

Stewardship Series Bible Study

First Fruits

One of the purposes of the book of Deuteronomy is to prepare the Israelites to re-enter the land God had promised to their ancestors. Their ancestors were in Egypt for many generations. After the exodus, Moses guided the people in the wilderness for 40 years. He sought to form them into a community of faith. In Deuteronomy 8 Moses states that commandments and directions for living in the community are meant so that the people do not forget God, or who they are as the people of God, especially as they enter back into the Promised Land and experience prosperity. Deuteronomy 26 gives specific directions for honoring God and remembering who they are.

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

26When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, ²you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. ³You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, "Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us." ⁴When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, ⁵you shall make this response before the LORD your God: "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. ⁶When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, ⁷we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. ⁸The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; ⁹and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me." You shall set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God. ¹¹Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house.

What stories do you tell about how your faith was shaped?

What family stories do you have that tell of your family's faith journey?

What rituals and practices happen in your family to remember who you are as people of God?

