

The God Who Holds Tomorrow

Deuteronomy: Choose Life | Week Two | Deuteronomy 1:9–3:29

THE BIG IDEA

We are prone to forget what God has done, and forgetting makes us afraid. So before Israel enters the land, Moses walks a new generation back through their own story, the failures, the wandering years, and the victories, so they can face the past with humility, trust God in the present, and walk into the future without fear. Our future has never depended on our perfection. It rests on God's grace, which is greater than every failure and every fear.

01 Share life *about 15 minutes*

Before we open the Bible, take a few minutes to catch up on life. Give everyone a chance to share. This guide is designed for about 85 minutes, and the times beside each section are suggestions, not rules.

1. What was a high point and a low point of your week?
2. When has fear talked you out of something you now wish you had done?
- 3. When we last met, we each named one step to take. How did it go, and what got in the way?

02 Setting the scene

Last week Moses gathered Israel on the plains of Moab and reminded them that an eleven day trip had taken forty years. This week he tells them why. In Deuteronomy 1:9–3:29, Moses opens Israel's photo album and walks a new generation through the whole story: the spies who saw giants instead of God, the generation that refused to enter the land, the long wandering years where God still fed and carried his people, the surprising victories over King Sihon and King Og, and even God's painful no to Moses himself. Moses retells all of it for one reason. A people who face their story honestly, and remember God's faithfulness in every chapter of it, can walk into the future by grace instead of fear.

03 Read the Word together *about 10 minutes*

This week's passage runs almost three chapters, so read the heart of it aloud. Have one person read Deuteronomy 1:19–46, the story of the spies, and another read 3:21–29,

God's word to Moses at the end. If your group reads in another language, have someone read from their own Bible as well. The verses for each part of the study are printed below, and the rest of the passage is worth reading at home this week.

MEMORY VERSE | DEUTERONOMY 3:22

Don't be afraid of them, for the LORD your God fights for you.

First impressions

4. What word, phrase, or image stood out to you as the passage was read?
5. What did you notice about God in these verses, and did anything surprise you?

04 Study the scripture *about 35 minutes*

The sermon walked through this passage in three parts: learning from the past, trusting God in the present, and walking into the future by grace instead of fear. The verses for each part are printed below, so reread them as you go. The first question in each part asks what the text says, the second asks what it means, and the third asks what it changes. If time is short, keep the questions marked with an orange dot.

LEARN FROM THE PAST

Read Deuteronomy 1:26–33 again.

Deuteronomy 1:29–33 CSB

29 So I said to you: Don't be terrified or afraid of them! **30** The LORD your God who goes before you will fight for you, just as you saw him do for you in Egypt. **31** And you saw in the wilderness how the LORD your God carried you as a man carries his son all along the way you traveled until you reached this place. **32** But in spite of this you did not trust the LORD your God, **33** who went before you on the journey to seek out a place for you to camp. He went in the fire by night and in the cloud by day to guide you on the road you were to travel.

Standing at the edge of the land, ten of the twelve spies saw giants and fortified cities and decided the battle was already lost. Fear did more than shake their emotions. It rewrote their theology. The people God had rescued from Egypt, walked through a parted sea, and fed with bread from heaven every morning looked at him and said, the LORD hates us. Fear magnifies obstacles and minimizes God, until we start reading his character through our circumstances instead of reading our circumstances through his character.

6. Look at verses 30 and 31. What two pictures does Moses use for what God had already done for Israel on the way? Then look at verse 32. What did the people conclude anyway?
7. Moses makes Israel revisit their failure, not to shame them but to teach them. What is the difference between facing your past with humility and being trapped in it with shame?
- 8. Where has fear been distorting your view of God lately, magnifying an obstacle and shrinking your sense of his power or his love?

TRUST GOD IN THE PRESENT

Read Deuteronomy 2:7 again.

Deuteronomy 2:7 CSB

7 For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your journey through this immense wilderness. The LORD your God has been with you this past forty years, and you have lacked nothing.

You might expect Moses to skip past the wandering years. Instead he lingers there, because even the wilderness had something to teach. For forty years, while Israel lived with the consequences of their unbelief, they never once lived with the absence of God. He fed them, guided them with cloud and fire, and watched over every step, so that Moses can honestly say, you have lacked nothing. Waiting is not evidence that God has forgotten you. Sometimes waiting is where God does his deepest work.

