

The Weekly Word
August 15-21, 2016

If vacation travels come your way this week, be sure to take God's Word with you.
Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, August 15: Deuteronomy 7- Dealing with the gods of this world...

My attention was drawn to verses 25-26, so I sat with these words and pondered them and meditated upon them.

The images of their gods you are to burn in the fire. Do not covet the silver and gold on them, and do not take it for yourselves, or you will be ensnared by it, for it is detestable to the LORD your God. Do not bring a detestable thing into your house or you, like it, will be set apart for destruction. Regard it as vile and utterly detest it, for it is set apart for destruction.

I wondered if there were ways I invite the gods of my world into my home?

Who are some of the gods of my world?

- Materialism & consumerism... the constant wanting of more and better and nicer stuff
- Power and prestige... my culture likes being on top, people like the perks that being on top adds to life.
- Recreation... it is almost a 'religious' right to have fun, take vacations, have a 'lake or beach' place, etc.
- Retirement... I have worked hard for many years and now I get to 'enjoy life' and spend all my time on myself
- Family... I know this one sounds strange, but sometimes I wonder if people in my culture make family a god. The kids' sports, music, dance, etc. takes priority over worship and youth activities and developing ones discipleship in the Lord.
- Sports... people are obsessed with professional sports. Thousands of dollars are spent on attending sporting events and great athletes are almost 'gods.' And game times, especially for football, are religiously adhered to.

Now do I allow these into my home? Yes, to some degree I do, but I do not think I do so in a religious manner. But honesty says I must think about these and bring them to the Lord.

There is some difference between these issues and the actual idols that Israel was being warned against. These issues are not literal idols (though they certainly can become an idol if we allow it). And none of these issues are inherently evil like an actual idol; so they are not a direct connect to the meaning of the text. Still they are topics that a disciple should bring to the Lord and allow Him to speak into our lives. And this is what I will do the remainder of my time with the Lord this morning.

Lord, as Your son, I do not want to allow anything to disrupt my connection and devotion to you. Please speak with me and let me know if I am allowing any of these cultural issues to impede my spiritual growth or my daily walk with You. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Tuesday, August 16: Deuteronomy 8- God gives us the ability...

Wow, a rich word from the Lord today. Strong and straightforward. So many touch points for me. I sat and wondered where should I land? What portion should be my manna today?

Slowly, like an old fashioned Polaroid picture developing, my devotional focus cleared on verses 17-18: *You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.*

It is so easy to have a self-centered view of life, especially when it comes to the good things and successes of life.

I am successful in school...

I am successful at work...

I have made money...

I have provided well for myself, family and children...

Look at me...how hard I have worked, how smart I am, how good at my job I have become.

Yeah me. I applaud me. Me, me, me. I, I, I. It is all about me and how good I am.

The simple reminder from the Lord grows out of verse 18: *But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.*

Yes, I may have worked hard and done well in school and so on, but we have to take a step further back. It is the Lord who gave us the brain power and the will power in the first place.

I must never lose sight that everything I have is due to the Lord's grace to me. Boasting is not good. Pride is not good, Humility before the Lord is the posture of faith.

Thank You, Lord God, for this very timely and important reminder. I praise Your name... through Jesus, my Lord. Amen.

Wednesday, August 17: Deuteronomy 9- I deserve nothing, yet God has given richly...

The story Moses paints in this chapter is a reminder that NONE of the good things and graces of God that come into my life are earned or deserved. Like Israel, I am sin filled. There is wretchedness in me.

I only need to re-write the chapter substituting my name for Israel and replacing her sins with my own... then it becomes so clear that God could have justifiably destroyed me but His mercy, grace and love instead chose to save me.

So my heart and mind swell with gratitude for my God –Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit. He has done great things for me and I will praise His name forever and ever.

Praise Him, praise Him, the Lord my blessed redeemer. He has done great things for me; things underserved. Holy and gracious is He. And I will praise His name forever and ever. Amen.

Thursday, August 18: Deuteronomy 10- Fear, Obey, Serve...

Some mornings when I read the text a portion leaves the page and attaches itself to me immediately. Today was one of those days. Verses 12-13 did that today. *And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?*

Direct, clear, understandable... it warmed my heart and challenged my thoughts.

Fear the Lord; obey, love and serve Him with everything I have. Pay attention to His commands -His Word.

Good words to live by... but living is more involved than reading.

Fear, obey, serve... meditating on these, the order seems to be significant.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, right. So that is a good starting place. And if I fear God, truly fear Him, then I certainly will obey Him as well.

Obedience seems to represent a different character set than serving. Obedience is a direct response to God's commands and orders. Serving on the other hand can also imply my initiative. For example, I serve my wife by knowing what pleases her and doing those things for her. So serving, in part, grows from my initiative to please and honor, which is additional to responding obediently to God's commands and directives.

Fear, obey, serve... three words for today and all the todays of my life.

Lord, thank You for inspiring Moses to give us these three simple words. Now, Lord, help me to embed them into my life. In Jesus' name and for Your glory, I pray. Amen

Friday, August 19: Deuteronomy 11- Practical words to grow your faith...

Well, Moses is certainly hammering home the concept of loving the Lord God as he speaks to the people before they enter the land.

In the midst of his message, Moses gave the people some practical application of the call to love the Lord. Moses charged the people to: *Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth (18-21).*

What very practical ways to remind ourselves to love and obey the Lord...

- Fix them in our mind & heart; create reminders that we can carry with us...
- Teach our children. I find that when I teach something I actually learn it better, so this application aids both the children and the parents!
- Talk about them with our families... constant reinforcement of the commands of the Lord.
- Write them on doorframes and gates... every time you come or go from your house the commands stand sentinel, a constant reminder to us. How often do we leave or enter our house and our property?

Moses gave wonderfully practical ways to apply the teaching he gave. How can I apply these to my life? What are ways I can contemporize these application points to work for me today? If anyone has ideas, please send them to me.

Lord, some days Your Word is so practical. Thank You for today's helpful and practical word. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Saturday, August 20: Deuteronomy 12- Get rid of other gods...

How serious is the Lord about not worshipping other gods? Very... check out this instruction from the Lord:

Destroy completely all the places on the high mountains, on the hills and under every spreading tree, where the nations you are dispossessing worship their gods. Break down their

altars, smash their sacred stones and burn their Asherah poles in the fire; cut down the idols of their gods and wipe out their names from those places (2-3).

Destroy any remnants of foreign gods in your land; this is the essence of the command. Don't leave any trace even of how they did their sacrifices in the land, lest you be corrupted even by their manner of worship.

The Lord is serious... one God worshiped His way and only His way.

So I thought, are there any remnants of false-god worship in my home? None that I am aware of. Decades ago, shortly after becoming a Believer, a friend warned me about things like Ouiji boards and anything that might be tainted by occult practices. So I burned one I found in a mound of games in my house.

In later years I have accompanied people when they asked for our prayer teams to pray through their homes. Occasionally we have seen artifacts of other gods and religions that we suggested they rid from their houses. These are mostly trinkets purchased on vacations and though they carried no religious significance for the people, they are representations of gods other than the Lord. Hearing Moses' injunctions, I believe it is wise to rid our lives of anything that might smack of gods other than the Lord.

Fidelity to the Lord, is my desire, down to the removal of potential hindrances...

Lord, I pray that my life brings You honor and glory. Lord, prepare me today for worship of You tomorrow. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen

Sunday, August 21, 2016, Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at office@pcogonline.org.

Click here for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.