

## Transcription of 16ID1740

Deuteronomy 6

"Reminded Of How We Got Here"

April 6, 2016

All right. Let's open our Bibles tonight to Deuteronomy 6 as we continue in our favorite book of the Bible on Wednesday nights - the book of Deuteronomy.

If you haven't been here for a few months, Moses' forty days of messages delivered on the brink of the Promised Land, just across from Jericho, and a second generation of children of Israel - 2½ million of them are perched, ready to go forward. And they've come back to the place that their parents failed, or their family (not always parents) forty years earlier, Kadesh Barnea.

The previous year, the thirty-ninth year, if you will, leading up to the fortieth year, had seen this group of people discover what God could do. What had been lost in the first generation, the second generation had begun to discover. They did what God said. They listened to His Word. They followed His direction. And, for this past year, they had found themselves as an inexperienced bunch of wanderers in the desert, finding great victory over well-organized armies of heathens and unbelievers who stood in their way. And yet, with God's help and by God's hand, they had begun to experience His delivering power. God gave them victory over, literally, (if you look at a map of Israel where the Jordan River runs north to south - on the east side of the Jordan) everything from the Galilee in the north to the Red Sea in the south. Every tribe of people, every people group, every nation, if you will, that was there had been overthrown by these 2½ million folks in the last twelve months. So they don't just sit on the Land of Promise's doorstep, but they sit there having learned by experience that God can do great things through obedience.

If you had to pick a word for this book, I think that's the word that you'd have to choose. God honors obedience. And one of the burning principles of God's grace is that full-hearted obedience from His people is really all that He's looking for. He doesn't really want great accomplishments from you. He's not really interested in you moving the world, although He may very well do that through your life. We always share with people that are being baptized - today you are pleasing God, and all you are doing is getting wet. But you're doing it in response to His Word. And that's the key, isn't it? When God says, "Go," and you go, God responds.

So, these 2½ million people sit in Moses' final (what was a) forty-day training session on walking with God. He goes back over their history. He talks about (in the present tense) how they can translate that into moving forward. He mentions their deliverance from Egypt, how they had come out of 430 years of captivity, and now they sit camped on a place that they were going to go in that God had prepared for them. His final words, Moses, before he dies. He'll go to die after this is delivered. The people will mourn for thirty days - for his death - and then the book of Joshua begins. That's really the way the history reads through the Bible as well. So lots of encouragements, lots of exhortations.

But the key is often one of simple obedience. And that was something that the previous generation had failed to do. That was really their failure, wasn't it? God said, "Go in." They went, "Oh yeah. We'd like to except there're giants, and there're walls, and there're challenges, and we can't!" And after all that they had gone through - the 430 years of captivity, the nine months of plagues that had led to that tenth plague where they were set free, the six weeks through the desert, the year sitting at Mount Sinai before God listening to what He had to say to them, the trip over here - and they still came to the conclusion God couldn't be trusted. Amazing! But it's all a matter of don't set aside what God has done. It's not blind obedience God is looking for. He just wants response to His faithfulness. Right? It isn't like put your hand over your eyes and jump, but respond to God's glorious revelation of Himself. So, make it a priority. Know Him, follow Him, and do what He has to say. So, you will read in this book, maybe more than any other, the driving home of the importance of heeding God's Word. You'll find words like follow and obey and observe and learn and do, and they aren't just mentioned once. It sounds almost like a broken record. And I think that that might be the biggest argument for us. We know a lot. Are we doing a lot? And if what you know is reduced to what you do, how much do you really know? And that's really the key here.

So, last week we finished the last eleven verses of chapter 5 as Moses spoke about the right hearts of those who first met him there at Mount Sinai, how they wanted to do everything that God wanted for them. But the stark reality was that sin makes it impossible. So we need God's grace.

And tonight we come, and we want to tackle chapter 6 - not too long, really. But the mantra continues. Be hearers, and then be doers - as these folks are waiting to go forward. Well let's read the first three verses here. It says, "Now this is

the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.

Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you - 'a land flowing with milk and honey.' " Look at the words: teach, observe, fear the LORD, keep, hear, observe. You get the feeling reading through the Bible - man, God sure wants to rain on my parade. He has a lot of "do" stuff and "don't do" stuff, and you think, man, leave me be. But in reality, these are all directions from the Lord - not designed to restrict you but to bless you. When David was able to write in Psalm 1:1, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly," that's a blessed guy who doesn't listen to the world, "who doesn't stand in the path of sinners, he doesn't sit in the seat of the scornful; blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the LORD." When you read through these verses, too, you get the same kind of, I think, direction - life made simple and easy through obedience.

Well this is a chapter, aside from these introductory three verses, that is all about reminders. In fact, you could entitle the chapter "Reminded Of How We Got Here" because the Lord is going to be speaking to them about reminders in their lives; things that should remind you about how far God has brought you and, in so doing, hopefully encourage you to continue down the path that you've followed.

I don't know if you've ever heard the name Frederick Rueckheim. Anybody? Good. This is going to work then. Frederick Rueckheim was a German immigrant who, along with his brother Louis, came to clean up in Chicago after the great fire of 1872. And while he was there, he and his brother invented the Cracker Jacks. You remember those, don't you? They began to sell them to the world market at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. It was the same year that the Ferris wheel was introduced, the same year that Aunt Jemima pancakes were given to us, and the ice cream cone. They all came out in the same year. It was quite a year. Pancakes, ice cream and Cracker Jacks. If you remember - I don't know if you've ever gotten the Cracker Jacks, but they have that logo on it of that young boy in a sailor suit with his dog, and it was modeled after Frederick's grandson. His name was Robert, his dog's name was Bingo, and Bingo was this little kid's best friend. And Robert died very young, and so they put that on the box just to remind him. Twenty years

later, I think in 1908, they asked to use the Cracker Jacks in the "Take Me Out To The Ballgame" song, which you may have sung once or twice. In 1912, they threw a surprise in there. Now you get Cracker Jacks and a surprise. Not bad. All that to say the logo on the Cracker Jack box (Laughing) - I know, I got into this, and I was real excited! - was put on there to remind themselves of this little boy and his struggle for life and the joy that he had brought to the family. I think Cracker Jacks got sold to Borden in the early 60's, and I think Frito-Lay bought it right before the turn of the century. The logo stayed with it.

So here's God's Word to Moses. Watch this transition. (Laughing) Cracker Jacks to Moses. I'm going to get there. The Bible's pretty clear that God doesn't like graven images. Right? We read through the commandments. He doesn't want anything made of Him, made to look like Him or even anything to represent Him. We're not to bow down to anything at all or to be worshipped. But God did establish practices in the nation that are reminders about what He did or what He promised to do. So whether it's the feast days or the certain ceremonies or the rocks they placed in the middle of the river when they crossed into the Land of Promise or the altars that they left behind in the wilderness, God wants and has for them and He has for us - like He had for that little boy on the Cracker Jack box (there you go) - reminders. God wants to remind us always of His work so that we might obey and follow His ways, and that's really what Moses' sermons collected here are all about. You know, most of us have had an Exodus. God has saved us from the world, and we've been delivered from Egypt, our old life. God has brought us out. But you need a Deuteronomy, too. You need a reminder of how far you've come. And the book is really that. It reminds you and me that there was a day that we weren't saved and that our lives weren't as good as they are now. And so this is really the issue of chapter 6 as God speaks to these folks, and He wants to remind them. For many people in the audience with Moses here, they were too young or many of them not even born, so they wouldn't have known personally what had happened. But they would have been told time and again - maybe by parents, by friends. Every generation needs to hear the story of God and His work, and it's best when they hear it from the previous generation. The best way to learn is to learn from family - from parents, from folks that are close to you who have known God's power and seen God's faithful so that you can pass it along. Peter - we read his letters here on Sunday mornings for quite some time, studied them together - was all about reminding the people not to be negligent, to remind them. He always wanted to set that before them. And God wants the same thing. He doesn't want representations of Him in terms of worship, but He doesn't mind reminders along

the way. And those are the things that should push us forward and keep us moving ahead.

