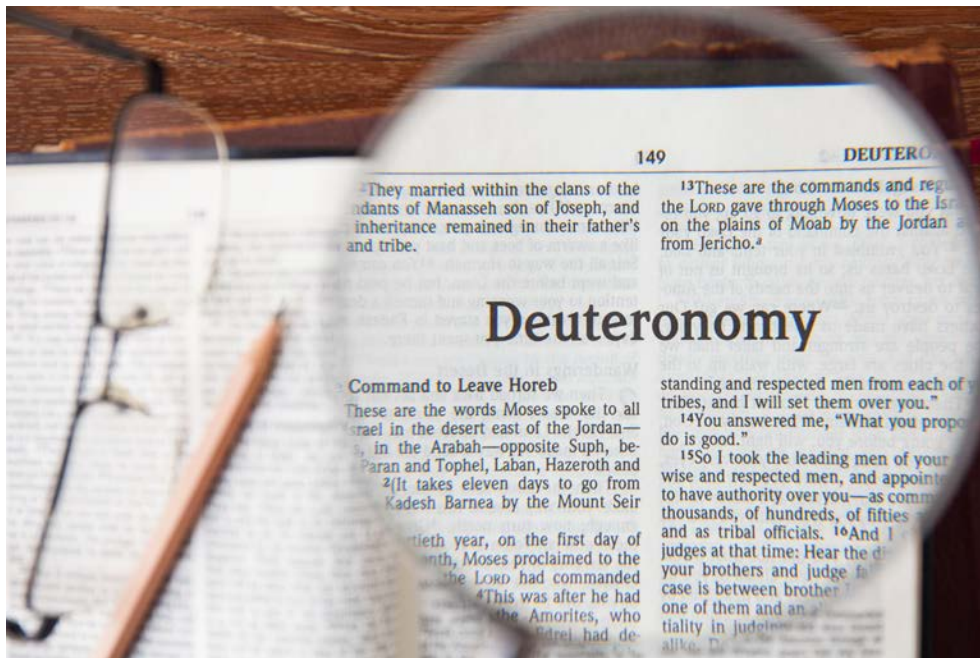


THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS: DEUTERONOMY 5



T. M. and Susie Moore

A Scriptorium Study

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Ten Commandments: Deuteronomy 5
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Susie Moore, Editing and Finishing
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Introduction to Deuteronomy 5

Having set the stage historically, Moses now proceeds to declare the Ten Commandments for a second time. Everything that follows in the book of Deuteronomy will develop, clarify, illustrate, and enlarge on what Moses writes here.

The Law of God comes from God, Who is great and powerful and filled with love for His people. If we can keep God in mind, and continue trusting in Him, we won't have any problem keeping His commandments.

And if we do that, we'll know full and abundant life in Jesus Christ.

Susie and I hope you will find this study challenging and enriching for your walk with and work for the Lord.

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T. M. and Susie Moore

1 God's Covenant

Opening Prayer: Psalm 119.145-148

I cry out with *my* whole heart;
Hear me, O LORD!
I will keep Your statutes.
I cry out to You;
Save me, and I will keep Your testimonies.
I rise before the dawning of the morning,
And cry for help;
I hope in Your word.
My eyes are awake through the *night* watches,
That I may meditate on Your word.

Psalm 119.145-148

(Finlandia: [Be Still My Soul](#))

With my whole heart, I cry to You, O Lord!
Lord, answer me! Your statutes I will keep.
I call to You; save me! I love Your Word.
I cry to You, arising from my sleep.
My hope is in Your holy Word, O Lord;
I meditate upon Your promise sweet.

Today's Text: Deuteronomy 5.1-5

Preparation

1. What was Israel to do with the statutes and judgments Moses spoke to them?
2. What did God make with His people?

Meditation

Having reminded the people of God's uniqueness and love, and of their history from Egypt to Moab, Moses turned to the second giving of the Law, His "statutes and judgments" (v. 1).

Three injunctions are issued to Israel: They must *hear* the Law of God, and not only at that moment, when Moses was giving it to them; but continually, individually and corporately, they must attend to the hearing of the Law, whether by reading or listening.

