

W O M E N ' S L E A D E R S H I P D E V E L O P M E N T

Accepting the Challenge

*Leadership Lessons
from the Life of Moses*

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Dedication

I am dedicating this book to my parents, Don and Sue Harris. Throughout my life they have shown me what it means to faithfully serve God. My father finished his course in 2009 and is in Heaven. My mother continues to serve God and provide a godly example for our family.

Acknowledgments

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How to Use This Book

The purpose of this Bible study is to help you develop qualities necessary for Biblical leadership based on observations from the life of Moses. This study is divided into six daily study times (sections) each week. Each week will provide a lesson on leadership and a verse to memorize.

Day 1: Time Alone with God. I am convinced that the highest priority for every leader is to sit at the feet of God and listen to His Word before hearing any other voices. For this reason, the first day of every lesson presents only the Biblical texts with suggestions for observation and study. Do not skip Day 1, because it will be the foundation for what God has to teach you personally through the Living Word.

Day 2: Leadership Lessons from the Life of Moses. You will be introduced to the theme of the chapter through Moses' life and experiences. By examining his life, faith, trials, and victories, you can gain valuable understanding about what God does and does not value in a leader.

Day 3: Comparing Scripture with Scripture. This is essential in studying the Bible. On Day 3 the study will focus on other Biblical examples and texts that provide insight into the leadership theme for the week.

Day 4: Seeing God's Hand. God is the main character in every Biblical account, and Day 4 will challenge you to focus on God Himself. Discerning God's plans and purposes that influenced the life of Moses will help you see and understand His purposes in your life.

Day 5: Making It Count. This day will focus on application and is a time to search your heart for a personal response to God's Word. God did not ask us to study the Bible to increase our knowledge, but to change our lives. Day 5 will be a time of contemplation that will help you implement what you have learned this week.

Day 6: Accepting the Challenge. This day will challenge you to act on your knowledge by reviewing the theme of the lesson, stating action steps, and listing prayer requests.

Suggested class discussion questions throughout each lesson are indicated with red question numbers. Each leader can adapt those questions to the time allotted for discussion. Personal reflection questions will not be marked but could be discussed if participants are willing to share.

Introduction

Are you ready for the task God has for you? Do you believe that God is looking for a leader who will make a difference in their family, their church, their workplace, and their nation? What if that person is you? Would you accept the challenge of leadership?

Before you start your very long list of why you are not qualified, consider that people are often afraid of leadership roles because they misunderstand what leadership really means. You might be surprised to find that true Biblical leadership is not designed to put you in the limelight. Instead it allows the spotlight to shine on God Himself. When His power and purposes are showcased in your life, you will lead, not by your own might, but by God's power.

No one understood this concept better than Moses. The struggles he faced while growing up and his quest to lead stubborn people to the Promised Land mirror the struggles most Christian leaders face. Studying his life will highlight Biblical principles that will allow you to be more effective in your leadership role. But first you must decide if you are willing to accept the challenge.

Leading Means Choosing God by Faith

Choosing wisely

Look around you. Do you ever get discouraged by the world's problems? Do you sense the need for someone who will stand up in our secular society to articulate a Biblical worldview and demonstrate Biblical Christianity? What if that person is you? I believe that God is looking for leaders who will make a difference and I believe God wants you and me to be that type of leader.

Does that thought intimidate you? Before you run and hide, you'll have to admit that although leadership is scary, it is also essential. It is leaders who shape nations for good or evil. It is leaders who transform businesses and corporations into models of integrity or corruption. Leaders change the climate of their community or home. In fact, whether we realize it or not, most of us are already leaders. People are watching us. People are affected by our decisions, our attitudes, our speech, and our behavior. The question is not whether we will lead others, but in what direction we will lead them.

For this reason, in this lesson we will focus on the important choice that each leader must make to live for God by faith. We will study the difficult choice Moses made early, which ultimately determined what type of leader he would become. His choice centered on his loyalties. Before God can use us as leaders, we also must declare our loyalties, so this lesson centers on the choice of whom we will believe and whom we will serve.

MEMORY VERSES

"By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin" (Heb. 11:24, 25).

Day 1

Time Alone with God

Wise choices

This lesson will highlight the blessing of choosing God by faith. So while you are reading, look for choices people made.

