

SESSION 12

Fully Committed

DEUTERONOMY 30:11-20

BELIEVERS ARE TO BE CHARACTERIZED BY A WHOLEHEARTED COMMITMENT TO GOD.



Do you remember when people sat for a professional family photo? Afterward, somebody must decide which photo was best. One of the best ways to pick the favorite is to not consider multiple options at once. Instead, look at only two. Of these two, which is better? Set aside the not chosen one. Place a new picture beside the chosen one and ask, which is better? By comparing only two, you eliminate choice fatigue. Eventually, you've chosen the best photo.

IN WHAT SITUATION HAVE YOU HAD SO MANY OPTIONS THAT IT WAS OVERWHELMING TO PICK ONLY ONE? HOW DID YOU EVENTUALLY DECIDE?

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

For forty years, Moses had been leading God's people from Egypt across the Sinai Peninsula. He and the Israelites were now east of the Jordan River, across from the city of Jericho, on the Plains of Moab. At this point, he was an old man. He had spent his first forty years in Egypt, his second tending to his father-in-law's flocks, and his final forty leading the exodus. God's people were standing on the threshold of the promised land. Moses would only be able to view it from a distance; he would never be allowed to enter.

This week's passage would be Moses's last formal message to the Israelites. It was not for a select few. He "summoned all Israel" and began to speak (29:2). This message would apply to everyone.

In this message, Moses covered three main points. First, he spoke about God's past faithfulness. He reminded them of the Lord's mighty acts that led to the Hebrew slaves being freed from Egyptian captivity. Moses highlighted God's faithful love, grace, and care for His people.

Second, Moses emphasized God's covenant with His people. God had spoken His covenant with Moses at Mount Sinai. God's message at Moab was a renewal of the covenant made at Sinai (29:1-2). God directed His people to obey this covenant because He wanted them to succeed in everything they did. Plus, this covenant would establish them as His people (vv. 9,13).

Third, God was giving His people a basis for hope in the future. Knowing God had shown His power and demonstrated His faithfulness in the past would reassure them of His continued care and protection. The people would certainly face challenges in Canaan. Recalling what God had done in the past would encourage them during challenging days ahead.



11 “This **command** ^A that I give you today is certainly **not too difficult** ^B or beyond your reach. **12** It is **not in heaven** ^C so that you have to ask, ‘Who will go up to heaven, get it for us, and proclaim it to us so that we may follow it?’ **13** And it is not **across the sea** ^D so that you have to ask, ‘Who will cross the sea, get it for us, and proclaim it to us so that we may follow it?’ **14** But the message is very near you, in your mouth and **in your heart**, ^E so that you may follow it. **15** See, today I have set before you life and prosperity, death and adversity. **16** For I am commanding you today to **love the LORD your God**, ^F to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, statutes, and ordinances, so that you may live and multiply, and the LORD your God may bless you in the land you are entering to possess. **17** But if your heart turns away and you do not listen and you are led astray to bow in worship to other gods and serve them, **18** I tell you today that you will **certainly perish** ^G and will not prolong your days in the land you are entering to possess across the Jordan. **19** I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, **20** love the LORD your God, obey him, and remain faithful to him. For **he is your life**, ^H and he will prolong your days as you live in the land the LORD swore to give to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

A. While stated in the singular, the phrase refers to the entirety of God’s covenant demands.

B. Obeying God’s law is not easy, but it also is not reserved for a privileged few. All those in a covenant relationship with Him can understand and obey His instructions.

C. Moses’s first metaphor described accessibility to God’s law. The Lord did not keep His instructions out of reach or impossible to grasp.

D. Moses’s second metaphor emphasized that God’s law does not require great effort to obtain. Essentially, the ancient Israelites were land dwellers. So, for them, placing God’s law across the sea made it virtually impossible to retrieve.

E. To have God’s Word “in your heart” is to know and embrace it internally, not merely by rote. It should affect our actions (Deut. 6:5; 11:18).

F. We express our love for the Lord by two actions: “walk in his ways” and “keep his commands.”

G. The Hebrew states the truth emphatically. Rebelling against God would have devastating consequences for Israel.

H. Life is not found in the law, but in the God who gives and sustains it. Apart from Him, there is no life. Jesus made the same claim (John 14:6).

