

October 26, 2025

REMEMBER: DEUTERONOMY 4:1-9,15-20

Introductory Activity (ETB LG, 81)

“Discuss: *What is your favorite family memory?* (PSG, p. 73)

Read: Enlist a volunteer to read the opening paragraph on page 73 of the PSG. [See Notes Box]

Ask: *How do your family’s stories get passed down from one generation to the next?* (PSG, p. 73) Discuss responses.

Explain: Point out **Pack Item 2** (Poster: Outlines of Numbers, Deuteronomy). Share that this session shifts from the book of Numbers to the book of Deuteronomy. Mention that the study reminds us of how recalling God’s past faithfulness leads us to worship Him.

Transition: Deuteronomy is built on a series of speeches or sermons Moses delivered on the border of the promised land. As we dig into a portion of Moses’s first message to the people, reflect on how his challenges to the Israelites are applicable in your own journey.”

1. OBEDIENCE (DEUT. 4:1-4)

Read (or have someone read) Deuteronomy 4:1-4.

Explain: This passage concludes a historical review of Israel and God’s faithfulness. Verse 1 begins with the word “now.” It is as if God is saying because of all of that, now do this. First, Moses tells the people to listen to the statutes and ordinances of God. Second, he tells them to follow those statutes and ordinances. The word translated “follow” literally means “do.” “Listening is not enough. Moses goes on to say, ‘...and do them.’” (Preaching, 116)

Read James 1:22 (See Notes Box)

Discuss: Why is it important for a believer to not only know God’s Word, but also to practice God’s Word?

Explain: It is important that we learn the Word of God. We do this through personal study of God’s Word, consistently listening to others explain the Word through weekly worship attendance and discussing the Word with others in small groups. However, it is not enough to know the Word. We must also put it into practice. In his explanation of James 1, Richardson compares the one who knows the word but does not put it into practice to those in the parable of the Sower (Matt 13:3-9) who grow quickly but have no roots. “To be a hearer or to have faith only (cf. 2:24) is self-deceiving. Faith must be demonstrated (cf. 3:13), and to miss this is a fundamental

Notes:

This Lesson was created using:

- *Explore the Bible Leader Guide* (ETB LG)
- *Explore the Bible Personal Study Guide* (ETB PSG)
- *Explore the Bible Commentary* (ETBC)
- *Preaching the Word: Deuteronomy* (Preaching)
- *New American Commentary: Deuteronomy* (NAC)

“Older folks will remember family get-togethers that included porch sitting. After the evening meal, family members headed outside. A few sat in rocking chairs. Some were on the porch swing. The adults would talk. Someone would ask, “What ever happened to so-and-so?” Then the reminiscing began. They talked about their happy memories and the hurdles. The kids didn’t do a lot of talking. Mostly, they listened, not realizing how much they would treasure these memories decades later.” (PSG, 73)

²² But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

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flaw in understanding.”¹ James goes on to challenge his reader not to be “a forgetful hearer but a doer who works—this person will be blessed in what he does.” (James 1:25b) Moses says the same thing to the Israelites. They are to keep God’s law so that they can “live, enter, and take possession of the land.” However, he knows that people need to rightly handle the Word of God.

Ask: What does Moses tell the people in verse 2 concerning the Law?

Explain: He tells them not to add anything to the Law or take anything away. In essence, Moses is telling them, “Don’t make it harder than it is and don’t make it easier than it should be.” Sometimes we want to make following God harder than it should be. We might think that adding stipulations to the Law will help us better keep the Law. We might think these additions are like guardrails to keep us on track. This is what Eve did when she talked with the serpent in Genesis 3:3. She said, “³ But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, ‘You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.’” She added to God’s Word. She might have thought that if I don’t even touch it, I will not be tempted to eat it. In actuality, she was portraying God as unreasonable and demanding. So, we should not make God’s law more difficult than it is.

We should also not make God’s law easier than it should be. We do not get to pick and choose what parts of the Bible we adhere to. The Israelites only had the laws given to them at Sinai. We, on the other hand, have the entirety of God’s revealed Word. We should be diligent to interpret it rightly and follow it closely. We might say we believe the Bible, but “the only part of the Bible you truly believe is the part you obey.” (Preaching, 116) Moses has already given them a positive result of following God’s law. Next, he reminds them of the consequences of not following it.

Reread verses 3-4

Explain: According to Merrill, it has only been a few weeks since the events mentioned in this verse. The events are recorded in Numbers 25:1-9. The Israelites had been camped on the plains of Moab. There many of them had been lured into sin. “The Israelites had engaged in the grossly sensual rites of Canaanite paganism with the result that many of them had perished.” (NAC, 115–116.) The Lord had punished those who broke His law and disciplined the nation. But Moses points out that those listening to his voice had obeyed the Lord, and that is why they were alive. He said they had “remained faithful.” The Hebrew word literally means “to cling.” To cling to the Lord means that you “love him, depend on him, give him

Notes:

Verse 51: ⁵¹ Tell the Israelites: When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan,

Verse 53: ⁵³ You are to take possession of the land and settle in it because I have given you the land to possess.

