

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

DEUTERONOMY 5-8

Last month the people at Merriam-Webster released the 2005 Top Ten Words of the Year. Seven million people logged onto their computers to use the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. Company president, John Morse, commented on the list, "It gives us an interesting window that opens up into what people are thinking about in their lives." These were the ten most frequently looked up words...

10. Inept 9. Levee 8. Conclave 7. Pandemic 6. Tsunami

5. Insipid 4. filibuster 3. Contempt 2. Refugee 1. Integrity
Two Hundred Thousand people wanted the definition for the word *integrity*.

The interest in most of these words is obvious...

Levee and *refugee* were obviously the result of Hurricane Katrina.

Inept might've been provoked by our government's response to Katrina.

Tsunami harkens back to December 2004 and the disaster in Southern Asia.

Pandemic no doubt relates to the bird flu threat.

A *conclave* of cardinals met this past year to elect a new pope.

Filibuster is what the Democrats did to President Bush's judicial nominees.

Contempt and *insipid* may describe America's reaction to their filibuster.

That leaves us the number one word on the list, **integrity...** which Webster defines as, **“a firm adherence to a code of especially moral values”**.

Again Merriam-Webster’s President comments, **“I think the American people have isolated a very important issue for our society to be dealing with...”**

Could it be that Americans are smart enough to realize that despite our world’s more obvious problems - *like hurricanes, and tsunamis, and epidemics, and political squabbles* - society’s real problem is a lack of personal integrity?

People today are like a boat adrift with no anchor.

They float on the tides of convenience and self-gratification with no moral values – no overarching, uncompromising commitments by which they live.

Like the teenage girl who was accused of having no values.

She snapped back, **“No values? How dare you say I have no values? I bought this blouse I’m wearing for 30% off.”** That’s about the depth of our values.

Everyone needs a moral basis – an anchor – a collection of non-negotiables to which they’re committed - regardless of the peers they’re with, or the stress they’re under... What are the principles in your life on which you’re willing to take a stand?

In chapter 5 God reminds the second generation of 10 non-negotiables God gave to their fathers at Mount Sinai. Moses repeats the Ten Commandments.

“And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them. The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.”

The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who are here today, all of us who are alive.” The Ten Commandments were as much for the children and grandkids - as it was for the adults who came out of Egypt.

Verse 4, “The LORD talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire. I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain.” Mount Sinai was the site of a physical manifestation of God.

God appeared on the mountain engulfed in the smoke and fire, and He spoke to Israel the Ten Commandments. God placed such an enormous importance on His Top Ten List that He conveyed it to a frightened Israel in an audible voice.

“He said: I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 'You shall have no other gods before Me.’ Notice, the first commandment is in response to God’s grace and deliverance.

“I saved you... I ended your slavery... now come and follow Me alone.”

God never frees us for freedom’s sake. Freedom is an illusion. Everybody serves somebody. Our only real choice is

we get to pick our taskmaster.

This is why God pleads with Israel to worship Him as their only God.

Verse 8, “You shall not make for yourself any carved image - any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.”

The true God is spirit. He has no physical boundaries or natural limitations. Thus to associate God with a material or tangible image is to constrict Him.

The second commandment prohibits marginalizing or diminishing God.

It’s interesting that with the Roman Catholic Church’s preoccupation with statues, icons, and images they leave this commandment out of their list.

“For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God,” He is not jealous “of us”, but “for us.” He doesn’t want to share our love. He wants our unrivaled allegiance.

And Moses tags on a warning... For God judges those who are disloyal - and He rewards those who are faithful... “visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.” We can break the third commandment in three

ways...*profanity, hypocrisy, and frivolity.*

Obviously attaching a profanity to God's name - or using His name in disgust or anger - using God's holy name in an unholy way is nothing less than blasphemy.

Spouting a claim to God without any real association with Him is hypocrisy.

Perhaps, the most common way to break the third commandment is to throw God's name around without really taking God seriously. This is where our culture errs. Everybody mentions "God", but no effort is given to understand who God is and what pleases Him. Here is the devil's goal in a nutshell – "He wants to keep God in our thoughts, but make Him nothing more than an afterthought."

