

Moses: The Mediator
Sunday School Lesson 2
Personality and God's Purpose
Exodus 4
6/21/2020

Introduction: For our second lesson, we are going to look at the personality of the great leader of Israel – Moses. Of all of the Old Testament characters, Moses definitely had one of the more unique personalities. In fact, his personality was so unique that it's somewhat difficult to identify it. I've seen some who've described Moses as a moody leader who displayed random fits of anger or frustration. That characteristic of Moses, though, does not really paint the whole picture for him. Others describe Moses strictly as an introvert, yet the Bible gives us examples to refute that notion. By Moses' own confession, he struggled with being well-spoken and with his own self-confidence, but he was not an overly reserved individual, which is a primary characteristic of an introverted person. I believe that the best way to classify Moses' personality is to refer to him as a mediator. From an early point in his life, we see that Moses was motivated by the well-being of others. He was very concerned with fairness and justice for his Hebrew brethren, as well as for total strangers. While all Godly parents should teach their children the Biblical principles of justice and caring for others, there are certain people whom God has created with a mediator personality. Let's see how God used Moses' personality for a very specific purpose, and we'll observe a particular challenge with it as well.

I. THE LORD USED MOSES' PERSONALITY TO LEAD PEOPLE TO VICTORY WHO COULD NOT OR WOULD NOT FIGHT FOR THEMSELVES. (EXODUS 2:11-17, 3:9-10, 5:19-21)

- A. Notice that Moses stood up for the Israelites and for the daughters of Jethro (Exodus 2:11-17).** When Moses observed an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, he could not stand idly by. He had to take action. This was who Moses was. He did not much consider the consequences of his decision. He looked to see if anyone was watching, and he took action against the Egyptian. On the very next day, he saw an Israelite striving together. Again, Moses did not stand by and watch. He wanted to help these two men reconcile their differences. He approached them and sought to be a mediator in whatever their issue was. Of course, the men were not very eager for the assistance of Moses, as word had spread about what he had done. This forced Moses to flee from Egypt and go to the wilderness of Midian. While he was there, he observed some shepherds mistreating the daughters of Jethro. He did not know these women, but it did not stop him from standing up and helping them. These are the first stories recorded in the life of Moses as an adult, so it's clear that the Bible is trying to show us exactly what type of person Moses was. He was the one who was not afraid to interject himself into a situation. He could not sit idly by as his brethren or these women were mistreated.
- B. Notice that God called Moses to do the very thing that Moses excelled at doing (Exodus 3:9:10, 5:19-21).** When God spoke to Moses through the fiery bush, He had a very specific purpose for Moses. It was going to be his job to lead the people out of Egypt. Was there anybody better suited for such a task? Moses did not mind standing up for others, even when those others did not even want to stand up for themselves. Moses' reluctance was not due to a lack of desire to see the people delivered from the cruelty of the Egyptians. His reluctance was totally based on his insecurities. He thought that such a job was better suited for some well-spoken person who could present their case before the pharaoh. The Lord knew that Moses was the perfect fit for this job, even if Moses didn't know it. This is clearly seen when we see the Lord's rebuke when Moses continued to ask for help. God gave Aaron to Moses to help him, but he did not really need that help. God had given Moses all the tools that he needed to fulfill God's plan for His people. Moses had the personality of a natural leader. One of the most important qualities of a leader is just being someone who is willing to stand up and speak up for what's right.

II. THE LORD USED MOSES' PERSONALITY TO MAKE PLAIN THE LAW AND JUSTICE OF GOD. (EXODUS 18-23)

- A. Notice that Moses was committed to ensuring that matters among the Israelites were handled justly (Exodus 18:12-26).** A person with a mediator personality is committed to ensuring situations are handled justly. After Moses led the people out of Egypt, someone had to mediate disagreements among all of the Israelites. At first, Moses took this task on all by himself. Any person who had a problem would come and see Moses directly. While Moses was properly motivated in his efforts, he was foolish to take on such a huge responsibility. This is one of the dangers of the mediator personality. A person may think that it is their responsibility to mediate or fix every situation. No person here on this earth has been given that task from God. Thankfully, Jethro helped Moses understand the error of the situation, and Moses agreed that appointing judges throughout Israel would be the best way to ensure matters were resolved.

