

"But I Say..."

*31 Days with
Jesus in Deuteronomy*

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GRACE COMMUNITY CHAPEL

But I Say: 31 Days with Jesus in Deuteronomy

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The Approach

One of the reasons we often struggle to approach the Old Testament - especially the Torah - is because we don't have confidence in our application of the texts. We have a vague idea that we aren't expected to keep the whole Law as it was given, but also know that the Law was given for our good. Why are we still expected to abstain from some activities but not from others? Who gets to choose?

Our hope is that in walking through this devotional you start to exercise the "spiritual muscles" that make this process easier to unravel. If you're new to the idea of dealing with the Old Testament Law in light of the New Covenant, consider reading Romans 7 before beginning Day 1. There is so much life to be found in God's Word for the Christian today, and Deuteronomy is no exception. We pray that you may be made "complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:17), and that, in studying the perfect Word of God, it may "bring about the obedience of faith" (Romans 16:26).

Day 1: Why This Law?

>> Deuteronomy 1

> Ephesians 1:7-12

(read these)

(then this)

How would you explain the Law? In the first few sentences of Deuteronomy we find that this is exactly the task that Moses sets himself to (v. 5). But instead of getting out his scroll with the list of 613 laws, he does something unique: he reminds Israel of their history. More specifically, he reminds them of their need for the Law. Israel's own rebellion had kept them in the wilderness for 40 years, and now the day had finally come. But they would not enter this Promised Land in their own strength. Rather, the Lord appointed a man to "cause Israel to inherit it." We call that man Joshua, but they would have called him by another name: "Yeshua," which translates to "Yahweh saves."

Years later, another Yeshua would enter the land, set up His Kingdom, and cause His people to inherit it, in spite of their sin. His salvation would begin with a reminder of rebellion against God, but His blood would turn that rebellion into peace.

(then answer these)

Why do you think Israel needed to be reminded of their past before understanding the Law?

What are some other ways you can think of that Joshua foreshadowed Christ?

Ephesians 1:7-12

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

Matthew 12:43-45

“When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and **the last state of that person is worse than the first.** So also will it be with this evil generation.”

Day 2: Giants in the Land

>> Deuteronomy 2-3:20

> Matthew 12:43-45

Remember the giants that lived in Canaan that scared the Israelites away the first time? They're back, and now they've expanded beyond the river Jordan and into the borderlands. The very plague that Israel refused to destroy nearly 40 years prior has not only come to them, but is now a burden that must be shared by Israel's sister-nations. Apparently it's better to put down giants sooner than later.

Problems left to fester often get worse over time. The same is true of sins that are dealt with in half-measure. But we tell ourselves, "surely an appearance of holiness will be enough. Perhaps my temporary exorcism will be as good as sanctification, and without the fierce battle!" Seven demons later, we always wish we had done the hard work from the start.

Have you ever had what started as a personal issue bleed into other areas of your life?

What hard work are you avoiding for your sanctification?

Day 3: Rest

>> Deuteronomy 3:21-29

> Matthew 11:28-29

Where does your heart go when you are told, “no”? When the thing you’ve been working toward for so long is denied you, what happens to your spirit? If we were to find ourselves in Moses’ situation, many of us would wrestle with (at least) a note of entitlement and frustration. But in spite of the frustration that Moses likely experienced, it’s interesting to discover the amount of rest that is being offered in these nine verses. Moses’ frustration sprung from a desire to move beyond the Lord’s will, when God was simply calling him to not be afraid (v. 21), gaze at the promise fulfilled (v. 23), and strengthen the future leader of His people (v. 28).

Jesus calls us to do the same when we approach Him. Rather than disqualifying us from the Promised Land, Jesus exchanges burdens with us, offering His heart in exchange for our own. His heart is gentle and His gift is rest.

Have you ever been frustrated with God? What was that like?

In what ways are you prone to lean into entitlement instead of God's rest?

