

People on the Way

Deuteronomy: Choose Life | Week One | Deuteronomy 1:1–8

THE BIG IDEA

God's people are always on the way. Before Israel ever enters the land, God tells them how to live in the in-between: remember where you have been, rise from where you have stayed too long, and receive what he has already given. God's grace is with us at every step.

01 Share life *about 15 minutes*

Before we open the Bible, take a few minutes to catch up on life. Give everyone a chance to share. This guide is designed for about 85 minutes, and the times beside each section are suggestions, not rules.

1. Share a high point and a low point from your week.
2. Where have you seen God at work lately, and where has it been hard?
- 3. This is our first week in Deuteronomy. What do you hope God does in you, and in our group, through this series?

02 Setting the scene

Deuteronomy is Moses' final message to Israel, spoken on the edge of the promised land. A whole generation has passed away in the wilderness, and a new generation now stands at the border, about to cross into everything God promised. Before they go, Moses gathers them to remember, to warn them, and to send them. Our passage this week is the very opening of that message, and it sets the tone for everything that follows.

03 Read the Word together *about 10 minutes*

Open your Bibles to Deuteronomy 1:1–8. Have one person read the passage aloud, slowly, while the rest of the group follows along. If your group reads in another language, have someone read it again from their own Bible. The verses for each part of the study are printed in the sections below.

MEMORY VERSE | DEUTERONOMY 1:8

See, I have set the land before you. Enter and take possession of the land the LORD swore to give to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their future offspring.

First impressions

4. What word, phrase, or image stood out to you as the passage was read?
5. What did you notice, or what surprised you, in how God speaks to his people here?

04 Study the scripture *about 35 minutes*

The sermon walked through this passage in three words: remember, rise, and receive. The verses for each part are printed below, so reread them as you go. The first question in each part asks what the text says, the second asks what it means, and the third asks what it changes. If time is short, keep the questions marked with an orange dot.

REMEMBER

Read verses 1–5 again.

Deuteronomy 1:1–5 CSB

1 These are the words Moses spoke to all Israel across the Jordan in the wilderness, in the Arabah opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab. **2** It is an eleven-day journey from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea by way of Mount Seir. **3** In the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, Moses told the Israelites everything the LORD had commanded him to give them. **4** This was after he had defeated King Sihon of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and King Og of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth, at Edrei. **5** Across the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain this law, saying:

These opening verses read like a travel log. Moses names the places Israel has been and reminds them that a journey of eleven days took them forty years. He is honest about their fear and their failure, and just as honest about the battles God won for them along the way. Memory is the soil faith grows in, and a people who forget what God has done will not trust him for what he is about to do.

6. Look at verses 2 and 3. How long should the trip from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea have taken, and how long had it actually been? What do those two numbers tell you about what happened in between?
7. Why do you think Moses begins by helping them remember, before he says anything else?
- 8. What happens to our faith when we forget what God has done? Where do you need to remember his faithfulness today?

RISE

Read verses 6–7 again.

Deuteronomy 1:6–7 CSB

6 “The LORD our God spoke to us at Horeb, ‘You have stayed at this mountain long enough. **7** Resume your journey and go to the hill country of the Amorites and to all their neighbors in the Arabah, the hill country, the Judean foothills, the Negev, and the seacoast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the Euphrates River.

At this mountain, God had given Israel his law and met with them. It was a good and holy place. Yet God says, “You have stayed at this mountain long enough. Resume your journey.” Even good places can become places we are not meant to stay. There is a difference between resting and settling, and God is not against rest, but rest is meant to send us back out.

9. Look at verses 6 and 7. What does God say about the mountain, and how large is the map he unrolls in front of them? Count the regions he names.
10. What good or familiar mountains are the hardest to leave: comfort, fear, the past, success, or waiting for perfect certainty?
- 11. Where might God be saying to you, “You have stayed here long enough”? What would it look like to break camp and take the next step?

RECEIVE

Read verse 8 again.

Deuteronomy 1:8 CSB

8 See, I have set the land before you. Enter and take possession of the land the LORD swore to give to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their future offspring.”

Before God gives a single command, he gives a gift: "See, I have set the land before you." The promise comes first. Only after the gift does he say, "Enter and take possession." Grace always comes before the call, and the whole promise rests on the character of a God who swore an oath and cannot lie.

Notice how big the map is in verse 7. God points Israel toward hill country, foothills, desert, and seacoast, a land full of people and places. His promise was never meant to stop with them. It was always meant to spill out toward others.

12. Look at verse 8. Which comes first, the gift or the command? What exactly does God say he has already done?
- 13. Where are you worn out trying to earn something God says is already yours? What changes when you truly believe the gift comes first?
14. Who is one person, or one place, God may be sending you toward this week? What would loving them actually look like?

05 Back to Jesus *about 10 minutes*

How does this passage point us back to Jesus?

Centuries later, another Israelite stood in a wilderness, hungry and tested. When the enemy came, Jesus answered every temptation by quoting this very book (Matthew 4:1–11). Where Israel failed in the wilderness, Jesus stood firm. And notice this. Moses himself never entered the land. The leader who finally took Israel across the river was his successor, Joshua, and in Hebrew that name, Yeshua, is the very same name as Jesus. The first Joshua led God's people into a land they would one day lose. Jesus, the greater Joshua, leads his people into a home they can never lose.

- 15. How does seeing Jesus as the true and faithful Israelite, the One who obeyed where we could not, change the way you read this passage?

APPLICATION

What is God telling me to do today? Write down one specific step you will take this week.

06 Pray together *about 15 minutes*

Share one request with the group and pray for one another. As you pray, name the step each person wrote down and ask the Holy Spirit for the courage and power to take it.

Who has God brought to mind this week?

Someone who needs what you have been talking about. Write their name here and pray for them by name.

Prayer requests

A PRAYER TO CARRY WITH YOU

Father, thank you that you have carried me this far, and that you are not finished with me. Where I have stayed too long, give me the courage to rise. Where I am striving to earn what you have already given, teach me to receive. Send me toward the people you love, and lead me all the way home, in Jesus, the One who has gone ahead of me. Amen.

At home this week

Deuteronomy 6 tells parents to talk about God's words at the table and on the road. If there are children in your home, ask at dinner this week: **Where has God taken care of our family?** Then read Deuteronomy 1:8 together. God gives before he asks, and remembering what he has done helps us trust him for what comes next.

Before we gather again

Three things to carry into the week.

- Read Deuteronomy 1:1–8 again on your own this week, and ask God what he is saying to you through it.
- Take the one step you wrote down, and tell someone once you have done it.
- Reach out to the person whose name you wrote in Pray Together. We will talk about how it went next time.



Scan to answer two quick questions after your meeting: which question landed, and which one fell flat.