

The Book of Deuteronomy, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 6: A Chosen People; Remember the Lord

Deuteronomy 7:1–8:20

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Doctrinally, this lesson must handle God's choosing of Israel rightly. Moses is explicit: God chose them not for their size, strength, or righteousness, but because He loved them and was keeping His oath to the fathers (7:7–8; 9:4–6). This is a call to a covenant purpose, that through Abraham's seed all nations would be blessed (Genesis 12:1–3), fulfilled in Christ and His church (Galatians 3:16,29). It is not the unconditional individual election to salvation taught by Calvinism. We will present a real, gracious choice of a people for a mission, while affirming that the gospel call is genuine and universal and that people are truly able to respond.

The lesson also presses two pastoral truths into the heart. First, that our standing with God rests on His love and faithfulness, not our merit, which frees us from both pride and despair. Second, that prosperity is a spiritual danger, tempting us to forget the Giver and claim self-sufficiency. Moses' remedy, remember the Lord who gives you power to get wealth (8:18), must be taught without turning it into a prosperity-gospel formula; God's blessing is not a transaction we trigger by technique.

Finally, we keep Christ in view. Jesus answered the tempter from this very passage, "man shall not live by bread alone" (Matthew 4:4), living out perfect dependence where Israel failed. The deepest aim of the lesson is to form in the student a remembering, dependent, grateful heart that lives by every word of God.

Question 1

Student Question:

Why does Moses say God chose Israel (7:6–8), and what does it reveal about the basis of God's love and the purpose for which He set them apart?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Moses states Israel's identity plainly: "you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth" (7:6). Then he removes every ground for boasting: "The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples" (7:7).

The actual basis follows: "but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out... and redeemed you from the

house of bondage” (7:8). The reason God loves them is, in the end, that He loves them, joined to His sworn promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The choice rests entirely on God’s gracious love and faithfulness, not on any quality in Israel.

This choosing has a purpose beyond Israel itself. The oath to the fathers always reached outward: through Abraham’s seed all the families of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:1–3). Israel was set apart not merely to be privileged but to be the people through whom God would bring blessing to the world, a calling fulfilled in Christ, Abraham’s true seed, and in His church (Galatians 3:16,29).

So election here is the gracious choice of a people for a covenant mission, grounded in God’s love and promise. It humbles human pride, since nothing in Israel earned it, and it directs us to the God who keeps His word. We will guard against misreading this as unconditional individual election to salvation when we reach question nine.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Israel chosen as God’s treasured, holy people
- Not chosen for size, strength, or merit (7:7)
- Chosen because God loved them and kept His oath (7:8)
- Chosen for a covenant purpose to bless all nations (Genesis 12:1–3)
- The promise fulfilled in Christ and His church (Galatians 3:16,29)

Discussion Prompts

- On what basis did God choose Israel?
- Why does Moses remove every ground for their boasting?
- What was the larger purpose of Israel’s being chosen?

Question 2

Student Question:

If God’s love rests on His own grace and promise rather than on our worthiness, how does that free you from both pride and despair in your walk with Him?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

If God’s love rested on our worthiness, we would swing forever between pride and despair: proud on our good days, crushed on our bad ones. But Moses roots Israel’s standing in God’s love and promise, not their merit. That truth, carried into the gospel, sets us free.

It frees us from pride, because there is nothing to boast in. “What do you have that you did not receive?” Paul asks (1 Corinthians 4:7). If even our calling is grace, then looking down on others is absurd; we are recipients, not achievers. The cure for spiritual arrogance is remembering we were “the least”, chosen by love alone.

And it frees us from despair, because our standing does not collapse with our performance. When you fail, the ground of your relationship with God is still His faithful love, not your record. This is not license to sin, for we are called to faithful obedience, but it is deep security: He set His love on you, and He keeps His promises. Rest there, and let that security make you both humble and bold.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Grace as the cure for both pride and despair
- Everything we have is received, not achieved (1 Corinthians 4:7)
- Security grounded in God's faithful love, not performance
- Humility and boldness flowing from grace

Discussion Prompts

- How does grace humble our pride?
- How does grace guard us from despair when we fail?
- Where do you most need to rest in God's love rather than your record?

Question 3

Student Question:

Why were Israel commanded to drive out the nations and to refuse idolatry and intermarriage (7:1-5), and what does this reveal about the seriousness of anything that turns the heart from God?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Moses commands Israel to drive out the nations of Canaan and to make no covenant with them, "nor make marriages with them", and to tear down their altars, sacred pillars, and carved images (7:1-5). To modern ears this sounds harsh, so we must hear the stated reason: "for they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods" (7:4). The concern is not ethnicity but idolatry. Intermarriage with the nations meant the heart drawn to their gods.

