

# Influence With Action

## *August 28, 2022*

### Lesson Summary

#### ***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)

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

God equips us to conquer our spiritual enemies if we will obey and focus on developing our spiritual strength. It is then our responsibility to train and equip the following generations to know His Word, defend His Word, and share His Word.



## Leader Guide

# Influence With Action

### Introduction

There is a famous American prison on an island off the coast of San Francisco called Alcatraz. Movies have been made about the prison and the notorious criminals that were kept on that seemingly inescapable island. To this day people travel by boat to the island and tour the grounds, walking through the prison cells and hearing stories about the inmates housed there. One such cell has a window that looks over the water toward the sights of San Francisco. If you stand at the cell window you can see the lights of the city, and if it is quiet, you can hear the sounds. One reason the prison was closed is that it was declared too expensive, but another reason is that it was considered inhumane. For convicted criminals to be kept in a place where they could see evidence of people living life and enjoying the freedom they were not allowed was considered too harsh. Yet many people today settle for living in defeat and not stepping into the life that God has for them. The children of Israel were at just such a place as they looked at the promised land. Moses challenged them with words that are also helpful to us as we face spiritual challenges.

- ❓ Why is it hard to see others living in victory and freedom when you aren't?
- ❓ What are some characteristics you notice about people who win spiritual battles?


### Session Summary

Moses knew the time had come for the people of God to obey the Word of God and step out in faith into the promised land. They would be tested and face enemies, and they needed to be equipped by God to see victory.

Jesus gave us the best example to follow when facing the enemies of the world. When we know God's Word and obey it, we will find strength that equips us to be victorious in the things God gives us. As part of this equipping, we are also tasked with teaching the younger generation to know God's Word and live in obedience to what He says.


## 1. God Equips (Deuteronomy 1:1-5)

After 40 years wandering in the wilderness, the time had come for the children of Israel to move on. Many of us can relate to the feeling of knowing that it is time to go but still having questions about our destination. The life of a Christ follower is not about keeping the status quo but about growing, changing, and moving where God calls us. Much like kids on a car trip, we often feel like asking God, “Are we there yet?” The more prepared you are for the trip, the better the experience. Moses knew the people needed to be prepared for the next step of faith before them, so he taught them lessons found in the book of Deuteronomy.

 When is a time you felt like asking God, “Are we there yet?”

The Israelites were entering a new territory and a new lifestyle. They had been wandering in the wilderness for 40 years due to their own sin of not believing and trusting God. The whole generation of adults had died off, and now the people were facing a complete change in their way of life. They would no longer be wanderers on the move but were to take the promised land, defeat their enemies, and settle in Canaan. Though Moses had been their leader, his time was ending, and he was preparing to hand the responsibility off to Joshua. Much of the book of Deuteronomy is a repetition of the laws and statutes that God had given the people. Time and again in Scripture, repetition is used for emphasis so that it can be remembered or emphasized.

Since the written word was not yet readily available, the people relied on teaching and speaking God’s instructions verbally. Moses knew they were going to need wisdom and discernment to know how to live in this new land and life that the Lord was bringing them into. The Lord always has good plans for His people, and He also equips His people for what is next. That is exactly what God used Moses to do—equip the people. The people needed to be reminded and challenged to trust God and keep moving forward.

 What is something you repeat often so that your kids or family members will remember it and know it is important? Why do you find that thing worth repeating?


Notice that Scripture describes where the Israelites were at the time. They had arrived at the Jordan River just across from the promised land. This area was typically referred to as Transjordan and is where two and a half tribes end up settling permanently. These first few verses of Deuteronomy point out an interesting fact. The journey from where the Israelites had been to this place was typically an eleven-day journey, but because of the disobedience of the Israelites, their journey had taken 40 years.

### All Israel

Moses’s audience, “all Israel,” is not to be taken literally as though the entire population of the nation was assembled in one place and at one time to hear his address. Given a postexodus population of over 600,000 men of twenty years and older (Num 26:51; cf. 26:4), the nation as a whole must be numbered in the several of millions. Moses therefore was speaking to representatives of “all Israel,” probably the elders (cf. Num 11:16–30; Deut 27:1; 31:9, 28), though obviously the message was intended for all and would become accessible to all when it finally was committed to writing.


Moses wanted everyone to be reminded that their attitudes and actions had consequences. This new generation was given their own opportunity to trust God and live for Him in the land, but they were to never forget what happened when the previous generation took their eyes off God and listened to the wrong people.

These verses also mention who had been defeated to get them to that place. Moses referred to defeating the two kings of the region. When we go with God and follow His instructions, we will face opposition along the way. Sometimes that opposition can come in unexpected places. They knew there would be enemies in the promised land that they would need to defeat, but enemies are not always contained to the place we expect. These first battles reinforced to the Israelites that God was with them and was fighting on their behalf before they crossed the river and faced even bigger enemies.


