

Central

Devotional Prayer Guide

IMPACT

HOME
& AWAY

"The LORD said, '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. ... And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and ... I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.' "

Exodus 3:7-10

Primary Goal:

We desire to have 100% of those who call Central home to seek God through prayer about how He would have them respond and give a gift that will require an element of both faith and sacrifice.

Over the next few weeks God is going to confront us at Central with a vision we believe He is calling us to continue to step into. This vision is more significant than money. It's also so much bigger than the needs we present. Over these next seven days we want to ask you to consider joining us in making an impact over the next three years. Determining to follow God's call often begins with us being confronted to deal with anything that hinders us from answering that call.

Our text for the next week is the call of Moses from Exodus 3.

In Exodus 3, the intimate relationship between God and Moses begins as God confronts His chosen with a mission (3:1-11). Moses does not accept the mission with bold faith and valiant courage. This intimate relationship begins with concerns and excuses that need to be replaced with faith-filled actions.

Moses, like so many who are invited to follow God's call, is plagued with self-doubt, fear, and inadequacy. God deals patiently with him, just as He does with us. Clearly, how we see ourselves doesn't matter when we behold the God who calls and decide to trust Him. As God works on Moses' heart, He encourages him to replace the concerns with steps of faith. That's how Moses opens the window to the future that God has for him. In the same way, if we are to grow in our relationship with God, we also need to address our concerns and grab hold of the faith He asks us to show.

In answering God's call, Moses had to work through five concerns. I think most of us will be able to identify with Moses' struggle. We begin today by looking at verse 11: "But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' " God calls out to Moses, but Moses answers by finding a number of reasons to avoid that call. **It's not that he's rebellious so much as he is fearful.**

We recognize that the same five concerns often need to be addressed in visionary journeys like the one we are on. The primary goal that we have for our examination of Moses' call as it relates to our Impact vision is 100% participation on the part of everyone who knows Central as their spiritual home. **We are not asking for equal giving, but equal sacrifice based upon a willingness to go before God and determine what He**

is calling each of us to do. We are not asking for a significant commitment because that leads us to think about money. Rather, we are asking that each of us journey to a place where we are willing to hear God speak.

We're deeply grateful that you have made it this far and we are excited about what God will say to each of us moving forward.

Prayer:

God, at the start of this visionary journey we give ourselves completely to You. We acknowledge concerns that we have. We invite You into this process praying that Your Holy Spirit would reveal You to us. Over the next seven days, prepare our hearts for Your will to be known and give us boldness so that Your will can be done.

Use this space to note your thoughts, concerns, assumptions, and fears about this week-long prayer journey.

“But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’ ”

Exodus 3:11

God doesn't call the equipped. He equips the called.

God called out to Moses. He calls out to us too. All too often, we can avoid the call for the very same reason Moses tried to avoid his. Moses struggled with his identity; feeling unqualified and unable to do what he was being asked to do. God still calls people to obediently follow. Such obedience is based on working past a number of things that hold us back. The first thing that hinders obedience to God's C.A.L.L.S is:

Confidence

Moses' Question: “Who am I?”

Moses' Problem: Identity- I am not qualified. He asks, “Who am I?” I'm a nobody!

Our competency must come from God first. It is interesting to note that when Moses was in Egypt of his own accord, he wanted to become the deliverer of his people—but now he was unsure. **God wants us to lose our pride and rely on Him and His resources.** God usually can't use us until we have tried to serve Him our own way and failed. He loves to use our failures as He shapes us into stronger, more resilient people—and that's good news.

Elijah, filled with self-pity, sat down under a tree and asked God to kill him. Peter had to fail dismally by denying and cursing the Lord before he could be used. Don't let anyone convince you to throw away your failures, or even worse, to let the fear of failure stop you from following God's will by faith. **It's through our failures that God is often getting us ready for something bigger and more brilliant.**

God's Response: It doesn't matter how you see yourself. I am with you. God was with Moses and He will be there for you too.