Matthew 11:28-29

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and *you will find rest for your souls.*

Ephesians 4:22-24

...put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Day 4: Trajectories

>> Deuteronomy 4

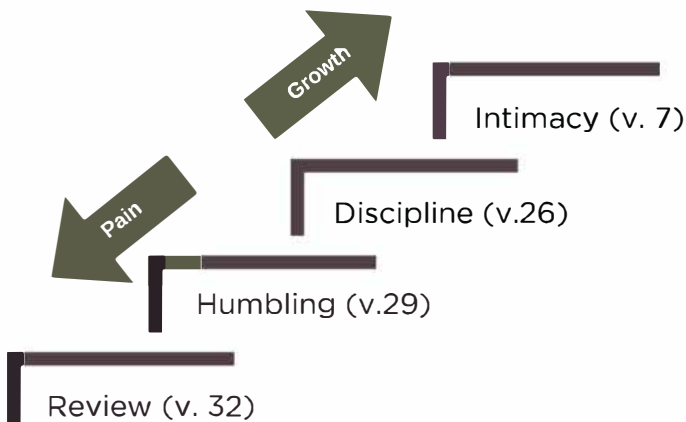
> Ephesians 4:22-24

Discipline. Humbling. These are words that, depending on the context, can either mean joy or sorrow in the life of the believer. The difference depends on the trajectory of one's sanctification process. Discipline can lead to humbling if the child continues to rebel, but it can also be the voluntary act of one who has embraced humility and now seeks true intimacy with their Father.

In the same way, remembering one's former state may lead to a Christlike humility, whereas a refusal to submit may indicate a need to look at our behavior in retrospect.

Look at the diagram and mark the point you are currently in before the Father. Why did you identify this position?

What "direction" does your heart find itself moving toward?



Day 5: Why Should We Die?

>> Deuteronomy 5

> Matthew 5:21-30, 1 Timothy 2:5

The image of Jesus is seen all throughout this passage. In verse 5 Moses foreshadows Christ as our mediator and the Spirit as our translator. The Ten Commandments are the foundation upon which Jesus builds His Sermon on the Mount throughout Matthew 5. Then in v. 24-25 we see words spoken in fear, but re-contextualized give hope in Christ.

Read those verses again, now with Christ in full view:

“Look, the LORD our God has shown us His glory and greatness... Today, we have seen that God speaks [using] a Man, yet [He] still lives. So now, why should we die?”

Answer: We shall never die because He has rescued us from the fire!

How is Jesus a new and better mediator between God and man than Moses was?

Are there any other of the Ten Commandments that we can confidently apply a Kingdom extension to (as Jesus did in Matthew 5)? If so, what are they?

Matthew 5:21-22a, 27-28

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ **But I say** to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment...

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ **But I say** to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

1 Timothy 2:5

For there is one God, and there is one **mediator** between God and men, the man Christ Jesus...

John 10:27-30

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. **I and the Father are one.**”

Matthew 22:36-40

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?”
And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. **On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.**”

Day 6: The Shema

>> Deuteronomy 6

> Matthew 22:36-40; John 10:27-30

Sometimes the best interpretation is the simplest one. If you understand nothing else about the Law, you must understand this: The Lord is One, and we must love Him with all that is in us. This is blatant exclusivity in His desire for worship and infuses every square inch of our lives. All other obedience streams out of our love and devotion to the One God.

But this Law - yes, even this most important one - does not come naturally for our selfish hearts, and we are prone to forget it. The Lord, knowing this, included a command to keep these words before us at all times. Keep them before our children. Talk about them when we go outside. Think about them when our heads hit the pillow. Utter them again anew with the rising sun.

At what point in your day are you most likely to forget to love God with your whole being?

What action do you need to take to fill that gap in your mindfulness?

