

Moses Was Normal, Too

Part 1

Purpose: To show the importance of a thorough study of scripture, in this case, a Bible character, before a conclusion is drawn. By application we need to remember that haste makes waste and only thoroughness reveals truth. Snap decisions by students should be discouraged by the time this study is completed.

Scripture: Hebrews 11:23-28 for introduction, and Exodus 2:11-14 for Bible study.

Opening Activity (30 minutes): Play charades. Have two T.V. shows, two songs, two people and two books written out on small slips of paper ahead of time. Divide group in half and play charades. The goal is to show how wrong conclusions can be made when one doesn't have enough information. Thoroughness is vital.

Group Time:

Introduction (15 minutes):

In studying a Bible character, one must study all that the scriptures reveal about him. Anything less can lead to a wrong conclusion about that person. Have the students divide into groups of fives, read Hebrews 11:13-28, and list the characteristics about Moses and his family. Some common discoveries will be:

1. He had faithful, God-fearing parents (v. 23)
2. He was a very beautiful child (v. 23)
3. He was strong-willed/a fighter (v. 24)
4. He was a man of principle (v. 25)
5. He was godly (v. 26)
6. He was fearless (v. 27)
7. He persevered unto the end (v. 27)
8. He was faithful (v. 27)

Bible Study:

Ask if these characteristics are some of the main ones they think of when they think of Moses. These characteristics make Moses seem perfect. Yet he wasn't. A careful study of his life will demonstrate this.

In Exodus 2:11-14, Moses depended upon his own strength and desires rather than God's. Moses knew that the Egyptian was being unfair to the Hebrew slave (v. 11) but rather than seeking God's wisdom in how the situation should be handled, he tried to solve the problem on his own. By depending on his own strength, he did five things:

1. He was a plotter (v. 12)
2. He committed murder (v. 12)
3. He tried to conceal the truth (v. 12)
4. He was critical of others (v. 13)
5. He was scared of being discovered for who he was (v. 14)

Discuss the dynamics of each of these characteristics Moses demonstrated when he depended upon his own strength.

1. A *plot* is "used of a secret, usually evil, project or scheme of which details have been carefully worked out. Moses "looked this way and that," then he acted. His plot involved not only the murder of the Egyptian when no one was looking, but also how he would dispose of the body.
2. *Murder* is forbidden by God in the Ten Commandments. "Life was viewed in the Old Testament as sacred and existing in the image of God" (Genesis 9:6).
3. *Concealment* of truth is also forbidden by God (Colossians 3:9). God does not want us to tell white lies, black lies, or even withhold information to save our own necks. Even if we can conceal the truth from other men, we can't conceal it from God (1 John 3:20).
4. *Criticism* of others reflects your own weaknesses. We see those characteristics in our lives we don't like and we take it out on others who have the same characteristics (Matthew 7:1-6).
5. *Fear* is healthy when we are fearing, having reverence, for God (Psalm 19:9). This type of fear demonstrates true strength, for one is depending upon God rather than self (Proverbs 14:26). But Moses' fear was a result of guilt. He was afraid of being discovered for the wicked person he was.

Closing Activity:

Hand out the next page to the students which asks them to list different areas where they are "plotters, murderers, liars, critics and fearful." Then discuss their answers and share how everyone is a Moses.

Characteristic	At School	At Home	At Church
Plotter			
Murder			
Liar			
Critic			
Fear			

Moses Became Unique Part 2

Purpose: To realize what a shepherd is. That everyone is being shepherded by someone and that shepherding is God's means of caring for His people.

Scripture: Exodus 2:16-3:2; Acts 7:29-31; Psalm 23

Opening Activity: Play "Dog Loves Cat." Make a circle of chairs, with one less than the number of people you have. All the students should choose an animal to be. The student in the middle begins the game by saying his animal loves another animal that has been chosen.

Example: Dog loves cat. Cat then stands and must say, "Cat loves (another animal) before he is tagged by dog. If he does not succeed in this, he then must be in the middle. Also he must go in the middle if he calls out an animal that is not represented in the circle.

Bible Study:

Read Exodus 2:16-3:22; Acts 7:29-31. Explain how God wanted a man with a shepherd's heart to lead His people. So Moses became a shepherd and spent forty years perfecting his shepherding skills so God could use him in a unique way.

Divide the students into small groups as you prepare to study Psalm 23 and how it illustrates just what a shepherd should do. After you read each verse, ask each group to discuss the key word. After a couple of minutes, explain what the key word is ultimately trying to express. (Key words are underlined).

* *Rest* (v. 2) - Here David is describing the divinely selected resting *place* which refers to fresh, new grass (Dent. 32:2; Prov. 27:25). It's a "rich, lush pastureland with an abundance of tender green grass." This is in contrast to most places in the Near East which are covered with stickers or burrs, dangers and irritants.

* *Restoration and guidance* (v. 3) - Restoration is the reviving of one's strength. This comes by finding a proper resting place (v. 2) but also by being *nourished* while resting (taking advantage of the rest). A Christian's nourishment comes from the guidance of God's Word.

* *Protection* (v. 4) - Tragedies in this life will occur and it is the role of the shepherd to protect, guard, and give assurance to his flock. The word "rod" may not only designate the shepherd's rod which was used as a weapon, but also a teacher's staff and the word 'staff' refers to what was used in chastising loitering sheep. The idea is two-fold: (1) The immediate protection from wild beasts and other harmful events and (2) The teaching by the shepherd which prepares the sheep for different situations.

* *Blessing* (vv. 5,6) - Verse five refers to a change in setting, not a change in concept. In this verse we do not see the shepherd in the fields with his flocks but back at his tents with a guest. A godly shepherd must have three characteristics:

1. Hospitality ("prepare a table") - In desert life, hospitality between shepherds was a virtue and the guest was 'sacred and honored.'
2. Graciousness ("anoint my head") - The pouring of unguents and perfumes over a guest's head was a sign of joy and happiness and it was not an obligation. It was a sign of a willingness to think of others rather than ones self.
3. Loving-kindness ("surely goodness") - This term refers to total commitment, a covenant between two people. A dedication to fulfill one's commitment to the other.

Closing Activity:

Have the students write down:

1. What a shepherd is.
2. Who shepherds them.
3. Some positive and negative responses to their shepherds.

After 5-10 minutes, review the four aims of a shepherd from Psalm 23. Then explain how their parents and pastor are their shepherds. God is using them to guide, protect, reassure and bless them.