

NO EXCUSES

MOSES



BIG IDEA: Have you ever thought that God wanted you to do something but felt like you just couldn't do it? Perhaps you've thought, "I know I should not go to certain places with my friends, but they'll just laugh at me if I don't," or "I know I should talk to my roommate about Christ, but I've tried before and he wouldn't listen," or "I know I should lead a Bible study, but I don't know enough and I could never teach others."

Your group members probably have experienced struggles like these no matter where they are in their walk with God. At some point we all struggle with doing what God wants us to do.

In this study, we'll look at Moses and the areas in which he felt inadequate and how he struggled with trusting God enough to step out in obedience. Then we'll discover God's power and patience as He lovingly responds to Moses.



DESIRED LIFE CHANGE: As a result of this study the students in your group should be able to: 1) identify areas God is asking them to trust Him in, 2) identify their fears or barriers to obedience, and 3) make a decision to place their trust in God and His power to work through them. As a result they will feel free to step out in obedience to what He asks them to do.



AUDIENCE: This lesson is designed for all believers. It should encourage: 1) new believers struggling to let go of their old life styles, 2) older believers struggling with sharing their faith or to letting God use them to lead others, and 3) those trying to yield their choice of life vocation to God.



LEADER'S PREPARATION: Familiarity with Moses' life before Exodus 3 is essential to understanding his dialogue with God. In Acts 7:20-35 Stephen gives an excellent summary of Moses' life. After reading this summary, work through Exodus 3-4:17 in your own personal study. Be prepared to share your story related to this topic. Let your group see how these truths have changed your life.



AT A GLANCE

As your group interacts in this study, they will discover. . .

This is my **WORLD:** I often have assignments from God that I am afraid of or feel inadequate to do.

This is my **NEED:** I need to know that God is able to do what He says He will. I don't have to accomplish these tasks on my own. God knows my limitations and offers His power and strength for me to trust in.

This is my **ANSWER:** I must stop focusing on my limitations and focus on God—His promises and power—to accomplish His will through me. Then I will be able to obey what God is calling me to do.

This is the **DIFFERENCE:** I no longer have to be immobile, but will be able to do what God asks of me because God will be working His power through me. I will be able to say with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

This is what I'll **DO:** I will choose to believe that God is sufficient in spite of my limitations, and will put my trust in Him as I do what He has asked me to do.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION - WHY IS THIS STUDY IMPORTANT?



As we grow as believers, God wants us to experience Him and His sufficiency. One way God helps us to know Him is to ask us to do things we cannot possibly do ourselves. God uses such challenges to help us realize "I can't do it, but God can and will work through me." As we change our focus from self to God and put our trust in Him, we will be able to willingly obey what he asks of us. As a

result of this process, we will experience God and will be able to say with Paul, "His power is perfected in my weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

The purpose of this study is to help your group to move from, "I am inadequate" (self focus) to trusting that, "God can and will work through me" (God focus) as I take action and obey.

1 ASK: Growing up, what was something you were asked to do but, because it was so difficult, you thought “No way!”?

The group leader should be prepared to share a personal example (keep it light). Allow 2 or 3 group members to respond. Some categories to help stimulate thinking: school, work, family.

2 STATE: We all face difficult challenges in life.

3 ASK & DISCUSS: What are some of our initial responses and feelings when we face a difficult challenge?


POSSIBLE RESPONSES:
embarrassment; feelings of inadequacy; fear of failure

4 STATE: Let’s look briefly at some biblical examples of people who were assigned very difficult jobs by God.

The leader needs to be prepared to highlight each of the biblical examples listed. The leader may also want to read 1 or 2 scripture passages and/or have the group members read the examples as listed in the chart.

5 STATE: In the REFLECT box, take a minute and respond to the following questions.

NOTE: Leader may want to share only his/her reflections and not ask group members to share their responses.


VERSION 1.1

NO EXCUSES

TOOLBOX
 THINK
 OBSERVE
 CLOSE-UP
 WRITE
 DISCUSS
 FEELINGS
 BRAINSTORM
 REFERENCE
 PASSAGE
 ARTICLE
 BIG IDEA
 CROSSROAD

THINK BACK
 Growing up, what was something you were asked to do but because it was so difficult, you thought “No Way!”?

DISCUSS
 What are some of our initial responses and feelings when we face a difficult challenge?

DIFFICULT ASSIGNMENTS

Noah - He spent 80 years building an ark in the desert with everyone ridiculing and laughing at him (Genesis 6:13-22).


