



WHAT'S THE POINT OF Deuteronomy?

+ + +

On your way to
a great future,
don't ignore
the past.

SLAVERY IN EGYPT

1446 +

EXODUS FROM EGYPT

1445 +

TEN COMMANDMENTS GIVEN

WILDERNESS WANDERINGS

1406 +

MOSES' DEATH;
ISRAELITES ENTER CANAAN

1375 +

JUDGES BEGIN TO RULE

1050 +

UNITED KINGDOM UNDER SAUL

WHAT'S THIS BOOK ABOUT? Moses' final message to the people before they enter Canaan.

• **WHO WROTE IT?** Christian and Jewish traditions say the author was Moses.

• **WHEN DID IT HAPPEN?** In the 1400s B.C.

• **WHERE DOES THIS BOOK FIT?** Deuteronomy contains three addresses Moses gave to the people of Israel near the end of his life, after the Israelites had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years and just before they finally entered the Promised Land.

THE BREAKDOWN

- Chapters 1–3: Address 1, Part 1—A history lesson
- Chapter 4: Address 1, Part 2—A plea for obedience
- Chapter 5: Address 2, Part 1—Moses reviews the Ten Commandments
- Chapters 6–26: Address 2, Part 2—Moses urges the people to love and obey God
- Chapters 27–28: Address 3, Part 1—Blessings for obedience, curses for disobedience
- Chapters 29–30: Address 3, Part 2—Moses reviews God's covenant
- Chapters 31–34: Moses' final days

KEY CONCEPTS

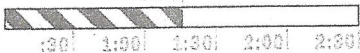
- Worship (offerings, sacrifices)
- Laws, commandments
- Sin, rebellion, idolatry
- Covenant

SCORECARD

- **Moses:** The lawgiver
- **Joshua:** Moses' successor

READING TIME

IN HOURS



WORTH MEMORIZING

- **6:4-7** "Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children."
- **7:9** "Understand, therefore, that the LORD your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and lavishes his unfailing love on those who love him and obey his commands."
- **30:19** "Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live!"

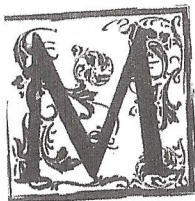
THE MASCULINE PERSPECTIVE

- **UNDERSTANDING THE BIG PICTURE.** Here Moses gives background information and clear instructions so the people will succeed when they get to the Promised Land. This book is still relevant for us today. As we learn to look past the surface of the many laws and regulations in this book to see the reasons God established them, our lives will be transformed by the incredible power of his love.
- **FAITHFULNESS BASED ON LOVE.** God took care of his people because he loved them and was committed to them. No matter how God's people disappointed him or turned against him, he kept on being faithful. We are to follow his example in our own relationships.

1:1-5 This is a book of new hope; it is all about making a fresh start. The Israelites' failures in the wilderness were behind them. Opportunities for rebuilding their lives, their communities, and their nation lay ahead. At last Israel stood once again on the threshold of the Promised Land. It had taken them 40 years to accomplish an 11-day journey because of their willful disobedience and lack of faith. Moses took time to give them principles for living within the Israelite community and for maintaining their relationship with God.

1:1-5 After a generation of consistent failure, the Israelites needed to get back to the basics. As they were about to enter the Promised Land, they took time to listen to God's laws once again. The name *Deuteronomy* actually means "second law" or "repetition of the law." It was necessary for Moses to share God's instructions with the new generation of Israelites as they faced new living conditions and the accompanying temptations. God's instructions for living are good for every generation. We need to take the time to regularly review them as we face our own temptations and difficulties.

1:6 In every life there are moments when it is essential to move on. If we seek to grow in our spiritual life, we must be careful to advance according to God's schedule—neither lagging behind nor running ahead.



Many of us are alarmed at reports showing steep declines of faith among our young people. It's increasingly hard to raise godly children in a godless world. Moses was no less concerned for the young people of his day. Near the end of his life, he delivered a series of sermons to teach the new generation—those about to enter Canaan—about the covenant of the Lord.

