

Through the Bible - Deuteronomy

by Zac Poonen

The book of Deuteronomy teaches us the importance of looking back at God's faithfulness, looking upwards at his laws, and looking forward to his promises.

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Scripture: Deuteronomy 5:15, Deuteronomy 18:18, Deuteronomy 20:3, Deuteronomy 20:5-6, Deuteronomy 20:16-17

Topics: "Biblical Obedience", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the book of Deuteronomy and its three main themes: looking back at God's faithfulness, looking upwards at God's laws, and looking forward to God's future plans. The first two chapters of Deuteronomy encourage the Israelites to reflect on God's faithfulness throughout their forty years in the wilderness. The following chapters focus on God's laws and the importance of looking inward while also looking upward to Jesus. The final chapters contain prophecies by Moses about the wonderful things God will do in the future. The speaker emphasizes the need for personal growth and moving forward in the Christian life, rather than remaining stagnant. The sermon also highlights the significance of even the smallest commandments and warns against forgetting the Lord when experiencing material blessings.

Transcript

Okay, we can begin. Let's turn now to the fifth book of Moses, the book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy means a second law.

And there's a lot of repetition here. It's a repetition of the law, many important aspects of the law which was already given, and also a review of God's dealings with his people. And this book, we can divide it in two ways.

We can divide it as three speeches that Moses gave. The first one from the first four chapters, one to four, and the second long speech that he gave from chapter five to twenty-six, and the third one from chapter twenty-seven to thirty. Then after that, you read of the song of Moses in chapter thirty-two, the blessing of Moses on the tribes in chapter thirty-three, and the death of Moses in chapter thirty-four.

So that's basically what the book of Deuteronomy is all about. The other way you could divide it is, we could look at these as messages that make us look in different directions. Just in a broad way, we could say it looks like this.

There are six messages here, and the first two chapters, one to eleven, make us look back at God's faithfulness. The Lord Moses urged the Israelites to look back, think of God's faithfulness to you through all these forty years in the wilderness. See, this is spoken at the end of this wilderness journey.

And the next two messages, chapters twelve to thirty-one, speaking of God's laws, we could say make us look upwards at God speaking his laws to us, and when God speaks his laws to us, we see ourselves. It makes us look inward too, but we should never look inward without looking upward. There are a lot of people who have the habit of looking inside.

It's not good. We must look at Jesus, and as we see his glory, we see our need. That's the best way to see it, otherwise you'll be discouraged.

And the last two messages, we could say chapter thirty-two to thirty-three, the prophecies that Moses made look forward to the wonderful things that God is going to do for us in the future. Now, all of us need these three looks. That's one of the things we can learn from the book of Deuteronomy, that we should never stop having these three looks in our life, no matter how old you are.

There are many times in my life that I look back over the last forty-one years that the Lord has led me as a believer, and that encourages my faith. Many times when I'm in a very difficult situation, and it looks as if there is no way out, the thing that strengthens my faith, I know all the promises in the Bible, I listen to what people say, but the thing that encourages me more than anything else, I look back over forty-one years, and the Lord says to me, have I ever let you down even once so far? And I say, no, Lord. And he says, I won't let you down now.

That's the thing that encourages me. Have you fallen? Look back and see the number of times that the Lord forgave you. Didn't he forgive you then? Didn't he know that you would fall again? Was it a surprise? He'll forgive you.

Look back with gratitude, and that will strengthen your faith, and be thankful, extremely thankful. And when you look at all your failures in the past, that's the thing that Moses reminded the Israelites. Look back at your failures, and you will be very merciful to other believers around you who fail.

So looking back is very important, in a good way. There's another way in which we must forget the things that are behind. Paul said, forgetting the things that are behind.

If I look back in the wrong way, for example, I look back and I get discouraged. Oh, I'm such a failure. I'm good for nothing.

I wasted so many years of my life. Let me give you a message for those who wasted so many years of their life. Jesus told a parable about people who did not work for 11 hours out of 12 in a day.

And the 11th hour, a man went and called them and said, will you come and work in my vineyard? How many hours did they work? One hour. And they got their reward first. And the other fellows who worked for 12 hours got it last.

I hope that's an encouragement whenever we think of, oh, I wasted so many years. So that's, we should not look back in discouragement. Neither should we look back in pride.

Oh, see what I've accomplished. See the number of things I've done for the Lord. Forgetting the things that are behind that relates to discouragement and pride.

Anything that discourages you or makes you proud, forget it. But we need to look back with gratitude to God for what he has done. That's the backward look I'm talking about.

Peter says that those who have forgotten that God has purified them from their sins, they are blind or short-sighted, 2 Peter 1. So the other look we need is upward. And you must never stop looking upward. Say, Lord, give me light.

I want to see the glory of Jesus. I've seen a lot of Jesus in the scriptures through all these years. But even today, when I go to this book, I say, Lord, open my eyes.

I want to see wonderful things out of your law. Like David prayed in Psalm 119, open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. And we will see the glory of Jesus in ways that we have never seen before.