1. Start by reading Exodus 1 and 2, Luke 16:19–31, Acts 7:18–20, and Hebrews 11. Look carefully for details in these passages. Some sample categories are listed below. Under the headings, jot down the details you notice, and note the verses in which you found them.

Historical or geographical information

Key people

Key concepts

Key admonitions

2. What did you learn about Moses and the Children of Israel?
3. What did you learn about the Egyptians?
4. What did you learn about God and His ways?
5. What did you learn about yourself?
6. Record the most important thing you learned from your time in God's Word today.

Day 2

Leadership Lessons from the Life of Moses

Choosing between two worlds

Imagine starting life with a death warrant over your head. Moses was a unique child who seemed destined for greatness, but he had some huge obstacles to overcome. Even though he had godly Hebrew parents and a strong brother and sister team, the world situation made his arrival dangerous.

1. According to Exodus 1:15–19, why did the midwives choose to disobey a direct order from the King of Egypt?
2. After reading Exodus 2:1–3 and Hebrews 11:23, record some of the choices Moses' parents made despite Pharaoh's edict.
3. Compare Exodus 1:22 to 2:3. How did Moses' mother show wisdom in obeying Pharaoh's decree?
4. Read Exodus 2:4–7 to see what choice Miriam made when she saw the princess with her baby brother. Record some risks of this choice.
5. According to verses 5–10, what choice did Pharaoh's daughter make?

Moses' miraculous survival and intriguing entrance into nobility show that God had an important task for Moses to complete. His life had been dependent on the decisions of others, but soon Moses would face the most important decision of his life, and no one could make it for him. Although the Bible gives few specific details about Moses' connection with his birth family or his position in Pharaoh's court, it does record that for forty years Moses had two families. According to Acts 7:21 and 22, Moses was raised as the son of the pharaoh's daughter, yet he also had a birth family that was different in almost every aspect. Imagine the struggles Moses might have encountered because he had two families.

“And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds” (Acts 7:22).

6. What issues do you think he faced regarding the following?

Loyalty

Sense of belonging

Spiritual beliefs

Worldview

Because Egypt was one of the wealthiest nations, Moses’ royal family would have enjoyed a lifestyle of comfort and riches known only to the privileged. Egyptian civilization was advanced in medicine, math, art, literature, and architecture, so the education afforded the pharaoh’s grandchild would have been unparalleled.

7. Read Acts 7:22. What does this verse tell you about Moses’ education? (Note the two areas in which Moses was considered “mighty.”)

8. Read Exodus 1:8–14 and consider the differences Moses would have experienced between growing up in Pharaoh’s palace as grandson to the ruler and growing up in the humble home of a Hebrew slave family. How could the following factors have influenced his loyalties?

Wealth

Food

Entertainment

Perks of power

The suffering of the Israelites would have provided a stark contrast to Moses’ lifestyle in the palace. As Moses grew older, royal power and privileges must have been alluring, especially since a grandson of a pharaoh might one day inherit the throne. The book *Rulers of Ancient Egypt* says that the pharaoh “governed all aspects of life with the aid of a simple, central administration, largely composed of his sons and other relatives.” Moses was experiencing the best of everything and was on the inside track to world power, but he understood that this life is not the only life that matters.

The importance of the choice

Although Moses lived in the palace of Egypt, he did not forget that he had another heritage. Hebrews 11:24–26 indicates that when Moses grew up, he made an important decision about his life and loyalty. We cannot be sure when this happened, but in ancient Egypt boys who reached the age of fourteen were considered adults and had already begun training in their fathers' occupations. The writer of Hebrews gives great insight into the choice Moses made at this pivotal point in his life.

9. What did Moses purposefully choose (Heb. 11:24, 25)?

10. On what basis did Moses willingly make this choice?

Now stop for a moment to ponder this momentous choice. It was not simply a question of whether Moses liked his birth family more than his surrogate family. His decision was based on whether he would stand true to the God of Abraham or bow to other gods. From his earliest days in the palace Moses had to consider whether Jehovah was the one true God or if He was just another god like the Egyptian deities.

