



YEAR 3—The God Who Pursues Relationship: A Story of God's People

Module 3—Exodus

Lesson 6: Moses' Radiant Face—Exodus 34

BIBLICAL REFLECTION

(A theological and biblical reflection on today's Scripture passage.)

GOD'S STORY

God had been leading His people around in the desert for some time now, and they weren't exactly grateful about the situation. Nonetheless, the Lord kept showing His faithfulness to them every day by performing great miracles of provision and protection. He's delivered them the Ten Commandments, provided them with manna from heaven, brought down quail for them to eat, and an assortment of other miracles (not to mention the parting of the Red Sea, the providing water from a rock and more).

In Exodus 34, God again has re-issued the Ten Commandments and brought Moses up the summit of Mount Sinai known as Jebel Musa to retrieve them. The biblical account records one of the most amazing and awe-striking images ever: "Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD." (Exodus 34:5)

God literally did this—He came down, stood with Moses and proclaimed His name. The bi-product of this was that as Moses took the laws and commandments that God gave him and went to speak before the Israelites, they saw that his face was shining because "he had spoken with the Lord." This overflow of the presence of God, like a radiation that permeated Moses' physical body and shown on him as a source of light, frightened the Israelites and they were afraid to come near him.

This was not a one-time thing, Moses repeatedly went to speak with God, and took to veiling his face when he spoke with the Israelites. This story tells of a glimpse of God's glory and power. To be in His presence is powerful and amazing.

OUR STORY

We may not physically glow like Moses did after spending time with God, but He does something in our character after we've spent intentional time fervently connecting with His presence. All throughout Scripture, the Lord promised that He will reveal himself to those that love Him—"Come near to God and he will come near to you" (James 4:8).

Often, we let "life" and the busyness of our perceived needs become obstacles to seeking even just a few minutes with our Creator. Sometimes we see no way around it, as if spending time with the Lord is an insurmountable task. We forget He's always as close as a breath before it's even exhaled.

What's ironic is we're actually blessed beyond what Moses experienced, for we have the awesome privilege of serving a God who isn't just around us but can now indwell us. We know the name of Jesus Christ, and His sacrifice made it possible for the Holy Spirit to live inside of us. The Lord knows our name and wants to have a relationship with us, going to great lengths to show us that love and to save us from a lost and dying world. He is not nameless, faceless, or in the grave.

OTHERS' STORY

Moses originally wore the veil so that the Israelites would be shielded from the glory of God. Jesus' life was about fulfilling this gap by making possible all the things God wanted for His people. He made it possible for anyone to have access to God's presence. When Jesus breathed His last breath, all of humanity was changed. The veil in the temple was actually torn, showing that the separation of God's presence from the people was no more.

For this reason the light we shine before others isn't intended to blind them, but to light up their path. The inner illumination that takes place when we spend time in the presence of God empowers us to shine Christ into the lives of those still in darkness.

THE WORLD'S STORY

The world is still in the desert of sin, but because of the work of Jesus on the cross it can be shown the light of God's glory through us. Our lives should reflect the reality from 1 John 1:5, that "this is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all." If we are in Christ, and Christ is in the Father, and the Holy Spirit is in us, it makes perfect sense why Jesus said we are the light of the world.

Declaring God's message to all nations is like radiance in darkness. The world needs that more than ever, even if it is resistant to it. People all over the world need to know that God desires to be among them and have communion with them. Just as God gave the Law to Moses and Moses glowed afterward, our goal is to not just smack the world over the head with God's word but come alongside it and light it up.

Jesus modeled this when He said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). We have the light of life. Be encouraged, and step into the darkness to be a light unto many.