

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

Leviticus 20:7-8

Men and Their Guns
Part One – Handguns

Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the Lord your God. And you shall keep My statutes, and perform them: I am the Lord who sanctifies you.

Let's talk guns. I've handled everything from late 19th century vintage guns to the most current pistol used by the majority of our armed forces. Each firearm begs to tell a tale of adventure of men and their guns. Let's stand in someone else's shoes for a few minutes...

The Colt Peacemaker Single Action Army. I heard about that outlaw gang. They're headed this way. Thank the good Lord for that new telegraph line. I asked the preacher to recommend three men I could deputize to help me out. Now they're right beside me watching the dust rise down the road as horse and rider advance on our small town. Shots ring out! The gang charges our barricade! Our .45's heat up quickly as we send a flurry of hot lead toward the marauders. Four ugly outlaws of notable fame lie face down in the dirt. Our women, children, farms, and homes are safe. At least for today.

The Iver Johnson Safety Hammer Revolver. It's 1896. The shop floor is swept, the ledger is reconciled, and I've flipped the sign in the window to CLOSED. The bag of money rattles with the 'clink clink' of silver against silver, muffled by a few dollar bills tendered by my more wealthy customers. The bank will be open just a few more minutes. I lift the rear action of my little top break .32 to make sure the gun is loaded, then slip the pistol into my vest pocket. The owl's head grips protrude slightly, offering an instant grasp should I need it. I stuff the money bag into my innermost coat pocket. Off I go.

The Smith & Wesson 38/200 British Service Revolver. Dear mom, How are you and little James? I miss you a lot. Have you heard from dad? We took back Sollum yesterday from that bloody enemy. I think of you all the time. We're doing everything we can but sometimes I wonder if it's enough. We received new pistols last week. Me and my buddies are sure glad. Hopefully, it won't be long until I'm home. Well, got to go. Tell my brother I miss him, too. Love, Jack. 12 Jan 1942.

The Harrington & Richardson Sportsman. He's lived a long, good life and I'm so proud to have been married to him all these years. He looks so peaceful lying there asleep, his open Bible resting upon his chest. He's not in a lot of pain and about all he can do these days is read. Last night, he asked me to bring him his old trapping gun. As he held it in his feeble hands, he reminisced about the last time he carried it on his trap line in 1961. Oh, how his memory is still sharp! He wants our oldest son to have the gun when he's gone. The doctor says that will be any day now. I'll miss him so much.

The Freedom Arms Model 83 Revolver. It's 2002. My hunting pal thinks I'm crazy but I've always wanted to hunt elk with a handgun. Now, everything is on the line. The sun will go down in a couple of hours and... There he is! The big 6X6 we spotted on the first day. The wind's just right. Quickly, I nestle the big revolver into shooting position. The timber's not too thick but I still have to find a clear shooting lane. Closer and closer he approaches it. Wait. Wait. BOOM! He's down! The 300 grain bullet has done it's job. All that practice with the hard-kicking handgun has paid off. I can't wait to see my friend's face.

The Holiness of God. It's a recurring theme in the Bible. Not only is it a theme, it's a command, *"For I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy. ...You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy,"* thus says God in Leviticus 11:44-45 and many other places in His Holy Word. These words were not meant for just the Old Testament Israelite. This command is also meant for Christians today.

I don't think God would give us a command to be holy and then not explain for us how to do so. Notice that He says to *consecrate yourselves*. That means to make yourselves holy. It's an action we must take. We must want to be holy and must take the first step: confess sins and confess JESUS IS LORD. Holiness then comes upon us. We become what He alone makes us: holy. He is exalted because of what we want to do: make ourselves holy, that burning desire of our hearts. And we confess that we can only be holy through the blood of the Lamb.

God also says to keep His statutes. I believe this means that we must make God's statutes the center of our whole being, not only as a person but also as a society. We must incorporate His statutes into our daily living, our community standards, and our national heritage. This starts with the 10 Commandments and continues with the two greatest commandments upon which all the commandments depend: *And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. ...You shall love your neighbor as yourself* (Mark 12:30-31).

And finally, God says to perform His statutes. It's one thing to recognize His commandments, to have them on the books so to speak, but it's quite another thing to live by them. Again, it's an action we must take. Now, God speaks to the hearts of His children the things they must do for Him. Now, God sends by the feet of His children the good news of salvation for all people. Now, God saves through the obedience of His children the soul who confesses sins and confesses JESUS IS LORD. God's holiness comes full circle, from JESUS IS LORD to JESUS IS LORD. He is the Lord who sanctifies us, setting us apart for Himself.

We might handle a firearm and drift into some nostalgic story of men and their guns. But we can't drift or dream or wish ourselves into the holiness of God. We can only experience His holiness when we decide that it's what we want more than anything else in the world. We then get what can't be had, only because God is holy. All because Jesus is Lord.

Bible Devotions: Hook Line & Sinker (study guide)

Leviticus 20:7-8
Men and Their Guns, Part One – Handguns

HOOK

1. What is your favorite handgun and why?

2. Name two laws regarding firearms ownership and explain why the law should be obeyed.

3. Write a historically accurate story about an old handgun and the man who might have used it.

LINE

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We must incorporate God's statutes into our daily living, our community standards, and our national heritage.

It's one thing to recognize His commandments but it's quite another thing to live by them. Again, it's an action we must take. Now, God speaks to the hearts of His children the things they must do for Him. Now, God sends by the feet of His children the good news of salvation for all people. Now, God saves through the obedience of His children the soul who confesses sins and confesses JESUS IS LORD. He is the Lord who sanctifies us, setting us apart for Himself.

How do you obey God's command to preach the gospel to every created person? What more can you do to fulfill this command?

How are God's statutes (commandments) treated by the world today? How do you respond to God's commandments? What can you do to help others understand God's commandments?

SINKER

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

Key words: holiness commandments Jesus is Lord
