

WATER•FIRE•STONE

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MOSES

Session 15 – His Presence, Part Four | Exodus 34

Moses stepped out of his tent into the cool morning air. Dawn was his favorite hour, easing gently into a new day while the camp still slept. He was bone-tired and weary. But the mountain, like a sleeping giant silhouetted against the desert sky, called to him.

It would take several hours to reach the summit. At first, the path was smooth—then it crumbled and rose sharply, every step filling his sandals with an avalanche of shale. Slow and steady, clutching stone tablets in one arm, leaning hard on his staff to keep from slipping. By the time he reached the granite peak, white-hot sun was flooding the desert floor far below him.

What compelled Moses, an 80-year-old man, to make this solitary climb? You know the story well, but read it again with fresh eyes to see God’s glory.



This session in our four-part series, *His Presence*, explores lessons in God’s character and why spending time in God’s presence benefits us and impacts the lives of those around us.

Icebreaker

Name three character traits that describe you.

Goals for this Session

- Discover what God says about Himself.
- Consider God’s warning to the Israelites and how it relates to you.
- Pray with full intention and increasing desire to experience God’s presence in a deeper way.

1 Read Exodus 34:1–10. | What is happening? Highlight what stands out to you, and why.

2 Exodus 34:1–4 | These verses are sandwiched between two remarkable scenes in Moses' life. Moses prays, "Show me Your glory," and God tells him how that will happen. The next scene is a captivating description of that encounter with God. It's easy to focus on those extraordinary events and miss a key element tucked into these verses.

- a. **Be ready.** A few simple steps of obedience allowed Moses to experience God's presence in a more intimate way. What do you suppose occupied his thoughts while he cut out those tablets of stone? These verses remind us that being ready to meet God involves practical preparation and anticipation.

In practical terms, what can you do to *be ready by morning* to meet with the Lord?

What do you anticipate from the Lord when you meet with Him?

- b. **Come and present yourself to Me.** Why are we permitted to come into God's presence and what should be our attitude of approach?

Hebrews 10:19–22

Hebrews 4:16

Psalm 100:4–5

Psalm 119:10–11

3 Moses had asked the Lord, “Let me know Your ways.” Take time to contemplate the Lord’s description of Himself (verses 6–7). Discuss each attribute and why this is a vital part of knowing and growing in our relationship with God.

Compassion and mercy:

#wordstoknow

forgiving (nasa) to lift or carry.

Slow to anger:

iniquity (awon) to turn aside from what is right or good.

Unfailing love and faithfulness:

transgression (pasha) a willful violation or betrayal.

sin (chatta’h) a moral failure of any kind.

Forgiving iniquity, transgression, sin:

Justice | By no means clearing the guilty*:

Memory Verse

Now the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there,
and proclaimed the name of the Lord.

Exodus 34:5 NKJV

Which part of this verse resonates most with you today? How or in what way?

* This refers to “those who hate Me” (Exodus 20:5) which is anyone who persists in unbelief, rejecting God. “Visiting the iniquity” doesn’t mean God punishes innocent children; He deals justly with each person (Deuteronomy 7:9–10). But we know that sinful behavior affects others; families suffer and sometimes pass the same sins on to the next generation. However, the cycle can be broken through repentance and forgiveness.

4 Read Exodus 34:11–17. | What did God promise He would do for His people when they entered the Promised Land?

a. In order for this to happen, what did God warn them to stay away from and why?

b. Are the *specific* warnings God gave to Israel in these verses still relevant for us? In what way? Give some current-day examples of similar snares that we might be swayed or tempted by.

It will become a snare...

How does it work? Since most creatures choose the path of least resistance, a noose, net, or wire is placed directly in the path.

Spread out a little bait, scatter some weeds or vines, and the unsuspecting prey will walk right into it. They have no idea they're in trouble until it's too late.

5 **The Lord, whose name is Jealous** (verse 14). God emphasizes this attribute by using it twice in the same sentence. But what exactly does this mean? Let's remember that God is not jealous *of* anything—He can't be, since He is all sufficient, lacking nothing. He is jealous *for* what is His, and that includes you. It is an expression of His passionate, fiercely protective love.

a. Think of this in terms of marriage. Would you feel completely loved by God if He was happy to share you with the world? Why or why not?

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When God says something more than once, you need to think twice about what it means.

You don't belong to God once.

You belong to God twice. Once by virtue of creation.

Twice by virtue of redemption.

Mark Batterson

b. Think of this in terms of parenting. Would you feel safely loved if God was indifferent or neglectful to nurture and protect you? Why or why not?

Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. —Ephesians 6:18 NIV

Adoration – Giving praise and honor to God for who He is and what He does.

Confession – Honestly deal with sin; acknowledge to God the ways (and whys) you fall short.

Thanksgiving – Verbalize your gratitude; express your praise and a thankful heart.

Supplication – Pray specifically for the needs of others, ourselves, our church, our nation.



Close your discussion time by praying together. Use the A·C·T·S pattern as a group focus and keep it simple. No need to be lengthy or profound—just authentic.

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