Second, they must *learn* the Law of God. Reading or hearing is not enough. They must apply their minds to understand, their hearts to embrace, and their consciences to value the Law as the guiding light of their souls.

Finally, they must "be careful to observe" the statutes and judgments of God (v. 1). The Law – and all the Word of God – is meant to give direction and power for our lives, that we might know the blessings and promises of God and demonstrate His wisdom to the world.

Moses invoked the memory of God's covenant. That covenant did not have its beginnings in Exodus 20. Rather, the covenant given to Israel through Moses was but a further and more specific development of *God's* covenant. God began to give His covenant to Adam and Eve, then to Noah and Abraham, and at this point to Israel through Moses. It's the same covenant, which may be summarized by the familiar motto that recurs throughout Scripture: "I will be your God, and you will be My people." In the giving of the Law, the

administration of God's covenant was "updated" – like your computer operating system – to take into account the changing needs and situation of God's people. But the original mandate remained: "be fruitful and multiply", just as God had given it to Adam and Eve and restated it to Noah. And the first specific refinement of that – that Israel would be blessed to be a blessing to the world – which was given through Abraham, is here brought forward, enlarged, and made more specific by the giving of statutes and judgments.

Moses mediated God's covenant to Israel at Horeb (vv. 2-5). In that respect, he is a foreshadowing and type of Jesus, Who mediates God's new covenant on Calvary. The new covenant is itself but a further development of God's one covenant, which He enters with all who believe in Him.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

"I stood between the LORD and you at that time...for you were afraid of the fire..." (Deut. 5.5). Moses did mediate between God and the people. And they were thankful that he did. Job longed and cried out for a mediator: "For He is not a man, as I am, that I may answer Him, and that we should go to court together. Nor is there any mediator between us, who may lay his hand on us both" (Job. 9.32, 33). But we, like the children of Israel, have a Mediator Who stands between God and us, and how grateful we are for Him! "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all..." (1 Tim. 2.5, 6).

Reflection

1. In what sense was Moses a "mediator" between God and the people of Israel? What did he mediate to them? How did he have authority to mediate this to the people?
2. How do you see that the covenant God made with Israel is a further development of God's already-existing covenant?
3. How does Jesus serve as the "one Mediator between God and man"? What does He mediate to us?

In these words he commends the Law; because it must be accounted a peculiar blessing, and a very high honor to be taken into covenant by God. Wherefore, that they may anxiously prepare themselves to embrace the Law, he says that what was above all things to be desired had been freely offered to them, viz., that they should be united in covenant with God.. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Deuteronomy* 5.2

Nothing is impossible with You, O Lord! Help me today as I...

Closing Prayer: Psalm 119.12-17.

Pray that the Lord will impress the lessons of Israel's obedience and disobedience on you, and ask Him for guidance today in realizing more of His precious and very great promises.

Psalm 119.12-17

(Passion Chorale: [*O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*](#))

Be blessed, O God our Savior, teach us Your holy Word!

Our lips proclaim with favor the statutes of the Lord.

How great our joy, dear Jesus, to follow in Your ways.

What more than this could please us, or brighten all our days?

We contemplate Your precepts and cherish all Your ways,
delighting in Your statutes, rememb'ring all our days.
With wondrous bounty bless us, Your humble servants, Lord,
that we may live with Jesus and keep His holy Word.

2 The First Three Commandments

Opening Prayer: Psalm 119.1-4.

Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way,
Who walk in the law of the LORD!
Blessed *are* those who keep His testimonies,
Who seek Him with the whole heart!
They also do no iniquity;
They walk in His ways.
You have commanded *us*
To keep Your precepts diligently.

Psalm 119.1-4

(Ode to Joy: [Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee](#))

Blessed are they whose way is blameless, all who walk within God's Law,
who, His testimonies keeping, seek Him, filled with joy and awe.
These are they who, no wrong doing, ever walk within God's ways.
Lord, Your precepts You command us; we would keep them all our days.

Today's Text: Deuteronomy 5.6-11

Preparation

1. What do you learn about God from these three commandments?
2. What are some examples of the kinds of sin these commandments proscribe?