Aligning himself with the people of God might seem like a simple decision for Moses to make, but it wouldn't be for most of us. He had to count the cost, and the cost was high. How easy it would have been to rationalize a compromise that would allow him to enjoy his elevated status in Egypt instead of throwing it away forever. Moses understood what many people fail to grasp: choosing God means following Him and forsaking all others. In my estimation, the most unique aspect of Moses' young life was not that he was hidden in a basket in the Nile or found by a princess, but that when he looked at all the options of the world's wealth and power, he chose God and His blessing instead. The writer of Hebrews honored his noble decision because of the faith it required.

*Was Jehovah
the one true
Almighty God,
or was He just
another god?*

Day 3

Comparing Scripture with Scripture

The basis for the choice

Since Adam and Eve, individuals have chosen whether they will obey or disobey God, but the Bible has never portrayed this decision as an easy

choice. Sometimes people make the excuse that they need more information or a sign to make such a radical decision. Luke 16:27–31 explains that people do not need more information to believe God. In this passage a rich man being tormented in Hades requested that Lazarus visit his living relatives to tell them about the reality of Heaven and Hell. He thought that if someone from the dead returned to speak to them, they would believe and respond. Abraham’s response was, “If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.” The decision to follow God wholeheartedly must be made by faith.

1. Read Hebrews 11:1 and 2 and write out your own definition of faith, based on these verses.

2. Why is faith a key element in our choice to follow God (Heb. 11:6)?

3. Read Hebrews 11:4–34. If you were going to give out an award for the person with the greatest faith in this passage, who would you choose and why?

Each of the people listed in Hebrews 11 made difficult choices to believe and follow God regardless of the consequences. Living by faith means choosing to believe God over every other source of information in every circumstance and then acting in obedience to God based on that faith. Because God is truth, each word He speaks is always true. Therefore, individuals can make important decisions based on the veracity of God’s Word instead of depending on merely the tangible evidence that surrounds them.

The cost of the choice

4. What reason did the three Hebrew men give to King Nebuchadnezzar for disobeying his edict and facing imminent death (Dan. 3:15–18)?

5. What was the result of their death-defying stance for God, according to Daniel 3:23–28?

Living by faith means choosing to believe God over every other source of information in every circumstance.

6. List some of the consequences men and women endured in Hebrews 11:35–38 because they chose to believe and obey God.

How shocking! God's contract has no fine print but spells out the terms in bold letters. He explains that sometimes when we are obedient, He will spare us from harm, but other times we will suffer great affliction. So why would anyone choose to follow God if there is no fire escape clause? Why suffer, why be mistreated, why be laughed at and perhaps even killed? The answer is that God promises something far better. His rewards are better than we can imagine in our wildest imaginations, and they will last for eternity.

7. Hebrews 11:13–16 reveals the positive side of following God. List the reasons why choosing God is the wisest choice.
8. According to John 6:67–69, what was Peter's reason for following Jesus?
9. How did Paul contrast the two choices mentioned in 2 Corinthians 4:17 and 18?

The wisdom of the choice

People often spend a great deal of time thinking about investing for their future. Whether they invest in land, stocks, bonds, or bank securities, they usually ask two important questions: What is the risk? and What is the gain? The best investments offer great gain with little risk. The choice to follow God is basically an investment of our lives. We have seen that Moses and many other Biblical men and women chose by faith to seek eternal rewards rather than earthly riches, but was their choice truly a wise investment? Interestingly, the disciples also had questions about their investment after they saw the rich young ruler turn his back on God. Their questions and Jesus' answers help us understand the wisdom of our eternal investment when we choose to follow Christ.

10. What did Peter ask Jesus, as recorded in Matthew 19:27?

11. What words from Jesus in Matthew 19:28 and 29 address the certainty of this investment so people can weigh the risk?
12. What words from Jesus in verses 28 and 29 explain the gain from this investment?

Let me give you a personal illustration of enduring pain for a greater cause. In 1981 after three years of marriage, I was thrilled about being pregnant with my first child. However, during the first five months of pregnancy I endured endless nausea, daily vomiting, weight gain, and other pregnancy induced problems. At the end of nine months, I went into labor and felt the most excruciating pain of my life, which lasted over ten hours. At the end of that ordeal, I looked into the face of my newborn son, Nathan, and never once felt sorry that I had suffered. In fact, four more times I went through the same process knowing full well what it would entail. I will say that occasionally, usually in the midst of vomiting for the third time in a day, I thought, “What was I thinking?” but I knew that the joyous results would make up for the pain of the process.

