



# The Beauty of Obedience

*This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. (Deut. 30:19-20)*

## The Beauty of Obedience

Americans generally dislike obedience, preferring instead to “\_\_\_\_\_.” Disciples of Jesus know better. We know that obedience to God is true freedom. Because God knows you better than you do, obeying God produces authentic life. *“The ship that will not obey its captain will have to obey the rocks.” (English proverb)*

## Quick Facts about Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy is the last of the 5 books of the Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). The stories and laws of the Torah form the cornerstone of Jewish life and the building blocks of the New Testament. “Deuteronomy” means “\_\_\_\_\_,” and Deuteronomy summarizes the Law. Its authorship goes back to Moses himself (1:1, 5; 31:24; 1 Kings 2:3; 8:53; Matt. 19:7-8; Acts 3:22-23; Rom. 10:19), although in its final form, the book was likely assembled later. Deuteronomy is the \_\_\_\_\_ most quoted book in the New Testament, and Jesus’ favorite book.



*Looking west to the land of Canaan from Mt. Nebo (dmy)*

## Message of Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy comprises three sermons delivered by Moses north of Mt. Nebo just prior to his death. Its purpose is to reaffirm God’s covenant with Israel and to prepare Israel for life in the promised land. God has adopted Israel, rescued it from bondage, and provided it with land. Israel must now obey the commands of God in order to find real life. In the same way, God has delivered Christians from bondage and made us His people. To find real life we, too, must be obedient to God.

## The Beauty of Obedience

- Obedience to God offers life to you and \_\_\_\_\_. (Deut. 12:28; 30:19-20)
- Obedience to God prevents you from conforming to the values around you. (Deut. 7:1-6)
- Obedience to God sets you free from the false gods of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. (Deut.

29:17ff; cf., Romans 6:17)

- Obedience to God creates the best possible world. (Deut. 7:12ff; 15:4-5; 28:1ff)

- *Thought experiment:* Can you imagine a world where there is no poverty, no violence, no abandoned children, no dishonesty, no crime, no racism, no war, no STIs, no evil. That’s the world God offers humanity—if we will only obey Him.

### The Flow of Deuteronomy

Setting (1:1-5)

First Sermon: How God brought us here (1:6-4:40)

Establishment of refugee cities (4:41-43)

Second Sermon: Terms of God’s Covenant (4:44 – 28:68)

Third Sermon: Exhortation to Obedience (29:1 – 30:20)

Joshua to Succeed Moses (31:1-29)

Moses’ song (31:30-32:47)

Moses’ blessing (32:48 – 33:29)

Death of Moses (34:1-12)

## Strengthen Your Obedience in 2021!

1. Identify three areas where you need to strengthen your obedience:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

Examples: "I need to forgive someone." "I need to disciple a few people." "I need to end this bad habit." "I need to join a small group." "I need stop trying to control others for my happiness." "I need to show more love." "I need to be more generous." "I need to stop being cynical." "I need to trust God more." "I need to work on myself as a parent/spouse." "I need to stop watching unchristian programs/movies." "I need to rejoice in the Lord always." "I need to stop procrastinating/being lazy." "I need to reach across racial lines and make new friends."

2. This week, spend 5 minutes each day asking God to help you prioritize these areas.
3. Ask yourself two questions every single day:  
What will happen if I keep living this way? Allow yourself to feel the \_\_\_\_\_.  
What will happen if I choose obedience? Allow yourself to feel the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. By next Sunday, make the decision to strengthen your obedience in each of the three areas.  
*To decide is to cut off the options. In some cases, you must go \_\_\_\_\_ . In other cases, start small in order to end big.*
5. Move quickly to embrace the resources you need: a discipleship group, a good book, Celebrate Recovery, a new calendar, a trusted friend, etc.
6. Every day, spend time alone with God asking for His Holy Spirit to produce obedience in your life. Since we are broken, we need divine help. The Holy Spirit will give us the power we need.
7. Celebrate every win.
8. Get back up from every fall. If you fall 100 times, \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Share with others what God is doing in your life.
10. Prepare for a celebration on December 31, 2021!

*"It is not hard to obey when we love the one whom we obey." Saint Ignatius*

### Select Resources for Deuteronomy

For a short video overview, watch the YouTube Bible Project: Overview: Deuteronomy  
Daniel Block, *The Gospel According to Moses* (2012)  
Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster?* (2011)  
Peter Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (1976)  
Walter Kaiser and Paul Wegner, *A History of Israel* (2016)  
J. G. McConville, *Law and Theology in Deuteronomy* (1984) and *Deuteronomy* (2002)  
J. Gary Millar, *Now Choose Life: Theology and Ethics in Deuteronomy* (2015)  
David Young, "How is the OT Relevant to Christians," in Holloway, et al, *Theology Matters* (1998) pp. 129-141 and *King Jesus and the Beauty of Obedience Based Discipleship* (2020).

### Why Study Deuteronomy?

- It presents life-giving truths about God, humans, and how to live. Deuteronomy is *our* book. (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11; 1 Pet. 1:12)
- It is inspired, holy, right, and good. It will help make us mature. (Psalm 19:7; Rom. 7:12; 2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- It points us to Jesus, who is the God of Deuteronomy. (Luke 24:37, 53; John 1:45; 5:39; Acts 10:42-43; Rom. 10:4; Isa. 6:9; John 1:1-4)
- Jesus believed Deuteronomy and teaches us to obey it. (Matt. 5:17-20; Luke 24:44)
- Failure to teach the whole counsel of God puts us at risk of heresy. (Acts 20:25-27; 2 Tim. 4:2-4)
- It teaches us the beauty of obedience!

Answers: color outside the lines; second law; third; your descendants; sin, sensuality, self; pain of disobedience; blessing of obedience; cold turkey; get up 100 times.



