

November 23, 2025

FULLY COMMITTED: DEUT 30:11-20

Introductory Activity Option 1 (Adapted from ETB LG, 113)

Ask the group to guess how many products the average American supermarket carried in 1976 and the average in recent years.

Explain: According to an article from Forbes, the average number of products carried by a supermarket in 1976 was 9,000. In recent years, the number has grown to 40,000.¹ It is not just grocery stores that offer many products from which consumers must choose. Online shopping provides an infinite number of choices. This reality leads to what researchers refer to as “decision fatigue.”

Discuss: “In what situation have you had so many options that it was overwhelming to pick only one? How did you eventually decide?” (ETB PSG, 109)

We have all been there, staring at the many different toothpaste options or the plethora of coffee K-Cup choices. Which one do I choose and what is the best option for my budget? Sometimes we might give up and walk away, or just randomly select one from the shelf. Consider online shopping. We might be looking for one item. We place one choice in our Amazon cart and then start scrolling for a different color or a different price. Eventually, we place three more almost identical options in the cart before giving up and abandoning the search altogether. This is decision fatigue. On a more serious note. When we make many decisions throughout the day at work or for our families, our impulse control is reduced, and our ability to make wise decisions is diminished.²

Transition: In Deuteronomy 30, Moses is going to encourage the Israelites to make a choice. The good thing about the choices before them is that they are limited. Instead of 40,000 options, the Israelites have only two. They can choose to follow the Lord, or they can choose not to follow Him. In the lesson, we will see that “Believers are to be characterized by a wholehearted commitment to God.” (ETB LG, 129)

1. THE COMMAND (DEUT. 30:11-14)

Read (or have someone read) Deuteronomy 30:11-14.

Ask: Have you ever had a boss or teacher give you vague directions for a project? Or have you ever tried to decipher a confusing instruction manual? What did you do and how did you feel?

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)

¹ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/gregpetro/2023/06/27/the-next-frontier-for-merchandisers-taming-consumersdecision-fatigue/> (Accessed, 11/13/2025)

² <https://thedecisionlab.com/biases/decision-fatigue> (Accessed 11/13/2025)

Explain: When we receive vague directions from a boss or teacher, we might turn to another person to figure out what we are supposed to do. If we are trying to assemble a product bought online or program the clock on the coffee pot using vague instructions, we might turn to the internet for advice.

As Moses delivers his final message to the Israelites, he reminds them that God's instruction is not vague or unintelligible. First, he says they are "not too difficult or beyond your reach." The words "not too difficult" can be translated as "not too wonderful." This word *wonderful* is the same word used to describe God's wondrous, miraculous deeds. When God first provided manna, for example, the Israelites wondered what it was and how God performed the miracle. The word manna is derived from the question the Israelites asked when it first appeared: "What is it?" (Exodus 16:15).³ In contrast, the instruction of God should not lead to the same question, "What is it?" It is "not too difficult" to understand. Moreover, it is not beyond your reach. It is close at hand. Moses gives too vivid and helpful illustrations to help us see what the Word *is not*.

Reread verse 12 (See Notes Box)

Discuss: What are some ways people in the modern world seek out "God's will" or God's instruction or even God Himself?

Application: Many people today ask the same question as the Israelites. "How can I know what God wants for me or from me?" Or more commonly, "How can I know God's will for my life?" In answer to questions like these, people begin to investigate by reading various "holy" texts. Or they watch YouTube videos about angels or mystical ideas related to the Bible or spirituality. In these acts, they are saying, like an Israelite might, surely this esoteric knowledge of "God's instructions" or "God's will" has been found by some super spiritual person who sought out the "heavens" and has delivered it to us. In some cases, this might lead to decision fatigue. The searcher might simply give up because there are many "options" to choose from the menu of spirituality. Moses says, You don't have to go searching the heavens for the answers to "God's instructions" because God has come from heaven and given it to you at Sinai. His instructions are found in one place today, the Bible.

Reread verse 13 (See Notes Box.)