Except for Joshua and Caleb, the older generation had perished in the wilderness. Those who had been children during the Exodus were now ready to follow Joshua across the Jordan; but before Moses passed the reigns of leadership, he had a final opportunity to explain the Word of God to the Israelites. The word "Deuteronomy" means the retelling or second giving of the Law. The first twenty-six chapters of this book contain the introduction, background, and requirements of the covenant. Chapters 27 through 30 give the curses and blessings of the covenant. The final four chapters relate the transfer of leadership from Moses to Joshua.

It's summed up in chapter 6, when Moses gives timeless instruction about instilling faith within our children: *Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.*

KEY THOUGHT:

Every new generation needs to learn the lessons of the Lord and develop a heritage of faith and obedience.

HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BIBLE

Deuteronomy

4:1-2	
4:5-8	
4:11	Scripture
4:24	
4:35	21:17
4:35,39	21:23
5:6,15	22:8
5:7-15	23:4
5:16-21	23:5
5:23	25:4
5:24	28:15-68
5:33	30:3-5
6-25	30:6,19-20
6:4	30:14
6:5	31:19
7:9	32
7:15	32:2
8:3	32:10
8:17-18	32:11
9:15	32:16
11:14	32:46-47
11:16	33:26
13:1	34:5
13:2	34:9
13:3	34:10-12
13:5	
16:9-10	
16:9-12	
16:16	
18:9-14	
18:9-22	
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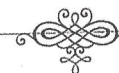
KEY VERSES:

"Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength."
Deuteronomy 6:4-5



KEY ACTION:

Share the truth of God with your children, with your grandchildren, and with the generation to come (see Deuteronomy 6:7).



KEY PRAYER:

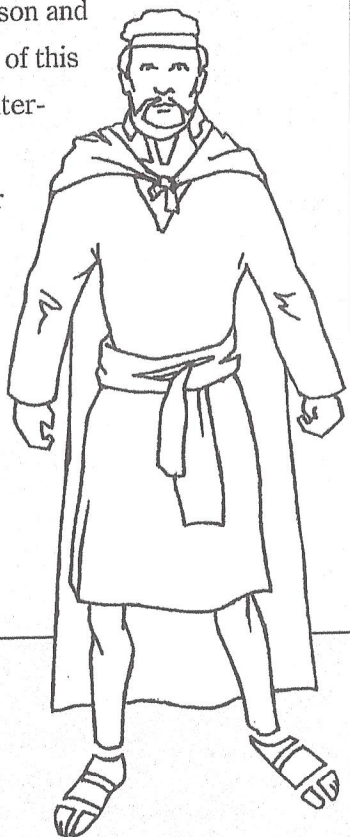
Lord, You are my eternal God and my refuge, and underneath me are the everlasting arms.

23:17-18 In these verses, prostitution is singled out for special condemnation. The bounds of marriage are the only valid context for sexual activity. In our society, sex outside of marriage has become an accepted practice. Sexual purity is often considered something to be embarrassed about. Healthy marriages must be founded upon trust, which is based upon sexual purity. If we have failed in this area, there is forgiveness and hope for restoration, although the consequences of our sin may never truly be overcome.
23:21-23 Being trustworthy is an absolute necessity for building healthy relationships. All enduring relationships are built on trust. When we make promises, we must learn to keep them—even at great inconvenience to ourselves.
24:1-4 Some might view this regulation as proof that God supports divorce. On the contrary, God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). Regulations like this were given to put controls on this unsatisfactory solution

AN INTRODUCTION TO

DEUTERONOMY

After 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, the new generation of Israelites needed a reminder of who they were and how God wanted them to live. So Moses gave them a history lesson and reviewed God's law. The name of this book means "second law." Deuteronomy repeats the ten commandments and other rules for living good and happy lives. It also reminds us that God gave Israel his law because God loves his people.



ISRAELITE MEN WORE CLOTHES LIKE THESE WHILE THEY WANDERED IN THE WILDERNESS.

Headlines

MOSES GIVES A HISTORY LESSON

Deuteronomy 1, page 226

KING-SIZE IRON BED FOUND

Deuteronomy 3, page 229

GOD FIGHTS FOR ISRAEL

Deuteronomy 9, page 237

PEOPLE DON'T HAVE TO PAY DEBTS!

Deuteronomy 15, page 243

SCARED SOLDIERS SENT HOME

Deuteronomy 20, page 249

MOSES' GRAVE IS LOST!

