

# Lesson 10 | February 5, 2023

## The Courtyard of the Tabernacle

**Study Text:** Exodus 27:1–19; 30:17–21; Leviticus 9:1–7; Deuteronomy 12:10–14; John 4:19–24; Titus 3:3–7; Hebrews 10:1,5–10

[Exo 27:1-19 KJV] 1 And thou shalt make an altar [of] shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof [shall be] three cubits. 2 And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay it with brass. 3 And thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes, and his shovels, and his basons, and his fleshhooks, and his firepans: all the vessels thereof thou shalt make [of] brass. 4 And thou shalt make for it a grate of network [of] brass; and upon the net shalt thou make four brasen rings in the four corners thereof. 5 And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath, that the net may be even to the midst of the altar. 6 And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves [of] shittim wood, and overlay them with brass. 7 And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, to bear it. 8 Hollow with boards shalt thou make it: as it was shewed thee in the mount, so shall they make [it]. 9 And thou shalt make the court of the tabernacle: for the south side southward [there shall be] hangings for the court [of] fine twined linen of an hundred cubits long for one side: 10 And the twenty pillars thereof and their twenty sockets [shall be of] brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets [shall be of] silver. 11 And likewise for the north side in length [there shall be] hangings of an hundred [cubits] long, and his twenty pillars and their twenty sockets [of] brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets [of] silver. 12 And [for] the breadth of the court on the west side [shall be] hangings of fifty cubits: their pillars ten, and their sockets ten. 13 And the breadth of the court on the east side eastward [shall be] fifty cubits. 14 The hangings of one side [of the gate shall be] fifteen cubits: their pillars three, and their sockets three. 15 And on the other side [shall be] hangings fifteen [cubits]: their pillars three, and their sockets three. 16 And for the gate of the court [shall be] an hanging of twenty cubits, [of] blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework: [and] their pillars [shall be] four, and their sockets four. 17 All the pillars round about the court [shall be] filleted with silver; their hooks [shall be of] silver, and their sockets [of] brass. 18 The length of the court [shall be] an hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits [of] fine twined linen, and their sockets [of] brass. 19 All the vessels of the tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court, [shall be of] brass.

[Exo 30:17-21 KJV] 17 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 18 Thou shalt also make a laver [of] brass, and his foot [also of] brass, to wash [withal]: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. 19 For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: 20 When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD: 21 So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, [even] to him and to his seed throughout their generations.

[Lev 9:1-7 KJV] 1 And it came to pass on the eighth day, [that] Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel; 2 And he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer [them] before the LORD. 3 And unto the children of Israel thou shalt speak, saying, Take ye a kid of the goats for a sin offering; and a calf and a lamb, [both] of the first year, without blemish, for a burnt offering; 4 Also a bullock and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD; and a meat offering mingled with oil: for to day the LORD will appear unto you. 5 And they brought [that] which Moses commanded before the tabernacle of the congregation: and all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD. 6 And Moses said, This [is] the thing which the LORD commanded that ye should do: and the glory of the LORD shall appear unto you. 7 And Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin offering, and thy burnt offering, and make an atonement for thyself, and for the people: and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them; as the LORD commanded.

[Deu 12:10-14 KJV] 10 But [when] ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and [when] he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; 11 Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD: 12 And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that [is] within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you. 13 Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest: 14 But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.

[Jhn 4:19-24 KJV] 19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. 21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God [is] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth.

[Tit 3:3-7 KJV] 3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, [and] hating one another. 4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

[Heb 10:1, 5-10 KJV] 1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, [and] not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. ... 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith,

Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and [sacrifices] for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and [offering] for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure [therein]; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once [for all].

**Central Truth:** Through Christ, all people have access to God for spiritual cleansing.

**Key Verse: Titus 3:5**

**Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost (KJV).**

**He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit (NLT).**

**Learning Objectives**

- Students should recognize the connection between use of the tabernacle courtyard and God’s plan of redemption.
- Students should seek forgiveness and cleansing.
- Students should be grateful for the grace and mercy of God without which no one can be saved.

## **Introducing the Study**

**Say:** When you stand between a source of light and a wall, you cast a shadow. The shadow is not you; it is merely a representation of your physical being. In an imperfect way, your shadow depicts you. Someone might even recognize you by your shadow. The tabernacle foreshadowed a time when Jesus would dwell or “tabernacle” among those He created (see John 1:14), showing them the Father and providing a plan of redemption from sin, bringing a new and better covenant. This lesson focuses on the outer court, or the court of the congregation, where the people came for their sins to be forgiven and to meet with God. *v*  
**(Play the video available at [RadiantLifeCurriculum.com/Adult](http://RadiantLifeCurriculum.com/Adult).)**

**Opening Activity—Representatives**

*Ask. What objects or people can you name that are representative of something or someone else?* (Answers may include pictures or photos, statues, or people who represent others in business or in government.)

