

A Right View of God

Deuteronomy: Choose Life | Week Four | Deuteronomy 4:15–40

A study you can do on your own in about 40 minutes. Find a quiet place, a Bible, and something to write with. The questions speak to you directly, and the lines are yours.

THE BIG IDEA

The greatest threat to our life with God is rarely a dramatic rebellion. It is the slow drift of our hearts toward idols that feel familiar, manageable, and harmless. Moses' answer to idolatry is not more willpower but a bigger view of God, the One who is formless and jealous, merciful and faithful, findable and incomparable. We do not guard our hearts by gripping tighter. We guard them by seeing God more clearly, and his grace meets us at every turn of the road home.

01 Check in with God *about 5 minutes*

Before you open the passage, be honest with God about your week. Write short answers. Nobody else will read them.

1. What was a high point and a low point from your week?

2. What is something you drifted into slowly, a habit or a routine, without ever deciding to start it?

- 3. If I did last week's study, how did the step I named go? If this is my first week, what do I hope God does in me through Deuteronomy?

02 Setting the scene

We are four weeks into Deuteronomy, and this passage closes the first of Moses' farewell sermons. Israel is camped on the edge of the Promised Land, and Moses, at the very end of his life, knows he will not cross over with them. So he spends his final words on the thing that matters most. The greatest danger ahead of Israel is not the armies of Canaan. It is the temptation to trade the living God for idols, the familiar gods of Egypt behind them and Canaan in front of them. Moses does not fight idolatry by simply saying it is wrong. Again and again he points to who God actually is, because for Moses the antidote to idolatry is a right view of God. That is exactly where this week's passage takes us.

03 Read the Word *about 10 minutes*

Open your Bible to Deuteronomy 4:15–40 and read the whole passage aloud to yourself, slowly, even if it feels strange. Reading aloud slows you down and helps you notice. If you can, read it twice. The verses for each part of the study are printed in the sections below.

MEMORY VERSE | DEUTERONOMY 4:29

But from there, you will search for the LORD your God, and you will find him when you seek him with all your heart and all your soul.

Read it aloud three times now, and once each morning this week.

First impressions

4. The word, phrase, or image that stood out to me as I read was this.

5. What surprised me, or what I noticed for the first time.

04 Study the scripture *about 20 minutes*

The sermon walked through three appeals Moses makes in this passage: be on guard against drift, return when you wander, and obey God alone, because there is no one like him. The verses for each part are printed below. The first question in each part asks what the text says, the last asks what it changes in you. The dotted questions are the ones to keep if time is short.

BE ON GUARD AGAINST DRIFT

Read verses 15–24 again.

Deuteronomy 4:15-16, 23-24 CSB

15 “Diligently watch yourselves, because you did not see any form on the day the LORD spoke to you out of the fire at Horeb, **16** so you don’t act corruptly and make an idol for yourselves in the shape of any figure: a male or female form, **23** Be careful not to forget the covenant of the LORD your God that he made with you, and make an idol for yourselves in the shape of anything he has forbidden you. **24** For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

A NOTE ON THE HARD VERSES

You may wonder why God calls himself jealous, or a consuming fire, in verse 24. This is not the pettiness of a rival. It is the jealousy of a devoted spouse who rightly wants an undivided heart, and the fire is the seriousness of a love that will not share. If this troubles you, bring it to a pastor. It is a good question.

Moses warns Israel to watch themselves carefully, because idolatry rarely announces itself. Like a swimmer pulled by a current, God’s people can drift a long way before they notice they have moved. The idols Moses lists were the familiar gods of Egypt and Canaan, the ones that surrounded them and felt normal. His warning rests on who God is. God has no form, so he cannot be managed or domesticated like a carved image. And God is jealous, not in a petty way, but the way a devoted spouse rightly wants an undivided heart.

6. Look at verses 15 and 16. Why does Moses say Israel must not make an idol? What did they not see at Horeb, and why does that matter?
7. How does it change this warning to hear God’s jealousy as covenant love, like a spouse who wants your whole heart, rather than as pettiness?
8. What idols feel familiar or normal in our culture, and which ones have you become comfortable with in your own life?