To Ponder:

1. What stands in the way of you living out any calling God has already made or will make?
2. Spend time identifying the things in your life that are holding you back.
 - a. Now ask yourself what you can do to fight back.
 - b. End your time by praying to God for a breakthrough in those areas.

Remember, God has called you. Be confident in Him.

Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

Exodus 3:13

God called out to Moses. He calls out to us too. You'd think that God's promised presence would be enough for Moses, but it wasn't. He objects to the God who C.A.L.L.S once again. This time what hinders him is:

Acceptance

Moses initially refuses to accept God's answer. Verse 13 reads like this:

Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

Moses' Problem: Intimacy- My relationship with you is not strong enough.

Moses struggled because he didn't know God well enough to describe Him to the people. Moses wanted to know what name he should give to the God of Israel. On the surface this was an understandable question. All the other nations had gods with names. Indeed, Moses had grown up as an Egyptian and they had numerous gods, all with names. The God of Israel, however, had never been referred to by name. They knew He existed, of course. They prayed to Him, but He was only ever referred to as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So, Moses wanted to know what to call Him. He wanted to be able to put a tag on Him that would carry some weight with the Israelites and with Pharaoh.

God's Response: "I AM WHO I AM" I'm anything you need. "

Interestingly, God won't be drawn in. God would not allow Himself to be tied down by a name. All God told Moses was that He is who He is. The only name God gave Moses was "I AM": a name that seems to imply an eternal existence, yet one that's always relevant to the present. One who has always been, yet one who continues to be active at every instant of time.

It's as if God, through a reluctance to be tied down to a single attribute, was asking Moses to trust Him. It's as if God was promising to be all that Moses would ever need Him to be. It's as if God was saying that the journey on which they would eventually embark would begin and end with trust. **It was all going to be about trust.**

To Ponder:

1. The level of intimacy is directly related to the level of obedience. As we continue this faith journey, ask yourself whether anything stands in the way of you trusting God for the rest of this faith journey?
2. Spend time identifying the things in your life that may be hindrances to you trusting God.
 - a. Remember that faith in the present is based on the faithfulness of God in the past. Ask God to bring to your memory moments when trusting Him proved to be the best thing that you could do.
 - b. End your time by acknowledging any challenges that you have to stepping out in full trust, and invite Him to deal with those issues.

Remember, God is with you. Accept His call.

Moses answered, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The LORD did not appear to you?' "

Exodus 4:1

God called out to Moses. He calls out to us too. So far, we have worked through Moses' confidence and acceptance problems. You'd think that God's promised presence would be enough for Moses, but it wasn't because his relationship wasn't intimate enough. Today we see that Moses objects to the God who C.A.L.L.S once again. This time what hinders him is his feeling of being a:

Lightweight

Has someone ever asked you to do something and you weren't sure you had what it took to get the job done? This was Moses' problem. In Exodus 4:1 Moses asks an understandable question: *"What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The Lord did not appear to you?' "*

Moses' Problem: Intimidation- He was intimidated by the Egyptians.

Moses was worried about people's reaction to him. He was afraid of rejection and failure. Moses' words in verse 1 are recurring fears of many Christians too. What Moses failed to see, what we often fail to see, is that God's power is displayed through weakness and insignificance. Moses' weakness was exactly what God needed to reveal His power. God answered Moses' objection with a demonstration of His ability to perform wonders. In the story, Moses' staff turned into a snake. Then his hand became leprous before being restored to healthy pink flesh. These demonstrations of God's power were intended to convince Moses initially, and later the people themselves, that God was indeed with him/ them and that they mattered.

God's Response: When I am through, they'll listen.

The feeling of significance deep inside is crucial to our emotional, spiritual, and social stability. So often we look at the little we have available to us and fail to see what could become of us if we would only accept the fact that God will work through us. God asks us the same question He asked Moses: "What is that in your hand?"

