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# Living a Holy, Balanced Life in God's Presence: Prayer, Purpose, and Rest

A Journey Through Exodus 30-31

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# Meditation Scripture

## Exodus 31:13

**“You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ‘Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you.’”**

**(ESV (English Standard Version))**



# Key Themes



## Drawing Near to God with Holiness and Prayer (Exodus 30)

God invites His people into His presence, but He is to be approached reverently, prayerfully, and with purity.

- The altar of incense highlights continual prayer (30:7–8)
- The bronze basin emphasizes cleansing before service (30:17–21)
- The anointing oil and incense show that what belongs to God must be set apart (30:22–38)



## Serving God with Spirit-Empowered Purpose (Exodus 31:1–11)

God equips His people with the Holy Spirit to accomplish His work, including practical and creative tasks.

- Bezalel is filled with the Spirit of God for skill and craftsmanship (31:3)
- God values obedience, excellence, and faithfulness in work
- Every task given by God is sacred when done for Him



## Living in Obedient Rhythm: Work and Rest (Exodus 31:12–17)

God commands rest as part of covenant faithfulness even during holy work.

- The Sabbath is a sign of relationship with God (31:13)
- Rest acknowledges God as provider and sanctifier
- Obedience includes knowing when to stop



# Key Takeaways

**A faithful Christian life is marked by regular prayer, spiritual cleansing, and reverence toward God—not casual or careless worship.**

**God calls believers to serve Him using their gifts, skills, and vocations—work done for God is worship, not second-class spirituality.**

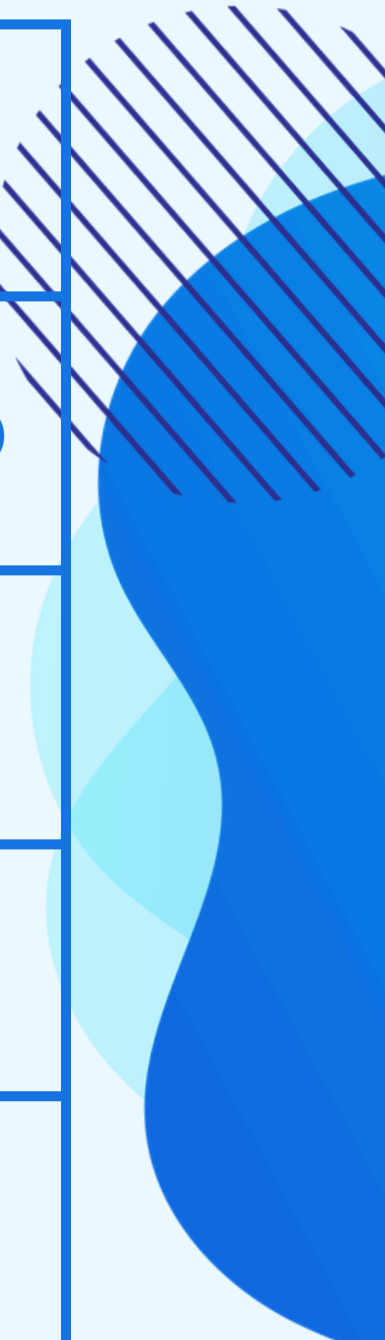
**A healthy Christian life balances devotion and service with trust-filled rest, showing confidence in God rather than self-reliance.**



# New Testament Verses on God's Presence

Christian living flows from prayerful holiness, is expressed through Spirit-empowered service, and is sustained by obedient rest in God.

| Drawing Near to God with Holiness and Prayer<br>(Exodus 30 – incense, washing, holiness) | Serving God with Spirit-Empowered Purpose<br>(Exodus 31:1–11 – Bezalel and Oholiab) | Living in Obedient Rhythm — Work and Rest<br>(Exodus 31:12–17 – Sabbath as covenant sign) |
|--|---|---|
| Psalm 24:3–4: Clean hands and a pure heart to stand in God's presence                    | Exodus 35:30–35: Reaffirmation of God filling craftsmen with His Spirit             | Genesis 2:2–3: God rests and sanctifies the seventh day                                   |
| Leviticus 19:2: "Be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy"                               | Proverbs 16:3: Committing work to the LORD  | Isaiah 30:15: Rest and trust as strength  |
| Isaiah 56:7: God's house as a house of prayer  | 1 Corinthians 12:4–7: Same Spirit, different gifts, for the common good             | Mark 2:27: The Sabbath made for people  |
| Exodus 19:10–11: God calls His people to consecrate themselves before meeting Him        | Ephesians 2:10: Created for good works prepared by God                              | Matthew 11:28–30: Jesus invites the weary to rest   |





