

Exodus 1-2 “Prepared to Lead

The book of Exodus tells the story of the Lord’s deliverance of His people. Providentially, Moses was uniquely prepared to lead in God’s redemptive work. It is a gripping saga, commencing with Egyptian oppression.

Pharaoh intended to demoralize the Hebrews, prevent them from cooperating with a rival nation, and in order to eventually extinguish the Hebrew race, executed a policy of enslavement and infanticide. Facing infanticide, Moses birth was the result of a mother’s conspiratorial act of civil disobedience.

The conspiracy was hatched and implemented by his mother, Jochebed and his older sister, Miriam. Ironically, the heroine in the story was none other than one of the daughters of Pharaoh. The heart of Pharaoh’s daughter was moved as she saw 3-month-old Moses in a basket strategically placed along the Nile River. The plan produced a best-case scenario, far greater than Jochebed could have asked or imagined. Pharaoh’s daughter not only rescued baby Moses, she naively paid Jochebed to raise her own son for the first years of his life.

“When Moses grew older, his mother took him to Pharaoh’s daughter and he became her son” (Exodus 2:10). Do you see God’s providence and Moses’ unique preparation? Moses was born and raised as a Hebrew child, adopted by royalty, received the best education and training, and enjoyed all the privileges as an Egyptian prince.

Around the age of 40, Moses declared his loyalty: *“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin”* (Hebrews 11:24-25).

Moses was committed to his people; with a passion to confront Egyptian oppression. He had been trained, possessing the skillset, education, and the drive of a strong leader. Yet he needed more than human courage, natural ability, and what the best education in Egypt could provide. Godly leaders, regardless of extraordinary natural ability and excellent training, must learn a simple leadership axiom, “God’s work in God’s way for God’s glory”.

Moses’ actions and reactions in 2-day period (Exodus 2:11-14) revealed a destructive pride. A lack of self-control left his anger unrestrained, which when combined with a blinding passion for justice, climaxed in a murderous rage. The next day, self-importance compelled him to intervene in a situation that was none of his business and then over react to another’s assessment of him. In an inaugural foray into leadership, his self-centered pride resulted in a rejection by his own people and a death warrant by the Egyptian ruler. Pretty impressive for two days work! Moses needed to learn humility.

Humility is a powerful virtue. It is the spiritual fountain from which cascades God's spiritual life. C.S. Lewis said, "True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less." The cultivation of a humble heart frees us from self-importance and others' approval to enjoy a life for God's glory. It liberates us from the bondage of self-reliance to become more and more enamored with the will of our Father. Humility momentarily convinces us to live by a simple and powerful truth, "my life is not about me, it is about God."

In the 16,400 days in the wilderness, Moses learned humility. Far from making him into a less effective leader, Moses became one of the greatest leaders in human history. He led an entire nation out of slavery into freedom. He raised his staff and stretched out his hand and the waters of the Red Sea miraculously divided. He met God Almighty on a mountain and received from God the Law as well as the designs for God's earthly dwelling place. He wrote the Pentateuch, the first 5 books of Holy Scripture. Those are but a few of his achievements.

God would use Moses' unique background, natural abilities, and Egyptian training. But first, Moses learned that spiritual leadership and a successful life were not enabled by self-reliance, willpower, and self-glory but by God's strength for God's glory. What transformed this wannabe leader into one of the key leaders in God's redemptive plan? The book of Numbers gives us the secret of Moses' success: "*Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth*" (Numbers 12:3).