**Say:** God displayed His desire for fellowship with His creation through the tabernacle and the sacrifices conducted there. He made that desire even more clear when He sent His Son to earth. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

In the tabernacle's structure and worship, we see representations of our Lord and our worship of Him. As we consider the Israelites' preparation for the construction of the tabernacle, their worship within the completed tabernacle, and the New Testament fulfillment of God's plan, we will see pictures of our Lord and learn lessons concerning our worship of Him.

## **Part 1—Place of Access to God**

### **A Place of Sacrifice**

Exodus 27:1–19

[Exo 27:1-19 KJV] 1 And thou shalt make an altar [of] shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof [shall be] three cubits. 2 And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay it with brass. 3 And thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes, and his shovels, and his basons, and his fleshhooks, and his firepans: all the vessels thereof thou shalt make [of] brass. 4 And thou shalt make for it a grate of network [of] brass; and upon the net shalt thou make four brasen rings in the four corners thereof. 5 And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath, that the net may be even to the midst of the altar. 6 And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves [of] shittim wood, and overlay them with brass. 7 And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, to bear it. 8 Hollow with boards shalt thou make it: as it was shewed thee in the mount, so shall they make [it]. 9 And thou shalt make the court of the tabernacle: for the south side southward [there shall be] hangings for the court [of] fine twined linen of an hundred cubits long for one side: 10 And the twenty pillars thereof and their twenty sockets [shall be of] brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets [shall be of] silver. 11 And likewise for the north side in length [there shall be] hangings of an hundred [cubits] long, and his twenty pillars and their twenty sockets [of] brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets [of] silver. 12 And [for] the breadth of the court on the west side [shall be] hangings of fifty cubits: their pillars ten, and their sockets ten. 13 And the breadth of the court on the east side eastward [shall be] fifty cubits. 14 The hangings of one side [of the gate shall be] fifteen cubits: their pillars three, and their sockets three. 15 And on the other side [shall be] hangings fifteen [cubits]: their pillars three, and their sockets three. 16 And for the gate of the court [shall be] an hanging of twenty cubits, [of] blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework: [and] their pillars [shall be] four, and their sockets four. 17 All the pillars round about the court [shall be] filleted with silver; their hooks [shall be of] silver, and their sockets [of] brass. 18 The length of the court [shall be] an hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits [of] fine twined

linen, and their sockets [of] brass. 19 All the vessels of the tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court, [shall be of] brass.

**Say:** The courtyard of the tabernacle is where the people entered to bring the sacrifices for their sins and to receive forgiveness. There was only one entry point, and the first thing inside it was the altar of burnt offering. We no longer have to offer burnt sacrifices because Jesus has made the sacrifice for us, and He is the only way into the Father's presence. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The tabernacle was the dwelling place of a holy God with His people (Exodus 25:8). But the people of Israel could not freely enter into His presence because of their sin. The tabernacle included an inner tent where the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies, KJV) were located. The area surrounding this tent was called the "outer court" (KJV) or "courtyard" (NLT). In this courtyard, sacrifices were made to atone for the sins of the people. The walls of the courtyard were curtains of finely woven linen 7 feet high hung by silver hooks from a bar supported by wooden pillars. The pillars were set in bronze (brass) bases (Exodus 27:9–10). The courtyard measured 75 by 150 feet.

On the east side was the only entrance to the courtyard, a thirty-foot-wide curtained entrance of "finely woven linen" which was decorated "with beautiful embroidery in blue, purple, and scarlet thread" (Exodus 27:16, NLT). Through an opening in this curtain the priest and the one with a sacrifice could enter to make sacrifices to God.

Just inside the courtyard was the altar of burnt offerings, representing God's desire for fellowship with humanity through the forgiveness of sin. The wooden altar, overlaid with bronze, was 7 feet square and 4 feet high (Exodus 27:1–2). On each corner of the altar was a "horn" where blood of the sacrifices was smeared. These sacrifices were essential for the people to receive forgiveness for their sins.

Moses was also instructed to make bronze utensils to be used during the sacrifices on the altar and the two poles with which to carry the altar (verses 3–7). He was required to follow the pattern given to him by God (verse 8).

### ***Discuss***

? Why do you think there was only one entrance to the tabernacle courtyard? (See Acts 4:12.)

