

Series: God & Man & Woman #755

Title: Genesis 2.16-17, Part 2

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world! It is Friday and we want to finish the week together *strong*. The purpose of this ministry is to understand who God is. Our source for teaching us the *truth* about God is the Bible. I believe the Bible to be God's holy, inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word. When we open the Scriptures we are literally reading and hearing *God* speak to us. There is no other book like this. *None*. The Bible is our great treasure. Let us never be bored with it, tire of it, ignore it, or disassociate ourselves from it. And let us not be lazy with the Bible, even at the end of a week (on a Friday) when we may be very tired indeed.

So that you get used to reading in the Bible (or if you are already someone who knows God's Word very well) I left you with a friendly, short assignment last time. I am sure you did it. I believe in you, friends! And this was to read Genesis chapter 2, verses 16 and 17 alongside Deuteronomy chapter 30, verses 15-20. Both Genesis and Deuteronomy belong to the Pentateuch (the first five Books of the Old Testament) – all written, I believe, by Moses. Pentateuch means “five scrolls,” and we are in the first scroll, Genesis, and chapter 2.

And why would we read Deuteronomy 30 in light of Genesis 2? Let me remind you why and then we will look at these two great texts together. Our purpose is to see the consistency of God as He joins together living in a good land with keeping His commandments. The garden in Eden was a good land, complete with everything man and woman needed, but for the first people to live in that good land meant they needed to keep the command of God. We want to find a similar command from God to His people elsewhere and for this we turn to Deuteronomy chapter 30!

So, let me start with Genesis 2.16 and 17. If you have your Bible, follow along.

“¹⁶ The Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.’ And now let me read the longer text, Deuteronomy 30.15-20. Again, if you've got your Bible open, turn or scroll there along with me. Genesis, then Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy has 34 chapters, so this is near the end. Are you there? I am reading now the Word of God to you in Deuteronomy 30, beginning in verse 15.

¹⁵ “See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; ¹⁶ in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the Lord your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it.

I am reading in Deuteronomy 30 and now at verse 17 ...

¹⁷ But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong *your* days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, ²⁰ by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”

Who is commanding the Israelites here? God is. What I have just read to you is the voice of holy God via Moses. Like in Genesis 2 when God spoke to the man, commanding him, here too God speaks to His people (the ancient Israelites) commanding them. That is the first similarity between these texts. Verse 16: God says, **“I command you today... (a little further along) to keep [God's] commandments...”** God is *The Commanding* God. And God is consistently this. God commands in Genesis and God commands in Deuteronomy. I hope you see this in your Bible.

The second similarity is the blessing of *land*. God is *The* God of land. Land is of vital importance in the Bible. Have you ever noticed this? And the land of Israel is the key piece of property. It still is! Let's find land in Deuteronomy 30. Verse 16 again: **"that the Lord your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it."** Ah, the land they were entering. At this point in the Bible the Jews were camping on the precipice of entering the Promised Land. Listen again to verse 20: **"...that you may live in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."** The land here is the piece of real estate God promised long ago to the forefathers of these people. God makes a promise and God keeps a promise. The promises of God are always *sure*! And this promise deals with land.

We have the blessing of land in Deuteronomy 30 and also in Genesis 2.16 and 17. In Genesis 2 the land is the garden in Eden that we have been talking about for several weeks. (The garden in Eden and the Promised Land. Land.) Both passages are about God's blessing of land. And the question is how to get the land and how to stay in the land once it is given. As to how to get it, the answer is clear: *trust* God. God provided the garden in Eden. We've seen how He did that. And God will provide the Promised Land. The Bible tells us how God does that, as well, but we do not have time to explore this today.

As to how to stay in the land, that is the third similarity between Genesis 2 and Deuteronomy 30 we want to discuss. And the answer is obeying God's command! To stay in the land that God provides, required obeying the command of God. This speaks directly to our purpose in finding the consistency of God as He joins together living in a good land with keeping His commandments.

So, in Genesis 2.16 we have the land of Eden, and this command of God, **"...¹⁷ from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."**

And let's look again at Deuteronomy 30 (I hope that you are following along closely). Listen to *this*. I am going back to Deuteronomy 30, verses 17 and 18, **"¹⁷ But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land..."** Wow! How similar to what God said to Adam in Genesis 2.17. God is consistent in this command and the consequence that disobedience to the command brings.

In Genesis 2 God says if Adam eats of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he will surely die. That is, if Adam disobeys God's command then Adam will die. And we will see how this means Adam will be forced out of the land of Eden. In Deuteronomy 30 God says if the Israelites will not obey Him, then they will surely perish. They will die. And they will, therefore, lose the land. They will be forced out of this prosperous land. They will move from *life* to *death*, just like the first man.

This emphasis on obeying the command of God is reiterated beautifully in Deuteronomy 30, verse 20. I am reading Deuteronomy 30, verse 20, **"...by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers..."** Do you see (do you hear) the clear link between living in a good land with keeping God's commandments?

Let me give you again the three similarities we have highlighted between Genesis 2 and Deuteronomy 30. I want to make sure you get these. And I know many of you do take down notes.

The first similarity is that God gives commands. God commanded Adam (the first man) and God commanded the Israelites.

The second similarity is the blessing of *land*. God gave Adam the land of the garden in Eden. God gave the Israelites the Promised Land.

The third similarity is obedience. To stay in the land God has given Adam and the Israelites both must obey the command of God. When God gave His commands He specifically linked obedience to *life* in the *land*.

And so what? With just a minute left, let me ask the application question. What does all this have to do with you and me? What we have read today can be applied in multiple ways. We should all ask how the Spirit of the Living God wants to apply this to each of our lives. But for me, what I ask myself is this: do I trust God when He tells me what is good for me? Do I trust God when He tells me what is bad for me? Clearly, it was good that the first man and woman *not* eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It was bad if they did. Likewise, when God commands me do I trust that what He commands is *good* for me?

I have a very mixed record. Sometimes I trust God's commands as good for me, and I obey. Sometimes I do not. I persist in disobedience. And I require God's forgiveness for my disobedience. What about you? We'll talk more about this on Monday right here on God Is!

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