Deuteronomy 34, page 270

THE FIFTH BOOK OF MOSES CALLED

DEUTERONOMY

DEUTERONOMY, MOSES' "UPPER DESERT DISCOURSE," consists of a series of farewell messages by Israel's 120-year-old leader. It is addressed to the new generation destined to possess the Land of Promise—those who survived the forty years of wilderness wandering.

Like Leviticus, Deuteronomy contains a vast amount of legal detail, but its emphasis is on the laymen rather than the priests. Moses reminds the new generation of the importance of obedience if they are to learn from the sad example of their parents.

The Hebrew title of Deuteronomy is *Haddebarim*, "The Words," taken from the opening phrase in 1:1, "These are the words." The parting words of Moses to the new generation are given in oral and written form so that they will endure to all generations. Deuteronomy has been called "five-fifths of the Law" since it completes the five books of Moses. The Jewish people have also called it *Mishneh Hattorah*, "Repetition of the Law," which is translated in the Septuagint as *To Deuteronomion Touto*, "This Second Law." Deuteronomy, however, is not a second law but an adaptation and expansion of much of the original law given on Mount Sinai. The English title comes from the Greek title *Deuteronomion*, "Second Law." Deuteronomy has also been appropriately called the "Book of Remembrance."

WATCH WORDS

- **statute** (a command, civil enactment, legal prescription, or ritual law decreed by someone in authority)—5:1 (also 6:1)
- **observe** (do or keep, as instructions or commandments)—7:11 (also 4:6; 6:3)
- **go well** (produce a good outcome)—12:25 (also 4:40)
- **choose** (carefully select or accept)—14:2 (also 7:6)
- **worship** (bowing before someone to express submission)—26:10

1:19-21 "Don't be afraid! Don't be discouraged!" The expression "Don't be afraid" and its variations is the most common command in Scripture. We are afraid of so many things. In challenging his people to a new course of action, God was insisting that they cast away their fears. God was really asking his people to trust him. If we can learn to turn our focus away from our circumstances and toward God and his power, our helplessness and fears will soon melt away.

BASIC SURVEY

DEUTERONOMY

AUTHOR: Traditionally attributed to Moses. Chapter 34, recording Moses' death, was probably written by his successor, Joshua.

DATE: Approximately 1400 BC.

IN TEN WORDS OR LESS

Moses reminds the Israelites of their history and God's laws.

DETAILS, PLEASE

With a name meaning "second law," Deuteronomy records Moses' final words as the Israelites prepared to enter the promised land. Forty years have passed since God handed down His laws on Mount Sinai, and the entire generation that experienced that momentous event has died. Moses reminds the new generation of both God's commands and their national history as they ready their entry into Canaan. The invasion will occur under Joshua, as Moses will only see the promised land from Mount Nebo. "Moses the servant of the LORD died there. . . . And [God] buried him in a valley in the land of Moab" (34:5-6 NKJV). Moses was 120 years old.

QUOTABLE

> "And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength" (6:5 NLT).

UNIQUE AND UNUSUAL

The Ten Commandments, most commonly found in Exodus 20, are restated in full in Deuteronomy 5—with slight differences, however.

SO WHAT?

Deuteronomy makes clear that God's rules and expectations aren't meant to limit and frustrate us, but instead to benefit us: "Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you" (6:3 NKJV).

READ DEUTERONOMY 4:1-40 AND 8.

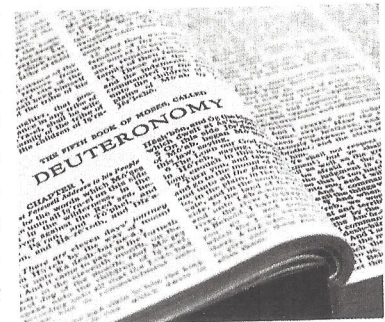
- One-Month Course: your next reading is on page 34. →
- Three-Month Course: your next reading is on page 34. →
- Six-Month Course: your next reading is on page 31. →

CLOSER LOOK

A STORY TWICE TOLD

Is the dry old book of Deuteronomy worth reading? Yes, definitely! Jesus Himself not only read and studied it, but meditated upon it and memorized key passages from it.