The rest of the story proceeds to demonstrate what happened to Moses when that frightened man used what he'd been given. Today, God is encouraging us to look at what He has placed within our hands. **He is encouraging us to believe that He can do great things with what we have been given.** Be confident in that truth. Accept it. Refuse to view yourself as a lightweight. God does great things through people who consider themselves and what they can offer insignificant.

To Ponder:

1. Do you feel that you have too little to offer God to be of significance for Him?
2. What things do you believe you need to succeed in, attain to, partake in, in order to feel good about yourself?
3. Meditate on Romans 5:1-11 (especially verse 1) and thank God that Jesus took our sins and that His perfect righteousness was given to us. Thank Him that you matter to Him and therefore you matter for Him in the world.

Remember, God's power is demonstrated when we trust Him
with what we have in our hands.

Moses said to the LORD, "Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue."

Exodus 4:10

God called out to Moses. He calls out to us too. Yesterday we sought to increase our grasp of the fact that we matter to God and that what we have been given can be used by God. **Every contribution we make to Christ's mission counts.** Nothing we have is too great and nothing we have is too small. We continue that thought today as we see that the God who C.A.L.L.S overcomes our inadequacies. This time what hinders Moses is his:

Limitation

In Exodus 4:10 the debate continues: *"Moses said to the Lord, 'O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.' "*

Moses' Problem: Inadequacy- Who will follow someone who can't speak well?

Even after a demonstration of power with the staff turning into a snake, Moses needed more convincing. Sometimes being aware of God's power isn't the same as being aware of God's power in us. Not even a demonstration of God's power was enough to get Moses over the personal inadequacy he carried with him. The text tells us that Moses said he wasn't a good speaker. He was a doer, not a talker. How could he ever convince Pharaoh to let the people go? Many of us can relate. We detest public speaking. The only speech many of us have given was our wedding speech and we only did that because we couldn't get out of it! We relate to Moses because we are uncomfortable up front. The good news is that God hasn't called those of us who struggle with public speaking to speak in public! But what if He did? What would our response be?

God's Response: Guess who's the source of your gifts? Have you forgotten where the gift of speech comes from?

Moses didn't need to worry about whether he could convince Pharaoh. God would do the convincing. Jesus promised the same thing to us in Luke 12:11-12. Jesus said that when we need to speak on His behalf the Spirit will speak through us (see Matthew 10:19-20). That applies whether we're called to preach or simply tell our neighbor how good God has been.

No matter how insignificant we may feel, no matter how limited we may feel our contribution may appear, we must remember that God's power is limitless. **He takes everything that is offered, large and small, and uses it for His glory.**

To Ponder:

1. Take time to consider your spiritual gifts. What are they?
2. In what areas are you using your gifts, or do you feel that you are not needed?
3. Spend time reading John 6:1-14, noting verse 9.
 - a. What lessons do you think that boy learned about giving what he had, however limited, to Jesus?
 - b. End by asking God to use what you have for His work in your world.

Remember, when you feel inadequate, God made you, loves you, and is the source of your spiritual gifts.

But Moses said, "Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else."

Exodus 4:13

Over the past four days we have noted how Moses wrestled with confidence, acceptance, his contribution, and his limitations. Today we notice that Moses questioned his:

Status

Exodus 4:13 says, *"But Moses said, 'Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else.'"*

Moses' Problem: Inferiority- there are far more competent people out there!

No matter what, signs or no signs, whether God promised to be with him or not, Moses does not want to accept the call. Moses compared himself with others more competent and felt inferior. Finally, in verse 14 we read: "Then the LORD'S anger burned against Moses...". God became angry at Moses' refusal to trust God's answer. When Moses begs God to send someone else, he, in effect, telling the Lord, I don't trust you. This angers God. We should not need someone else to do what God is calling us to do. **If we let others do what we are afraid to do, we are letting them do what God has called us to do.**

Have we ever considered the consequence of refusing to do God's will? In verses 14-16 God says to Moses: *"Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do. So he shall be your spokesman to the people."*

God's Response: Okay, Aaron can go too ...BUT ... I'm still calling you.