? Why might the altar of burnt offerings have been placed just inside the entrance to the tabernacle courtyard?

## **A Place of Worship**

Deuteronomy 12:10–14; John 4:19–24

[Deu 12:10-14 KJV] 10 But [when] ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and [when] he giveth you rest from all

your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; 11 Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD: 12 And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that [is] within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you. 13 Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest: 14 But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.

[Jhn 4:19-24 KJV] 19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. 21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God [is] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth.

**Say:** The tabernacle was to be not only a place of sacrifice and repentance, but a place of worship. God had delivered His covenant people from Egypt, and they were set apart from other nations by their worship of Him. They were the people through whom He would send His Son as the perfect Sacrifice to deal with sin once and for all. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

In His instructions to Israel concerning their worship in the Promised Land, God required that worship be conducted in the tabernacle, His dwelling place (Deuteronomy 12:10–11). Though the tabernacle was a mobile tent, it was the only place the Israelites were to worship God. They were to present offerings, sacrifices, tithes, and gifts only in the tabernacle.

God wanted His people to be different from the pagan inhabitants of the land, who worshipped whom they pleased wherever they chose. Unlike the worship of the pagans, the Israelites' worship was to be more than dreary obedience, but a time of rejoicing and feasting. Israel's use of a specific worship site signaled their obedience to God's command; the tabernacle was the Lord's choice for Israel (verse 14). By coming to the tabernacle the people were obeying God.

God still places a high priority on gathering together for corporate worship (Hebrews 10:23–25). But whether gathering together for public worship or expressing our adoration in private, our worship is an act of obedience to the Lord. Entering God's presence produces joy (Psalm 16:11). For the believer, worship is not a burden, but a joyful experience.

In Jesus' day, the place to worship God was a source of controversy between the Jews and Samaritans (verses 19–24). Since the temple was at Jerusalem, the Jews claimed Jerusalem was the only place to worship God. The Samaritans, however, had chosen Mount Gerizim as the place for their distorted worship of God.

In Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well, the woman brought up this subject (John 4:19–20). Convicted by Jesus' exposure of her sinful lifestyle, she wanted to change the focus of the conversation away from her sins to the controversy about worship. Her people taught that worship must take place on Mount Gerizim, but Jews worshipped at the temple in Jerusalem. Jesus answered by pointing to a soon-coming change when worship would not be limited to buildings and physical locations, but would take place in the hearts of the worshipers.

Jesus taught that worship is a matter of relationship, not location (verses 21–22). God's dwelling place is no longer a temple or tabernacle; believers are now His temple where He dwells by His Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:22).

In John 4:24, Jesus summarizes the worship God desires. "For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth" (NLT). Such worship corresponds with God's nature. Today we do not approach God through endless sacrificial offerings and a special priesthood, but through Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit.

### ***Discuss***

? Why did God select only one site for worship?

? What contrasts do you see between God's instructions concerning worship in the Old Testament and worship today?

### **Resource Packet Item 1: The Altar of Burnt Offerings**

Distribute the work sheet and assign the passages to small groups. After two or three minutes, ask the groups to share their thoughts.

## **Part 2—Place of Forgiveness**

### **Sacrifices Required**

Leviticus 9:1–7

[Lev 9:1-7 KJV] 1 And it came to pass on the eighth day, [that] Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel; 2 And he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer [them] before the LORD. 3 And unto the children of Israel thou shalt speak, saying, Take ye a kid of the goats for a sin offering; and a calf and a lamb, [both] of the first year, without blemish, for a burnt offering; 4 Also a bullock and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD; and a meat offering mingled

with oil: for to day the LORD will appear unto you. 5 And they brought [that] which Moses commanded before the tabernacle of the congregation: and all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD. 6 And Moses said, This [is] the thing which the LORD commanded that ye should do: and the glory of the LORD shall appear unto you. 7 And Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin offering, and thy burnt offering, and make an atonement for thyself, and for the people: and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them; as the LORD commanded.

*Say:* God's plan for our redemption was unfolding even in the days of worship in the tabernacle. The sacrifices He required of the Israelites were purposeful and were meant to teach them the importance of obeying and worshipping God. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Eight days after Aaron and his sons had presented the sacrifices and offerings required for their ordination as priests, Moses called them together, along with the elders of Israel. He instructed them to "take a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, both without defects, and present them to the Lord" (Leviticus 9:2, NLT). These were being offered on behalf of Aaron and the priesthood.

