

Love that Looks Like Obedience

Deuteronomy: Choose Life | Week Five | Deuteronomy 5:1–21

THE BIG IDEA

The Ten Commandments are not a ladder we climb to earn God's love. They are ten words spoken to people God had already rescued, showing what freedom looks like toward God and toward every neighbor. God saves first, and every word that follows is grace teaching rescued people how to live free.

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 from your week?
2. Growing up, what was one rule in your house that you only understood later?
- 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

We are five weeks into Deuteronomy, Moses' farewell sermons to Israel on the plains of Moab. The first section of the series was about remembering, as Moses walked a new generation back through their story and warned them not to forget the God who carried them. This week the series turns from Remember to Love. In Deuteronomy 5, Moses gathers the people and reads out the Ten Commandments, the ten words God spoke from the fire at Horeb forty years earlier. But he is not reading them to the generation that first heard them. Their parents are gone. He is handing the covenant to their children, and he begins not with a rule but with a rescue: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. Everything in this passage flows from that sentence.

03 Read the Word together *about 10 minutes*

Open your Bibles to Deuteronomy 5:1–21. Have one person read the passage aloud, slowly, while the rest of the group follows along. If your group reads in another language, have someone read it again from their own Bible. The verses for each part of the study are printed in the sections below.

MEMORY VERSE | DEUTERONOMY 5:6

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery.

First impressions

4. What word, phrase, or image stood out to you as the passage was read?
5. What did you notice, or what surprised you, in how God speaks to his people here?

04 Study the scripture *about 35 minutes*

The sermon walked this passage in three parts: the covenant is offered fresh to every generation, God rescues before he commands, and the ten words show what love looks like toward God and toward our neighbor. 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.

A WORD FOR TODAY

Read verses 1–5 again.

Deuteronomy 5:1–3 CSB

- 1** Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, “Israel, listen to the statutes and ordinances I am proclaiming as you hear them today. Learn and follow them carefully.
- 2** The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. **3** He did not make this covenant with our ancestors, but with all of us who are alive here today.

Moses tells the children of the wilderness generation that God made this covenant not with their ancestors, but with all of us who are alive here today. Almost nobody in that crowd had actually stood at the mountain. Moses collapses forty years on purpose, because the covenant is not an heirloom passed down a family line. It is a living

relationship, offered fresh to every generation. Nobody inherits faith secondhand, and nobody stands at someone else's mountain.

6. Look at verses 2 and 3. With whom does Moses say God made this covenant, and with whom does he say it was not made? Why is that surprising, given who is standing in front of him?
7. What is the difference between a faith you inherited and a covenant you have received as your own?
- 8. Whether you grew up in church or came to faith later, what would it mean for you to receive this covenant as yours, today, rather than something borrowed?

A RESCUE BEFORE A RULE

Read verse 6 again.

Deuteronomy 5:6 CSB

6 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery.

Before God gives a single command, he introduces himself: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out. Israel walked out of Egypt in Exodus 14, but God did not speak the ten words until Exodus 20. The rescue came months before the rules. Israel did not obey their way out of slavery, and neither do we. The exodus is the starting line, not the finish line.

The German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer called the counterfeit version of this cheap grace: a rescue that asks nothing of us and changes nothing in us. Real grace does not lower the bar. It changes the reason you climb.

9. Look at verse 6. What does God say about himself before he gives a single command? What has he already done?
10. Which mistake are you more prone to: trying to earn grace, or cheapening it? What does that look like for you?
- 11. Where in your life are you still trying to obey your way into God's acceptance instead of living from it?

A LOVE WITH TWO DIRECTIONS

Read verses 7–21 again.

Deuteronomy 5:12-16 CSB

12 Be careful to remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy as the LORD your God has commanded you. **13** You are to labor six days and do all your work, **14** but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. Do not do any work, you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, your ox or donkey, any of your livestock, or the resident alien who lives within your city gates, so that your male and female slaves may rest as you do. **15** Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. That is why the LORD your God has commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. **16** Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and so that you may prosper in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

LEADER NOTE

Someone in your group may ask about verse 9, where God speaks of consequences reaching the third and fourth generation. Keep it brief and keep it at the level of the sermon. Sin has a long shadow in families, which anyone who has lived in one knows. But the verse does not stop there: faithful love reaches a thousand generations. The ratio is the point. If the conversation runs long, offer to talk more after the meeting and move on.

The ten words run in two directions: loving God above everything, and loving your neighbor in everything, with the Sabbath standing at the hinge. In Deuteronomy, the reason for Sabbath rest is not creation but rescue. You were slaves, and slaves never get a day off, so rest is a weekly declaration that Egypt is over. And verse 14 insists that our rest should create rest for the people around us. Free people do not just take rest. They give it.

The list then turns to the neighbor, starting with honor your father and your mother, spoken to the children of parents who had failed them. Honor means to treat as weighty.

It is not the same word as obey, agree, or imitate, and where a parent has caused real harm, honor may even mean wise, prayerful distance rather than pretending. These commands were never only about private goodness. A community that tells the truth, honors its elders, guards marriages, and gives rest to the people under its roof becomes a picture of freedom that a watching world can see.

- 12. Look at verses 14 and 15. Who is included in the Sabbath rest, and what reason does Moses give for keeping it?
- 13. What makes it hard for you to truly stop and rest, and whose rest depends on yours? And what does honoring a parent look like for you right now, in your season and your story?
- 14. Who in your everyday world is affected by how you keep or break these words, and what is one way your obedience could bless them this week?

05 Back to Jesus *about 10 minutes*

How does this passage point us back to Jesus?

The list that began with rescue ends by exposing every heart: our hands may be clean, but our wants are not. So God sent his Son. Jesus loved the Father with an undivided heart and his neighbor all the way to a cross. He kept every word we have broken, and at the cross he was treated like the word breaker so that word breakers could be treated like the Son. The new covenant he sealed is not a lower standard but a new address: by his Spirit, God writes these words on our hearts. At Sinai the covenant ended with a meal in God's presence, and it still does. We do not come to the table as people who kept the list. We come as people the Rescuer keeps.

- 15. How does knowing that Jesus kept these words for you, and now writes them in you, change the way you read the Ten Commandments?

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 brought me out before you ever asked anything of me. Thank you that your love spoke first. Show me the rival I have been clinging to, and teach me to rest like a free person. Help me treat the people around me, beginning with my own family, as weighty and beloved. Write your words on my heart this week, so that my life looks like your love. 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: **Why did God give us the Ten Commandments?** Then read Deuteronomy 5:6 together. God rescued his people first, and the commandments show rescued people how to live free.

Before we gather again

Three things to carry into the week.

- Read Deuteronomy 5:1–21 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.