God accommodated Moses' lack of faith by allowing Aaron to assist him. Once the children of Israel left Egypt, Aaron got his brother – and the children of Israel – into serious trouble. It was Aaron who led the children of Israel in making an idol while Moses was on Mt. Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments. It is always true that God's perfect will is better than His permissive will!

It's here that the LORD finally broke through Moses' resistance. Exodus 4:20: *"So Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey and started back to Egypt. And he took the staff of God in his hand."*

Obedience to the call. Think of the lives that he touched because of his obedience. Over 2 million Israelites under Moses eventually walked out of the land of slavery. **Think of the impact we could make if we all obey the call to share Jesus with Holland and the world!**

To Ponder:

1. Take time to tell God how you are feeling about our primary goal of asking God what He wants you to do.
2. What are the major hindrances to your willingness?
3. From the story of Moses, what do you believe God's response to these might be?
4. End your devotional time by inviting God into your journey.
 - a. Ask the Spirit to give you confidence as you continue your journey.

Remember, God loves and calls you as you are. Your weakness is not an excuse for disobedience.

Day 7: Obedience

God “will repay each person according to what they have done.” To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.

Romans 2:6-7

“It is a great deal easier to do that which God gives us to do, no matter how hard it is, than to face the responsibilities of not doing it.” B.J. Miller

When we walk in obedience to the call of God, we will touch the lives of those around us. The cost of obedience is nothing when compared with the cost of disobedience. When God calls you, what’s your answer? Can’t or Won’t? Although we often choose to say we can’t, all too often what we are really saying is that we won’t.

Our primary goal for our Impact Vision Journey is that 100% of people who call Central their spiritual home be willing to ask God what He would have them do. The goal of this seven-day journey has been to prepare us to say, “I’m willing and ready!”. Obedience to God’s call is a challenging proposition and it is more than understandable to be afraid. If the call of Moses tells us anything, it is certainly that some things are done afraid!

Intricately involved in God’s calling is God’s plan. God has a plan, but He never expects any of us to carry out the plan. He is going to see that His plan is carried out. All He wants us to do is to make ourselves available as His instruments to play our part in it.

One of the key disciplines we practice as elders and pastors is the “prayer of indifference.” In the context of spiritual discernment, indifference is a positive term signifying that “I am indifferent to anything but God’s will.” Ruth Haley Barton, in her book *Pursuing God’s Will Together*, describes the prayer of indifference as “a capacity to relinquish whatever might keep us from choosing God and love, and we have come to a place where we want God and God’s will more than anything---more than ego gratification, more than wanting to look good in the eyes of others, more than personal ownership, comfort or advantage. We ask God to bring us to a place where we want ‘God’s will, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else...’ ” (Barton, pg. 54).

As leaders this prayer is essential to every decision we make. **Every major decision begins with us praying, “Lord, make us indifferent to anything but Your will.”**

1. Is there anything holding you back from being willing to discover God’s will in our Impact Visionary Journey?
 - a. If so, confess it to the Lord and speak to a trusted friend if necessary.
 - b. Pray this prayer:

Father, will you give me an “indifferent” spirit as I come together with my church family in this season to seek what You would have me do. I am aware that many emotions and feelings are present inside my soul when it comes to physical and material things.

You made us to appreciate tangible places and the blessings money can buy. You have also made us independent of places and money when we worship and follow You. I want to be a good steward of the assets You have given to me. I believe that You want to lead me to a good and strong decision because seeking Your will is central to my journey. Help me discern wisely. Give me a spirit of peace about the decision You are leading me to make. Let peace rule over my household. I continue in this journey asking all these requests in the name of Jesus, my Savior and Lord. Amen

2. Continue asking God to speak to you as you work through the **IMPACT COMMITMENT GUIDE**.



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