 Application: Where have you experienced unexpected enemies in the Christian life? What encouragement can you take from these verses?

## 2. The Key to Victory (Matthew 4:1-11)


The lessons from Moses and the Israelites in Deuteronomy have a parallel passage in the New Testament. God's Word never contradicts itself and seeing passages that reiterate the same truths in both the Old and New Testaments can be powerful. Think back to the questions you might face when you feel like God has you on the move and is calling you to step out in faith. One of the primary questions we'll face will be along the lines of, "How am I supposed to handle \_\_\_\_\_?" We don't automatically know what we should do or how we should think or act in different circumstances. Just as the Israelites had to learn new things about settling or fighting instead of wandering, we need to learn what God expects and wants from us in whatever He is calling us to. When faced with these questions, Jesus is our best example.

 What parallels or similarities do you see in the Matthew 4 passage to the Children of Israel's situation?


The children of Israel were coming out of the wilderness and facing new challenges and enemies. The parallel passage in Matthew 4 describes what happened when Jesus faced a strong enemy in the wilderness. He was fasting for 40 days. During this time, Jesus faced three specific temptations or tests that were similar to the temptations the children of Israel faced. Though the Israelites failed in their temptations or tests, Jesus never failed and gives us a perfect example to follow when we encounter tough times.

 What did Jesus do in response to each temptation or test that Satan put before Him?

Scripture is the key to winning spiritual battles. Jesus quoted God's Word back to Satan even when Satan misquoted it. God's Word stands firm against the wiles and schemes of the enemy, and it will always hold true. The Scriptures Jesus used in His battle were from Deuteronomy 6–8. The very teachings Moses used to equip the people to follow God and do the right things were the same Scriptures Jesus used against the enemy. Jesus could have called down angels to fight for Him, brought fire from heaven, or anything else He wanted. But He chose to use God's Word. One benefit of reflecting on Jesus's temptation is it shows us how to respond when battles come our way. It also reminds us that Jesus has been perfect, even when we fail.

 When was a time you used Scripture in a battle you've faced? How does it change your perspective to rely on God's Word and not your own knowledge or strength?

When you face temptations, tests, or battles, you have a choice of what weapons to rely on. The world offers many suggestions of how and where to find strength for our battles, but nothing the world has to offer will give you the strength of God's Word. Jesus's example shows us that truth from Scripture is our best weapon. When you strengthen yourself in the Lord and His Word, you find what you need to resist and stand firm against the enemy. Knowing and using Scripture develops spiritual strength and is the key to victory for believers who want to conquer spiritual enemies and live forever with God.


 Application: How will you be intentional about using God's Word to develop spiritual strength this week?

### **3. Responsible to Equip (Deuteronomy 1:6-8)**


Moses challenged the people to remember when God spoke to them at Mt. Horeb. Horeb—also referred to as Sinai—was the place of the covenant and it seems the Israelites became comfortable there. God spoke to them and said they had been there long enough. There is a great temptation for us to stay where we are comfortable. We like to linger where we feel God's Presence or where we have experienced Him in a real way.

The problem is that God had bigger plans for them that would not be fulfilled unless they were willing to leave the place where they had grown comfortable. The Lord recognized what was happening and told the people it was time to keep moving. He called the people to trust Him in a new place as they stepped out in faith to take the land He had promised.

The same thing happens for us. It is easy to grow comfortable in one spot, place of service, or location to the point that we resist following God when He calls us to something or somewhere new.


-  Why do you think people resist stepping out of a comfort zone once they find it? How does this specifically tempt you?

Consider what was at stake for the Israelites. They had learned about wandering and found a place that felt good. They knew what it was like to be transient and being challenged to leave that behind likely stirred up fear of the unknown. They knew enough of their own history to realize that if they made bad decisions, it would have a negative effect on their children and grandchildren. They had lived out that scenario. God knew their hearts and called them to resume their journey to the promised land despite their fear or hesitation. He reminded them that He had set the land before them and had sworn to give it into their possession.

-  What effect do you think being reminded of God's promise about the land had on the Israelites? How do God's promises impact you?

Though it is true that the people needed to step out in faith for themselves, they also carried the responsibility of teaching and training the next generation to trust and obey God. The Scriptures were to be taught from one generation to the following, and no one was exempt from the responsibility they had to the younger ones. By obeying God's commands, the men and women set an example that their children could see and follow. Actions speak louder than words, and modeling obedience to God's Word is one of the best and most powerful examples you can set today. God knew what was coming for His people and wanted them to experience the abundant life that comes with following Him. He also knew that taking the land was going to be a process, and it would take all of them believing, trusting, and obeying to accomplish the victory.




