

God's Word in Your Life

Deuteronomy 4:5-9

God's Word – His communication to you (Deuteronomy 4:5-9)

- **Deuteronomy 4:5-9 HCSB** Look, I have taught you statutes and ordinances as the LORD my God has commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to possess. (6) Carefully follow *them*, for this will *show* your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the peoples. When they hear about all these statutes, they will say, 'This great nation is indeed a wise and understanding people.' (7) For what great nation is there that has a god near to it as the LORD our God is *to us* whenever we call to Him? (8) And what great nation has righteous statutes and ordinances like this entire law I set before you today? (9) "Only be on your guard and diligently watch yourselves, so that you don't forget the things your eyes have seen and so that they don't slip from your mind as long as you live. Teach them to your children and your grandchildren.

As near to us (v.7). The laws God gave Israel were a sign of God's special relationship with His people. They are designed to guide humanity toward life-styles that are healthy, upright, and characterized by intimacy with the Lord. They point out sin, both actual and potential, and show us how to deal with it. They are the ultimate "how-to" guide on interpersonal relationships.

What great nation (v.8). Queen Victoria of England (1819-1901) declared publicly "I will be good." She kept her childhood resolution to "be good" throughout the 64 years of her reign. Under her, England reached the height of its glory and became the leading country of the world. At one point her empire covered a quarter of the globe!

In reply to a visiting African prince who asked her the secret of England's success, Victoria did not take him to see the glittering crown jewels; or to observe the great industrial cities at work; or to hear the brilliant orators who debated in Parliament. Instead, she presented the prince with a Bible, and said, "*Here is the secret of England's greatness.*"¹

A prince from India also recognized this truth. "*Where did the English-speaking people get all their intelligence and energy and cleverness and power?*" He asked. "*It is their Bible that gives it to them. And now they bring it to us and say, 'This is what raised us. Take it and raise yourselves.'*"²

Every nation that has taken the Word of God at face value and applied it thoroughly has flourished. Every time those nations have abandoned the Lord's commands, they have very shortly thereafter stumbled and failed. Would that we would learn from history.

As near...whenever we call to Him (v. 7). Our children may be playing next to us and we may not be particularly focused on them because we are distracted by other affairs. However, when our children call our name and speak to us, we are more focused on them. In a limited sense, this is also true of God. Though God is omnipresent and therefore always near us (for in Him we live and move and exist Acts 17:28), He is particularly close to us, emotionally speaking, when we pray. It is not that He becomes more or less aware of us. He is, after all, omniscient! What Moses (the friend of God) is referring to is emotional and spiritual intimacy – d'vekut.

¹ National Dangers and Guards; by Rev. Edward P. Ingersoll, D.D., July 4th, 1880

² In the Tiger Jungle: and other stories of missionary work among the Telugus of India; by Rev. Jacob Chamberlain, M.D., D.D., thirty seven years a missionary of the Reformed Church in America at Madanapalle, India.

Be on your guard...don't forget (v.9). As a good shepherd looks out for potential threats to the flock, Moses was concerned that our people forget all the many things that God had done for us. He urged the parents to build in rituals, holidays, festivals, and to even take day to day activities – all designed to remind the next generation of the Lord's call upon their lives. This not only helps the next generation – it helps us. Repeating God's great favors over and over helps keep us from straying.

The divine call to remember the Lord's past redemptive acts is a common theme in Deuteronomy.³

How the Bible helps you.

It reveals the way to life beyond death. (Romans 6:23; 2 Timothy 3:15; John 4:42; 1 John 4:14)

Paul taught that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.⁴ All of humanity stands beneath this Damoclesian sword⁵ but our fate is not set in stone. There is a way to escape. Paul encouraged Timothy, "*You have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*"⁶

They show us how to escape Death through the atoning work of a Savior. As John said, "*we have heard for ourselves, we have seen, we know and we testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.*"⁷

It explains life's real meaning and purpose. (Psalm 8:3-4; Genesis 1:26-27; Revelation 5:10)

When we look at the immensity of space and it slowly dawns upon us what that vastness and limitless power implies about its Creator, we may feel so miniscule as to think that God would not, could not, care about us.⁸ However, Moses wrote that God made us in His own image and likeness, both male and female and designed us to steward the Earth.⁹ Not only are we made in His image, but He has great plans for us. God has made us a kingdom of priests and we will reign on the earth.¹⁰

It shows the way to harmonious relationships. (Matthew 22:37-39; Philippians 2:3-4; Matthew 6:12; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. Love your neighbor as yourself. Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit. Humbly consider others as more important than yourself. Don't only consider your own interests but also the interests of others. Forgive others as you have been forgiven. Be patient and kind. Don't envy. Don't boast. Don't be conceited. Don't act improperly. Do not be selfish. Don't be provoked. Don't keep a record of wrongs. Hate unrighteousness. Love the truth. Bear all things. Give people the benefit of the doubt. Be hopeful. Endure all things. Don't quit loving people."

If we followed the principles of the four passages I just quoted alone, we would be considered the greatest saints the world has ever known. We would be loved by every righteous person and soundly hated by the wicked everywhere.

