

Parents issue a lot of warnings.

Read Leviticus 26:1–27:34

9 “I will look favorably upon you, making you fertile and multiplying your people. And I will fulfill my covenant with you. 10 You will have such a surplus of crops that you will need to clear out the old grain to make room for the new harvest! 11 I will live among you, and I will not despise you. 12 I will walk among you; I will be your God, and you will be my people. 13 I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so you would no longer be their slaves. I broke the yoke of slavery from your neck so you can walk with your heads held high. 14 However, if you do not listen to me or obey all these commands, 15 and if you break my covenant by rejecting my decrees, treating my regulations with contempt, and refusing to obey my commands, 16 I will punish you.” Leviticus 26:9-16

To observers, these warnings can seem harsh. Sometimes they seem harsh to the children as well, but loving parents issue them anyway. They know that the world’s dangers are real.

This reading completes God’s instructions for Israel’s everyday living by summarizing the rewards for obedience to God, the consequences of disobedience, and by telling how to dedicate something to the Lord. It’s a clear statement of why we should obey God.

The Point: There is only one true and living God, so it doesn’t make sense to live for money, possessions, or other idols. Not only that, but such living is dangerous.

Some people think that the Old Testament portrays God as harsh, pointing to passages like Leviticus 26:14-39 as an example. But this passage shows what God really wanted to accomplish with such warnings, and also what God meant when he said that he is slow to anger (see Exodus 34:6). God warned his people of sin’s consequences for the same reason parents warn their children of danger—to protect and provide for them out of love. GOD IS LOVE, He is also a Holy God of righteousness and justice. God wanted his people to prosper through their compliance to his design for life. And he wanted it so much that he promised to reward them if they obeyed (Leviticus 26:3-13). Even if the Israelites chose to disobey God and were scattered among their enemies, God would still give them the opportunity to repent and return to him (26:40-45). God did not want to destroy the Israelites; he wanted to help them grow. That is the purpose of his warnings.

Our day-to-day experiences and hardships can sometimes seem overwhelming. God allows these events to happen to help us grow, not to curse us. Many times, those hardships are a result of our choices and decisions, yet many blame God. God can turn all situations for our good if we turn back to him. We need to see that God’s purpose is to help us live as he designed and to bring about continual growth in us. Jeremiah 29:11 puts it this way: “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ says the Lord. ‘They are plans for

good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.’” To retain hope while suffering shows that we understand God’s merciful ways of relating to his people.

What are you struggling with these days? What stresses and problems are you facing? Endure hardship as God’s teaching tool; ask God to teach you through every difficulty.

PRAY: LORD, I humble myself before you and man, I repent and turn to you. Holy Spirit, I welcome you to show me the areas of my life that need transformation, help me to be more like Jesus and live for His purposes and will. Thank you for your Holy presence in my life. Amen.

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