Verse 12, "Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall not do any work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates, that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you.

Work seven days straight and it makes one *weak!* Take a break or you'll get broken. God wants us to *rest*, and *reflect*, and *recharge* one day in seven.

Remember what God created at the end of the sixth day? He created the man and woman. All God's creation was leading up to and designed to support man's life and livelihood on the earth. But when the man was created God

stopped His creative work - all that was left for God, was to enjoy the humans He'd made.

Thus, God rested not because He was tired, but because He desired to hang out with the man and woman. He loved us and wanted to spend time with us.

Later, God put Adam to work – but He wanted Adam to return to Him one day in seven to spend time with His Creator, and to remember why He was created.

God created Adam by breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. In essence, every seventh day God wanted Adam to catch his breath - to return to the source of life. The Sabbath Day is our opportunity to become spiritually refreshed.

Verse 15, “And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.” For 400 years the Hebrews worked without a day off.

It's hard to believe not taking one would ever become an issue. God though knew that greed, and busyness, and ambition can be as cruel a taskmaster as the Egyptians. This is why God's people need to rest one day in seven.

“Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.” God wrote the Ten Commandments with His own finger on two stone tablets. The first tablet dealt with *man's relationship with God*. The second slab dealt with *man's relationship with his fellow man*.

Most people place the 5th commandment on the second tablet, but I think it belongs on the first. *For if you cannot respect the authority you can see – your parents – then how will you learn to respect the authority you can't see – God?*

Verse 17, **"You shall not murder."** Notice, the newer translations say murder, not kill. There're some God-sanctioned types of killing... *capital punishment, self-defense, just war*. Murder is taking a person's life without a biblical justification.

"You shall not commit adultery." Did you hear about the Sunday School teacher who tried to teach his class the Ten Commandments? It was great until they got to the 7th commandment. One kid asked, **"What does it mean to commit agriculture?"**

The little guy had his words confused - *but he still received the right answer...*

While the teacher was laughing, another student offered a great response. He answered, **"It means you shouldn't plough in another man's field."**

That's the correct definition for committing agriculture and for committing adultery... In both cases **"you shouldn't plough in another man's field."**

The sin of adultery occurs when a person engages in sexual activity outside the bonds of marriage - *when you decide you'd rather plough in someone else's field, rather than your own*. Even if two unmarried people have sex it still violates their future spouse. In a sense, *it's adultery in advance*.

You're still guilty of plowing in another's field, and he or she will have to deal with the damage you cause.

Verse 18, **"You shall not steal."** Put positively, respect other people's property. Private property is God's idea – which makes robbery a sin against God.

Here's a list of ways we can steal without breaking into a house... *shoplifting, pilfering from the company, failure to pay your taxes, fraudulent insurance claims, software piracy, padded expense accounts, failure to pay child support, frivolous lawsuits, borrowed items that never get returned, unlawful downloads of music, taking a coke out of the Brook without ever remembering to pay for your \$.50...*

And the worse form of thievery - *withhold your tithes and you steal from God.*

Verse 19, **"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."**

Don't lie - or gossip - or exaggerate – or slander. Proverbs 19:9 tells us, **"A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who speaks lies shall perish."**

And number 10, verse 20, **"You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his donkey, (his car, his golf clubs, her new countertops, their high definition plasma screen television), or anything that is your neighbor's."**

There's nothing wrong with us wanting nice things – *with working hard, saving our money, and purchasing amenities*

that will better our lives. The Bible teaches us that God “gives us richly all things to enjoy.” But we should be content with what God gives us. Covetousness wants what the other person has got.

A Christian should be characterized by *contentment*, not *covetousness*.

Verse 21, "These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly, in the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me." It's been said, "The Ten Commandments were given in tablet form and by following their directions we can avoid the use of a lot of other tablets."

"So it was, when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, that you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders. And you said: 'Surely the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire.

We have seen this day that God speaks with man; yet he still lives."

This was a surprise. They figured God was so holy if He revealed Himself to man directly, then sinful man would never survive the encounter.

