

SESSION 2

OBJECTIONS OVERRULED



When have you accomplished something you didn't think you could do?

QUESTION #1

#BSFLbrokenvessels

*God will work through us
despite our shortcomings.*

THE PASSAGES

Exodus 3:11-12; 4:10-17

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

My office is full of artwork, and I'm proud of my collection. Before you start guessing whether I prefer abstract, modern, renaissance, or cute Bible verse plaques, I'll give you a hint: I have three young children!

The “artwork” that graces my wall is a compilation of squiggly lines, letters, pandas, and a drawing of yours truly flying with a cape. The amazing thing about children is that, no matter how their drawings look or how far outside the lines the colors go, they are always so proud of their work. (And so are their parents.)

So what happened? When did we lose that pride in our work? When did we start comparing ourselves to others? Instead of being satisfied with what we can accomplish, we tend to measure ourselves against others, and we often conclude we're not capable.

While our culture may value our appearance, the size of our bank accounts, and the trophies on our walls, God operates with a different standard. Instead of valuing us by what we can or cannot do, God accepts us as we are. As we see in the life of Moses, God takes us just as we are—broken vessels with blemishes, weaknesses, and all—and accomplishes what we never thought was possible.

Exodus 3:11-12

11 And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

KEY WORDS

this mountain (3:12)—Refers to Horeb, “the mountain of God” (Ex. 3:1; also known as “Sinai”), the mountain on which God met with the Israelites through Moses.

Any one of these scenarios could cause a person to have “issues.”

- ▶ You were separated from your mother as an infant because a death sentence hung over your head.
- ▶ Your birth mother nursed you, but then you were handed over to a different woman who adopted you and brought you up.
- ▶ You committed murder then fled to a foreign country where you took on a whole new way of life.

Moses experienced all three of these—and after all that, he saw a burning bush and heard the voice of God commanding him to go back to the place he came from (and where he had murdered someone). Had that been one of us, we might have decided it was time to check into a psychiatric hospital!

Or maybe we’d finally realize God is up to something.

That was Moses’ story. Although he grew up as royalty in Egypt—having been adopted by Pharaoh’s daughter—there were moments in his past holding him down and causing him to doubt God. When God issued His call to Moses, he asked, “Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?” Moses could not believe that God was asking *him* to go back and bring the Israelites out of Egypt.

Moses may have been remembering when he was a prince in Egypt and tried to save an Israelite from an Egyptian. He may have thought, “If I, as a prince, could not save even one Israelite without messing things up, how can I, as an exile, deliver all of the Israelites from the Egyptians?” Perhaps God’s call brought to Moses’ mind the question he had heard 40 years earlier: “Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?” (Ex. 2:14).

It’s easy for us to find objections and rationalize. “*But God, what if...?*” “*But God, what about...?*” God gives us the same answer he gave to Moses’ doubts and negative self-talk, “Certainly I will be with thee.”

As a child, I was always afraid of walking up the stairs alone in the dark. The thought was in my head that someone was going to grab me from behind and attack me. It didn’t help that my sisters often told me scary stories. What’s interesting though, is that when I walked up the stairs with someone else—whether it was my mom, dad, or one of my sisters—that fear would fizzle like foam on a freshly opened can of soda.

As His children, God is with us! He goes before us. “And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed” (Deut. 31:8). No matter what opposition or objection we may be facing, God is with us. “If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31).

What’s amazing is that God wants to work through us despite our shortcomings and failures. He is looking for those who will walk with Him in faithfulness and humility. Obedience to God, trust in Him, and willingness to go trumps our own competence and talent.

When have you felt inadequate to do something God wanted you to do?

QUESTION #2

Exodus 4:10-12

10 And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

11 And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?

12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

KEY WORDS

slow of speech, and of a slow tongue (4:10)—Moses protested his inability to speak well disqualified him as a candidate for the mission to which God was calling him.

Moses was living in the shadow of his past. In his own effort and in his own way, Moses had tried to rescue one Israelite 40 years earlier. He failed miserably. He knew his shortcomings.

Moses was allowing past sin and his perception of himself to shape his future. Years of running and living in fear had deeply affected his identity. God told Moses He Himself would be with him and gave Moses signs and wonders to perform. Yet Moses could only respond to God with words like, “but ... who am I ... what if ... I have never.” We see this when Moses told God he couldn’t speak.

When Moses gave the excuse—“I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue”—what exactly did he mean?

- ▶ **Maybe it was psychological.** A lot of people can relate to that. They don’t like to speak in public; in fact, many are terrified at the idea of saying something in front of others.
- ▶ **Maybe it was educational.** Even though Moses grew up in the house of Pharaoh, maybe he didn’t feel he could talk on their level anymore. Maybe after 40 years in the wilderness, Moses felt his skills with the Egyptian language were too rusty.

- ▶ **Maybe it was a speech impediment.** Moses may have had a stutter or other limitation that made him anxious when speaking in front of others.

Whatever the reason, Moses did not see himself as the best person to speak publicly—and certainly not to speak to Pharaoh. Moses was convinced he could not stand before Pharaoh and speak, even though he had been speaking to God this whole time! Let's be honest, if you can speak to God, you certainly can speak to any earthly king. Why did Moses think he could negotiate with God but not with Pharaoh? Yet, Moses continued to doubt himself.

