

## STUDY 20

### Deuteronomy 8:6

**Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.**

Read the context: 8:1-20

Looking back at Deuteronomy 6:10-11, what was the land like that God was taking them into? What is God emphasizing and reminding them about repeatedly in those 2 verses (“which you . . .”)? According to the last clause of verse 11, what will be their situation in life after they are settled in the land?

Read Deuteronomy 8:7-9. What will the land be like that God is taking them into? In a word: ABUNDANCE!

Look at Deuteronomy 8:11-17. Like Deuteronomy 6:12, this passage gives us another strong warning: Beware!! List the things in 8:10, 12-13 that they will experience in the land God is bringing them into, the clauses that begin with “when...

What is the word for all of that? They will be very \_\_\_\_\_!

But that is not how they always were. Where had they come from? (Deut. 6:12 & 8:14) And what had they experienced since then, before entering this land of abundance? (Deut. 8:2-5, 15-16) In Deuteronomy 8:2 & 16 God repeats the 2 purposes He had for leading them into the wilderness and causing them to go through the trials they experienced. What were those 2 purposes?

It is humbling to be hungry and not able to provide for yourself. It is humbling to be so utterly and daily dependent. It was a test. What was God testing according to Deut. 8:2? Would they obey? What had they promised with their words several times over in Exodus 19:8 and Exodus 24:3, 7? But was it really in their *hearts*? It always comes down to this, doesn't it? God goes for the heart. That's where it counts.

What does Proverbs 4:23 say about the heart? What does Jesus say about the heart in Mark 7:21-23? The heart is the well-spring of all we think, say, and do. The heart is the seat of our affections and desires. Whatever is in the heart, that is what we will do.

What did God want the people to realize according to Deuteronomy 8:3? There's a spiritual dimension to our lives that cannot be filled or satisfied with physical prosperity! And even our physical prosperity comes from the gracious hand of God.

According to Deut. 8:14, what was the heart danger lurking in all the prosperity they would enjoy?

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And what 2 things would that cause them to do (Deut. 8:14 and 17)? It's interesting that both verses again use the word *heart*: "when your heart is lifted up;" "you will say in your heart." Out of the heart the mouth speaks what we really think. And we expose ourselves.

But what did they need to remember? (Deut. 8:18) Look back at the verbs in Deuteronomy 6:10-11: "the Lord your God \_\_\_\_\_ you into the land of which He \_\_\_\_\_ to your fathers... to \_\_\_\_\_ you...which you did \_\_\_\_\_ build,...you did \_\_\_\_\_ fill, ...you did \_\_\_\_\_ dig, you did \_\_\_\_\_ plant..." **God** gave them all their prosperity. **God** gives us power to get wealth. Any prosperity we enjoy comes from the hand of God; our ability to work comes from the hand of God, our health, our strength: the power to make money. Oh, may we never forget that!

Read Ezekiel 16:49. What were the sins of Israel and Judah according to that verse? In a future day God foresaw that their prosperity would lead to pride and forgetfulness, forgetfulness of God and where that prosperity came from. It also leads to idleness and self-indulgence. A further grievous step downward in this sin cycle is that with all their prosperity they would not help the poor. (As we've seen from earlier Fear of the Lord studies, caring for the poor is tightly linked with the fear of the Lord; this is close to God's heart.)

Hosea 13:6 expresses this same idea: Deuteronomy sounds the warning; Hosea decries the reality that had come to pass.

Cotton Mather, an influential New England Puritan minister wrote: "Religion hath brought forth prosperity, and the daughter destroyed the mother. There is a danger, lest the enchantments of this world make us forget our errand into the wilderness." Don't forget that this world is our wilderness; it is not our home, nor the Promised Land.

According to the last part of Deuteronomy 8:16, what was God's end desire or goal for the humbling and testing in the wilderness? This is always His aim: to do us good. Reread Deuteronomy 8:5. It is parental love that chastens, humbles, tests us – to see what is in our hearts. God knows what is there; it is we ourselves who don't realize what is really in our hearts, so He helps us to see it. It reveals our need for a Savior who alone can transform the heart.

Finally, read Proverbs 30:7-9. Can you pray these 2 prayers along with Agur (Prov. 30:1)?

Lord, remove the falsehood, the hypocrisy in my heart that might say I will fully obey You, when really I want to run after the things of this world; that says I honor You, when really I'm proud of all my accomplishments. Remove from me the lie of pride. Give me daily contentment with what You have given. Never give me too much prosperity; let me never forget You or deny You, or think that the strength to achieve and to gain has come from myself. Nor let me sink so low into hardship that I break Your commandments to fulfill my needs. Lord, by the power of the cross and the resurrection and the Holy Spirit within me, keep me from forgetting You; keep me in the fear of the Lord; keep me remembering that all I've accomplished and all I have, You have performed in and for me (Isa. 26:12).

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Spend a few minutes praying these things for your loved ones and friends.

How does the fear of the Lord keep us from pride? How does it shield us from forgetting and help us to remember? Walking in the fear of the Lord is very purposeful, isn't it? It is intended to keep us reflective. And in that reflection we must continually take ourselves back to who we were without Christ, before He reached down to save us and deliver us from sin. We need to reflect on the times of chastening He has taken us through and remember the lessons learned. We must also continually lift up our hearts in thanksgiving for the things we've been enabled to accomplish and the things we've been enabled to acquire. Spend some time in reflection and humble thanksgiving.

Add to your Fear of the Lord list what you have learned from this verse study.