I believe there's a lot of the glory of Jesus I have still not seen after so many years. And I want to look upward and see more and more, because that's the image into which the Holy Spirit is seeking to transform me. And as I see him, I get humbled because I see my own need.

And I believe this is the greatest secret of remaining in humility till the end of your life. It's very easy for a servant of God whom God has anointed and used mightily. If a day comes like that in your life, it's very easy for you to become proud.

And I've seen a lot of preachers like that because God has used them. They are so proud and so distant from people. What's the thing that can keep us in brokenness and humility till the end of our life? Only one thing.

The Lord taught me that more than 40 years ago, that the whole secret of the Christian life was looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. And I find that when I look at Jesus, it is impossible to be proud. A man becomes proud when he has stopped looking at Jesus.

He started looking at other people, and he thinks he's better than them, more anointed than them, more used than them, better than them in 101 ways. And he becomes proud. If only he could turn his look upwards and look at Jesus, he will fall to his face in the dust like John did in the Isle of Patmos, and he'll keep his face in the dust forever.

I want to recommend that to you, all of you young people and older people. Keep your face in the dust all your days. That's the place God uses us.

If you want God to use you till the end of your life, look upwards. And as you look upwards, you will see your own need and your own shortcoming. The third look, as I said, is looking forward.

We need to look forward in faith. God's got wonderful things ahead of me, and he's got a great job for me to do. I don't know when I'm going to die or whether the Lord is going to come, but the grave is not my goal.

You know, sometimes you see older people say, oh, I'm just waiting to die and things like that. Well, I'm never going to wait waiting to die. Even if I lived to 90, I'm not going to expect that.

The sky, not the grave is our goal. We sing in one English song. The sky is our goal, not the grave, the rapture, the coming of Christ.

We look forward in faith that before the Lord comes, we're going to do something for the Lord. In India, I have faith for that. That before the Lord comes, we're going to do something for him.

We're going to accomplish something for him in our local towns where we are. Look forward in faith. That's how God told Moses to tell these people, look forward to the time you're going to Canaan and see what you're going to do and look forward right into the future.

Moses prophesied a long way into the future for the 12 tribes. So if you keep these three things in mind, I believe that you got a gist of the book of Deuteronomy. OK, the other thing I want to mention here is that don't be disturbed by repetition.

Deuteronomy has got a lot of repetition of what is already covered in earlier books like Leviticus and others. But repetition is necessary. Why do we have one and two Kings and one and two Chronicles? You know, there's a lot of repetition in Chronicles of what is already written in Kings.

There must be a reason. Why are there four Gospels? There's a certain amount of repetition in those four Gospels, too. And you take Ephesians and Colossians.

There's a lot of similarity in certain sections of Ephesians and Colossians, almost similar words. From what I learned from that, and even the writings of different apostles, there's a lot of repetition of what was written earlier. What I learned from that is that the apostles were not ashamed to repeat.

Now, sometimes preachers are afraid to repeat a sermon on the same subject. Do you know why? Because they lose their reputation before people. They are more concerned about what people think about them than the need of the people.

I'll never forget the story I heard of a great evangelist who conducted a seven-day crusade somewhere, seven-day meetings. I think they were called meetings in those days, many years ago. It's probably in the last century.

And every day his subject was, you must be born again. So there was one unconverted man who had been attending that meeting, and he got a bit tired of listening to this every day. And he came up to the evangelist on the last day and said, why do you always preach on you must be born again? He said, because you must be born again.

That's fine. That's it. That's the answer.

So why does God have to repeat that you need to get victory over sin? Because you need to get victory over sin. Why does God have to repeat that you should not love the world? Because you should not love the world. So I, for one, take my example, not from these modern day preachers who are afraid and ashamed to speak on the same subject again, but from the prophets in the Old Testament who repeated and repeated and repeated because Israel needed to hear that.

Do you know the number of times Jeremiah more or less said the same thing? They repeated their messages because people had to hear it. Sometimes a person has to hear something 10 times before it sinks in. So the book of Deuteronomy teaches that don't be afraid of repetition.

If you are seeking your own honor, you will not repeat. If you are seeking the good of the people, you'll be willing to repeat until they have understood. If they are not born again, you'll keep on telling them that till they are born again.

If they haven't got victory, you'll keep on preaching on victory till they get victory. If they are not understood how to build the body of Christ, they will keep on preaching that till they build the body of Christ and many other truths like that. Okay.

Now we turn to chapter one. I just want to go through this book and point out a few important passages. In Deuteronomy chapter one, we read in verse two, it is 11 days journey from Horeb by the way of Mount Seir to Kedesh Barnea.

11 days from the time they got the laws in Horeb to Kedesh Barnea, which is what we considered in the last study in numbers was the point from which they were to enter the land of Canaan. But they did not enter and that journey of 11 days finally took them 38 years. I told you yesterday how you can cover first standard to 10 standard in 10 years or you can cover first standard to 10 standard in 15 years or 20 years.

That's up to you. And you can cover a journey of 11 days in 11 days or you can cover it in 38 years. That's up to you.

11 days and 38 years. What a difference. Well, we can always ask God to forgive us.

