

# Deuteronomy 31:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law:

## Analysis

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**Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates**—comprehensive inclusivity: all ages, both genders, even non-Israelite residents. No demographic was excluded from hearing God's law. **That they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God**—the threefold purpose: auditory reception, intellectual comprehension, reverential response. **And observe to do all the words of this law**—the goal wasn't mere knowledge but obedience.

The progression is crucial: hearing leads to learning; learning produces fear (reverential awe); fear motivates obedience. This pattern appears in James 1:22-25: 'Do not merely listen to the word... Do what it says.' Including children and strangers demonstrated that covenant knowledge wasn't restricted to adult male Israelites—God's word addressed the entire community. The stranger's inclusion anticipated the Gospel's reach to all nations, fulfilling God's promise that through Abraham all peoples would be blessed.

## Historical Context

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Commanded circa 1406 BC for implementation in Canaan. Ancient patriarchal societies typically excluded women, children, and foreigners from religious

instruction, reserving sacred knowledge for male citizens. Israel's inclusivity was radical—everyone present during the feast, regardless of status, must hear the law. This reflected the universal human accountability before God and anticipated the church's message that in Christ 'there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female' (Galatians 3:28).

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. Why does God insist that women, children, and foreigners hear His law? What does this reveal about human dignity and responsibility?
2. How does the progression (hear, learn, fear, obey) inform effective Christian discipleship and teaching?
3. What barriers prevent 'everyone'—all demographics—from accessing God's word in contemporary churches?

## Interlinear Text

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וְהָטָרְ	וְהַנָּשִׁים	וְהַאֲנָשִׁים	הָעָם	אֶת	הַקָּהָל	לְ
	and women		the people		Gather	
	H802		H5971		H6950	
וְשָׁמְעוּ	לִפְנֵי	בְּשַׁעַר יְיָ	אֲשֶׁר	וְגֵרְךָ		
that they may hear		that is within thy gates		and thy stranger		
H8085	H4616	H8179	H834	H1616		
אֱלֹהֶיךָ	יְהוָה	אֶת	וְיִרְאוּ	וְלָמַדּוּ	וְלִפְנֵי	עַן
your God	the LORD		and fear	and that they may learn		
H430	H3068		H3372	H3925	H4616	
הַזֹּאת:	הַתּוֹכָהּ	דְּבַר יְיָ	כָּל	אֶת	לַעֲשׂוֹת	וְשָׁמְרוּ
	of this law	all the words			to do	and observe
H2063	H8451	H1697	H3605	H853	H6213	H8104

## Additional Cross-References

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**Deuteronomy 4:10** (Word): Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.