"Now therefore, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the LORD our God anymore, then we shall die." For some reason they'd

encountered the holy God, and survived. They don't want to start pushing His patience. Obviously, they had yet to grasp God's grace.

“For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? You go near and hear all that the LORD our God may say, and tell us all that the LORD our God says to you, and we will hear and do it.” They're asking Moses to intercede for them.

"Then the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me: 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken. Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!

Go and say to them, "Return to your tents."

'But as for you, stand here by Me, and I will speak to you all the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which you shall teach them, that they may observe them in the land which I am giving them to possess.'

"Therefore you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess.” Obedience to God would guarantee them blessing and longevity.

Chapter 6, "Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you - 'a land flowing with milk and honey.'

Verse 4, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!" The word "hear" in Hebrew is "shema". This is why Jews call verse 4 "the Great Shema".

The Shema was the Jewish creed. It was their affirmation of faith. In the midst of the polytheism of the ancient world, the Shema declared the monotheistic nature of God, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!"

Judaism was the only religion to state that the true God is but one God.

But the Shema holds an even a deeper revelation. The word translated "one" is the Hebrew word "echad", which speaks not of an *absolute unity*, but a *compound unity*. When the rabbis explain the word "echad" they hold up one fist, then point out that this one fist is also made up of five fingers – *it's a compound unity*.

This is a beautiful way to describe the Trinity. God is a compound unity. He is one God, who exists in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I heard of a little girl who was asked if she knew the term for the three persons of the Godhead. The teacher wanted the word *“Trinity”*. But the little girl answered, *“The Triplets.”* She was right on the three persons, but God is still just one God!

Verse 5, **“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.”** In Mark 12 one of the Jewish scribes came to Jesus, testing Him... **“Which is the first commandment of all?”**

Jesus answered him, **“The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.”** According to Jesus Deuteronomy 6:5 is the greatest of all the commandments. We’re to love God with all we’ve got. Love Him passionately.

And we’re to pass on our passion for God to our children. Verse 6, **“These words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”**

I love the way God tells us to teach spiritual truth to our kids...

He doesn’t say hold daily Bible classes – or fun and festive Sunday Schools – or bust the bank to send you kid to

Christian school – or even sit down once a week, and have a family devotion – although all these practices have value...

The preferred method is much more hands-on and relational.

The best approach to conveying spiritual truth to our kids is to integrate its application and relevance into everyday life. Teach God's truth as you live your life. "When you sit in your house... walk by the way... lie down... rise up..." Be involved with your kids. Be always on the look-out for a teachable moment.

The kid on the baseball team who throws a temper tantrum becomes your opportunity to talk about why a good attitude is important... Rejection from a friend becomes the springboard for a lesson on why our security needs to be in God, not man... Nervousness before a test is fertile ground to teach the power of prayer and a reliance on the Holy Spirit... These are all fertile opportunities.

This is how Jesus taught His disciples.

He's walking down the road, and He sees a man with a bag of seed... "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed..."

Or a flock of birds fly overhead, and Jesus says, "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them..."

Jesus was always drawing on real life situations to teach spiritual truths.

The context of chapter 6 helps us interpret verse 8, “**You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.**” Moses is talking about a comprehensive, integrative approach to applying the Word to the world.

Thus he says “*bind it on your hand*”... let God’s Word guide your activities.

Bind it “*between your eyes*”... let God’s Word color your thoughts.

Write God’s Word on “*the doorposts of your house and on your gates*”... in other words, let God’s Word set the atmosphere inside your home.

Today though, orthodox Jews have a whole different take on these commandments. They’re very literal in their interpretation and application.

They wear leather pouches wrapped around their forehead and wrists called *phylacteries*. These pouches contain tiny pages of Scripture.

Mezzuzahs are weatherproof boxes that hold these verses from Deuteronomy. Jewish families nail them to the column or doorpost of their homes - and when they enter or exit they kiss the mezzuzah to show their love for God’s Word.

Verse 10, “**So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig,**

vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant..." Israel will journey into a grace-land. Into a world that's all about grace. All their blessings are unearned and undeserved.