You know, if you live 38 years outside God's will, doing what you want, living for yourself, making money, seeking honor, living for pleasure, and at the end of it, say, oh God, please forgive me. I wasted 38 years of my life. Do you think he'll forgive you? He certainly will.

But do you think he can give you back those 38 years which you wasted? No, even Almighty God cannot give you time back. Can God give me 1999 again? No. How can he give me 1999 again? That's over.

He can give me another year, but he can't give me 1999. The opportunities I had in 1999 are gone forever. That is why it's very important that if God wants to do something in your life in 11 days, it should not take more than 11 days.

This was two years after they left Egypt. That they were to enter the promised land. But we read in Deuteronomy chapter 2 in verse 14.

The time that it took for us to come from Kedesh Barnea until we crossed over the Brook Zireid was 38 years. Until all the generation of the men of war perished from within the camp as the Lord had sworn to them. 38 years.

What should have taken only 11 days. Let's move on to verse 13 of chapter 1. When the Lord wanted to, when Moses was giving advice concerning leadership for the people of Israel, I want you to see the type of qualities he said you must look for. Just three things.

Very little. But three very important qualities. He said when you choose people as your leaders, first of all see that they have wisdom.

Now wisdom is different from knowledge. Knowledge is study. You can have knowledge if you got a clever brain.

But you may have a clever brain and no wisdom. Wisdom is the application of knowledge to practical situations in life. And you may have a lot of Bible knowledge and no divine wisdom.

If you read the book of Proverbs, we'll come to that later. You see the emphasis is on wisdom. Not on knowing scripture as much as knowing God.

This is a means, this book is a means by which we get wisdom and know God. But we mustn't stop with knowledge. A lot of people when they study the Bible and you could even go through this study and just acquire knowledge.

I'm scared of knowledge. The tree of knowledge brought death. I don't want it.

I want the tree of life which is wisdom, which teaches me how to live, how to react in practical situations. So wisdom is the first requirement for a leader. The second is discernment.

I believe one of the greatest needs today in leadership is discernment. To discern between what is godly and what is ungodly. Not just between what is godly and demonic.

That's easy. But between godly and what is human. Sometimes we say, well, after all, I'm only a human being.

Well, Paul said to the Corinthians, why do you walk like human beings? He said in 1 Corinthians 3. Aren't you walking like men? That's one of the things he told him. You shouldn't be walking like men. You should be walking like Jesus Christ.

He who says he abides in Christ must walk as he walked. 1 John 2:6. So we see that is discernment. To discern between a spiritual man and a soulish man.

Not within a spiritual man and a carnal man who's living in sin. That's easy. But a spiritual man and a soulish man who lives by his human abilities.

When you listen to a man speak, you should be able to discern whether that man is speaking from his heart or from his head. What comes from his head will only come to your head. And it won't help you.

What comes from his heart will come to your heart. Jesus always spoke from his heart. There's a lot of preaching today which is from the head.

It doesn't change people's lives. Learn to preach from your heart. We need to discern.

It's one of the great needs particularly in leadership today. The Bible was not written for our head. It was written for our heart.

What does David say in Psalm 119? Thy word have I hid in my head? No, in my heart that I may not sin against thee. Thy word have I hid in my heart that I may not sin against thee. I think it's verse 9 or 11 anyway.

There are only 176 verses in that Psalm. You can find it. In our heart.

God's word is in our heart. That's where it should be. Discern.

Okay, the third requirement is experience. See, we can have wisdom. We can have discernment.

But all of you who are young need to recognize that you also need experience. You know, that means you've practiced God's word in different situations. And you've got some experience.

You've been through trials. And in those trials, you've been crushed. And God has taught you a few things.

And you can speak from that experience. That's how Paul spoke. You read in 2 Corinthians 1, 4. The strength I got in my trials.

He said, that's what I can give to other people. So in the living Bible, it's translated as reputation. That's also important.

Men of good reputation. A good testimony. So it's very simple.

But if you can keep those three things in mind, which Moses, with his years of experience, said these are the qualities in leaders. If you want to be a leader, look for these things in your own life. And we read further in verse 16 and 17.

Some practical wisdom to these leaders. He says, when you judge cases, verse 17, you must not show partiality. You must hear the small and the great alike.

Very great requirement for preachers. Don't show partiality in your congregation to a rich person. Don't make a distinction between the rich and the poor.

God is my witness that for 40 years, I have tried my best never to make a distinction between a rich man and a poor man. Whenever I preach the word of God in any church, in any place. Most of the people have been offended by my preaching are rich people.

And they have left our church. And I praise God that it will be so. A lot of rich people got offended when Jesus preached.

Never make a distinction. Don't try to flatter the rich. Never make a distinction.

Don't show any partiality. The small and the great people with great influence. Let me just tell you something that I saw as a young man in Christian work.

When I was very young, I moved around many different churches. And I saw one thing that if a man was a very influential man in society, IAS officer or a senior police officer or a rich businessman, he was always on the board of that church. And I said, Lord, what's this? But all the spiritual people, always these people in big administrative posts.

And I decided as a young man, I said, Lord, if I ever build a church, if you give me grace for that, that will never be true in any church I build. We will look for spiritual men. And that's how through the years in our churches, we have had peons in offices who are elders in the church.