Mediation

The Law of God begins with the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are to the rest of God's Law – all the statutes, precepts, testimonies, judgments, and rules – as the United States Constitution is to the state constitutions and case laws and civil statutes that have been created over the years. The Constitution defines the broad parameters of American law; all other laws refine our understanding and application of the Constitution to specific instances. So also with the Ten Commandments and the rest of God's Law.

Fittingly, the Law of God begins by directing our attention and obedience to Him. God does not need us, or anything else (Acts 17.24, 25). God is complete within Himself – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He knows infinite and unchanging fellowship, joy, and pleasure, and His great desire is that we should share in that with Him. This is what we are made for as His image-bearers. God, Augustine wrote, has made us for Himself; and our souls are restless and ill at ease until we find our rest in Him.

The Law shows us how to do this. The first commandment instructs us to focus all our attention, desire, devotion, worship, and obedience on God alone, for He alone is God. He is the LORD, the eternal I AM, the Maker of all things and Savior of His people. We must look only to Him, to increase in the knowledge of Him, which is eternal life (Jn. 17.3).

The second commandment warns us against deferring or redirecting any devotion to created things, whether false gods, carved idols, or man-made dreams and schemes, as though these were the ultimate values and truth. Idolatry is always the great distraction for people, because it promises a shortcut to happiness without the requirement of holiness. God will have none of this, because not only does this do injustice to Him, idolatry also short-circuits our true happiness and fulfillment.

By believing in God, we take His Name upon us: We are the people of God. And in New Testament terms,

Hearing God's Word: Deuteronomy 3, 4

we are Christians. We must not take this Name upon us to no effect. This is the true meaning of the third commandment. Yes, of course, we must not use God's Name in vulgar speech. But even beyond that, if we say we are the people of God, then we must live as He intends, according to His commandments.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

We are to love God most, always, wholeheartedly, and unflinchingly. And if we don't, or won't, God says that we hate Him. He is a jealous God. He says to us, "Do not go after other gods to serve them and worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands; and I will not harm you" (Jer. 25.6). This should make us so horrified and sad that we long for nothing more than to make Him know for certain that we love Him. Jesus says to us, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (Jn. 14.15). It is the same requirement, Old and New. The same yesterday, today, and forever. Holiness demands our love priority must be to God.

Reflection

1. Why did God direct the first three commandments toward Himself?
2. What do the first three commandments require of us?
3. Why is God so adamant against idols?

God is here set before us in the character of a husband, who suffers no rival; or if it be preferred to extend the meaning of the word, He is called the assertor of His rights; since His rivalry is nothing more than retaining what is His own, and thus excluding all the rivals of His honor. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Deuteronomy 5.9

Help me daily, Lord, to renew devotion to You, to grow in love for You, and to...

Closing Prayer: Pray Psalm 119.5-8

Ask the Lord to keep you in all your ways within the loving parameters of His Word. Pray specifically about the day ahead.

Psalm 119.5-8

(Ode to Joy: [*Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee*](#))

Let my ways steadfastly keep to all the statutes of Your Word.
Then shall I, no shame enduring, fix my eyes on You, O Lord!
With an upright heart I praise You; in Your rules will I abide.
I will keep Your statutes wholly; keep me ever by Your side.

3 The Fourth Commandment

Opening Prayer: Psalm 92.1-4

It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High;
To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning,
And Your faithfulness every night,
On an instrument of ten strings,
On the lute,
And on the harp,
With harmonious sound.
For You, LORD, have made me glad through Your work;
I will triumph in the works of Your hands.

Psalm 92.1-4

(Sweet Hour: [Sweet Hour of Prayer](#))

How good it is to thank the Lord and praise to God Most High accord;
by day to let His kindness ring, His faithfulness by night to sing.
With ten-stringed lute, resounding lyre, and sweetest harp we'll lift You higher.
For You have made our souls rejoice; we sing Your praise with blended voice!

Today's Text: Deuteronomy 5.12-15

Preparation

1. What are we supposed to do with the Sabbath Day?
2. What reason did God give for keeping this commandment?

Meditation

The two givings of the fourth commandment are extremely interesting. First, two different verbs are given – “remember” (Ex. 20.8) and “observe” or even “guard” (Deut. 5.12). “Remember” means “to attend to diligently and faithfully”; “observe” or “guard” means actively to keep the Sabbath from being compromised. Second, two different reasons for remembering and guarding the Sabbath are proffered – first, to remember God’s work of creating everything in six days and resting on the seventh (Ex. 20.11); and second, as a way of remembering God’s deliverance from captivity (Deut. 5.15).

