

“Backing Into Greatness”
Dr. Dan Johnson, preaching
Exodus 3:1-6

Jim Collins, in his best selling (and one of the best of its kind) book, Good to Great, shares a discovery that surprised him and his entire team: Truly great leaders are humble leaders, hesitant to talk about themselves, ready to defer to others. It's called **Level 5 Leadership**. His model for this idea could have been Moses. Consider this when you read about his response to God's call in chapter 3 and throughout his remarkable life.

The episodes of Moses' life are dramatic and extraordinary, NOT to say, "Moses is different from us and therefore irrelevant to us," but rather to make an unforgettable impression to drive home the powerful point in each episode that God wants you to know and never forget about yourself.

Episode 1 - the midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, ordinary persons, with great faith and nerve (1:15-22)

Principle: What you do in God's name, does not end, but is timeless and of great blessing.

Episode 2 - Pharaoh commands that all male children be killed, which is in effect to destroy the plan of God (Really shouldn't mess with God!). The irony: The Pharaoh who orders the destruction of all male children ends up being the "father/grandfather" of the one whom God will use to overthrow Pharaoh himself! (2:1-10)

Principle: As you live a life of faith in God, even the potential obstacles will come to bless you and serve the larger purposes of God.

Episode 3 - Moses flees to the desert places of Midian (2:11-25) and there he finds his bride, his mentor and his God.

Principle: Most of us "leave" physically or existentially, and it's often in those "I'd-rather-not-be-there" desert places where things powerfully good happen.

Episode 4 - The encounter between God and Moses is dynamic, engaging; two distinct and strong personalities are present. God does not demand a self-effacing Moses (or anyone). Moses' reaction is perhaps similar to how we might respond. (3:1 - 4:17)

Excuse One: I'm not capable to do the task. (3:11-12)

God's Answer: I will be with you.

Excuse Two: I don't know you well enough, or at all, God; what is your name? (3:5-11)

God's Answer: YHWH - difficult to translate but three good possibilities:

I am who I am

I will cause to be what I will cause to be

I will be who I am/ I am who I will be - (this may be the best reading. It means: "I will be God for you; I will be the kind of God God is.")

Excuse Three: What if they don't believe me, or what if I am not able to make them believe me? (4:1-9)

God's Answer: I'll give you three signs, they all center around "What's in your hand."

Excuse Four: I am not eloquent.

God's Answer: I will help you speak and teach you what to say.

Principle: In our Christian life, most of us do not arrogantly aspire for too much, we sadly settle for too little. God wants us to (a) recognize our limits, (b) be unreservedly dependent on God, (c) be imaginative about what's in our hand, and once we see it, put our hand to the task with a lot of hard work and passion, and (d) trust God to be the kind of God God is!