This simple example cannot come close to explaining the great benefits we will receive from choosing God. How much more will our lives overflow with joy as we receive our eternal reward in Heaven, regardless of what we suffered on earth.

Day 4

Seeing God's Hand

The God we choose

When Moses made his choice, it was not based simply on the reward God offered, but on his confidence in God's character. We assume Moses' birth parents taught him about Jehovah, since his formal education would have taught him to worship Egyptian gods. Moses probably had heard stories of how his people had come to Egypt. His parents might have repeated the words God spoke to Jacob when he originally went to Egypt.

1. What promise had God given to Moses' ancestors in Genesis 46:2 and 3?

When Moses made his choice, it was not based simply on the reward God was offering, but on his confidence in God's character.

2. According to Exodus 1:8–14, what events had taken place since that initial promise to Jacob?

At a time in history when it looked like God had forgotten His promise to the Children of Israel, Moses chose to believe and worship God. Hebrews 11 implies that even before Moses was banished for killing an Egyptian, he had made this important choice. Moses believed God before he heard Him speak audibly from the burning bush or saw Him inflict plagues on Egypt or divide the Red Sea. By faith, Moses believed and chose God.

Have you ever considered the amount of information about God that Moses had at his disposal when he gave up his privileged life to willingly suffer affliction with God's people? Although he had far less information about God than we do today, God had made Himself known in various ways to Moses as He does to every generation.

3. What could Moses have learned about God from the creation account (Gen. 1; 2)?
4. What could Moses have learned about God through observing the world (Ps. 19:1–3)?
5. What could Moses have learned about God from the worldwide flood (Gen. 6; 7)?
6. What could Moses have known about God from the covenant God made with Abraham (Gen. 12)?
7. What could Moses have known about God from the birth of Isaac (Gen. 21:1–7)?
8. What could Moses have learned about God from Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22)?

Based on this short history of a true and living God, Moses chose God. He considered the facts, but it took faith to believe that the facts were true. Each person who is called for leadership must first step out in faith and believe God. The first step is belief in Jesus' death on the cross that pays the penalty for our sins. But belief also must lead us to a place where we trust God with our whole lives, as well as with our eternity. Belief based on the knowledge of God Himself is essential. It is not based on God's show of power or gifts of goodness or provision of health and wealth. It is based on the fact that He is God and there is no other. Great leaders throughout the ages have understood the greatness of God.

9. What did David proclaim about God in his prayer near the close of his reign as king (1 Chron. 29:11, 12)?
10. What did Jehoshaphat claim about God just before facing a great army of enemies marching against him (2 Chron. 20:6)?
11. How did Paul describe God in Rom. 11:33?

We have far more revelation about God than any of these individuals, and still we hesitate to give Him an unrestricted yes about ruling our lives. God has revealed Himself to us through nature, through the Bible, and through the Holy Spirit. Learning about God is a lifelong process, but we do not need more information before we decide today to wholeheartedly obey and serve Him. We simply need to choose to do so by faith.

Day 5

Making It Count

How not to choose

I love going out to eat, but sometimes making menu choices is difficult for me. Everything looks good when I don't have to cook, so I can never make up my mind what to order. Just when I think I will definitely order the wood-grilled salmon, someone mentions the garlic jumbo shrimp, and I am indecisive again. So I love restaurants that have a "choose two" menu. You can have your cake and eat it too.

But that is not true when it comes to choosing whom we will serve. God does not give the a la carte menu or “choose two” option. He is a jealous God and demands our full obedience and radical commitment. Consider these options that people weigh when they consider either following God wholeheartedly or continuing to live for the pleasures of the world.

Procrastination or indifference

Our reasoning may go something like this: I eventually want to be totally committed to God, but right now I am busy trying to juggle time and money to meet the needs of my family. I can work on spiritual things later. God will understand.

1. Read Luke 12:16–21. How did this option work out for that rich man?
2. In light of Luke 12:16–21, describe the problems with procrastination.

Halfhearted commitment

Partial commitment seems like a nice, middle-of-the-road option. The reasoning goes something like this: I want to live for God, but I’m not interested in being a fanatic. I try to fit God into my plans most of the time. The great multitudes that were following Jesus probably felt this way as well. Jesus responded to the topic when He addressed the multitudes.