This is what we experience in Christ. It's a grace-land. It's all grace.

But "when you have eaten and are full - then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." Notice, the warning, "lest you forget". As we talked about last week, the theme of the book of Deuteronomy is the responsibility to remember. Don't forget what God has done.

We're all susceptible to spiritual amnesia. That's why we need to actively exercise our memory. Take seriously your responsibility to remember...

It reminds me of the woman sitting in her car at the train station. She was half crying and half laughing when the policeman asked her what was the matter.

She explained, "For 10 years, each morning I've driven my husband 20 miles to this station to catch his train. This morning I forgot him!" Israel had spent 40 years with God, but that alone didn't mean they would always remember Him...

Verse 13, "You shall fear the LORD your God" They're to reverence God and show Him the proper respect. "And serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name. You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you (for the LORD your God is a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against you and

destroy you from the face of the earth.”

“You shall not tempt the LORD your God as you tempted Him in Massah.” Right out of Egypt the Hebrews complained they had no water, and God had Moses strike the rock. God silenced their grumblings with water from a rock.

“You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you, and that you may go in and possess the good land of which the LORD swore to your fathers, to cast out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has spoken.”

Verse 20, “When your son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘What is the meaning of the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?’” And this is the question your son will one day ask you.

Young kids accept the rules on face value, but when they get older they want to know *why*... *What’s the reason behind the rules? What’s the rationale to obey?*

Why is sex outside marriage such a bad idea?

Why should I go to church every Sunday?

How do we know the Bible is the inerrant Word of God?

Parents need to be informed and do their research. “When you son asks you in time to come...” You need to be prepared to give him sound, logical answers.

Moses tells the Hebrews, “then you shall say to your son:

'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; and the LORD showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household.' He tells parents to make sure their kids know their testimony... The children need to know the salvation God provided.

“Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers.”

Verse 23 is one of the most important verses in the Bible...
God always brings us out, so that He can bring us in...

God delivers us from sin... saves us, washes us, cleanses us... not to put us on the mantle where everyone can admire our pearly white purity. No!

God brings us out of Egypt to bring us into the Promised Land... *to win battles, conquer enemies, become fruitful, enjoy His grace and His blessings.* When you come to Jesus God brings you out of the world to bring you into a better life.

Verse 24, “And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day. Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us.”

I love that... *to fear the Lord... is for our good always...*

Chapter 7 opens with a battle plan for the invasion of the land of Canaan.

"When the LORD your God brings you into the land which

you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them.

You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.

Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.” Remember the Hebrews lacked the power of the Holy Spirit. This is why they were so easily seduced by their surroundings.

Since they had no inner strength – they were subject to outside influences.

And this is why God put such tight prohibitions on them mingling with the pagans in the land. The Hebrews lacked the power to resist temptation.

“But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.”

When it came to idolatry – its adherents, its images, its altars – God expected Israel to have a policy of zero tolerance.

For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; (a people set apart for God – for His plans and purposes) 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.

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; 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 with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”

What an amazing statement... God didn't choose Israel because of her natural advantages... her large numbers, or her pedigree, or her special endowments.

God chose Israel for one reason... He loved them. And the same is true for us. It's all about grace! We get into God's family not on merit, but on mercy.

Verse 9, “Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face. Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them.

"Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers. And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the

fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you.

You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be a male or female barren among you or among your livestock. And the LORD will take away from you all sickness, and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known, but will lay them on all those who hate you.”

These are the blessings of the Old Covenant. God was building an earthly kingdom in Israel, thus His covenant translated into physical blessings. Today, God is building a spiritual kingdom. For us His blessings are more spiritual.

“And you shall destroy all the peoples whom the LORD your God delivers over to you; your eye shall have no pity on them; nor shall you serve their gods, for that will be a snare to you.”

Another difference between the covenants - under the Old Covenant idolaters were destroyed - under the New Covenant they're converted.

Verse 17, "If you should say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?' - you shall not be afraid of them, but you shall remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt: the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs and the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. So shall the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid.

