

Family Survival 101
The God-Given Partner for Every Family
Deuteronomy 12:1-14

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Text Introduction: To this point in our series called “Family Survival 101” we have considered Deuteronomy 6. We have learned a fundamental principle about family life. We have learned that God gave the primary task of discipleship to the home. Now what is both interesting and important to understand is that Deuteronomy 7-11 continues to hammer home this same theme of the general renewal of God’s covenant. What we begin to see in chapter 12 is a more specific outline of how the covenant community is to keep the requirements of the covenant.

Text: ¹ “Be careful to follow these statutes and ordinances in the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess all the days you live on the earth. ² Destroy completely all the places where the nations you are driving out worship their gods —on the high mountains, on the hills, and under every flourishing tree. ³ Tear down their altars, smash their sacred pillars, burn up their Asherah poles, cut down the carved images of their gods, and wipe out their names from every place. ⁴ Don't worship the LORD your God this way. ⁵ Instead, you must go to the place the LORD your God chooses from all your tribes to put His name for His dwelling. ⁶ You are to bring there your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tenths and personal contributions, your vow offerings and freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. ⁷ You will eat there in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice with your household in everything you do, because the LORD your God has blessed you.

⁸ “You are not to do as we are doing here today; everyone [is doing] whatever seems right in his own eyes. ⁹ Indeed, you have not yet come into the resting place and the inheritance the LORD your God is giving you. ¹⁰ When you cross the Jordan and live in the land the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all the enemies around you and you live in security, ¹¹ then the LORD your God will choose the place to have His name dwell. Bring there everything I command you: your burnt offerings, sacrifices, offerings of the tenth, personal contributions, and all your choice offerings you vow to the LORD. ¹² You will rejoice before the LORD your God—you, your sons and daughters, your male and female slaves, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion or inheritance among you. ¹³ Be careful not to offer your burnt offerings in all the [sacred] places you see. ¹⁴ You must offer your burnt offerings only in the place the LORD chooses in one of your tribes, and there you must do everything I command you.

Introduction: Pop culture has given us some pretty famous duos. By duos, I mean those kinds of pairs that you hardly think of one without the other. I’m thinking of pairs like Sesame Street’s Bert and Ernie; cartoon characters Tom and Jerry, Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet; music’s Donnie and Marie. I wish that we could begin to think of the inseparable duo of the family and the church.

If one did not know better, it could be concluded after the last several weeks that we really do not need the church. After all, for the last 4 weeks, we have hammered home this principle that “God gave the primary task of discipleship to the home.” Again, lest someone conclude that families are all on their own and that the church is secondary, we come to chapter 12. We discover in chapter 12, as ancient as the setting might be, that God has given every family a covenant partner—the community of faith. For

our New Testament purposes and 21st century understanding it is easy to conclude that the application of this community partner is the church.

The Historical Context of Deuteronomy 12

Even within the context of strong words to the family unit for spiritual instruction, God was specific about community gatherings. Notice these two things in Deuteronomy 12.

- God chooses a place for community worship. Are you surprised by this? Does our place of worship matter?
- God commands a pattern for community worship. Not only does God give us the place, but He also prescribes the activity of our worship.

In addition to these, God also calls people to lead in the community worship. These are the Levites of verse 12. So, there is evidence and example that this is what God wills. But as in all things that God commands, there are reasons, so we want to look at the reasons that we must continue to practice community worship.

The Practical Conclusions of Deuteronomy 12

We need the church as our partner to strengthen our families. It is not “either/or,” it is “both/and.” Here is why we need the church. The church is the place where we . . .

- Encounter God through worship.
- Exercise our Spiritual Gifts.
- Encourage one another.
- Give and Receive Instruction.
- Give offerings to the Lord.

Your Personal Commitment from Deuteronomy 12?

What does your habit of worship attendance say about your desire for the church to be your partner? What does your attitude about your church communicate to those under your influence (your children) about the church being your partner?

What about the partnership of marriage? It’s a good illustration of the fundamental importance of this message. The husband and wife have roles. Likewise, both the church and the family have roles.