Day 7: No Quarter

>> Deuteronomy 7

> Ephesians 6:13; 1 Corinthians 10:13

Though we don't find ourselves in wartime Israel, we can still glean much from this chapter. That there be no quarter between the people of God and the sinful practices and perspectives of the world has not changed. When we stand against these things and watch the Lord overthrow them, we must not pity them. Pity those who fell into deceit, perhaps, but not the secularization itself. Remember that when it's difficult to stand beneath the weight of its pressure to sin, the Lord did not choose us because of our strength - but because of His great love for us.

Trusting in the Lord's strength does not remove our personal responsibility to walk in obedience, but when we do fail, we get to see the full might of His redemptive power on display. Dear Christian, stand firm beneath temptation and watch Him overcome in His own strength.

Do you equate God's love for you with how effective you are at resisting temptation? Why or why not?

Have you been ensnared by something that's been "dedicated to destruction" (v. 25-26)? What is your next step?

Ephesians 6:13

Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

Hebrews 12:4-7

In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

*“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,
nor be weary when reproved by him.
For the Lord disciplines the one he loves,
and chastises every son whom he receives.”*

It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

Day 8: Humility

>> Deuteronomy 8

> Hebrews 5:8; 12:4-7

Understanding the discipline of the Lord can be a difficult concept for today's Christian. On one hand, we know that Christ has taken all our present and future punishment from the Father when He endured the cross. Yet on the other, we know both from experience and the exhortation in Hebrews that discipline is a method the Lord uses to mature His beloved children. Our insistent flesh and the commands of the Spirit within us drive us towards a state of inconsistency that requires a strong hand from our Father in order to manage.

Fortunately for us, nothing in Scripture indicates that the Lord is passive in His pursuit of us. He is aggressive in His work to conform us into the image of His Son, and while His discipline may feel like punishment, we can endure knowing that even our Savior learned obedience through the things that He suffered. Even in this we become like Him.

Describe a time you received discipline from the Lord.

What was the result?

Day 9: Self-Righteousness

>> Deuteronomy 9

> Luke 18:9-14

We do not earn the good that we live in, and the actions of the Lord are not entirely dependent upon the state of our hearts. God warned Israel against self-righteousness when He told them that their taking of the Promised Land had less to do with their righteousness, and more to do with the unrighteousness of the previous inhabitants.

If a thing is taken from one and given to another, it may be because of God's kindness to one, but it may also come because of the unrighteousness of the one from which it was taken. Excelling in station or possessions does not indicate certainty of right behavior, merely the kindness of a just, good, and patient Lord of all things.

Is there an area in your experience where you've seen this principle play out? What was it?

In what ways do you tend to pridefully compare your righteousness to others' unrighteousness?

Luke 18:9-14

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For **everyone who exalts himself will be humbled**, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

John 3:35-36

The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Day 10: Blood Sacrifice

>> Deuteronomy 10

> John 3:35-36

The other gods - they demand a blood price for their gifts. Their reward diminishes in its return, their “inheritance” is yet more blood. Yet our God does not demand this. His demands are of the heart directed towards Him in all things, and amazingly, the demanded Sacrifice has already been made! Therefore He needs no bribe. He is already partial towards His Son, therefore He shows no partiality.

So what He does, we will also do. As He exemplifies, we will model. And as He demands, so we will do. And his commands are not burdensome: love, remember, and hold fast. This do for the One Who ascended the mountain for your sake, that the wrath of God should fall on Him. No other god can offer this.

Can you identify the gods that demand sacrifice in today's world?

In what ways do the gods of today offer diminishing returns with increasing cost?

Day 11: Wise for Salvation

>> Deuteronomy 11

> 2 Timothy 3:14-15

What did you learn about the Lord in your childhood? If you received any exposure to the gospel as a child, it was probably from either a parent or another adult that took the time to teach it to you. In this chapter, God did not directly deal with or instruct the children within Israel, but He revealed Himself to the generation of parents and instructed them to reveal Him to their children. Likewise, the wisdom and knowledge of His commands and nature are revealed to us that we may instruct our children in His Way. We see the results of a failure to do this in the book of Judges when the following generations “did whatever they wanted...” and suffered greatly for it.