Moreover the LORD your God will send the hornet among them until those who are left, who hide themselves from you,

are destroyed. You shall not be terrified of them; for the LORD your God, the great and awesome God, is among you.” When the Lord fights for you even the hornets become your allies - a secret weapon.

Verse 22, “And the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you little by little; you will be unable to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become too numerous for you.” The byproduct of a mass extermination of the enemy would leave no one to help thin out the population of lions and tigers.

Israel would be rid of one problem, but would inherit another.

Thus, God chose to drive out the pagans “*little by little*”. He promises victory, but it’s often won in increments. We want overnight, instant elimination of all our problems, but that’s not always how victory occurs in the Christian life.

Yes, an immediate work occurs inwardly the moment we embrace Jesus, but the *working out* of what *God works in* takes time. It occurs little by little, and along the way valuable lessons are learned, and a maturity develops. We need patience!

“But the LORD your God will deliver them over to you, and will inflict defeat upon them until they are destroyed. And He will deliver their kings into your hand, and you will destroy their name from under heaven; no one shall be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them. You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest

you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the LORD your God. Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing.” Verse 26 is an important verse – it teaches us to hate.

We need to detest and abhor anything sinful. Moses tells Israel not to bring an abomination into their house... *a porno magazine, a bag of marijuana, a dirty movie, a raunchy video game, occult literature.* Hate what God hates.

Lest you suffer the same destruction intended for that abomination.

Evangelist, Billy Sunday, once said, “I’m against sin. I’ll kick it as long as I’ve got a foot, and I’ll fight it as long as I’ve got a fist. I’ll butt it as long as I’ve got a head. I’ll bite it as long as I’ve got a tooth. When I’m old and fist-less and footless and toothless, I’ll gum it till I go home to glory and it goes home to perdition!”

Hate sin. Love God – both are needed to live a victorious Christian life.

Chapter 8 tells us God’s purpose for Israel’s wilderness experience was not just time to let the older generation die off. It was also a period to test the faith of the younger generation. *There are no self-made individuals in the desert.* It takes daily miracles from God to survive. You have to learn to walk by faith in a desert.

"Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to

your fathers. And 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.”

“So 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 man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.” This is the verse Jesus quoted when the devil tempted Him to prove He was the Messiah by turning stones into bread.

We feed our bodies with mere bread, but the soul needs richer foods.

Only the Word of God can fortify and satisfy the spirit of a man.

Charles Spurgeon once commented on the word “every” – as in “every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD...” He wrote, “In places where they cut diamonds, they sweep up the dust, because the very dust of diamonds is valuable; and in the Word of God, all the truth is so precious that the very tiniest truth, if there be such a thing, is still diamond dust, and is unspeakably precious.”

Even the diamond dust of God’s Word is valuable to the seeker.

Verse 4, “Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.” Wow! My boys can wear

out and *out* grow a pair of sneakers in six weeks. Imagine, going forty years with the same clothes and shoes.

They walked a desert floor for 40 years and never need Dr. Shoals.

Verse 5, “You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you.” You might know this in our head, but Moses says “know (this) in your heart.” God is a good dad. And because He loves you, He’ll spank you. Don’t resent it. Don’t be surprised when it happens. Chalk it up to God’s love for you. It means you’re His kid. God is faithful to discipline us.

“Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.

Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, lest - when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is

multiplied; when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;” Don’t be so enamored with the *gifts* that you forget the *Giver*.

“Who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, in which were fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water; who brought water for you out of the flinty rock; who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end - then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.’” This can happen. God works miracle after miracle on our behalf – then we rise up and take the credit.

It reminds me of the woodpecker pecking on a tree trunk in a thunderstorm. Suddenly the tree gets struck by lightning and splits in two. The woodpecker flexes his muscles, and thinks, “**Wow, look at the power in my pecks.**”

God doesn’t bless your business, your family, and your finances for you to take the bows. Give the glory and honor to who it belongs. Live humbly before God.

Verse 18, "And 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, as it is this day. Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the LORD your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish.

As the nations which the LORD destroys before you, so you shall perish, because you would not be obedient to the voice of the LORD your God.”