The New Testament quotes from Deuteronomy dozens of times, and in the story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness in Matthew 4:1-11, He defeated Satan by quoting exclusively from Deuteronomy. Jesus restated Deuteronomy 8:3 (NKJV) ("Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD"). He quoted Deuteronomy 6:16 (NKJV) ("You shall not tempt the LORD your God") and Deuteronomy 6:13 (NLT) ("You must fear the LORD your God and serve him").



Deuteronomy retells the history of the Israelites.

Deuteronomy is basically a retelling of the Israelites' history, and sometimes we wonder why the Bible duplicates entire books. Why, for example, do we need 1 and 2 Chronicles when they cover most of the same material as 1 and 2 Kings? Why do we need the Gospels of Mark and Luke when basically the same story is told in Matthew? Why does Acts 11:1-17 repeat Peter's trip to Caesarea in Acts 10?

Some people guess that when something is repeated, it's because it's more important than other things in the Bible, but this isn't the case. Rather, the benefit is that in the retelling, much that is new is brought out. Also, we discover amazing truths when we compare two separate accounts, lay them over one another, and draw conclusions from the differences. It's like seeing a movie in 3-D.

READ DEUTERONOMY 5-6.

- Six-Month Course: your next reading is on page 34. →

HIDDEN TREASURE

ISRAEL'S MANY REBELLIONS

In Deuteronomy 9, Moses reviewed the constant rebellions of the Israelites and pointed out that they were a stubborn, disbelieving generation. They had seen God do mighty miracles in Egypt, bringing down devastating plagues. They rejoiced and believed for a while, but as soon as they hit another obstacle, they lapsed into disbelief and accused God of not caring for them. Then they began complaining and imagining the worst. When they found themselves trapped at the Red Sea, they doubted again. God did a miracle and delivered them—but later when they had no water, and when they ran out of food, they doubted again. And they backslid by worshipping the golden calf. They simply didn't trust God, and their hearts weren't dedicated to Him.



Moses recounted many of the Israelites' rebellions against God, which are found in the ninth chapter of Deuteronomy.

READ DEUTERONOMY 9 AND 1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-22.

HIDDEN TREASURE

DESTROYING THE "HIGH PLACES"

When the Israelites prepared to enter Canaan, God ordered, "You shall utterly destroy all the places where [the Canaanites] . . . served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills" (Deuteronomy 12:2 NKJV). "Destroy all their . . . idols, and demolish all their high places" (Numbers 33:52 NIV). If the Israelites left the idols standing, they'd be tempted to worship them (Exodus 23:32-33). The Canaanites often worshipped on top of mountains and hills. That's where the altars to their demon-gods were, and that's where the Canaanites did their disgusting worship, so God told the Israelites to desecrate these spots. God didn't even want His people to worship *Him* on these defiled high places. He wanted them to worship Him at His temple wherever He chose to have it (Deuteronomy 12:10-11).



This statue of Baal would have been one of the many things that God ordered the Israelites to destroy when they entered Canaan.

READ DEUTERONOMY 12 AND PSALM 78:52-72.

HIDDEN TREASURE

LOVING, MERCIFUL LAWS

First John 4:8 (KJV) says, "God is love," and many of God's laws were directly related to the command to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. For example, in Deuteronomy 22:1-4, God commanded the Israelites to look out for one another and to help lift an overloaded donkey or ox if it fell down. He even commanded, "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden. . . you shall surely help him with it" (Exodus 23:4-5 NKJV). He also commanded them to care for a stray animal till its owner arrived. He even commanded them to help runaway slaves escape (Deuteronomy 23:15-16).

READ DEUTERONOMY 22:1-6 AND EXODUS 23.

HIDDEN TREASURE

BLESSINGS OR CURSES

God made a covenant with the nation of Israel. He said, "The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth" (Deuteronomy 7:6 NKJV). This was a tremendous privilege and would provide unprecedented blessings. "The LORD has declared today that you are his people, his own special treasure. . . and that you must obey all his commands. And if you do, he will set you high above all the other nations he has made" (Deuteronomy 26:18-19 NLT). But they had to be faithful to uphold their end of the agreement—to love and obey God—to receive these blessings. On the other hand, if they willfully disobeyed, God would judge them severely. The choice was theirs.



Joshua encouraged the Israelites to stay true to God, which is depicted in this lithograph titled *Joshua Renewing the Covenant with Israel*.

READ DEUTERONOMY 7 AND 11.