The problem was that Moses was looking at himself and not at the One who was calling him. Then God reminded Moses just who it was that made him the way he was. To paraphrase verse 11, God told Moses, "I see that you think you are slow and hesitant in speech, and you have never been eloquent in communication. Who do you think gave you the ability to talk in the first place? Now get up and go!"

Whatever you may see as shortcomings are not shortcomings in the hands of God. God created you as you are, and He will use every part of you for His glory. Nothing is beyond God's grace and power.

What do these verses teach us about our place in God's plans?

QUESTION #3

Exodus 4:13-17

13 And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.

14 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.

15 And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do.

16 And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.

17 And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs.

God gave Moses a play-by-play of the immediate future, showing Moses three miracles He would do through him to prove that God had sent him. You'd think that would have built enough confidence in God that Moses would be able to obey. Unfortunately, even that didn't convince Moses.

Instead of replying, as Isaiah did, "Here am I; send me" (Isa. 6:8), Moses essentially begged, "Please, Lord, send someone else." No wonder we read in the following verse: "And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses"

Moses failed to understand that God doesn't just want those already equipped and competent to call into His service; He is looking for faithful servants to call so He can then equip them. God wants to equip the called, rather than merely call the equipped. When God calls you to Himself, He will equip you with all you need to follow Him, live day-by-day, and experience His joy and fullness.

How would you summarize the root of Moses' objections throughout these passages?

QUESTION #4

Fortunately for Moses, God was merciful; He relented and allowed Moses' brother, Aaron, to go with him. But God did not let Moses off the hook. God didn't say, "Aaron will speak and you can just manage the process." Instead, God said, "And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be *with thy mouth, and with his mouth*, and will teach you what ye shall do" (emphasis added). God still insisted that Moses speak because He had a greater plan in store for him.

Fast-forward a few chapters. Moses and Aaron confronted Pharaoh and began performing signs and miracles. God used Moses and Aaron to bring the first plague against Pharaoh and Egypt. You see both Moses' and Aaron's names mentioned again in the second and third plagues. However, it's fascinating that Aaron's name does not always appear with the remaining plagues. Did God simply choose to leave off Aaron's name? Was Aaron out of town? Or was this God's way of helping Moses to see that he didn't need Aaron's assistance like he thought he did? Moses did not need Aaron to accomplish God's will; he just thought that he did. When God calls you, He *will* equip you.

DIGGING DEEPER



MOSES' ROD/STAFF

In ancient Palestinian-Israelite society, one's rod was an essential personal possession, a means of protection and identification and even a symbol of one's power.

Various Hebrew terms are translated "rod." It is possible to use them rather interchangeably here in light of their semantic overlap and render them all with the English word "rod" just as "rod," "staff," "big stick," and "walking stick" can all be

used largely interchangeably in English. From the point of view of identifying oneself, a rod was in certain ways the equivalent in ancient culture of what a passport, wallet, or driver's license would be today. A rod was so basic and prized a possession that it might be mentioned metaphorically as the only thing a person possessed, or the first thing in a short list of very basic possessions.

Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2 of *The New American Commentary*, gen. ed. E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville: Broadman Press, 2006), 138-139.

When I wake up in the morning, one of the first things I do is pray. I start off my day by praying, “Lord, here I am. Use me today.” I want to be a faithful, willing, and available servant to God. After I pray those words, I get ready for work. While I’m getting ready, I will continue my prayer by saying, “Lord, please speak to me and through me today.” I then often end my prayer with, “So I offer up to You the work I need to accomplish. Please guide those moments for Your glory.” We must remember that God *will* equip us each day!

How has God used others in your life to accomplish His purposes?

QUESTION #5

EQUIPPED FOR SERVICE

Moses raised several objections when presented with a ministry opportunity. We often raise the same objections. Use short phrases to answer the following questions instead:

How is your relationship with God right now?

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What are your natural strengths and weaknesses?

.....

How has God spiritually equipped you for service?

.....

Remember, your weaknesses (real or perceived) do not override what God can and will do through you if you are open to His leading.

LIVE IT OUT

It's easy to approach God with a posture that asks: "But, what if?" or "But, what about?" Choose one of the following applications instead:

- ▶ **Deal with the past.** Moses' past sins affected his outlook and posture in life. What temptations tend to come up repeatedly for you? Ask the Lord to free you from those chains.
- ▶ **Focus on the present.** When you wake up, start your day by praying something like, "Lord, here I am. I ask that You would use me today. Please speak to me and through me today. I offer up to You the work that I need to accomplish, as well as every interaction I have."
- ▶ **Be accountable.** One of the best ways to overcome your shortcomings is by sharing them with others and inviting others to help keep you accountable. This is one of the key attributes to being a follower of Jesus—building relationships with others and living unashamed.

Knowing that God uses us as we are takes the pressure off. When He calls us, He equips us to do what He needs done for His glory!



Share with others how you will live out this study: [#BSFLbrokenvessels](#)