



## ► *Fully Committed* ◀

BELIEVERS ARE TO BE CHARACTERIZED BY A  
WHOLEHEARTED COMMITMENT TO GOD.

### DEUTERONOMY 30:11-20

Do you remember when people sat for a professional family photo? Afterward, somebody would have to decide which photo was best. It would be framed, hung, and proudly displayed. One of the best ways to pick the favorite is to not consider multiple options at once. Instead, look at only two. Of these two, which is better? Set aside the not chosen one. Place a new picture beside the chosen one and ask, which is better? By comparing only two, you eliminate choice fatigue. Eventually, you've chosen the best photo.



**In what situation have you had so many options that it was overwhelming to pick only one? How did you eventually decide?**

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# UNDERSTAND **THE CONTEXT**

## **DEUTERONOMY 29:1–30:20**

For forty years, Moses had been leading God’s people from Egypt across the Sinai Peninsula. He and the Israelites were now east of the Jordan River, across from the city of Jericho, on the Plains of Moab. At this point, he was an old man. He had spent his first forty years in Egypt, his second tending to his father-in-law’s flocks, and his final forty leading the exodus. God’s people were standing on the threshold of the promised land. Moses would only be able to view it from a distance; he would never be allowed to enter.

This week’s passage would be Moses’s last formal message to the Israelites. It was not for a select few. He “summoned all Israel” and began to speak (29:2). This message would apply to everyone.

In this message, Moses covered three main points. First, he spoke about God’s past faithfulness. He reminded them of the Lord’s mighty acts that led to the Hebrew slaves being freed from Egyptian captivity. Moses highlighted God’s faithful love, grace, and care for His people.

Second, Moses emphasized God’s covenant with His people. God had spoken His covenant with Moses at Mount Sinai. God’s message at Moab was a renewal of the covenant made at Sinai (29:1-2). God directed His people to obey this covenant because He wanted them to succeed in everything they did. Plus, this covenant would establish them as His people (vv. 9,13).

Third, God was giving His people a basis for hope in the future. Knowing God had shown His power and demonstrated His faithfulness in the past would reassure them of His continued care and protection. The people would certainly face challenges in Canaan. Recalling what God had done in the past would encourage them during challenging days ahead.



**As you read Deuteronomy 30:11-20, identify the choices set before the people. Highlight the commands.**

# EXPLORE THE TEXT

## THE COMMAND (DEUT. 30:11-14)

<sup>11</sup> “**This command that I give you today is certainly not too difficult or beyond your reach.** <sup>12</sup> **It is not in heaven so that you have to ask, ‘Who will go up to heaven, get it for us, and proclaim it to us so that we may follow it?’** <sup>13</sup> **And it is not across the sea so that you have to ask, ‘Who will cross the sea, get it for us, and proclaim it to us so that we may follow it?’** <sup>14</sup> **But the message is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, so that you may follow it.”**

### VERSES 11-14

In Deuteronomy, God repeatedly called His people to keep His commands. **This command** was not beyond comprehension nor **too difficult** to understand or obey. God had called His people to a doable task. Obedience was not attainable by only the superhuman or the super-spiritual. All could obey. The Lord was not setting His people up for failure but for spiritual success.

God’s command **was not in heaven** or **across the sea**. Moses was saying that if the Israelites wanted to know God’s command, they would not have to send someone on an extreme and difficult journey to retrieve it. To be *in heaven* would mean God’s covenant was lofty and unattainable to everyday Israelites. The good news was that although God’s message to His people originated in heaven, it was not beyond their reach. One did not have to be an expert to understand, explain, or apply it.

What a contrast to the Egyptians’ and Canaanites’ beliefs about their so-called gods. Worshipers hoped to earn their gods’ favor. Their efforts were essentially a hit-or-miss proposition, like playing darts blindfolded. “We did this before, and things got better—this must be what pleases the gods.” The pagan gods and any theological beliefs related to them were complete fabrications of peoples’ imaginations.

God was not that way with His people. He wanted His covenant purposes and will to be perfectly clear. He wanted His people to be able to follow. Thus, they did not need to send a messenger *across the sea* to retrieve it, bring it back to them, and then proclaim it to them.