9. Look at 2:7. What three things does Moses say God did during the forty years, and what does he say Israel lacked?
10. We rarely doubt God's ability, but we often struggle with his schedule. What makes trusting God's timing hard for you right now?
- 11. Think of a waiting season in your life, past or present. Looking back, where can you see that God was providing and working even when nothing seemed to be happening?

WALK BY GRACE INTO THE FUTURE

Read Deuteronomy 3:21–28 again.

Deuteronomy 3:21–22 CSB

21 I commanded Joshua at that time: Your own eyes have seen everything the LORD your God has done to these two kings. The LORD will do the same to all the kingdoms you are about to enter. **22** Don't be afraid of them, for the LORD your God fights for you.

LEADER NOTE

Someone in your group may ask why God would not let Moses into the land. Numbers 20 tells the story: Moses struck the rock in anger and took credit that belonged to God. Keep it brief and keep it at the level of the sermon. The point is not the fairness of the no but the grace inside it. God let Moses see the land with his own eyes, and gave him a job for his final days: strengthen Joshua. If the conversation runs long, offer to talk more after the meeting and move on.

The passage ends with a deeply personal moment. Moses, after forty faithful years, pleads with God to let him cross into the land, and God says no. Yet even inside the no there is grace. God brings Moses up the mountain to see the promise with his own eyes, and Moses does not spend his final days bitter over a closed chapter. God calls us to learn from our failures, but he never calls us to live in them.

Notice what God tells Moses to do next: commission Joshua, encourage him, and strengthen him. Grace does not just free us from the past. It sends us toward people. When we know our future rests on God's faithfulness and not our own perfection, we are free to spend our lives strengthening others for the road ahead.

12. Look at 3:21 and 22. What does Moses tell Joshua to remember, and what reason does he give for not being afraid?
- 13. Is there a closed chapter or an old failure you keep replaying? What would it look like to learn from it without living there?
14. Who is one person God has placed in your life that you could encourage and strengthen this week, the way Moses was sent to strengthen Joshua?

05 Back to Jesus *about 10 minutes*

How does this passage point us back to Jesus?

Moses could only look at the land from a distance, and even Joshua could only lead Israel into an inheritance they would eventually lose. But Joshua's name in Hebrew is the same name as Jesus, and it means the LORD saves. Jesus is our greater Joshua. Where Israel's fear rewrote God's character, Jesus trusted his Father perfectly, walked into the deepest wilderness of death itself, and rose again to lead his people into an inheritance that can never be lost. Because of him, our failures were nailed to the cross, and we do not face tomorrow wondering if God is with us. We know he is.

- 15. How does knowing that Jesus has already secured your future change the way you face the fear or the failure you named today?

APPLICATION

What is God telling me to do today? Write down one specific step you will take this week.

06 Pray together *about 15 minutes*

Share one request with the group and pray for one another. As you pray, name the step each person wrote down and ask the Holy Spirit for the courage and power to take it.

Who has God brought to mind this week?

Someone who needs what you have been talking about. Write their name here and pray for them by name.

Prayer requests

A PRAYER TO CARRY WITH YOU

Father, you have been faithful in every chapter of my story, even the ones I would rather forget. Help me face my past with humility, trust you in the waiting, and walk into this week by grace instead of fear. Thank you that the battle belongs to you and that my future rests on your faithfulness, not my perfection. Lead me to someone I can strengthen and encourage along the way. In Jesus' name, Amen.

At home this week

Deuteronomy 6 tells parents to talk about God's words at the table and on the road. If there are children in your home, ask at dinner this week: **What is something scary that God helped our family through?** Then read Deuteronomy 1:31 together. God carried Israel the way a father carries his child, and he carries us too.

Before we gather again

Three things to carry into the week.

- Read Deuteronomy 1:9–3:29 again on your own this week, and ask God what he is saying to you through it.
- Take the one step you wrote down, and tell someone once you have done it.
- Reach out to the person whose name you wrote in Pray Together. We will talk about how it went next time.



Scan to answer two quick questions after your meeting: which question landed, and which one fell flat.