

WATER·FIRE·STONE

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MOSES

Session 1 – God Enough | Exodus Chapters 1–2

Moses: Lawgiver . . . Lawbreaker . . . Liberator.

God called and Moses said, “Here I am.” Then he heard the plan and said, “Send someone else.” That’s not the kind of response we expect from an epic leader like Moses, but have we ever used a similar excuse? *I can’t. I’m not qualified. It’s too soon . . . it’s too late.*

We know Moses, the great hero of history, but who was the man behind the legend? He was born in poverty, raised in a palace, but the wilderness became his home. He was an outlaw, a loner, and a Lawgiver. Reluctant to lead but determined to follow God. At times he could be impulsive, impatient, explosive. He was idolized and criticized, yet he remained humble and forgiving.

How did this man with so many complexities become a world-changer? Is the secret to his friendship with God something we can tap into? With Moses’ life and times as our script, we will explore why God chooses unlikely heroes—flaws, failures and all—to accomplish His perfect plan.

Icebreaker

When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up? (Choose your top three.)
What motivated you toward the career path you eventually chose?

Goals for this Session:

- Discover what motivates ordinary people to act with extraordinary courage.
- Consider how failure can be an excellent opportunity for growth.
- Pray for strength to obey God’s will and resolve to trust His timing.

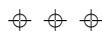
The Back Story . . .

Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land He swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.” —Genesis 50:24

Several hundred years separate the end of Joseph’s story in Genesis and the beginning of Moses’ story in Exodus. Joseph arrived in Egypt as a slave, sold by his own brothers. But God had a plan and Joseph rose through the ranks to become prime minister. While Egypt prospered, sons were born to Joseph and their names reflect his journey. Ephraim means *fruitfulness*—“For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction” and Manasseh means *forget*—“For God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s household” (Genesis 41:51–52). But God always had a plan to reunite Joseph with his family.

Jacob’s clan migrated to Egypt during one of the worst droughts on record. Famines were common in the land of Canaan, but Egypt’s lifeblood was the Nile. When Joseph brought his extended family to Egypt, the king graciously allowed them to settle in the lush farmlands of Goshen where they could raise strong families and shepherd their flocks in peace. And they did.

After a long and prosperous life, Joseph passed away; over time his godly influence was forgotten. During a period of political decline, foreign invaders swept into Egypt and set up their own pharaoh. This may have been the king “who did not know Joseph” (Exodus 1:8). All he knew was that a growing Hebrew population was trouble waiting to happen. So he forced them into hard labor. Successive pharaohs continued the abuse and slavery for generations of Hebrews. Their good life was a forgotten dream. But God had a plan and He always keeps His promises.



Expectations. Hopes. Uncertainties. Failures. We all have them, and at one time or another we wonder what God is doing and where this journey will take us. Who are we? The better question is *whose are we?*

As a young man, Moses tried to be what he thought his people needed. It didn’t go the way he hoped, and Moses figured he’d missed his chance. But it’s never too late to respond to God’s call on our lives.

In this two-part series, *God Enough*, we’ll explore God’s call and discover that His plan is never limited by our limitations.

1 Read Exodus 1:8–22 | What is happening? Describe the situation in your own words.

- a. Why was Pharaoh hostile toward the Israelites? What motivated him to oppress them?
- b. Describe Pharaoh’s initial plan for controlling the Hebrew population (verses 11–14). How did Pharaoh and all of Egypt benefit from this plan? In what way did it fail?
- c. Pharaoh’s next plan was even more vile than the first (verses 15–22). What did Pharaoh decree and how did that work out?

2 Two women, Shiphrah and Puah, are mentioned by name.¹ As midwives, they were trained to safely deliver babies, but Pharaoh brought them in and told them to make sure that no boys survived. Think of the pressure put on them to compromise their ethics and silently comply with the king’s command. What was at risk for them?

- a. What gave them courage to reject Pharaoh’s evil scheme?
- b. The Bible says that fear (awe·reverence·honor) of God gives wisdom and results in good judgment (see Proverbs 9:10 NLT). Simply put, obeying God is always the right thing to do. When obedience requires choosing the harder path, what can you be absolutely sure of? Use the following verses for help with your answer.

Proverbs 3:5–7

Psalm 119:165

¹ With so many Jewish babies being born, it’s likely they also had other midwives working under their supervision.

3 In a way, Shiphrah and Puah’s act of “civil disobedience” was the start of a revolution that eventually led to Israel’s mass exodus out of Egypt eighty years later. Freedom didn’t come in their lifetime, but they (literally) helped birth a generation of change.

- a. Who would guess that two ordinary women could discreetly outmaneuver the most powerful man in Egypt? They had no elaborate plan, simply an internal drive to do the right thing and be obedient to God. They did what they could and trusted God for the outcome.

Do you believe that God still uses ordinary people with ordinary skills to give help and hope in difficult times? Does that include you? Consider what the Bible has to say about your place and purpose in God’s plan. Share your thoughts.

Ephesians 1:4

1 Corinthians 1:26–27

John 15:16

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Courage isn’t a feeling that
you wait for.
Courage is doing.
And sometimes courage
means doing it scared.

Jill Briscoe

Memory Verse

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit,
and that your fruit should remain,
that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.”

John 15:16 NKJV

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

4 Read Exodus 2:1–10 | Highlight some of the details that stand out to you.

- a. Read Acts 7:17–21 | Add any other details you notice from Stephen’s account.
- b. Three women played a key role in Moses’ early life. The world was not a safe place, particularly if you happened to be an illegal baby boy. Describe how God used each one and what motivated them to protect Moses. What risks/difficulties were involved?

→ Moses’ mother:

→ Moses’ sister:

→ Pharaoh’s daughter:

5 Read Exodus 2:11–25 and Acts 7:22–29 | Highlight the details that stand out to you.

- a. What does the first incident (verses 11–14) tell you about Moses’ sense of identity and his character?
- b. Moses had a choice to make: Take a position of influence in Egypt or fully embrace his Hebrew heritage. From a human standpoint, Egypt was the obvious choice. Someday he could be in a position to relieve suffering and restore his people to the respect they had during Joseph’s day. Was a complete break with Egypt really necessary? In your own words, explain what the Bible says about the company we keep and the choices we make.

Psalm 1:1–6

Proverbs 12:26

1 Corinthians 15:33

6 Faith or impulse? Hebrews tells us that faith was the deciding factor in Moses' choice (Hebrews 11:24–25). But Moses' first attempt to help his people was a complete failure. What do you think he might have believed about himself at that point?

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Moses spent 40 years thinking he was a somebody; 40 years learning he was a nobody; and 40 years discovering what God can do with somebody who knows he's a nobody.

D.L. Moody

- a. What does the second incident (verses 16–19) tell you about Moses' sense of identity and his character?

- b. It was a long road for Moses, but God set the pace and worked everything, including Moses' flaws and failures, together for His good purpose. Have you ever tried to help God out or hurry Him along? When the wheels seem stuck, we tend to press down on the pedal. Next time you want to take matters in your own hands, go ahead and act—but act *on God's Word*. How should we do that and what will it accomplish?

Psalm 27:14

Isaiah 41:10

Philippians 4:5–7

- c. Which aspect of faith do you personally find more challenging: knowing God's will or trusting His timing?
- d. Describe a time when God turned a failure into an opportunity for growth. What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about God?

Action Steps ►► As you think through this part of Moses’ story, what is the most important takeaway point for you personally? How will you put what you’ve learned into action?

“**P**ray 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.
