

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible- Presbyterian
Church, 10 Downing St.
Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

**DHW BIBLE CLASS
LESSON 4**

**DEUTERONOMY
CHAPTERS 5 & 6**

INTRODUCTION

In his first address to the Israelites, Moses recalled what God had done for His people (Chapters 1-4). He reminded them of God's mercy and goodness and also the basic principles of God's Laws (Chapters 5-6) in the Ten Commandments or the Decalogue. It is only after laying this all important foundation that he applies God's commandments to specific areas of the people's lives. Similarly, unless we know the Ten Commandments of God which reveals God's standard of holiness, we would not understand why and how we should relate to God and to our neighbours in our daily living. The commandments are given for the good of His people, so that they might live and walk rightly before the LORD God (6:24-25). In his teaching of the commandments to the people, Moses focused on three things: (1) to learn, (2) to remember and (3) to do the commandments. Moses exhorted all Israel to honour, love, declare, remember, serve and trust the LORD.

OUTLINE

A. Moses Emphasised the Present Application of the Covenant Made at Sinai (5:1-5)

1. The call to Israel to learn, keep and do the laws of God (5:1).
2. The LORD God had made a covenant with them at Horeb (5:2-5).

B. God's Way of Life for Israel Expressed in the Ten Commandments (5:6-21)

1. The reminder that the LORD God delivered Israel out of their bondage in Egypt (5:6).
2. The First Commandment: They shall have no other gods beside the LORD (5:7).
3. The Second Commandment: They shall not make nor worship any graven image (5:8-10). The promise of mercy to all those who love God and keep His commandments (5:10).
4. The Third Commandment: They shall not take the name of God in vain (5:11).
5. The Fourth Commandment: They must keep the Sabbath day holy unto the LORD (5:12-15).
 - a) It was the LORD'S commandment (5:12).
 - b) Six days they should work (5:13).
 - c) The seventh day they should rest (5:14).
 - d) The motivation to keep the Sabbath (5:15).
6. The Fifth Commandment:
 - a) They must honour their parents.

- b) The promise of long life (5:16).
- 7. The Sixth Commandment: They must not kill (5:17).
- 8. The Seventh Commandment: They must not commit adultery (5:18).
- 9. The Eighth Commandment: They must not steal (5:19).
- 10. The Ninth Commandment: They must not bear false witness against their neighbours (5:20).
- 11. The Tenth Commandment: They must not covet their neighbour's wife or possessions (5:21).

C. Moses' Role as a Mediator was Established (5:22-33)

- 1. The LORD wrote the Ten Commandments on two tables of stone and gave them to Israel at Mount Sinai (5:22-23).
- 2. The Israelites saw the glory and greatness of God (5:24-26).
- 3. The children of Israel pledged to do all that the LORD told commanded through Moses (5:27).
- 4. The LORD heard their words and responded positively (5:28-30).
- 5. The LORD established Moses as His mediator between Him and Israel (5:31).
- 6. The LORD required, through Moses, that the children of Israel walk in the ways of the LORD uncompromisingly (5:32-33).

D. The Crowning Commandment and Israel's Primary Duty (6:1-9).

- 1. Israel was called to fear the LORD God (6:1-3).

- a) Israel was to obey the commandments of God (6:1-2a).
- b) Israel was promised long life, prosperity, and power as a nation if she obeyed the LORD (6:2b-3).
- 2. Israel was to understand that the LORD God is one LORD and that Israel should love Him wholeheartedly (6:4-5).
- 3. Israel was entrusted to keep and teach the Law of God (6:6-9).
 - a) They must diligently teach their children the Law of God in every aspect of their lives (6:7).
 - b) They must wear the laws of God on their arm and forehead (6:8).
 - c) They must write the laws on the door posts of their houses (6:9).

