



### Additional Resources related to this week's message:

#### Excerpt from Doug's message:

*I want to invite each of you to honestly ask the question, "When it comes to the culture around me, am I a thermostat or a thermometer? Do I set the climate or only reflect it?" Let me just put it like this: If WE as individuals ... and as a church ... want to experience God's blessing and influence ... when it comes to the culture around us, we will be more like thermostats... than thermometers.*

*In Deuteronomy 7, just as the people are about to enter into a whole new area — this environment of greater blessing and impact — God warns the people that there will be external influences in that new environment that will **THREATEN** their ability to actually experience the blessing God desires.*

*God describes [all the nations] this way: "... seven nations larger and stronger than you." These seven nations are the ancient enemies of God's people, going back to Abraham. They represent the culture that is always around God's people ... threatening to dilute their spiritual life. And then, as God continues, He gives the people 3 ways to make sure they are not negatively influenced by the new culture they enter.*

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#### Excerpt from *The Old Testament Survey Series: The Pentateuch*

Moses next attempts to get his audience to look upward, to reflect on their great God. They needed to know that the Lord was leading them and testing them as they prepared for entrance into Canaan.

##### Leading of the Lord (Dt 7:1–26)

The key to successful effort on the part of God's people is the assurance that the Lord is leading. That assurance is possible through reflection on the word and works of God. Moses points out seven key facts which Israel needed to remember.

1. Israel needed to remember who the enemy was. The seven mighty nations of Canaan were to be totally destroyed. No treaty was to be made with them. No intermarriage was to take place with them. Fraternization with these pagans would lead to religious apostasy, which in turn would arouse the wrath of God. All pagan paraphernalia was to be destroyed (7:1–5).
2. Israel needed to remember her own identity. This nation was (1) holy to Yahweh, (2) chosen out of all people, (3) God's treasured possession, (4) the object of God's love, (5) the beneficiary of the divine oath, (6) the object of God's deliverance, and (7) the servant of the only true God (7:6–8).
3. Israel needed to remember her God. He is faithful to his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him. On the other hand, he utterly destroys all those who hate him (7:9–11).
4. Israel needed to remember the key to blessing. Faithful execution of God's commands against the Canaanites would result in blessing: (1) population growth, (2) agricultural abundance, and (3) health (7:12–16).
5. Israel needed to remember the power of God. They would not be afraid to face the Canaanites if (1) they recalled what God had done to Pharaoh and all Egypt; (2) they understood that God would send before them the "hornet," a metaphor for the fear of Israel; and (3) they realized that their awesome and great God was actually in their midst (7:17–21).
6. Israel needed to remember the plan of God. He would drive out the seven nations of Canaan "little by little" lest the land be uninhabited and overrun by wild beasts. Nonetheless, the Lord would throw their enemies into utter confusion until they were destroyed. No king of Canaan would be able to stand before them (7:22–24).
7. Israel needed to remember the command of God. No pagan image was to be spared. These detestable objects would bring destruction upon any house where they might be found (7:25–26).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, J. E. (1993). *The Pentateuch* (2nd ed.). Old Testament Survey Series (Dt 7:1–26). Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co.

## HomeGroup Questions (Geoff's notes in blue)

Week 7 | Deuteronomy 7:1-26 | Be a Thermostat (not Thermometer)

1. What are some warnings that you were repeatedly given as you were growing up?
2. The Lord repeatedly reminds Israel to completely drive out their enemies, to not intermarry and to remove all counterfeit gods. Why? What threats do they pose?
3. What kinds of blessings and benefits (vv. 12-16) will result from keeping God's instructions?
4. How does this passage instruct us regarding the sin and "the enemies" in our lives? We need to always be aware and always be eradicating the sin and the threats to fully trusting and following the Lord in our lives. Sometimes it's easy to fall into an attitude of sin management and not understand the real threats to our spiritual lives.
5. Have you ever witnessed the destructive consequences of letting sin hang around? In what ways? Encourage your group not to use this as an opportunity to gossip but to talk about the truth that sin has real consequences.
6. What spiritual principles does this passage provide to guide us in our struggle with sin? There are many. I see things like don't let sin hang around, rely on God's strength, understand that this is often a process in our lives that takes time, bad company corrupts good character, etc.
7. The Israelites no doubt felt overwhelmed and outmatched by their enemies. The Lord constantly is reminding them that He is a faithful God and they are to trust in His power and promise. In what ways have you seen God come through for you? In what aspect of your life do you need to be reminded of His strength and faithfulness?
8. Looking back on this series "Lessons Learned In The Desert," what has resonated with you? In what ways has God spoken into your life through these chapters of Deuteronomy? The five parts of this series so far...Hold Fast to God's Word, Let God Be God, Cooperate With His Commandments, Live Your Faith Forward, Be A Thermostat.

Pray for one another.

**GVC Life:** We are so eager to have our "God's Faithfulness Sunday" on June 2, by sharing personal stories about God's faithfulness through GVC in our current location at each our services. Please share with your group about this special Sunday and encourage them to consider sharing a story about their personal experiences through GVC and how God has shown His faithfulness individually. We're eager to share these stories and to have our final "good byes" to this current building to prepare us to move along into our new location.