel many symbols and ceremonies that taught how to overcome sin. But he ended all of those provisions with the sad information that any Israelite who refused to learn from those provisions would have to pay the consequences. He would die. An Israelite who accepted Jehovah in his heart but still neglected observe the regulations concerning clean and unclean would die physically. An Isrelite who rejected Jehovah's authority over him completely would die eternally. Death was, is, and always will be the penalty for rejecting and defying God.

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**G Campbell Morgan - Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible** - Lev. 15:31 Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness.

This chapter contains the laws governing the whole experience of issues from the flesh as they are involved in uncleanness. It is a strange and solemn chapter in which, once again, as in the one dealing with the subject of motherhood and childhood (12), there is brought before the mind, with dread and forceful solemnity, the fact of the defilement of the race. A simple and yet careful consideration of these requirements will serve to remind us that the procreative powers of humanity are all under the curse, as the result of race-pollution. Whether the exercise of such powers be natural or unnatural, within the restraint of law or beyond such restraint, they are tainted with the same virus of sin in the sight of a God of absolute holiness. Therefore for these people of God who were to be preserved from all contamination physically with other races, in connection with the activity of these powers, stringent laws were enacted for cleansing. The chapter, therefore, has a solemn message to all of us concerning the fact of the pollution of human nature at its fountain-head, and the consequent perpetual necessity for cleansing. This view of human nature is not flattering, and the human mind is often in rebellion against it. To deny it, is to deny a fact which is constantly proven true in human experience. We should, therefore, sedulously observe the spiritual significance, and apply it resolutely in the physical realm. For us the way of perpetual cleansing is provided in Christ.

**Leviticus 15:32 This is the law for the one with a discharge, and for the man who has a seminal emission so that he is unclean by it,**

- Lev 15:1-18 11:46 13:59 14:2,32,54-57 Nu 5:29 6:13 19:14 Eze 43:12

**Hyatt** Summary Note (15:32-33) These verses are a summary of the message contained in this chapter concerning bodily discharges. It was likely not a part of the message delivered by Jehovah, but like other summary notes was added by Moses when he compiled the messages of Jehovah (see comments on Lev. 11:16- 47 in MESSAGE 14). In this summary note, four classifications of uncleanness from bodily discharges are mentioned: (1) from a discharge of semen (see vs. 16-18), (2) from a discharge of menstrual blood (see vs. 19-23,25-30), (3) from abnormal discharges of a male or a female (see vs. 2-15), and (4) from being touched by menstrual blood unintentionally when sleeping in the same bed with a menstruating woman (see v. 24). This summary covers all the cases described in the message, but not in the same order. Note that verse 2 had used the word “man” when referring to abnormal discharges. Verse 33 in this summary note confirms that the word was used there in a generic sense, including men and women (see comments on Lev. 15:2 above under the heading A man who.

**Leviticus 15:33 and for the woman who is ill because of menstrual impurity, and for the one who has a discharge, whether a male or a female, or a man who lies with an unclean woman.**

- of her (KJV): Lev 15:19-30
- and of him (KJV): Lev 15:24 20:18

**Hyatt Application** Sin in the life of a believer is a serious matter. It can be forgiven, when the believer asks for forgiveness. But, even then, sad effects are left on the sinner’s life. Those effects can be removed only by a combination of effort on the part of the believer, the passing of time, and the grace of God. However cooperation between the one who sinned and God can and will remove the hardness and coarseness that sin brings to the life of a believer and replace them with the likeness of God.

1 John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” That verse is not talking about pardon for the penalty of sin granted to lost men. It is talking about forgiveness and cleansing from the effects of sin that has come into the life of a believer. Sin in the life of a person who has not accepted Jesus brings eternal condemnation, because that person’s sin is primarily rejecting Jesus. It is removed only by faith in God. Sin in the life of a believer brings loss of fellowship with God. His restoration to God’s fellowship requires only confession.

However, even after being restored to God’s fellowship, damage remains on the life of a believer person who has sinned. Coarse attitudes, evil thoughts, ugly habits, physical weakness remain with him. The longer he has continued to sin, the deeper are the marks that sin has left on him. Those marks will not disappear easily. He must work at making clean thoughts, positive attitudes, righteous actions, and physical vigor return to being natural for him again. The change will not take place over night, but it will come if he persists in doing good. He will especially need to draw near to God, be faithful in church, study his Bible, be persistent in prayer, and depend on the goodness and grace of God. The Lord will help him, and the time will come when the results of his sin will vanish away. People will scarcely be able to remember the days when he disappointed himself and failed His God.

Though the healing and restoring power of God is great and blessed, a better way exists. The better way is for a believer to guard

himself carefully, so that sin does not creep into his or her life and bring damage with it. None of us will be completely perfect, but we should strive to be as near to it as we possibly can. As the ancient Israelite strove to be ceremonially clean as a reminder to stay away from sin, let us put our energies into growing in righteousness every day.

However, the stern reality remains. If a person rejects all of God's warnings about sin, he will die. If he has trusted his life to Jesus and still persists in some sin, he will die physically (1 John 5:16-17). If he rejects God completely from his heart and life, he will die eternally. His destiny will be banishment into hell forever..