So, even here in the first three verses, they speak of our needing to act upon what we have heard. Even when you read there the first part of verse 2, it says "that you may fear the LORD." The theme of the Scriptures that seems to be lost in the church so often is we do those things because we fear the Lord. It's a great word - fear of the Lord. It doesn't speak about terrifying like you're hiding, but it speaks about reverence, that somehow your attitude toward God is not wanting to displease Him in any way because you're moved by what He has done and who He is. So you have a reverence, you have a desire to, "I don't want to let Him down. I want to make Him happy. I want Him to be pleased with me. I want to do what He has to say." And throughout the Bible that's a big issue. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10). It's "the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). It's the place that your life in the Lord, growth-wise, begins. But if you know Him and you love Him, then you will reverence Him, and then His Word will guide your actions and your responses. If you don't reverence God - in other words, if you can take Him or leave Him, if you know there's something there, but He doesn't really move you - you're headed for disaster. So we read in verse 2 listen to what God has to say "that you may fear the LORD." And, in fearing the Lord, you'll keep His commandments. And "if you fear the Lord and keep His commandments, your days are prolonged. It may go well with you, and God might bless you in the land to which He is bringing you." Everything is tied to fearing the Lord. So fear the Lord, and be careful to observe all that He tells you.

Then we read, verse 3, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!" It is certainly one of the most famous Bible passages in the Bible. To the Jews, it is perhaps the pinnacle of the Scriptures. The **Shema**. The word "**Shema**" means to hear. "Hear, O Israel." You see it here. It is the foundation of Judaism. Its declaration is something that no other religion in the world could declare - that there was only one God. They were unique as a people. God had chosen them. There is but one God, and to that the Scriptures agree. And to a Jew who is practicing his faith, this verse will find itself daily upon the lips of every man and woman in Israel in prayer. They will pray this prayer literally every day - that there is one God to whom you should listen, to whom you should respond, and to whom you should fear. There was no other nation but Israel that believed in only one God. They were all (the others) polytheists; they believed in a multitude of gods. And yet these, to whom God had chosen to reveal Himself, knew Him as the

God that He truly was. So this is the declaration of God's chosen people. "Our God is only one God." Not like the other gods of the nations. There's only one God. "*Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai echad.*" "*Echad.*" If you're Dutch like I am, that comes to you pretty easily. Otherwise, you may stumble a little with the "*echad.*" But I want you to notice in your Bibles that the word "LORD" there is all capitalized. So, when it is capitalized, it is a tetragrammaton as it's called. There are four Hebrew consonants - they are Y and an H and a V and an H, and you will find this word written in the Scriptures often. The reason I point it out to you - it is a translation, if you will, of a word that we can't pronounce because there're no vowels in it. So the word "Jehovah" and the word "*Yahweh*" have both come from these same four consonants. So that's the name that is written here. But in their prayers, the Jews have substituted another word for "LORD." Not the "LORD" capitalized but the "Lord" with only the L capitalized, and it's the word "*Adonai.*" And the word "*Adonai,*" in Hebrew, literally means one who is in charge. It speaks of a position of authority over another. He is the Lord over all. But the name "Lord" itself, the becoming One, the "*Yahweh,*" is a word that the Jews wouldn't pronounce. They were afraid of offending God. So even though it is written "*Yahweh*" in the Scriptures, or YHVH, it is pronounced (in the prayer) "*Adonai,*" and the reason is there is this unwillingness on the part of Israel to pronounce the name of God. And so because they might pronounce it wrong, they don't pronounce it at all.