Abraham - He left his home country (Genesis 12:1-4). He willingly offered his only son, Isaac, as a sacrifice to God (Genesis 22:1-12).

Stephen - He faithfully proclaimed Christ in the face of opposition resulting in his death by stoning (Acts 7:54-60).

Esther - She risked death to obey God and protect her people from harm (Esther).

Gideon - He faithfully destroyed Baal cult sites. God used him to defeat the combined army of the Midianites and Amalekites with only 300 men (Judges 6).

Mary - Despite of the embarrassment of being misunderstood, she willingly submitted to the Lord’s plan to bear the Son of God through a virgin (Luke 1:26-38).



REFLECT

How often do I feel ...	Never	Some	Freq.	Always
That God won’t help me?	1	2	3	4
That God can’t use me?	1	2	3	4
That I can’t do what God has called me to do?	1	2	3	4

Let’s explore how God deals with our feelings of inadequacy ...

1 READ

2 READ

3 **STATE:** To understand the drama being played out in Moses' life, we're going to observe what Moses said and what God said in these verses.

4 **ASK:** Someone to read the verse (3:11, etc.) then have the group answer, "What did Moses say?" and, "What did God say and do?"
LEADER'S NOTE: This is the Observation stage of the Bible study.

5 **STATE:** Now that we have the overview of the dialogue between Moses and God, let's answer the other two questions, "What does this reveal about Moses?" and "What does this reveal about God?"
LEADER'S NOTE: This is the Interpretation stage of the Bible study.

6 **ASK:** On the surface, what does Moses appear to be struggling with?

7 **ASK:** What adjectives would you use to describe God?
LEADER'S NOTE: These adjectives are not found in the text itself. They are implied by the text. For example: "I will be with you" (3:12) suggests that God is near, present, concerned, involved, caring, etc.

LIFE OF MOSES

Moses was born to Hebrew slaves, but through God's intervention was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter and raised in Pharaoh's household. As a result, he was "educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in word and deeds" (Acts 7:22). Yet Hebrews 11:24,25 tells us Moses "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasure of sin."

At age 40, Moses witnesses an Egyptian taskmaster beating a Hebrew slave and he comes to the defense of his people by killing the Egyptian. Moses "supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him, but they did not understand (Acts 7:20). This becomes clear to him the following day as he attempts to break up a fight between two Jews. Their response is, "who made you ruler over us?" They obviously did not acknowledge his authority as coming from God.

As Pharaoh seeks to kill him, Moses flees to the desert and begins a new life. He marries, has two sons, and goes from being a man of power, to being a shepherd—one of the lowliest jobs of his times.

CONTEXT

As the third chapter of Exodus begins, Moses is 80 years old. He has had forty years to dwell on the enormity of the task of freeing the Israelites, his failure, and God's seeming lack of action. He is shepherding the flock of his father-in-law when he has an encounter in which:

1. God reveals Himself through the miraculous sign of the burning bush and by telling Moses who He is ... "I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham" (vv. 1-6);
2. God reveals His concern for His people and His plan to deliver them (vv. 7,8);
3. God reveals His plan to use Moses to bring the Israelites out of Egypt (v. 10).

Our study begins at this point, where God and Moses dialogue about God's plan and Moses' involvement in it.

DIALOGUE WITH A RELUCTANT LEADER			
MOSES SAID . . .		GOD RESPONDED . . .	
What did he say?	What does this reveal about Moses?	What did He say (and do)?	What does this reveal about God?
3:11 Who am I that I should go?	he feels inadequate	3:12 I will be with you	He understands; promises His presence
3:13 What do I say when they ask who sent me?	he is intimidated by the people (They had questioned his authority 40 years earlier)	3:14 -"I AM" has sent you 16 -I am concerned 18 -I will bring them out 22 -They will listen 22 Egyptians	He is eternal; He is able to accomplish the task
4:1 What if they will not believe me or listen to me?	Unbelief (God had just said they would listen); Focusing on self and his past experience.	4:2-9 He demonstrates His power through signs	He is powerful; He is patient; Willing to meet human needs
4:10 I have never been eloquent	doubts himself	4:11,12 I made your mouth; I will teach you what to say	powerful and will provide
4:13 Please Lord send whomever thou will (someone else)	unbelief wins (focus on self) unwillingness to obey	4:14-17 Anger-sends Aaron to help; Commands Moses to obey	God is merciful; can be angry; provides for our weaknesses
On the surface what does Moses appear to be struggling with?		What adjectives describe God's character?	
he doubted his ability to speak, motivate and lead the people or influence Pharaoh; he questioned whether the people would believe him or believe God sent him		(Based on the verses we have been studying.) understanding, patient, faithful, present, sovereign, eternal, powerful, merciful, compassionate	

LEADER'S NOTE: Even Aaron who speaks well must have God speak through him. Only God is able, 4:15.

