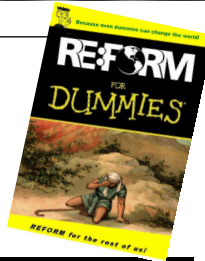



**A Five-Day Devotional Journey**
**April 6 – 12, 2008**
**Acts 7:17-41**

# Moses

## ReForm for Dummies



### 1 They braved the king's decree

**Read.** Acts 7:17-22 NLT

As the time drew near when God would fulfill his promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt greatly increased. But then a new king came to the throne of Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph. This king exploited our people and oppressed them, forcing parents to abandon their newborn babies so they would die. At that time Moses was born — a beautiful child in God's eyes. His parents cared for him at home for three months. When they had to abandon him, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and raised him as her own son. Moses was taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was powerful in both speech and action.

**Hebrews 11:23 Message**

By an act of faith, Moses' parents hid him away for three months after his birth. They saw the child's beauty, and they braved the king's decree.

**Think.**

- If time permits, read the story of Moses' birth in Exodus 1:1-2:10. How were the Israelites being oppressed in Egypt? Why was the Pharaoh doing this? How did they respond to the oppression? Where was God in the midst of all this?
- Why do Moses' parents hide him away for three months? What would you have done in their place? What do you think they thought would happen when they placed him in the river?
- Why does Pharaoh's daughter take Moses in? Who ends up caring for him? How do you see the hand of God in all of this?
- Where are you facing oppression and fear in your life now? How does this story encourage you? How have you seen God's purpose unfolding in your life — or are you still waiting to see it?

**Pray.**

O Lord, give me the stout heart of those Hebrew midwives who refused to cower — and the tender heart of Moses' parents who had the courage to see your purposes in the face of their child. Help me to see and act in unison with your purposes unfolding all about me.

**Live.**

Following the Lord's lead, find a way to take "under your wings" someone who has been oppressed in some way.

Listen carefully to what I'm telling you.  
 If there is a prophet of God among you,  
 I make myself known to him in visions,  
 I speak to him in dreams.  
 But I don't do it that way with my servant Moses;  
 he has the run of my entire house;  
 I speak to him intimately, in person,  
 in plain talk without riddles:  
 He ponders the very form of God.  
 Numbers 12:6-8, Message

**Tents stretched across the horizon as far as the eye could see. He couldn't help but remember those shepherd days in Midian, seemingly a lifetime ago now. He had been so sure he was done. He was a fugitive from Egypt, now spending the rest of his life in a backwater tending sheep. He really thought he was the one who would deliver his people, but those dreams had all but died. Who could possibly have guessed that a shrub burning with an unquenchable fire would be what it took to resurrect that dream. He smiled as he remembered how difficult that resurrection had been. "They'll balk... I can't talk..." But God just wouldn't take no for an answer — either from him or from Pharaoh. So in Moses went and out they came, a free people.**

**And now they filled the countryside.**

**Only now did Moses really understand. Getting Israel free was not the hard part — the road forward, staying free — that was the real challenge...**

**One of the main charges Stephen faced was the charge that he constantly spoke against Moses and the Law. So now Moses becomes the centerpiece of Stephen's speech. And as Stephen unfolds the story at the very heart of Judaism he reveals yet another Messianic tapestry — the story of Moses telegraphing, foreshadowing, prefiguring the path of the Messiah these very rulers had rejected, even as Moses himself had, in turn, been rejected not just once, but repeatedly by an unbelieving generation unable to see beyond themselves.**

## 2) They didn't want him

**Read.** Acts 7:23-25 NLT

One day when Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his relatives, the people of Israel. He saw an Egyptian mistreating an Israelite. So Moses came to the man's defense and avenged him, killing the Egyptian. Moses assumed his fellow Israelites would realize that God had sent him to rescue them, but they didn't.

John 1:11 Message

He came to his own people, but they didn't want him.

**Think.**

- Unlike the frequent Hollywood portrayal, Moses was actually cared for by his own mother in Pharaoh's court and knew exactly who he was. Stephen also says Moses was trained in all the wisdom of Egypt. With all this in mind, why does Moses go out to visit his people?
- What does Moses do when he is directly confronted with the oppression of his people? Good idea or bad idea?
- How do you typically respond to oppression and suffering in the world when you see it in the news? (a) my blood boils (b) I feel overwhelmed (c) I'm glad it's not me (d) I pray really hard (e) I change the channel...or what?

