

# WATER•FIRE•STONE

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MOSES

## Session 2 – God Enough | Exodus Chapters 3–4

Moses cupped a hand over his eyes and squinted toward the mountain. From a distance at dawn, it looked like a camel’s hump jutting up from the desert floor, but now the sun was playing tricks with shadows. Shielding his eyes, Moses stared up into the craggy face of Mt. Horeb staring back down on him. He loved the solitude of this place. Mountains don’t care about time. Minutes and days and decades mean nothing to them. Mountains teach you to forget. And Moses had learned that lesson well.

All he was looking for that morning was a suitable spot for sheep and goats to forage desert grass and lie down in the shade of a rock. But everything was about to change.

### Icebreaker – *Who am I?*

Can you name these famous failures?

I was fired from a local newspaper; the editor said I “lacked imagination and had no good ideas.”

Walt Disney

I didn’t speak until I was four; I couldn’t read until I was seven. Because of a speech impediment, my teachers labeled me “slow” and “mentally handicapped.”

Albert Einstein

I only sold one painting in my lifetime (to a friend for a small fee).

Vincent Van Gogh

My music teacher criticized my technique and told me that I was “hopeless” at composing music.

Ludwig Beethoven

### Goals for this Session

- Discover what God’s name reveals about His nature and character.
- Consider why God’s desire to use us has nothing to do with our limitations.
- Pray honest prayers that confess weakness but still embrace obedience to God’s call.

**1** Read Exodus 3:1–10 | What was Moses doing when he came upon the burning bush? When you think about it, how was this useful in preparing Moses for the assignment God was giving him?

- a. This is the first time on record that Moses has personal interaction with God. Notice what the Lord tells Moses about who He is, what He knows, and what He intends to do. Put yourself in Moses' place—if this was your first encounter with God, what would you be able to know about Him from these verses? What characteristics and qualities of God stand out to you?

**2** Read Exodus 3:11–22 | Moses was comforted to know that God saw the affliction of His people; he was relieved that the time had finally come for God to deliver them. But he was stunned when God said, “Come now and I will send you” (verse 10).

- a. **“Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?”** That’s a fair question, but where did it come from? Give some possible reasons why Moses hesitated to step up and be the leader he once wanted to be.
  
- b. **And God said, “I will be with you.”** But what did Moses hear? God gave Moses specific instructions and even told him how it would all work out. But at this point, Moses is still thinking *who . . . me?* Like a deer in headlights, Moses is paralyzed by his own sense of inadequacy. While God is still speaking (from a burning bush no less) Moses is calculating all the ways this plan can go sideways. Meanwhile, God—the great **I AM**—explains how He Himself will deliver His people.

Read through verses 16–21 and circle all the “I” statements God makes about Himself; what He sees, what He knows, what He has done, what He will do for Moses and the Israelites. List as many as you find here.

**3** Let's go back to verse 4 and a detail we slipped by. Moses noticed a particular bush in a desert filled with tumbleweeds. Imagine Moses going home that night and Zipporah says, "Tell me about your day." And Moses says, "I had a conversation with a bush." Poor Moses. Forty years of working under a scorching sun with no one to talk to but sheep has finally gotten to you!

This bush blazed, but that's not so remarkable. Under certain conditions, a creosote bush can suddenly ignite, flare up, and burn itself out in minutes. But this bush kindled and kept burning, engulfed but not consumed. *That's remarkable*—but there's still more to the story.

What did the Lord wait to see before He spoke to Moses from the burning bush? Why is that a significant point for us to consider and apply?

- a. God used a burning bush to get Moses' attention so He could reveal His plan and redirect the course of Moses' life. Can you identify something that God has used to get your attention? How would you say it has changed the course of your life?

- b. God spoke to Moses from a burning bush. Today He speaks from His Word. Like Moses, we have issues and inadequacies to deal with. Culture says *find yourself* and offers countless ways to *tap into your potential*. Is that enough?

Discuss why we must learn to discern the difference between self-help tumbleweeds that flare up and burn out, and a "burning bush" conversation with God.

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The Bible is our burning bush, a faithful declaration of the presence and holiness of God.

We ask it to tell us about ourselves, and all the while it is telling us about I AM.

Jen Wilkin

## Memory Verse

By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

Hebrews 11:24–25 ESV

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

**4** Read Exodus 4:1–17 | Moses had a list of reasons why he wasn't the man for the job. For every excuse Moses gave, God reassured him—but not in the way we might expect. This was no pep talk to unleash his deep inner potential. Moses felt inadequate because he *was* inadequate! But God knew exactly what he needed.

