

Deuteronomy 4

Deuteronomy 4:2, 5-8, and 10-17

Launch

In chapters 1–3, Moses looked back on Israel’s journey through the wilderness. Now, in chapter 4, Israel is camping at the edge of the Jordan River, ready to enter the promised land. Before they cross, Moses reminds them of the importance of God’s commands and instructions. These commands weren’t just rules for survival, they were meant to guard their hearts from anything that might pull them away from God’s purpose for them. God gave Israel these commands to prepare them for their purpose: to conquer the promised land and to live as His set-apart people. But there’s also a bigger purpose at play: their obedience and story ultimately point forward to God’s plan to save humanity through Jesus.

Explore

Read the passage

Read through Deuteronomy 4:2, 5–8, and 10–17 together. This week’s promise is that *“God’s purpose requires ruthless focus on Scripture.”* As you read, take time to notice where this truth shows up in the passage and how it connects to God’s purpose for His people.

Next, take out your map (digital copy available online) and locate points 2 and 11. In verses 10 and 15, Moses reminds the Israelites of the events at Mount Sinai, even though they are now camped at Heshbon. Why would Moses bring up Mount Sinai at this moment in their journey? How might remembering their past encounter with God prepare them for what lies ahead?

Finally, open your Deuteronomy books to page 2 and go through the Engage section as a group. *(As a reminder, commit to reading through chapter 5 during the week before next Sunday. And remember, you can always dig deeper and find answers to questions at centralsf.org/34.)*

Apply

In verses 9, 15, and 23, Moses warns the Israelites to “be careful” or “watch out.” The Hebrew word means to diligently guard your heart. Why would Moses remind the people to guard their hearts so closely with Scripture? Share a brief story of a time when you used scripture to guard your heart..

In verses 6 and 7, Moses explains that when Israel obeys God’s commands, the surrounding nations will notice their wisdom and way of life. In the same way, our obedience can impact our Oikos, the people in our relational world. How are you currently living in a way that sets you apart, and where could you grow in living more distinctly as God’s people?

Finally, in verse 2 Moses says, “Do not add to or subtract from these commands.” Why is it so important that God’s Word not be altered? In what ways might we, even unintentionally, add to or take away from Scripture in our own lives?

Pray

Pray for strength and diligence to listen to and obey God’s commands. Pray for discipline to be in God’s Word daily and to ruthlessly focus on Scripture.