ROLE MODELS: MOSES • JOSHUA • CALEB

GOD RULES

It was not because of the righteousness of the Israelites that they took the Promised Land but because of the wickedness of the people there (9:4-6).

DEUTERONOMY

THE 40-YEAR JOURNEY

The Incredible Deuteronomy Journey From Horeb to the Promised Land From Horeb to Kadesh Barnea to the hill country of the Amorites. Back toward the Red Sea, through Seir, past Moab, across the Zered Valley and through the Arnon Gorge. In all that time—for 40 years—God provided the Israelites with manna, water, clothes and sandals that did not wear out (29:5).

DID YOU KNOW?

Moses' speech in Deuteronomy took place 39 years after the events in Leviticus and Numbers.

THE AMAZING MOSES

"Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone" (34:7).

"Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, who did all those signs and wonders the Lord sent him to do in Egypt—to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land. For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel" (34:10-12).

"Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the Lord had commanded Moses" (34:9).

In the Word

The first ten chapters review previous events and commandments. Chapters 11-30 contain commands and reminders of how the Israelites were to serve God and enter the land ahead. Chapters 31-34 contain the selection of Joshua to lead the Israelites forward and the passing of Moses.

BY THE NUMBERS

34
CHAPTERS
959
VERSES
25,489
WORDS

LIFE LESSONS: Follow and serve God in every area of your life (6:5).

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW DEUTERONOMY?

DEUTERONOMY IN REVIEW

★ MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

1. Which was not one of the cities of refuge Moses set aside, east of the Jordan, where anyone who had unintentionally killed a person could flee and be kept safe?
A. Bezer in the wilderness plateau
B. Beth Peor in the valley
C. Golan in Bashan
D. Ramoth in Gilead

★ MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

2. What did God instruct the tribes standing on Mount Ebal to do?
A. Pray for rain
B. Pronounce curses
C. Pray for fire
D. Defy the enemy armies

➡ THEN VS. NOW

3. It took the Israelites 11 days to go from Horeb to Kadesh Barnea by the Mount Seir road. About how long would it take us to travel the same distance today by car?
A. Two hours
B. Two days
C. Seven hours
D. Seven days

🔥 HOT SEAT

4. I've been known as everything from a criminal to royalty, but no one has ever had the mighty power or matched the awesome deeds I did. Who am I?

★ MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

5. If the Israelites lay siege to a city for a long time, fighting against it to capture it, what were they not supposed to destroy?
A. Fruit trees
B. Kings and princes
C. City walls
D. Daylight Savings Time

★ MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

6. How many years passed from the time the Israelites left Kadesh Barnea until they crossed the Zered Valley?
A. 20 years
B. 35 years
C. 38 years
D. 40 years

★ MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

7. God told the Israelites that he would bring terror and fear on all the nations under heaven because of them when Israel began to fight against whom?
A. The people of Seir
B. The king of the Moabites
C. The Ammonites
D. King Sihon of Heshbon



HOT SEAT

8. Nun is my dad and Moses is my boss, but I will eventually take his position. Who am I?



TIME TRAVELER

9. You are a future king of Israel. According to the instructions in Deuteronomy, what are you to carry with you on a scroll at all times?
A. The names of all the tribes of Israel
B. The law given to Moses
C. The song of Miriam
D. The list of your commanders and advisors

★ MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

10. When the people sinned by worshiping a golden calf and Moses broke the original tablets, how long did he then fast and pray for the people, that they would not be destroyed?



HOT SEAT

11. I was cutting wood with my neighbor when the head flew off my ax and hit him, killing him. What an awful accident! The problem is, I'm afraid someone will kill me in a rage to avenge his death! Where can I go to be safe now?



WHO SAID IT?

12. "Has anyone built a new house and not yet begun to live in it? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else may begin to live in it."
A. Moses
B. Aaron
C. Joshua
D. Army officers

ANSWERS:

1. B (4:41-43) 2. B (1:29; 27:13) 3. A (1:2) the Israelites traveled about 7 or 8 miles per day; 7x11=77 miles, two hours or less by car) 4. Moses (34:12) 5. A (20:19) 6. C (2:14) 7. D (2:24-25) 8. Joshua (1:38; 3:12) 9. B (17:14) 10. 40 days and 40 nights (9:15-19) 11. a city of refuge (4:41-43) 12. D (20:5)

These laws are mixed up. Draw a line from the first part of the law to the second part. To check yourself, look up the chapter and verse in Deuteronomy.