People who sell what is in the street on a cycle. Elders in our churches. And bus drivers and various people, elders in our churches.

And sitting, listening to them will be PhDs and bank managers and all that. Make no difference between the small and the great. When you build a church, if you want to build the body of Jesus Christ, that's how God is.

And you shall not fear man. Middle of verse 17. That's very, very important.

If you want to be a leader, you must not fear man. Don't be afraid of any man's face. Because the judgment is God's.

And if a case is too hard for you, the last part of verse 17. Go to a more godly brother. Humble yourself and say, I can't handle that.

Let me go to someone who's got more experience than me. And let him help me there. Okay, we got to move on.

We read in a review in that chapter about all the things which they did. And we finally see in chapter 2 and verse 2 and 3. The Lord spoke to me saying, you have circled this mountain long enough. The same thing in chapter 1, verse 6. You have stayed long enough in this mountain.

But the way this expression. Verse 3 of chapter 2. You have gone around in circles long enough. Does the Lord have to say that to any of you? You're always in the same place.

You're moving, but there's no progress. Do you know that movement is not the same as progress? If I want to go from this town to another town. If I keep going around in circles, I'm going to be in the same place even after 10 years.

A lot of Christian activity is like that. You have gone around in circles long enough, the Lord says. Move forward.

You should be going in. You should not be defeated by the same sins that you were defeated by 10 years ago. You should not be in the same losing your temper the way you did 10 years ago.

You should not be lusting like you did 10 years ago. You're moving around in circles. You've lived long enough in this type of Christian life.

Move on. That's the message of Deuteronomy. In chapter 4, we read in verse 2, You shall not add to the word which I am commanding, nor take away from it.

Do you know that even the small commandments are important? We will not take away the great commandments. What are the temptations that we have in relation to God's word? It's not in relation to the great commandments. All of us will keep all the great commandments.

But it's in the small commandments. Jesus said, If anyone, Matthew 5, 19, cancels the smallest commandment, he won't go to hell, but he'll be called the smallest in God's kingdom. But he who keeps the smallest commandment and teaches other people to keep the smallest commandment, will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

According to Matthew 5, 19, any of you can become great in the kingdom of heaven. How? By keeping the small commandments. All of us keep the big commandments.

How do you test the obedience of a small child? Supposing my little five-year-old boy is going to school one day and I tell him the big commandments. Okay, my son, on your way to school, don't murder anybody. On your way to school, don't commit adultery with anyone.

And on your way to school, don't rob a bank. And he comes back and says, Dad, I obeyed all your commandments today. Is that where you test his obedience? No.

I'll tell you where I test that five-year-old's obedience. Okay, son, you have played enough. Now come inside and help mommy.

Wait, daddy. That's where you test his obedience. It's not in the big commandments.

How does God test your obedience? Is it in the big commandments? No, the small ones. It's the small ones that we take away. What does it mean to take away from the word of God? Oh, that's a small thing.

It's not a small thing. Has God said it? Have you heard a commandment which is written in God's word? And you say, oh, that's a small thing. I tell you, there are so many believers who have neglected to obey commandments in God's word, which they say are small.

This is what's happening, particularly in Western countries. Neglecting God's commandments. It's happening in India too, gradually, because some of these Western influences come unfortunately into our churches too.

Neglecting God's small commandments. Secondly, how do you add to the word of God? There are many people who tell people to do things which are not written in scripture. God has not said that they should do that, but churches make laws.

For example, you must always wear white. Our full-time workers must wear white. When I was a young Christian, I also tried that, but I found it was very expensive because my clothes got dirty pretty quickly.

So I couldn't afford it. Rich people can. I wasn't rich, so I couldn't do it.

But who gave you this idea that if you wear white clothes, you become spiritual? I wish it were so easy, but it is not. You don't become spiritual by wearing white clothes. See, these are all commandments that are added to God's word.

That if you are in full-time Christian work, you should not try to support yourself by any means. Paul did it. Are you better than Paul? Some people say if you're a full-time worker, you should not get married.

Peter was married. All the apostles were married, according to 1 Corinthians 9, except Paul and Barnabas. Many, many things which are added to God's word.

You can't have this and you can't have that. You can't touch this and you can't touch that. You must do this and you must do that.

Even fasting. I believe in fasting. But when you command people that you must fast like this and like this and like this and compel them.

Jesus did not. He made it optional. There are many, many things like this which Christians do.

They don't realize they are adding to the word of God. They are trying to become more spiritual than God himself. And the end result is they become less.

You know, when the devil came to Eve, and said, what has God said? Eve added and subtracted to God's word. Eve said, God has told us not to eat and not to touch this tree. God never said anything about

touching.

He only said about eating. But Eve tried to be more spiritual. We won't eat and we won't touch.

What was the end result? They both touched and ate and did everything. That's usually what happens with people who try to add to God's word. The second thing she said was, God said, lest you die.

That means you may die. No, that's not what God said. God said, you will surely die.

She subtracted the intensity of that word. Sometimes you can subtract the intensity of a certain commandment. These are ways in which we can reduce God's word.