You do find in this verse, like so many others, a great support for the concept of the trinity. The word "trinity" itself is not in the Bible, but it is God's revelation of Himself as one God in three distinct Persons. Just begin in Genesis 1:26, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness." And then you'll read the next verse, and it says, "So God created man in His own image, in His likeness," and it goes from plural to singular. You would fail in an English class. It isn't proper grammar, if you will, but it's biblically proper to mix singular and plural when it comes to the doctrine of God's revelation of who He is in His Person. The same thing is true here with the word "*echad*" (the word "one"). There are many words for "one," actually, in Hebrew, but there are two main words. One of them is the Hebrew word "*yachid,*" and the other one is the Hebrew word "*echad.*" Now "*yachid*" is a word in Hebrew that means absolute oneness. If you said to somebody, "There's only one of those," or, "It's one of a kind," you would use the word "*yachid.*" However, if you were talking in terms of one, but there was a compound unity in the one - for example, there's one baseball team, but they have nine people playing, but it's only one team, there aren't ten teams, just one team,

nine players - then you use the word "***echad***." It speaks of compound unity but still speaks, if you will, of one. That's the word that's used here. The name for God, in Hebrew, is "***EI***." That's the singular name. "***Eloah***" is dual, and then "***Elohim***" is masculine compound plural. So the Person of God revealed in three Persons yet one God is a biblical truth that is repeated throughout the Scriptures, and it is the crux verse for the Jews. The Lord our God is one God in three Persons. He is a compound unity God. Like I said, the word "trinity" isn't found in the Bible. Maybe tri-unity is easier for you to grab hold of. But you'll find that throughout the Scriptures. Isaiah 6:8, "The voice of the LORD said: 'Whom shall I send,' " to Isaiah, and then He says - very next line, " 'and who will go for Us?' " Wait a minute. Is it "I" or is it "Us"? And the answer is - yes it is. Three Persons, one God. Trinity. Blow your mind? It's all right. You don't have to understand everything. Then you'd be like God. But we receive the revelation that God gives to us of Himself. So you go to Matthew 28:19, "Go into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature, baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," and you find that compound unity. Or what Paul said to the Ephesian elders, there in Acts 20:28, his last words really to these elders before he went to Jerusalem and he was arrested. He said, "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." The Spirit and the Father and the Son - all in one verse. It is that same truth that we find here. Even the benediction at the end of 2 Corinthians 13, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen." And there are many, many more of those. But here's the prayer, the declaration: fear the Lord, and there's only one God; worship the Lord, and there's only one God. And things will go well with you. He's the only One that you have had to deal with.

Verse 5, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." Now how do you command someone to love somebody else? You ever walk up to somebody and say, "Hey, start loving me right now"? The definition of love that the world holds, and sometimes we carry into the church, is oftentimes used as a noun. Right? We use the word "love" most as a noun. "I fell in love, I have strong feelings of love," and maybe later, "I fell out of love." It's always a noun in the sense of how we relate to it. Man's love, at best, is still governed by sin and overwhelmed by self-interest. So when you get to the word "love" in the Bible, the "***phileo***" love (Philadelphia - the love of man, one for another), that's a brotherly love. That's about the strongest love that you and I

are going to be able to engender without God's help. Right? We're going to love each other, but we're going to kind of love each other with an eye towards what we want and what we need; and that love can come and go based upon how I'm feeling or what I'm getting out of the relationship, if you will. But God loves us with a love that is far different. The word "**agape**" is a selfless love that puts another before yourself, and it's the highest form of love. It's God's love for you. It's the one that He demonstrated at Calvary when even for the sinner He dies, for the rebellious He forgives, for the worst of us He offers life. It's an amazing love, and it is only found with God. And when you get saved, the Holy Spirit brings that love into your heart. So He bears that with Him as He comes to dwell in your heart, and you begin to care for one another, and you begin to seek the best interest of others, and you begin to die to yourself. And it's a love that isn't a feeling, it's a choice. You may feel many things, but the love is a choice. Well, His love in us that we choose to act upon in relationships is not a noun anymore. Now it's an action word, it's a verb. "Bless those who persecute you, pray for those who spitefully use you, love those.....love your enemies" (Matthew 5:44). Really?! I can't do it as a noun, but I can do it as a verb. I can act upon God's Word. I can't make my feelings follow. But when you obey God, then feelings change. And so Jesus can demand that you love your enemies - not emotionally, not with feelings necessarily. But in your behavior, you can bless those who curse you and pray for those who spitefully use you, do good to those who won't do good to you. And you come to the Word of God here and the direction of God to the children of Israel, and God says this, "Love the Lord with everything you've got." Love Him. But it isn't just that love of selflessness. It's the love of reverence that he begins the chapter with. It's a love of submitting myself to Him. When we read in Romans 5:5 that "the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us," God gives you the capacity to love Him. You couldn't do it on your own. But you can now. Christians are weird that way. They love like God loves. And it's a proof of His very existence in our hearts. Sometimes we relate to the Lord almost like we don't understand that loving relationship. You wish you could always feel love for God, but quite honestly, your emotions go up and down. One day you feel saved, and one day you're in tears in church, "Oh, I'm so blessed." The next day, you're as cold as a fish. "Why doesn't God speak to me? I think He died. I think I died. I don't know....." It's all over the place. But if I love God by choice - I do what He says, I listen to His Word - the feelings will follow the facts. The feelings will follow faith. Faith goes before feelings oftentimes. We're hot and cold in our feelings, but devotions that don't waver is a choice. So when Jesus said (John 14:15), "If you love Me," He doesn't say, "Feel this way or act this way." He says, "Keep My



