

M O S E S
AND THE JOURNEY OF FAITH
DISCUSSION GUIDE

Law and Compassion

Deuteronomy 4.5-8, 15.1-11

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Share plans for future Community Group gatherings and the following happening in the life of the church:

- The **Aruna 5k** is coming up THIS WEEKEND **April 16th!** Visit the City for information on how to get involved. Consider running/walking as a cGroup!
- **Flying Pig Weekend** is **April 30th-May 1st!** Each year we *celebrate Christ* with a worship service and “pig out” dinner on Saturday evening and then *serve Cincinnati* on Sunday morning by staffing a hydration station at mile 10 along the marathon route. Information on how to sign up to serve, and info about the “pig out” dinner is on the City.
- Our next Intro to New City is Saturday morning April 23rd. If you are interested in participating check the website / The City for more information and to RSVP.

LEADER NOTES

Deuteronomy 4 shows us that part of the incentive to keep the commandments is missiological. Obedience will show to other nations Israel’s wisdom and understanding, akin to the moral wisdom encouraged in Proverbs. Such wisdom will draw attention not only to Israel but ultimately to Israel’s God (as epitomized by the queen of Sheba’s visit with Solomon; 1 Kings 10), a pattern intended by the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:3).

The shemitta laws of Deuteronomy 15 are part of the overall structure of Israel aimed at eliminating long-term poverty (v. 4). Every sabbatical year (7th year), debts were cancelled (or at least deferred). Lending freely not grudgingly (v. 10) and providing liberally (v. 14) was to characterize God’s people. Why was such generosity to be the norm? Because Israel knew what it was to be slaves in Egypt (v. 15) and to experience the generosity of God (v. 14).

Jesus taught that this same spirit of generosity is operative in the “kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:23–35). Out of his extravagant generosity, the divine King released us from a debt we could never have paid back on our own (Matt. 18:27), and he expects us to show this same kind of generosity to others who are in need (Matt. 18:28–35). Our generosity to others is to be motivated by God’s prior grace to us (2 Cor. 8:9).

As we consider the depths of God’s own love for us and the riches that he has lavished upon us in Christ (Eph. 1:7–8, 18), our hearts cannot help but be moved to give to others as a reflection of what God has given to us.

OPENER

Have people pick a number between 1-12. Have them then answer the question corresponding to the number.

- #1 - What is the worst place to use the bathroom?
- #2 - Name a time in your life you wish you had a do-over.
- #3 - What is the most expensive thing you wish you never bought?
- #4 - If you were a celebrity, which company or product would you most want to endorse?
- #5 - If you had a time machine, what year or era would you travel to?
- #6 - What conversation topic do you try to avoid?
- #7 - We all know Cincinnati is the best city in the world. But what is the second best city?
- #8 - What aspect of the good ol' days would you like to see make a comeback?
- #9 - Where is the worst place to be stuck waiting?
- #10 - What is the most time consuming thing to be buy at the grocery store?
- #11 - If you could learn one new skill, what would it be?
- #12 - If you were forced to find a new job in a different field, what would you choose?

OPENING PRAYER

Open your group in prayer. Pray spontaneously, or use this prayer:

Lord God, help us to follow Christ in all of life. Help us to listen to each other, encourage one another, and grow in love for you and our neighbors.

STUDY/DISCUSSION

We are looking at the life of Moses. This week we are looking at two passages from the book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy is a series of farewell sermons from Moses at the end of his life, preparing the people to enter into the Promised Land.

STUDY THE TEXT

1. Read Deuteronomy 4:5-8. What do we learn about God's law from this passage?
2. On Sunday Josh quoted Harvie Conn as saying the church is like a "model home." Talk through the analogy. How can we grow in becoming a public community?
3. Read Deuteronomy 15:1-11. What are the laws of release ("shemitta" laws) designed to do?
4. What should be the attitude of Christians toward the poor and needy?
5. Compare verse 4 and verse 11. How should we understand these verses together?

APPLY THE TEXT

6. In Matthew 5 Jesus calls the church to be the salt of the earth... the light of the world... a city on a hill. All these involve engagement with those outside the church. Are you public with your faith? If not, what factors keep you from living that way?
7. How can we invite others into our community life? Is there someone specific God is calling you to invite around?
8. On Sunday Josh mentioned contempt and fear as two common reasons people do not give more generously to the poor. Which of these are you more prone to? Why?
9. What is God calling you to apply to your life from these passages? Some possible applications:
 - Get to know one of the mercy/development organizations New City works with in Cincinnati (Whiz Kids, CityLink Center, Norwood Food Pantry, Jobs Plus, Celebrate Recovery). Learn about what it means to serve with one of those organizations.
 - Think about someone in your life right now who is in need (financially or otherwise). Pray for them daily this week. Spend some time with them over a meal.
 - Be intentional in thinking through how much you give and try to stretch your generosity further.

PRAY THE TEXT

Take some time and pray together. This can be done together as a whole group, or in smaller groups. Use these Biblical passages as a way to pray. Read 2 Corinthians 8:9 and Ephesians 1:7-8, 18. Pray in response. If you haven't already, break up and share prayer requests.