

EXODUS

WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE?

I have been helping students lead Campus clubs at middle schools and high schools for over two decades, and for years we could never figure out how to effectively reach the campuses with the gospel. A ministry called National School Project (NSP), now called Decision Point, has a successful strategy to reach high schools with the gospel if they can find willing students to answer God's call to lead these outreaches. In the fall of 2018, Alex was a faithful participant in Village's student ministry. He was also busy senior at Kaneland High School with schoolwork, baseball, and a job. But he heard God's call and challenge to reach his school with the gospel of Jesus Christ when we first met with a NSP staff person. Alex and a small team of students raised prayer and financial support and led our first school outreach on February 21, 2019, called "What's the Point?" They weren't sure that anyone was going to even show up, but when the school bell rang, 122 students poured into the cafeteria. Alex shared his testimony in front of his peers followed up by a guest speaker who talked about making sense of life, ultimately pointing everyone to Jesus. Thirty students trusted in Christ that afternoon!. Alex could have made excuses that he was too busy, but he listened and followed God's calling to reach Kaneland High School. Alex started a movement in our Village Students student ministry where we have had similar outreaches in our local schools every year since.¹

Exodus 4 continues Moses' burning bush conversation with God. Moses had already given two excuses for why God shouldn't choose him to lead Israel out of Egypt. Moses' first excuse was "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh to lead the Israelites out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11) And his second excuse was he didn't know what he should say if they asked who sent him (Exodus 3:13). This week's study covers Moses' last three excuses for thinking that God shouldn't choose him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

ICEBREAKER

What excuse do you tend to give when you are asked to do something that you don't want to do?

¹ Author's notes

DAILY DEVOTIONS

DAY 1

READ IT

Read Exodus 4:1–17.

EXPLORE IT

- 1. What first captured Moses' attention, and what caused him to turn aside to investigate? (vv. 1–3)**
- 2. What three powerful signs did God give Moses to demonstrate to the Egyptians that God had sent him (vv. 1–9)?**
- 3. What profound truth did God bring to Moses' attention after Moses criticized his own speaking abilities (v. 11)?**
- 4. Which righteous emotion did God demonstrate when Moses ran out of excuses and asked God to choose someone else (v. 14)?**
- 5. What additional resource did God give Moses with which to carry out his ministry role (v. 14–16)**

DAY 2—MOSES' THIRD EXCUSE: THEY WON'T BELIEVE ME REMEMBERING THE PROMISES OF GOD

Read Exodus 4:1–9.

When I was in elementary school, I was pretty good at making up stories. There was a forest along the edges of my school's field where we went to play outside during lunch. I'm not sure that we were supposed to play in the woods area unsupervised, but my friends and I would play there all the time. In the media of the day, the creature "Bigfoot" was a thing people would talk about. Bigfoot was basically a big guy with big feet covered in thick gorilla hair. I remember telling some of my classmates that I saw a Bigfoot in the woods and asked them to help me find him. I was convincing, and some of my classmates believed me even though it wasn't true.

Unlike my Bigfoot story that was utterly fake, Moses had an actual encounter with God where God spoke to him from the burning bush. God told Moses to tell the Israelites that he spoke with God. God told Moses that he would be with him (Exodus 3:13) and that the Israelite elders would listen to him (Exodus 3:18). But Moses gives his third excuse: "What if they don't believe me?" God took away Moses' excuse of the Israelites' potential unbelief by giving three miracles Moses could perform in front of the Israelite elders to prove that God spoke with him.²

6. **God told Moses in Exodus 3:18 that "the elders will listen to him." Moses didn't believe God. In Exodus 4:1 he says, "What if they do not believe me?" God gives us so many promises in the Bible, but like Moses, sometimes we don't always believe God will make good on His promises. What are some promises that may be difficult for you to believe?**

7. **God tells Moses that He is the God of Abraham and Jacob, reminding Moses that He is the covenant God who has kept his promises to these men. How has God shown himself faithful in keeping his promises to you in the past?**

8. **Because Moses himself had the problem of disbelief, he made up excuses for not obeying God. What is one excuse for not obeying that you are making to God right now?**

² Author's notes

DAY 3—MOSES' FOURTH EXCUSE: I AM NOT ELOQUENT RELYING ON THE POWER OF GOD

Read Exodus 4:10–12.

