

Old Testament Application, Part 2

By Greg Smith

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Use an online or a printed Bible dictionary such as *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* at <http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries>. Look up the word *test*. Prepare to share a brief report on the theological meaning of “testing” and how Moses instructed Israel to understand her “testing” in the wilderness.

Assignment Two

Use a printed study Bible or an online tool such as <http://www.openbible.info/labs/cross-references>. Use the Scripture cross-reference tool for Deuteronomy 8:3 and the phrase “man does not live by bread alone.” After studying the other passages noted, prepare to share more fully why Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 8:3 in Matthew 4:4.

Assignment Three

Use an online or a printed Bible encyclopedia such as the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* at <http://www.biblestudytools.com/encyclopedias/isbe> or *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary* at <http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary>. Look up the word *discipline* and prepare to share about this term in the context of Deuteronomy 8:1–5.

Scripture to Memorize

Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you.
Deuteronomy 8:5

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand how to use basic Bible study resources for inductive Bible study.

Greg Smith is assistant professor of Bible in The College at Southwestern and also serves as associate vice president for Academic Technology and Support. Greg is the author of *The Testing of God's Sons: The Refining of Faith as a Biblical Theme*. Before coming to Southwestern, he served in various youth and college ministries for nearly a decade and now serves as a volunteer children's minister at Walnut Ridge Baptist Church, Mansfield, Texas.

In his free time he loves going on camping adventures with his wife, Ellen, and two kids, James and Hannah. He also loves singing, playing guitar, and watching hummingbirds in his backyard. Please feel free to contact him at gsmith@swbts.edu.

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Emily was glad for the year to end. The year had been a really tough one. She wrecked her car. Her boyfriend broke up with her. She lost her cell phone. She missed some major social events due to a long illness. Yes, it had been a real wilderness experience. She knows God loves her, but she wonders how He could let all of these things happen.

An inductive Bible study of Deuteronomy 8:1–5 is just what Emily needs. Are you prepared to show her how to have such a study?

Read Deuteronomy 8:1–5 out loud.

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week may now share how a Bible dictionary helped explain the theological meaning of “testing” and how Moses instructed Israel to understand her “testing” in the wilderness.

Studying the Passage

Verse 1. I command you. Moses challenged and instructed Israel one last time before she entered Canaan under the new leadership of Joshua. In verses 1–5, Moses offered a brief theological reflection on Israel’s forty-year wilderness experience. **the land.** This refers to Canaan. Israel was camped on the plains of Moab, some twenty miles east of the city of Jericho.

Verse 2. humble you, testing you. Moses used the key terms “humble” and “test” to describe both the divine agenda and the purpose behind the difficult wilderness experience. The biblical idea of “testing” can convey both the ideas of *refinement* (as in the removal of impurities from gold and precious metals) and *authentication* (as in the inspection of gold and precious metals for its purity). God frequently tests the faith of His people, often through experiences of hardships and difficulties. For Israel, the wilderness offered a classroom experience and a daily opportunity to put feet to their faith.

Discussion Questions

Why are the more significant lessons in life learned through the hardest times of life?

On Your Own

In the space below, describe a difficult time when your faith was tested. Discuss how you responded and what lessons you learned.

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week may now share how the Scripture cross-reference tool helped with identifying and understanding the connection between Deuteronomy 8:3 and Mathew 4:4.

Studying the Passage

Moses offered additional reflection on Israel's wilderness experience of testing.

Verse 3. let you hunger. In this testing experience, the Lord both *provided for* and *withheld from* His people. We know from other contexts that Israel was hungry for the food they used to eat in Egypt (Exodus 16:3). God was *not starving* His people, but withholding for a time the food they craved. In fact, the food He provided was actually better for them, given the unique challenges in the wilderness. **by bread alone.** The real lesson of the wilderness focused on a test of faith or obedience. The bread was not the core issue, but faith that trusts and responds to the instructions of the Lord.

Verse 4. did not wear out. Moses reminded that generation about the Lord's daily provision and protection. While the hardships and difficulties were not necessarily removed, it seems that the Lord may have limited the full impact of the wilderness experience on His people. Thus, the lesson was perfectly designed to prepare Israel to learn how to trust in the Lord.

On Your Own

It took a wilderness experience to remove all the distractions that were surrounding the nation of Israel and to teach her the most important lesson of all—that of faithful dependence on the Lord. In the space below, describe a time in your life that might be considered a wilderness experience. What kinds of distractions were removed during that experience? What kinds of difficulties did you encounter? How did the Lord provide for you during your wilderness experience?

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week may now share how a Bible commentary led to a better understand of the word *discipline* in the context of Deuteronomy 8:1–5.

Studying the Passage

Moses reminded Israel of the Lord's unwavering commitment toward His people during the wilderness experience.

Verse 5. disciplines his son. The wilderness experience was a family affair. Moses made clear that the Lord was acting like a good parent in not giving the child (Israel) everything the child may have wanted. The *discipline* came from the daily practice of trusting and depending on the Lord's provision.

This is tough love, and such love is not just something God demonstrated with Israel. He still uses tough love with His disciples today. "For the LORD disciplines the one He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives" (Hebrews 12:6, quoting Proverbs 3:12).

Discussion Question

A popular idea in the world is that God is somehow obligated to answer every “I want” prayer that comes from our mouths. Some church members have an attitude similar to a stubborn child who exclaims, “Daddy, I want a pony and I want it now!” How does Deuteronomy 8:5 correct this wrong thinking about God and our relationship with Him? In terms of human relationships (teacher/student, sergeant/soldier, coach/athlete, etc.), discuss what might be the example that best reflects this passage.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: “In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . .”

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

Remember the story about Emily in the **Real-Life Scenario**? After studying about God's provisions and purpose for Israel, Emily found a new perspective on her year of "wilderness wanderings." First, she realized that God has continually provided for her basic needs, just as He did for ancient Israel. Also, she realized that her wilderness experience was not as dangerous as Israel's—where there was a real danger of going without food and water.

Second, she realized that while some of her *wants* were not met (such as going to certain parties), she was probably better off not going to them.

Third, she was comforted to know that God disciplines and tests her for her spiritual growth, God has a specific purpose for her, and God can use even difficult experiences to bring about His purpose in her life. She has learned what James says in the opening of his letter, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2–4).

Fourth, she realized God is using others to discipline her and build her faith.

The Bible has truths that are valuable in the real world. Disciples can find more of those truths when they use Bible dictionaries, cross-reference tools and Bible encyclopedias as part of their careful study of the Scriptures.

Follow up Question

What has been your personal wilderness wandering experience? Where did you see God provide your needs (but not necessarily your wants)? How did God refine your faith?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.