Rather than being remote and unattainable, God's message was near. Significantly, the Hebrew word translated **message** in verse 14 is not plural. *Message* being singular underscores the unity of God's instruction to His people. God has not left us an incoherent rambling of disconnected thoughts and teachings. He has given a unified single message to His people. It proclaims God's redeeming, forgiving, restoring, and reestablishing His relationship with we who are fallen.

To have the message in one's **heart** meant God's command and covenant had been woven into the hearer's very being. It had become ingrained into the person's thinking and was part of the person's spiritual makeup; it affected his or her life.

Having the message in one's **mouth** meant the person could articulate the content and teaching of God's message. The Lord had a reason for wanting the Israelites to achieve this heart and mouth level of understanding; He wanted His people to **follow** His covenant. He was calling for life-changing obedience.



**If people think God's truths are confusing and unattainable, how might that affect their openness to God's Word?**

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**How can you respond to people who say it is too difficult to know God's will or to obey His commands?**

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## **THE COMMITMENT (DEUT. 30:15-18)**

<sup>15</sup> **"See, today I have set before you life and prosperity, death and adversity. <sup>16</sup> For I am commanding you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, statutes, and ordinances, so that you may live and multiply, and the LORD your God may bless you in the land you are entering to possess. <sup>17</sup> But if your heart turns away and you do not listen and you are led astray to bow in worship to other gods and serve them, <sup>18</sup> I tell you today that you will certainly perish and will not prolong your days in the land you are entering to possess across the Jordan."**

### VERSES 15-16

In Hebrew thought, **prosperity** was not limited to having abundant financial resources. Prosperity could also refer to experiencing kindness and living joyfully. In contrast, **adversity** referred to experiences that were unpleasant, wicked, or hurtful.

Again, Moses reiterated the command that God's people were to love and obey Him (Deut. 6:5; 7:9; 10:12; 11:1; 19:9). These two actions were, by definition, interwoven. Jesus understood this. He told His disciples, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word" (John 14:23). To love and obey was to **walk** in God's ways and **keep** His commands, statutes, and ordinances.

Verse 16 adds a layer to experiencing the life and prosperity mentioned in verse 15. God would allow His people to **multiply** in the land. Multiplication, whether in fields, families, or flocks indicated one was prosperous.

The sentence points to three benefits of walking in God's ways and obeying His commands. God's people would live in the land, multiply in the land, and be blessed in the land they would possess. This was the life and the prosperity mentioned in verse 15.

What a far cry from the preceding generation. They had been slaves in another land; someone else possessed them. Due to God's blessing, they would have a land and would possess it. What a great reminder that God can take our worst circumstance and turn it into a blessing.

God's people are not immune from difficulties and challenges. We are "born for trouble as surely as sparks fly upward" (Job 5:7). We don't have to face those troubles, though, by ourselves. God is still at work.

***God can take our worst circumstance  
and turn it into a blessing.***

### VERSES 17-18

Moses had just described the life and prosperity he introduced in verse 15. Next, he explained the death and adversity mentioned in that same verse. Numerous times, God had called His people to follow His statutes and ordinances (Deut. 4:5,6,14; 6:1; 11:22). Rather than follow, what if their **heart turns away** from God, meaning they reject Him?

Verse 17 contains a progression of action. The first step begins in the heart, maybe unseen by others. Surrounded by the pagan Canaanites, a person could begin to think, “I really am tired of these restrictive customs and laws.”

Second, the person no longer listens to what God has said. They ignore His Word, instructions, and commands. This leads to step three; the person is **led astray**. Often, this can be an incremental movement rather than a massive leap.

Growing more comfortable in the presence of the ungodly can lead to steps four and five. The person will begin to bow in worship and ultimately serve the other gods. The enemy always makes sure that there are plenty of **other gods** to lure people. Those false gods will get the person’s time, attention, energy, and resources. This is what it means to **serve them**.

During the looking, luring, and leading astray stages, the target does not know or maybe does not want to hear about the hook in the lure. But God is fair and just. He warned His people and told them the consequences of having a heart that turns from Him.