We also need the reminder that our Christian walk is not just about us but about setting an example for those who follow us. It is our responsibility to make sure the younger generation is equipped just as Moses spent time intentionally equipping the children of Israel. Each of us has a choice about who we will trust, follow, and obey daily. Will we strive for spiritual strength and equipping, or will we settle for what the world has to offer? One is the way of destruction and the other is the way to life, freedom, victory and belonging. God has great plans for us if we will surrender to Him and follow.

-  Application: How has today's text challenged you? What do you need to change to be intentional about equipping the next generation?

## Conclusion

The words of God are exactly what you need to be strengthened for the battle. It is time for God's people to choose His weapons and His armor instead of wasting time on what the world has to offer. The false gods of the world will never give you the victory you desire and will leave you empty and defenseless, which is precisely where the enemy wants you. Jesus endured and defeated the temptations and tests from Satan by using Scripture. If we want to be wise and step into the things that God has for us, then we will follow the example of Jesus and let Scripture be our strength.

Moses referred to the promise of God as being for Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all their future descendants. The choices you make today will affect how you live and are crucial for the impact they will have on future generations. If you want the best for those who follow you then it is imperative that you know where you're going and be intentional about equipping the next generation. What can you do to help them know God's Word, defend God's Word, and share God's Word with the world?

-  What battle are you fighting today? Have you been relying on God's strength or your own strength in this battle? What needs to change?
-  What step of faith do you need to take? How will you do that this week?
-  How do you need to change to be intentional about equipping the next generation?

## Prayer of Response

*Close in prayer thanking God for His guidance throughout our lives. Ask Him to use you to equip the next generation for His purposes.*

## Additional Resources

- *Family Discipleship* by Matt Chandler and Adam Griffin
- *Deuteronomy* by Daniel Block
- *The Book of Deuteronomy* by Bill Arnold

# Disciples Multiplying Disciples





## For Next Week

### Session Title

- Reading as Conversation (New Series: How to Read and Study Your Bible)

### Main Passages

- Hebrews 4:12

### Memorize

*“See, I have set the land before you. Enter and take possession of the land the Lord swore to give to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their future descendants.”* - Deuteronomy 1:8

# 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 1:1-8

1:1 The reference to Moses being across the Jordan is from the perspective of one standing in Canaan to the west. The east side of the river was called Transjordan, even by those living there.

1:2–3 Forty years had passed since Israel’s exodus from Egypt. Though the journey from Horeb (Sinai) to Kadesh-barnea was normally eleven days (v. 2), Israel, because of its sin, had spent forty years on the not-much-longer route from Egypt to Moab (2:7; 8:2, 4; Nm 14:33).

1:4 Sihon and Og were rulers of kingdoms in Transjordan whose defeat permitted Israel to occupy most of the region, which was later settled by the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and part of Manasseh (Nm 32; Jos 22).

1:6–7 The Amorites and their neighbors is a way of speaking of all the peoples of Canaan. Arabah more technically describes the Great Rift Valley of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea.

1:8 The land the Lord swore to give was part of the covenant in which the Lord called Abraham out of paganism to found a people whom he would use to bless the whole earth (Gn 12:1–3; 15:12–21; 17:8). Israel’s impending conquest would be the inheritance God had already allotted to Abraham’s descendants.<sup>1</sup>

### Matthew 4:1-11

4:1–2 The temptation of Christ highlights numerous parallels between Jesus and OT Israel. Deuteronomy 8:2–3 says that the Lord led Israel into the wilderness to be tested for forty years. Similarly, Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested for forty days. The three temptations Jesus faced parallel the tests Israel faced in the wilderness, and every Scripture that Jesus quoted in response to his temptations was drawn from God’s message to the Israelites about their wilderness test (Dt 6–8). Israel failed its tests, but Jesus passed his and in doing so “fulfilled all righteousness” (see Mt 3:15). Thus he is qualified to create a new spiritual Israel. Several features of Matthew confirm Jesus’s intention to gather a new people for God. He chose twelve disciples to parallel Israel’s twelve tribes. This was a conscious effort to identify his followers as the new Israel. The fact that Jesus was hungry shows that he was truly human as well as divine.