Application: Others might suggest undertaking a great quest to discover God's instruction. Surely, I must travel across the great sea and seek out some tablet or spiritual guru to help me understand. The same is true

Notes:

"They are not 'too difficult' (lō' niplē't, lit., 'not too wonderful,' i.e., beyond comprehension) or beyond reach (v. 11)." (NAC, 391)

Deut. 30:12

It is not in heaven so that you have to ask, 'Who will go up to heaven, get it for us, and proclaim it to us so that we may follow it?'

Deut. 30:13

¹³ And it is not across the sea so that you have to ask, 'Who will cross the sea, get it for us, and proclaim it to us so that we may follow it?'

³ Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 378; Barbara J. Bruce, "Manna," ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 1074.

today. People travel to “holy” places to find God’s will and God’s instructions. They trek to monasteries in Tibet or sweat lodges in Sedona, Arizona. Some travel to the Amazon and take hallucinogenic like Ayahuasca to find answers to life’s questions. Moses tells the Israelites that they don’t have to seek out a holy tablet because God wrote out two with His own finger and gave them to them. They don’t have to seek a holy mountain because God led them to His holy mountain in Sinai. God’s instruction is not far off because He brought it to you.

Reread verse 14. (See Notes Box)

Explain: Moses reminds the people that God’s message is nearby. Actually, it’s in your mouth and your heart because you have been inundated with it for the past forty years. For the believer today, we too have God’s Word close at hand. We do not have to go to a spiritual place or seek out “a special word.” Instead, we simply have to fill out hearts and mouths with the Word of the Bible. Yes, there might be times when you need to retreat to a quiet place when making a difficult decision. But it’s not because the place is inherently more holy. Instead, it is because our world is so full of distractions. When we retreat to a “set apart” (holy) place, it is because we need to be set apart from the distractions of the world and dig into God’s Word, meditate on God’s Word, and hear from the Lord.

Summarize Transition: There are those in Israel who might say the instruction of God is too difficult to understand or that it is far off. The Ten Commandments, a summation of God’s instructions, are not difficult. Nor are they far off because God brought them to the people. Today, believers might assert the same things. However, God’s Word is not difficult to understand or follow. Jesus summed up the law in two commands: love God and love people. The Holy Spirit empowers us to understand how to apply these commands and empowers us to follow these commands. Like the Israelites, “we can trust God to give us the ability to obey His commands.” (ETB LG, 133)

2. THE COMMITMENT (DEUT. 30:15-18)

Read (or have someone read) Deuteronomy 30:15-18.

Explain: After reminding the people of the nearness and understandability of God’s instruction, Moses gets to the point of commitment. Deuteronomy 30 “is a summary of the essential message of Deuteronomy” (Preaching, 624), and verses 15 and 16 are the climax of this summary (ETBC, 125). Verses 17 and 18 are a mirror of verses 15 and 16. These two pairs of verses present two choices, or two paths, for the people. We must remember that God is speaking to His people who have already committed themselves to follow Him. The book of Deuteronomy is a renewal of that commitment. Believers today sometimes need to renew their commitment to the Lord. In verse 15, Moses tells them that “today” is the day of

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Deut. 30:14

But the message is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, so that you may follow it

“It could be that people objected that the Word was too difficult to understand and too difficult to practice.” (Preaching, 622)

Wright says “There is a ‘natural assumption that ordinary people can indeed live in a way that is broadly pleasing to God and faithful to God’s law [albeit imperfectly], and that they can do so as a matter of joy and delight.” (ETBC, 123)

“Especially now that we have a complete Bible, we can say that we can find all that we need for obedience from the Word.” (Preaching, 622)

decision. For some of us, maybe today is the day to renew our commitment to the Lord in some area of our lives.

Moses presents two paths for the people and two destinations. We see a similar thought in Psalm 1. Let's see what Moses tells the people.

