

Moses Lesson 2 Article

What lessons can we learn from Moses as we meet him in Exodus 2–5? Several.

* *Use opportunities.* God placed Moses, of slave heritage, in the palace of his people's oppressors. There he was "educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action" (Acts 7:22). We too need to take opportunities to grow, and to develop within our own culture.

* *Dream dreams.* Moses had a vision of himself as his people's deliverer. When he killed the Egyptian taskmaster he supposed "that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not" (Acts 7:25). Not all of us are called to fulfill our early dreams. But the desire to do great things for God, and to dare great things to help those for whom He cares, is admirable in us as well as in Moses.

* *Accept discipline.* The Jews didn't share Moses' vision of himself as a hero. Pharaoh heard what he had done, and Moses fled. For 40 years he lived as a simple shepherd in a backward land. The image of the hero faded under the stress of repetitious toil. Finally Moses learned to accept himself as a "nobody." We too need this kind of discipline. God does not want to break our spirits. But He cannot use pride. When we accept ourselves as nobodies, only then can we become somebodies whom God can use.

* *Face limitations.* At the burning bush Moses carried his "nobodiness" too far. At 80 God spoke to him, and announced that the youthful dream would be fulfilled. Now Moses hesitated. He saw so many reasons why he could not do what he had once planned to do.

"What if they do not believe me?"

"Lord, I have never been eloquent."

"Lord, please send someone else."

Each of these objections indicates clearly that Moses now was all too aware of his inadequacy. From "I can" he had swung to "I can't."

It's important that we face our own limitations, and reject trust in our natural abilities. But we can be too overwhelmed by our weaknesses. We need to remember God, and shift our gaze from ourselves to Him.

* *Accept God's commission.* In the call to Moses, God had announced His purpose. "I am sending you ... to bring My people the Israelites out of Egypt" (Ex. 3:10). For each objection, God had a promise:

"The elders of Israel will listen to you."

"Go, and I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

God is well able to do in us what He intends. With the commission of God comes the presence and power of God that enables us to fulfill it.

* *Expect disappointments.* Moses did go as God commanded. And the Hebrews did welcome him. But, as God had also warned, Pharaoh did not listen. The burdens of the slave race were now increased. The people of Israel turned on Moses, and Moses turned to God. "Why have You brought trouble upon this people? Is this why You sent me?"

Every ministry knows disappointments. No path God asks us to follow will always be smooth. Learning to accept the disappointments and yet to always turn back to God is an important aspect of preparation for ministry.¹

¹ Richards, L., & Richards, L. O. (1987). *The teacher's commentary* (76–77). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.