

## Study Guide for Deuteronomy 12-15

--- See the last page of this handout (following the text) for additional instructions as needed.

--- Text is from the New American Standard Bible (1995)

1. **Read Deuteronomy 12-15** and mark each of the following words or phrases in some distinctive way –
  - **the land** -- where it refers to **the land** that the LORD is giving to Israel. Mark in the same way, any pronouns that refer to that land (such as **it** or **which**) **The land** will continue to be a key word throughout Deuteronomy.
  - **the LORD your God** (or **the LORD our God** or pronouns such as **He** that refer to **the LORD our God**)
  - **before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God will choose** -- or any part of that phrase or any similar wording. Mark also the pronoun **there** when it refers to **the place which the LORD your God will choose**.
  - Words that signal any of the three kinds of why-phrases. (See the Additional Instructions after the text for reminders about each of these. Also, see examples in the text below.)
    - **for, because, or since**
    - **that, so that, in order that**
    - **therefore**
  - Any words that signal that a comparison is being made. (See Additional Instructions and examples below)
    - **as, just as, like, also,**
    - **but, yet, however,**
2. **Read Deuteronomy 12 again** and do the following –
  - Mark the phrase **within your gates** in some distinctive way
  - Decide where the paragraph divisions should be and summarize each paragraph in 25 words or less.
  - Give this chapter a title. Try to do this in 10 words or less. Try to use some exact words from the text, but feel free to use others words or phrases such as “Instructions about . . .” or “Warnings about . . .”
3. **Read Deuteronomy 13 again** and do the following –
  - Mark the phrase, **go after other gods which you have not known** (or similar wording)
  - Decide where the paragraph divisions should be and summarize each paragraph in 25 words or less
  - Give this chapter a title in 10 words or less, as you did with chapter 12
4. **Read Deuteronomy 14 again** and do the following –
  - Mark the phrase **you are a holy people to the LORD your God** in some distinctive way
  - Mark the word **tithe** (also any pronouns such as **it**) in some distinctive way
  - Decide where the paragraph divisions should be and summarize each paragraph in 25 words or less
  - Give this chapter a title in 10 words or less, as you have done previously
5. **Read Deuteronomy 15 again** and do the following –
  - Mark the following words or phrases in some distinctive way
    - **remission**
    - **poor** or **poor man** or **poor brother** (or any pronouns referring to the **poor** such as **he** or **him**)
    - **kinsman** (or any pronouns referring to the **kinsman** such as **he** or **him**)
    - **firstborn** (or any pronouns referring to the **firstborn** such as **he** or **him**)
  - Decide where the paragraph divisions should be and summarize each paragraph in 25 words or less
  - Give this chapter a title in 10 words or less

## Deuteronomy 12

1 “These are the statutes and the judgments which you shall carefully observe in the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess as long as you live on the earth.

2 You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree.

3 You shall tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and burn their Asherim with fire, and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods and obliterate their name from that place.

4 You shall not act like this toward the Lord your God.

5 **But** you shall seek the Lord at the place which the Lord your God will choose from all your tribes, to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come.

6 There you shall bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the contribution of your hand, your votive offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock.

7 There also you and your households shall eat before the Lord your God, and rejoice in all your undertakings in which the Lord your God has blessed you.

8 “You shall not do at all what we are doing here today, every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes;

9 for you have not as yet come to the resting place and the inheritance which the Lord your God is giving you.

10 When you cross the Jordan and live in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies around you so that you live in security,

11 then it shall come about that the place in which the Lord your God will choose for His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution of your hand, and all your choice votive offerings which you will vow to the Lord.

12 And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion or inheritance with you.

13 “Be careful that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every cultic place you see,

14 but in the place which the Lord chooses in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.

15 “However, you may slaughter and eat meat within any of your gates, whatever you desire, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle and the deer.

16 Only you shall not eat the blood; you are to pour it out on the ground like water.

17 You are not allowed to eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or new wine or oil, or the firstborn of your herd or flock, or any of your votive offerings which you vow, or your freewill offerings, or the contribution of your hand.

18 But you shall eat them before the Lord your God in the place which the Lord your God will choose, you and your son and daughter, and your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God in all your undertakings.

Israel

Seek the LORD  
at the place He  
chooses

VS.

The nations that

Israel dispossesses  
Serve their gods on the  
high mountains


Why were the  
Israelites not to eat  
the blood?

19 Be careful that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land.

20 "When the Lord your God extends your border as He has promised you, and you say, 'I will eat meat,' because you desire to eat meat, then you may eat meat, whatever you desire.

21 If the place which the Lord your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, then you may slaughter of your herd and flock which the Lord has given you, as I have commanded you; and you may eat within your gates whatever you desire.

22 Just as a gazelle or a deer is eaten, so you will eat it; the unclean and the clean alike may eat of it.

23 Only be sure not to eat the blood,  for the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life with the flesh.

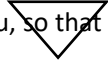
24 You shall not eat it; you shall pour it out on the ground like water.

25 You shall not eat it, so that it may be well with you and your sons after you, for you will be doing what is right in the sight of the Lord.