In the New Covenant the pattern continues. Paul tells Timothy that the Scripture (Old Testament) that he learned as a child is able to make him wise for salvation in Jesus. The application is simple in concept: If the Lord has done it for us, we must convey it to the next generation.

How will you accept the instruction to talk about His Word when you sit for dinner? Leave the house? Begin and end the day?

Where are the holes in your discipleship approach? How best can you fill them today?

2 Timothy 3:14-15

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how **from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings**, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

John 4:21-24

Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Day 12: Acceptable Worship

>> Deuteronomy 12

> John 4:21-24

When we worship the Lord corporately, it's important that we do so in a way that pleases Him. Never in Scripture are we given permission to worship in whatever way seems right to us. Quite the opposite. We are to examine the Lord's commands, in sharp contrast to the way our culture practices their worship, for their worship is rooted in vain sacrifice and detestable practices.

Therefore, when we are told to turn towards the Lord's dwelling (v.5 & 11)...

...we bow towards our hearts and arrange ourselves to face each other.

We are to bring our offering to the place where the Lord chooses (v.6 & 11)...

...so we give our tenth to the established church to carry out His purposes.

We are free to eat meat (v.15)...

...but we avoid cruel practices and unhealthy patterns.

What does it mean to worship God in "spirit and in truth"?

What are some ways your worship has been influenced by cultural norms?



Day 13: Dedicated to Destruction

>> Deuteronomy 13

> 1 Corinthians 10:14-22

How we love to play with that which is dedicated to destruction. That which is solid and true holds no appeal to our fleshly selves - we'd rather be enticed by the temporal and the perishable.

Thankfully, we do not put to death those who practice idolatry anymore, for how could we, now that the commands have been opened up to include our heart-posture? How would any stand if Christ had not at once taken on punishment while He revealed sin?

Yet though Christ has taken on our death sentence, Paul still urges the believers in Corinth to flee from idolatry. The standard has not changed for the child of God, merely the focus of the consequence. As with many of these Laws, the Lord still loves what He loves and hates what He hates... and He absolutely hates idolatry in all of its forms.

What idols are you currently entertaining? What do you sacrifice in order to get them to “work” for you?

How does Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 10:20 impact your understanding of how you interact with your personal idols?

1 Corinthians 10:14-22

Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar?

What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. **You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.** Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

Galatians 4:3-7

In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, **so that we might receive adoption as sons**. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Day 14: Adoption as Sons

>> Deuteronomy 14

> Galatians 4:3-7

Ah, the ceremonial Law. It's easy to lump these laws into a pile and view them all as arbitrary requirements for holiness. But rather than a chaotic scattering of requirements, we find incredible order within. "Unclean" animals aren't inherently unclean, but include qualifiers that make it unclean "for them" (v. 10).

The New Covenant completion? Perhaps, among other things, that the Lord does not assign the rotting leftovers to His children to partake in, but sets a reminder before us that we are coheirs of a Promised Land. Our "crops" are bountiful - enough even to spend on extravagant worship and care of those with no inheritance. We need not eat of the rotting flesh, but may "spend the money on anything [we] want" (v. 26). Our share in the Land is that of a principality because we have been adopted as sons. We do not beg for what the pigs eat - we, in God's great kindness, have slaughtered the Fattened Calf.

What are some differences between a thing being "unclean for you" and "holy unto the Lord" (as in Leviticus 27:30)?