Choice A: The Righteous Path: In a very real sense, God is placing physical life and death before the people. As a people dependent on God for survival in the conquest to come and peaceful settlement as an agricultural people, their very survival depends on the Lord. Moreover, God is placing a specific quality of life before the people. The word "life" in verse 15 "designated more than mere existence. It implied life to the full, life as God intended it." The word prosperity indicates more than economic success. It is "a secure quality of life in every way." (ETB LG, 134) This is the same life Jesus offers in John 10:10, where He says, "¹⁰ A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance." The life Moses and Jesus are speaking of is pictured in Psalm 1:3. The psalmist says the person who chooses the righteous path will be "like a tree planted beside flowing streams that bears its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers." But how does one arrive at this destination? Look at verse 16.

Reread verse 16a (See Notes Box)

There are three essentials to walking the righteous path. First, the believer is to recommit to loving the Lord fully. This is the same instruction given in Deuteronomy 6:5, where Moses instructs the people to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." Second, the believer is to recommit "to walk in his ways." Now we might equate this with keeping His commands, but there is more going on here. The Explore the Bible Leader Guide explains, "The term translated 'ways' can denote a road where believers follow the path He has prepared for them." (ETB LG, 134) We might be able to understand this by again considering Psalm 1. Verse 1 presents a person who walks in the ways of the wicked. He is literally following wicked people. Verse 2 presents the ways of the righteous man. It reads, "Instead, his delight is in the Lord's instruction, and he meditates on it day and night." To walk in the ways of the Lord means to take our instruction or our guidance from His Word. To do so, we must read it and meditate on it. Third, the person on the righteous path recommits to "keep his commands, statutes, and ordinances." Loving God and saturating our lives in His Word will result in rightly keeping His commands. This is the path that leads to a life of abundance.

Discuss: What are some things we can do or habits we can practice that will help us remain on the righteous path?

Explain: Spending time with the Lord daily in prayer and Bible reading is essential to staying on the righteous path. Just as a hiker would take time to study the trail map each morning to maintain his course, we should study

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"This is suggested in v. 15, where 'life and prosperity,' by way of metonymy, represent blessing in its most significant forms—quantity and quality of life (cf. 4:1; 5:33; 8:1; 16:20; 30:6, 19–20)." (NAC, 392)

Deut 30:16a

¹⁶ For I am commanding you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, statutes, and ordinances,

God's Word each day and set our course. Spending time with God's people in worship, service, and ministry to the community will also keep us on the right path. Just as a climber on Mt Everest has a guide and sherpas to help him reach the summit, we need others around us. These things and others will help us avoid the wicked path.

Choice B: The Wicked Path: Let's look again at verses 17-18 and remember they are a mirror image of verses 15-16.

Reread verses 17-18. (See Notes Box)

The destination of the wicked is not good. Moses says they will perish and not prolong their days. Again, this is a very real physical reality for the people. But there is also a spiritual component to this destination. The word used in verse 18, and translated as "perish," is the same word used in Psalm 1:6, where it is translated "ruin." Verses 4-6 describe the terminus of the wicked path. (Read Psalm 1:4-6. See Notes Box.) The person who reaches his destination after walking the wicked path will be useless like chaff (v. 4). He will not be able to enter the presence of holy God (v. 5). And he will be ruined (v. 6). In summation, his life will be ruined and wasted. Even a believer can find himself on this path.

Moses tells us how a person ends up on this path, and the comments under verse 17 in the *Explore the Bible Leader Guide* help us see the way in which a believer exits the path of righteousness. We might use the metaphor of taking the highway exit ramp. The first off-ramp from the righteous path to the wicked path comes when our hearts turn away from the Lord. Verse 16 challenges us to love God with our whole being. When we let our love wane, it's like putting on the turn signal and heading for the exit ramp. At this point, we stop listening to the instructions of the Lord. The GPS of our life might be saying, "Recalculating. Make a U-turn ahead," but we have stopped listening. When this happens, we are likely to proceed down the ramp and follow wicked people and their ways. The loss of love and failure to listen to God and His Word opens us up to being led astray by others and our sinful desires.

Object Lesson (adapted from ETB LG, 135): In these four verses, Moses is presenting the people with two choices.