Next they were to instruct the Israelites to bring their own sin offerings, burnt offerings, and grain offerings (verse 3). The priests offered these sacrifices on the altar, providing an "atonement" for sins (verse 7, KJV). The Hebrew word for atonement conveys the idea of pacifying God's wrath and providing a covering for sin. Before the high priest could enter the Holy Place, he had to offer a sacrifice for his sins and the sins of the people. The way into God's presence came through the blood of bulls and goats.

The sacrifices of the Old Testament, while pleasing to God, could not provide forgiveness of sin or perfection; they only pointed to the time of Christ. Only through Him can people receive forgiveness for sins and eternal salvation.

God was going to move among His people, and He wanted them to prepare to see His glory. The people obeyed by bringing their offerings, then waiting for Him to reveal His glory. He did not disappoint (see verses 23–24).

### *Discuss*

? Why did the priests need to present offerings on their own behalf before presenting the sacrifices from the people?

? How do we receive atonement for our sins today?

## **The Perfect Sacrifice**

Hebrews 10:1,5–10



[Heb 10:1, 5-10 KJV] 1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, [and] not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. ... 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and [sacrifices] for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and [offering] for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure [therein]; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once [for all].

**Say:** The Israelites were instructed to bring sacrifices without blemish or defect as the atonement for their sins. But no matter how perfect that sacrifice was, it was only a “dim preview of the good things to come” (Hebrews 10:1, NLT). The blood of animals could never make the worshipers holy. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Though the sacrifices offered on the altar atoned for sin, they could not make the one who offered them perfect (Hebrews 10:1). Repeated year after year, the sacrifices reminded the Israelites of their sin rather than removing their sin and guilt. They could not provide what humanity needed most.

The answer to humanity’s dilemma came in the form of the ultimate sacrifice, Jesus Christ. Quoting Psalm 40:6–8, the writer of Hebrews showed that Christ came to do what the Old Testament sacrifices could not: forgive sin. In dying for our sins, Jesus fulfilled the will of God written on the pages of the Old Testament (Hebrews 10:5–9). By setting aside the Old Testament’s sacrificial system through His obedient sacrifice, Jesus provided cleansing for all who come to Him (verse 10).

The altar of burnt offering reminds us of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. Having been sacrificed for our sins on the cross, He is now risen and offers sinners complete forgiveness and cleansing.

### ***Discuss***

? How was Christ’s sacrifice different from Old Testament sacrifices?

? In what ways did Jesus’ life on earth demonstrate His purpose to do the will of the Father?

## **Part 3—Place of Cleansing Cleansed for Service**

Exodus 30:17–21

[Exo 30:17-21 KJV] 17 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 18 Thou shalt also make a laver [of] brass, and his foot [also of] brass, to wash [withal]: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. 19 For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: 20 When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD: 21 So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, [even] to him and to his seed throughout their generations.

**Say:** Beyond the altar of burnt offering was a place for the priests to be cleansed from the impurities on their bodies. They could not fully serve in the tabernacle without that cleansing. Often we allow attitudes and behaviors in our lives that keep us from being effective in the ministry to which God has called us. Under the new covenant, service is not limited to the priests, or leaders because we are all “a chosen people . . . royal priests, a holy nation, God’s very own possession” (1 Peter 2:9, NLT). (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Not only did the priests need to offer sacrifices for their sins, they also had to be physically cleansed before they could move into the Holy Place to complete their work. The journey to the tabernacle dirtied their feet, and the handling of sacrifices defiled their hands. This required a place for cleansing.

God provided for regular cleansing through the “laver of brass” (Exodus 30:18, KJV), “a bronze washbasin” (NLT) located between the altar of burnt offering and the tabernacle. God instructed Aaron and his sons to wash their hands and feet as they entered the tabernacle. To neglect this daily cleansing would bring death (verse 20). Whether ministering at the altar of burnt offering or within the tabernacle, God required the cleansing of those who performed this ministry.

Just as the altar represented salvation through the sacrifice of Christ, the basin speaks of the need for the believer’s daily cleansing through studying God’s Word. Like the priests, today’s believers experience worldly defilement even as they minister to and for the Lord. As believers we must come daily to God and be cleansed. What is the washbasin (laver) available to us? A good place to begin is by spending time in God’s Word. Paul wrote that “Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God’s word” (Ephesians 5:25–26, NLT). Daily time in God’s Word will wash away the grime of the world and will also help us avoid much of that grime.

Cleansing also calls for sacrifice on our part. Drawing near to God often requires us to give up the things that distract us from fully serving the One who has called us. We must be willing to lay down our earthly treasures to enjoy the greater wealth of a holy life.

### ***Discuss***

? Why do you think the washbasin (laver) was placed beyond the altar of burnt offerings?

