

Questions for Small Group or Individual Study/Reflection
Unlocking the Old Testament Sermon Series
“A Lesson Before Dying” – Deuteronomy 31-34 ~ Sermon for August 2, 2009

Moses does not enter the Promised Land after all that he and the Israelites have been through in the Egyptian captivity and the many years of wandering in the wilderness. But the time is now, according to the Lord, under the new leadership of Joshua for the Israelites to enter the Promised Land. How Moses handles this news and supports and commissions Joshua is key to the “final matters” in the life of his servant, Moses, that God teaches us in the Book of Deuteronomy. This book tells us a story of a Godly leader yearning to finish the work he had begun. As you take time to read the final chapters of the book of Deuteronomy, assess how you think Moses “finished the race” – despite God not permitting Moses to physically enter into “...the land which I (the Lord) swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there.” (Deut. 34:4) Then, take time to assess the life’s journey God has placed you on – do you want to finish well? What are you living for that will be bringing God glory and benefiting others beyond your lifetime?

1. What has been your biggest disappointment in life? How did you handle it (or not) physically, spiritually and/or emotionally?
2. How did Moses prepare the Israelites to enter the Promised Land even though he was not coming with them? Where will the Israelites get the strength and courage to go on without Moses? How will Joshua follow in his steps?
3. How do you think Moses really felt about God’s decision (concerning the Promised Land)? What did it mean, emotionally and spiritually, for Moses to see the Promised Land? How do you think Joshua really felt about God’s decision?
4. For a man who claimed not to be a good communicator in Exodus 4:10, Moses has some powerful words to share to a people about to end a very long time wandering in the desert! Moses recites the words of a song in Chapter 32 – (read 31:24-30) – why does Moses need to share this song with the whole assembly of Israel? What does this song say about God? (Read 32:44-47) What is the song’s purpose? Moses blesses the tribes in Chapter 33 – compare to Jacob’s blessing in Genesis 49.
5. In what way(s) do you see from these final chapters of Deuteronomy that Moses was living for something beyond his lifetime? Do you think the Israelites took notice of that too?
6. What’s the life lesson in this text/story for you? What Christian legacy will you leave for you family, friends and community?
7. **Personal Application – Prayer focus for the week:**

Additional Scripture references: Read Deuteronomy 31-34 – the final stretch Moses, life journey. Does Moses run through the finish line even though it’s only to the border of the Promised Land? Number 20:1-13 – Case for Moses and Aaron (see v. 8 & v. 10 & v.12) not entering the Promised Land—Moses spoke to the people instead of the boulder as God commanded. What do you think about God’s decision in this situation?