Can something be unclean for one believer today and clean for another? (For help, see 1 Corinthians 8:9-13)

Day 15: The Kingdom Jubilee

>> Deuteronomy 15

> Matthew 18:23-35; 1 John 3:17

This chapter speaks of the Jubilee divisions, before the 49th year. In it, we see that every seven years Israel was to forgive all debts and release all slaves. Blessing was promised to all who would allow this way, up to the whole kingdom! But who would willingly forgive all debts? Who would release every slave? Unfortunately, our knowledge, Israel never completed a single Jubilee cycle.

This style of living must have seemed as counter-intuitive then as it would today. All lending today has an expected return and those who ask are always met with tight fists. How does this Law meet us in the New Covenant? Perhaps not on differently than in Moses' day. Generosity must rule in the Kingdom of Christ. We live in a perpetual "seventh year." Our debts are cancelled and we are ever-freed from Egypt. How then can we tighten our fists to a needy brother?

What does the parable of the master and his servants have to do with the Jubilee in the Kingdom?



**What debt are you still holding on to?
How large is that debt compared to the
one you've been forgiven of?**

Matthew 18:23-27

Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants... When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.

Ephesians 2:4-9

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And **this is not your own doing**; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Day 16: Come Empty-Handed

>> Deuteronomy 16-17:1

> Ephesians 2:4-9

These celebrations were given to God's people to help them remember. Worship accompanied them, as well as a reminder of holiness in the sacrifice of the blemish-free animal. Under the Old Covenant, no one was to appear before the Lord "empty-handed" (v. 16). When sacrifice came due, you needed to be ready. Then when the celebration ended, it was time to prepare what you would bring to the next one.

In contrast, under the New Covenant, we must only come empty-handed, and our celebration is unending. Our Sacrifice has been made in full, and the "yeast" is removed from among us daily as we confess our sin, in haste, as an even greater Exodus approaches.

Are you locked in a cycle of sacrifice? In what way do your "sacrifices" need to conform to the New Covenant rest?

What "yeast" (sin) needs to be removed from you today?

Day 17: A Tale of Two Kings

>> Deuteronomy 17:2-20

> Matthew 12:38-42; Philippians 2:8-11

Their names were Solomon and Yeshua, and they were the same... but different. Both were offered the world - one by the Father, the other by the Evil One. Solomon accepted the Lord's offer to hand him wisdom, riches, and security, yet rather than accept what was freely offered chose to reach out and take it in his own strength. In contrast, Jesus was offered all the kingdoms of the world by the Evil One, yet chose to wait and endure the longer, more difficult plan of the Father. One's legacy was a tainted kingdom, and the other's - one that would never end.

Jesus is our New and Better Solomon. He fulfilled every command for kingship in this chapter that Solomon would fail in. He consistently waited upon the Father's timing and pleasure and was thus exalted over every name.

Following this example, compare and contrast another key person from the Old Testament with Jesus, noting how Jesus is the "New and Better _____."

Matthew 12:38-42

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

1 John 4:1, 18

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for **many false prophets** have gone out into the world.

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

Day 18: False Prophets

>> Deuteronomy 18

> 1 John 4:1, 18

Unlike their request for a king later on, the Lord approves of their request for a prophet. This approval, however, is not without warnings. As we see, there are those who would speak presumptuously, claiming the Lord's direction without actually having received it. We see in the chiastic mirror book of Scripture (1 John, as we've organized it) that there are always those who deceive others into believing that they have spiritual power that they do not, in reality, possess. These false prophets use fear as their weapon and boast proudly in their ability to discern the will of God.

But they cannot. Their end is more certain than what they claim against those who do not follow them. Their platform is to influence and gain followers. Their message sounds just like that of the world - full of fear and personal gain, yet void of love.

It's all they know.

Where do we find false prophets today?

Whose messaging do you need to reject in favor of the truth?

Day 19: Justice in the Kingdom

>> Deuteronomy 19

> Matthew 5:38-42

Jesus is referencing this passage in Matthew 5:38-39 regarding false witnesses. Those who wish to do harm will make plans - lie in wait - to do it. It glorifies God when a justice system does its duty to protect the weak, but when it comes to executing justice on an individual level, Jesus commands that we refrain. Retributive action is banned in the Kingdom.

