

# Influence With Wisdom

## *August 21, 2022*

### Lesson Summary

#### ***Main Passages***

Deuteronomy 5:1-22

#### ***Session Outline***

1. God's Word Teaches (Deuteronomy 5:1-6)
2. Love God and Others (Deuteronomy 5:7-21)
3. Our Responsibility (Deuteronomy 5:22,32-33)

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#### ***Theological Theme***

God gave the Ten Commandments so that His people will know how to live in relation to Him and to others. We must know and obey His Word as we teach the next generation to appreciate the gift of God's wisdom for daily living.



## Leader Guide



# Influence With Wisdom

### Introduction

During the pandemic there was an increase in the amount of things people ordered for delivery. Many who were working remotely ordered office furniture to use at home. They then faced the task of assembling that furniture. Depending on what kind of pieces you order or where you order from, there is usually a set of instructions that come with the item, ranging from very simple to completely complicated.

It would be an interesting to know how many people who have attempted to assemble furniture with a spouse or close friend ended up in a fight or argument. This is often due to the different approaches people choose to take when faced with instructions. There are those who get everything out of the box, organize the pieces, read over the instructions, and then follow each step in order. Other people look at the picture on the box, dump out the pieces, and start where it makes sense to them without ever looking at the instructions. You may be one who strives for nothing less than perfection, one who holds a few leftover pieces in your hand and hopes for the best, or somewhere in the middle. Each of us has a unique inclination for handling instructions.

When it comes to following the Lord, He wants you to succeed, and He has supplied exactly what you need to accomplish the tasks you are given. Today we are going to study what following instructions has to do with the way we live our lives and what God wants us to do with His Word.

-  Share any funny assembly story you have experienced or heard.
-  How do you typically respond when faced with a list of instructions? Why?

### Session Summary

The Ten Commandments were given as a guide for daily living. They give us wisdom for relating to God and to others. We should know and obey His Word and lead the next generation to do the same.

## 1. The Word Teaches (Deuteronomy 5:1-6)

In this passage, Moses—the leader of the children of Israel and author of Deuteronomy—called the people together in an assembly. He had been sharing with them the laws and statutes they needed to follow as they made their way toward the promised land. The people had been in bondage in Egypt and were now out on their own, heading toward the place God had promised them. There was a massive amount of people and some law and order needed to be reiterated to keep them organized and moving together in a healthy, God-honoring way.

Moses called the people to attention and reminded them of some important things. He stressed that the people needed to know and keep God's commands. Just hearing what God said was not enough. Just knowing what was expected of them was not enough. Moses took it a step further, telling them to learn the statutes and rules and then to be careful to obey them. Too many people settle for being around Scripture on a surface level and think they have gotten what they need. They then wonder why they are living in defeat and not experiencing the abundant life that God has for His people.



How have you experienced the reality that just hearing or knowing God's Word is not enough but that we must also obey and apply it? What difference do these two approaches make?

We are not so different from the people of Israel. We can easily fall into the trap of only seeking to fill our heads with more knowledge of God. Knowledge is good if we also apply it to our daily lives in order to be transformed. Moses emphasized the need to take what he was saying seriously by reminding the people that they were in a covenant relationship with God. Though God originally cut the covenant with their ancestor Abraham, He also reinforced that covenant with them along the way. They did not have the excuse that God's law was for a different generation because the covenant with God was for the living people of God.




Making a covenant with God was referred to as “cutting covenant” because covenants were always sealed with the cutting of a sacrifice. How might this practice emphasize the seriousness of the agreement made in a covenant? How does this point you toward the work of Jesus on the cross?

Moses reminded the people of the experience at Mount Horeb (see Exodus 20) and used the term “face to face” (v. 4) to describe the way God had interacted with His people. When you hear the phrase face to face, you

might think about being close or talking directly with another person. This wording implies an intimate, free communication. The people communicated with the Lord through Moses because they could not handle being that close to a holy God. This stressed the authority that Moses carried and gave more credence to what he told them. Because of the work of Jesus on behalf of all who trust Him, we don't have to have approach God through another person. We can talk face to face with God, and we can hear Him talk to us through His Word. The question is whether we will receive His Word with the authority it deserves. Do we study it and obey the things we read in Scripture, or do we just give it a passing glance every now and then?