commandments." Make the choice. Act upon that love. Then you're free from a lot of those emotional distress things. I remember when I got saved. I got saved with three other guys in a home study, and they were bawling, and, "Oh, I got saved." And I looked at them like, "You bunch of weenies, crying!" (Laughing) That's what I thought. "Come on, man! Suck it up." And then I went home, and I thought, well, maybe I didn't get saved because they're all crying and stuff, and I don't remember crying at all. Then I felt bad. But that's feeling-driven. That's not truth. I mean, feelings come and go, don't they? They're not very dependable in terms of communication. So it's kind of like the lowest form of communication, I think, feeling.

But even Jesus, when He spoke to that lawyer (there in Matthew 22) who asked Him a question - he actually came to test Him, Matthew says, and he said, "What is the greatest commandment of all?" Jesus quoted this verse - right here - verse 5 to him. "You should love God with everything you have." It sums up the first part of the law, right? And Leviticus 19:18 is the second greatest commandment - our relationship to others.

But our commitments first, and feelings that will follow, are what Moses starts with here. This is the greatest commandment: put God first. There's only one God. Love Him with everything that you have. Observe Him. It'll go well with you. Your days will be prolonged. Observe, command, listen, respond, act upon. And so it goes. That's Moses' counsel to the people going into the land. I think it would be the same counsel God would give to us tonight.

We then read, in verse 6, "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up." Teach them to your children. What a wonderful obligation God gives to the parents to pass along to their kids. But I want you to notice, and it's most important (verse 6), you can tell them what's "in your heart." If it isn't in your heart, you'll never get to verse 7 very well. Put this in your heart, and then share it with your family. It has to be in your heart. How vital for the heart. And, by the way, the Bible talks about the heart - not as this thing that's pounding in your chest; but the heart, to the Bible, is the seat of your decision making or, if you will, the center of your place of will. So there're a lot of people that have the Word of God on their lips, even filling their minds, but it never has gotten down to their place of choices. I think Walter Martin used to say, "It never made it the