Thus, in considering how to fulfill the requirements of this commandment, a wide range of truly interesting and edifying possibilities open to us. Imagine a matrix, set up like this:

	<u>God's Work of Creation</u>	<u>God's Work of Redemption</u>
Remember		
Guard		

How many activities can you think to list under those headings and according to those verbs? Plenty! Plenty enough, in fact, that if we are diligent in keeping the Sabbath, we won't have time for all those things that normally distract us from resting on the Lord's Day as He intends.

God is serious about remembering and guarding the Day He has set apart as His own. We should be as well. The rest God has in store for us is so necessary and enriching, that we rob ourselves – and God – when we fail to keep His Day according to His Word.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy” (Ex. 20.8). “Observe the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy” (Deut. 5.12). Both verbs lead us to the ultimate condition of holiness. We need a day of rest to remember His works of creation and redemption, so that we can increase in holiness. Then holiness will characterize our conduct, since it is written, “Be holy for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1.15, 16), because “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love...” (Eph. 1.4). This is the best rest, the obedient rest, and the good rest. Happily, Jesus tells us, “it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (Matt. 12.12). Knowing this, the rest is up to us!

Reflection

1. Why do you think people find it so difficult to remember and observe the Lord's Day?
2. What is your practice for keeping the Sabbath Day holy?
3. What kind of rest does God require of us and promise us when we keep the Sabbath Day as God intends?

Was this day of “rest” given merely as a day off? No, one of the most important purposes of the Sabbath was to provide a day for believers to worship and focus on God, as individuals and communities (Is. 58:13, 14). It is not that we are free to ignore God on the other six days; every day belongs to Him. But by designating one day as a special opportunity to come before the Lord, we demonstrate our dependence on Him as Creator and our obedience to Him as Lord. Earl Radmacher (1931-2014), NKJV Study Bible Notes to Deuteronomy 5.12-15

Lord, I don't want to miss anything You have in store for me, so help me on Your Day to...

Closing Prayer: Psalm 92.5-15

Thank God for His many great works, especially the work of creation and redemption. Call on Him to help you flourish and grow strong.

Psalm 92.5-15

(Sweet Hour: [Sweet Hour of Prayer](#))

How sweet Your works, Your thoughts how deep: The fool cannot such knowledge keep.
Like grass the wicked rise each day; in judgment they are swept away.
But You, O Lord, abide on high; Your enemies shall fall and die.
All those who sin shall scattered be, but, Lord, You have exalted me!

My eye my vanquished foe shall see; my ears hear those who threaten me.
Yet in God's house, where he belongs, the righteous like a tree grows strong.
Then let us green and fruitful be and flourish like a mighty tree,
to tell God's righteousness abroad: He is our Rock, our sovereign God!

4 The Last Six Commandments

Opening Prayer: Psalm 19.7, 8

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;
The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes...

Psalm 19.7, 8

(St. Christopher: [*Beneath the Cross of Jesus*](#))

The Law of God is perfect, His testimony sure.
The simple man God's wisdom learns, the soul receives its cure.
God's Word is right, and His command is pure, and truth imparts;
He makes our eyes to understand; with joy He fills our hearts.

Today's Text: Deuteronomy 5.16-21

Preparation

1. How do these commandments encourage love for neighbors?
2. What does the tenth commandment address?

Meditation

The first four commandments outline our duty in loving God. The last six guide us in loving our neighbors. The Law of God thus provides reliable and unchanging guardrails for traveling the path of righteousness. To set this Law aside, or to neglect it, is to encourage the flourishing of wickedness (Prov. 28.4), blunt the efficacy of your prayers (Prov 28.9), relegate yourself to Kingdom mediocrity (Matt. 5.17-19), and cool the fires of love for God and our neighbors in your soul (Matt. 24.12).

