

Devotion 8:

Our Father Gives Us All Good Things

Deut. 1--33

The book of Deuteronomy is the greatest pre-game speech of all time. Moses is exhorting his fellow Israelites prior to their entering the Promised Land. He was unable to enter with them due to his striking a rock rather than obeying God's command and simply speaking to it for water to gush forth and thereby honor God.

When seen from one angle, most of the book is a repeat of the laws that God had given to Moses. When seen from another angle, however, most of the book is a strong restatement that *“every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights.”* (James 1:17)

Consider these observations. Over 300 times the phrase *“Lord our God”* is used in these 33 chapters. Over 90 times Moses reminds the Israelites of what God has done or will do for them. I know that many people think that the Old Testament shows one side of God, His stern and law-oriented side, while the New Testament shows His softer side, His Gospel side. After reading Deuteronomy and looking for characteristics of our Father in it though, I see His good gifts all over the place. And Moses is very intentional about reminding the Israelites of this very fact. The book even ends with a song of praise to God. (32)

This might be a point too easily overlooked by us today. Stop and think about it: what do you have that you did not receive? What do you have that you did not receive from our Father? I Thessalonians 5:18 urges us to *“give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for (us) in Christ Jesus.”* What percentage of your prayers is asking for something, and what percentage is thanking for what you have already been given? I believe Luther was right when he said that parents and God are never sufficiently thanked.

In America we are raised to value self-reliance, independence, and self-sufficiency. We are taught to believe that we can raise ourselves by our own bootstraps, so to speak. We praise the “self-made” millionaires. But let's take a look at Deut. 8:17-18:

“You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.”

None of us have done anything that was not given to us by our heavenly Father.

A beautiful word picture is given by Moses in Deut. 1:31 when he reminds the Israelites: *“There you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place.”*

A fascinating passage is found at the end of Moses' life in Deut. 31:16:

“And the Lord said to Moses: ‘You are going to rest with your fathers, and these people will soon prostitute themselves to the foreign gods of the land they are entering. They will forsake me and break the covenant I made with them.’”

It fascinates me because God will continue to give good gifts to His children. He will help them overtake most of the Promised Land. He will keep every promise He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He will send a Savior from the tribe of Judah. And He will do all this knowing in advance that His children are an ungrateful and idolatrous bunch. True, He will send hardships to discipline them. But He will remain true to Himself and what He said to Moses about Himself in Exodus 34:6. It is a passage repeated quite frequently throughout the Bible:

“The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin. Yet, he does not leave the guilty unpunished.”

Stop and count the good blessings our Father has given you today out of His compassion, faithfulness, love, and grace.