The building was up and the people were excited. They were bringing their offerings because they wanted to give to a work that was serious and sacred. One of the most amazing and generous offerings ever given was seen in Numbers 7. All of the tribes participated and gave an offering so shocking; Moses didn’t know what to do. But God told him accept it.

But just because you have a building and just because you have a bunch of money does not automatically mean you have the guaranteed power and presence of God. That point is clear from this text. God was well pleased with what had happened with His people and His presence was there. But verse 1 says, “then the LORD spoke to Moses.” What He says is this;

**IF MY PEOPLE WANT MY PRESENCE AND POWER THEY MUST OBEY MY WORD CONCERNING LAMPS AND LEADERSHIP.**

In most churches, people are losing sight of the importance of how sacred and how reverent God’s place of worship is supposed to be. People are also losing sight of how clean those who minister are to be. Leaders need to know God’s word and obey it. According to this passage, that actually enables God to bless the work and not send a plague to it (8:19).

Notice how verse 1 begins, “Then the LORD spoke to Moses.” So God, Himself, is going to take the time to discuss lights in the Tabernacle and the leadership of the tabernacle. This occurs immediately after the generous offering was given by the people and just before the people moved out toward the Promised Land (Num.10:11ff.). So this business is a prelude to moving forward. God wants the people to realize that they must be serious about Him and His word and they need leadership that is clean.

Now this chapter may be analyzed by three observations:

**OBSERVATION #1-** God gives instruction concerning the **lampstand.** 8:2-4

What these verses teach us is if we want God’s presence, power and blessings, the actual place where God is worshipped must be a place that is respected and reverent and it also must be a place where the true light of God is seen.

The Tabernacle was divided into two parts: The Holy of Holies, where God’s glory rested above the mercy seat and the Holy Place which was separated from the Holy of Holies by a veil.

In the Holy Place there were three pieces of furniture: 1) A table for twelve loaves of bread; 2) A golden incense altar that sat before the veil; 3) Golden lampstand with seven lamps.
Now Aaron and his sons had the responsibility to make sure that lamp kept burning. It was their job to trim the wicks and add the oil to make sure that light did not go out (Ex.25:31-40; 27:20-21; 37:17; Lev.24:1-3). This was the only source of light inside the Holy Place. There were no windows.

This tabernacle was to be known as the place where the light of God would continually shine.

There are two specific instructions that are given:

**Instruction #1-** Instruction concerning the location and function of the lampstand. **8:2-3**

Everything that God has in His tabernacle has a Divine purpose and function. It was carefully designed and structured by God and in order for Him to bless the relationship between Him and His people, they needed to carefully follow His instructions. They needed to take this place seriously.

God told Moses to make sure the lamps are mounted in such a way as to give light in front of the lampstand. According to verse 3, Aaron did exactly what Moses told Him to do. He set up the lamp so the lamps shined forth light in front.

This would make it possible for the priests to move freely and safely within the Tabernacle that otherwise would be dark. Without light the priests could not minister properly but would just wander around in the dark.

This appears to be supplemental instruction to that which was given in Exodus 25:37; 27:21. So the practical purpose of the lampstand was to give light to the outer sanctuary. There were no windows and the Sanctuary was covered by thick skins and inside there were heavy curtains. It would be very dark going in there, which is why light was needed.

Now this light was to be lit at all times. This lampstand represents the fact that this place of worship is to be a place that radiates the light of God. This is what God’s place of worship should always be, a sacred place that reflects the light of God to everyone.

There is a tremendous application that may be made concerning the church. It has the job to make sure the word of God is shining truthfully and brightly. The word of God is the light and lamp and without it people wander around in the dark. Psalm 119:105 says “thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” The church that moves forward will make certain God’s word shines forth from a sacred place of worship.

Now we know that Jesus Christ was the light of God (John 1:4). In fact, Jesus, Himself, said “I am the light of the world (John 8:12).

We also know that this lampstand business has a definite application to the church (Rev.1:20). The Church is to be a sacred light to the world. The Church is to be a place that shines forth the light of God.
This means it is to be a place where Jesus Christ is proclaimed and where the word of God is taught and obeyed. If a church is not shining light properly, God will remove the lampstand (Eph.2:5). God would rather have no church that a church that is not setting forth the truth of God.

**Instruction #2-** Instruction concerning the design and construction of the lampstand. 8:4

God wanted this lampstand carefully made. He wanted precise workmanship. It was to be pure gold. It was to be hammered out of one piece of gold and formed from its base to its flowers. It weighed about 75 pounds. It had six branches with a central shaft.

There were various man made idols that were made out of gold. But this was not a graven image of some idol, this was a lampstand designed by God. It was to be made of pure gold because it was to shine forth pure light of God.

When you saw this lampstand, it was beautifully designed and made.

