

## Spiritual and Practical Exercises

(for the week of September 18)

1. Reflect on the opening chapter of Exodus, especially how God uses very ordinary people to confront persons of power and prevail. The midwives acted in faith and what they did in God's name had an eternal effect. Take your ordinary day, live in faith, act in God's Spirit and what you do will live forever.
2. Be aware this week of "major obstacles," hard places, difficulties you encounter; try to imagine how you can "give them to God," and see how they might become avenues for God to bless you and serve others.
3. As Moses' mother placed Moses in that little basket coated with tar and pitch and floated him down the Nile river, I'm sure she never dreamed that she would soon be nursing him and be again his mother. Reflect on some dreams of yours that you have had, for one reason or another, to put in a basket and float away only to have them joyfully return to you.
4. Moses fled from Egypt to the desert of Midian - think of some times that you have "left" and it was in the desert place you found God (or God found you). I used to "flee" to the east pasture on our farm, just to get the quiet and space I needed, and talked with God.
5. Maybe your teen is going through an "experience in Midian" right now. How do you best give him/her the space they need and, at the same time, the protection they need? Ask God to guide you.
6. God seems to bring "Jethros" into the lives of younger people. These are people who guide, mentor, are "there" for them. Maybe a friend, a youth counselor, a Sunday School teacher, a coach, a teacher, an uncle or aunt. To whom are you being a Jethro? Are there ways you could be more intentional, more actively involved?
7. God took an ordinary bush to gain Moses' attention. So often God uses the very ordinary to speak to us. Be intentional a couple of days this week in looking for God in the most ordinary of places, and then listen and learn.
8. Note God's compassion: "I have seen and heard, I am concerned and I have come down to my people" (Exodus 3:7). Whenever we are tempted to wonder "where was God when..." remember this verse and be reminded of the caring character of God.
9. Just as God called Moses, God calls you! No doubt about it. And just as Moses answered, "Here I am" so may that be your answer. Your calling will take a different route than Moses' calling did, but it will have some of the same elements: inner struggle, feelings of inadequacy for the tasks, dependence on God, a shove from God; it will help people, relieve suffering - for many or for one, nurture life - perhaps for your own family member or for many; it will confront obstacles and you will see the power of God at work.
10. Moses had four reasons that it would be difficult for him to respond to God's call; how many are you tempted to cite for yourself? Note from the Scripture and the sermon notes God's reply to each and see how those replies apply specifically to you. And, then consider "what's in your hand." How are you gifted, what do you do on a daily basis (Moses was a shepherd; he had a staff; God used what he did daily as a means to express God's power and grace).

## **Parallels between the Book of Exodus and the New Testament, especially the Gospels**

1. Both Moses and Jesus are born into a world where the powerful ruler threatens to kill all the boy children.
2. The children of Israel went down into Egypt; Jesus' family fled to Egypt.
3. Both Moses and Jesus spend time in the desert in preparation to fulfill their call.
4. Both Moses and Jesus "deliver" their people from bondage to freedom.
5. Both Moses and Jesus (along with Elijah) are present at the Mount of Transfiguration.
6. Both Moses and Jesus are instruments of the mighty power of God.
7. Moses gave to his people the Law on the Mount; Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount.
8. Moses is the model prophet, after whom would come another great Prophet - Jesus is that Prophet.
9. The Gospels parallel Moses and Jesus a lot, especially Matthew, which was written to a Jewish audience. In Matthew, Jesus is the new Moses. Matthew has the Sermon on the Mount to parallel the law on Mt. Sinai. Luke calls it the Sermon on the Plain.
10. A major purpose of Exodus is to know God: The phrase, "That they may know that I am YHWH/God. John 17:3 says: This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.
11. The Passover is a central feature of Exodus and the escape through the sea. Jesus is the Passover lamb.
12. God "tabernacled" among the Israelites; see the elaborate instructions and designs for the tabernacle. In the Gospels, God "tabernacles" in Jesus' very person. (John 1:14)
13. God's self disclosure with God's personal name: YHWH or Yahweh, and the related story in chapter 3; Yahweh is a covenant God who sees, hears, has compassion and comes down. Yahweh is not removed and distant. Yahweh is personal. In the Gospels, God's self-disclosure takes the form of God's own self: Jesus, God incarnate.
14. The layout of the New Testament mirrors, in some fashion, the layout of the book of Exodus: The first 15 chapters of Exodus are the story of God's bringing about freedom from bondage, through, primarily the leadership of one man, Moses. The Gospels tell a similar story of freedom/salvation, through the life, teaching, death and resurrection of one man, Jesus. In Exodus, redemption and liberation is followed by the gracious act of giving of the law (10 commandments); in the New Testament, God's saving work in Jesus is followed by the Epistles, or teaching, instructions to the new community, the church.