As you read through these six commandments, try doing two things. First, get in mind the people in your Personal Mission Field, especially those you expect to see or communicate with today. Second, as you read through the commandments – especially 6-10 – set them into a positive frame. Of course, you don't want to murder your neighbors, or even harbor ill will toward them (Matt. 5.22); but what can you do to enrich their lives today? How will you guard your heart against lust (Matt. 5.27, 28)? You perhaps will not steal from your neighbors today, but can you think of anything you can do to add to their lives? Resist every temptation to lie or stretch the truth; instead, plan and pray now for grace to speak the truth in love at every opportunity (Eph. 4.15). Instead of allowing covetousness to take root in your heart, cultivate the discipline of thanksgiving and the attitude of contentment in all things.

Obedying the Law of God is the source of full and abundant life in Christ (Lev. 18.1-5; Jn. 14.6). We don't obey the Law to *gain* Christ, but to *increase in Him* in every aspect of our lives. The Law cannot save us; only Jesus can do that. But once He saves us, He calls us to follow Him, and that means keeping the commandments of God (1 Jn. 2.1-6). Thus, the more we meditate on these commandments and pray through them each day, the more we can expect to increase in them and in Jesus.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“Honor your father and your mother...” (Deut. 5.16). This is our first foray into obeying the relational commandments. Parents are our first attempt at personal interactions. These are not always people who are easy to love; but love and honor them we must. What better place to begin to work on obedience and grace?

In Proverbs 3.27 we're told, "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so." There is a pattern here. We start at the very beginning and then move outward – from our relationship to God, then at home, then on to others. It is the same pattern that Jesus has set up for us as believers in Him: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1.8). The internal change gradually moves outward. "Love does no harm...therefore love is the fulfillment of the law" (Rom. 13.10). First at home. Then to the world.

Reflection

1. Why are these *commandments*, rather than, say, *suggestions*?
2. How does keeping the Ten Commandments help us to grow in love for God and our neighbors? What kind of love is this?
3. What can you do to add reflecting on the Ten Commandments as part of your spiritual life?

There the finger of God worked upon tables of stone: here upon the hearts of men. So there the law was set outside men to be a terror to the unjust: here it was given within them to be their justification. "For this: you shall not commit adultery, you shall do no murder, you shall not covet, and if there be any other commandment"—written, as we know, upon those tables—"it is briefly comprehended," said the apostle, "in this saying: you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love works not a neighbor's ill: and charity is the fullness of the law." Augustine (354-430), *On the Spirit and the Letter* 17.29

Keep me from desiring anything more than You, Lord, so that I...

Closing Prayer: Psalm 19.9-14

Thank God for His Law and all His Word. Listen in silence as He searches your soul. Confess your sins and repent; then go forth renewed in God's Word and Spirit to serve Him today.

Psalm 19.9-14

(St. Christopher: [*Beneath the Cross of Jesus*](#))

The fear of God is cleansing, forever shall it last.

His judgments all are true and just, by righteousness held fast.

O seek them more than gold most fine, than honey find them sweet.

Be warned by every word and line; be blessed with joy complete.

Who, Lord, can know his errors? O keep sin far from me!

Let evil rule not in my soul that I may blameless be.

O let my thoughts, let all my words, before Your glorious sight

Be pleasing to You, gracious Lord, acceptable and right!

5 Wrong-Hearted?

Opening Prayer: Psalm 139.1-5

O LORD, You have searched me and known *me*.
You know my sitting down and my rising up;
You understand my thought afar off.
You comprehend my path and my lying down,
And are acquainted with all my ways.
For there is not a word on my tongue,
But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.
You have hedged me behind and before,
And laid Your hand upon me.

Psalm 139.1-5

(Ripley: [Hallelujah! Praise Jehovah. O My Soul!](#))

You have searched me, Lord, and known me, when I sit and when I rise.
From afar, my thoughts discerning, all my path before You lies.
Every word, before it's spoken, You behold and know it well.
Both behind me and before me, Your sweet presence I can tell!

Today's Text: Read Deuteronomy 5.22-31

Preparation

1. Of what were the people afraid when God gave them His Law the first time?
2. What did God lament about His people?

Meditation

This passage is a bit enigmatic. First, although Moses has just given the Law for the second time, he transports the people before him back to Mt. Sinai, forty years earlier. Then, when God appeared to the people in fire and smoke, they feared for their lives (v. 25). They realized that God was real and serious, and so they asked Moses to act as their intermediary with Him (vv. 26, 27). God sent them back to their tents to wait for Moses to return (vv. 30, 31) with all the Law of God.

