

Remember

Session 8 • Deuteronomy 4:1-9,15-20



ENGAGE

PREPARE: On a focal wall, display **Pack Item 2** (Poster: *Outlines of Numbers, Deuteronomy*). Make copies of **Pack Item 10** (Handout: *Remembering God's Faithfulness*). Gather enough notecards so each adult can have one.

DISCUSS: What is your favorite family memory? (p. 69) Give each adult in the group a notecard. Guide them to record their responses on the card. Invite a few volunteers to share what they wrote.

READ: Enlist a volunteer to read the opening paragraph on page 69.

ASK: How do your family's stories get passed down from one generation to the next? (p. 69) Discuss responses.

EXPLAIN: Point out **Pack Item 2** (Poster: *Outlines of Numbers, Deuteronomy*). Share that this session shifts from the book of Numbers to the book of Deuteronomy. Mention that the study reminds us of how recalling God's past faithfulness leads us to worship Him.

TRANSITION: *Deuteronomy is built on a series of speeches or sermons Moses delivered on the border of the promised land. As we dig*

into a portion of Moses's first message to the people, reflect on how his challenges to the Israelites are applicable in your own journey.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

OVERVIEW: Summarize the following background of Deuteronomy 1-3:

- As the Israelites camped in the Plains of Moab, God gave Moses His words to share (1:1-5). Moses then recounted Israel's tragic spiritual failure at Kadesh-barnea (1:19-45). In judgment, God decreed that the entire unbelieving generation would die in the wilderness. Now, their children stood at Canaan's borders.

READ: Call on a volunteer to read aloud Deuteronomy 4:1-4 as adults listen for Moses's instructions.

EXAMINE: Encourage the group to read the passage again and to call out the words and phrases Moses used to direct the people to follow God's commands. Lead a brief discussion about why our past experiences with God can move us forward in faith.

- **(4:2)** Moses stressed the importance of keeping God's Word pure. The people could not add "anything," for doing so would put their own human words on the

same level as God's words. They also were warned against trying to "take anything away" from it by choosing which of God's words they wanted to retain and which they wanted to lay aside.

- **(4:3)** Baal-peor was where the people had compromised their faith through sexual sin with foreign women (Num. 25:1-9). The term "Baal of Peor" denotes an image of Baal, the chief god of the Canaanites. Supposedly, he was the god of the storm and of fertility, and his worship often involved illicit sexual rites. God sent a plague against the Israelites who worshiped this pagan god, and 24,000 died (Num. 25:9). Verse 3 reminds us of Moses's instruction in verse 2 not to add or subtract anything from the Lord's commands. God desired pure worship because His ways were best.

ASK: Why do you think Moses kept emphasizing that the words he was speaking were from God? (p. 71)

READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud Deuteronomy 4:5-9 as adults listen for two groups who would be influenced by the faithful obedience of the Israelites.

LIST: Call on adults to call out the groups mentioned in Deuteronomy 4:5-9 and write their responses on the board. Point out that other nations and the Israelites' descendants would learn from the example of positive, godly obedience.

EXPLAIN: Use the following content to describe how the Israelites' faithfulness would be viewed by surrounding nations:

- **(4:6)** "Wisdom" denotes the ability to apply knowledge to a situation. The term "understanding" is related to the word "between," suggesting the ability to distinguish between truth and error. Knowing and fearing God leads to both (Prov. 9:10). As neighboring peoples heard of God's commands and saw the Israelites living by them, they would conclude that Israel was a great nation comprised of a wise and understanding people. Living by God's standards would set His people apart. They would be seen as a great nation. Ultimately, that differentiation would point people to God.

ASK: How will obeying God's Word set believers apart in today's world? (p. 71)

DISCUSS: Lead a brief discussion about the role of parents in pointing their children toward God. Allow a few volunteers to share practical ways they have nurtured their own children's spiritual growth over time. Take a moment to pray for parents and their families.

READ: Enlist a volunteer to read Deuteronomy 4:15-20 as adults underline references to idols in these verses. Ask volunteers to share what they underlined.

REFLECT: Distribute copies of **Pack Item 10** (*Handout: Remembering God's Faithfulness*) and lead adults to work in pairs to make a list of what God had done for Israel. Encourage the pairs to make a second list of things God has done for them. Allow a few volunteers to share. Direct them to keep the handout in their Bible and to add items to the list that may come to mind in the next several days.

ASK: What kinds of idols do we need to refrain from worshiping today? (p. 71)

DISCUSS: Call attention to the list of pagan idols from other cultures mentioned in verses 16-19. Emphasize that God called His people to live distinct from other nations (v. 20).

- **(4:16-19)** Moses described forms these idols might take. The examples he gave all appear in Genesis 1, which describes God's act of creation. It made no sense for people to worship what had been created; rather, they should worship the Creator alone.
- **(4:20)** Out of all the earth's inhabitants, God had selected one group, Abraham's descendants, to be His special people. Hearing their cries in Egypt, God remembered His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He brought them out. This is always God's work of redemption. He brings us out—from darkness to light, from death to life, from the yoke of slavery to freedom in Christ. God had given the Israelites a new identity, and they were called to respond by worshiping and serving Him in the way He instructed. In time, if Israel remained faithful, people of other nations would see their uniqueness and be drawn to their God.

CHALLENGE

SUMMARIZE: Briefly overview these points from this week's Bible passage

- We are to obey God's commands.

- We are to value and seek the wisdom that comes from the Lord.
- We can rejoice that God has called us to be His people.

EXPLAIN: Point out that even though believers in Christ rely on His grace rather than their works for salvation, obedience is still an important part of the Christian life. Remind adults that Jesus equated love with keeping His commands (John 14:15).

DISCUSS: Direct attention to the **Apply the Text** questions on page 71. Lead a brief discussion on the meaning of worship and things that might hold us back from true worship. Suggest that a lack of obedience is a key hindrance to worship. Lead adults to consider how they can better obey the commands of Jesus and, in doing so, draw closer to God in worship.

PRAY: Lead a time of directed prayer, guiding adults to speak aloud a prayer of thanksgiving for how God has been faithful to them in the past. Close the prayer by asking God to strengthen our love for Christ and our faithful obedience to Him.

AFTER THE SESSION

After the session, email or text adults and encourage them to continue to add items to the list they started on **Pack Item 10** (*Handout: Remembering God's Faithfulness*). Challenge them to use the list in their daily prayers to strengthen their reliance on God's faithfulness. Suggest they make a specific plan to share a meaningful story about God's faithfulness with someone this week.