18" trip from the head to the heart." It gets stuck up here somewhere, right? So you're smart, you're rattling stuff off, but no one's buying it because it's not you. It's a head filled with information. But you're different. It's who you are. The Lord says to these folks, "Let this be in your heart, and then you can pass it along to others." You know, kids - maybe more than anyone - will tell if you're genuine or not. Don't they? They don't really like phoniness. They'll call you on it and embarrass you in public, won't they? I always love when little kids come in, and you say, "Oh, isn't your mom nice?" "She's not very nice at home." And kids just blab, man. They'll just tell anything. But they know if you're walking with God. If your walk with God is for real, kids are drawn to that. And then they'll be fruitful, and your ministry will be able to be taken care of with them - not just in church or in Sunday school but everywhere you are. When you get up, when you sit down, when you eat, when you lie down - it'll just be an active part of your daily life. You're walking with God, it's in your heart, it'll get into their hearts. People oftentimes come and go, "What's the best way to teach my kids?" Well, just walk with God. They'll get it. There's no programmatic approach. There's not much here at all in terms of anything other than it's the ordinary walk with God that you have every day that will be learned by your kids. I think it was Gale Erwin that used to say, "I tried to teach my kids good table manners, but they keep eating like me." (Laughing) That's the way it works, isn't it? And I think that that's really all that this is saying. You've got to actively give them an appetite for the things of God. In fact, that's what this Scripture would say here. Give them a hunger for it. But pass along your understanding of who God is in your day-to-day life - sitting in your house, walking down the road, lying down to go to sleep, getting up in the morning. Let it be those reminders of everyday life - at the dinner table, at the breakfast table. The best way for kids to learn that you love God is to see you loving God. It's far more effective, by the way, than the old programmatic approach. You know, or you're forcing them to....."You go to church, get your Bible!" (harsh tone) They're still going to just turn out like you. (Laughing) That could be good.....or not so good. But if they see inconsistency in your life, they'll have hesitancy in theirs. That's just the way it works. It's extremely hard to teach them to do as you say and not live as you live, though many try that approach. I came from a drop-you-off-at-church family. My dad just dropped me off at church, and then he said, "You go into church, and I'd better not hear you weren't in there!" And then sometimes he'd drive around and catch me not in there, and then I was in all kinds of trouble. I didn't do very well. That wonderful verse, Proverbs 22:6, says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." The word "train up" is the Hebrew word "**hanakh**," and

"*hanakh*" means to stimulate the taste bud. It's almost like putting date honey on the lips of a baby to encourage them to have that suckling reflex to feed. They still do that in Israel. It's like they're sweet, and then you start to go, "Oh, I want more of that." That's the same word that's used for "train up a child in the way he should go." Make them hungry. Make them want to have what you have. Well how do they want what you have? They are convinced that you want what you have. There's no way to put that show on for very long, you know? You can't fake that for very long. So, by your words and by your behavior, stimulate your kids to spiritual things; reminders of the Lord. Teach them your ways.

Verse 8, some more outward reminders to help us remember, "You shall bind them" (shall bind these words from verse 6) "as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." Now there are many religious Jews to this day that take these two verses very seriously. In fact, they have what, today, are called phylacteries. They are little boxes; they're usually black. They are tied to the arm and to the hand and to the forehead of those Jews who would pray. On the front of the box, you will usually find a "*Shin*," the Hebrew letter that looks like a "w." But inside the box usually are three portions of Scripture - Exodus 13:1-16, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, and then Deuteronomy 11:13-21; and they all speak about binding these things to your heart. Like this verse. Although this verse isn't included, there are three other places that they are. And if you would go with us to Israel, and we flew El Al for years (which we aren't flying this year), and you can go nonstop to Tel Aviv from LA, whenever it is morning prayer time in Israel, you will find devout Jews getting up in the airplane (whether the seat belt sign is on or not - it doesn't make much difference to them) and putting these phylacteries on their arms and on their foreheads and then beginning to read the verses and beginning to bow. And they truly believe that without work there's no prayer, so they can't just stand and pray or sit and pray. They've got to move and pray, and you'll find, sometimes, a whole plane full of people just moving around, praying with these long leather straps before they begin to pray. Jesus mentioned the outward practice of those boxes (in a negative way) when He said to the scribes and the Pharisees that they made a big show of praying, but they didn't really have a heart for God. In fact, He said, "They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments" (Matthew 23:5). But He was going after the religious folks. And interestingly enough, there's no description in here of how big these boxes need to be, and so it does seem like the holier you are, the bigger the box. Pretty soon you've got a crate you're carrying around because you want people to think of you

