

## “Burning Bush Moments”

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Exodus 3:1-15 + Moses at the Burning Bush



**W**e long for, hunger and thirst for a sign from God. We need one right now to bless Crosspoint and reveal God’s plan for us. We come today seeking a sign from God about where God wants us to be – what God wants us to be. Would that God would give us a burning bush moment. We need that.

Like Moses at the burning bush, in Scripture God’s purpose was abundantly clear: [This didn’t mean Moses responded well, but just that God’s purpose was clear.]

- When God spoke, the people of God knew it was God.
- The family of God knew what God was saying.
- God’s people knew what they were to do in response.



- When God spoke, the people of God knew it was God. There was no ambiguity, no missed connections.

- The family of God knew what God was saying. There was no miscommunication.
- God's people knew what they were to do in response. They knew exactly what God expected.<sup>1</sup>

**N**one of that holds for us today, unfortunately. As much as we may wish for that kind of clarity, we don't get it. Nor of course does any of that mean that members of God's family always get it right or follow through every time on what God requires. I am just saying that God's purpose and expectations have crystal clarity ~ whether we choose to respond as God requires is an entirely different matter. Think of Jonah. Think of most of the kings of Israel and Judah. Think of Moses.

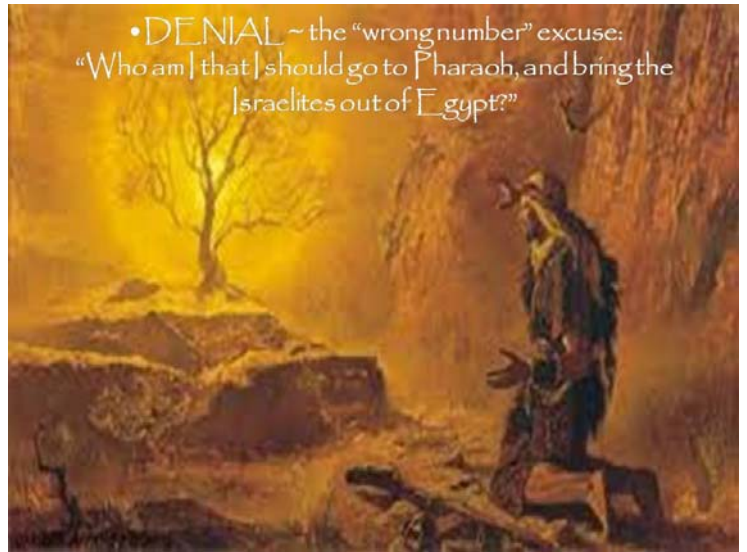
Yes, let's take up Moses. He is always lauded as the one who really got it right, but in today's text we find him trying his darnedest to wriggle out of God's call. Here we see Moses in a most human light. In essence Moses responds as each of us would respond: with *denial, delay, deferment, dissuasion* and *disclaimer*.



**E**xuses, excuses ~ all kinds of excuses! God's people are always making excuses. Even Moses!! One excuse – our big one – is “if God would just give me a burning bush, then I would know for sure.”

Think about it for a moment ~ if we ever were to be blessed with a burning bush moment, face to face with the living God, would we be standing tall saying “here I am, send me” or would we be mumbling our excuses right along with Moses? Is any of us greater than Moses?

• DENIAL ~ the “wrong number” excuse:  
“Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the  
Israelites out of Egypt?”



- Moses began just like every one of us with *denial*, the “wrong number” excuse: *“Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”*<sup>2</sup>
- Then Moses stalls for time, tries to *delay* with the “let’s talk about this” excuse. An infamous delaying tactic: *“Suppose I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?”*<sup>3</sup>
- Now going beyond our text today ~ Following fast behind this one is Moses’ attempt to *defer* by trying to play the “why try if you know it’s going to fail” card. When God will not be refused, try to make your obedience contingent on the untried response of others. *“But suppose they do not believe me or listen to me, but say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you.’”*<sup>4</sup>
- Now in desperation, we try to *dissuade* God with the “woe is me” excuse ~ after challenging God’s choice, faking ignorance and blaming others for a future intention to fail, then we and Moses both claim incompetence: *“O my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”*<sup>5</sup>



- Finally, having exhausted every other possibility he can think of, Moses resorts to *disclaimer*, the “can’t you send someone else” excuse: *“O my Lord, please send*

• DISCLAIM ~ “can’t you send someone else” excuse:  
“O my Lord, please send someone else.”