³ 5:15; 7:18; 8:2, 18; 9:7, 27; 11:2; 15:15; 16:3, 12; 24:9, 18, 22; 25:17

⁴ Romans 6:23

⁵ Legend from c. 300 BC

⁶ 2 Timothy 3:15

⁷ John 4:42 cp 1 John 4:14

⁸ Psalm 8:3-4

⁹ Genesis 1:26-27

¹⁰ Revelation 5:10

It reveals how to find true success, fulfillment, and happiness. (Psalm 1:1-2; Proverbs 3:5-6; John 10:10; Philippians 4:6-7, 13)

- **John 10:10 HCSB** A thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it in abundance.

Jesus' commands are for our good! We have the Creator of all life willing to share with us the secrets of the universe! We may argue "I don't think I can obey God. I don't think I can keep all those commands." You're right! You can't. Nobody's asking you to. Fortunately, those who submit their lives to the sovereign rule of Christ receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Empowered by that holy Presence we may, with Paul, say "*I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me*"¹¹

This is why our church is called a "Bible Fellowship." We have understood the tremendous advantages afforded to us in the Holy Scriptures. With the Psalmist we can say.

- **Psalms 1:1-2 HCSB** How happy is the man who does not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path of sinners, or join a group of mockers! (2) Instead, his delight is in the LORD's instruction, and he meditates on it day and night.

So,

- **Proverbs 3:5-6 HCSB** Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; (6) think about Him in all your ways, and He will guide you on the right paths.
- **Philippians 4:6-7 HCSB** Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. (7) And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

It reveals the future. (1 Corinthians 15:50-52; Revelation 11:15; Revelation 20:11-15 (cp Psalm 28:4; 62:12; Romans 2:6; Revelation 2:23; 18:6; 22:12))

It warns us that unrepentant sinners will not be able to enter the Kingdom of God.¹²

It encourages believers who are struggling with the difficulties of life that a great day of change is coming.¹³

It foretells of a wonderful event that will be signaled by a trumpet blast that the entire world will hear: the establishment of the Millennial kingdom of the Messiah.¹⁴

- **Revelation 20:11-15 HCSB** Then I saw a great white throne and One seated on it. Earth and heaven fled from His presence, and no place was found for them. (12) I also saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged according to their works by what was written in the books. (13) Then the sea gave up its dead, and Death and Hades gave up their dead; all were judged according to their works. (14) Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. (15) And anyone not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

It gives us the sobering reminder that all of us, Highlander and Lowlander, Adonaic believers and mere Cultural Christians, Sheep and Goats, Wheat and Weeds, Disciples and Rebels...all of us face a coming judgment.

¹¹ Philippians 4:13

¹² 1 Corinthians 15:50

¹³ 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

¹⁴ Revelation 11:15

That judgment, which for believers will take place at the Bimah Seat and for the unbelieving will take place at the Great White Throne of Judgment, will be based on works.

- **Psalms 28:4 HCSB** Repay them according to what they have done--according to the evil of their deeds. Repay them according to the work of their hands; give them back what they deserve.
- **Psalms 62:12 HCSB** and faithful love belongs to You, LORD. For You repay each according to his works.
- **Romans 2:6 HCSB** He **will repay each one according to his works:**
- **Revelation 2:23 HCSB** I will kill her children with the plague. Then all the churches will know that I am the One who examines minds and hearts, and I will give to each of you according to your works.
- **Revelation 18:6 HCSB** Pay her back the way she also paid, and double it according to her works. In the cup in which she mixed, mix a double portion for her.
- **Revelation 22:12 HCSB** "Look! I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me to repay each person according to what he has done.

For the unbelieving, the works will be used to determine their salvation. All will universally fail for "*all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*" For the believing, that judgment will be for rewards that we will later be able to use to celebrate the Lord's ascension to humanity's throne.

Our responsibility.

Meditate on God's Word. (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 19:12-14; 63:6 cp 119:147-148; 77:11-13; 119:97-100)

- Meditate on it if you want to truly succeed in life.¹⁵
- Meditate on it if you want to be able to identify and get rid of even unintentional sins – if you want to be acceptable to the Lord.¹⁶
- Meditate on it during the night.¹⁷
- Rise up before dawn and pray about what you read and meditated on the night before.¹⁸
- Meditate on it so that you never forget God's great redemptive acts and in your foolishness betray Him as so many have done before.¹⁹
- Meditate on it throughout the day. Apply it to each conversation; to each act; to your children; your spouse; your boss; your co-laborer; your pastor...Meditate, apply and obey it!²⁰

Act on God's commands.

- **James 1:22-25 HCSB** But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. (23) Because if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man looking at his own face in a mirror; (24) for he looks at himself, goes away, and right away forgets what kind of man he was. (25) But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer who acts--this person will be blessed in what he does.

¹⁵ Joshua 1:8

¹⁶ Psalm 19:12-14

¹⁷ Psalm 63:6

¹⁸ Psalm 119:147-148

¹⁹ Psalm 77:11-13

²⁰ Psalm 119:97-100