The Canaanite nations had filled up the measure of their iniquity over centuries (Genesis 15:16), including practices like child sacrifice. God's judgment fell through Israel, and Israel was warned that they were not to imitate but to remove these snares. The danger was real and proven: anything left in place would, in time, turn the heart away.

This reveals how seriously God takes whatever competes for the heart of His people. Idolatry is not treated as a minor inconsistency but as a deadly contagion to be utterly removed. "You shall not bring an abomination into your house" (7:26). The command is radical because the stakes, wholehearted devotion to the one God, are total.

Under the New Covenant we do not wage physical war or drive out nations; Christ's kingdom is not of this world, and our weapons are not carnal (2 Corinthians 10:4). But the underlying principle abides: ruthless dealing with whatever turns the heart from God. Jesus spoke of cutting off the hand and plucking out the eye that causes sin (Matthew 5:29–30). The seriousness Israel was to show toward Canaanite idols, we are to show toward the idols of the heart.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The command driven by the danger of idolatry, not ethnicity
- Intermarriage forbidden because it turns the heart to other gods (7:4)
- The fullness of Canaanite iniquity and God's judgment
- Idolatry as a deadly contagion to be removed
- The abiding principle: ruthless dealing with what turns the heart (Matthew 5:29–30)

Discussion Prompts

- What was the real reason behind these commands?
- Why does God treat idolatry as so deadly serious?
- How does this principle apply to the idols of our own hearts?

Question 4

Student Question:

What in your life has the subtle power to “turn your heart away” from wholehearted devotion to God, and how should you deal with it?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The phrase “turn your heart away” (7:4) is worth sitting with. Few of us renounce God in a single decision. Far more often the heart is turned slowly, by a relationship, a habit, an ambition, an entertainment that little by little reorders our loves until God is no longer first.

Ask what has that kind of quiet power over you. It need not be evil in itself; the Canaanite danger came through marriage, a good thing turned into a snare. Anything we will not surrender, anything that consistently wins when it competes with obedience, is functioning as a rival altar in the house of the heart.

Moses' remedy was decisive, not gradual: tear it down, burn it, do not bring it into your house (7:5,25–26). Jesus echoed that decisiveness about whatever causes us to stumble (Matthew 5:29–30). The call is not to manage a heart-rival but to deal with it ruthlessly before it deals with us. What needs to be torn down in your life, and what is the first concrete step?

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The heart turned slowly, not all at once

- Good things becoming snares
- Identifying what consistently wins against obedience
- Decisive, ruthless dealing rather than management (Matthew 5:29–30)

Discussion Prompts

- What has the quiet power to turn your heart from God?
- Is there a good thing that has become a snare for you?
- What needs to be torn down, and what is your first step?

Question 5

Student Question:

What did God intend to teach Israel through the wilderness, the hunger, and the manna (8:2–5), and what does “man shall not live by bread alone” reveal about real life and dependence on God?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Chapter 8 looks back on the wilderness as a deliberate school. “You shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not” (8:2). The hardship was not random; it was formative, designed to reveal and to shape the heart.

The manna was central to the lesson: “He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord” (8:3). Daily bread that appeared each morning and could not be stored taught daily dependence. They lived, literally, on God’s word and provision.

Even their discipline was fatherly: “as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you” (8:5), and through it all their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell (8:4). God’s humbling was never cruelty; it was the loving training of a Father preparing children for the land.

The truth “man shall not live by bread alone” reaches to the heart of real life. We are not merely physical creatures kept alive by food; we are made to live by God and His word. Jesus quoted this verse to the tempter (Matthew 4:4), refusing to turn stones to bread on demand, choosing instead to live by the Father’s word, the perfect Son succeeding where Israel had failed. To live by bread alone is to mistake the gift for the Giver and to starve the soul.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The wilderness as God’s deliberate school of dependence
- Hardship that humbles, tests, and reveals the heart (8:2)

- Manna teaching daily reliance on God
- God's discipline as fatherly love (8:5)
- Living by every word of God, fulfilled in Christ (Matthew 4:4)

Discussion Prompts

- What was God teaching Israel through the wilderness?
- How did the manna train them in dependence?
- What does it mean to live by every word of God, not bread alone?

