

# The Reluctant Leader

## EXODUS 2:11- 12; 16-17

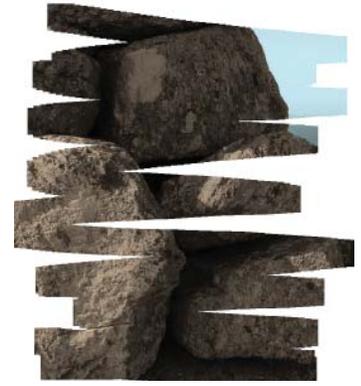
One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and saw their forced labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his kinsfolk. **12** He looked this way and that, and seeing no one he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. [...] **16** The priest of Midian had seven daughters. They came to draw water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. **17** But some shepherds came and drove them away. Moses got up and came to their defense and watered their flock.

## EXODUS 3: 1-4, 10-14

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. **2** There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. **3** Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." **4** When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." [...] **10** So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." **11** But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" **12** He said, "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain." **13** But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" **14** God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

## EXODUS 4:1-15

Then Moses answered, "But suppose they do not believe me or listen to me, but say, 'The Lord did not appear to you.'" **2** The Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A staff." **3** And he said, "Throw it on the ground." So he threw the staff on the ground, and it became a snake; and Moses drew back from it. **4** Then the Lord said to Moses, "Reach out your hand, and seize it by the tail" —so he reached out his hand and grasped it, and it became a staff in his hand— **5** "so that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you." **6** Again, the Lord said to him, "Put your hand inside your cloak." He put his hand into his cloak; and when he took it out, his hand was leprous, as white as snow. **7** Then God said, "Put your hand back into your cloak" —so he put his hand back into your cloak" —so he put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was restored like the rest of his body— **8** "If they will not believe you or heed the first sign, they may believe the second sign. **9** If they will not believe even these two signs or heed you, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground; and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground." [...] **10** But Moses said to the Lord, "O my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." **11** Then the Lord said to him, "Who gives speech to mortals? Who makes them mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? **12** Now go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak." **13** But he said, "O my Lord, please send someone else." **14** Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses and he said, "What of your brother Aaron, the Levite? I know that he can speak fluently; even now he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you his heart will be glad. **15** You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do.



What do we learn about Moses in these passages?

What do we learn about God?

## BEFORE GOD'S CALL

### External Responses :

- ▶ [ ] Moses gets involved when he sees the Hebrew and the women being mistreated.
- ▶ [ ] Both times he responded, he took a risk at cost to himself. Moses responds out of principle, which prompts self sacrifice.
- ▶ [ ] Moses pays attention to the burning bush: God gets his attention.

### Internal Characteristics :

- ▶ [ ] Moses chooses to act against injustice.
- ▶ [ ] Later in his leadership this allows him to abandon himself to God even when it costs him the admiration of the people he is leading.
- ▶ [ ] Will this desert be where I spend the rest of my life or is there something more? Moses turns aside and makes himself available for God's call.

## AFTER GOD'S CALL

### External Excuses :

- ▶ [ ] Moses didn't think Pharaoh would ever agree—it would cost him too much. God's call for him to go to Pharaoh seemed ridiculous: it could never work.
- ▶ [ ] This paralyzed him from seeing God as author and in charge of the plan and ultimately led to his laundry list of excuses self sacrifice.
- ▶ [ ] There was a time when Moses might have styled himself a Hebrew liberator, but he knows his limitations too well now to consider himself one. **Moses doesn't see himself as having the competencies or gifts required.**

### Internal Feelings :

- ▶ [ ] Moses said the task was impossible but what he really meant is "I am incompetent for this task. I am not this gifted."
- ▶ [ ] All Moses could feel was fear: fear of failure, fear of letting God down, fear of letting the Hebrews down, fear of being crushed by Pharaoh. Fear produced the paralysis.
- ▶ [ ] Moses wants to claim, "I am not who you think I am. I know better than you my limitations and inabilities. I must have deceived you."

## GOD'S MINISTRY TO THE RELECTUANT LEADER

MOSES' CHOICES/ OBJECTIONS	GOD'S PATIENT RESPONSES
Fled conflict in Egypt	Called Moses to himself and sent him back to Egypt
"Who am I?"	"I will be with you"
"Who are you?"	"I AM WHO I AM... I AM sent you"
"Suppose they do not believe me"	You will demonstrate my power
"I am not eloquent"	"I make mouths—I can make you eloquent"
"Send someone else"	"I will give you a partner, Aaron"

### DISCUSSION GUIDE

What is the mission you have been called to?