God's Word is our set of instructions to live a godly life and always needs to be applied. Regardless of the approach you take to assemble furniture, God's instructions are life-changing and life-giving and deserve your full attention, just as Moses challenged the children of Israel.

 Application: What do you need to change about the way you approach God's Word? What are some wrong ways you might have approached His Word in the past?

## 2. Love God and Others (Deuteronomy 5:7-21)

Having emphasized why the people needed to listen and apply the instructions of the Lord, Moses got specific. Just as we need to hear some instructions multiple times, Moses reminded them of the Ten Commandments God had given His people in Exodus. This list gives ten commands that apply to all the relationships in our lives today. Because He loves us and wants us to live godly lives, God knew we needed guidance. It is important to recognize that the Ten Commandments were not given to make us legalists, but to teach us to rightly order our loves.

The first four commandments instruct us in how to love God while the last six are all about how to love other people. That covers both our vertical and horizontal relationships. When the Lord gave the commandments to Moses, He began by declaring who He is to set the foundation for the rest of the list. God had brought the people out of bondage in Egypt and was guiding them to the promised land. He is the only true and living God and He has the right to tell us how to live.


 How does recognizing what God has done for you motivate you to obey His instructions?

As you study the commandments, you should notice that worship matters. Who you worship and how you worship are a big deal. We live in a world that worships everything but God and encourages us to do the same. The

### The Form of the Commandments


The Ten Commandments share the basic form of ancient Near Eastern treaties. The Great King is identified ("I am the Lord your God"), and the history of His dealings with His servant people is outlined. The first command is the basic covenant principle. The following commands detail what Israel's exclusive devotion to God entails for Israel's relations with God and interpersonal relations. The form of these commands is virtually identical to that in Exodus 20:2–17. Here, however, remembering the Sabbath commemorates the saving deliverance from Egypt (Deut. 5:15) rather than creation (Exod. 20:11).

Lord leaves nothing to chance and told us to keep Him first and worship Him only. We are to respect the name of God and follow His example of holiness and rest. God knows where we will be challenged in living a godly life and set these parameters to keep us on the right path. In the busyness of life and the craziness of our culture, it can be easy to overlook what God has said. You may struggle to keep God first, rest regularly, control your speech, or worship Him alone. Moses knew the people were struggling and wanted to remind them of God's commands so that they would commit themselves again to obeying what they had been told.

 What are some less obvious ways we may struggle to keep God's commands? Why is it important to not overlook these areas?

After focusing on relating to God, we must also consider how God tells us to relate to others. The last six commandments covered guidelines for how to love others well, starting with the command to honor your parents. This is foundational in several ways. Dishonoring one's parents is rebellion and rebellion will always have consequences. But these relationships affect more than just the immediate family. If the younger generation is not respectful and honoring of those who preceded them, society in general will suffer and be weakened. A promise was attached to this command—those who honor their parents would prosper in the land God was giving them.

These last few commands cover various aspects of our lives including the way we think, act, and speak. Some of these areas are obvious like murder, adultery, lying, or stealing while others are less visible like wrong desires and covetousness. As you look through this section of the list, you will notice many things that the world looks the other way on or even celebrates. We must be careful in this regard, even when it comes to what we spend our free time watching and dwelling on, including movies, TV, music, and podcasts. It's a slippery slope for believers when we choose to be entertained by that which God condemns or when we covet what others have because we constantly compare our lives to theirs. While we may divide the list of Ten Commandments into those that focus on God and those that focus on others, the list is inseparably connected. When we love God as we should, it is easier for us to also love others as we should.

 Application: What examples can you think of that are seen as "acceptable" ways of disregarding God's commands? What (maybe less obvious) examples of this exist in your own life?

### 3. Our Responsibility (Deuteronomy 5:22,32-33)

It is common to repeat certain things we want to emphasize or want to be sure a listener will remember. You may even have a way of speaking that shows how serious you are about what you are saying. Similarly, after Moses repeated the commandments, he stressed that these commands had not come from him but from the Lord and were to be taken very seriously and with great respect. He recounted how the commandments were first received as they were spoken out of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness with a loud voice. Each of these elements pointed back to the presence of God with His people during the exodus from Egypt. These ways that the Lord manifested His presence with the people caused a godly fear in them. Many today could use a healthy fear of the Lord instead of a cavalier attitude toward God and His Word. Moses's words that the voice spoke out of the darkness remind us that though the world is dark and it sometimes feels like we cannot find our way, God is with us and will guide us through whatever we face if we will turn to Him and listen. Relying on ourselves or other people can never satisfy us like trusting and obeying God will.