E. The Need to Remember and Respond Appropriately to God's Goodness and Greatness (6:10-25)

- 1. Israel would enter and settle in the land which God had promised them, and they would prosper (6:10-11).
- 2. Israel must not forget the LORD who delivered them from bondage in Egypt (6:12).
- 3. Israel ought to fear the LORD and serve Him only (6:13-15).
 - a) They should swear in His Name (6:13b).
 - b) They should not worship the gods of other nations (6:14).
 - c) They must remember that the LORD their God is a jealous God, and not incur His anger (6:15).

4. Israel must not tempt the LORD God as they had done in Massah (6:16).
5. Israel must diligently keep the commandments, testimonies, and statutes of God (6:17-23).
 - a) It would be well with them if they obey the LORD (6:18).
 - b) The LORD promised to cast out their enemies (6:19).
 - c) They should explain the commandments, judgements, testimonies and statutes to their children (6:20-23).
6. Israel's well being as a nation was dependent on their fear of the LORD God and obedience to Him (6:24-25).

COMMENTARY

In his opening words, Moses called on the people to "hear" the commandments of God so that they might learn, keep and do them. The meaning of the word to "hear" does not mean casual listening. It means to understand what is being said, to take heed, obey and do.

Moses reminded them of the covenant which God made at Mount Sinai 38 years ago. In the midst of the fire, God gave them the Ten Commandments. In case they might harbour the idea that the covenant did not apply to them, Moses told them that the LORD did not make the covenant with their fathers who had passed away, but with them who were alive. God would keep His covenant and in turn they were bound by the covenant.

Moses reiterated that the LORD (YAHWEH) brought them out of bondage in Egypt. It was an act of

grace and mercy on the part of God. The commandments were given to them who were already redeemed from their bondage in Egypt, in order that they may express their love for God and fellowship with Him (5:6).

The *first commandment* calls on all Israel to worship only the LORD their God and to have no other gods before Him (5:7). God must dominate every aspect of their lives.

The **second commandment** stipulates that they must not make any graven image. Many devout people have misinterpreted this commandment to mean that God forbids sculpturing, painting, and drawings for decoration and illustration. God is not against such things. God ordered the Israelites to make images of angels in the construction of the Tabernacle. God told Moses to make the brazen serpent. What God is against is the making of images *for worship and idolatry*. His people must not bow before any icons in worship.

The **third commandment** warns the people not to use the name of God in vain. Our Lord Jesus Christ taught us to pray saying, "Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name." We must not use God's name to manipulate others or use such exclamations as, "O my God!" or "O Jesus!" Saying things about God that we do not mean is also using the name of God in vain. God sees the heart. When we make a vow or a promise and break it, it is also using the name of God in vain. We must be very careful not to use God's name to support our ambitions. Divorce is a clear example of taking God's name in vain.

The **fourth commandment** requires that one day in a week, we, our family members, servants, animals and guests must rest. God

rested on the seventh day after His creative works in six days. It was not because He was physically tired. God rested on the seventh day to look at His creation which, in His own Words, was “good”. In like manner, the Sabbath is for us to reflect on the goodness and greatness of God over the past six days, and praise, thank, adore and worship Him. The early Christians make the first day of the week – the day of Christ’s resurrection – a day of rest and worship. God sees our need to be physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually refreshed, re-orientated and recharged for the next six days! These first four commandments focus on our relationship with God. It must not be a legalistic observance of a list of do’s and don’ts made up arbitrarily by the leader of the group.

The fifth to the tenth commandments apply to man’s relationship with man. The **fifth commandment** exhorts man to honour his father and mother. Parents work to sustain and protect their children. They are also the guardians of their children’s spiritual life with the responsibility to teach them God’s laws. Believing parents are God’s representatives.

How about our parents who are non-believers? Do we respect and honour them? Yes, we must. God demands that His children give due respect and honour to their parents regardless of their behaviour, conduct or spiritual standing.

