

LIVING BY EVERY WORD THAT COMES FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD

PRAY

READ SCRIPTURE

Introduction: What Leads You To Life?

What guides your life and gives you life; makes you alive? Your career, your hobbies, your family, your dreams? How you answer this question is going to set a trajectory for your life. It will determine what you do, where you go, how you respond to pain and suffering, what you do with the money you make, and how you treat other people. It will determine your future (in this life and the next). Deuteronomy 8 verse 3 gives us the only answer that will actually deliver what it promises because it came from God.

Main Point and Overview of Context

Now the main point of Deuteronomy 8:2–4 is that God provides life; God sustains his people and gives them life. That is the point that Moses is trying to communicate. In verse 2, Moses tells the people to remember the whole way that God led them in the wilderness then the rest of verse 2 and verse 3 tell us what God was teaching them by leading them through the wilderness. And then verse 4 gives proof that what he is saying is true. Moses is saying, “God sustained you and gave you life in the wilderness. Here is some proof: your clothing did not wear out on you and your feet did not swell these forty years.” At this point, the people probably looked at their clothes and their feet and nodded their heads in agreement.

Now during this time in the wilderness, God’s provision taught the people two things: (1) what was in their hearts; their stubbornness and propensity disobey (verse 2) and (2) that they will live by trusting and obeying his word (verse 3).

Moses wants the people to remember the wilderness lessons because the people are about to leave the wilderness and go in and take possession of the Promised Land where they will no longer live in tents, move from place to place without a home, and depend on the supernatural provision of God for food. Listen to verse 7 of chapter 8:

For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. (Deut 8:7–9)

With the abundance of all these good things, it would be easy to forget about the wilderness. So Moses is preaching to them, reminding them of what God taught them in the wilderness. We are going to focus on verse 3 because verse 3 is the lesson that Moses wants the people to take away

from their experience. It is the foundational truth that the people should live by in their next stage of life.

For those of you who are graduating, verse 3 is the foundational truth that you need to have if you want to pursue life. As you move into the next stage of your life, let verse 3 guide you. And for the rest of us, take this time now as an opportunity to reassess your life and ask your self if verse 3 is what you believe and live by.

Here is where we are going:

1. Our Need (what is the passage teaching us to do)
2. Our Problem (why we can't do this)
3. Our Solution (how we can do this)
4. Our Plan (How do we do this in our every day lives)

Our Need (Learn the Lesson of the Manna)

So what is verse 3 all about? It is all about the lesson of the manna. Look at verse 3. First, the wilderness and the food shortage was not an accident. Notice the subject. *He* humbled you. *He* let you hunger. *He* fed you with manna. *God* brought this trial. And he did it in order to teach them something. Notice the word “know.” The manna was not something that they recognized as food. It was not something anyone had ever seen before. It was supernatural food. He took away all sources of bread from them and then fed them with something that was not bread or at least not any kind of bread that they had ever known. The word translated manna basically means “What?” When they saw it they said, “what is it?” or in Hebrew, “man-hoo?” and that became the name for it.

What Does Manna Have To Do With God's Word?

So what does manna have to do with God's word? The wilderness became a place where the people had to trust God's promises and obey his commands or else they would die quickly. They had to trust that this strange food would give them life and sustain them. They had to obey God's commands about gathering it and eating it. And when they did trust him and obey him they learned that his commands and his promises really did lead to life. Everything he said about the manna was true. And everything he commanded them to do with the manna was for their life. It was a context where obeying and trusting God was the obvious choice to make. If they chose to not trust him and obey him about the manna, their stomachs would soon tell them that they had made a bad choice.

This was a unique situation but the lesson is that this is true about all of God's promises and commands in all situations. We live by them. They are more foundational than bread. Even when there is no bread and God's word doesn't seem to us like the obvious thing to do, we need to trust and obey his word in order to live.

What Does It Mean To Live?

What does it mean to live? In Deuteronomy 4:1–4 Moses tells the people to obey all of God's statutes and rules then he gives them a warning by bringing up a recent disaster. Listen to verses 3 and 4:

“Your eyes have seen what the Lord did at Baal-peor, for the Lord your God destroyed from among you all the men who followed the Baal of Peor. But you who held fast to the Lord your God are all alive today.

So if they obey God's word and don't turn away to other gods, then God will not judge them and destroy them. They must hold fast to God by living by every word from his mouth. So one aspect of this life is avoiding God's judgment. But there is more. It is not just avoiding judgment. Listen to the next 4 verses:

See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

They will live wisely and righteously and testify to the greatness of God among the other nations. They will enjoy God's presence. They will avoid God's judgment, they will live the way they were made to live, and they will experience God's presence (he will delight in them, draw near to them, and answer their prayers). In other words, they will live!

Summary of Deuteronomy 8:3

So to summarize so far, when the people of Israel enter the land, they must remember the lesson of the manna and choose to live by every word that comes from the mouth of God. Even when they have plenty of bread. Even when it doesn't seem like the most economical decision. Even when other ways look much more appealing. They must remember that God's word leads to life and they must choose life. And so should we.

Our Problem (Why We Can't Do It)

But it is at this point that we have a problem. Do you know what the problem is? The problem is you. And me. Notice one word in verse 3: The word "every". It doesn't say some. It is doesn't say half. It doesn't say "as many as you can do if you try really hard." It says "every word." Israel couldn't do this and it resulted in death. God judged them and sent them into exile. And we wouldn't have done any better. Let me ask you just one question: When you leave church on Sunday are you more concerned with what you are going to eat for lunch or with how you are going to obey and apply the words that you have just heard and sang.