Question 6

Student Question:

Where is God using a season of need, waiting, or discipline to teach you dependence, and how are you responding to His training?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

God still leads His people through wilderness seasons: the waiting, the lack, the unanswered prayer, the discipline that humbles. Like Israel, we would never choose them, and yet they often do in us what comfort never could. They reveal what is in our hearts and teach us to depend on God rather than on our own resources.

The text says God let Israel hunger in order to feed them, and humbled them in order to bless them in the end (8:16). That reframes our hard seasons. The hunger is not abandonment; it may be the very means by which God is teaching us that He, not our bread, is our life. The question is how we respond: with resentment and grasping, or with trust and daily dependence.

Hebrews picks up Deuteronomy 8's language of fatherly chastening and urges us not to despise the Lord's discipline, for He disciplines those He loves, and it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those trained by it (Hebrews 12:5–11). Whatever season of need you are in, ask not only when it will end but what your Father is teaching you, and lean into the training rather than away from it.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Wilderness seasons as God's training, not abandonment
- Hardship revealing the heart and teaching dependence
- Hunger as a means God uses to bless in the end (8:16)
- Responding to discipline with trust, not resentment (Hebrews 12:5–11)

Discussion Prompts

- What wilderness is God using in your life right now?
- Is your hunger driving you to God or away from Him?

- What might your Father be teaching you in this season?

Question 7

Student Question:

What is the danger Moses warns of in the good land (8:7–18), and how does the heart move from gratitude to the proud claim, “my power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth”?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Moses describes the land in glowing terms: a place of brooks and springs, wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, olive oil and honey, a land where they will “eat bread without scarcity” and lack nothing (8:7–9). Then comes the hinge: “when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them... when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God” (8:12–14).

The danger is forgetting, and the engine of forgetting is a heart “lifted up” in pride. Prosperity tempts us to misremember our own story, to overlook the God who brought us out of bondage, led us through the wilderness, and brought water from the rock (8:14–15). Comfort dulls the memory of grace.

The proud claim is named exactly: “then you say in your heart, My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth” (8:17). This is the lie of self-sufficiency, the conviction that our success is self-made. It is idolatry of the self, crediting to our own hand what God’s hand provided. From there it is a short road to serving other gods and perishing (8:19).

The remedy is memory rightly aimed: “you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers” (8:18). Even the strength and skill by which we earn are His gift. The honest heart traces every good thing back to the Giver, refusing the lie of the self-made life. We must teach this without making it a formula: God is not promising that remembering Him will guarantee riches; He is calling His people to humble, grateful dependence whatever their circumstances.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Prosperity dulling memory and lifting up the heart in pride
- Forgetting the God of redemption and the wilderness
- The lie of the self-made life: “my power... my hand” (8:17)
- Even the power to gain wealth is God’s gift (8:18)
- Remembering God as the remedy, taught without a prosperity formula

Discussion Prompts

- How does prosperity tempt us to forget God?

- Where does the claim “my own hand” creep into our hearts?
- What does it mean that God gives the power to get wealth?

Question 8

Student Question:

When you succeed or prosper, how honestly do you credit God as the giver, and where do you catch yourself quietly taking the credit?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Success is a more dangerous test than failure. In failure we know we need God; in success we are tempted to think we did it ourselves. The whisper of 8:17, “my power and the might of my hand”, is rarely spoken aloud, but it lives quietly in many hearts: the promotion we earned, the home we built, the life we made.

Be honest about where you take the credit. Do you thank God for your income, your health, your abilities, your opportunities, or do you assume them as simply yours, the natural fruit of your own effort? The text insists that the very power to produce wealth is a gift (8:18). Strip away God’s providence, your body, your mind, your circumstances, your next breath, and the self-made story collapses.

The cure is deliberate, specific gratitude that traces blessings back to the Giver. Paul asks, “What do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?” (1 Corinthians 4:7). Make a practice this week of naming a success and crediting God concretely, so that prosperity makes you more grateful rather than more proud.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Success as a more dangerous test than failure
- The quiet assumption that our blessings are self-made
- Tracing every good thing back to the Giver (8:18)
- Boasting answered by “what do you have that you did not receive” (1 Corinthians 4:7)

Discussion Prompts

- Where do you quietly take the credit for God’s gifts?
- How honestly do you credit God when you succeed?
- What success can you specifically thank God for this week?

Question 9

Student Question:

Deuteronomy says God chose Israel by His love and oath, not their merit, and warns that forgetting Him brings ruin (8:19–20). How should we understand God’s choosing of a people and His gift of blessing, guarding against both the idea that He elects individuals unconditionally to salvation and the idea that prosperity is a formula we can claim?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This passage forces two careful doctrinal corrections, one on each side. The first concerns God’s choosing of Israel. Moses is emphatic that the choice rested on God’s love and His oath to the fathers, not on Israel’s worth (7:7–8), and he will say even more bluntly that they did not receive the land for their righteousness, “for you are a stiff-necked people” (Deuteronomy 9:4–6). So the choosing is real, gracious, and entirely undeserved. But what kind of choosing is it?