The consequences were two-fold, loss of life and loss of longevity. **You will certainly perish** echoes God’s warning to Adam and Eve about eating the forbidden fruit from the tree in the garden, “for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die” (Gen. 2:17).



#### **KEY DOCTRINE:** *Man*

By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. (See Genesis 3:6-7; James 1:14-15.)

Adam and Eve did not physically die that day; yet they were banished from the garden because of their sin and eventually died. God’s people were eventually banished from the land where He was about to place them. They had gone after foreign gods. In 722 BC, the Assyrians conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel and took survivors as captives. Similarly, the Southern Kingdom of Judah fell to the Babylonians in 586 BC. Their days were not prolonged in the land across the Jordan. Sin had consequences—and still does today.



**Based on these verses, what does loving God look like?**

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How are people today fooled into thinking there is no penalty for sin?

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## THE CHALLENGE (DEUT. 30:19-20)

<sup>19</sup> “I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, <sup>20</sup> love the LORD your God, obey him, and remain faithful to him. For he is your life, and he will prolong your days as you live in the land the LORD swore to give to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

### VERSE 19

As if in a courtroom setting, the Lord called His two witnesses against His people, **heaven and earth**. The phrase referred to all of creation. No being, either human or heavenly, could ever deny that God gave His people ample opportunity to make the right choice. The word **today** added a sense of urgency. Moses’s time with the Israelites was coming to an end. The time to decide was now.

The decision was between **life** and **blessing** or **death** and **curse**—the very options Moses had been describing. Several times in Deuteronomy Moses had urged God’s people to choose life (4:1; 5:33; 6:2; 8:1; 16:20). Here, he clearly laid out the only two options the Israelites had.

The decision they made this day would affect them and subsequent generations. The decision was not merely a mental or academic one. No one could say, “I am going to choose that one, but it’s not going to change my life.” No, the choice would have major life implications.

### VERSE 20

Since verse 15, the two key words have been “life” and “live.” They have appeared six times in these verses. This is the option God preferred for His people—and still prefers for us today.

Like mixing water and dye, which cannot be separated, loving, obeying, and remaining faithful to God affects every area of life. Why the connection? Because God **is your life**. He had created

His people. He had chosen them. He had led them. Apart from Him, the Israelites would not have existed as a people or individuals. He was the only one who could fulfill the promise He had sworn to the Israelites' ancestors. They would live in the land for a prolonged period of time. This was the essence of the old covenant.


It is also the core of the new covenant, which God revealed in sending Jesus to live among us and die for us. Death will not win over Him because “in him was life” (John 1:4). He said of Himself, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (14:6). At one point in His ministry, many in the crowd quit following Jesus. He challenged His disciples, asking if they too were going to walk away. “Simon Peter answered, ‘Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life’” (6:68). Peter knew that in Jesus alone was life. The same is true still today.

The disciples had a decision to make. The Israelites had a decision to make. We have a decision to make. It’s the decision every person must make for themselves. The choice is between life and blessing—or death and curse. Today, which do you choose?

 **What does it mean for you to say God “is your life”? In this context, what does it mean for you to “choose life”?**

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 **BIBLE SKILL:** *Read multiple Bible passages to understand a biblical concept.*

Read Deuteronomy 30:19-20; 32:46-47; John 17:3; and Colossians 3:1-4. Reflect on what it means that God is our life. Practically speaking, what does that look like? How does the truth these verses communicate challenge you to adjust your priorities?

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## APPLY THE TEXT

- + We can trust God to give us the ability to obey His commands.
- + People must choose whether they will follow God or not.
- + Our desire to follow God influences our descendants' choices to follow Him.



**Discuss the following: What can you do to help yourself understand God's Word better? How can your Bible study group help people with little Bible knowledge to better understand God's Word?**



**The enemy lures people away from God incrementally rather than in one huge leap. How might this apply to you? Do you sense you are not as close to God as you once were? What changes will you make this week to renew your commitment to God?**

**Memorize Deuteronomy 30:16.**

*Prayer Needs*