You and I are to be living lampstands. We should reflect the light of God and when people see us and watch us they should see that we are pure and beautifully made to reflect God’s glory.

**OBSERVATION #2-** God gives instructions concerning the Leadership. 8:5-26

What is clear here is that the lampstand is to be lit at all times and the leadership is to be clean at all times. Now the group who were responsible to help Aaron and his sons were the Levites. They had been chosen by God to be the assistant priest helpers (3:5-8). One thing that is stressed in this text is that they were to be taken “from among the sons of Israel.”(8:6,14,16,19) So these were just normal human, sinful, finite men, called by God to do this job.

There are primarily three areas of instruction given concerning this group:

**Area #1-** The cleansing of the Levites. 8:5-18

As we mentioned, clear back in chapter 3, the Lord had consecrated the priests (3:1-4), but here He consecrates Levites who were to be their assistants (3:5-8). They were to be set apart for service by selection and election of God.

The first step necessary for carrying out a ministry God would bless was their cleansing. What we see here is that they were not automatically clean, they needed this priestly cleansing. This is true for any leader in any dispensation.

**No one can serve God and lead others to the blessings of God if he is dirty. Leaders must be clean.** So in verses 6-7, God told Moses that they were to take the Levites and sprinkle purifying water on them and they were to shave all hair off their body and wash their clothes and they would be clean.
This ritual was very similar to the ceremonial cleansing required for a leper (Lev.14:7-9). Since we know that leprosy is often a metaphor for sin, this is clearly illustrative of the fact that the leaders must be clean. They cannot have contaminating sin dominating their lives if they are to lead others into the great blessings of God.

The first thing Moses needed to do was to make certain these leaders were cleansed by water. They needed to be clean.

After this was done, they were to make an offering that consisted of a young bull with a grain offering and another bull for a sin offering (8:8-13). These priests were to appear before people and admit they were sinners and then they were presented as living sacrifices to God (8:13). This was to be done publicly. It showed that they were set apart to God and it showed they were sinners who were serving.

There is no such thing as a holier than thou leader. Any leader who presents himself as some holier than thou dominate kingpin will never lead God’s people to the blessings of God.

There is no such thing as a sinless minister. All ministers are sinners no matter what the dispensation. But if a minister is to minster in the sacred things of God, he must be clean through the cleansing process.

According to verse 11, they were to wave the offering before the Lord. Now according to Numbers 6:20, there were two movements involved in a wave offering: Forward and backward and up and down. One Rabbi said the offering was waved forward toward the altar and then backward and up toward heaven and then down. When you carefully think this motion through, it is a cross type of motion.

This wave offering would certainly indicate one comes down from heaven and then goes back up into heaven and one goes to the altar and then comes back away from the altar. This is exactly what Jesus Christ did. He came down from heaven, went to the cross, was raised from the dead and went back up into heaven. That wave offering physically suggests this.

By doing this the individual Levites are actually dedicating themselves to the Lord. They were acknowledging that what we are doing on earth has a link to heaven. They were actually presenting themselves as a living sacrifice unto the Lord (Rom.12:1-2).

Area #2- The purpose of the Levites. 8:15-22

After this was done, the Levites could go in to serve in the tent of meeting. God would consider them totally dedicated to Him. God had set them apart instead of every firstborn. They had been given to Aaron and his sons as a gift to help them.

In verse 19 we learn that part of their responsibility was to protect the ministry at the sanctuary. They were to make sure that they protected the place and performed their responsibilities so God would not send a plague against it.
According to verse 20, Moses and Aaron obeyed God and verse 21 says that the Levities purified themselves from sin and verse 22 says they went in and served God. The Levites perfectly obeyed and God blessed them.

This was a fantastic time in Israel’s history. Everything is going great. Tabernacle is up, offerings are in and priests are clean. What went wrong? What went wrong is the same kind of thing that always goes wrong. They stopped carefully following and obeying the word of God. They became a mess and not one of these people will make it to the Promised Land.

Area #3- The age of the Levites. 8:23-26

The career of the Levites was to be one that lasted 25 years. They could serve from the age 25 until 50. After age 50 they were to retire. They could still help out with their brothers who were involved in the tabernacle issues, but they were not to do the work.

Now Numbers 4:3 says that their work began at age 30, but Numbers 8:24 says age 25. It is likely that each of these Levites served a five year apprenticeship before entering into full time service. There was a lot to do around the tabernacle and there was a lot to learn.

Practical Applications:

1) To have fellowship with God that moves forward, we must be clean.

2) To be involved in a service God will bless, one must be clean.

3) God’s place of worship is to be a reverent place that shines forth the light of God’s word.

4) The job of the leaders was to protect sacred worship when it comes to God.

5) In order for God to bless a people it needs leaders who are clean.

6) We are all priests and we all have a responsibility to radiate the light of God.