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Deuteronomy 1-4

“Three Reasons to Keep God’s Word”

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As we begin Pastor Gary’s series in the book of Deuteronomy, it’s important to have a basic understanding of some historical facts and background. The Greek word, Deuteronomy, means, “second law.” It’s not that this is another set of Laws from God, but the same Law for a new generation. Remember, the first generation died in the desert on their way to the Promised Land. The second generation, which grew up in the desert in the previous forty years, had never really heard the Law of God that was given to their parents, so just before they entered the land, Moses gave them a review of their history and the Law of God.

Moses wrote Deuteronomy as a narrative, approximately 1450BC, when he was about 120 years old. Most of the book was written in the first person, with the exception being the last few chapters, which read like an epilogue. The final days and death of Moses are recorded in these chapters, and the author is most likely Joshua.

Other interesting facts about Deuteronomy include: the book covers only about one month of time; it’s the most quoted book in the New Testament, and the most quoted book by Jesus; the word “love” appears more times in this book (21 times) than the previous four books combined (15 times).

In this study, Pastor Gary looks at three ways keeping God’s Word will be a blessing for us, those who don’t know God, and future generations.

Historical Background

1. In [Deuteronomy 1:2](#), Moses included a parenthetical comment about the journey that should have taken about eleven days, actually taking them almost 40 years!
 - a. The reason it took that long was sin and rebellion.
 - b. An entire generation died in the wilderness because of their refusal to believe God and enter into the Promised Land.
2. Now, nearly 40 years after the first generation died, a new generation needed to know the specifics of what God expected of his people: they needed to know the commandments of God.
 - a. [Deuteronomy 1:3](#) - *“In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses proclaimed to the Israelites all that the Lord had commanded him concerning them.”*
3. [Deuteronomy 1:6](#) mentions Horeb ¹ as being the place God told the people to enter the land.
4. Moses gave them what we might call “Freshman Orientation.”
 - a. He basically said, “Let me explain how we got to this place!”
 - b. He told them about the appointed leaders - [Deuteronomy 1:9-13](#)
 - c. He told them about the spies who were sent to check out the land - [Deuteronomy 1:19-25](#)
 - d. He told them the bad news about their parents! - [Deuteronomy 1:26-36](#)
 - e. He told them about their parents wandering around the desert for nearly 40 years - [Deuteronomy 2](#)
 - f. He told them about God being angry with their parents and that because he was angry too, he would not be able to go into the Promised Land - [Deuteronomy 3:26-29](#)
5. Starting in [Deuteronomy 4](#), Moses “schooled” the people with lessons about God and his commandments, and he told them that following God’s decrees, laws, and commandments would be absolutely vital.

Keeping God’s Word For Personal Benefit

6. [Deuteronomy 4:1-5](#) - *“Hear now, O Israel, the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you. Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of*

¹ Horeb is another name for Mt. Sinai.

the Lord your God that I give you. You saw with your own eyes what the Lord did at Baal Peor. The Lord your God destroyed from among you everyone who followed the Baal of Peor, but all of you who held fast to the Lord your God are still alive today. See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the Lord my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it.”

7. Moses, referring to [Numbers 25](#) and the time the Moabite women seduced the fighting men of Israel to engage in sexual sin and idolatry, explained, “You saw what happened to people when they sin against God; they die! You are still alive because you held fast to the Lord and didn’t give in to sin!”
8. There is a correlation between honoring God and enjoying his favor, and dishonoring God and experiencing the consequences.
9. If we honor God, we are not promised that we will live a perfect life or ever experience difficulties, and the reason is because there will naturally be troubles because we live in a fallen world.
10. We will invite double-trouble if we choose to live in rebellion to God.
11. [Proverbs 13:15](#) - *“... the way of transgressors is hard.”* (KJV)
12. We make things worse for ourselves and harder for ourselves when we sin against God, and, eventually, sin leads to death and judgment.
13. A common theme in the book of Deuteronomy is the simple truth that we need to “get right with God” so that it may go well for us.
 - a. [Deuteronomy 4:40](#) - *“Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you...”*
 - b. [Deuteronomy 6:3](#) - *“Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, promised you.”*
 - c. [Deuteronomy 6:18](#) - *“Do what is right and good in the Lord’s sight, so that it may go well with you...”*
 - d. [Deuteronomy 12:28](#) - *“Be careful to obey all these regulations I am giving you, so that it may always go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is good and right in the eyes of the Lord your God.”*

14. The New Testament book of James also has something to say about this subject.
- a. **James 1:22** - *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”*
 - b. **James 1:25** - *“But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it - he will be blessed in what he does.”*
15. God’s Word is given for our:
- a. Comfort and correction
 - b. Wisdom and direction
 - c. Blessing and salvation
16. It’s obvious the Bible teaches there is an undeniable, intrinsic value attached to knowing God’s Word and doing what it says!

Keeping God’s Word For The Benefit Of Others Who Don’t Know God

17. **Deuteronomy 4:5-8** - *“See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the Lord my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him? And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?”*
18. Moses told the people that if they would obey the Word of God, their lives would be a testimony, which would cause other nations to notice God.
19. The same can be said of Christians today, because when we live a life that honors God, is obedient to his will and his ways, and worships him, we will put God on display and cause him to be seen by others.
20. **Matthew 5:16** - *“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*
21. **1 Peter 3:15** - *“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”*

22. **1 Timothy 1:15-16** - *“Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners - of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.”*

Keeping God’s Word For The Benefit Of The Next Generation

23. **Deuteronomy 4:9-10** - *“Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, when he said to me, ‘Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children.’ ”*

24. It’s interesting to note that the word *“teach”* in verse nine is different than the word *“teach”* in verse ten.

- a. The Hebrew word, yada, is used in verse nine, and it means to teach by example, to learn by observation.
- b. The Hebrew word, lamad, is used in verse ten, and it means to train.
 - i. Lamad is the same root word for ox goad, which was a tool used for prodding oxen, and it communicates the idea of gently prodding and guiding your children in the course of life.

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read **Deuteronomy 4:1-10** to provide an overview for this study.
 - a. It might be helpful for some of the people in your group to understand the overview of Israel’s history. (See #4 above)
3. What are some of the blessings you’ve received from the Lord because you’ve obeyed the Scriptures?
4. How have you experienced the direct correlation between honoring God and enjoying his favor?
 - a. Read and discuss the Scriptures listed in #13 and #14 above.

5. How have you experienced the direct correlation between dishonoring God and realizing the consequences?
 - a. Read and discuss [Proverbs 13:15](#).

6. Read and discuss [1 Peter 3:15](#) and [Matthew 5:16](#).
 - a. It's implied in this verse that people notice something different in our lives, so the question begs to be asked, "Do others see something different in your life?"
 - b. What are the characteristics of an undercover Christian?
 - c. What are the characteristics of a Christian whose life sends a mixed message?

7. Read and discuss [1 Timothy 1:15-16](#).
 - a. How willing would you be to believe someone who had a testimony like this one?
 - i. "I was messed up to the core, and I'm the worst sinner ever! But Jesus Christ came along and took someone like me, loved me, forgave me, changed me, and saved me, so I can be an example of what he can do for you!"

8. Spend time talking about the different Hebrew words for teach. (See #24 above)
 - a. Is the way you're living preparing a Christ-like legacy for future generations? (How about the way you: live, talk, treat your spouse and others, react, discipline, encourage, manage your money, love and spend time with your family, etc.?)

9. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: learn God's Word, live God's Word, and teach God's Word to others; obey the Word of God for their benefit, the benefit of others who don't know God, and for the benefit of the next generation.