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. The Command

(Deut. 30:11-14)

We can trust God to give us the ability to obey His commands.

- **How can you respond to people who say it is too difficult to know God's will or to obey His commands?**
- **If people think God's truths are confusing and unattainable, how might that affect their openness to God's Word?**

2. The Commitment

(Deut. 30:15-18)

People must choose whether they will follow God or not.

- **How are people today fooled into thinking there is no penalty for sin?**
- **Based on these verses, what does loving God look like?**

3. The Challenge

(Deut. 30:19-20)

Our desire to follow God influences our descendants' choices to follow Him.

- **What does it mean for you to say God "is your life"? In this context, what does it mean for you to "choose life"?**

Apply the Text

- **Discuss the following: What can you do to understand God's Word better? How can your Bible study group help people with little Bible knowledge to better understand God's Word?**

KEY DOCTRINE:

Man

By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. (See Genesis 3:6-7; James 1:14-15.)

BIBLE SKILL:

Read multiple Bible passages to understand a biblical concept.

Read Deuteronomy 30:19-20; 32:46-47; John 17:3; and Colossians 3:1-4. Reflect on what it means that God is our life. Practically speaking, what does that look like? How does the truth these verses communicate challenge you to adjust your priorities?

TALK IT OUT

Focus on Deuteronomy 30:16. How is love for God expressed according to this verse?

Moses had just reminded the people that God's commands were not beyond their reach (vv. 11-14). God had made His will for His people perfectly clear. His commands were not too difficult to understand. His truth was fully accessible to all who desired to obey it. The apostle Paul used this same passage to show that salvation is accessible to all who will believe in Christ (Rom. 10:6-8). In light of this fact, Moses entreated the people to obey God's commands. He repeated the promise that if they did so, God would bless them in the promised land. Moses also made a connection between loving God and obeying God. Jesus taught the same truth, "If you love me, you will keep my commands" (John 14:15).

What objections might people offer to obeying God and walking in His ways?

What God expects of us is neither unrealistic nor arbitrary. God's commands are understandable, doable, and in our best interest.

Name one way you will demonstrate your love for God this week.

Memorize Deuteronomy 30:16, looking for ways to do the actions called for in the verse.

Prayer Requests / Notes

DAILY EXPLORATION



Day 1: Deuteronomy 30:11-14

Summarize these verses in a sentence.

God repeatedly called His people to keep His commands. “This command” was not beyond comprehension nor “too difficult” to understand or obey. His command “was not in heaven” or “across the sea.” To be “in heaven” would mean God’s covenant was lofty and unattainable. Although God’s message to His people originated in heaven, it was not beyond their reach. One did not have to be an expert to understand, explain, or apply it. What a contrast to the Egyptians’ and Canaanites’ beliefs about their so-called gods. Worshipers hoped to earn their gods’ favor, but their efforts were a hit-or-miss proposition, like playing darts blindfolded.

Rather than being unattainable, God’s message was near. The Hebrew word translated “message” in verse 14 is singular. This underscores the unity of God’s instruction to His people. God has not left us an incoherent rambling of disconnected thoughts and teachings. He has given a unified single message to His people.

To have the message in one’s “heart” meant God’s command and covenant had been woven into the hearer’s very being. Having it in one’s “mouth” meant the person could articulate the content of God’s message. The Lord had a reason for wanting the Israelites to achieve this heart and mouth level of understanding; He wanted His people to “follow” His covenant.

What would you say to someone who claims God’s commands are too difficult?



Day 2: Deuteronomy 30:15-16

Highlight the contrasts in verse 15.

In Hebrew thought, “prosperity” was not limited to having abundant financial resources. Prosperity could also refer to experiencing kindness and living joyfully. In contrast, “adversity” referred to experiences that were unpleasant or hurtful.

Moses reiterated the command that God’s people were to love and obey Him (Deut. 6:5; 7:9; 10:12; 11:1; 19:9). These two actions were, by definition, interwoven. Jesus understood this. He told His disciples, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word” (John 14:23).