RETURN WHEN YOU WANDER

Read verses 25–31 again.

Deuteronomy 4:27–31 CSB

27 The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be reduced to a few survivors among the nations where the LORD your God will drive you. **28** There you will worship man-made gods of wood and stone, which cannot see, hear, eat, or smell. **29** But from there, you will search for the LORD your God, and you will find him when you seek him with all your heart and all your soul. **30** When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, in the future you will return to the LORD your God and obey him. **31** He will not leave you, destroy you, or forget the covenant with your ancestors that he swore to them by oath, because the LORD your God is a compassionate God.

Moses is honest about where drift leads: scattered lives, fractured community, and the emptiness of serving gods that cannot see, hear, eat, or smell. But verse 29 is the great turn of the passage. Even from the far country, if Israel seeks the LORD, they will find him, because he is a compassionate God who will not abandon them or forget his covenant. The door home is never shut.

9. Look at verses 29 to 31. What does Moses say Israel will do from the far country, and what three things does he say God will not do?

10. What does seeking God with all your heart and all your soul actually look like in an ordinary week?

- 11. When you have wandered from God, how do you picture him looking at you? Arms crossed, or arms open like the father running to the prodigal son?

OBEY HIM ONLY

Read verses 32–40 again.

Deuteronomy 4:35, 39–40 CSB

35 You were shown these things so that you would know that the LORD is God; there is no other besides him. **39** Today, recognize and keep in mind that the LORD is God in heaven above and on earth below; there is no other. **40** Keep his statutes and commands, which I am giving you today, so that you and your children after you may prosper and so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you for all time.”

Moses closes with a challenge: search all of history and ask if any god has ever done what the LORD has done. The answer is no. Israel was shown these things so that they would know, not just in their heads but in their lived experience, that the LORD is God and there is no other. That kind of knowing grows every time God’s people retell the stories of his faithfulness.

And those stories were never meant to stay private. A people who know there is no one like their God become witnesses of him, in their homes, workplaces, and neighborhoods, simply by telling what he has done.

- 12.** Look at verses 35 and 39. What is the one thing Israel was shown all of this in order to know?

- 13.** What is a moment from your own story that helped you know, deep down, that God is real and worthy of your life?

- **14.** Who is one person who needs to hear that story, and what would it take to tell them this week?

05 Back to Jesus *about 5 minutes*

How does this passage point me back to Jesus?

The God who has no form chose to take one. In Jesus, the incomparable God entered our world, lived in the in-between with us, and carried every consequence of our wandering to the cross. He is the proof that God's jealous love is for us, not against us. Because of Jesus, the promise of verse 29 is sure: when we turn back, we do not meet a God with crossed arms. We meet the Father who runs to us, embraces us, and welcomes us home.

- 15. Where do you need to stop swimming against your own drift this week and let Jesus bring you home?

APPLICATION

What is God telling me to do today? One specific step I will take this week.

06 Pray *about 5 minutes*

Write your prayer. Prayers on paper are slower and more honest than prayers in our heads. Tell God what you found, ask him for what you need, and name the step you just wrote down.

Who has God brought to mind?

Someone who needs what you have been reading about. Write their name, pray for them by name, and send them a message before you close this guide.

A PRAYER TO CARRY WITH YOU

Father, you alone are God, and there is no one like you. Guard my heart from the idols that feel familiar, and show me where I have started to drift. When I wander, remind me that you are merciful, faithful, and findable, and give me the courage to turn back toward home. Help me to know you, not just to know about you, and to love you with an undivided heart, 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 we love that could become more important to us than God?** Then read Deuteronomy 4:29 together. Even when we drift, God can always be found when we turn back to him.

Before Sunday

Three things to carry into the week.

- Read Deuteronomy 4:15–40 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.
- Follow up with the person whose name you wrote above. A message today, a conversation this week.

DO THIS WITH OTHERS

Deuteronomy was preached to a people, not to a person, and this guide works best with others around the table. LOFT's Bible studies meet during the week and welcome new people at any point in the series. Find one in the Church Center app or at loftcity.church, or email sam@loftcity.church and we will help you find one.