

# **MANual Lessons from Deuteronomy**

The next set of lessons on becoming a godly man comes from Deuteronomy, the last of the five books of Moses. This chapter in The **MANual**, our NIV Bible for men, is called "Replay." In it, Moses delivers what is called his farewell speech to remind the Israelites how God cared for them throughout their journey from slavery in Egypt. These stories also remind and encourage us to rededicate ourselves to following His commandments.

## **About Deuteronomy**

Deuteronomy is the last book written before Moses dies. It is written approximately 1406 B.C. as Moses is speaking to the people of Israel. The setting is the east side of the Jordan River, on the plains of Moab in view of the land of Canaan, where the Jordan River flows into the Dead Sea. The Israelites are ready to enter the Promised Land. It was time to break camp and move on.

The first 4 chapters of Deuteronomy is where Moses reviews the mighty acts of God during their 40-year journey that probably should have only lasted 11 years. It wasn't the distance that took so long, but the conditions of their hearts that needed extra time to purify.

## **A History Lesson from Moses**

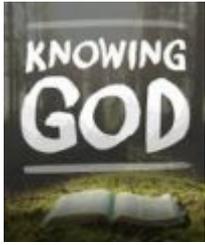
The Israelites carried the pagan rituals of the regions they traveled throughout their journey. Their disobedience and dissent grew each day. Yet God's promise to make them a great nation remained constant.

Moses replays the lessons from their ancestors (which you can read in my posts on the lessons from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers). God has already disciplined Moses by forbidding him to cross the Jordan. Several times in their journey, Moses took credit for miracles and failed to treat God as holy. God told Moses, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them." (Numbers 20:12).

So Moses is preparing to transfer his leadership to Joshua by delivering his final address to the people in three parts as he :

1. Reminds them of the history of God's precious care for the people of Israel,
2. Reviews the Ten Commandments he received at Mount Sinai, and
3. Calls for their commitment to honor their part of the contract made with God.

In this sense, Deuteronomy is about renewal of the covenant with God and to God.



## Concerned About the Details

Responsibility and knowledge come along with God's covenant. Like the Israelites, we are called to become holy people. This requires us to learn more about God and to follow His commandments.

- Are there some new practices like prayer, reading a devotional, or joining a Bible study that you begin to help purify your heart?

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In chapters 5 through 28 Moses restated the Ten Commandments given to him in Exodus. He explains the details of the principles for living as God's chosen nation. These instructions included how to love the Lord, the laws of worship, laws regarding relationships, and the consequences and penalties if these laws are broken.



## Honoring Your Parents

At this point, we have learned of the Ten Commandments in both Exodus and Deuteronomy. The fifth Commandment – to honor your mother and father, is a tough one for many who grew up in an abusive or unloving household. It's difficult to appreciate our parents, accept their authority, treat them with respect, and provide for them when they get old and need our support unless we follow this commandment.

Everyone has a right to distance themselves from their dysfunctional, toxic relationships. It's a conundrum when the stress of a difficult relationship with a parent or parents begins to bleed into your own nuclear family. It can consume one's marriage or effect raising your children. But we do have an obligation to honor our parents, as difficult as that is at times.

- How has the concept of honoring your parents changed over time?
- Who do you value more: your spouse or your parents?
- Why is it important to establish proper boundaries once you are married and become a parent?



## Fatherhood

Research shows that if you don't work hard at establishing your own style of parenting, you will fall back on your parent's child-rearing habits, whether those were healthy or not.

- What type of parenting style did your father use? Loving & understanding or strict & authoritative?
- How can you be more purposeful in your parenting?

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Chapters 10-16 specifically are about the call to love and obey God and His laws for proper worship, tithing and debts. It also includes strong warnings against idolatry. In summary, we're to fear God (have reverence for Him), live in a way that pleases Him, love Him, serve Him with all our heart and soul, and obey His commandments.



**The perfect church is out there; I just have to find it.**

Most areas of the country include many options for attending a church. Historically, the main church was in the center of town so all people could easily attend. Nowadays the splinters of denominations and numerous church-plants provide many

options, especially in larger urban and suburban areas.

You've probably heard the line, "If you find the perfect church, don't join it!" The reality is there is no perfect church on earth and you need to stop looking for it. Churches contain flawed people trying to do their best. You may find that the preacher is not the best orator, the music is traditional or too contemporary, or there are not enough children. So instead of church-shopping, choose one and commit to it.

- Take inventory of the number of churches you visited in the last 5 years. What were the strengths and weaknesses of each?
- What keeps you from committing to one church and sticking with it?

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Chapters 17-26 in Deuteronomy include the laws for ruling the nation and laws for our human relationships. This includes guidelines for judges, officials, and kings. Chapters explain the gifts of the priests and Levites who served much like our ministers today by teaching the people about God, setting an example of godly living, and caring for the sanctuary and workers. These chapters also include the rights of the firstborn, handling of rebellious children, and other regulations about death, sexual purity, and worship.

Chapters 27 & 28 are about the consequences and curses of disobedience but also the blessings of obedience. Chapter 29 and 30 is Moses' third address: a call to commitment.

Finally, in chapters 31 through 34, Moses hands over his authority to Joshua, and commissions him. Moses sings to the people and provides specific blessings to each of the tribes. He heads up to Mt. Nebo where God shows him the Promised Land, even though he cannot enter it, and dies at the age of 120 years old.



## **God Buddy Focus**

God's commandments were provided as reminders of how we are to trust, love, and obey Him. They remind us of how to treat people. They help us maintain justice and respect for all. Choosing to abandon those commandments can bring about way more harm to ourselves and to others. But obedience helps encourage us on our long journey through the deserts of loneliness and despair.

God wants us to embed those instructions in our own hearts and minds so we do not live undisciplined and die short of the Promised Land, like Moses. He also desires us to pass on these truths to future generations.

This week:

1. What family traditions have been passed on to you?
2. Was your family active in a church? Do you know why or

why not?

3. Discuss with your God Buddies the ways we can honor our parents.
4. Review your current church participation with your God Buddies. Form a covenant to become more involved in teaching, serving and caring for your own family and the needs of others.