And when we have either subtracted or added to God's word, we have nullified it. Because as it says in chapter 4, verse 24, God is a consuming fire. The Lord your God is a consuming fire.

This is quoted in Hebrews as well. We don't like to hear that. And I'll show you why, how I believe that we don't like to hear it.

I get letters from some people sometimes on top it's written, God is love. You get letters sometimes like that from somebody? Have you ever got a letter where it's written on top, God is a consuming fire? I've never got a letter like that once. Maybe some of you will write to me like that to prove that you do.

But I hope you realize we don't like to hear that. I've seen verses in walls, God is love. Have you ever seen a verse on a wall, God is a consuming fire? I got a sticker like that once and put it up in my room.

Because we don't like to think of God as a consuming fire. But that's the balance. God is love.

But that love is a fire. Remember that. And at the same time, the Lord your God is merciful, verse 31.

He's a compassionate God. The glory of God was seen in Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth. He was merciful and he was fiery.

And a true godly man, in one sense, he'll be like a consuming fire. And then on another side, he'll be tremendously compassionate. And if you are going to be a spiritual leader, you got to be like God.

That is, immensely compassionate, at the same time, like a consuming fire. A lion in the pulpit and a lamb outside. This is how Jesus was.

And this is what I believe is a true servant of God. He's a lion and a lamb. His words are like a burning fire and his words are tremendously compassionate.

Now, we can know all this in theory, but we must demonstrate that in our life. Don't think that the spiritual man is only the man who's always compassionate. No, such a man is an imbalanced man.

And don't think the spiritual man is the man who always thunders and is fiery in the pulpit. Such a man is also imbalanced. The glory of God is seen full of grace and truth.

Okay, I want to show you another verse here in Deuteronomy 4.29, where the Lord says, if you drift away from God, Moses says, you will seek the Lord and you will find him if you search for him with all your heart and all your soul. It's a principle in God's dealings with man that we find him only when we seek for him with all our heart and all our soul. Now, that's repeated again in Jeremiah chapter 29, verse 13.

With all your heart, when you search for me, Jeremiah says, reminds the people, you will find God when you search for him with all your heart. A lot of people don't find God the way other people have found him because their seeking is half-hearted. They seek for God like they seek for a 10 paisa coin, which they have lost in the grass at night.

How long will you search in that grass for a 10 paisa coin? Maybe a beggar will search long, but I don't think anybody here will. Because I looked for some time, I didn't find it. Never mind, it's only 10 paisa.

But if you lost 100,000 rupees somewhere, how long will you search for that? How eagerly do you seek after God? How eagerly do you seek after victory over sin? How eagerly do you seek to overcome your anger? How eagerly do you seek to be pure in your eyes? How eagerly do you seek to study the scriptures, to know God? How eagerly do you seek God so that you can be an effective servant of God? How eagerly do you seek God for the anointing of the Holy Spirit? Not just once, but every day, to be anointed afresh, to be filled with the Holy Spirit. You will find when you search with all your heart, like Jesus said, you knock and knock and knock and knock and knock and don't give up till it is opened. That's a principle that Moses told Israel right at the beginning.

Okay, now we move on to chapter 5, where we find the 10 commandments are repeated again. We already saw that in Exodus 20, but there's a need to hear it again. From verse 6 onwards up to verse 21, the 10 commandments are repeated with a little more amplification on not worshipping idols, verse 9, and a little more amplification on the Sabbath in verse 14 and 15.

And here another reason is given for keeping the Sabbath, and that is in verse 15, that you were a slave and the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand. Therefore, you must observe the Sabbath. What does that mean? That means remember that you did not deliver yourself by your own power.

See, the Jews worked on the Sabbath many times, disobeying God to make more money. They tilled their land in the seventh year when God said, don't till your land in the seventh year because in the sixth year I'll give you abundance, double. But they said, we get the double in the sixth year, we'll also till in the seventh, then we get three times.

What is the purpose of the Lord teaching them to keep the Sabbath? Was trust in me, rest in me. It was I who brought you out of Egypt, not your abilities. You tried for 430 years, you did not get free.

But when I set you free, I set you free in one night. That is the message of the Sabbath according to verse 15. The man who trusts in God, who rests in God, accomplishes more than the man who's restless in activity.

We who have believed enter into rest. It says even as God rested from his works, we have to rest from our own activity in Hebrews chapter 4. So that's very important to understand what the Sabbath is described in verse 15. It's a very important principle in the Christian life.

And you read in verse 29 of chapter 5, God's great longing. You find this very rarely that you find this word. Oh, when God says, oh, this verse begins with that.

Oh, oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear me, says the Lord and keep all my commandments always so that it may go well with them and with their sons forever. God gives his commandments that it might go well with us. This book is the manufacturer's instructions.

When you get an electronic gadget, that electronic gadget will come with a manufacturer's instructions. If it is a cheap gadget, you usually don't get any instructions. But if it's a very expensive electronic gadget, there will always be a book of instructions, whether it's a computer or a washing machine or anything.