? How do you (or should you) engage in daily cleansing in order to serve God more effectively?

### **Resource Packet Item 3: God's Word Cleanses Us**

Distribute the work sheet and encourage students to complete the graph. As a group, praise God for sending us His Word for our benefit.

## **Cleansed by God's Mercy and Grace**

Titus 3:3–7

[Tit 3:3-7 KJV] 3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, [and] hating one another. 4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

**Say:** Some people think living for God is a matter of being good, doing the right thing, obeying the rules. The Israelites could not obey the Law on their own. They had to come day after day and year after year to sacrifice and receive atonement. But God gave His Son as the perfect Sacrifice to pay the ultimate price for our sins. But we cannot live for Him by our own willpower. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

As believers, we are constantly exposed to things that defile us. We are bombarded with messages and images that are contrary to the holiness of God. Even mature believers are tempted to sin. Because of the defilement of the world, we need a place for cleansing each day.

Just as the Israelites could not cleanse themselves from sin, but had to come through a process of atonement through the blood of sacrifices, neither can we cleanse ourselves from sin. In writing to Titus, Paul gave him teachings for the church under his care. He reminded them that they had been “foolish and disobedient” (3:3, NLT). He enumerated attitudes and behaviors that had separated them from God.

But God had provided a solution, an altar of forgiveness and a washbasin for cleansing. Our righteousness and our sacrifices cannot save us. Only God's mercy can bring us salvation. “He washed away our sins, giving us new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior” (verses 5–6, NLT). Some believe the washing refers to water baptism and the renewal to the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Others believe this phrase refers to the regeneration and renewal that they say takes place at water baptism. It is probably best to see this phrase as a metaphor of spiritual cleansing at salvation.

Without the grace of God, no one can come to Him. As Paul summed it up, “Because of his grace he made us right in his sight and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life” (Titus 3:7, NLT).

### **Resource Packet Item 3: Except for God's Grace**

Distribute the work sheet, and ask someone to read the story aloud. Then give students a few minutes to write their testimonies of God's grace, or ask them to share them verbally, depending on which works best for your class.

#### *Discuss*

? What are some of the things that may defile believers—in actions, attitudes, or thoughts? What should we do about these things?

What is the role of the Holy Spirit in helping believers live for God?

### **What Is God Saying to Us?**

*Say:* The marvelous plan of God for our redemption is foreshadowed throughout the structure and rituals of the tabernacle. He was preparing His people to be the ancestors of the Messiah and a light to the nations around them. We are privileged to live in a time when salvation by grace and the fullness of the Spirit are readily available to us, and He calls us to be a light to those around us who do not know Him.

### **Living It Out**

#### **Ministry in Action**

- Invite someone who does not attend church to worship with you next Sunday.
- Choose something you can sacrifice to meet a need for someone else.
- Examine your life for grime of the world that needs to be washed away.

### **Daily Bible Readings**

#### **Monday:**

Yearning for His Courts.  
Psalm 84:1–4

**[Psa 84:1-4 KJV] 1 [[To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm for the sons of Korah.]] How amiable [are] thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! 2 My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. 3 Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, [even] thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God. 4 Blessed [are] they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.**

#### **Tuesday:**

Better in His Courts.  
Psalm 84:10–12

**[Psa 84:10-12 KJV] 10 For a day in thy courts [is] better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. 11 For the LORD God [is] a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good**

[thing] will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. 12 O LORD of hosts, blessed [is] the man that trusteth in thee.

**Wednesday:**

Courts of Praise.  
Psalm 100:1–5

**[Psa 100:1-5 KJV] 1 [[A Psalm of praise.]] Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. 2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. 3 Know ye that the LORD he [is] God: [it is] he [that] hath made us, and not we ourselves; [we are] his people, and the sheep of his pasture. 4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, [and] into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, [and] bless his name. 5 For the LORD [is] good; his mercy [is] everlasting; and his truth [endureth] to all generations.**

**Thursday:**

Cleansing the Temple Courts.  
Matthew 21:12–16

**[Mat 21:12-16 KJV] 12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, 13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. 14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them. 15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased, 16 And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?**

**Friday:**

Healing at the Temple Courts.  
Acts 3:1–11

**[Act 3:1-11 KJV] 1 Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, [being] the ninth [hour]. 2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; 3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. 4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. 5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. 6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted [him] up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God: 10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. 11 And as the lame man which was**

**healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.**

**Saturday:**

Miracles at the Temple Courts.

Acts 5:12–16

**[Act 5:12-16 KJV] 12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. 13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. 14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) 15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid [them] on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. 16 There came also a multitude [out] of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.**