God commended them for their response to Him (v. 28). Then He denounced them because their fear was only temporary and self-centered, rather than the true fear of God which He expects of us at all times (v. 29). It seems to me that Moses was talking about the people at Mt. Sinai, but meaning to apply this situation to the people before him on the plains of Moab. It's as if, having related this account, he was saying to this new generation, "What about you? Do you have a heart for God? Do you fear Him as He requires (Deut. 10.12)?" That question is left open; subsequent events will answer it for us.

Verse 32 returns to the present, with Moses saying that they should "be careful" to obey all that God commands and to walk in all His ways always (vv. 32, 33). Would this new generation prove faithful to God? Or would they show themselves to be wrong-hearted as well?

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Because Jesus is the Light of the world (Jn. 8.12), we tend to forget about the darkness of God. He spoke from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice (Deut. 5.22). Indeed, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10.31). "Clouds and darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne" (Ps. 97.2). In spite of warnings, the people were

still wrong-hearted. God speaks out of the same darkness to us, telling us to fear Him and always keep all His commandments, that it might be well with us and with our children forever (Deut. 5.29). Jesus' righteousness and justice are the foundation of our salvation; but we must embrace and fear the Power in the darkness to find the Light!

Reflection

1. What does it mean to fear the Lord? Why does the Lord require this of us?
2. How can we know when our heart is turning away from the Lord?
3. How can believers help one another "be careful" to obey all that God commands?

Certainly He has the power of bending and directing men's hearts whithersoever He pleases. Why, then, does He wish that it were given to the people from some other quarter, that they should be always kept in the path of duty, except that, speaking in the character of a man, He shows that it was rather to be wished than hoped that the people would constantly persevere in their fidelity? John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Deuteronomy 5.29*

Fill my heart with fear of and love for You, Lord, so that I will...

Closing Prayer: Psalm 139.6-18, 23, 24

Thank God for making you, saving you, giving you His Word, and sending His Spirit to dwell in you. Wait on Him to search the condition of your heart.

Psalm 139.6-18, 23,24

(Ripley: [*Hallelujah! Praise Jehovah, O My Soul!*](#))

Just to know this is more wondrous than my seeking soul can know.
From Your ever-present Spirit there is nowhere I can go.
Whether high above the heaven or below the earth in hell,
even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your Right Hand hold me well!

Neither light nor dark conceals me; day as night is with You, Lord!
All my inward parts You fashioned by Your all-decreeing Word.
Praise the Lord, for You have made me; all Your wondrous works I'll tell!
All Your works declare Your glory, and my soul knows this full well!

All my unformed frame You witnessed when You destined all my days.
Precious to me, Lord, Your precepts; all Your wondrous Word I praise.
More than sand, Your thoughts to me, Lord, far too vast their sum for me!
When the morning breaks upon me, in Your presence I shall be.

Search my heart, O Lord, and know me, as You only, Lord, can do.
Test my thoughts and contemplations, whether they be vain or true.
Let there be no sin in me, Lord, nothing that Your Spirit grieves.
Lead me in the righteous way, Lord, unto everlasting peace!

6 Three Commands, Three Promises

Opening Prayer: Psalm 105.1-5

Oh, give thanks to the LORD!
Call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples!
Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;
Talk of all His wondrous works!
Glory in His holy name;
Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD!
Seek the LORD and His strength;
Seek His face evermore!
Remember His marvelous works which He has done,
His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth...

Psalm 105.1-5

(Warrington: Give to Our God Immortal Praise)

Give thanks unto the Lord Most High;
call on His Name, before Him cry!
Make known His deeds in every land;
sing praise for all the works of His hand.

