

Message #30**Deuteronomy 24:5-22**

I read a story of something that happened years ago with a 10-year-old boy. He went into an ice cream shop to get a Sundae. He sat down and the waitress brought him water and asked him what he would like. He said, "How much is a Sundae?" and the waitress said 50 cents. The boy pulled the change out of his pocket and counted it and said well how much is just a dish of ice cream and the waitress said 35 cents. So the boy said, "I'll take the dish of ice cream." The waitress brought the boy his ice cream and left the bill on the table. After the boy ate his ice cream, he took the bill and paid the cashier and headed for home. The waitress came back to clean the table and as she was cleaning the table she saw that the boy had left her a tip of 15 cents. He could have ordered the Sundae, but he wanted to make sure he had enough to tip the waitress so he didn't.

That kind of respect and concern for others is something that is truly developed by Moses in Deuteronomy. We are in a very practical section of Deuteronomy. God is giving His people a series of regulations as to how they are to live life in ways that treat others respectfully and bring His blessings.

GOD GIVES HIS PEOPLE GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS FOR LIVING LIFE IN A WAY THAT WILL BE HAPPY AND IN A WAY THAT WILL GUARANTEE HIS BLESSINGS.

In this chapter there are ten different regulations and last week we looked at regulation #1.

REGULATION #1 – Regulations concerning the divorce and remarriage of a spouse. **24:1-4**

Someone said in most marriages there are three rings. There is the "engagement ring"; there is the "marriage ring" and then there is the Suffering. Sometimes, as we saw last time, the marriage doesn't make it. We examined the regulations last week on this subject.

REGULATION #2 – Regulations concerning a newly married man. **24:5**

Back in this culture, Israel's national military was not comprised of professional "full-time soldiers" who made a career of being in the military. It was comprised of men from every tribe who were normal working men. If a man were 20 or older, he was expected to go to war (Numbers 1:3, 45). This is still kind of an expectation in Israel. Every person who gets out of high school or who is 18-years-old is expected to serve in the Israeli military for two years.

Back at this time, when there was some national threat against Israel, these men would leave their homes and families and join the troops for battle. Actually, today the only exemptions for not serving are medical, criminal, religious for women or pregnancy for women.

Here was a temporary exemption given by God. If a man is recently married, he is not to go out to war, but is to stay at home for one year to bring happiness to his wife.

I'm not sure having a husband hang around the house for one year would bring all that much happiness to the wife, but that is the regulation.

In the context, this may have been something that would prevent divorce. It is interesting that the point is that he is to stay home and bring happiness to the wife and not the other way around.

So in the Promised Land, a newly married man was to take a year off and stay at home and enjoy his marriage.

We would assume that he was to do the normal work that he would do in caring and providing for his family and also he was to bring happiness to his wife.

There is a saying that I have never agreed with: "Happy wife is a happy life." I don't agree with that. Job's wife would have been happy if he would have cursed God and died. That is what she advised him to do (Job 2:9). Some wives are not happy unless they get everything they want. This kind of self-centered woman would never be happy because it's never enough. I know of a case in which a wife is truly happy gambling. This woman is happy when her husband takes her to a casino and no matter how much she loses or how much the debt, she is as happy as can be. So there is no way that a husband should seek to make a woman like that happy. She is making life miserable.

Having said that, however, marriage is supposed to be happy and joyful and not depressing. The husband is to concern himself with having a joyful relationship with his wife. He is to love his wife as Christ loved the church, which does mean to make some sacrifices.

Now the truth is, very few couples actually operate like this. In most cases today, when a man marries a woman, he is more concerned about his career than he is his wife. Certainly he must work to provide for his wife and family. That is his responsibility. But unfortunately, many men are far more concerned with their careers than their wives.

Truth is our world applauds those who succeed in their careers and not those who succeed in their marriages.

REGULATION #3 – Regulation concerning security loans. 24:6

People who were poor could not afford to go out and buy grain. They needed to grind it daily to be able to make bread. In order to do that, one needed two stones. These stones were their means of survival.

The hand mill or upper millstone was critical to survival of a family. These two stones worked in pairs. One was a large stone that remained stationary and the other was a smaller upper stone. If you took these stones away from a person, you put them out of business.

This was equipment necessary for their survival. God permitted some things to be given as collateral, but He regulated some things that could not be given (Ex. 22:26-27; Deut. 24:10-13; Ez. 18:16; Amos 2:8).

You needed both of these stones to take care of the produce. Now there were things that could be given in a security loan (Deut. 24:10-13). But these two items were off limits as a security loan.

One of the responsibilities a lender had was the responsibility to analyze the borrowers' situation and make sure that their lives were not ruined by what they borrowed.

There are some people who will borrow money from another Christian and not pay it back. God will never prosper one who does not pay back their loans.

REGULATION #4 – Regulation concerning kidnapping. **24:7**

Contextually, we could assume that perhaps the lender was not being paid back so he decided to kidnap one of the sons of an Israelite borrower and either misuse them for his own purposes or sell them as a slave to someone so he could get his money. God did not want that ever happen-ing.

