



Growth Group Curriculum Week 3 – January 23, 2022 – Deuteronomy 4:1-14

Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at church. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.

The people of Israel have made it to the Promised Land and Moses now delivers his final sermon to the people. God has told him he will not be able to enter the Promised Land because of his failure to be obedient to God, back in Numbers 20:1-12.

He gathers the people one more time, to remind them about being obedient to God and to follow God's commandments. Moses speaks to a new generation of Israelites who had spent their childhood in the wilderness. Moses wants to remind them of earlier mistakes so they will prosper in Canaan.

Moses tells them that they need to listen well. They need to hear God's commands and be obedient to them. The Hebrew word "shema" which is translated in verse 1 as listen, infers not only listening, but also obedience to what is being shared. Moses uses a lesson from Numbers 25 (Baal Peor) about what to not do. This was a time when the people disobeyed God and there were serious consequences.

Moses says that if they want to know what wisdom is, or to find wisdom, they need to be obedient to the Law – in other words the 10 Commandments. Moses says that if you live wisely and obey the commandments life will go well for you and you will also have an influence on the nations around you. Those nations were all seeking wisdom. If they saw the blessings that came to a nation that followed in God's way, then it might have an impact on how they lived as well.

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The difference with the God of Israel is that He is a God that is immanent. God is present amongst his people. God is not aloof and disinterested in terms of what is happening on earth. Other nations' gods were seen as busy and uninterested as to what was happening on earth and that is why nations had such elaborate worship and sacrifice systems. The people were always trying to get the gods' attention.

Moses reminds the people that they need to “remember their story and tell their story.” Once they forget what God has done for them and stop telling the story and living the story, the way of wisdom will no longer be possible. They must pay attention to the lessons they had learned and continue to share those lessons with their children and their children's children. Then they will walk in wisdom.

Exploring the Text

Deuteronomy 4:1-14

4 Now, Israel, hear the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. ² Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you. ³ You saw with your own eyes what the LORD did at Baal Peor. The LORD your God destroyed from among you everyone who followed the Baal of Peor, ⁴ but all of you who held fast to the LORD your God are still alive today. ⁵ See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. ⁶ Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” ⁷ What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? ⁸ And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today? ⁹ Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. ¹⁰ Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when he said to me, “Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children.” ¹¹ You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain while it blazed with fire to the very heavens, with black clouds and deep darkness. ¹² Then the LORD spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice. ¹³ He declared to you his covenant, the Ten Commandments, which he commanded you to follow and then wrote them on two stone tablets. ¹⁴ And the LORD directed me at that time to teach you the decrees and laws you are to follow in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess.

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Questions

If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.

- 1) During the COVID isolation, what regular parts of your life did you start to forget how to do?
- 2) Vs 5-6 remind the Israelites of the decrees and laws that were taught and need to be observed, in order to show wisdom and understanding. How do you observe biblical lessons you've learned, so they don't slip away?
- 3) We have our God near us when we pray, vs. 7-8. How does knowing that we have a personal relationship with God help you to focus on living a life that honors God's best wishes for us?
- 4) Vs 9 warns us to be careful, watchful, and not forgetful. It encourages us to teach our children and grandchildren about God and his commandments. In today's culture, that often moves us away from the importance of family and muddies truth, how do you remain watchful and not forgetful and teach your children and grandchildren?
- 5) Long known lessons can become rote and lose their intent. How can we refresh and refocus on lessons learned to make them applicable in our lives today?
- 6) Entering a new land would be scary for the Israelites so getting this reminder gives them some tools and reminds them that God is faithful. Do you look to scripture or pray when you are faced with a challenge that is overwhelming? What do you do to help you focus?
- 7) Moses is encouraging the people to actively remember God's faithfulness. In vs 13, he reminds them that God gave them the 10 Commandments. How do you actively apply the lessons of the 10 Commandments to your lives, in pursuit of wisdom?
- 8) Deuteronomy 6:6-9 gives us practical examples of how to "pay attention" to God in our daily lives. ***6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.***
What can you do this week in your homes and your lives to keep God first?