Verse 16 points to three benefits of walking in God’s ways and obeying His commands. God’s people would live in the land, multiply in the land, and be blessed in the land they would possess. This was the life and the prosperity mentioned in verse 15. What a far cry from the preceding generation. They had been slaves in another land; someone else possessed them. Due to God’s blessing, they would have a land and would possess it. What a great reminder that God can take our worst circumstance and turn it into a blessing.

God’s people are not immune from difficulties. We are “born for trouble as surely as sparks fly upward” (Job 5:7). We don’t have to face those troubles, though, by ourselves. God is still at work.

List some benefits of walking in God’s ways and obeying His instruction.



Day 3: Deuteronomy 30:17-18

Pay attention to the progression of action in verse 17.

Numerous times, God had called His people to follow His statutes and ordinances (Deut. 4:5,6,14; 6:1; 11:22). But what if their “heart turns away” from God, meaning they reject Him? Verse 17 contains a progression of action. The first step begins in the heart. Surrounded by the pagan Canaanites, a person could begin to think, “I really am tired of these restrictive customs and laws.” Second, the person no longer listens to what God has said. This leads to step three; the person is “led astray.” Growing more comfortable in the presence of the ungodly can lead to steps four and five. The person will begin to bow in worship and ultimately serve the other gods. Those false gods will get the person’s time, attention, energy, and resources. This is what it means to “serve them.”

God is fair and just. He warned His people and told them the consequences of having a heart that turns from Him. The consequences were two-fold, loss of life and loss of longevity. “You will certainly perish” echoes God’s warning to Adam and Eve about eating the forbidden fruit in the garden (Gen. 2:17). Adam and Eve did not physically die that day; yet they were banished from the garden because of their sin and eventually died. God’s people were eventually banished from the land where He was about to place them. They had gone after foreign gods. Sin had consequences—and still does today.

Why do people get fooled into thinking sin has no consequences?



Day 4: Deuteronomy 30:19

Circle the phrase “choose life” in verse 19.

As if in a courtroom setting, the Lord called His two witnesses against His people, “heaven and earth.” The phrase referred to all of creation. No being, either human or heavenly, could ever deny that God gave His people ample opportunity to make the right choice. The word today added a sense of urgency. Moses’s time with the Israelites was coming to an end. The time to decide was now.

The decision was between “life” and “blessing” or “death” and “curse”—the very options Moses had been describing. Several times in Deuteronomy Moses had urged God’s people to choose life (4:1; 5:33; 6:2; 8:1; 16:20). Here, he clearly laid out the only two options the Israelites had.

The decision they made this day would affect them and subsequent generations. The decision was not merely a mental or academic one. No one could say, “I am going to choose that one, but it’s not going to change my life.” No, the choice would have major life implications.

Pray today for someone who is struggling with a decision that could lead to blessing or curse.



Day 5: Deuteronomy 30:20

Highlight the phrase “he is your life.”

Like mixing water and dye, which cannot be separated, loving, obeying, and remaining faithful to God affects every area of life. Why the connection? Because God “is your life.” He had created His people. He had chosen them. He had led them. Apart from Him, the Israelites would not have existed as a people or individuals. He was the only one who could fulfill the promise He had sworn to the Israelites’ ancestors. They would live in the land for a prolonged period of time. This was the essence of the old covenant.

It is also the core of the new covenant in Christ. Death could not win over Him because “in him was life” (John 1:4). He said of Himself, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (14:6). At one point in His ministry, many in the crowd quit following Jesus. He challenged His disciples, asking if they too were going to walk away. “Simon Peter answered, ‘Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life’” (6:68). Peter knew that in Jesus alone was life. The same is true still today.

The disciples had a decision to make. The Israelites had a decision to make. We have a decision to make. It’s the decision every person must make for themselves. The choice is between life and blessing—or death and curse. Today, which do you choose?

What does it mean for you to say God “is your life”? In this context, what does it mean for you to “choose life”?

APPLY THE TEXT

The enemy lures people away from God incrementally rather than in one huge leap. How might this apply to you? Do you sense you are not as close to God as you once were? What changes will you make this week to renew your commitment to God?

JOURNAL