as holy. That's not God's intention. And certainly there is no way that you can take these verses and say, "This is exactly what God meant. Tie them to your hand." Because you've got to go back to verse 6. If they're not "in your heart," on your hand doesn't matter, on your forehead doesn't matter. None of that matters. But the idea is let your mind and your heart and your thoughts and your ways (if you get to verse 6) be guided by the words that God has spoken. Hide them within your heart. Follow them with all that you have. That's God's intention. But it has developed, obviously, into this very large outward kind of show. Not that everyone is showing off. I don't know what's in people's hearts, but it's certainly not the main emphasis of these verses - one guy trying to outshine the next guy in his spiritual presentation of himself. But keep God's Word close at hand, put it between your eyes so that your thoughts are good ones, have a worldview that's shaped by His Word, your actions that can support it. Run your home that way as well. Notice in verse 9 there's another reminder to be placed on your dwelling. And, again, if you go to Israel, on the Jewish homes (every hotel room in Israel certainly has it), you'll find the mezuzah outside the door - a little cylinder. Again, it's got Scriptures inside that speak of this verse and others like it. And oftentimes people will kiss their hand and place it on the mezuzah upon entering the door to speak of the respect that this home has for the Word of God. Well, if that's true, that's great. But that's not God's intention. God's intention was let your life be guided by God's Word so that, again - just go backwards, it'll be well with you, and your days will be prolonged, and you will be multiplied greatly where God wants you, as you love Him with all that you have, and His Word guides your heart and directs your path. Good counsel.

Yet notice verse 6, and I guess I can't beat it to death enough. None of these things are of any value if it's not "in your heart." God doesn't like lip service. He wants heart commitment. It's a beautiful picture. Beautiful picture. Imagine going in and out of your house just going, "Lord, I'm going out in Your name, and I'm coming home for Your glory," and you have God's love in your heart. Surround your family and your kids with God's Word. Put memory verses on the fridge. That's all right. Talk often about the Lord. Include the Lord in your family in all you say and do, and the kids will just get it. They'll just get it because you get it. But anything else structured-wise, I think, when it comes to your heart's not there, it's going to be very difficult for you to pass along what you don't have in your own heart. "Oh, I want better for my kids." No. God just wants for your kids what He wants for you. Life.

Verse 10 he says this, "So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant - when you have eaten and are full - then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." It is far easier to be aware of our need for God when the need is obvious. And fortunately, we live in a country where need is usually defined by want. Right? We have it pretty good. If you don't believe that, just travel a little bit, and you'll certainly want to come home. So, the Lord says to the people, "When you get all that I've got stored up for you, just don't forget how you got it." Moses warns the nation of the danger of how God's blessings can blind us to our continual need for Him. I always like that Proverb 30 verse there that Agur wrote, and he said, "Two things I request of You (deprive me not before I die): remove falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches - feed me with the food allotted to me; lest I be full and deny You, ..... or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God." (verses 7-9) Just give me what I need. Don't ever let me feel like I have more than I don't need You for or so little that I'm thinking of getting it in ways other than trusting You. Just keep me where I never lose sight of who You are. And I think Moses is saying the same thing to the people here.

By the way, there are some Jewish households I think are very interesting who have used this verse; and we had a talk with a guy in Israel last time we were there who believes that because of this verse, they pray after they eat rather than before. Interesting. You might try that sometime. "Lord, bless this food," eat it, and then go, "Lord, thanks for the food. That was really good." You'll be reminded of where it came from and who provided it. I would rather pray before first, though, just in case there's something wrong with it. (Laughing) Maybe you should pray twice. Yeah. That's my advice. Pray twice. There you go.

Verse 13, "You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name. You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you (for the LORD your God is a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth." Now we covered this, I think, in great detail as we looked at the Ten Commandments a few weeks ago. But suffice it to say I think it's a reasonable request. Don't you? That God would say to you, "I just want you for Myself." I

guarantee if you're dating someone and thinking about getting married, if you find out they're dating four other people, you're not getting married. It's your first move. You're a smart person. You're heading for the hills. Fidelity is something that, in terms of relationships, is always the most important thing. Right? You can restore a lot of confidence in a lot of ways, but once people are unfaithful, that's the hardest thing to overcome is to restore trust. So God just is saying the same thing to them, "I just want you for Myself." Beware lest you forget God, and you go after the other gods of the earth. Be careful. Make your oath and your promise and your faithfulness to Him. God is a jealous God. And notice the capital LORD - "**Yahweh**" - the character God, the becoming One, your God. He's a jealous God among you. And you don't want to anger Him so that He deals with you directly. Does that mean you lose your salvation? I hardly see that saying that, but you may very well not have your days prolonged like God promised over there in verse 2. There is a way, I think, to cut yourself off from a life that God would want by just keeping God at arm's length. It seems fair to me that the Lord would want exclusivity. Don't you think that's fair? He doesn't want you out serving other gods. And whatever that other god is to you, He wants to be first and only.