Why was it important for the people to remember where the Ten Commandments had come from? Why is it important today to remember where the Bible and all the truth within it comes from?

Moses said the commandments were written on tablets of stone and then given to him. This refers to the fact that the Lord Himself carved the words onto the stone. Using stone speaks of permanence. There would be no fading of ink. A flood would not ruin the document. No one can add or change the words. The Ten Commandments were written by God on tablets of stone and were to be preserved and obeyed for every generation to follow. Likewise, if we care about those who come behind us, we will care about teaching them what the Word of God says and leading them to obey it.

Every time the Word is spoken, read, or taught, the person receiving it has a choice to make about what to do in response. Moses was clear that what he taught was to be used in guiding the people to right living. The Lord calls His people to holy, righteous living and gives us the instructions we need for it. He did not give us instructions so we would become legalistic about checking off a list of rules. The Ten Commandments are guidelines that give us freedom to rightly order our lives so that we can live in victory. When we have a correct perspective on God's Word, it will be evident in the way we live and attractive to the world around us. With the chaos of our culture surrounding us on every side, the freedom that comes from following God's perfect plan is a welcome relief. When we obey His Word and become more like Christ, we have hope to offer those around us who are desperate for answers and have been let down by the wisdom of the world.

- ❓ Why is it important for you to consider the Ten Commandments not as legalistic but as a gift of guidelines for righteous living? How is the perfect life of Jesus connected to our inability to keep God's commandments perfectly?

The Ten Commandments were meant to be handed down through the generations. We are called to do the same with God's Word today. It is crucial that we respond to what we learn from Scripture with wisdom and by applying it to our lives. It is not enough to just hear the Word. We need to be intentional about obeying God's Word and then committed to teaching it to the next generation in our homes and throughout our lives. Consider how the church would be different if we recognized that our homes are the original small groups. It is time to take that responsibility as seriously as God intended and create an intentional plan to teach and develop the generations God has put in our care.

- ❓ Application: How will you be intentional about studying and teaching God's Word in your home and throughout your life?

## Conclusion

- ❓ How do the Ten Commandments guide you to rightly prioritize your life? What specifically would change in your life if you followed these commands?
- ❓ How do the Ten Commandments challenge your worship? What action can you take toward this today?
- ❓ How will you be intentional about your responsibility to teach God's Word to your children and the next generation?

## Prayer of Response

*Close in prayer asking God to help you to rightly reorder your loves according to His commands that you might glorify Him and bless others.*

## Additional Resources

- *The Ten Commandments from the Back Side* by J. Ellsworth Kalas
- *Be Equipped* by Warren Wiersbe
- *The Message of Deuteronomy* by Raymond Brown

# Disciples Multiplying Disciples





# For Next Week

## Session Title

- Influence With Action

## Main Passages

- Deuteronomy 1:1-8, Matthew 4:1-11

## Session Outline

1. God Equips (Deuteronomy 1:1-5)
2. The Key to Victory (Matthew 4:1-11)
3. Responsible to Equip (Deuteronomy 1:6-8)

## Memorize

*And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the rules that I speak in your hearing today, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them." - Deuteronomy 5:1*

# Historical Context of Deuteronomy

## Purpose

Though the initial covenant between the Lord and Israel was made at Sinai, the generation that received it had largely died out in the thirty-eight years since that event. Now the younger generation needed to affirm their commitment to the covenant (4:1–8). Moreover, the transition from a largely nomadic existence in the desert to a sedentary lifestyle in Canaan required a covenant revision and expansion suitable to these new conditions. The purpose of Deuteronomy is to provide guidelines for the new covenant community to enable them to live obediently before God and to carry out his intentions for them.