Glory in God, rejoice in heart,
all you who seek His holy part.
Him and His strength and Presence seek;
His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

Today's Text: Deuteronomy 5.32, 33

Preparation

1. What three promises do you see here?
2. What three commands did Moses give?

Meditation

Moses has just given the Ten Commandments to this new generation, who are about to enter the promised land of Canaan. He again sternly warned them against the hard-heartedness of their parents, promising that if they would devote themselves to Him and obey Him in all things, it would "be well with them and with their children forever!" (Deut. 5.29)

Now, to emphasize the need for obedience, and to enlarge before them the magnitude of what God promised, Moses restates the call to obedience in three commands, and reissues the promises of God in a three-faceted gem. More of God's Law is yet to come; but this brief interlude allows Moses the opportunity to remind the people that these words are not merely to be received with some form of intellectual assent.

Three commands reinforce the duty of obedience: "be careful to do"; "not turn aside"; and "walk in all the ways" of the Lord. The verbs used here indicate activity, direction, and progress. Obeying God is a matter of *doing* what He commands, exerting ourselves, soul and body, to bring the beauty and righteousness of God's Law to realization in our daily lives. We are on a journey, and the path is clearly marked by the twin guardrails of love for God and love for neighbor. We must not stray beyond these; rather, we must "walk in all the

ways” marked out by that path, all that God commands us in His Law.

But we don't do this so that God will save us by our works. We are saved; as Israel had been delivered from Egypt, so we have been delivered by grace through faith from our sins and guilt by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. So we do what God commands, keep on the straight path, and walk in all our ways according to His Word, so that we might know the precious and very great promises He has for us.

And these are precious and very great indeed: “that you may live and *that it may be* well with you, and *that* you may prolong *your* days in the land which you shall possess” (v. 33). What more could we want than to be assured of these all the days of our life? We gain the promises of God's Word through obedience to the commandments of God's Word. And by so doing, we know Him, His Presence, His promises, and His power increasingly, in every aspect of our lives.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

The car owner's manual recommends molasses for really good mileage. Washing machine booklets suggest that tar cleans efficiently. Just be sure to use the right amount. Water is an excellent way to clean your computer keyboard. “If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?” (Lk. 11.11-13) What exactly are we thinking when God, the Creator of the entire world and of all the people in it, tells us through His User's Manual (the Bible) exactly how we should live, and then act like we know better? We prefer not to follow His wisdom and commands. Are we crazy? Who does that? Do we really choose molasses over gasoline? Tar in place of detergent? Water instead of air? Or stones, serpents, and scorpions? Our trustworthy Guide tells us, “Stay always within the boundaries where God's love can reach and bless you” (Jude 1.21, *The Living Bible*). Let's follow His commandments always, because He knows best.

Reflection

1. Why does the Word of God have authority to direct and bless our lives?
2. What can we do to make sure we always do and walk in God's paths, and not stray?
3. Are you making the best possible use of the User Manual God has provided for you?

He adds, in conclusion, that they will not satisfy the Law unless they keep themselves within its bounds; and in order that they may be more disposed to obedience, he gently attracts them by subjoining the promise. John Calvin (1506-1564), *Commentary on Deuteronomy 5.32*

Keep me in the path of Your Word, O Lord, so that I...

Closing Prayer: Psalm 105.26-45

Give thanks for Jesus and your salvation. Ask God to show you how His promises might play out in your life today, and where you need to “be careful” to follow all His commands.

Psalm 105.26-45

[*\(Warrington: Give to Our God Immortal Praise\)*](#)

He brought His people from Egypt alive,
and made their joy and song revive.
He made the nations' land their own,
and all the wealth that they had known.

To them He granted the promised land,
the portion of His gracious hand.
Though they were few, and wandered far,

Hearing God's Word: Deuteronomy 3, 4

He kept them close within His heart.

So let us all in our Savior confide,
and in His holy Law abide.
Let us observe His glorious Word,
and praise our sovereign, faithful Lord!

7 God and His Law

Pray Psalm 78.1-5.

Give ear, O my people, to my law;
Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
I will open my mouth in a parable;
I will utter dark sayings of old,
Which we have heard and known,
And our fathers have told us.
We will not hide *them* from their children,
Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD,
And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.
For He established a testimony in Jacob,
And appointed a law in Israel,
Which He commanded our fathers,
That they should make them known to their children...

Sing Psalm 78.1-5

Psalm 78.1-5 (Foundation: *How Firm a Foundation*)

Give ear, O my people, attend to my word,
dark sayings and parables sent from the Lord,
things we have before by our fathers been told,
which we would not dare from our children withhold.