The **sixth commandment** demands that a person must not kill or murder another person. This commandment has been misunderstood to mean that all forms of life-taking are wrong. What is meant here is that it is wrong for a person to take the life of another by criminal intent, that is premeditated, or through negligence, or

manslaughter. A human life is precious in the sight of God, for man is made in the image of God. In particular, it is wrong and sinful to take a life through abortion, euthanasia and suicide. Abortion is to take the life of an unborn baby. Euthanasia is to take the life of a person in the name of mercy. Suicide is to take our own life. All three of these are murder.

The **seventh commandment** forbids any illicit sexual relationship. This sin has to do with unfaithfulness to one’s spouse. The marriage covenant made between a man and a woman is violated when unfaithfulness creeps in. It is a serious offence – God uses the marriage covenant to illustrate His covenant relationship with man. He is ever faithful to that covenant. Similarly He demands that we be ever faithful to our marriage vows. Proverbs 6:32-35 is a warning against committing adultery. This commandment does not preclude the sin of fornication. All sexual relationships outside of the bonds of marriage are utterly condemned and sinful in the eyes of God. The extent of this sin includes the lusting of the man’s eyes after a woman (cf. Mt. 15:27-28).

The **eighth commandment** condemns stealing. A person has the right to work, earn, save and own. The philosophy “what belongs to my neighbours also belongs to me, and I will take it” is wrong. Stealing can come in many forms – evading income tax; not paying enough for car parking; using office time for one’s own personal interests. The Christian is to render to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s (cf. Mt. 22:21).

The **ninth commandment** prohibits falsehood and the telling of lies. A society will be strong and

united if truth is upheld. The fabric of society is broken when promises, contracts in business or vows made are not honoured. The commandment also condemns slander which is lying about other people. As Christians, we should speak the truth in love. The Christian must let his yea be yea and his nay, be nay (cf. Mt. 5:37).

The **tenth commandment** disallows covetousness. While all the other commandments concerning human relationships relate to outward actions, this commandment deals with the inner motives of a person. It deals with the attitude of a person towards his neighbour. If this last commandment is kept, all the preceding nine commandments will never be broken. Every outward action has its seed in the heart. A person will not slander if he does not covet his neighbour's good reputation. He will not steal if he does not lust after the things which are not his. He will not commit adultery if he does not desire another person's wife.

God says that all these commandments are given for our own good. It is sad that man today rejects these absolutes from His Creator and exalts himself as wise. God promises that if we obey, we will live and prosper (6:1-3).

The glory and greatness of God motivated the people to call on Moses to mediate between God and them (5:22-27). God heard them and approved of it. Moses became a mediator between God and Israel. His task was to communicate the commandments of God to the people, to teach them and elicit their obedience.

Honour God

God desires that His people fear Him, keep all His commandments

(5:29), honour and revere Him through their obedience. If they do so, God promises that they and their children would be forever blessed.

Love God

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (6:4-5). Every Orthodox Jewish child, the moment he or she can speak, recites the words in verse 4: “Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD.” This is called the *Shema* (meaning “to hear”). The relationship of God's people with Him is founded on an implicit and uncompromising love for God. They love Him with their hearts – the seats of their mind, will, and emotions. They love Him with their souls – the centre of life and vitality. They love Him with their might and strength. The heart is pre-eminent for where the heart is, therein lies the treasure. Let us acknowledge the Lord our God and love Him with all our hearts, souls, and strength.

Declare God

The responsibility of God's people is to teach the laws of God to their children. God's laws should permeate every area of their lives. It is true that “Home is where life makes its mind.” The Orthodox Jews take 6:8-9 literally — they make small leather cases to contain Scripture verses (Exodus 13:1-16) and tie them to their right arm or their forehead. On the right-hand post of the entrance to their homes, they affix a metal or glass case which contains Deuteronomy 6:4-5; 11:13-20. A Jew before entering the home would kiss it. There is nothing wrong in practising this if it genuinely expresses the condition of their

hearts toward God as He has required of His people.

