

# WATER·FIRE·STONE

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MOSES

## Session 21 – Choose Life, Part Three | Deuteronomy 30

After forty years in the wilderness, Israel is ready to step into the good life. But Moses warns what will happen if they choose to take their wayward habits with them into the Promised Land.

Sadly, he knew they would. “You have been rebellious against the Lord as long as I have known you,” he told them (Deuteronomy 9:24). We wonder, as they listened to all of the dire warnings in Deuteronomy 28, if the people thought Moses was exaggerating. But history reveals that Israel has suffered all of these calamities at one time or another.



The book of Deuteronomy is a series of sermons Moses gave to prepare the people for life in the Promised Land. In this session of our four-part series, *Choose Life*, we focus on praying our prodigals home and the life-changing power of God’s Word.

### Icebreaker

What is one of the best choices you have ever made? What is one of the worst?

### Goals for this Session

- Discover the blessings we forfeit when we choose to go our own way.
- Consider God’s promise to chasten and bring His prodigal children back home.
- Pray honest prayers that accept chastening, embrace grace, and restore faith.

God’s promise to restore Israel illustrates God’s promise to all of His children. If we straight out rebel (like a prodigal) or prefer half-hearted, self-satisfied living (like the older brother) we forfeit the blessings that come with obedience and invite His chastening. God keeps all of His promises. But as certain as His chastening is, so also are the promises of His forgiveness and restoration.

**1** Deuteronomy 30:1-5 | Not *if* but *when*. Have you ever been given advice that made no sense to you until much later? If you trust the person giving it, you respectfully listen; if not, you dismiss it.

Israel is about to see their hopes and dreams fulfilled at last—but Moses is counseling them on what to do after they’ve thrown it all away! The path of a prodigal starts with rebellion and leads to ruin. Consider the steps that bring them back to the Lord.

a. **Remember.** “When you call them to mind” (verse 1). In your own words and experience, explain why honestly retracing the choices that lead to rebellion is so important. Read Luke 15:13-17 for help with your answer.

**What is a Curse?**

Is it like an evil spell that a person is powerless to resist? A voodoo doll with pins? Not at all.

“Cursed shall you be” is God’s strong warning of the natural consequences of sin.

When God pronounced a curse in the Bible, it was a divine judgment of sin.

Repentance “breaks” the curse and lets restoration begin.

b. **Return.** “...and you return to the Lord your God” (verse 2). Think about the difference between wanting a change of circumstances and experiencing a change of heart. Which would you pursue first and why? Read Luke 15:18-20 for help with your answer.

c. **Restoration.** “...the Lord your God will bring you back from captivity” (verse 3). Moses reminds the people that the Lord is full of compassion. He doesn’t withhold love or hold back the blessings. What disobedience forfeited, grace fully restores. Compare God’s promises here in verses 4-5 with what you read in Luke 15:21-24. How would you answer someone who wonders if God gives second chances?

**2** Deuteronomy 30:6-10 | God will rejoice over you! The word “rejoice” means jubilant delight and unrestrained celebration. When it comes to forgiveness, some people imagine God standing back, arms folded, with a stern expression on His face. But Jesus portrayed God as a father running to embrace his prodigal son.

In your own words and experience, what would you tell someone who thinks God is reluctant to forgive? Use the verses below for help with your answer.

Zephaniah 3:17

Jeremiah 32:40-41

Luke 15:4-10

**3** God promised to restore the blessings that Israel took for granted and lost. It’s been said that the seeds of rebellion are germinated in the soil of ingratitude. Think about it. If the only blessings you could count on today were the ones you thanked God for yesterday, what would you be missing?

## Memory Verse

I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you,  
that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing;  
therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live.

Deuteronomy 30:19 NKJV

Which part of this verse resonates most with you today? How or in what way?

**4** Deuteronomy 30:11-20 | No excuses—it's not too hard. Reading these verses, we can almost hear Moses sigh as he scans the faces of these people he knows well and loves deeply. They could hear what he was saying, but were they listening?

Consider what it means to have God's Word *near* you. The Bible is more accessible than ever, especially now that we can read it on any smart device.

- a. What Bible apps, if any, do you use?
- b. Which features do you find most helpful for reading the Bible?
- c. What features do you find least helpful, and possibly even distracting?

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There's a wrong way to read the Bible. Putting Jesus at the center will make your heart burn. Treating it like a self-help manual will give you heartburn.

Levi Lusko

**5** Consider what it means to have God's Word *in your mouth*. Read it. Say it aloud. Sing it! Speak it back to the Lord in prayer (Moses did that regularly).

- a. In what ways does God's Word *in our mouth* shape character and influence our conversations, even when we aren't directly quoting Scripture? Use the verses below for help with your answer.

Colossians 3:16

Colossians 4:6

2 Timothy 4:2

1 Peter 3:15

- b. Think about it. Why should we memorize Scripture when it's so easy just to *google* it?

**6** Consider what it means to have God’s Word *in your heart*. Memorizing Scripture becomes more than a rote exercise when you *meditate* on it. Biblical meditation is more than a self-help technique to reduce stress and increase mindfulness.

Meditating on God’s Word is akin to digesting food in order to nourish growth, sustain life, and increase strength. It’s the difference between gulping down your food, or taking time to savor it.

Most of the verses we know *by heart* are the ones we go to, again and again. When you meditate on Scripture, it comes alive to you, it feeds your soul and stirs up heart change.

**Spiritual M & M’s**

**Memorize:** Store God’s Word in your heart and mind and it will be on the tip of your tongue when you need it most.

**Meditate:** Chew on it. One way to do this is to read a verse repeatedly and focus on each word, one at a time.

a. Is there a specific verse that has been food for your soul in recent weeks? Share why and in what way.

b. Is there a specific verse that gives you hope and an anchor for praying a prodigal home?

**Action Steps** ►► As you think through this part of Moses’ story, what is the most important takeaway point for you personally? How will you put what you’ve learned into action?

**P**ray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. —Ephesians 6:18 NIV

**Adoration** – Giving praise and honor to God for who He is and what He does.

**Confession** – Honestly deal with sin; acknowledge to God the ways (and whys) you fall short.

**Thanksgiving** – Verbalize your gratitude; express your praise and a thankful heart.

**Supplication** – Pray specifically for the needs of others, ourselves, our church, our nation.



Close your discussion time by praying together. Use the A·C·T·S pattern as a group focus and keep it simple. No need to be lengthy or profound—just authentic.

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