1 **ASK:** What promises did God make to Moses?
(3:8,10,16-21)

ASK: What did Moses' questions focus on?

ASK: What did God's answers focus on?

2 **STATE:** Only God knew what was going on inside Moses' heart. From God's responses to Moses we see Moses' true struggle.

3 **ASK:** Looking at God's responses, what were some issues Moses was struggling with?

4 **STATE:** Each time Moses questions his own ability or whether the people will believe him, God answers by assuring Moses of His presence, power and promises. We see Moses' real struggle is belief or trust that God is able to do what He promised (3:8,10).

5 **STATE:** Once Moses reached the point of believing God, then he could trust God to work through him, and could step out in obedience.

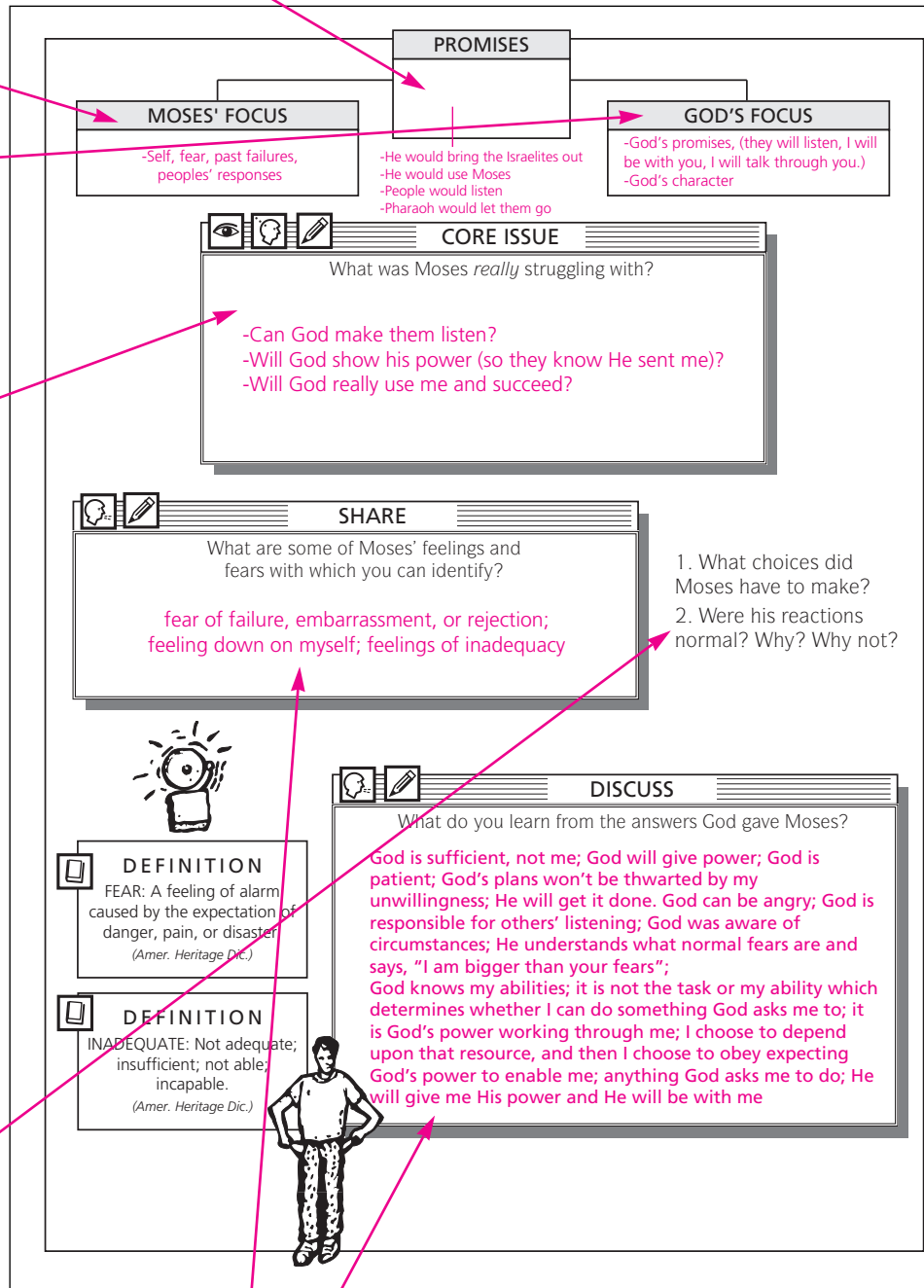
6 **ASK:** What choices did Moses have to make?
1. To move from "I am inadequate" to "I believe God can and will work through me."
2. To obey.