26 Only your holy things which you may have and your votive offerings, you shall take and go to the place which the Lord chooses.

Why should the  
Israelites listen to  
Moses' commands?

27 And you shall offer your burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, on the altar of the Lord your God; and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of the Lord your God, and you shall eat the flesh.

28 "Be careful to listen to all these words which I command you,  so that it may be well with you and your sons after you forever, for you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God.

29 "When the Lord your God cuts off before you the nations which you are going in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land,

30 beware that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?'

31 You shall not behave thus toward the Lord your God, for every abominable act which the Lord hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

32 "Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it.

## DEALING WITH THOSE WHO SUGGEST GOING AFTER OTHER GODS

### Deuteronomy 13

Any prophet who suggested going after other gods was to be put to death even if his signs and wonders came true.

1 "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder,

2 and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,'

3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

4 You shall follow the Lord your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him.

5 But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the Lord your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you.

6 "If your brother, your mother's son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is as your own soul, entice you secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods' (whom neither you nor your fathers have known,

7 of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end), 8 you shall not yield to him or listen to him; and your eye shall not pity him, nor shall you spare or conceal him.

9 But you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

10 So you shall stone him to death because he has sought to seduce you from the Lord your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

11 Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such a wicked thing among you.

12 "If you hear in one of your cities, which the Lord your God is giving you to live in, anyone saying that

13 some worthless men have gone out from among you and have seduced the inhabitants of their city, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods' (whom you have not known),

14 then you shall investigate and search out and inquire thoroughly. If it is true and the matter established that this abomination has been done among you,

15 you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying it and all that is in it and its cattle with the edge of the sword.

16 Then you shall gather all its booty into the middle of its open square and burn the city and all its booty with fire as a whole burnt offering to the Lord your God; and it shall be a ruin forever. It shall never be rebuilt.

17 Nothing from that which is put under the ban shall cling to your hand, in order that the Lord may turn

from His burning anger and show mercy to you, and have compassion on you and make you increase. just as

He has sworn to your fathers,

18 if you will listen to the voice of the Lord your God, keeping all His commandments which I am commanding you today, and doing what is right in the sight of the Lord your God.

## Deuteronomy 14

1 "You are the sons of the Lord your God; you shall not cut yourselves nor shave your forehead for the sake of the dead.

2 For you are a holy people to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

3 "You shall not eat any detestable thing.

turn from His burning  
anger, show mercy,  
have compassion, and  
make you increase

||

What God swore  
to their fathers  
What God will do

4 These are the animals which you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat,  
5 the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope and the mountain sheep.  
6 Any animal that divides the hoof and has the hoof split in two and chews the cud, among the animals, that  
you may eat.  
7 Nevertheless, you are not to eat of these among those which chew the cud, or among those that divide the  
hoof in two: the camel and the rabbit and the shaphan, for though they chew the cud, they do not divide the  
hoof; they are unclean for you.  
8 The pig, because it divides the hoof but does not chew the cud, it is unclean for you. You shall not eat any of  
their flesh nor touch their carcasses.  
9 "These you may eat of all that are in water: anything that has fins and scales you may eat,  
10 but anything that does not have fins and scales you shall not eat; it is unclean for you.  
11 "You may eat any clean bird.  
12 But these are the ones which you shall not eat: the eagle and the vulture and the buzzard,  
13 and the red kite, the falcon, and the kite in their kinds,  
14 and every raven in its kind,  
15 and the ostrich, the owl, the sea gull, and the hawk in their kinds,  
16 the little owl, the great owl, the white owl,  
17 the pelican, the carrion vulture, the cormorant,  
18 the stork, and the heron in their kinds, and the hoopoe and the bat.  
19 And all the teeming life with wings are unclean to you; they shall not be eaten.  
20 You may eat any clean bird.  
21 "You shall not eat anything which dies of itself. You may give it to the alien who is in your town, so that he  
may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner, for you are a holy people to the Lord your God. You shall not boil a  
young goat in its mother's milk.  
22 "You shall surely tithe all the produce from what you sow, which comes out of the field every year.  
23 You shall eat in the presence of the Lord your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the  
tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and your flock, so that you  
may learn to fear the Lord your God always.  
24 If the distance is so great for you that you are not able to bring the tithe, since the place where  
the Lord your God chooses to set His name is too far away from you when the Lord your God blesses you,  
25 then you shall exchange it for money, and bind the money in your hand and go to the place which  
the Lord your God chooses.  
26 You may spend the money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or  
whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the Lord your God and rejoice, you and  
your household.  
27 Also you shall not neglect the Levite who is in your town, for he has no portion or inheritance among you.

28 "At the end of every third year you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in that year, and shall deposit it in your town.

29 The Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, in order that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

## **Deuteronomy 15**

1 "At the end of every seven years you shall grant a remission of debts.

2 This is the manner of remission: every creditor shall release what he has loaned to his neighbor; he shall not exact it of his neighbor and his brother, because the Lord's remission has been proclaimed.

3 From a foreigner you may exact it, but your hand shall release whatever of yours is with your brother.

4 However, there will be no poor among you, since the Lord will surely bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess,

5 if only you listen obediently to the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all this commandment which I am commanding you today.