So where does that leave us when the justice system fails us? When wicked men prosper and our leaders do not or cannot take action, upon whose ears do our cries fall? Do we, in turn, lie in wait for our chance at vengeance, or do we aggressively look for opportunities to offer ourselves up in kindness? This command (and others like it) often get lost in our desire to take justice into our own hands, yet our hope comes from remembering Who our great Judge is, trusting Him alone to do His good work.

How does the temptation to resist wicked people manifest itself in your life?

What steps of faith are necessary for you to trust God completely with executing justice on your behalf?

Matthew 5:38-42

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, **Do not resist the one who is evil.** But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

James 1:22-25

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, **he will be blessed in his doing.**

Day 20: Greater than Zeal

>> Deuteronomy 20

> James 1:22-25

In your heart of hearts, how much do you think the Lord needs you? We learn from this chapter how little the Lord needs our efforts to accomplish His will, as He seems to look for any excuse to remove soldiers from His army. If left to our own understanding we will convince ourselves of our own abilities to succeed and overcome. In this we misunderstand - the Lord doesn't need our strength. But He desperately craves our devotion.

Obedience is far greater than zeal towards a goal. While we have set up many goals before us that, as His church, we must pursue, we must remember: in our zeal to accomplish the work, obedience on the micro level is preferable to general, 30,000-foot-view obedience. He will accomplish His mission!

Have you ever bypassed a command of Scripture in order to accomplish a noble goal? What happened?

In what area of ministry have you over-inflated your contribution to the Lord's work?

Day 21: Women in the Kingdom

>> Deuteronomy 21:10-14, Deuteronomy 22

> John 8:1-11

It's amazing how many laws are dedicated to the preservation of women's dignity. In an age of male-domination in all things, only the Jewish people had any kind of code for preservation of the woman's wellbeing. The Lord sets a clear baseline of conduct: men cannot simply do whatever they wish. There's nothing here to indicate that greater protections could not be enforced, but as with much in the Law, the Lord gives clear instructions as a baseline, then allows the Spirit to draw us into further obedience as He wills.

Some of this may still unsettle you, and it should. But can you see the New Kingdom seeds being planted in their hearts? In the New Kingdom, lust is counted as adultery. In the New Kingdom, cities are served rather than ransacked. The New Kingdom is so different from the Old. This is good, for the Old ultimately fell, and the New is without end.

What safeguards did the Lord put in place to protect women in v. 10-14?

What do the prohibitions in Chapter 22 tell you about the accepted social norms of the surrounding nations?

John 8:10-11

Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”

Galatians 3:13

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”

Day 22: Cursed

>> Deuteronomy 21:1-9, 15-23

> Galatians 3:13

“It’s not my fault!”

When bad things happen, human nature has proven a tendency to shift the blame. Pilot, probably accidentally, calls back to verses 1-9 when he washes his hands as a sign of absolution in Jesus’ murder. But things get crazy when verses 1-9 meet verses 22-23, for when Jesus is executed He bears all of the blame and all of the curse that should have rightfully been shared by all those involved. He allowed the people to yell, “crucify Him!” even as He prepared to bear the curse in their place.

Indeed, He sustained the very breath that allowed them to scream at Him.

In what situations are you most likely to try to pass the blame onto another?

Describe how verses 22-23 played out in the death of Jesus.

Day 23: Feet Called Beautiful

>> Deuteronomy 23

> Romans 10:15; Luke 7:36-50

What is an instance where you've seen the Lord turn a curse into a blessing?

The Lord turns curses into blessings (v. 5).

This is His way.

He walks among us (v. 14).

This is His way.

The Lord commands generosity without abuse (v. 16, 19-20, 24-25).

This, too, is His way.