Briefly describe what Moses' objections were and God's response each time.

a. What if they don't . . . (verse 1).

b. I'm just not good at . . . (verse 10).

c. Please Lord, send someone else . . . (verse 13). Do you detect a shift in Moses' attitude? "*I can't*" is inching toward "*I won't*." It wasn't Moses' insecurities that made God angry, it was his resistance to trust God and take Him at His word. Can you identify with Moses here? In what way?

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As long as you are saying,  
“*what if*” you aren't obeying.  
You're negotiating.  
And there's a big difference.

Ray Pritchard

Our limitations don't provoke the Lord but stubborn unbelief will. For every weakness we can name, God's answer remains the same. Instead of simply copying each verse below, personalize them. What is God saying *to you*?

Psalms 32:8–9

Isaiah 41:10

2 Corinthians 12:9

Philippians 4:13

**5** Read Exodus 4:18–31 | At this point, Moses doesn't yet resemble the bold and confident leader God is transforming him to be. Moses' first encounter with I AM WHO I AM did not instantly burn away his own doubts and insecurity.

Moses may have felt twice the age and half the man he used to be, but God was shaping him into the man He intended him to be—but it didn't happen overnight.

In this section, Moses (who wrote Exodus) includes three family incidents that a prouder man might have left out. *"Not my best moment,"* an older, wiser Moses could have said.

- a. **Jethro** (verses 18–20). What reason did Moses give Jethro, his father-in-law, for going back to Egypt? What significant details did he leave out?

Everything we know about Jethro (we'll learn more in chapter 18) indicates that Moses respected him and the feeling was mutual. But somehow, Moses couldn't bring himself to say, "I'm going back to lead my people out of slavery." In your observation, what was Moses still coming to grips with?

- b. **Zipporah** (verses 24–26). For some reason, Moses had neglected to circumcise his son\* and God confronted him about it in the strongest possible way. God's covenant with Abraham (see Genesis 17:9–14) was sealed through circumcision, the distinguishing mark of God's people. God was unwilling to let Moses proceed without making this right. Even if no one else knew, God knew. Why was it important for Moses to bring his private life into alignment with his public ministry?

What types of sin or spiritual neglect are we most likely to tolerate and sweep under the rug? Discuss why integrity in personal matters is so important for *every* believer, whether they are in public ministry or not.

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\* Zipporah may have insisted on raising her sons according to her own Midianite culture and Moses simply let it go. At any rate, Moses was guilty of compromise and disobedience here.

- c. **Aaron** (verses 14–16; 27–31). Moses tried to convince God that He needed someone more forceful to stand up to Pharaoh. “Slow of speech” doesn’t mean Moses stuttered or talked slow; the Hebrew phrase (literally *a heavy tongue*) was like saying, “I’m not a naturally persuasive or gifted speaker.” But Aaron was. So God accommodated Moses and brought Aaron on the team.

Put yourself in Moses’ place. Consider what having Aaron by his side meant for Moses. What positive encouragement might Moses have gotten from his brother?

Aaron may have helped Moses get over his fear of public speaking, but later we’ll see that he wasn’t always a help to his brother. Moses learned the hard way what God already knew. Moses wanted Aaron because he had great presentation skills—but God chose Moses because He was looking for true leadership ability.

God knows us better than we know ourselves. Can you think of a time when you have pressed hard for something and God allowed you to have Plan “B”? If you could go back and choose differently, would you? Share why or why not.

**6** *What is that in your hand?* God asked Moses that question, and He asks the same of us. Moses’ staff was a sturdy piece of equipment, an extension of who he was and how he made a living. It was useful, but not remarkable. But look what God did with that ordinary tool.

Let’s be real. Throwing down the staff was a simple act of obedience but it took courage to reach out and grab that snake by the tail. It was something of a test, wasn’t it? Moses needed to trust God and *go all in*.

Describe a time when obeying God took you out of your comfort zone. How did it work out and what did you learn from it?

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Never underestimate the ripple effect of one act of obedience.

Mark Batterson

**A**ction 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

**A**doration – Giving praise and honor to God for who He is and what He does.

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

**T**hanksgiving – Verbalize your gratitude; express your praise and a thankful heart.

**S**upplication – 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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Notes

A series of horizontal lines for writing notes.