Remember God

When the people of God keep all His commandments, God will bless them. The Israelites kept God's commandments and claimed the Promised Land (6:10-11). One of the dangers of prosperity is forgetfulness. God warned Israel that in the midst of their blessing, they must not forget the LORD, who redeemed them from bondage in Egypt. This is a precious lesson for God's people. Indeed, God has blessed us with many spiritual and material things. Often when we enjoy these blessings, we tend to forget God the Giver. In contrast, during adversities we remember God and are closer to Him. Let us always remember to be grateful to God.

Serve God

The appropriate response in gratitude to God is to revere and serve Him (6:13-15). Nothing else should take pre-eminence in our lives. Anything or anybody that means more to us than God is an idol. God has revealed that He is a jealous God, and He abhors idolatry in our lives. He has redeemed us through His only Son the Lord Jesus Christ who died on the cross for us. He has the right as our God and Redeemer to demand from us complete obedience and servitude. It is indeed a privilege to be a servant and a slave of God.

Trust God

The people of God should not tempt God but should trust Him wholeheartedly (6:16-19). In Massah (Exodus 17:1-7), Moses did not trust God. Instead of speaking to the rock, he struck it.

To tempt the LORD also means to manipulate God's Word for one's own interests. When Satan challenged our Lord Jesus to throw Himself down and quoted the promise of God to protect Him, Jesus responded that man should not tempt or test God for his own interests. God exhorts us in these verses to diligently and faithfully keep His commandments, and to trust Him.

Witness God

When our children ask us the meaning of God's commandments, we must be ready to tell them (6:20-23). God placed an important responsibility and duty upon the Israelites to tell their children what God had done for them in Egypt, and how He had delivered them. They must always be ready to witness of the grace and mercy of God to them.

SUMMARY

These two chapters contain precious lessons for us today. Moses ended Chapter 6 by declaring that the commandments of God were for the good of the people, always. If they kept them, God will be pleased to preserve and protect them. The same words speak to us. If we keep God's commandments, it will go well with us and we will have life abundant. Worship no other gods but the LORD God, the one true and living God who has revealed Himself to us through Moses and the nation Israel as recorded in Holy Scriptures, the sixty six books of inspired writing which is able to make us wise unto salvation. Be grateful to Him by reflecting His goodness towards us, by going to church to praise and thank Him every Lord's Day (Sunday), and serving Him wholeheartedly. In fact, no sacrifice

on our part can ever be greater than what He has done and given to us and will give to us in future if we love Him, worship Him, be grateful to Him, and obey and serve Him wholeheartedly.
AMEN.

DAILY READING & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Deuteronomy 5:1-5;
Psalm 119:9-16

TUESDAY: Deuteronomy 5:6-21;
John 14:21; Galatians 5:22-26;
Romans 13:8-10

WEDNESDAY: Deuteronomy 5:22-33;
John 1:10-14; 1 Timothy 2:5

THURSDAY: Deuteronomy 6:1-9; 1
Corinthians 13:4-7; 2 Corinthians 3:1-3

FRIDAY: Deuteronomy 6:10-25;
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe the relationship between Moses, God, and the children of Israel in 5:1-5.

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2. What is the common feature in the first four commandments? What do they teach?

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3. What is the common factor in the last five commandments? What do they teach?

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4. Are the Ten Commandments just a list of "do's and don'ts"?

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5. How do you explain the latter part of 5:9?

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6. In what way can the children who honour their parents enjoy long life and goodness?

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7. What do 5:28-29 tell us about God's heart for His people?

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10. In what ways are verses 4 & 5 of Chapter 6 significant?

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8. Does 5:32-33 apply to us today?

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11. What does the verse following 6:4-5 say? How can we do it today?

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9. Write in one sentence the terms of the covenant between God and Israel?

12. Why do you think God commands us to teach our children the Word of God?

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13. What is the weakness that God points out? Why do we commit this sin?

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14. What is the attitude we display when we “tempt the Lord our God”?

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15. Can the fear of God be a positive influence in our lives? How?

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