



my grandma time

...doing simple things together!

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Day 1--- Deuteronomy 3-4

Moses gets into what turns into a very long sermon. The key message is that the children of Israel are not to add or subtract from the law that God has given them. From what we read in the book of Judges it would seem that they subtracted a lot. The real problem was that they added to what God had said and then added some more. They added so much to what God had said that they couldn't see God anymore. In these two chapters God claims to be sovereign, which means Lord or King. He is God and there is no other. There is a God who knows you and invites you to know Him.

God makes a promise through Moses in chapter 4. In verse 29 God promises that if you search for Him with all your heart then you will find Him. It doesn't matter where you are or what you've done. One of the first places to look is in history. That is why God had Moses record these events for the people so that when they needed to look for God they could easily find them in their history. Everyone has a history. If you look very carefully and with all your heart you'll find God in your history as well.

- When has God very clearly been at work in your life?

Day 2 --- Deuteronomy 5-7

In chapter 5 Moses repeats what we know as the Ten Commandments. They begin with commands that are all about respecting God. In the middle is one command about respecting family. The remaining commands are about respecting the people in the community around us. These commands tell us a lot about what God cares about and who He is.

In Deuteronomy 6:5 God summarizes all the law. Jesus called this the greatest commandment. God desires what is best for Israel and what is best is purity, an exclusive relationship with Him. God knows that the Israelites will not be able to resist the temptation to worship idols if the people currently in the land remain. This is why they must be completely destroyed.

- Why did Israel have to fight to take the land?
- Why didn't God wipe out the people of the land?

The answers to these questions help us understand why God doesn't just immediately remove all the evil desires from our lives.

Day 3 --- Deuteronomy 8-10

The Israelites who arrived at the Promised Land had spent much time in the wilderness, but no time in slavery in Egypt. Moses tells them that it is very important to remember where they came from. They also need to remember who brought them to this point. We also see in this section God's desire that the Israelites care for people who are hurting even if they aren't Israelites. God's plan was to bless Israel so that they could bless all the nations around them.

We're introduced to a cycle that is very important to understand. It was repeated over and over with the Israelites and you'll see it as you continue reading. The people are oppressed and cry out to God for release. Slavery in Egypt is the best illustration. God rescues the people. The Exodus is the primary example used through all the Bible. God provides for His people. Every day the Israelites were walking in miracles as their shoes did not wear out to pick up food provided by God. The people take God for granted and begin to worship other gods. This will happen within two generations after entering the Promised Land. The people are oppressed by foreign nations and the cycle repeats itself.

- What does Moses recommend to prevent this cycle from happening?
- What do you need to remember to get you growing in your relationship with God?

Day 4 --- Deuteronomy 11-13

For Israel to continue to be faithful to God it was essential that each generation pass on their faith to the next generation. Moses repeats the instruction on how to do that. The Israelites were to make their sacrifices to God in only one place. They were to avoid idolatry at all costs. Idolatry is worshipping something that has been created rather than the Creator God. I once heard idolatry described as worshipping anything that gives you permission to do what you wanted to do anyway. An example would be a man who wants to have sex worshipping a fertility goddess who demands sex as a form of worship. Israel fell away from God over and over again as a result of idolatry. They could never say they hadn't been warned.

- What are the things in your life that could easily become idols?

Day 5 --- Deuteronomy 14-16

This section is like reading the constitution of Israel. There is an apparent contradiction in this section. First God says there are to be no poor and then later He says they are to care for the poor. The first is the ideal and the second is the reality. Note that God does not command economic equality. Instead, what He desires is generosity. Everyone should have enough and some will be blessed with more than others.

One of the things that Israel was to do regularly was celebrate. We've forgotten how to do this. We know how to seek pleasure and many have been destroyed in the process. We don't know how to enjoy God's provision in a way that leaves us feeling better and with stronger relationships when we're done than when we started. All of these celebrations and the sacrifices associated with them were based on faith. When I sacrifice the first born ox I have to believe that God will provide another one and another one. I have to believe that my current oxen will remain strong and healthy until the second born and third born are old enough to work. As long as the people were faithful to God this was true and they had many reasons to celebrate and much to celebrate with.

- What are some things you do because you believe that you have to depend on yourself to survive?
- How would your behavior change if you really knew that God was going to provide all you needed tomorrow and every day after that?

Day 6 --- Deuteronomy 17-20

It was never God's intention (ideal) that Israel have a king, but the reality is that they will. Instead, they were to have judges who would be local officials in their communities who could make decisions when conflicts came up. They wouldn't need a king to lead the army and protect them because God was their King and Protector. Only one king even came close to God's instructions here, and even David didn't keep all these guidelines. His son Solomon would break them all and the kingdom went steadily downhill from his reign on.

I think our judicial system would totally change if we held to the requirement of at least 2 or 3 witnesses. Of course, this requirement made total sense in a community where everyone knew everyone else. Idolatry is a big deal to God, but there is one other thing that really matters to Him. Any form of divination, attempting to contact the spirit world, is absolutely forbidden. The spirit world is very real and it is opposed to God.

Some people think the God of the Old Testament is always mean and angry. In chapter 20 God describes the approach the people are to use when going to war against nations outside their borders. Think about it this way. How would you react to a threat to your children that is in your house or neighborhood? Compare that to how you would react to a threat to your children that is in another state. What we tend to miss in this is how much God loves His children the Israelites. He wants the very best for them and He knows how easily tempted they will be to be unfaithful.

- What should have been removed from your home and neighborhood?
- How far would a loving father go to protect his children?

Day 7 --- Deuteronomy 21-23

The law is very practical. For example, the Israelites are instructed to put borders, a railing, on their roofs so that no one falls off. Deuteronomy 22:13-30 makes it very clear to me that God intended sex for marriage. Our culture almost totally disregards this now and I think we have lost more than we know. This is without thinking about what happens to children in an environment where adults are not committed to life-long relationships with one another.

God's welfare system is described in chapter 23. The Israelites were primarily farmers. They had very few cities. If people were without a job or without money they could enter anyone's field and eat from the produce there. However, they couldn't take more than they could eat. Later when you read the story of Ruth you'll discover how this worked out in real life.