

Leviticus 19:14 (NIV)

“Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but fear your God. I am the Lord.”

This powerful command from Leviticus belongs to God’s holiness code, where He calls His people to live with justice, compassion, and reverence. In this verse, God forbids exploiting the vulnerable specifically those who are deaf or blind as a profound metaphor for how we should treat all who are weak or dependent.

The “deaf” and “blind” here are literal but also symbolic. They represent people who, due to limitation or ignorance, are at risk of being taken advantage of. The “stumbling block” is anything that causes them to fall or harm themselves, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual.

Why does God emphasize this?

Because God is a God of justice and mercy (Micah 6:8), and He calls His people to reflect His character. Exploiting others’ weaknesses is not only unjust; it is a failure to honor God’s holiness and love. This verse reminds us that fearing God means protecting and respecting the

vulnerable, not harming them.

Practical Examples of Exploiting Vulnerability

Consider a blind person trying to cross a busy street. Naturally, one would help guide them safely, showing compassion and kindness. To deliberately put them in harm's way is cruel and inhumane.

Sadly, this kind of behavior exists in everyday life. For example, someone wanting to buy a phone might not understand its quality. Instead of advising honestly, a dishonest seller might deceive the buyer, selling a counterfeit product at the price of a genuine one. The buyer, unaware of the fraud, suffers loss. This is exactly what Leviticus condemns putting a "stumbling block before the blind."

This kind of dishonesty is an affront to God's justice. Throughout Scripture, God condemns deceit and calls for integrity (Proverbs 11:1; Proverbs 20:23). Sadly, such behavior is widespread and reflects a sinful heart that has not been transformed by God's grace.

The story of Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3) reminds us how

Satan exploited her “blindness” to good and evil to deceive her. Instead of guiding her in obedience, Satan’s deception led to sin entering the world. Likewise, people today misuse others’ ignorance or weakness for selfish gain, continuing the legacy of sin.

Other Examples

Sometimes, people use shortcuts to increase profit at others’ expense. For example, a cook might add fillers or harmful substances to food to increase quantity, knowing customers won’t notice. This is not only dishonest but endangers others’ health, deeply displeasing to God (Proverbs 12:22).

Even more heartbreaking are religious leaders or servants who exploit people’s spiritual or emotional vulnerabilities threatening or deceiving them to extract money or power. Jesus Himself condemned such hypocrisy and exploitation (Matthew 23:14).

Our Call as Followers of God

God's call is for us to be like Job, who said:

Job 29:15 (NIV)

"I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame."

We are called to serve and support those in need, guiding them rightly and protecting them from harm. To "fear the Lord" means to honor Him by acting justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly (Micah 6:8).

When we protect the vulnerable and live in integrity, we reflect God's character and experience His blessings "many good days" in His world (Psalm 91:16)

Shalom.

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