And what do you do? You follow those instructions exactly. In fact, the manufacturer says, don't switch your machine on till you have read the instructions. Who manufactured us? God.

Here are the instructions in this book. Don't switch the machine on till you read the instructions. You don't know.

And if you spoil your machine because you did something which you thought is right and you messed up your life, you mess up your marriage because you don't do it according to God's way. Who can you blame? You can't blame the manufacturer. You got to blame yourself.

A lot of Christians have messed up their life because they don't follow the manufacturer's instructions. Do you want it to go really well with this machine? Follow the manufacturer's instructions. Even physical health.

I believe that health is more important than healing. When the Lord says, I'm your healer, he says, I'm your health. We need to be healthy to serve God.

And if you want to be healthy, you got to follow certain laws concerning food. If you want to be spiritual, you got to follow certain laws concerning spirituality. You got to humble yourself to get grace.

God gives his grace to the humble. These are laws. It'll go well with you if you follow these laws.

Okay. We move on to chapter 6, where the commandment is expounded more. He says, here, oh Israel, verse 4. The first commandment is described in another way here.

This is what Jesus quoted in Matthew 22. The Lord is our God. The Lord is one.

God is one. We don't worship three gods. God is one in three persons.

And you shall love the Lord your God, verse 5. This is what Jesus quoted. With all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. That is the first commandment.

That means with all my strength, with all my heart. I don't have any place in my heart anymore for my wife, for my property, for my job, for money. Because all my heart is given to God.

This is not the second commandment. This is the first one. If you have not obeyed the first one, how can you serve God? A lot of people have got a place in their heart for their job, for money, for property, for their wives, for their children.

Brother, you can't serve God. I'm sorry. You're going to be a third-rate useless believer.

If you want to be a first-class believer, obey the first commandment. Manufacturer's instructions number one. Don't switch on the machine till you obey this.

What is that? Love God with all your heart. Does that mean I won't love my wife? I love my wife better when I love God with all my heart. I love my neighbor.

I love my enemy because I love God with all my heart. I don't have any hatred in my heart anymore. How is it some of you got bitterness against somebody who did some harm to you? I'll tell you how.

Because you don't love God with all your heart. You've got a little corner where you've got a bitterness against somebody. How is it you got a little jealousy in your heart? How did that part of your heart get jealousy? That part should be loving God.

If you love God with all your heart, there'll be no competition. There'll be no jealousy. There'll be no bitterness.

This is the way to overcome sin. Overcoming sin is not a battle against sin. It's primarily loving God with all your heart.

When you love God, the other love for lust and money and property and lusting after women and all these things go away. It's something like picture a girl who's in love with Mr. A. And he's not a good fellow, but he's in love. She's in love with him.

And the parents try to stop her from loving him and they don't succeed. For years they try and they don't succeed. But one day this girl meets Mr. B, who's more handsome and more good looking and more rich and more spiritual.

And suddenly in a moment, all her love for A disappears. How's that? It's called the expulsive power of a new affection. A new love drove out the other love, which the parents tried for years.

They didn't succeed. Now apply this to the Christian life. Here you are lusting, loving wrong things, so many wrong things.

God said, don't do it. Don't do it. We try, try, try.

But still those phone calls come and we listen to them and we do what this boyfriend is telling us to do. And then one day we see the glory of Jesus and we love him with all our heart and we have no more interest in lusting in the things of the world. It's the expulsive power of a new affection.

This is the secret of victory over sin. Love God with all your heart, with all your soul, which means with all your intellectual powers. God has given me a brilliant mind.

He's given you a brilliant mind. What for? Not to make money, not to get on in this world and become a great man. I think if the apostle Paul had gone into any field, he'd have been a success.

If you had put him in computer science today, he'd have been the top computer scientist. If you put him in business, he'd have been a top businessman. He would have made a success in any field, but he decided to use all the faculties God gave him for God.

And he made good use of his life. God has given you faculties. What do you use them for? With all your soul, all your personality, all the gifts God has given your personality, use it for God.

And with all your strength, that means with no laziness, no laziness, with all my strength, as long as God gives me strength in this body, it's going to be 100% for God. You know, there's a great secret there in Deuteronomy 6 and verse 5. Okay, and then it goes on to say how we must remind our children, verse 7 onwards, about the things that God has done for us. They don't know.

It's the responsibility of parents to keep on telling their children, think of what God has done for us. Think of what God has done for us. Think of what God has done for us.

This is what God did in the past. That's how all parents must be. In other words, I'm just picking out a few verses here and there to whet your appetite to study the book of Deuteronomy more thoroughly.

Deuteronomy 7, verse 2. It talks in verse 1 about Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, seven nations greater and stronger than you. It could be seven sins that you cannot overcome in your life. And when the Lord your God, verse 2, shall deliver them before you, you shall defeat them, you shall utterly destroy them, you shall make no agreement with them, show no favor to them.

Total victory is God's will for our life. Not even one of them must remain. Seven is the perfect number, referring to all sins in our life, overcome them all.

Chapter 8 is a very important chapter. Do you know that when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness for 40 days, at the end of it, he was tempted with three significant temptations that are described in Matthew chapter 4. Each time he overcame Satan with the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. He never got into a discussion on an argument with Satan.