6 For the Lord your God will bless you as He has promised you, and you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow; and you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you.

7 "If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother;

8 but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks.

9 Beware that there is no base thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of remission, is near,' and your eye is hostile toward your poor brother, and you give him nothing; then he may cry to the Lord against you, and it will be a sin in you.

10 You shall generously give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all your undertakings.

11 For the poor will never cease to be in the land, therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land.'

12 "If your kinsman, a Hebrew man or woman, is sold to you, then he shall serve you six years, but in the seventh year you shall set him free.

13 When you set him free, you shall not send him away empty-handed.

14 You shall furnish him liberally from your flock and from your threshing floor and from your wine vat; you shall give to him as the Lord your God has blessed you.

15 You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today.

16 It shall come about if he says to you, 'I will not go out from you,' because he loves you and your household, since he fares well with you;

17 then you shall take an awl and pierce it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also you shall do likewise to your maidservant.

18 "It shall not seem hard to you when you set him free, for he has given you six years with double the service of a hired man; so the Lord your God will bless you in whatever you do.

19 "You shall consecrate to the Lord your God all the firstborn males that are born of your herd and of your flock; you shall not work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock.

20 You and your household shall eat it every year before the Lord your God in the place which the Lord chooses.

21 But if it has any defect, such as lameness or blindness, or any serious defect, you shall not sacrifice it to the Lord your God.

22 You shall eat it within your gates; the unclean and the clean alike may eat it, as a gazelle or a deer.

23 Only you shall not eat its blood; you are to pour it out on the ground like water.

## Additional Instructions

Good Bible study involves three steps:

1. Careful and detailed observation of exactly what the text says.
2. Accurate interpretation of what the text means based on a thorough observation of the text as well as an understanding of the Bible as a whole and of the culture in which it was written. The goal in this step is to determine what the author meant when he spoke or wrote the words that have been preserved. *The text can't mean what it never meant.*
3. Appropriate application of the text to one's personal life based on careful observation and accurate interpretation.

Careful observation generally leads to one interpretation but many possible applications.

The following study questions are designed to assist you with the first step only: observation. As you work through the questions provided, you are encouraged to mark up the text that follows. Good Bible study inevitably involves reading a passage more than once. Marking up the text enables you to build on what you learn with each successive reading.

Be creative when marking key words or phrases. Key words or phrases could simply be underlined or double-underlined or circled or boxed with a pen. Or you could be colorful and use highlighters or colored pencils. Symbols above the words work also. Do whatever suits your fancy! The idea is just to make the words stand out so that when you read the passage a second time you will notice that particular word again and begin to see its significance within the passage.

Keep in mind that the goal of observation questions or exercises is simply to spend time handling the text. We want to turn it over, view it from every possible angle, hold it at arm's length, and also examine the details, sort of like what a geologist would do upon picking up a rock for the first time. The more we handle the text, without specifically trying to decide what it means, the better prepared we will be to interpret it and apply it when the time comes to do that. Observation can seem tedious at first: sometimes it may even feel like busy work, but rest assured – its rewards are great!!

### Signal words

**for** -- sometimes signals that a why-question is about to be answered. When you see the word **for**, try substituting the word because and see if the result makes sense. If it does, mark that word in some distinctive way and write the why-question that is being answered in the margin to the left. **For**-phrases usually explain the motive behind the main action. The why-phrase always follows the word **for**.

**that, so that** -- can also introduce a why-phrase but substituting the word because usually doesn't work. Try substituting the phrase in order that and see if the result makes sense. If it does, mark that word in some distinctive way and write the why-question that is being answered in the margin to the left. **That**-phrases usually tell what will be the result of the main action. Again, the why-phrase always follows the word **that**.

**Therefore** -- typically signals another kind of why-phrase. However, this time the why-phrase is typically before the word **therefore**. It could be immediately before or it could be many verses back! The phrase that follows the word **therefore** is typically a statement-of-fact or a command. The reason why the writer can make this statement or give the command is because of something he just said. The idea is . . . "because of A, **therefore** B." When you see the word **therefore** it's important to identify A and B and mark them in some way so that you will be reminded of the connection each time you read the passage.

**but, yet, however, only** – these words often signal that a contrast is being made; two things are being compared and the two things are different in some way. In the margin beside each occurrence of any of these words, note the two things that are being compared and what is different about them.



**as, just as, like, so, or also** – these words often signal that the writer is comparing two things that are similar in some way. In the margin beside each occurrence of any of these words note the two things that are being compared and what is the same about them. When **as** or **just as** are used in a question, they can actually seem to point to a contrast rather than a comparison! The text seems to be saying “Is there any B that is really like A? If the answer is “no,” then the two things are actually being contrasted! If you find places where this seems to be true, feel free to mark the **as** or **just as** in the same way that you marked **but**.

### **Paragraph summaries**

Draw a line between verses where a new topic is introduced. Feel free to consult the paragraph divisions in your own personal Bible as a starting place, but don't be bound by what you find there. Try to summarize each paragraph in 25 words or less using exact words from the text as much as possible. If there are any key repeated words in a particular paragraph, try to include one or more of them in your summary statement.