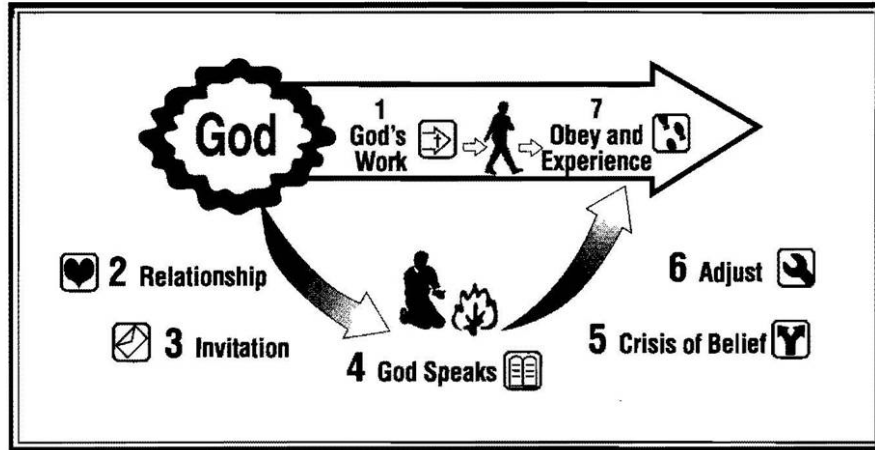
*someone else.*” This is Moses’ bottom line. We’ve hit our bottom line as well. Truth be told, in our heart of hearts, we really would rather not be involved with God’s plan for us. We like the blessing but don’t really like the commitment part. Our cry is just as loud as Moses’ ~ *“O my Lord, please send someone else.”*<sup>6</sup>

God handled every excuse Moses could muster. When we are blessed with a burning bush experience, God takes away every excuse



we can muster. God’s will for each of us is that we each face up to our own feelings of inadequacy and our own reluctance to commit to God’s enterprise our whole hearts, minds and souls. God does not take “no” for an answer – nor denial, delaying, deferring, dissuading or disclaimer. Maybe knowing this is how we are likely to respond to burning bush experiences is why God is so stingy with them.

**W**e do wish for, long for certainty about our own purpose and path – the certainty we might get if we gave up our excuses at a burning bush moment. Henry Blackaby in his popular and helpful book on *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God* figures there are seven steps in discovering God’s will for each of us. The excuses come in at step four. If we respond as hoped to each stage we will effectively grow into God’s plan. He uses the life of Moses to illustrate the seven steps:<sup>7</sup> [Has this ever happened in your life? All the way through the cycle? If not, who is to blame?]



1. God is always at work around us. Whether we recognize it. Whether we are aware of it or not.
2. God always pursues us, seeking constantly for a love relationship with each of us that is real and personal. Whether we recognize God's pursuit or not. Whether we are even aware of it.
3. God invites each of us to become involved in God's work. Whether we recognize it. Whether we accept the invitation or deny that it even exists.
4. God speaks by the Spirit to each to reveal Godself, God's purposes and God's path. through a variety of ways:
  - a. through Scripture
  - b. through prayer
  - c. through life circumstances
  - d. through the family of God
  - e. and even sometimes through a burning bush event
5. God's invitation to join in God's work always leads us to a personal crisis of belief that requires faith and action.
6. One must make major adjustments in life to join God in God's work. God does not make it easy. There is always change required.

7. Each comes to know God by experience on the path as we obey and follow. That is how God chooses to accomplish the plan.<sup>8</sup>

**I**t is amazing what we will do for ourselves but refuse to do for God. Many of us go to great lengths to accumulate spiritual experiences and material blessings to enhance the meaning of our lives, but to live our lives for the sake of Jesus is asking too much? We value comfortable life above all. We are certainly capable of investing much for our creature comforts and in extending our lives in health, why then can we not surrender that same life to God?<sup>9</sup>



**I**nvited everyone to come last Sunday with your testimonies. Today we are changing up our prayer time by inviting anyone who wishes to lift up their prayer concerns over discernment of direction to the Lord.

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<sup>1</sup> Henry T. Blackaby & Claude V. King *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God* (Broadman and Holman, 2004) 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition, p. 50

<sup>2</sup> Douglas D. Webster, "Living By The Word" *Christian Century* 8/23/2011, p. 20

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>7</sup> Blackaby & King, p. 52

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 50

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*