3. Read Luke 14:25–33. What did Jesus demand of His followers in the following verses?
 - v. 26
 - v. 27
 - v. 33
4. How does the illustration in verses 28–30 help us understand that this should be a thoughtful choice?
5. In light of these verses, what is wrong with halfhearted commitment?

“And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve. . . . But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Josh. 24:15).

Partial commitment

Partial commitment concludes, “After God reveals His will, I will decide which part I want to obey and skip the rest.” As we read 1 Samuel 15, it is easy to see the consequences of partial obedience in the life of King Saul.

6. What did God command Saul to do (1 Sam. 15:1–3)?
7. How did Saul respond to the command (vv. 7–9)?
8. How did Saul defend his disobedience (vv. 12–15)?
9. How did God respond to Saul’s partial obedience (vv. 16–23)?

Procrastination, halfhearted commitment, and partial commitment are all choices. These are all “no” answers to the God Who formed and made us. Each time we try to disguise our disobedience in these ways, God knows we have turned our backs on Him.

A “yes” answer looks like this: “Lord, I give up all my own plans and purposes, all my own desires and hopes, and accept Thy will for my life. I give myself, my life, my all utterly to thee to be Thine forever. Use me as Thou wilt, send me where Thou wilt, work out Thy whole will in my life at any cost, now and forever.” This yes answer was written by Betty Stam, who was later martyred in China.

Day 6

Accepting the Challenge

Are you sincere about allowing your life to be used for God? If you are, one of the first steps you must take is to prayerfully consider whether you have made your choice. Each of us must face the same choice that Moses and other men and women of God faced. When the allure of the world’s wealth, wisdom, and power calls, whom will we live for and whom will we serve?

Personal reflection

1. List some areas of your life in which God has placed you in a leadership role.
2. How is God working in your life to make you a better leader?

“Then Peter answered and said to Him, See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?” (Matt. 19:27).

3. List anything in your life, whether sinful or not, that tends to lure you away from total commitment to God.
4. How do you deal with situations that tempt you to live for immediate pleasures rather than pleasing your Heavenly Father?
5. Explain a time when you have been halfhearted or indifferent to God.
6. What do you believe is the danger of procrastinating in your obedience to God?
7. Give an example of when you or someone you know has tried partial obedience.
8. Be honest with yourself and write down any fears that you have concerning saying yes to God: If I yield totally to God, I am afraid that . . .
9. What have you learned from the Word this week that will help you say yes to God?
10. List some things you believe about God that convince you it is wise to live for Him without reservation.

Author's reflection

Carson, one of my four-year-old Sunday School students, told me excitedly that he was going to Chicago to see mummies at the Ancient Egyptian exhibit. When he came to Sunday School the day after his visit, I asked him what he thought. He exuberantly said, "Those mummies were so, they were so . . . they were so *dead!*" After I finished laughing about his assessment, I realized that this sums up why Moses did the right thing in choosing to

Prayer requests

live for God. Thousands of years later, all the great things that Egypt had to offer are either destroyed or sitting on the shelves of a museum; and all the important people who ruled the land are, quite frankly, *dead*. Before you decide Who you will believe and Who you will live for, consider the long view of life. Your choice will determine your destiny for an eternity to come. Jim Elliot said, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” He also wrote, “Eternity shall be at once a great eye-opener and a great mouth-shutter.”

In high school I made a choice to follow God wholeheartedly. I did not give up the things that Moses did, but I did feel the weight of my decision. My high school teachers told me I was foolish to attend Bible college. I married a pastor, which meant we never had a large salary or plush living conditions. I have never regretted that choice, and God has blessed my family abundantly, but I had to make the choice without having any guarantees of what the future would hold. It was a choice based on the same premise as Peter when he said, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68). The same choice is before you today.

I urge you to choose wisely. Choose for eternity. But God demands an answer, so you must choose.

It Will Be Worth It All When We See Jesus

*It will be worth it all when we see Jesus.
Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ.
Once glimpse of His dear face, all sorrow will erase,
So gladly run the race till we see Christ.*

—Esther K. Rusthoi

Personal response: Write a prayer of total commitment to God, expressing your choice of Him over all else.