Jesus redeems the offering of the prostitute and the demon possessed as they throw themselves upon His mercy. These knew the beauty found at the feet of Jesus, so it is there that they threw themselves - for there at His feet is a free-flowing wellspring of generosity and grace.

How desperate are you for generous mercy, and how does that draw you to the feet of Jesus?

Romans 10:15

And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

Luke 7:44-47

Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.”

Acts 20:32-25

And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by working hard **in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus**, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Day 24: The Kingdom Economy

>> Deuteronomy 24

> Acts 20:32-35

These are hard-hitting commands for holiness. These, paired with the commands towards care and justice paint a compelling picture of our Lord. Apparently if we must take things as security for a loan (an action that seems questionable on its own considering the open-handedness that is commanded), these securities are to be held loosely. So loosely, that if our indebted brother has need of them, we should return it for as long as he has need.

This is the justice of the Lord, and this is His economy: “Remember that you were a slave in Egypt.” No amount of hard work has earned you what you’ve been given, and no amount of poverty lowers you in the Kingdom. With a healthy view of our origins, we find ourselves guided into right living for today.

How does the economy of the Kingdom contrast with the economic inclinations of our culture?

How does remembering your origins impact your personal, day-to-day living?

Day 25: Blotted Out

>> Deuteronomy 24

> Revelation 3:5

Most of this chapter is dedicated to the fair and dignifying treatment of others. Family lines should be preserved and men should trade fairly. Two sections stand out as separate - verse 4 and verses 17-19. These, while seemingly out of place in the midst of these topics, find their life in the New Covenant. While verse 4 finds its "But I Say" in Paul's writings regarding paying pastors in 1 Corinthians 9, the blotting out of the Amalekites finds its fullness - as well as its reverse - in the treatment of Christ and His Book of Life.

How joyous that we, who were slaves, will never be blotted out - He will not remove His sandal (v. 5-12) and we will find our inheritance in Him. He will not forget us, but our sin He will blot out!

Are you ever tempted to unfairly leverage a situation or deal to your own advantage? How?

Look up 2 Corinthians 5:17. Under whose family line do you now belong? How likely is that lineage to be removed from the Book of Life?

Revelation 3:5

The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and **I will never blot his name out** of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

John 17:1-5

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, **having accomplished the work** that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.”

Day 26: The High Priestly Prayer

>> Deuteronomy 24

> John 17:1-5

This chapter concludes and summarizes the work that the Lord has done for His people. He sets a concluding offering when His promises are fulfilled and affirms the covenant that He made to Abraham. It preemptively proclaims the Lord's faithfulness and prophesies His goodness to His people - a reality we can now confirm with certainty.

Look at how Christ, upon His crucifixion, was able to boldly proclaim the prayer in verses 13-14:

"I have not violated or forgotten Your commands... I have obeyed the Lord my God; I have done all You commanded me."

Amen, it is finished.

How does obedience give confidence before the Father?

How does knowing that Jesus' work is complete give confidence before the Father?

Day 27: Blessings & Curses

>> Deuteronomy 27-28

> Isaiah 53:4-5

This is an awesome 2-chapter sequence where all of Israel - from Moses, to the elders, to the tribes, to the individuals - get to participate in the instructive process. The curses pronounced are obvious to all so that there may be unity in condemning sinful behavior. The orchestration of this sequence is masterful, drawing together each tribe to do their part. Even in the curses we see that God's Law is good.

But the conclusion to this sequence is heavy. Never before has the choice before God's people been so graphically portrayed. On one side: blessing. A complete scattering of enemies and abundant increase. On the other: curses. We don't like to think of God being a God who would curse anyone, yet this reality is essential to our doctrine. He must actively bestow blessings and curses, or how else could Jesus bear our curses and we receive His blessing? Yes, the Lord must curse, and it pleased Him to crush His Son, rather than us.

Do you generally think of our God as actively bestowing blessings and curses? Why/why not?