It is the choice of a people for a covenant purpose, not the unconditional election of individuals to eternal salvation taught by Calvinism. God chose Israel as a nation to be the channel through whom He would keep His promise to Abraham and bless all the families of the earth (Genesis 12:1–3), a promise fulfilled in Christ, Abraham’s seed, and in all who belong to Him (Galatians 3:16,29). Election here is corporate and missional. It does not teach that God arbitrarily predestines some individuals to be saved and others to be lost apart from any real choice on their part.

Indeed, this very passage refutes that idea. Chosen Israel is repeatedly warned that if they forget the Lord and go after other gods, “you shall surely perish” (8:19–20). Their being chosen did not guarantee their perseverance; it summoned them to faithful response, and unfaithfulness brought ruin. So the gospel call is genuine and universal: God’s grace truly invites all, and people are really able to respond and equally able to fall away. We are chosen in Christ to belong to His people, but we must remain faithful, for Scripture warns that one can fall from grace (Galatians 5:4; Hebrews 3:12–14).

The second correction concerns blessing. Moses says God “gives you power to get wealth” (8:18), and prosperity-gospel teaching seizes such verses to promise that the right faith or giving unlocks guaranteed riches. That is a serious distortion. The text is not a formula for getting wealthy; it is a warning against forgetting God when one is wealthy, and a call to humble gratitude. God’s point is the opposite of a transaction: do not imagine your prosperity is self-made, and do not imagine you can leverage God for gain. The blessing is His gift to give as He wills, tied to His covenant purpose, not a vending machine triggered by technique.

Hold both truths together. God graciously and freely chose a people, by love and promise, not merit, for a mission that reaches the whole world and lands in Christ; and God graciously gives every good gift, calling His people not to claim a prosperity formula but to remember Him humbly and live by His every word. Righteousness, salvation, and blessing are all finally His gift, received by trusting, obedient faith, never earned and never engineered. That is the gospel’s answer to both Calvinism’s determinism and the prosperity gospel’s greed.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God's choice of Israel grounded in love and oath, not merit (7:7-8; 9:4-6)
- Election as a corporate, missional call, not unconditional individual election to salvation
- The promise fulfilled in Christ and His church (Genesis 12:1-3; Galatians 3:16,29)
- Chosen Israel still warned they will perish if they forget God (8:19-20)
- A genuine, universal gospel call; the chosen can fall away (Galatians 5:4; Hebrews 3:12-14)
- God gives power to get wealth (8:18) as a warning, not a prosperity formula
- Righteousness and blessing as God's gift, not earned or engineered

Discussion Prompts

- How does this passage differ from unconditional individual election?
- Why does the warning that Israel could perish matter for the doctrine of election?
- How does 8:18 guard us against the prosperity gospel?

Question 10

Student Question:

Looking back across Deuteronomy 7 and 8, name one specific way Jesus is teaching you to remember the Lord and live by His word rather than by bread alone, and what is your next step?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Look back over both chapters. We have seen a people chosen by love and promise, not merit; commanded to clear away every rival to God; schooled in the wilderness to live by His every word; and warned against the pride that forgets the Giver in the land of plenty. One word ties it all together: remember.

Jesus stood in His own wilderness, hungry, and answered the tempter from this very passage: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Where Israel forgot and fell, Jesus remembered and stood. To follow Him is to be formed into a person who lives, daily, on the word and provision of God, neither turning the heart to idols nor crediting blessings to our own hand.

So name one specific way Jesus is teaching you, through Deuteronomy 7 and 8, to remember the Lord and live by His word. Perhaps He is tearing down a rival in your heart, or training you through a wilderness, or curing a self-made pride in your prosperity. Choose your next step, a rhythm of remembrance, a confession of dependence, a rival surrendered, and take it as a grateful response to the God who chose you by love and gives you every good thing.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Remembering the Lord as the thread through both chapters
- Jesus living by every word of God where Israel failed (Matthew 4:4)

- Being formed into a dependent, grateful, remembering people
- A concrete next step of remembrance or surrender

Discussion Prompts

- Which truth from these chapters is God pressing on you?
- How is Jesus teaching you to live by God's word, not bread alone?
- What is your next concrete step, and when will you take it?