How have you wrestled with being like Moses?

How could you make space to hear God's voice over your own internal voice?

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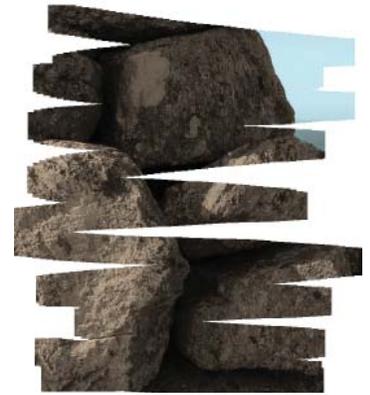
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What do we learn about Moses in these passages?

Moses sees the Hebrew being mistreated and he responds. Moses sees women being mistreated and he responds. He is not afraid to take risks. Moses pays attention—he sees a burning bush and stops what he is doing.

What do we learn about God?

(Why does God choose Moses for this mission? What is behind Moses' objections? What does God want Moses to see?)

God has prepared Moses before He calls him to lead the mission and Moses has responded to that. When God calls Moses at the burning bush, it unveils all of Moses' insecurities. His objections may be legitimate in part, but there is more to it. We know that because God answers his excuses with tangible evidence but Moses is not convinced. Deeper things going on for Moses—fear (of failure, of being rejected, of not being able to do the task, self doubt, etc.

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## BEFORE GOD'S CALL

### External Responses :

- ▶ **Willingness to act** Moses gets involved when he sees the Hebrew and the women being mistreated.
- ▶ **Risk-taker** Both times he responded, he took a risk at cost to himself. Moses responds out of principle, which prompts self sacrifice.
- ▶ **Pays attention** Moses pays attention to the burning bush: God gets his attention.

### Internal Characteristics :

- ▶ **Sense of injustice** Moses chooses to act against injustice.
- ▶ **Reckless Abandon** Later in his leadership this allows him to abandon himself to God even when it costs him the admiration of the people he is leading.
- ▶ **Expectant/Hopeful** Will this desert be where I spend the rest of my life or is there something more? Moses turns aside and makes himself available for God's call.

## AFTER GOD'S CALL

### External Excuses :

- ▶ **Task is impossible** Moses didn't think Pharaoh would ever agree—it would cost him too much. God's call for him to go to Pharaoh seemed ridiculous: it could never work.
- ▶ **Paralysis** This paralyzed him from seeing God as author and in charge of the plan and ultimately led to his laundry list of excuses self sacrifice.
- ▶ **I can't do this** There was a time when Moses might have styled himself a Hebrew liberator, but he knows his limitations too well now to consider himself one. **Moses doesn't see himself as having the competencies or gifts required.**

### Internal Feelings :

- ▶ **Incompetence** Moses said the task was impossible but what he really meant is "I am incompetent for this task. I am not this gifted."
- ▶ **Fear/Dread** All Moses could feel was fear: fear of failure, fear of letting God down, fear of letting the Hebrews down, fear of being crushed by Pharaoh. Fear produced the paralysis.
- ▶ **Self-doubt** Moses wants to claim, "I am not who you think I am. I know better than you my limitations and inabilities. I must have deceived you."

## GOD'S MINISTRY TO THE RELECTUANT LEADER

MOSES' CHOICES/ OBJECTIONS	GOD'S PATIENT RESPONSES
Fled conflict in Egypt Moses may have felt that he blew his chance to make a difference, but God wasn't done with him.	Called Moses to himself and sent him back to Egypt
"Who am I?" It is not who you are that matters, but who I am that matters	"I will be with you"
"Who are you?" God self-defines—he isn't defined by being anyone's son or relation (or even god)	"I AM WHO I AM... I AM sent you"
"Suppose they do not believe me" God didn't send Moses empty handed. He gave him the resources he'd need.	You will demonstrate my power
"I am not eloquent" God didn't make a mistake in the way he made Moses.	"I make mouths—I can make you eloquent"
"Send someone else" God gets angry with Moses but still does not give up on him—he gives him what he needs, a partner already on his way	"I will give you a partner, Aaron"

Moses' excuses and internal complexity do not scare God or cause him to look for someone else. He's chosen Moses for this mission because He knows what Moses is capable of. God holds both things—Moses' leadership development and the greater Mission—the Exodus.

### DISCUSSION GUIDE

What is the mission you have been called to?

How have you wrestled with being like Moses?

How could you make space to hear God's voice over your own internal voice?