Satan said many things. Jesus said, it is written. And he quoted from only two chapters in the Old Testament.

Deuteronomy chapter 8, verse 3, was the first temptation. That is the answer to the first temptation. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by everything, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

The second temptation, the answer came from Deuteronomy 6, 13, which is, you shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve. And the third, or the second, that was perhaps the third, and the second one was in verse 16 of Deuteronomy 6, you shall not tempt the Lord your God. What I wanted to point out was that Jesus answers to Satan came from Deuteronomy 8 and Deuteronomy 6. That means he studied the book of Deuteronomy.

You see, that is an answer to every temptation and every problem that we ever face in life in God's word, if you know where to find it. I've discovered that in 40 years. I've never found a problem in my life for which this book has got no answer.

It has always got an answer. Many, many times, very specific. And that's why I want to encourage every believer to be a student of God's word.

From your earliest youth, study God's word. And you'll find that you face mountains, rivers, and you go past all of them and fulfill God's purposes. David says, by my God, I've jumped over a wall.

Can be a huge wall in front of you. No, we can overcome it. There's no obstacle.

No mountain in the way can stand. There's an answer here, if you know where to find it. Jesus studied it and he had an answer.

He could not be deceived by Satan. So that's an important chapter for us to study. And there's one thing I want you to notice in Deuteronomy 8, which David, which Moses says, beware, verse 11 and 12, that you for that, lest you forget the Lord.

Verse 12, when you have eaten and are satisfied, when you have built good houses and lived in them, and your silver and gold multiplies, verse 13 and verse 14, your heart becomes proud and you forget the Lord, your God. He led you, verse 15, through the terrible wilderness with fiery serpents and scorpions. Now in the wilderness, we, it's much easier to remember God than when we become rich.

When David was running in the wilderness from cave to cave, he wrote those wonderful Psalms and he was very close to God. When did he sin with Bathsheba? He would never have sinned in Bathsheba those days. He sinned with Bathsheba after he got plenty and he relaxed in the palace.

He didn't go to battle that day, it says. If he had gone to battle, he wouldn't have sinned. It's when we have plenty that we are in danger.

When did Solomon sin? When he had plenty. It's always like that. When did Israel go after idols? As far as we know, they don't, didn't worship idols in the wilderness, but as soon as they landed in Canaan, the book of Judges, we read they're worshiping idols all the time.

When we have got plenty, we are in danger. Remember that. Thank God, if you struggle financially, that helps you to live close to God.

It doesn't mean that we have to forget God when we have plenty, but all I'm saying is more difficult. Jesus said, it's difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. He didn't say it's impossible.

It says in James chapter one that God has chosen the poor of the world, rich in faith. I want to say to all of you, don't envy the brother or sister who has got plenty. It's more difficult for him to be close to God.

Be thankful if you have less. Maybe you don't have as many clothes as that other sister has. Don't envy her.

You are better off actually. Don't envy that person who's got a much bigger house than you have, who's got much more money to serve God than you have. Don't envy him.

I feel sorry for him because he's in far greater danger. Do you realize that? Sometimes we wish, one day I hope I can have as many clothes as that person. One day maybe I can have as much money as that person.

Really? You are exposing yourself to more danger. Leave it to God to decide what He should give you and be thankful with little. I seriously warn you with this.

When you young people, when you start, you have little. In a few years, maybe you'll get plenty. Like I see so many preachers in this country and I've seen how they've destroyed themselves with that plenty.

Take a warning from them. A wise man learns from the mistake of others. And it's a warning God and Moses gave to these people.

Be careful when you go there. And in chapters 9 to 11, we read of some warnings from Israel's history. And I just wanted to show you a verse in chapter 11.

This is another important chapter which you could look at. And one verse I want to show you here in verse 21. In the King James Version, it says in verse 21, that your days and the days of your sons may be multiplied in the land which the Lord gave you, and that your days may be as the days of heaven upon

earth.

As the days of heaven upon earth. What is God's will for you? That all of our life on earth is lived like a day of heaven. I want to say to you, I've experienced a little bit of that.

And that's why my Christian life and my Christian ministry is so exciting. Every day is exciting. Because I've decided to live by heavenly principles and not by earthly principles.

And I want to encourage you, it's easy when you start to be like that. I hope you will be like that 40 years from now. Living by heavenly principles and not living by the earthly principles that so many believers around you are living by.

Say, Lord, I will steadfastly live by those heavenly principles that you taught me when I was a young man. Say that to God today and fix your eyes on Jesus. How he endured that your days on earth may be like days of heaven upon earth.

That is God's will for us. Read the rest of the chapter. Verse 24.

Every place where the soul of your foot treads will be yours. God's will is that we fulfill all of his will in every place he sends us to. That we overcome every weakness, every area of our life.

We have to put our foot there, put the devil under our feet and overcome. In chapter 13, we read of the test of when God sends a false prophet across our path. When God allows a false prophet to come, he's testing us.

If a prophet or a dreamer arises among you, we need to listen to this. It's very important because it's happening in our day. And he gives you a sign or a wonder.