Thus his point is made: Just as obedience to the Lord in the past resulted in life, so obedience in time to come would guarantee ongoing life (NAC, 116)

¹ Kurt A. Richardson, [James](#), vol. 36, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 95.

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first place in their lives, and don't entertain things that displease him." (Preaching, 119)

Summarize Transition: Moses has been reminding the people of God's faithfulness to them since leaving Egypt. Now he is preparing them to enter the land by reminding them to keep God's law. In essence, he is giving them a "formula for success in life: expose yourself to the Word and obey what it says, and God will bless you with success." (Preaching, 116) However, there is more the keeping the Law than our personal benefit. It will benefit others as well. Let's look at the next passage.

2. WISDOM (DEUT. 4:5-9)

Read (or have someone read) Deuteronomy 4:5-9.

Explain: The first thing we see in this passage is the importance of the teacher and the student. Moses says that he has taught the people the law of God. It is not enough to know the words of the Bible; we must understand them as well. Let's be honest, sometimes the Bible can be difficult to understand when we read it in a passing manner. It is important that we find ways to help us more fully understand what the Bible is teaching.

Discuss: What are some ways we can dig in and more fully understand what the Bible is teaching?

Explain: We can do this in several ways. First, we can find written materials to help us. These can include your Explore the Bible Personal Study Guide, trustworthy devotionals, or even practical, easy-to-read commentaries. Second, we should make sure that we are in a church that is teaching the Word from the pulpit. Third, we should take advantage of other learning opportunities like Sunday morning small groups and "deeper" studies on Sunday nights or during the week. As we saw above, we learn the law so that we can follow it and reap the benefits of doing so, but following it can benefit others as well.

In verse 6, Moses lays out what Fernando calls the "missionary impact of obedience." (c.f. Preaching, 121) Moses explains that if they keep God's law, the nations will see The Wisdom of God's People, The Wonder of God's Presence, and the Wholeness of God's Law.

The Wisdom of God's People (v. 6): Many of us are not experts in the law codes of the ancient nations of Mesopotamia, but we don't have to be to get our hands around Moses' statement. Just consider the sinful interactions that Israel had with the other nations. Anytime they turn away from God's law, there is a sense of chaos or unsteadiness that appears. The same is true for us today. When we adhere to God's law, there is a type of wisdom and steadiness that appears in our lives. Following the ways of the Bible will produce steadiness in our character, our demeanor, our finances, and our family. We might not have the most money, but there is wisdom in

Notes:

"The bible is not primarily a book we go to for an emotional kick each day. Indeed, that is often the by-product of Bible reading but the primary reason for reading the Bible is for instruction on how to think and act." (Preaching, 118)

TEACHERS' NOTE: You might bring some examples with you. Stand Firm and Journey devotionals are available in the foyer. You can also borrow a commentary, like the Exalting Christ in... series, from a pastor. If you listen to podcast or have digital resources you can introduce those to the group as well.

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the way we handle what we have. Our families might not be perfect, but there is stability in our homes. People will see this, and they will seek out those who adhere to God's wise Word for words of advice. This opens the door to evangelism.

The Wonder of God's Presence (v. 7): In verse 7, Moses asks a rhetorical question: "For what great nation is there that has a god near to it as the Lord our God is to us whenever we call to him?" Of course, the expected answer is no one. But let's dig into that question. The ancient cultures had "gods" all around them in the form of idols. Yet in their minds, these gods were not concerned with the people. On the other hand, Yahweh, while His appearance might be hidden from the people, is near to them. He dwelt among them. Moreover, He answered when they called. One of the most eye-opening experiences for an unbeliever is God's ability to answer prayers. When believers face hard times and let it be known they are praying instead of fretting, unbelievers will take note. They will see your peace in the storm and understand that it must be a result of your prayer life. Yes, they might outwardly make fun of you, but nevertheless, they will be witness to God's work in your life. Over time, this will allow you to share your gospel story.

The Wholeness of God's Law (v. 8): One of the magnificent things about God's law is its wholeness and wholesomeness. The Word of God acts like leaven in our lives. It permeates our heart and mind. Moreover, it touches every part of our lives. One of the most transformative and evangelistic aspects of God's law for the modern believer is the call to love those others see as unlovable and to care for those overlooked by others. Imagine Israel caring for people while the nation is surrounded by uncaring nations. They will stand out. We stand out when we do likewise, and it will give us an opportunity to share the gospel.

Discuss: What are some other ways that following the teachings of the Bible will give you an opportunity to share the gospel?