We read in verse 16, "You shall not tempt" (or test) "the LORD your God as you tempted Him in Massah." (Exodus 17) "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you." The children of Israel had tempted God and provoked Him as they were coming out of Egypt, and they questioned if the Lord was with them or not. It is just a mind-blowing question to me. I mean, if you read through the Bible, you go, "Really?! Are you guys that thick-headed? Really?!" And then I look at my life and realize, yep, you can certainly be that thick-headed. (Laughing) Right? God provides water from a rock, and then they go, "Are You really with us?" And manna hits you in the head, falling from the sky, and you're eating all sweet. Tastes like donuts. Krispy Kremes. Hot. That's the manna. I'm pretty sure it tasted like the Krispy Kreme. You like the Krispy Kreme? You'd have loved the wilderness. So, for forty years (Laughing), it's no wonder your clothes didn't stretch or wear out. And then they go, "Is God with us?" Yes! Look! Krispy Kremes everywhere! And water from the rock. Come on. But you see, what did they do? They decided God was not trustworthy. They presumed that He wasn't with them. So don't tempt Him. Don't test Him. Don't try Him. Believe in Him. Verse 17, "Diligently keep His commandments." So, "keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you."

Verse 18, "And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you, and that you may go in and possess the good land of which the LORD swore to your fathers, to cast out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has spoken." Mark it down. Please the Lord, do what is right in His eyes, don't necessarily please others, please Him, and He'll enable you to walk in the land and dispossess your enemies that are stronger than you. You'll have a great life, man. You let God be first, you'll have a great life. There're a lot of enemies in the world, but none of them can stand up to your God. What your best bet is, your best move is, find out what God wants, go do what is right in His sight, make Him happy, please Him, and then everything that would gather together against you will be set aside. That won't be a problem. It's a good promise, isn't it?

Verse 20, "When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is the meaning of the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?' then you shall say to your son: 'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD' " ("Yahweh") " 'brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; and the LORD showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household.' " And I want you to notice verse 23, " 'Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in,' " (He brought us out to bring us in) " 'to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers.' " What a great verse! He brought us out to bring us in. All of the rules, all of the regulations, all of the calls of God upon your life are designed to bring you blessing and to deliver you from sin and death. Isn't that good? You should know that tonight. I know my parents sought to convince me that their rules were for my own good. I never believed them. We used to have to come in before it was dark, and all the other kids could play outside, and my dad would say, "It's just for your good," and we'd go, "That's ridiculous! It's just so you don't have to watch for us." And, looking back, I think he meant it. And having raised my own kids, you want what's best. But trying to convince them it's good.....I see God's problem with us, you know? We read it, and we, "Oh, yeah. That would be good in normal situations, but this isn't a normal one. I'm not forgiving that dude. I'm not praying for that guy." God brought you out to bring you in. He delivers you from sin and death to give you a life that you can call life. God, indeed, is doing just that. He is good. What do you have to do? Hear and do, obey and observe, put into practice, and God's storehouse of blessings await. It's just the way it is.

Verse 24, " 'And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always,' " (See that? Fear the LORD for our good)

" 'that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day. Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us.' " It does kind of beat you over the head with the "do it, do it, do it, do it, do it," doesn't it?

But I love verse 23. I think if you want to remember two verses of this chapter, remember verse 6 - it has to be "in your heart" and verse 23 - "He brought you out to bring you in." Get it in your heart. He brought you out to bring you in.

Submitted by Maureen Dickson  
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