How does the cursing of Jesus result in our blessing?

Isaiah 53:4-5

Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.

Romans 2:4

Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

1 Peter 1:16

...it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

Day 28: Hobby Sins

>> Deuteronomy 29

> Romans 1:20; 2:4; 1 Peter 1:16

The grace we've been given to understand is for the purpose of our righteousness. While not every piece of knowledge is at our disposal, we have received enough to walk in obedience. No one is exempt from the charge to be holy as the Father is holy.

Yet how often do we count our sins as unimportant or ourselves as having achieved "enough righteousness" to guiltlessly entertain our hobby-sins? How much can a slave willfully rebel against his master and still consider himself exempt? But we are now slaves to righteousness.

Have you identified your "hobby sins"?

What are they?

What does it mean for us to "presume on the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience"?

Day 29: Yokes on You

>> Deuteronomy 30-31

> Matthew 11:28-30

Why do we consistently fail to keep an easy command?

“Yet... if you return...” What a wonderful promise of hope and life. The commands - the intents - of the Law were not too difficult for us. How difficult is it to love the Lord and to obey Him with all that is in us? In theory, this is not too much for us to handle. After all, how could we not love such a great and generous God, and how could that love not draw us to repentance and obedience?

If we are careful to keep this Law (the Law of Love) “In our mouth and in our heart,” then we find its yoke light. It becomes heavy only when we try to wander off. Courage comes naturally when this yoke is upon our backs. Indeed, this yoke, though light, builds strength in its wielder.

Does the yoke you carry contribute to your boldness in Christ? If not, are you certain that it's His yoke that you carry?

Matthew 11:28-30

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Matthew 4:4

But he answered, “It is written,
“Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by **every word** that comes from the mouth of God.”

Psalms 24:1

The **earth is the Lord's** and the fullness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein...

Day 30: The Song

>> Deuteronomy 32

> Matthew 4:4; Psam 24:1

The Song of Moses

Now listen, all ye heavens
As teaching falls like rain.
Like gentle rain on tender plants
Declaring Yahweh's Name.

The Rock - His work is perfect
And all His ways are just.
A faithful God, righteous and true
And with no prejudice.

Is this how you repay Him,
He who set your fence?
Despite your treachery He's claimed you -
His inheritance.

You! Yes you who wandered -
Alone in desert lands -
He sought you out and scooped you up
And led you by the hand.

But still! You grew entitled
You fled that perfect Stone.
You sacrificed to demon-gods
That you had never known.

Now this provoked the True King,
In anger and in fire,
To turn His focus in hopes to
Elicit our desire.

And oh! The mighty fury!
And oh! That dreadful hand!
The arm that once had scooped us up
Now struck across our land.

And all who watched could sense it.
The Rock gave Its appeal:
"Vengeance is mine, I will repay.
I wound... and then I heal."

So take this message forward
When one day you need help:
The discipline of God is meant
To draw you to Himself.

One way to grasp challenging passages is to rewrite sections of them in your own words. This poem is an example of this method using the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32 as a guide.

On a separate sheet of paper, try to rewrite Deuteronomy 32:44-47 in your own words.

Day 31: Joy in the Lord

>> Deuteronomy 33-34

> Psalm 112:1-8; Romans 5:20-21

How does your joy reflect the depth from which you've been saved?

And so Moses dies, but not before one final, glorious string of blessings. His final refrain? "How happy is the one who has been saved by the Lord!" The greater the salvation, the happier the one saved. Israel had been saved from much and so their reason for joy was very great.

Perhaps this is one reason why proximity to the Lord is a stream of unending pleasure. For our every boast - our endless rest - is found out of the memory of when we would boast without cause. We would rest... but to the lullaby of our own destruction. But then: gloriously liberated to true Sabbath rest in the Promised Land!

How can you find Sabbath rest in proximity to the Lord today?



Romans 5:20-21

Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.