

Set Apart

Deuteronomy: Choose Life | Week Nine |

Deuteronomy 7:1–26

THE BIG IDEA

God chose Israel not because they were many or impressive, but because he loved them. That same love calls us to live set apart from the idols that compete for our hearts, and it promises a victory we could never win on our own. Holiness is not how we earn God's love. It is how we live inside a love we have already been given.

01 Share life 15 min

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 one thing you were grateful for this week and one thing that wore you down.
2. Growing up, what was one value your family would not compromise on? How has it stayed with you?

- 3. When we last met, we each named one step to take. How did it go, and what got in the way?

02 Setting the scene

Last time, in Deuteronomy 6:10–25, Moses warned that the greatest threat to loving God would come in comfort, when Israel enjoyed houses and wells they did not build and forgot the God who gave them. This week the warning turns from comfort to compromise.

Moses is preaching on the plains of Moab, just across the Jordan from the land God promised. A new generation is about to leave forty years of wilderness behind and build a life among nations that worship other gods. Chapter 6 gave the greatest command: love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, and strength. Chapter 7 shows what that love costs when the culture around you pulls the other way. This week's sermon opened with the night before a young man's first flight to America, when his parents put their hands on his shoulders and told him to remember who he was, to refuse to compromise, and not to be afraid. Moses says the same three things to Israel: remember that you are chosen, live set apart, and do not be afraid, because God is with you.

03 Read the Word together 10 min

Open your Bibles to Deuteronomy 7. Have one person read the whole chapter aloud, verses 1 to 26, 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 7:6

For you are a holy people belonging to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be his own possession out of all the peoples on the face of the earth.

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, about how God speaks to Israel in this chapter?

04 Study the scripture 35 min

The sermon walked through this chapter in three movements: you are chosen by grace, you are called to live set apart, and you do not have to be afraid because God has already secured the

victory. The verses for each part are printed below, so reread them as you go. Each part has three questions. The first 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.

YOU ARE CHOSEN BY GRACE

Read verses 6–11 again.

DEUTERONOMY 7:6-9 CSB

6 For you are a holy people belonging to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be his own possession out of all the peoples on the face of the earth. **7** The LORD had his heart set on you and chose you, not because you were more numerous than all peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. **8** But because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors, he brought you out with a strong hand and redeemed you from the place of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. **9** Know that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps his gracious covenant loyalty for a thousand generations with those who love him and keep his commands.

Before Moses gives Israel a single instruction about the nations, he tells them who they are.

They are holy, chosen, and God's own possession, and the reason has nothing to do with their strength. They were the fewest of all peoples. God chose them because he loved them and because he keeps his promises, all the way back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The sermon connected this to Ephesians 1, where Paul says God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. None of us performed our way into his family. We cannot be good enough to earn grace, and we do not have to be. Our standing rests on his love and not on our record, on the days we feel close to God and on the days we do not.

6. Look at verses 7 and 8. What reasons does God give for choosing Israel? What reason does he rule out?
7. Why do you think God tells Israel so plainly that he did not choose them for their size or strength? What might that guard against in their hearts, and in ours?
- 8. Where are you still trying to earn something God says he has already given you? What would it look like to receive it instead?

YOU ARE CALLED TO LIVE SET APART

Read verses 1-5 and 25-26 again.

DEUTERONOMY 7:4-5, 26 CSB

4 because they will turn your sons away from me to worship other gods. Then the LORD's anger will burn against you, and he will swiftly destroy you. **5** Instead, this is what you are to do to them: tear down their altars, smash their sacred pillars, cut down their Asherah poles, and burn their carved images.

26 Do not bring any detestable thing into your house, or you will be set apart for destruction like it. You are to abhor and detest it utterly because it is set apart for destruction.

LEADER NOTE

Someone in your group may ask why God commanded Israel to destroy the nations. Keep it brief and keep it at the level of the sermon. These commands belong to a specific moment in Israel's story and are not a pattern for God's people to repeat. Their target was the worship of the nations, not their ethnicity, which is why Rahab the Canaanite was later welcomed into Israel and into the family line of Jesus. In Christ our fight is not against people but against whatever competes for our hearts.

If the conversation runs long, offer to talk more after the meeting and move on.

Deuteronomy 6 says love the LORD with all your heart. Deuteronomy 7 shows how: tear down the altars that compete for that heart. God knows how quickly a divided heart drifts. The same people who heard his voice at Sinai built a golden calf while Moses was still on the mountain. He knows our blind spots better than we do, and he refuses to share our hearts with the very things that pull us away from him, because compromise slowly harms the life he has called us to live.