- B. Notice that God gave Moses the very important task of establishing the rules of the Law for God's people (Exodus 19-23).** As with our first point, we must again ask whether there was anyone better suited to handle such a job? With Moses being a man who valued justice so greatly, it only made sense that God would trust him with the task of establish the Law that the Israelites would follow. This Law would help to avoid conflicts among the Israelite brethren. It would also make plain exactly what God had to say about a variety of daily affairs. While we are not under the Law today, we do know that God has still provided us with His Word to help us fully understand what He views as just and right for us to do in this world. The person with a mediator personality may often be effectively used by the Lord to teach His Word and to give instruction and encouragement to other believers on what the Bible teaches us to do. He may even naturally find it easier than some to memorize portions of Scripture. He may also be called on by fellow believers to help Scripturally resolve difficult situations or disputes that come up from time to time.

III. THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL OBTAINED EXTRA MERCY FROM THE LORD AS A RESULT OF MOSES' PERSONALITY (DEUTERONOMY 9)

- A. Notice that the children of Israel brought on the wrath of God on multiple occasions (Deuteronomy 9:24-25).** Moses had a very difficult job. He was leading a stiff-necked and rebellious nation. They constantly were provoking the anger of God. Moses recounts their failures in Deuteronomy 9-10. He tells them that they have been rebellious since the day that he met them. He reminded them of all of the times that God was ready to destroy them. They were certainly worthy of destruction. It's a good thing that God called a person with a mediator personality to lead them through the wilderness. What would the prophet Elijah have done with this people in the wilderness? He probably would have asked God personally to destroy them! Again, we see that Moses was exactly the right man for the job. Israel was constantly in trouble. Provoking a righteous and holy God to anger is not wise!
- B. Notice that the children of Israel were spared because of the intercessory prayers of Moses (Deuteronomy 9:26).** The Bible tells us that God was ready to destroy the Israelites and start over. I know we like to think that God wouldn't have done that, but the truth is that there was nothing in His promises that prevented Him from starting over with just a select few Israelites like Moses, Joshua, and Caleb. The Lord was even ready to kill Aaron the priest. The only thing that spared Israel was the intercessory prayers of Moses. If you find yourself with a mediator personality, use that personality to become a great intercessory prayer warrior for others. Others have to work much harder at intercessory prayer because they are not always as aware of the challenges that others are facing. The mediator personality type can be a real strength if you give it to God. We know that Jesus Himself is our Mediator. He's the perfect mediator who is making intercessory prayer before the Father even now on our behalf.

IV. THE MEDIATOR PERSONALITY ALSO HAS SEVERAL CHALLENGES THAT WE MUST BE AWARE OF. (NUMBERS 16, 20:11; 1 TIMOTHY 5:13; 1 THESS. 4:11)

- A. Notice that the mediator personality is not always well-liked, as there are those who do not want help or a resolution to their problems (Numbers 16).** Moses was not well-liked at first by the nation of Israel when he was in Egypt. They essentially ran him out of town the first time he stood up, and they were very upset with him the second time. You also have the example of Korah. He did not want Moses as a mediator. The life of Moses was undoubtedly very lonely at times. He even had issues with his own family turning against him.
- B. Notice that the mediator personality is prone to great frustration (Numbers 20:11).** We all know Moses' sin that kept him from the Promise Land. He smote the rock twice instead of once. Why did he do this? He was frustrated. He was fed up with the people. He had prayed for them. He had tried to help them. He had done everything he knew to do, but they were still rebellious. The job of the mediator is to reconcile two sides. Truthfully, Moses was never able to accomplish this. An entire generation had to stay in the wilderness instead. The mediator must remember the reason he is doing what he is doing. In that moment, Moses forgot the objective and instead became guilty of doing what the people were doing. He foolishly disobeyed God.
- C. Notice that the mediator personality must stay focused to avoid becoming a busybody (1 Timothy 5:13; 1 Thess. 4:11).** If we knew more about Miriam, we could probably use her as an example here. We don't really see Moses guilty of this, unless one believes that he should not have dealt with the Egyptian. Nonetheless, we know that a natural consequence of this personality can be busybodies. Moses fulfilled his role as a mediator within his job as a leader of the Israelites. A believer with the mediator personality must keep themselves reigned in. They ought to focus on their work and allow issues to present themselves as the Lord allows. Roaming about idly seeking problems is a really bad idea!