

Re-eh Deuteronomy - Devarim (11.26-16.17)

In his last speech to the Children of Israel, Moses tells them to obey God and follow God's Commandments. Moses said, "See now that I am setting before you today: blessing and curse. If you follow God's laws, you will be blessed more than all the peoples of the earth. However, if you worship other gods and ignore God's commandments, then you shall be cursed and perish. When God lets you enter the land, declare "Blessing" on Mt. Gerizim and "Curse" on Mount Ebal. Then follow God's laws for living in the land that God, the God of your fathers, is giving you so that you will always have it. Do away with any idols or sacred trees that remain. You must not worship God in such a manner. God will choose a place dedicated to God's Name where you can bring offerings and donations and feast with joy."

Remember, do all the offerings as God commanded. Listen carefully so you and your descendants will have a good life forever since you will be doing that which is good and morally right in the eyes of God, your God. Now if someone, whether family, friend or stranger, wants you to worship other gods or share some new spiritual experience or says they are prophet - Stop! Do not listen because God, your God is testing you to know whether you truly love God, your God, with all your heart and all your soul. Do not ask about other gods or how to serve them for their offerings are everything God hates. It is enough to follow all the laws I am telling you. Do not add to it or subtract from it. Follow only God, your God and you will have a true spiritual experience.

Pay attention when you eat. Eat only animals with true hoofs that are in two parts and brings up the cud, like sheep, goats and oxen and not camels, rabbits and pigs. You may eat anything in the water that has fins and scales. Eat clean bird not unclean like eagles, owls or bats. All insects are unclean as is anything that dies naturally. You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk.

Remember every year, give one-tenth of your riches away, to provide for the Levites who take care of God Sanctuary, and take care of those in need so God may bless you. If you do not take care of the needy, God will hear their cries and know your sins.

Do not forget to free your slaves in the 7th year and help them start in freedom. Remember you were once slaves in Egypt. Make your offerings to God with unblemished, first born livestock. Safeguard the seven day Passover offering of unleavened bread, then count seven weeks and rejoice with the Festival of Weeks (Shavuot), and the harvest Festival of Huts (Sukkot). Every male must be seen in God's Sanctuary these three times a year. No one shall come before God empty-handed. Instead each of you shall hand deliver a gift based on the blessings God granted you.

Questions: 1) Why is it so important not to ask about other gods or go looking for another spiritual experience? 2) Why is following God's Ways a true spiritual experience? 3) What blessings have God granted you that you could offer as a gift to God? **Illustration Ideas:** Any blessing from God...an offering to God...feasting with joy..helping the needy...