4:3 The stones that littered the wilderness floor resembled small round loaves of bread in shape, size, and color. Interpreters disagree as to why it would have been wrong for Jesus to transform and eat the stones. Most suggest that he was tempted to exercise supernatural power rather than depend on God’s provision. Clues in the text suggest that the Spirit, who led Jesus into the wilderness, commanded this fast. Thus, breaking the fast prematurely would have been an act of disobedience, preventing Jesus from fulfilling every act of righteousness (3:15). Jesus aimed to end his fast when the test was over and no sooner. God would signal the end by providing food. Matthew 4:11 shows that at fast’s end, angels came and “began to serve” Jesus. The verb serve means “to serve as a table-waiter” and implies that the angels fed Jesus. During their wilderness wanderings, Israel failed to trust God to provide food and water. Jesus, the embodiment of the new Israel, had unwavering trust in God’s care.

4:4 Jesus quoted Dt 8:3. His reference to every word that comes from the mouth of God recalls the OT theme that God's words are not idle but are to be received as commands. Deuteronomy 8:1, 6 emphasize the need to obey God's commands, and Dt 8:1 teaches that man lives by following God's commandments just as 8:3 says that man lives by what comes from God's mouth (Dt 6:24). Thus the OT text that Jesus quoted teaches that obeying God is more important than being well-fed. Israel struggled to learn this truth (Ex 16:3; Nm 11:4–5). In contrast, Jesus hungered for righteousness more than bread and thirsted for obedience more than water. He urged his disciples to have the same priority (Mt 5:6).

4:5–7 Satan quoted Ps 91:11–12 out of context, trying to convince Jesus that the Father would supernaturally protect him even if he gambled with his life. Jesus responded by quoting Dt 6:16 which refers to the time when Israel, angry and thirsty, questioned God's presence until he miraculously produced a stream of water from a rock: "They tested the Lord, saying, 'Is the Lord among us or not?' " (Ex 17:7). Had Jesus succumbed to Satan's temptation, it would indicate that his faith was frail and depended on God's miraculous action. Jumping from the pinnacle of the temple would test God by attempting to force him to perform a miracle.

Satan implied that God is trustworthy only when he rescues us from suffering and danger. Jesus knew better. God is trustworthy even when he allows us or even causes us to suffer. True faith recognizes this and perseveres through hard times. When Jesus suffered on the cross (27:41–44), those who tormented him used arguments similar to that of the devil: "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." They even quoted Ps 22:8 to argue that Jesus would be rescued if God really loved him, much as Satan quoted Ps 91:11–12 to argue that God would rescue Jesus from a deadly fall if he were really God's Son. Again, Jesus knew better. He trusted God even through a brutal scourging, even when nails were driven through his limbs, and even when God let him suffer a horrible death.

4:8–9 Although Satan exercises some authority over the world (Lk 4:6; Jn 12:31), the kingdoms of the world belong to God, and he promised to give them to his Son (Ps 2:8).

4:10–11 Jesus responded to Satan by quoting from Dt 6:14 and 10:20. If Jesus had worshiped Satan in order to gain worldly power, it would have indicated that he valued creation more than the Creator and the kingdoms of the earth more than the kingdom of God. Jesus insisted that only God is worthy of worship. After citing Dt 6:13, Jesus's reception of worship later in this Gospel (8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9, 17) without rebuking the worshiper (cp. Ac 10:25–26; 14:11–15) strongly implies his deity. That the angels came to serve Jesus further implies his superior status.<sup>2</sup>

## References

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

## Author Bio

### **Matt Chandler (Family Discipleship)**

Matt Chandler is the Pastor of The Village Church in Flower Mound, Texas. The author of *Explicit Gospel*, *Take Heart*, and *The Mingling of Souls*, Matt also serves as President of the Acts 29 Church Planting Network. He is married to Lauren and they have 3 children.

### **Adam Griffin (Family Discipleship)**

Adam Griffin (DEdMin, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) is the lead pastor of Eastside Community Church in East Dallas, Texas. He previously served as an elder and spiritual formation pastor at the Village Church. Adam lives with his wife, Chelsea, and their three sons Oscar, Gus, and Theodore, in Dallas, Texas.

### **Daniel Block (Deuteronomy)**

Daniel I. Block is the Gunther H. Knoedler professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. He holds degrees from the University of Saskatchewan, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and University of Liverpool and has lectured and preached in Russia, Denmark, and China. A prolific writer, Block's previous books include the Judges, Ruth volume of B&H Publishing Group's esteemed *New American Commentary* series.

### **Bill Arnold (The Book of Deuteronomy)**

Bill T. Arnold is the Paul S. Amos Professor of Old Testament Interpretation at Asbury Theological Seminary. At Asbury since 1995, he has served as Vice President of Academic Affairs/Provost, Director of Postgraduate Studies, Chair of the Area of Biblical Studies, and Director of Hebrew Studies. One of the series editors of NICOT, Dr. Arnold is also the author of several other books, including *Introduction to the Old Testament*.