

youthESource Bible Study

Moses: A Leadership Study

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If you're looking for a Bible Study on Moses' leadership style then I've got bad news for you: It will be a pretty short study. Regardless of Moses' stardom in the Old Testament, he wasn't the poster child for excellent leadership. In this study you'll discover why and how God eventually convinced Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery.

Where should we start? We could easily start with Moses being abandoned at birth by his mother (Exodus 2:1-10). We could begin at the moment when Moses became a murderer (Exodus 2:11-15). But when studying Moses' leadership style, it would be most appropriate to begin with Exodus 2:23-25.

"During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel – and God knew."

- What was the only thing that the people of Israel could do?
 - Cry out for help.
- In what way did God respond?
 - God heard, God remembered, God saw, and God knew.
- How does it feel to be heard, remembered, seen, or known? Share a brief story about a time when you truly experienced one of those four actions.

So God decides to initiate Israel's rescue. In His perfect wisdom, He chooses to use an earthly leader to carry out His plan; He chose Moses, the murderer.

Open your Bibles and read Exodus 3:1.

"Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God."

What is it with God and shepherds? (See 1 Samuel 16:11-13 and Luke 2:8-15) Furthermore, what is Moses doing out there in the wilderness? He's hiding. He's simply hiding.

Continue reading Exodus 3:2-6.

- What two new qualities do we see in Moses in this short reading?
 - Moses displays curiosity when approaching the bush and humility when in the presence of God.

For those of you keeping score, this might be a good time to make a mental checklist of the qualities that God looks for in a leader: a sneaky slayer, a humble herdsman and a curious coward.

Read Exodus 3:7-10.

- How many times did you hear the word "I" when God spoke of His plan?
 - Five times
- How many times did God say the word "you" when speaking about Moses in this same section?
 - Only two times.
- What does that tell you about God's plan? Who is the main character in this true story?
 - God is, not Moses.

Quickly read Exodus 3:11.

"But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?'"

- Notice how Moses tried to turn the attention to himself. How many times did Moses use the word "I" in this one verse?
 - Twice. God quickly reminds him in verse 12 that this is about God, not Moses.

POINT #1: GODLY LEADERSHIP KEEPS THE FOCUS ON GOD AND NOT ON US.

ACTIVITY: Give a nail, a screwdriver and a short section of a 2x4 board to one student. Give a 2" screw, a hammer, and a short section of a 2x4 board to another student. On "GO!" encourage the students to drive the nail/screw through the other end of the 2x4 while only using the tool that you've given to them. "GO!" Watch them a moment, and then ask them why it isn't working. Do they have the right tools for the job? Let's look at the tools God gave to Moses. Read Exodus 3:13. Notice how Moses is keeping the attention on himself?

Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"

God answers Moses question, giving him a tool, "I AM has sent me to you."

NOTE: I AM is also known as YHVH (Yahweh). The Israelites held this name in such high esteem that it was unspeakable by human lips.

Read Exodus 3:15-22.

- List on a dry erase board all of the tools that God gives to Moses to carry out His plan.
 - He reassures the Israelites that He is the God of their forefathers, He declares that He is the God who will reign forever, He gives the Israelites a promise regarding the Promised Land (3:17), God prophesies with 100% accuracy how the Israelites and Pharaoh will respond, God promises that the Pharaoh will give them their freedom, He promises to provide gold and silver for the Israelites escape.
 - If you were Moses would you feel like God had given you enough tools to lead the Israelites out of Egypt on His behalf? Would you feel like God had given you the right tools for the job?

Read Exodus 4:1. Moses wasn't convinced.

God gives Moses even more tools for his tool belt in Exodus 4:2-9

- What additional tools did God give to Moses?
 - A staff that became a serpent, the leprous hand and the water from the Nile River turning to blood on the dry ground.
- That's nine tools in all. What gifts has God given to you to be used for His glory as a leader?
- How are you using those gifts for God's glory? If you aren't using them, why not? What's keeping you from prayerfully asking God to use you and the gifts He's given you for His glory?

POINT #2: GODLY LEADERS USE THE TOOLS THAT GOD HAS GIVEN TO THEM TO FULFILL GOD'S PLAN.

Surely Moses is ready to follow God's plan! Not quite. He's still scared!

Head to www.youtube.com and search for "Funny kid scared by cockroach!!!!" by Corbin Maxey. The video is 1:33 long.

Read Exodus 4:10-12

- What are Moses' fears?
 - Not eloquent, slow of speech and of tongue.
- How does God respond to those fears?
 - God reminds Moses that He created man, including Moses' mouth. God also promises to be Moses' mouth for him.

Read Exodus 4:13-17.

Moses begged, "Please send someone else."

- Can you remember a time when you didn't want to obey God?
- Make a list of people from the Bible who disobeyed or argued with God. What was the end result of those disagreements?
 - Jonah, Saul who became Paul, etc.
 - God's way and will eventually was fulfilled.
- What emotion did God feel toward Moses in verse 14?
 - Anger
- How, in these verses, did God show his omniscience? (Omniscience means "infinite knowledge")
 - God had already called for Aaron probably before Moses even saw the burning bush.
- Although God was angry with Moses, He still had a plan to use Moses. It was through Moses that God would lead His people out of slavery and into a land of their own. And through Moses, God would give His people His law, His commandments, which would later be fulfilled in Jesus. (See John 1:17)

Finally, read Exodus 4:18.

- What did Moses eventually do?
 - Obeyed God and prepared to return to Egypt.

POINT #3: GODLY LEADERS OBEY GOD'S COMMAND.

We only looked at two chapters of Moses' entire story. We didn't study Moses before Pharaoh. We didn't look at Moses' leadership during the 10 plagues. We didn't even consider Moses leading the people out of Egypt and through the Red Sea. We could have devoted an entire lesson to the way Moses led the people through the desert during 40 years of wandering.

We could have. We could have studied each and every one of those events; but we would have come to the same exact result.

MOSES WAS AN EFFECTIVE LEADER BECAUSE HE LOOKED TO AND FOLLOWED GOD.

Moses doesn't get the credit. Moses was great for one reason: a great God working through him. So if you're looking forward to becoming a better leader, don't look in the mirror. Look to the LORD and follow His will, allowing Him to strengthen you and keep you strong in His Word and in faith. It's when we do this that we truly follow His will for our lives.

Close in Prayer