

**Bible Devotions: Lock Stock & Barrel  
Devotional Reading for Outdoorsmen  
(Old Testament)**

Leviticus 1:8-9

(and 1:13, 17; 2:2, 9, 12; 3:5, 16; 4:31; 6:15, 21; 8:21, 28; 17:6; 23:13, 18; 26:31)

A Sweet Aroma  
On Baiting for Bears, and Obedience

*Then the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat in order on the wood that is on the fire upon the altar; but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water. And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord. ... a sweet aroma to the Lord... a sweet aroma to the Lord... a sweet aroma to the Lord... a sweet aroma to the Lord... a sweet aroma... a sweet aroma to the Lord... a sweet aroma... a sweet aroma to the Lord... a sweet aroma... a sweet aroma to the Lord... a sweet aroma... a sweet aroma to the Lord... a sweet aroma... a sweet aroma to the Lord... your sweet aromas.*

I've been bear hunting one time in my life. That doesn't make me an expert, believe me, and compared to the stories I've heard from my hunting buddies, my hunt was relatively boring, even though it was successful (it was a small bear so I'm not bragging).

Some of the most exciting bear hunting stories I've heard have to do with baited stands. This might be a sure-fired way to bag a bear but it is also a sure-fired way for him to bag you. After all, he can climb trees. About the only thing more dangerous than getting in the way of a bear and his meal is coming between a momma bear and her cubs.

This happened to a guy I know. He and a mutual friend were spring bear hunting in northern Ontario. A large black bear and her three small cubs were drawn to his baited stand. As he looked on, she suddenly sensed danger and barked a command for her little ones to scurry up a tree. Guess whose tree they chose? He spent no small amount of energy fending off the cubs as they tried to get by him. After a fair amount of combat, they decided to seek safety in another tree.

Unfortunately, they chose a tree right next to the one he was in. This irritated the mother bear who was quick to decide that she did not like whatever just whooped her kids. She kept him at bay for some time until the three little troublemakers finally descended and vanished into the forest with their mother.

Later that fall, two other friends and I bear hunted the same area. One of the guys had taken a stand over a pile of honey-covered pastries. It didn't take long for a big black bear to come sneaking in. As my friend drew his bow, he spotted movement out of the corner of his eye. He quietly withdrew his hold and watched as three large cubs came bouncing up to the bait. Mother stood guard as her children ate their fill. Oddly enough, she never touched the bait. My friend took pictures, with some anxiety I might add, knowing what had happened earlier that spring. The cubs, most likely the same ones, were much bigger now. They could have easily put a whoopin' on him, even without the help of mom.

My friend wisely decided to relocate his hunting stand. It didn't help. The same four bears paid him a visit during which he narrowly avoided a confrontation on the ground. He was very, very glad to see us when we arrived with the truck. For his benefit, we stood guard with our rifles as he hastily and noisily removed his stand. Even so, in the near thickness of the forest we could hear the sound of the big bear popping her jaws.

There are several ways to bait for bears. Some guides use steel drums with bait inside (meat, sweets, or whatever). Others simply use leftovers from their last meal (well, hopefully not *the last* meal). Others use bacon and grease in various burnt conditions.

One type of bait is called a honey burn. A can of honey is heated on top of a small, inexpensive burner near fresh bear signs. As it boils over, the smoke and burning odor spread all over the general area. The scent may linger for a long time. From what I've heard, it's very effective at drawing in black bears.

One wonders what the bears are thinking at this time. One day they're lumbering along minding their own business when suddenly they smell burning food. Off they go toward the source. A single refrain runs through their furry heads: a sweet aroma, a sweet aroma, a sweet aroma. Life is so good.

This refrain also repeats itself throughout the book of Leviticus, as you can see in the verses above. The Israelites followed a strict rite of sacrifice which resulted in a sweet aroma rising up to heaven.

There's no hidden meaning here. The burning fat simply created a delightful odor in which God found pleasure. We must be reminded that God can also hear, see, walk, love, get angry, and much more.

Even though there's no hidden meaning, there is a serious matter to consider. The matter is that of being fully obedient to God's commands. Disobedience will not be tolerated, as God warned in Leviticus 26, "*If you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I will walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins... I will lay your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet aromas*" (verses 27-28, 31).

Although we don't sacrifice animals today, the mandate for obedience is still applicable. It doesn't matter if you're an Israelite from the days of Moses or a person in the 21st century. Obedience to God's commands is essential.

God was pleased when the Israelites obeyed His command on how to handle the sacrifice. When they offered the sacrifice in a way in *which He had not commanded them*, God was, to say the least, less than pleased (Leviticus 10:1-2).

When a 21st century man obeys God's command on what to do with the sacrifice Jesus made for his sins, it makes God happy. So happy, in fact, that it is the Father's good pleasure to give His children the kingdom (Luke 12:32). Obedience becomes a sweet aroma. However, if God's commands are ignored or corrupted, the act of obedience becomes tainted and stinky. It is something God does not take pleasure in. For that, *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God* (Hebrews 10:31).

Our obedience, then, begins with the simple command by Jesus to follow Him (Mark 1:17). This is where one's Christian pilgrimage begins. This is where we discover that our Lord's burdens are not heavy (Matthew 11:30). This is when we discover that it feels so good to be free from our own burden of sin. This is when we begin to make the Father happy.

And this is where we light up our own offering – our full obedience – as a sweet aroma to the Lord.

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**Bible Devotions: Hook Line & Sinker (study guide)**

Leviticus 1:8-9  
On Baiting for Bears, and Obedience

HOOK

1. In your view, what makes bears so dangerous?

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2. If you killed a bear, what would you do with the hide? With the meat?

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3. Describe how you would set up a baited bear stand. Tell what bait you'd use, and why.

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Our obedience begins with the command by Jesus to follow Him. This is where one's Christian pilgrimage begins, where we discover that our Lord's burdens are not heavy. This is when we discover that it feels so good to be free from our own burden of sin. This is when we begin to make the Father happy.

If you are a Christian, what have you done that has made Jesus happy? If you're not a Christian, what must you do to make Him happy?

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Name a few things that you believe Jesus has commanded you to do. How successful have you been in obeying Him? What can you do to improve your obedience?

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SINKER

Take a few minutes to write your thoughts on this devotional. Reflect on your own experiences.

Key words:    obedience                      sweet aroma                      God's pleasure

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