Explain: There are myriad ways to follow God's law that will give you the chance to share the gospel. However, not following the precepts of Scripture will detract from your gospel witness. That is why Moses challenged them to "be on your guard and diligently watch yourselves" in verse 9. Throughout these verses, Moses reminds the people to be careful. Fernando writes, "I believe this is because carelessness is so often the mother of sin...I think combating carelessness is the biggest battle I wage in my life. I often find that I am careless about the very things of which I should be most careful." (Preaching, 120-121) As followers of Jesus, we do not get to float through life. We are called to a mission, and that mission is set behind enemy lines. We must be on guard and on point as we interact with others and make personal decisions. Only then can we earn the right to share the gospel with others.

Notes:

"The book of Judges gives a vivid picture of the harassment of Israel by the pagan peoples left in the land." (ETBC, 77)

Summarize and Transition: Moses concludes this passage with a reminder to teach children and grandchildren the ways of God. We should not let this pass us by. The people comprising the nation of Israel had seen the work of God for many years. The coming generations will not have such direct access to the wonders of God. Therefore, they must be taught about God and the ways of God. It is a little different for us, but the command still stands. Parents and grandparents are the primary disciple-makers of children. The church comes alongside them to provide help and resources, but families should make a priority of God's Word and teach the next generation. When we do this, they, too, can keep God's Word and extend His mission.

3. WORSHIP (DEUT. 4:15-20)

Read or have someone read Deuteronomy 4:15-20.

Explain: We are jumping forward a little in the chapter, and in the passage, we see that we are to Worship God Only and Worship God Rightly. In verses 15 and 16, God reminds the people that they did not see Him at Horeb (another name for Mt. Sinai). God is Spirit, and while He does sometimes choose to manifest His presence physically in the OT to communicate with some individuals, He does not have a physical body. Therefore, He tells the people not to create a physical image of Him. We see this in the second of the Ten Commandments. More specifically, He tells them to worship Him only

Worship God Only: Verses 17-19 enumerate some of the things people were tempted to worship, and He tells the Israelites not to worship them. He begins with animals. He tells them not to worship the birds. They might be majestic, but not worthy of our worship. Don't worship the beast of the field. The lion might be great, but not great enough to worship. Don't worship fish. They might be good for food, but not good enough to worship. Then He moves on to the celestial bodies. Don't worship the sun. It might bring warmth or energy, but it's not powerful enough for you to worship. Don't worship the moon. It might bring light to the camp at night and move the tides of the ocean, but it's just a satellite subject to gravity. Don't worship the stars. They might be beautiful and mysterious, but they are simply orbs of burning gas. Moreover, each of these things was "provided" (CSB) or "apportioned" (NIV) or "allotted" (ESV) for mankind. In other words, they are gifts to you from your Maker. They were created in subjugation to you. The heavenly bodies serve you, and you have dominion over the animals of the earth. You do not worship that which serves you or that which is subject to you. One other interesting fact about the list provided in the passage is that it is given in reverse order from the days of creation. Deuteronomy lists man first, animals second, and the heavenly bodies last. This might be a picture of what happens when we get our worship wrong. When we fail to worship God only, everything gets turned upside down, and your world becomes topsy-turvy.

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Worship God Rightly: We worship God for who He is. We worship God rightly by first remembering that He is Creator. As Creator, He deserves our highest praise. Our highest praise includes our ardent praise. We do not worship God in a ho-hum manner. We should sing mightily to Him. If the music is not to our liking or unfamiliar, we can still worship Him by taking note of the words and meaning of the songs. Then, on our own, we should seek out music that connects more fully to our personality and our hearts. Regarding the topic of corporate worship in the local church, we should note that part of the mission of the local church is to connect with unbelievers. This includes younger unbelievers. The choice of music should take that into account. We should sing God-honoring music that helps them connect their hearts to the Lord. For those of us who are already connected to the Lord, we should put our preferences aside *for the benefit of those who do not know Him yet*.

We worship God for who He is and for what He has done. Moses reminds the people in verse 20 that the Lord brought them out of Egypt. We too should remember what God has done for us. Throughout this lesson, Moses has challenged the people to remember the Lord, His law, and His deeds. Our worship is grounded in these things. Merrill explains, "What is implied is that such an experience with the living God must be rooted and grounded in a historical event, an event that must be recalled and celebrated regularly and faithfully by all who participate in it and benefit from it." (NAC, 119) One practical way we do this today is through the Lord's Supper. This ordinance of the church is a tangible, tactile way of remembering the Lord's sacrifice. Likewise, we should take time in our lives to remember the ways the Lord has blessed us or protected us or guided us in the past. This remembrance will cause the faithful to worship Him.

Summarize and Transition: In this passage, Moses reminds the people who they are worshiping and what they should not worship. He goes on to remind them why they worship the Lord. He is Creator and He is Deliverer.

CONCLUDE

Let us conclude our lesson by reviewing.

We should Remember the Lord's Law. This means we learn it and strive to understand it.

We should Remain Faithful to the Lord's Law. We do this as a benefit to ourselves and to others. Faithfully following the Lord is a missionary act.

We should Rightly Worship the Lord. He is the only right recipient of our worship because He is Creator and Deliverer.