Holiness flows from a status we already have. On the first day of a marriage a couple is fully married; they do not start at ten percent and work their way up. In Christ we have already been declared holy and given a new identity, and living set apart is how we live inside that identity. This is not passive, and it is not a solo effort. A gym membership changes nothing until you show up and train, and sanctification works the same way. It is a daily partnership with the Holy Spirit, who stands beside us, gives us power, corrects our form, and nudges us forward.

9. Look at verses 4 and 5. What does God say will happen to Israel's hearts if they

compromise? What does he tell them to do instead?

10. Deuteronomy 6 says love God with all your heart. Why do you think chapter 7 ties that love so closely to tearing down altars? What happens to our love for God when an idol is allowed to stay?
11. What is one altar in your life, a false security, a hidden compromise, or a habit, that competes with Jesus for your heart? What would it look like to stop managing it and let the Holy Spirit help you tear it down?

DO NOT BE AFRAID, GOD HAS GIVEN YOU VICTORY

Read verses 12–24 again.

DEUTERONOMY 7:17-19, 21-22 CSB

17 If you say to yourself, "These nations are greater than I; how can I drive them out?" 18 do not be afraid of them. Be sure to remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and all Egypt: 19 the great trials that you saw, the signs and wonders, the strong hand and outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. The LORD your God will do the same to all the peoples you fear.

21 Don't be terrified of them, for the LORD your God, a great and awesome God, is among you.

22 The LORD your God will drive out these nations before you little by little. You will not be able to destroy them all at once; otherwise, the wild animals will become too numerous for you.

Moses knows exactly what Israel will say when they see the nations: they are greater than we are, so how can we drive them out? God's answer is not to shrink the enemy but to point back to Egypt. Remember Pharaoh. Remember the signs and wonders and the strong hand that brought you out. The God who did that is among you, and he will drive the nations out little by little. The blessings promised in verses 12 through 15 were a physical shadow of something bigger: a day when sin is fully removed and God's people see Jesus face to face.

The sermon was clear that this hope is not only for later. In Christ we walk in victory now, in the middle of hardship, pressure, and fear. Paul says that in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. That changes how we walk into work when everyone is negative, how we respond when the world feels frightening, and how we pursue justice knowing that God cares about every person and will one

day set things right. The same Jesus who rescued us will hold us until we see him face to face.

12. Look at verses 17 through 21. What does God tell Israel to do when the nations look too strong? What does he promise about himself?
13. Verse 18 says the answer to fear is to remember what God has already done. What has God done in your past that you need to remember right now?
- 14. Where this week could you carry a different hope into the people around you, at work, at school, at home, or in a hard conversation, because your victory in Christ is already secure?

05 Back to Jesus 10 min

How does this passage point us back to Jesus?

Israel was chosen because God loved them, and in Christ the same is true of us: chosen before the foundation of the world and adopted as sons and daughters through Jesus. The last verse of this chapter says that anything detestable brought into the house becomes set apart for destruction. At the cross, Jesus took that place. He was cut off and treated as the outsider so that people like us could be brought in and called God's own possession. Paul traces the whole journey in Romans 8: those God predestined he called, those he called he justified, and those he justified he glorified. Every altar we tear down is a response to a love that was already ours, and every fear we face has already been answered at an empty tomb.

- **15.** Israel was told to show the idols no mercy. At the cross, Jesus received no mercy so that we could receive it. How does that change the way you approach tearing down altars this week: as a way to earn God's love, or as a response to it?

APPLICATION

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

Write your step in your notes app, then share it with the group.

06 Pray together 15 min

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 the hope you have been talking about. Write their name here and pray for them by name.

Prayer requests

Keep the list in your group chat so you can follow up during the week.

A PRAYER TO CARRY WITH YOU

Father, you set your heart on me before I had done anything for you. Thank you that my standing rests on your grace and not on my performance. Jesus, you were treated as an outsider so that I could be brought in. Show me the altars that compete for my heart, and give

me the courage to tear them down instead of managing them. Holy Spirit, train my desires, correct my steps, and strengthen me when obedience is hard. When I am afraid of what looks stronger than me, remind me of what you have already done. I am chosen by grace, set apart for you, and secure in your victory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

At home this week

Deuteronomy 6 tells parents to talk about God's words at the table and on the road. Here is one question to ask at dinner this week, for kids of any age:

Does God love us because we are good?

Then read Deuteronomy 7:7-8 together and talk about the answer. God loves us because he loves us, not because we earned it. Ask what it feels like to be loved like that.

Before we gather again

Here are three things to carry into the week.

- Read Deuteronomy 7 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 in the group 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.

Leaders: after your meeting, tell us how this guide worked at loftcity.church/groups-feedback. Two questions, one minute.