- | | | |
|-------|---------------------------|--|
| 14:3 | Never eat anything | but justice. |
| 16:20 | Strive for nothing | when it's threshing grain. |
| 22:8 | When you build a new home | that is disgusting to the LORD. |
| 25:4 | Never muzzle an ox | put a railing around the edge of the roof. |

What's In It For Me?

GOD'S LAW . . .

- PROTECTS WOMEN.**
- PROVIDES FOR THE POOR.**
- PROMOTES JUSTICE.**
- OFFERS MERCY.**
- LEADS TO PROSPERITY.**
- WILL LAST FOREVER.**

Who Should Support the Poor?

In the United States, many poor people are on welfare. The government gives them money that is collected from other people through taxes. Today some people say welfare doesn't always help poor people.

The Bible tells us to care for the poor. But what is the best way to help people in need? One Old Testament law says people should loan money to the poor and not charge interest. Another law says farmers should leave some crops in their fields so the poor can gather their own food. Another law says that a person who is really poor can agree to work seven years for someone who has money. During the time the poor person is working, he or she will learn how to do different jobs. After the seven years are up, the richer person is supposed to give the poor person enough money to start his or her own business.

God expects us to care about people who need our help. But God also expects people who need help to try to help themselves. To learn more about the Bible's approach to welfare, see Exodus 23:10-11; Deuteronomy 14:28-29; 15:12-18; and 24:17-22.

You Be the Judge

Deuteronomy records laws to help judges decide cases. If you were a judge, how would you decide the cases below? After you decide, look up the verse and see what God's law says.

Case #1: Your best friend asks you to lie so he doesn't get in trouble. What should you do? (Deuteronomy 5:20)

Case #2: Your bike was stolen! A month later you find it in the park, broken. A boy named Chris says he saw Jack take it. Jack says he didn't. Is Jack guilty? (Deuteronomy 17:6)

Case #3: A friend wants you to play with a Ouija board and communicate with the spirit world. It's just a game, so is it OK? (Deuteronomy 18:9-13)

Case #4: Someone tells you he lost a baseball cap. Later you find it. Should you return it or is it "finders keepers"? (Deuteronomy 22:1-3)

Case #5: On your way home from school, you pass an apple orchard. Is it all right to fill a basket with apples and take them home? (Deuteronomy 23:24)

Law = Love

God gave the Israelites the law because he loved them. The law was part of a special agreement that God made with his people. If the people kept the law, they showed God that they loved him. God loves you, too. If you do right, you can show your love for God, also.

<p>ISRAEL'S OBEDIENCE BROUGHT:</p> <p>health</p> <p>many children</p> <p>victory over enemies</p> <p>plenty of food and wealth</p> <p>respect from other nations</p> <p>(see Deuteronomy 28:1-14).</p>	<p>ISRAEL'S DISOBEDIENCE BROUGHT:</p> <p>disease</p> <p>few children</p> <p>defeat by enemies</p> <p>lack of food and shelter</p> <p>cruel treatment by other nations</p> <p>(see Deuteronomy 28:15-68).</p>
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Putting the Honey in Honeymoon

Deuteronomy 24:5

ONE OF THE biggest problems couples face today is busyness. Husbands and wives are constantly on the go, moving so fast they can hardly breathe.

Hidden away in the big book of Deuteronomy is one brief verse with a stark, almost preposterous remedy for this problem. Deuteronomy 24:5 says a newly married man should be given a year of freedom from work and military service so he can devote himself solely to "bringing happiness to the wife he has married."

Immediately, we say, "That's impossible. How would the bills get paid?" Apparently the Israelites planned ahead, saving up for the expenses to come.

Wouldn't it be nice if today's newlyweds followed this Scripture? Too often, brides and grooms are so harried over wedding plans and travel arrangements for far-flung family members that their special day is the cause of as much exhaustion as joy. Then, after the wedding, an all-too-brief honeymoon is followed by a quick return to "normal" life, which means both husband and wife are back to their demanding jobs. Soon, the cares and concerns of life threaten to strangle the love and affection that marriage was intended to foster.