When I was a young student ministry pastor, I would compare myself to other student ministry pastors and wish I had the speaking ability or charisma of others. But somewhere along the way I grasped the truth of Psalm 139:14 that I am fearfully and wonderfully made with the gifts and abilities that God wanted to give me. I can see God's calling on my life to minister to students and I have come to learn the strengths God has given me. In the areas where I know I am "weak," I rely on God as well as the gifted people around me to accomplish His mission. In a similar way, both teenage guys and girls tend to compare themselves with others in intellect, athletic ability, popularity, or the way they look. When we compare, we feel we fall short in certain abilities. Moses saw himself falling short when it came to speaking in front of others. God wanted Moses to be His mouthpiece, but Moses told God that he was not eloquent. God called Moses out and said, "Hey, did you forget that I made you and that I am the one who gives you the ability to speak?" God promised that he would help Moses speak and teach him what to say. Every ability we have is from God, and we need to use those gifts to bring honor and glory to Him. In the areas in your life where you feel weak or inadequate, that's where God can demonstrate His power in your life. The Lord says to Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."³

9. **Why do you think we tend to compare ourselves with others?**

10. **How is not embracing the identity and way that God has made you offensive towards God?**

11. **What is an area of your life in which you feel inadequate or limited when it comes to serving God?**

12. **Read 2 Corinthians 12:9. Why do you think God chooses to work through people who feel ill equipped like Moses and Paul rather than waiting until they feel ready?**

13. **Can you think of a time when you felt weak and unqualified and God showed up with His power in your life to accomplish a task for His glory?**

³ Author's notes

DAY 4—MOSES' FIFTH EXCUSE: PLEASE SEND SOMEONE ELSE RECOGNIZING THE PROVISION OF GOD

Read Exodus 4:13–17.

God was more than adequately answering each one of Moses's excuses so that he didn't have any valid reasons not to be God's leader and mouthpiece to the elders of Israel and the king of Egypt. Moses ran out of excuses and simply asked God if he could send someone else. This was Moses' fifth and final excuse, so the Lord's righteous anger burned against Moses. God showed more mercy and grace by providing Aaron, Moses' brother, to help him. Why didn't God just set Moses aside and replace him with Aaron? It's because God is merciful, patient, long-suffering, and gracious. And He is the same way towards us. How many times do we sin against our holy God who loves us, but God is merciful, patient, long-suffering and gracious with us and doesn't give us the punishment we deserve. Yes, He will discipline us out of His love (Hebrews 12:4–11), but as His children, He will never give up on us and put us on the shelf never to be used again. I often hear stories from our prison ministry of inmates who have committed horrible crimes but Jesus transformed their lives and they are being used by God to minister to fellow prisoners.⁴

14. God has entrusted us with the message of the Gospel. On a scale of 1(toe in) to 10 (all in) how urgently do you think Village students share the gospel? What makes it hard to move closer to a 10?

15. What are ways you can overcome your feelings of inadequacy in the area of sharing the Gospel?

16. Who is an Aaron in your life who supports you as you serve God? How does this relationship help you?

17. Serving God doesn't have to mean preaching on a street corner. What's one definable step you can take this week to serve God, whether praying for a neighbor, reaching out to a friend with truth from God, or serving somewhere new? Pair up with 1 or 2 other people at small group to pray for God's power as you take this step.

⁴ Author's notes

This study was written by Pastor Mario Arindaeng based on the adult lesson by Pastor David Wood.