And the sign of the wonder comes true. That means what he prophesies takes place. Don't we see that in Christendom today? So-called prophets have got their consulting rooms and consulting fees and you pay them and you listen to their prophecies and you decide whether you go to Dubai or Germany.

And these things are happening today, provided you pay the right amount of fees. And these prophets and they say something and it happens. It's true.

It happens. But they lead you away from devotion to Christ. They emphasize the earthly, not the heavenly.

They lead you to be occupied with material things and not heavenly things. When it says, let us go after other gods. There is only one God in heaven.

Other gods are ambition, job, money, comfort. And he tells you, these are the important things. You shall not listen, verse 3, to the words of that prophet.

Because the Lord your God, verse 3, is testing you Do you know that some of these prophets in Christendom, God has allowed them to be there to test you and me to see whether we listen to them who tell us to go after other gods of comfort and material prosperity. God has allowed them to be there to test you and what they say comes true. Like it says in verse 1, verse 2. It comes true because God is testing you to see whether you'll go by what they say or what Jesus said in his word.

I told somebody recently, I would rather believe what Jesus Christ said in his word than what you say or what any other prophet says. And I know, the Bible says we must set our mind on things above. These prophets don't lead us to set our mind on things above.

They're always giving you answers concerning earthly things. Just like the Old Testament. We're not in the Old Testament.

It says in the Old Testament, verse 5, such a prophet must be put to death. How do I apply that today? I must be dead to that prophet. If you want to listen to the manufacturer's instructions, here it is.

I believe it's very, very important. In chapter 15, it speaks about releasing people in the year, in the Sabbath year. If you find there's a poor man among you, verse 7, don't close your heart to him.

Don't harden your heart. Freely open your hand, verse 8, and generously give him what he needs. The Lord took great interest in poor people.

In Deuteronomy 16, you read about the feasts. We already covered the feasts in another study and we don't want to go into that. In Deuteronomy 17 and verse 18, he says, if one day you get a king, it was not God's will that they should have a king.

But one day, verse 14, you may say, I want to have a king like the nations around me. And if you do decide to have a king, God gives you freedom to choose his second best if you don't want his best. But that king, verse 18, must write a copy of this law and he must read it, verse 19, all the days of his life to learn to fear God and carefully obey now that's another good verse for leaders.

Leaders must carefully study God's word and obey it if they are to continue. And in chapter 18, we read a prophecy about Jesus. In verse 18, the Lord said, I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you and I'll put my words in his mouth.

A prophecy concerning Jesus Christ and chapter 19 speaks of cities of refuge for those who have accidentally killed somebody to escape being killed from that. Rules for war in verse 20. You know when it says here and when you go to war, when you're approaching battle, verse 22, and you must tell the people, is anybody afraid here? Verse 3, don't be afraid for the Lord your God is with you.

And verse 5, is there a man who's not dedicated his house? Let him go back. Is there a man who's planted a vineyard? Verse 6, who is more interested in that than the battle? Let him go back. Is there a man, verse 7, who's engaged to a woman, not married her? You're more interested in that? Go back.

And that's what the Lord says today. Are you interested in your property and your wife and your job? Please go. Go and take care of that.

The Lord will work with those who are not interested in these things. Those who are interested in living for God. Those are the ones whom God is looking for.

So let's keep that in mind. Deuteronomy chapter 21. And goes on to speak here also about men's and women's clothes.

In Deuteronomy 22, 5. Laws on marriages in Deuteronomy 22, verse 13 to 30. Laws on cleanliness, Deuteronomy 23, 12 to 14. Laws on divorce in Deuteronomy 24.

And every man for his own sin, verse 14 to 16. Gratitude to God, verse Deuteronomy 26. A curse and blessing pronounced on two mountains, Deuteronomy 27.

And Deuteronomy 28, it speaks about how you will be blessed if you obey God and cursed if you don't obey God. This is the way in which God brought obedience to his commandments in the Old Testament. By offering them reward and by threatening them with punishment.

Just like with children. How do we make children obey? Offer them a reward, a chocolate, or threaten them with a stick. But in the new covenant, Jesus said, it's not by threats and by rewards I want you to obey.

If you love me, keep my commandments. Deuteronomy 28 is a great example of how obedience came under the law. Deuteronomy 32 is the song of Moses.

He also wrote Psalm 90, by the way, another song. I just want to show you one more verse before I close. Deuteronomy 33, verse 2 and 3. The last part, it says, at God's right hand, a flaming law went forth.

In the margin, it says, a flaming, a fiery law. What does that prove? A fiery law. What does it prove? The margin, it says, a fiery law in the King James version 2, verse 3. It proves that he loves the people.

That's a good thing to remember. God's fiery law proves that he loves the people. If it were a soft type of law, it would have proved he didn't love the people.

And then Deuteronomy 34 speaks about the death of Moses. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the wonderful example of a man of like passions like us, like Moses, who taught the people of Israel and warned them and encouraged them.

Help us to be men and women like that who can go around warning people around us and encouraging them to be faithful, to love you with all their hearts. We pray in Jesus name.

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