Instead of rejecting God's regulation here as impractical and crazy, let's stop to appreciate his goal: making time to concentrate on building a love that will last. Perhaps that's worth extra effort after all.

HOLDING BACK

Years ago, when I was in the Marine Corps, they drilled into us, "You don't salute the man, you salute the rank. If he is a major, even if he's wasted, you salute him because of the rank—he's a major."

That's what David was saying the day he caught his tormentor, King Saul, in a vulnerable spot (1 Samuel 24:1-7). "Saul is the anointed king! No matter how unfair he has been to me, I haven't any business cutting off the corner of his robe."

Verse 7 says, "So David restrained his men and did not let them kill Saul" (NLT).

I love this verse. Here we see a guy who did the right thing and brought a whole group with him. I have a feeling that David's men didn't just stand together and mildly say, "You think you should have done that?"

"No, I really don't."

"Well, we'll really consider that, David."

No, their dialogue must have been heated.

"Don't be a fool, David!"

"Hey, listen man, this wasn't right!"

"DAVID, the guy's done everything but take your life."

"Look, I can't do it!"

Back and forth, back and forth they went, but David stood for a righteous principle until they were persuaded.

Remember this when you are hanging in the balance somewhere. Maybe in your profession. Maybe in the way you've begun to do your business. Perhaps in the way you've done your studies or carried on your lifestyle. You've kind of compromised and sort of waltzed along on very thin wires of rationalization, and you've begun to lean. And God says, "You have no business doing that. Get back where you belong."

"Well, what'll they think?"

Hey, who knows whom you could persuade if you walked with God? Few things are more infectious than a godly lifestyle. The people you rub shoulders with every day need that kind of challenge. Not prudish. Not preachy. Just crackerjack clean living. Just honest-to-goodness, bone-deep, nonhypocritical integrity. Authentic obedience to God

Few things are more infectious than a godly lifestyle.

Personal Gold from CHUCK SWINDOLL

Someone you should know

Joshua

Stocking Up on Courage

NO ONE GETS through life unscathed. Tough circumstances can erupt at any moment—from any direction. That's why, from time to time, we can all use timely words that urge us to strength and courage. General Joshua, commander of Israel's military forces during the conquest of Canaan, received encouragement from a number of sources, including God himself.

You might think that a burly professional soldier, trained from youth to be the personal assistant of the commander in chief (Exodus 17:9; 24:13; Numbers 11:28), would have no need of spirit-lifting words. Yet he did need them, and he received them often, especially as the time grew near for him to take over the leadership of the nation of Israel. Note who spoke the words of encouragement that Joshua so badly needed to hear:

1. Moses often helped Joshua to take heart. At least twice the Lord commanded Moses to "encourage" his young aide (Deuteronomy 1:38; 3:28). So Moses told Joshua, "Do not be afraid . . . for the LORD your God will fight for you" (3:22). And later he repeated, "Be strong and courageous! . . . Do not be afraid or discouraged" (31:7-8).
2. God urged Joshua to act bravely by trusting deeply. In an official commission to the general just before Israel entered the Promised Land, God told Joshua, "Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).
3. The Israelites also joined the encouragement parade. After Joshua called the nation together to prepare to enter Canaan, the people replied, "So be strong and courageous!" (Joshua 1:18).

Every man needs large doses of both strength and courage, especially when preparing to tackle some daunting challenge. Joshua found the bulk of his courage through his close, growing relationship with God. He accompanied Moses to the top of Mount Sinai to receive God's laws (Exodus 24:13). He remained in the Tent of Meeting after Moses met there with God (Exodus 33:11). The Spirit of God lived in Joshua (Numbers 27:18), and so he was "full of the spirit of wisdom" (Deuteronomy 34:9).

Joshua found the bulk of his courage through his close, growing relationship with God.

All of this fortified a man to whom God said, "No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you" (Joshua 1:5).

Before long, Joshua himself became a man of encouragement. After the campaign of occupation had begun, Joshua said to his men, "Don't ever be afraid or discouraged. . . . Be strong and courageous, for the LORD is going to do this to all of your enemies"—then he destroyed those whom God had marked for death (Joshua 10:25-26).

Learn how to give and receive encouragement. You'll find it's contagious.

THE POINT: Everyone needs godly encouragement