

2

OBJECTIONS OVERRULED



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

QUESTION #1

#BSFLbrokenvessels

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE **89**

THE POINT

*God will work through us
despite our shortcomings.*



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.)

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 as broken vessels with blemishes and weaknesses, and He accomplishes what we never thought was possible.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Exodus 3:11-12

¹¹ But Moses asked God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” ¹² He answered, “I will certainly be with you, and this will be the sign to you that I am the one who sent you: when you bring the people out of Egypt, you will all worship God at this mountain.”

We’ve all had trouble in our past. But imagine you were separated from your mother as an infant because a death sentence hung over your head. Imagine that your birth mother nursed you, but then you were handed over to a different woman who adopted you and brought you up. Imagine that you committed murder as a young man, then fled to a foreign country and took on a whole new way of life.

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 that held him down and caused him to doubt God. So, when God called Moses to be His instrument of salvation for the Israelites, Moses balked. He asked, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

Moses may have been remembering that time when, as a prince in Egypt, he tried to save an Israelite from being beaten by an Egyptian taskmaster. He may have thought: *If I couldn’t save even one Israelite when I was a prince, how can I deliver all of the Israelites from the Egyptians as an exile?* Perhaps God’s call brought to Moses’ mind the question he heard 40 years earlier: “Who made you a commander and judge over us?” (Ex. 2:14).

It’s easy for us to find objections and rationalize our unbelief. *But God, what if...? But God, what about...?* Yet our heavenly Father extends to us the same answer He gave to Moses to curb his doubts and negative self-image: “I will certainly be with you.”

How comfortable do you feel about doing what God is currently calling you to do?

QUESTION #2

Exodus 4:10-12

¹⁰ But Moses replied to the LORD, “Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent — either in the past or recently or since you have been speaking to your servant — because my mouth and my tongue are sluggish.” ¹¹ The LORD said to him, “Who placed a mouth on humans? Who makes a person mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? ¹² Now go! I will help you speak and I will teach you what to say.”

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. Therefore, he was keenly aware of his own shortcomings.

Unfortunately, Moses allowed those shortcomings—his past sins and his present self-perception—to shape his future. Years of running and living in fear had deeply affected his identity. He was broken and looking for a way out of God’s plans for his life.

For these and other reasons, Moses didn’t see himself as the best person to speak publicly on Israel’s behalf—and certainly not to speak against Pharaoh. In fact, Moses seemed convinced that he wouldn’t be able to speak at all in the presence of such a man.

Do you see the irony here? Moses was expressing his fear and inability to speak in front of an extremely powerful man, which seems reasonable. Yet Moses was expressing those fears to God! He was talking to the Creator of the universe about how he would be unable to talk in front of another man.

Let’s be honest: if you can speak to God, you certainly can speak to any earthly king. Which begs an interesting question: why did Moses think he could negotiate with God but not with Pharaoh? Why did he persist so stubbornly in his desire to doubt himself?

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

QUESTION #3

The problem was that Moses was looking at himself and not at the One calling him. That's why God reminded Moses just who it was that made him the way he was. To paraphrase verse 11, God told Moses: "You think you're slow and hesitant in speech, and you've never been eloquent in communication. Well, 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 just as you are, and He will use every part of you for His glory. Nothing is beyond God's grace and power.

Exodus 4:13-17

¹³ Moses said, "Please, Lord, send someone else."¹⁴ Then the LORD's anger burned against Moses, and he said, "Isn't Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, he is on his way now to meet you. He will rejoice when he sees you.¹⁵ You will speak with him and tell him what to say. I will help both you and him to speak and will teach you both what to do.¹⁶ He will speak to the people for you. He will serve as a mouth for you, and you will serve as God to him.¹⁷ And take this staff in your hand that you will perform the signs with."

God told Moses, "I will help you" (v. 12). God even gave Moses a play-by-play description of the immediate future, showing Moses *three* miracles that would prove God had sent him.

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

QUESTION #4



Unfortunately, even those gifts didn't convince Moses.

Instead of replying as Isaiah did centuries later—"Here I am. Send me" (Isa. 6:8)—Moses begged, "Please, Lord, send someone else." No wonder "The LORD's anger burned against Moses"!

Moses failed to understand that God wants to equip those He calls, rather than merely calling those who are already equipped. When God calls you to Himself, He will equip you with everything you need to follow Him, live for Him each day, and experience His joy and fullness in your life.

Fortunately for Moses, God was merciful; He relented and allowed Moses' brother, Aaron, to go with him. But God didn't let Moses off the hook. God didn't say, "All right, Aaron will speak and you can just manage the process." Instead, God said, "You will speak *with* him and tell him what to say. I will help *both you and him* to speak and will teach you both what to do" (emphasis added).

God still insisted that Moses do the work God had called him to do. Why? Because God had a greater plan in store for Moses than whatever Moses was willing to settle for.

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. I ask that You would use me today." I want to be a faithful, willing, and available servant to God. After I pray those words, I begin to get ready for work. While I'm getting ready, I continue my prayer by saying, "Lord, please speak to me and through me today." In every interaction that I have with others, I want to be available for God to speak to me and through me. As a result, I will then often end my prayer with, "So I offer up to You the work I need to accomplish, my meetings, my interactions with coworkers, as well as my interactions with my neighbors, wife, and children. Please guide those moments for Your glory."

This practice works for me, and it can work for you. Begin your day with the understanding that God will be with you. He will equip you to accomplish His purposes in your life. And He actively desires to work through you despite your shortcomings.

How can we help one another move out of our comfort zones in order to obey God?

QUESTION #5

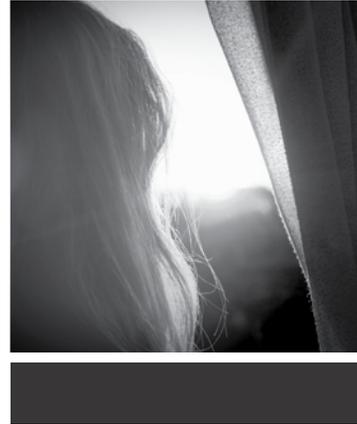
LIVE IT OUT

How will you respond to God's continued call in your life? Consider taking one of these steps in the days to come:

- ▶ **Deal with the past.** Moses' past sins affected his outlook and posture in life. What temptations tend to come up repeatedly for you? What sins do you often commit? Ask the Lord to free you from those chains.
- ▶ **Focus on the present.** When you wake up each morning, start your day by submitting yourself to God and His plans.
- ▶ **Be accountable.** One of the best ways to overcome your shortcomings is by sharing them with others and inviting others to keep you accountable. In fact, this is one of the key attributes to being a disciple of Christ—building relationships with others and living unashamed. Who can you ask to keep you accountable in your walk with Christ?

You and I have shortcomings. It's true. Even so, you and I are valued members of God's kingdom. We have the chance each day to work for Him as He equips and encourages us to make a difference.

My thoughts



Share with others how
you will live out this study:
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