## Author

The book itself asserts that Moses is the principle source and author for the material (1:1), as do subsequent OT texts (Jos 1:7–8; 1Kg 2:3; Ezr 3:2) and NT texts (Mt 19:7; Ac 3:22; Rm 10:19). This attribution remained virtually unchallenged until the advent of modern rationalism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Structural similarities between Deuteronomy and Near Eastern treaty texts from the second millennium BC support the unity and antiquity of the book. That Moses is the primary author of Deuteronomy is the most reasonable view for the person who accepts the testimony of Scripture.

## Setting

The exodus probably occurred in 1446 BC, whereupon Israel set out for Canaan, the inheritance God had promised his people. Because of their rebellious spirit, the Israelites were forced to wander in the desert for forty years (2:7) until at last they arrived in Moab, just opposite Jericho (32:49). It was there that Moses put pen to parchment to compose this farewell treatise (31:9, 24).

## Special Features

The title of this book of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy, comes from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) and means “second law” or “repetition of the law.” The phrase is actually a mistranslation of 17:18, which reads “a copy of this instruction.” It is still a fitting title since much of the book contains repetitions of the laws found in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.

## Extended Commentary

### Deuteronomy 5:1-22

5:1–3 Though revealed again now in a new, expanded form in Moab, this covenant was essentially a restatement of the covenant given forty years earlier. Fathers refers to the patriarchal ancestors beginning with Abram with whom God had made a covenant centuries earlier (Gn 12:1–3; 15:1–21; 17:1–21).

5:4–5 These verses echo Ex 20:18–21 (also Dt 4:12) and are elaborated on in Dt 5:22–31. Face to face is a metaphor for “directly” as opposed to through a mediator. Therefore, v. 5 seems to contradict v. 4. The explanation is in vv. 5:22–31. Although Israel heard the Ten Commandments directly from God, the rest of the law was mediated to them by Moses (J. G. McConville).

5:6–7 The phrase other gods does not admit their existence but only the fact that the polytheistic worldview was rife in the surrounding cultures of OT Israel (4:7; 1Co 8:4–6).

5:8 The Hebrew term translated idol (*pesel*) means “a carved thing.” It could, in this context, refer not just to likenesses of pagan gods but to that of the Lord himself (4:15–16).

5:9–10 To hate God in a covenant context means not so much to detest him with strong emotional overtones as it does to reject him as a covenant partner. For Israel to love God was to choose him and agree to obey him (6:4–5; Jn 14:15). Conversely, to hate him was to disobey him. When God is the subject, he is said to have loved Israel in the sense that he chose Israel to be his special people (Dt 7:8). The best illustration of love and hate with these nuances is the statement of the Lord, “I loved Jacob, but I hated Esau” (Mal 1:2–3). What clearly is meant is that God had chosen Jacob to inherit the covenant privileges but had not chosen Esau (cp. Gn 25:23; 27:29).

5:11 The Hebrew word behind the term *misuse* bears the literal idea of using the name of the Lord in an empty, flippant, or purposeless way. To make light of his name is to denigrate God himself (12:5).

5:12–13 To remember the Sabbath day is, literally, to set it apart for a special purpose. The emphasis is not so much on remaining inactive on the Sabbath as it is on making it a time of reflection, praise, worship, and service.

5:14 The seventh day calls to mind the seventh day of creation by which time all of God’s creation work had been accomplished (Gn 2:1–2). The verb used in Genesis is (Hb) *shavath* (“to cease”) which lends the nuance of stopping from one thing with the possibility of doing something else, not necessarily an absolute cessation from activity.

5:15 To remember in Hebrew idiom carries the sense of deep reflection and meditation on the past, particularly with regard to God’s mighty acts of love and grace (7:18; 8:2; 9:7; 15:15; Ps 42:4, 6; 77:11; 137:6; Is 46:8; 1Co 11:24–25). In the exodus account, the motive for remembering the Sabbath was that God had ceased his creation work on the seventh day (Ex 20:11). In Deuteronomy, Israel was called on to remember a more recent event, God’s mightiest work on their behalf—their redemption from cruel bondage.