Say: I have a choice for you to make. "Display a bowl of bite-sized individually wrapped candy or snacks, along with a separate bowl of kibble dog food. Pass the bowls and invite adults to select a snack from one bowl or the other."

Ask: Why isn't the choice between the options in verses 15-16 and verses 17-18 just as easy? What makes it hard for believers to commit to and stay on the righteous path? (Allow time for answers)

Explain: If we were to read the books following Deuteronomy, we would see there are at least two reasons the people of God failed to maintain their commitment to the Lord. We face the same challenges today. First, they, and we, **Fail to Trust God in the Hard Times**. In the letters written by Peter in the NT, trials are explained in two ways: bad things that happen to us and temptations that come before us. If we fail to remember God in these times, we will become disoriented and lose our way. Second, they, and we, **Forget God in the Good Times**. In the easy flow of the day-to-day and easy times that come with prosperity, we become distracted and lose sight of the Lord and His guidance

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Deut 30:17-18

¹⁷ But if your heart turns away and you do not listen and you are led astray to bow in worship to other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I tell you today that you will certainly perish and will not prolong your days in the land you are entering to possess across the Jordan."

Psalm 1:4-6

⁴ The wicked are not like this; instead, they are like chaff that the wind blows away. ⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand up in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. ⁶ For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to ruin.

Notes:

Teacher's Note: The ETB material and other source take time to discuss the fact that God called on creation to witness the challenge and the people's commitment. That is an important topic. But I am not going to discuss it because an exposition of that topic would distract from the content of *this* lesson. For edification though: In pagan nations when an agreement was made between two parties, they would call on their "gods" to witness it. "The monotheism of Israel's faith dictated that such appeal be to creation, to heaven and earth, for only it would endure into future ages (NAC, 393) "The Lord himself was the initiator of the covenant agreement, and heaven and earth were called as witnesses to the treatise (see 4:25-26)." (ETBC, 127)

Summarize and Transition: Like the Israelites, we have a choice to make today. Will we commit or recommit to following the Lord? The destination of the righteous path is the abundant life promised by Christ. The destination of the wicked path is ruin. The choice should be as easy as choosing candy over dog food, but sometimes life gets in the way. Let's decide before things get too bad or things get too good to follow Him regardless of the situation. Like the Israelites, we "must choose whether [we] will follow God or not." (ETB LG, 135)

3. THE CHALLENGE (DEUT. 30:19-20)

Read or have someone read Deuteronomy 30:19-20.

Explain: Just as the Ten Commandments are a summary of the entire law and the command of Jesus to love God and others is a summation of the Ten Commandments, verse 19 is a summation of the choices before the people. They have two choices: life slash blessings and death slash curses. In verse 19, Moses urges them to "choose life" because, as he says in verse 20, the Lord "is your life." A person chooses life by loving, obeying, and remaining faithful to the Lord. To remain faithful to the Lord means to "hold fast" to Him. (NAC, 393) If we hold fast to Him, we will experience the abundant life. As Jesus says in John 15:5, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."

Summarize and Transition: The Israelites are promised life in the land for themselves and their descendants. Believers who choose to faithfully follow the Lord are promised fruitfulness and a godly legacy. (**Possible quick object lesson:** Place a few drops of food dye in a glass of water sitting on the table. Then say the following words.) "Like mixing water and dye, which cannot be separated, loving, obeying, and remaining faithful to God affects every area of life. Why the connection? Because God is your life. . . . This was the essence of the old covenant. It is also the core of the new covenant, which God revealed in sending Jesus to live among us and die for us. . . . He said of Himself, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life' (John 14:6)." (ETB PSG, 115-116) Let us today choose to hold fast to the Lord, obey Him, and maintain our love for Him.

CONCLUDE

When it comes to following the Lord, we do not have to worry about decision fatigue. We have only two choices. For the person who has not yet placed their faith in Christ, they can choose to follow Him and receive salvation, or they can choose to reject Him and face the penalty for their sin. For the believer, we can choose to hold fast to the Lord and experience the blessed life, or we can choose to return to the wicked path and waste our lives.

Pray and ask the Lord to help group members make the right choice.