If someone kidnapped another person and then either mistreated them or tried to sell them as a slave, that person was to receive the death penalty.

So it did not matter as to the intent of the kidnapping—whether abuse or slavery or repayment of a loan—they were to be executed.

Now there were spoils of war in which God permitted His people to have those they captured to work for them (Deut. 20:11; 21:10-14). They were to treat them with dignity and respect. But God did not permit kidnapping someone with the idea of human trafficking for money.

No religious or rich man was to ever enslave another man. People who are involved in human trafficking should be given the death penalty.

REGULATION #5 – Regulation concerning Leprosy. **24:8-9**

We are in a context of regulations that have to do with relationships and all of a sudden in the middle of this, here is what appears to be odd verses about leprosy.

Leprosy was a dreaded disease and still is. It is presented in Scripture as a means of divine judgment (Job 2; Numbers 12:1-15).

We suspect that the reason God puts this issue here in this text is to warn God's people not to speak out against God-ordained leadership and don't try to put someone into leadership who is not authorized to be in leadership. Moses specifically brings up Miriam right here.

Leprosy was often used as a judgment of God as in the case of Miriam (Num. 12:1-15). She was the one who challenged Moses' authority and God gave her leprosy as a punishment. God has carefully laid out how He wants leprosy handled in Leviticus 13-14.

God is warning His people that if you get haughty and proud and speak against God appointed-leadership, He can and will cause a person's world to fall apart. He can send a judgment of leprosy.

These regulations need to be taken seriously.

This is also a metaphorical picture of sin. God wants sin dealt with His way, following His word.

REGULATION #6- Regulation concerning Loans. 24:10-13

This business of loans and borrowing and lending and repayment of loans is a theme that is brought up many times in the Mosaic law (Deut. 23:19-20; 24:6; Ex. 22:25-26; Lev. 25:35-37).

Borrowing and lending and repaying loans are all part of life.

What is specifically stressed here is that at times loans needed to be made but God did not want the loaner to go into a person's home and demand some collateral pledge. He was to stay outside the home and let the man bring out the pledge.

He was not to go into the man's home and demean him in front of his wife and children. There was to be some dignity to this. The lender was to stay outside the home and let the borrower come out.

If a poor person did that, he was to make sure he got the pledge back by dark. Sometimes all he had to offer was a coat.

God wanted the integrity and the dignity of the person who needed a loan to be protected. The creditor was not to cross lines in the lending and collecting process.

REGULATION #7 – Regulation concerning wages. 24:14-15

God wants owed wages paid. If you hire someone to do a job for you, you need to pay them. It would be possible to hire someone who was not an Israelite and then say I'll let them work and because they aren't an Israelite, I won't pay them and I'll save money as an Israelite.

God says I do not want My people to do business like that. When you have someone do some work for you, pay them. Any failure to do this was a violation of the law of God and was sin.

There are people who don't have any savings account and they depend on their paychecks for living day to day. They live from check to check. They need their money to put food on their table; clothes on their backs and heat in their houses.

When a man or woman goes to work for someone, they depend on that for their income. They need to be paid. It is an evil thing to withhold what is owed them.

It doesn't matter how poor the person is or what a person has, they still have been created in the image of God.

REGULATION #8 – Regulation concerning individual sin culpability. **24:16**

As we go through this part of Deuteronomy, Moses is setting forth all kinds of governing guidelines that pertain to national life in Israel. What is interesting here is that Moses wants people to realize that God is an individual and personal God, not only a national God.

Every single individual is responsible and accountable for his or her own sin. Individual and personal sin is not transferable to another person.

Every one of us is responsible for our own sin. Every one of us is accountable to God for our own sin.

REGULATION #9 – Regulation concerning perversion of justice. **24:17-18**

The lowliest people at this time were the alien, orphan and widow. God makes it clear that it does not matter how little a person has, there is to be justice for all.

He wanted all people treated respectfully. When we are merciful and gracious to people, we display the mercy and grace of God that He extended to us.

In an amazing display of grace and mercy, God brought Israel out of Egyptian slavery just as He brought us out of our slavery in sin. He literally brought Israel out of bondage when she was helpless and hopeless. This point is stressed over and over again in Deuteronomy (5:15; 6:12, 21; 8:14; 10:19; 15:15). God never wanted His people to forget how merciful and gracious He was in saving them.

As they reflected on this, they should be merciful and gracious to others. Never should justice be tainted because a person was helpless and hopeless. God wants people treated respectfully.

REGULATION #10 – Regulation concerning leftover harvest. **24:19-21**

God wants His people to remember that they were slaves and that He brought them out of Egypt and blessed them so they needed to remember that.

When someone was harvesting their crops, they were to make sure they left some for the needy. God did not want them going back to make sure they got every last drop of everything.

God's people must always think in terms of being generous with leftovers.

Life is lived in a real world with real people. God wants His people to function with others in ways that will enable Him to bless them. These guidelines are the kind of guidelines that will cause that to happen.