NOTE: Exodus 3:8 - God's plan was to deliver the Israelites regardless of Moses' choice. Moses had to decide whether or not to be part of what God was doing.

ASK: Are Moses' reactions normal?
Why or why not?
-Yes. We all struggle at some point or another with our limitations and fears though God is able. The key is to refocus on God and His promises to enable us to obey.

7 **DISCUSS:** What do you learn from the answers Moses gave?

8 **ASK:** What are some of Moses' feelings and fears with which you can identify?



9 **DISCUSS:** What do you learn from the answers God gave Moses?
LEADER'S NOTE: Refer back to the 4th column on page 2.

BRAINSTORM

What are some things God asks you to do that seem difficult?

Evangelism; being disciplined in my studies; speaking to groups; helping a needy person; leading a group; taking time to be involved in spiritual disciplines like prayer and Bible study; honoring my parents; asking forgiveness of someone I've wronged; standing up for something I know is right; leaving old friends who tempt me to wrong actions

IDENTIFY

What are some of your typical excuses and fears?

I am unable; I am afraid; I might get embarrassed; I may be rejected; I am unwilling

ANALYZE

What do your fears and excuses reveal about ...

You? I am not focusing on what God can do; I am self-dependent, not God-dependent

Your view of God? I am acting like He is not big or powerful enough to take care of my fears and inability or to do what He asks of me

CONSIDER

What are God's answers to you?

FINISH THIS . . .

Okay, God, I'm going to trust you for doing
evangelism/resolving conflict with my roommate

Though I feel inadequate and fearful

I know you are powerful enough

So I will share with Joe this week/ talk with my roommate tonight

LEADER'S NOTE: Use phrases and lessons from page 2: "What does this reveal about God?"

1 ASK: What are some things God asks you to do that seem difficult?

2 ASK: What are some of your typical excuses and fears?

3 ASK: What do your fears and excuses reveal about you?

4 ASK: What do they reveal about your view of God?

5 ASK: What are God's answers to you?

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are taken from the *New International Version*, ©1975, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society. Published by Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

L E A D E R ' S R E S O U R C E



BOOKS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Experiencing God – Blackaby & King (Lifeway Press)

Experiencing God's Attributes – Meyers (NavPress)



TOPIC CONNECTIONS

Related *InterACTA*

small group studies: *Father Knows Best; Extreme Love; Walk This Way*

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Moses grew in his ability to trust God as he experienced God's faithfulness. Study the rest of his life and why God described Moses as "more humble than anyone else on earth," (Numbers 12:3,) and "faithful in all my house" (Numbers 12:7).

- a. Numbers 11:1-35
- b. Numbers 13,14
- c. Numbers 20:2-13

Answer the following questions as you study these passages:

- What difficult circumstance was Moses facing?
- What was his attitude toward himself and God?
- How did Moses' attitude and ability to trust God change from the beginning of his life until the end?
- What can I learn from this passage?
- In view of who God is, how should I respond to challenges in my life?

2. You can also study the lives of Esther, Abraham or the twelve disciples to see how God worked through them to do what only He could do.

Ask yourself:

- What helped them to believe God?
- Did God come through for them?
- How did they obey in spite of barriers?

O V E R V I E W O F M E E T I N G T I M E



Planning your group session

Allocating your time

	INTERACTION AS A GROUP	INTERACTION WITH THE STUDY & WORD	INTERACTION WITH GOD	UPCOMING INFORMATION	OTHER IDEAS
	Ice breaker? Refreshments?	Provided. Add personal story?	Worship / Praise / Prayer time?	Next meeting? Special event?	Music / Video?
	_____ min.	_____ min.	_____ min.	_____ min.	_____ min.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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