5:16 As those created in the image of God and most immediately representing his glory and his authority over them, children must honor their father and their mother. The word “honor” translates a verb meaning literally “regard as weighty.” It is associated with the notion that important people are “heavyweights,” loaded down with glory and honor. Parents were to be considered as such, heavy with responsibility and privilege of which children must be aware and to which they must submit if they are to be obedient and pleasing to God. The opposite is to dishonor parents by considering them to be nobodies. Exodus 21:17 states that “whoever curses his father or his mother must be put to death.” The word “curses” here translates a verb meaning “be light” or “esteem to be light.” To honor one’s parents is to accord them the highest esteem; to dishonor them is to curse them and regard them with contempt.

5:17 Though a generic term for killing is used here, the intent clearly is to speak of premeditated murder. Manslaughter as accidental homicide has already been considered (4:42), and killing by government and other constituted authority was permitted as capital punishment (13:5, 9; Ex 21:12, 14–17) and in times of war (Dt 7:2; 20:13, 17). Murder is heinous because human beings are created in the image of God and their murder, in effect, is a blow against God himself (Gn 9:5–6).

5:18 Adultery is described in a number of ancient Near Eastern texts as “the great sin,” suggesting that even pagans were aware of its seriousness. A common biblical image is marriage as a metaphor for God’s relationship to Israel (Ezk 16:8, 32; Hs 2:14–16) and for Christ’s relationship to the church (Rv 19:7; 21:2, 9). In both cases, unfaithfulness on the part of God’s people is identical to adultery.

5:19 Whereas the sixth commandment is about taking one’s life and the seventh is about taking the purity and sanctity of the marriage relationship, the eighth is about taking one’s property. It betrays an attitude of dissatisfaction with what God has given.

5:20 The ninth commandment is most at home in a legal setting where testimony is required of witnesses or other knowledgeable persons. Since a person accused of a crime could suffer serious penalties or death for his violation of the law, it was essential that the evidence presented be trustworthy (cp. 17:6; 19:15–21).

5:21 To covet and to desire are essentially the same thing, as is seen in Ex 20:17 where the same Hebrew verb is used of both houses and wives. Here the same verb occurs for wife and a different verb for everything else. A possible explanation is that in the land of Canaan families would live in close quarters where desire for a neighbor’s property might be a more glaring temptation.

5:22 The fire, cloud, and total darkness indicated the Lord’s transcendent glory. The fire suggested its openness and the cloud and darkness its hiddenness. Were the glory of the Lord to appear in all its brightness, no human could look upon it and live (vv. 25–26; Ex 19:20–22). The two stone tablets reflect the ancient Near Eastern custom of making a copy of the covenant texts for each party. One of these was for the Lord and the other for Israel.<sup>1</sup>

## References

1. *CSB Study Bible* (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017).

## Author Bio

### **J. Ellsworth Kalas (The Ten Commandments from the Back Side)**

J. Ellsworth Kalas (1923-2015) was the author of over 45 books, including the popular Back Side series, *The Scriptures Sing of Christmas*, *A Faith of Her Own: Women of the Old Testament*, *Strong Was Her Faith: Women of the New Testament*, *I Bought a House on Gratitude Street*, and the *Christian Believer* study. He was part of the faculty of Asbury Theological Seminary since 1993, serving in the Beeson program, the homiletics department, and as president of the Seminary. He was a United Methodist pastor for 38 years and also served five years in evangelism with the World Methodist Council.

### **Warren Wiersbe (Be Equipped)**

Warren W. Wiersbe, former pastor of the Moody Church and general director of *Back to the Bible*, has traveled widely as a Bible teacher and conference speaker. Because of his encouragement to those in ministry, Dr. Wiersbe is often referred to as “the pastor’s pastor.” He has ministered in churches and conferences throughout the United States as well as in Canada, Central and South America, and Europe. Dr. Wiersbe has written over 150 books, including the popular BE series of commentaries on every book of the Bible, which has sold more than four million copies. At the 2002 Christian Booksellers Convention, he was awarded the Gold Medallion Lifetime Achievement Award by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association. Dr. Wiersbe and his wife, Betty, live in Lincoln, Nebraska.

### **Raymond Brown (The Message of Deuteronomy)**

Raymond Brown, formerly principal of Spurgeon’s College in London, was a pastor for many years. He is the author of *Philosophy of Religion*, *Why Believe?*, and several volumes in IVP’s *Bible Speaks Today* series.