

I Didn't Mean to Do It

Scripture Reading — Leviticus 4:13-21

"If the whole Israelite community sins unintentionally ..." Leviticus 4:13 —

When some people told you their tragic story, it haunted you. You contacted the deacons of your church, and they too were convinced that these people needed help. So your church spent many hours and dollars on them, eager to show Christ's compassion. Then came a telephone call from another church down the road: "Were you approached by desperately needy people?"

Con artists working your part of the city had taken you for a ride. Though the deacons had received instruction about such people at a training session just three months ago, they'd been careless with their responsibility. Of course, they didn't mean to do it.

Carelessness of an individual (4:3, 22, 27) or a group (4:13) exposes the people of God to shame and defiles the community God has chosen as his dwelling place.

But wasn't it just a mistake? The church leaders knew better; they'd been instructed. So they were responsible, like Joshua and his associates who'd been taken in by the Gibeonites (Joshua 9:16-21). Our carelessness can dishonor the whole people of God, the community that represents the presence of God.

The sin offering purifies God's dwelling place, dealing with the sin of the individual or the community. It removes the stain, but the consequences of careless leadership remain--a reminder of folly.

Prayer

Lord, purify us from everything that contaminates body and spirit; perfect our holiness out of reverence for Christ. Help us discern wisdom from folly, for your sake. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Bible](#), [Books of the Bible](#), [Leviticus](#)

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