

The Book of Deuteronomy

Lesson 8: Love and Obey; Blessing and Curse -- Deuteronomy 11:1–32

There is a kind of remembering that changes how you live. Moses knew it, and so he says to Israel, “Consider today... it was not your children who have not known or seen the discipline of the Lord your God... but your own eyes have seen all the great work of the Lord that he did” (11:2,7). He is not handing them a history lesson to memorize. He is asking them to let what their own eyes saw become the fuel for how their own hearts love.

Picture it. These are people who watched the sea stand up like walls, who ate bread that fell from the sky, who saw the ground open and swallow Dathan and Abiram when they defied the Lord. They are not being asked to believe in a God they have never met. They are being asked to keep loving the God they have already seen act. Memory and love are meant to walk together.

Then Moses paints the land they are about to enter, and it is unlike Egypt. Egypt watered its crops by human effort, foot-pumping water from the Nile. But Canaan “drinks water by the rain from heaven, a land that the Lord your God cares for; the eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it” (11:11–12). This is a land that lives by dependence, where every harvest is a fresh gift from a watching God. To live there well is to live looking up.

And so Moses sets before them the great choice, dramatized on two mountains: blessing on Gerizim, curse on Ebal. “See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse” (11:26). It is vivid, weighty, and personal. The same God who asks Israel to remember and to love now asks them to choose, and the same God still stands before us, inviting hearts won by His goodness to answer with wholehearted love and glad obedience.

Group Discussion: Moses ties Israel’s obedience directly to what their own eyes had seen God do. How does remembering what God has actually done in our lives and in Scripture fuel love and obedience, and what happens to obedience when that memory fades?

Personal Reflection: Moses calls Israel to bind God’s words on their hearts and hands and to teach them diligently to their children. How saturated is your daily life, and your home, with the word of God, and what is one change you sense the Lord calling you to make?

Read Deuteronomy 11:1–32

Study Questions

1. In Deuteronomy 11:2–7 Moses appeals to what Israel’s own eyes had seen, including the Exodus and the judgment on Dathan and Abiram. What does this teach about the relationship between God’s acts and the obedience He asks of His people?

2. Moses says it was the adults' own eyes, not their children's, that saw these things (11:7). What has your own life, not someone else's testimony, shown you about God, and how does that shape your obedience?
3. Compare the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan in 11:10–12. How does Moses describe the Promised Land's dependence on rain from heaven, and what does it mean that "the eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it"?
4. Moses commands Israel to love the Lord and serve Him "with all your heart and with all your soul" (11:13). Where is your own service to God wholehearted, and where has it become divided or half-hearted?
5. In 11:13–17 obedience and disobedience are tied to rain, harvest, and life in the land. How are these promises and warnings rooted specifically in Israel's covenant and their life in that particular land?
6. Moses tells Israel to fix his words on heart and hand, to teach them to their children, and to talk of them at home and on the road (11:18–19). What would it look like for God's word to fill your conversations and your home that way?
7. What does the command to bind God's words on the heart, the hand, and the doorposts (11:18–20) reveal about how God intends His word to shape every part of life and every generation?

8. Moses promises that if Israel loves and obeys, no one will be able to stand against them and their days will be many (11:22-25). When have you been tempted to obey God mainly for what you can get from Him, and how does loving Him purify your motives?

9. Moses sets a blessing and a curse before Israel on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal (11:26-29). How should we understand these blessings and curses as covenant promises to national Israel under the Old Covenant tied to the land, rather than as a formula guaranteeing health and wealth to Christians who obey, and what timeless truth about loving obedience still stands?

10. Looking back over Deuteronomy 11, name one specific way Jesus is forming you to love God wholeheartedly and to let that love overflow into obedience, in your home and in your daily walk.

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Matthew 22:37-38, where Jesus names loving God with all the heart the greatest commandment; John 14:15, if you love me you will keep my commandments; Deuteronomy 6:6-9, the parallel call to bind God's words on heart, hand, and home; Numbers 16:31-33, the earth swallowing Dathan and Abiram which Moses recalls here; Galatians 3:13-14, Christ taking the curse of the law so the blessing might come to all in Him

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