

Living with Excellence, Integrity, and Devotion to God

Deuteronomy 17 offers profound lessons that still apply to us today. Moses, knowing his time was short, was giving final instructions to Israel before they entered the Promised Land. In this chapter, God lays out principles for **giving, justice, leadership, and devotion**—all of which challenge us in our personal walk with Him.

Giving God Our Best, Not Our Leftovers

The chapter begins with a clear command: *“Do not sacrifice to the Lord your God an ox or a sheep that has any defect or flaw in it, for that would be detestable to Him”* (Deuteronomy 17:1).

God deserves **our best**, not what’s leftover or of no value to us. Think about how we often give—whether it’s our time, money, or talents. Do we give God **our first and finest**, or just what’s convenient?

David understood this principle when he refused to offer God a sacrifice that cost him nothing (1 Chronicles 21:24). The widow in the New Testament exemplified true giving when she gave all she had (Mark 12:43). These examples remind us that God isn’t impressed with **how much** we give, but rather **the heart behind it**.

What does this look like in daily life?

- Do I give God my best time in prayer and devotion, or does He only get what’s left after I’ve done everything else?
- Do I serve Him out of love and gratitude, or because I feel obligated?
- When I give to others, do I do it with a **willing, joyful** heart, or do I secretly hold back?

Let’s choose to **honor God with our best** in everything we do.

Justice, Integrity, and Avoiding Corruption

God also set up a system of justice in Israel, making sure that accusations were carefully investigated before any punishment was given. No one was to be put to death on the testimony of just one witness (Deuteronomy 17:6). If a case was too difficult to decide, it had to be brought before the priests, who would seek God’s wisdom (Deuteronomy 17:9).

This principle teaches us **to judge fairly, seek truth, and avoid corruption**.

How often do we make snap judgments about people based on rumors, assumptions, or personal biases? God calls us to be **people of integrity**, seeking truth rather than being quick to condemn.

This also applies to how we handle power and influence. In a world full of **bribery, favoritism, and compromise**, are we willing to stand for righteousness even when it’s inconvenient? Whether in the workplace, relationships, or leadership roles, **God calls us to walk in integrity, refusing to be swayed by selfish gain**.

The Danger of Drifting from God

God had a specific warning about leadership: When Israel eventually asked for a king (which they did centuries later), the king was to be **God's choice**, not simply someone they desired to be like the other nations (Deuteronomy 17:14-15).

God also gave **three warnings for kings**:

1. **Do not acquire many horses or return to Egypt for them.**
2. **Do not take many wives.**
3. **Do not accumulate large amounts of wealth.**

Why? Because each of these things would turn the king's heart away from the Lord.

Fast forward to Solomon's reign, and what do we see? **He failed in all three areas.** He gathered horses from Egypt, took **700 wives and 300 concubines**, and amassed extreme wealth (1 Kings 10-11). Just as God warned, **his heart drifted away**, and he led Israel into idolatry.

This is a warning for all of us. No one **starts** with a desire to drift from God—but compromise happens little by little.

- What are the “small compromises” in my life that could lead me away from God over time?
- Do I justify sin by thinking, “*That doesn't apply to me*”?
- Am I chasing wealth, power, or relationships that could eventually pull me away from my devotion to God?

We can't assume we're immune. Solomon was the wisest man to ever live, yet **he still fell**. We must guard our hearts and stay rooted in God's truth, taking His warnings seriously.

A Leader's Greatest Responsibility: Staying in God's Word

One of the most powerful commands in this chapter is that any king of Israel had to **write out his own copy of God's law and read it daily** (Deuteronomy 17:18-19).

What an incredible practice! By **personally writing and studying** the law, the king would keep his heart **humble before God**, knowing he was subject to His authority.

Imagine if every leader today—presidents, CEOs, pastors, parents—had to do this. Imagine if **we** did this! How much more would God's Word shape our decisions, attitudes, and actions?

This command teaches us that no matter how high our position or how much influence we gain, **we must always stay grounded in God's Word**. It keeps us from pride, self-reliance, and making foolish decisions.

- **How often am I in God's Word?**
- **Do I see it as essential for my daily life, or just an occasional “spiritual boost”?**

- **Is my leadership (whether at work, in ministry, or at home) guided by Scripture, or do I rely on my own wisdom?**

If we want to **stay close to God and lead well**, we must be people who immerse ourselves in His Word **daily**.

Final Takeaways: Living Out These Principles Today

1. **Give God your best.** Don't offer Him leftovers—honor Him with your time, talents, and resources.
2. **Live with integrity.** Seek truth, avoid corruption, and judge situations with wisdom.
3. **Be careful of compromise.** Small decisions can lead to spiritual drift. Stay close to God.
4. **Stay rooted in Scripture.** If you want to lead well and live wisely, make God's Word a daily priority.

Let's commit to living **wholeheartedly for God**, making decisions that reflect His wisdom, and never forgetting that He alone is our King.

May we be faithful to **follow His ways, stay close to His Word, and live lives of integrity, generosity, and devotion.**

God bless you as you seek to walk in His truth!