The glorious deeds of our God in His might,
and all of the works He has done in our sight,
together with all of the words of His Law,
would we on ourselves and our children bestow.

Read Deuteronomy 5; meditate on Deuteronomy 5.2-4

Prepare.

1. What do we learn about God from this chapter?
2. What does God require of those He has saved to be His own people?

Meditate.

The Law of God, in the form of the Ten Commandments, is prominent in Deuteronomy 5. Everything in chapters 1-4 has been leading to this moment, when Moses restates the laws, statutes, precepts, judgments, and testimonies God has prepared for His people.

We only understand the Law of God rightly as we keep in mind Him Who gave it. Throughout Deuteronomy 5 are glimpses, reminders, and implied teachings about God that should encourage us to embrace His Law as that which is best for us in every situation. Let's take a closer look at some of these insights about God.

Moses first reminds us that God has made a covenant with His people (v. 2). On His own initiative, and for the blessing of His people and the entire world, God entered into a commitment of blessing and peace with the people He chose, out of the infinite depths of His love, to establish as His own people. That covenant committed God to fulfill certain precious and very great promises; it committed His people to always make

sure they were in the path where God could reach and bless them.

Next, Moses reminds us that God revealed Himself and His will to His people (v. 4). He didn't leave them to guess about how to gain the benefits and blessings He promised. He made Himself known in smoke and fire and a trembling earth, and through the deliverance from Egypt which He accomplished for them (vv. 6, 15). He wanted them to know that He is capable of fulfilling all that He has promised.

Knowing the frailty of His people, that they would not long remember what He spoke to them, He wrote His words on tablets of stone, that they will have them always (v. 22). These words show the people of God how to know full and abundant life, and to live safely for generations (vv. 32, 33).

In sum, God showed His glory and greatness to His people (v. 24), that they might believe in Him, fear Him, be grateful toward Him, trust Him, and keep covenant with Him according to His Word. For then all would be well with His people in the land God promised to give them.

Know God in His greatness, love, faithfulness, power, Presence, and mercy. And knowing Him thus, receive, learn, and obey His Law.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

The beautiful covenant God made with His people then is still viable today. Through Jesus, and His perfect keeping of God's Law, we can move forward to know God and lay hold on His promises more fully, and obey His Law more fruitfully. This is how we show Him our love and appreciation. "We love Him because He first loved us." "And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also." "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" (1 Jn. 4.19, 21; 5.3). "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matt. 11.30).

Reflect.

1. Why must we keep God in mind as we consider His commandments?
2. We're not saved by keeping the Law, but we're not saved without keeping it. Explain.
3. What can you do to show more love to God and your neighbor?

Thence is all excuse taken from them, unless, for the sake of manifesting their gratitude, they give themselves up entirely to God, and in return worship with sincere affection Him whom they have experienced to be so bountiful a Father. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Deuteronomy 5.2

Lord, teach me to live from my proper vantage point each day, so that I...

Closing Prayer: Psalm 78.6-16

Ask the Lord to use you today to remind other believers of His greatness, faithfulness, provision, and love. And ask Him for strength to walk the path of His commandments in all you do.

Sing Psalm 78.6-16.

Psalm 78.6-16 (Foundation: *How Firm a Foundation*)

Lord, let all our children arise and declare
the truth of the Lord every day, everywhere,
and set all their hopes in God's wonderful Word,
and never forget all the works of the Lord.

Our fathers were stubborn; they would not obey;
when faced with their foes they in fear turned away.

Hearing God's Word: Deuteronomy 3, 4

God's work of redemption they wholly despised,
forgetting the pow'r He had shown to their eyes.

Hearing God's Word: Deuteronomy 3, 4

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What is the nature of the covenant God has made with His people?
2. Why must we have a clear and growing knowledge of God before we will obey His Law?
3. Jesus fulfilled God's Law (Matt. 5.17-19), and He fulfills all God promises (2 Cor. 1.20). Why should knowing Jesus want us to walk the path of His Law (1 Jn. 2.1-6).
4. How do the Ten Commandments help us in practicing love for God and our neighbors?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Deuteronomy 5? How are you putting that lesson to work in your life?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.