**Pray.**

Lord, help me not to hide my eyes from the suffering all around me nor to seek out numbing paths of frivolous escape; help me to see what it is you would have me to do, and then to make a start.

**Live.**

Spend time this week silent before the Lord. Ask how he would have you engage in some of the current issues and great needs in our world.

## 4) In the flame of a burning bush

**Read.** Acts 7:30-34 NLT

Forty years later, in the desert near Mount Sinai, an angel appeared to Moses in the flame of a burning bush. When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight. As he went to take a closer look, the voice of the LORD called out to him, 'I am the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' Moses shook with terror and did not dare to look. Then the LORD said to him, 'Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground. I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groans and have come down to rescue them. Now go, for I am sending you back to Egypt.'

**Think.**

- If time permits, read Exodus 3:1-4:17 for the full account of God's call to Moses at the burning bush. What reasons did Moses give for not carrying out this call? He seemed eager and ready before, why is he trying to excuse himself now?
- What specific inadequacies do you feel when you contemplate God's call upon your life? How have perceived inadequacies hindered you from pursuing his call? How have you seen God show up in the midst of your inadequacies?
- What other lessons do you learn from the burning bush?

**Pray.**

Lord, thank you that being overqualified is never an issue and that we can never be under qualified for you to work and shine through us. Thank you for using earthen pots and for pouring right through the cracks and broken places of our lives.

**Live.**

Make a list of your personal strengths, weaknesses, and abilities (maybe ask a close friend to help you) and lay it before the Lord as you contemplate his call on your life.

## 3) Who made you a ruler and a judge?

**Read.** Acts 7:26-29 NLT

The next day he visited them again and saw two men of Israel fighting. He tried to be a peacemaker. 'Men,' he said, 'you are brothers. Why are you fighting each other?' 'But the man in the wrong pushed Moses aside. 'Who made you a ruler and judge over us?' he asked. 'Are you going to kill me as you killed that Egyptian yesterday?' When Moses heard that, he fled the country and lived as a foreigner in the land of Midian. There his two sons were born.

Hebrews 11:24-27 Message

By faith, Moses, when grown, refused the privileges of the Egyptian royal house. He chose a hard life with God's people rather than an opportunistic soft life of sin with the oppressors. He valued suffering in the Messiah's camp far greater than Egyptian wealth because he was looking ahead, anticipating the payoff. By an act of faith, he turned his heel on Egypt, indifferent to the king's blind rage. He had his eye on the One no eye can see, and kept right on going.

**Think.**

- How does Moses expect his offered leadership to be received? What kind of reception does he get? How does he respond to the personal rebuff?
- When recently have you felt dismissed or rejected by others? How did you handle it?
- What does Hebrews 11 say about Moses' underlying motivations in this season of his life?
- How ready are you for a "hard life" with God's people? What do you imagine such a "hard life" would look like for you? Where do you need to give up an "opportunistic soft life of sin" in our culture so you can pursue a bigger and deeper purpose in your life?

**Pray.**

Lord, help me to live free and deep — and to faithfully pursue the hard life of bringing your salvation to this world.

**Live.** Take the risk of being a peacemaker this week.

## 5) Our ancestors refused to listen to Moses

**Read.** Acts 7:35-41 NLT

So God sent back the same man his people had previously rejected when they demanded, 'Who made you a ruler and judge over us?' Through the angel who appeared to him in the burning bush, God sent Moses to be their ruler and savior. And by means of many wonders and miraculous signs, he led them out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and through the wilderness for forty years. Moses himself told the people of Israel, 'God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among your own people.' Moses was with our ancestors, the assembly of God's people in the wilderness, when the angel spoke to him at Mount Sinai. And there Moses received life-giving words to pass on to us. But our ancestors refused to listen to Moses. They rejected him and wanted to return to Egypt. They told Aaron, 'Make us some gods who can lead us, for we don't know what has become of this Moses, who brought us out of Egypt.' So they made an idol shaped like a calf, and they sacrificed to it and celebrated over this thing they had made.

**Think.**

- In what role was Moses sent back to Egypt? What challenges did he face? How did God show up in the midst of it all?
- What was the overall response to Moses' ministry and work among the Israelites?
- What challenges are you currently facing in your walk and ministry with God? How are you really needing him to show up now?

**Pray.**

Come, Lord! Fill me, use me, pour me out. Through life-giving words and deeds, let my life make a difference in this fallen world.

**Live.**

Pray and live out this prayer throughout the day.