## **Ex 30:7-8**

**The altar of burnt offering dealt with sin, while the altar of incense expressed ongoing relationship with God through prayer.**

- **Burnt Offering → We are forgiven through Christ's sacrifice**
- **Incense → We now live in continual prayer and fellowship with God**



# The Alter of Incense & Burnt Offering Differences



| Altar of Incense                                 | Altar of Burnt Offering                         |
|--|---|
| Located <b>inside the Holy Place</b> ,           | Located <b>outside in the courtyard</b>         |
| Made of <b>acacia wood overlaid with gold</b>    | Made of <b>acacia wood overlaid with bronze</b> |
| Used for <b>burning incense</b>                  | Used for <b>animal sacrifices</b>               |
| Represents <b>prayer and worship</b>             | Represents <b>atonement and forgiveness</b>     |
| Used <b>daily, morning and evening</b>           | Used <b>continually for sacrifices</b>          |
| No blood except <b>once a year</b> on the Day of | Blood shed <b>regularly</b>                     |
| Symbolizes <b>communion with God</b>             | Symbolizes <b>reconciliation with God</b>       |

## **Atonement Money — Equal Need for Redemption-EX 30:15**

- **Equal Value Before God-**Every Israelite gave the same amount, regardless of wealth or status. No one could “pay more” to be closer to God. No one could “pay less” because of poverty.

**God’s standard for atonement was equality, not ability.**

- **Atonement Was Required for everyone.** The payment was called a ransom for life (Exod. 30:12). The ransom showed that everyone equally needed God’s mercy—wealth excused no one, and poverty exempted no one.

**Sin is universal, and so is the need for redemption.**

**A Reminder That Life Belongs to God-** The money supported the Tabernacle the place of God’s dwelling. Giving reminded Israel that their lives were redeemed, not owned by themselves.



# MERCY-ḥesed (חֶסֶד)

Faithful, loyal love shown by God to people who do not deserve it.

Exodus 34:6–7 (NKJV)

“And the LORD passed **X**  
before him and  
proclaimed, ‘The LORD,  
the LORD God, merciful  
and gracious,  
longsuffering, and  
abounding in goodness  
and truth, keeping mercy  
for thousands, forgiving  
iniquity and transgression  
and sin...’



- **Covenant loyalty:** Love rooted in a committed relationship (God keeps His promises). Mercy rooted in covenant relationship
- **Active mercy:** Love expressed through action on behalf of those in need.
- **Faithful love despite failure:** God’s love persists even when people are unfaithful. Not earned, but freely given
- Old Testament usage: Describes God’s character toward Israel
- Mercy expressed through forgiveness, patience, and preservation

**Every person stands equally in need of God’s mercy.**

(Micah 7:18 (NKJV))

“He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy.”



## Old Testament

- Psalm 49:7-8 — No one can redeem another by wealth
- Ecclesiastes 7:20 — No one is righteous apart from God
- Isaiah 53:6 — All have gone astray

## New Testament



- Romans 3:22-23 — All have sinned without distinction
- Romans 6:23 — Sin brings death; God gives life
- 1 Peter 1:18-19 — Redemption comes through Christ, not silver or gold
- Ephesians 2:8-9 — Salvation is by grace, not works
- Galatians 3:28 — All are one in Christ Jesus

# What This Means for Today's Believers

- **Salvation Is Equal at the Cross**
- **No One Can Earn Redemption**
- **Humility and Gratitude Should Mark Believers**





# **The Bronze Basin – Cleansing Before Service**

## **Exodus 30:20–21**

- **The priests were already chosen and consecrated, yet they still had to wash daily.**
- **Washing hands and feet symbolized removing daily defilement picked up while walking and working.**
- **The repeated warning “lest they die” shows that God’s holiness was not to be approached casually.**
- **Obedience to cleansing was a matter of life and death, not preference.**

**Calling does not replace cleansing. Being chosen did not excuse impurity.**

