



## Lesson 7: The Basic Message: Love God

Deuteronomy 6:4-5; 11:1-18

### Lesson Summary and Objectives

#### Summary

Moses makes the link between love and obedience clear, and he lays out God's promises of rewards and punishments.

#### Learning Outcomes

- Participants can explain the relationship between love/faitth/obedience.
- Participants can evaluate the importance of individual vs. communal responsibility to God.
- Participants can discuss Moses' list of blessings for staying faithful and how they might apply to us.

### Teaching Outline

#### Invite

- What is the best way to motivate you to do something?

#### Inform

##### Reread Deuteronomy 6:4-5

- We've already studied the *Shema* in Deut 6:4-5. This was the command to love God with one's whole being and to find tangible ways to pass on that love to future generations.
- These verses are foundational to today's lesson.

##### Read Deuteronomy 11:1-28 (or selected portions)

- Moving on to chapter 11, we find Moses hitting these same themes again.
- The chapter begins with a command to *love* God and *keep* his requirements/decrees/laws/commands (1).
- Moses reminds the people that their children did not see all the mighty works of God when he brought the people out of Egypt, defeated the Egyptian army, and cared for the people in the wilderness (2-7). Therefore, the people will have to pass on those stories to their children.
- Moses gives them a reason to keep the commands: so that they may have the strength to take the new land and to live long in it (8-10).
- The new land will be a gift given and cared for by God. Their own backbreaking labor will not earn the land for them, nor will their labor be necessary to sustain the land (11-12).
- Now we get to the promises of blessings and curses:

- If the people obey the commands, there will be rain in the new land (13-15).
- If, however, they turn away to worship other gods, there will be no rain, and the ground will dry up, producing no crops and sustaining no livestock (16-17).
- We get a repeat of the instructions of Deut 6, telling the people to find *tangible* ways to keep the covenant reminders in front of the children (18-21).
- Again, we get blessings and curses: Obedience will lead to God driving out all the threatening nations in the new land (22-25).
- Moses makes the linkage crystal clear: obedience will lead to blessings, while disobedience will lead to curses (26-28).

## Investigate

- Discuss the linkage between love of God and obedience to God in these verses.  
How do they naturally fit together? How is this an unexpected combination?
- If you were to ask Moses how to love God, how would he likely answer?
- Read Psalm 1. How does this fit in with today's text? What does it say about consequences for obedience and disobedience?
- Read Ecclesiastes 9:11. How do you square this with Moses' assertion that blessings will come because of obedience?
- Moses is deeply concerned about the generation of children who did not see God's mighty works in Egypt and the wilderness. Why? What does he expect the older generations to do about that?

## Illustrate

- How might we respond to the idea that love for God is a *feeling* we have?
- How do we avoid reading today's chapters as support for a prosperity gospel that ties increasing good words to increasing favor from God?
- If bad things happen in your life, is that a sign you have been disobedient?
- Moses' directives are *communal* (i.e., he's talking about the *people* of God and their obedience/disobedience, blessings/curses, not individual persons and their own actions). How can we then apply this to God's people today? Or can we?

## New Testament Ties

- Read Matt 7:24 and James 2:17. How do these verses relate to today's text?

## Inspire

Ideas for closing:

- Sing "Trust and Obey."
- Read Psalm 1 as a class.
- Recite the *Shema* (Deut 6:4-9) as a class.

For next class session, read Deuteronomy 7-8 and 13, looking for the warnings issued there.