

Pa232 Counseling

Lesson Pa232-44 The Call of God

Have you ever been asked to do something that seemed impossible? What was your answer to the one who asked? The Bible tells the story of Moses—from his birth to his death. When he was 80 years old, God told Moses that his assignment was to lead Israel out of Egypt. That task seemed impossible. He did not want to do it.

For 40 years Moses had been tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro. One day he led the flock to the far side of the desert. He came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. It was burning, but it did not burn up. Moses went over to look closer. God called to him from inside the bush, “Moses! Moses!”

“Here I am,” said Moses.

“Do not come any closer,” God said. Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God. “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them. ... So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt” (Ex 3:1-10).

Now Moses had a past, and God knew all about it. Moses was a fugitive from Egypt because he had murdered an Egyptian. The full story of Moses is long and complex. He had escaped from Egypt and wanted to live out his life in peace and quiet. God had other plans.

You may feel like God is finished with you. You may be hiding after some failure or poor decision. But God knew exactly who Moses was—his past, his present, and his future. He was in the middle of nowhere, but right where God could speak to him. The scripture is telling us that God trusted Moses. That makes me look twice at the passage. Surely it must be saying that Moses trusted God. But no, the scripture points to the fact that God chose an unwilling Moses and TRUSTED him. God told Moses that he would succeed in this assignment and would later bring the people to worship on this same mountain.

Typically, if someone has committed murder, they are not easily trusted again by others. Moses questioned his own worthiness, protesting to God: “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?” He may have been thinking, “I tried once to free my people and it did not work. Pharaoh tried to kill me.”

God said, “I will be with you.” God does not choose people who can do great things. God makes people he chooses *able* to do great things by his mighty power. His “power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12:9).

Moses cried, “What if they do not believe me or listen to me?”

God shared the future, “The elders of Israel will listen to you.”

Moses complained, “I am not a good speaker.”

God replied, “I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”

Not yet willing, Moses pleaded, “Lord, please send someone else to do it.”

The Lord became angry and asked, “What about your brother, Aaron?” Notice that God was patient with Moses’ objections and worries. That is, God was patient until Moses asked him to let him out of obeying the call to lead Israel (Ex 3:11-4:14).

You may counsel someone in a situation like Moses or a person struggling with the task God has appointed them to. You might proceed like this:

- Invite the person to put into words what they believe God has asked them to do.
- Ask about things God has given to them that have prepared them for their ministry.
- Encourage them to name the people God has placed in their life to teach, support, and partner with them.
- Ask them to reflect on where they came from and where they are now in their journey.
- Remind them that “this is a journey, a partnership,” and not one person’s project alone. One can encounter God anytime, anywhere. God is always at work, even when we cannot see it. Moses did not yet know he was part of God’s larger plan.
- Explain that God trusted Moses with his calling. God is also saying to the one you counsel, “I trust you in what I have called you to do.”
- Pray with the person, asking God to give them a willing heart and faith to believe God will help them.

Our past does not disappear and may follow us. God asked Moses to return to a country he had fled in disgrace. Moses did not have a good reputation in Egypt. He needed to focus on God, not on himself. It wasn’t who Moses was, but who God was that mattered. We need to remind ourselves and others that it is God’s reputation of being honest, trustworthy, long-suffering, and forgiving that we are to demonstrate. Our own perfection is not possible, nor what God expects. He is not surprised by our failures and shortcomings. If we believe that, then we can help others to believe it too. We do it best by realizing our weakness and still saying “Yes,” to the call of God.

God could have sent an angel to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt. He could have done all of this without Moses, Aaron, or Miriam. Throughout Scripture, however, we see that God calls *people* to be involved in his plan. He wants to use each one of us.

This lesson is **important** because it teaches a story that is often repeated today, when God calls people to do difficult things. Moses resisted the call and had many excuses for why he could not obey. God met each objection with encouragement and a promise to be there if Moses would trust him. God saw in Moses what Moses could not see in himself: a great leader.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that the call of God is a partnership. God asks us to trust him as he trusts us. We will experience God’s provision when we remember our weakness. “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Rom 8:31). Those responding to a call into ministry, full- or part-time, may have doubts. God can be trusted, however, and will work out his plan as they trust him.

Questions for review:

1. How do we answer the call of God? [Pause]
 - A. If you said, “We answer ‘Yes,’ realizing our weakness and believing that he trusts us,” you are correct.
2. Whose reputation are we concerned about when we answer God’s call? [Pause]
 - A. If you said that when we answer God’s call, we are demonstrating God’s reputation of being honest, forgiving, and trustworthy, you are right.
3. What are some good things to help people remember as you counsel them? [Pause]
 - A. If you answered, “We can help people remember how far they have come; those who have taught and supported them; that ministry is a partnership with God; and that God trusts them,” you answered correctly.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to it until you have learned the story of Moses’ call. Tell the story in your own words to the young people of your church. Then discuss excuses people in your culture might have for not answering God’s call. Pray with the group, asking God to make his call plain. Memorize God’s words to Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (Second Corinthians 12:9).