We don't live by every word that comes from the mouth of God. The problem isn't God's word. Psalm 119 tells us that God's law is perfect, righteous, sure, wise, and good. The problem is us. That is why Paul says in Romans 7:10 that "the command that promised life proved to be death to me." Just like Israel did, we fail to live by every word that comes from the mouth of God. And if our obedience is all we have, then we are in a spiritual desert with no food. We need a miracle. We need God to somehow provide life for us.

Our Solution (How We Can Do It)

There were some in Israel who realized this. They listened to prophets who said that God was going to send his messiah and provide life for his people. They saw that they could not keep the whole law and that the only way they were going to live is if God provided again like he did in the wilderness. They needed a new manna. They needed bread from heaven that would do more than just keep them alive physically for a little while. They needed bread that would keep them alive forever and would change their hearts so that they would delight in God and live for him. There were actually Rabbis who taught that when the messiah came he would again provide

manna from heaven for the people. So they waited and waited and waited. Until one day, in a little city named Capernaum, a man stood up and said, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.” (John 6:35) Now listen to Jesus’s words from verses 47–51 of John 6:

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” (John 6:47–51)

What is Jesus saying? How can Jesus be life? I thought we live on every word that comes from the mouth of God? Which one is it? Do we live on God’s word or on Jesus? Both. Listen to Jesus words to the Jewish leaders in John 5:

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

God’s word gives life because it points us to Jesus. Without Jesus, we cannot live by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Jesus Is Our Life

New Life Secured in His Life and Death

You see, Jesus did what we have failed to do: He lived by every word that came from the mouth of God. Like Israel, God sent Jesus into the wilderness to test him. Satan tempted him telling him to turn stones into bread. Even though he had been fasting forty days and forty nights, he did not give in. Unlike us, he did not doubt his father’s care. How do you act when you miss a single meal? How do respond when you are being tested? He didn’t grumble. He did not abandon his father’s words. Instead he quoted Deuteronomy 8:3. In all that he did, he lived by every word that comes from the mouth of God. He was tempted in every way and yet did not sin.

But he received death instead of life. He took the death that you deserve for every word of God that you have not lived by. He did that in order that you could have the life that he secured. Galatians 3:13–14: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree’—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.”

He didn’t need to do this. He didn’t need to take on flesh and become like us. He didn’t need to go into the wilderness to be tempted. Israel was sent into the wilderness because they disobeyed. Jesus never disobeyed. He did it for you. He did it to secure life for you so that when you believe in him you could receive life instead of death. The life promised in the law is yours when you trust Jesus.

New Life in the Spirit

But not only does he fulfill the law perfectly for us so that we can stand before a perfect and holy God. He gives us the Holy Spirit to make us alive to God. As we look to Jesus by faith, the Spirit transforms us so that we can live by every word that comes from the mouth of God. Listen to Paul in Galatians 3:20–21:

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

As we read God's word and see and trust Jesus and all that he has done for us, the Spirit makes us alive. He changes our hearts to love God and love our neighbors. He makes us alive. Do you want to live? Do you want to be more alive; be more of what you were created to be? Then you need to see what this word says about Jesus and you need to believe it.

So far we have seen our need (to live by every word that comes from the mouth of God). We have seen our problem (we fail to live by every word that comes from the mouth of God). And we have seen our solution (Jesus lived by every word that comes from the mouth of God, bore our curse for our disobedience, and now, by the Holy Spirit, he is making us alive).

Our Plan

What should we do? How do we apply this?

1. Pursue *Jesus* in God's Word

In order for this word to give life, you must see how it testifies to Jesus. If it is not testifying to Jesus then it is not giving life. If it is not pointing you to Jesus, then it is not giving you life; it is not making you more alive. If you do not taste and see the glory of Jesus in these pages, you will not experience the life promised in these pages. Let me give you two examples of ways we can miss out on life by misreading scripture:

1. *It's all about current events*

This is when the bible becomes a handbook for understanding current events. We watch the news and everything that is happening around the world and then come to the Bible looking for clues for what is going to happen next. This may be exciting and interesting but it is not life giving. If your reading of the bible does not lead to greater trust in Jesus and what he has done for us in his death and resurrection, then the Spirit is not using it and you are not getting life from it.

2. *It's all about me*

Another example is the "It is all about me" approach to scripture. This is when the stories of the bible become just moral examples or stories that resonate with my own experience but you never see how they testify to Jesus. This may be a way of making the Old Testament interesting to you but it is not making you alive. It is not until those stories testify about Jesus and cause you to trust him more and obey him more that they are life giving. The Spirit gives life by using the word to testify to Jesus.

Pursue *Jesus* in God's Word.

2. Pursue *Life* in God's Word

What we need is life. We need to know that death will not have the final word for those who believe in Jesus and we need the Spirit to make us alive so that we can delight in God in every area of life and live for his glory. What is going to do that? Your Instagram and Facebook feeds won't. Netflix won't. Food won't. Sports won't. A great career won't. Money won't. Sex won't. Adventures and travel won't. These can all be good things but they are not the source of life.

Jesus is the bread of life. He is the only bread of life. The more you eat the more he satisfies you. The more you eat the more alive he makes you. He is what you need more of. He is

your joy. He is your life. Feast on him and you will never be hungry. Feast on him in God's word and you will live.