

This Is Not What I Planned!

"WE > Me" Series- Part 01

Share/Connect time: If you ever spent time riding a school bus, which of the following roles best describes you while riding the bus?

- Bully
- Target for abuse
- The Invisible kid
- Mr./Ms. Popularity
- The White Knight or Defender
- Don't Mess With Me

Today, how do you feel about the role you played and in what ways has that role changed for you?

We have all messed up:

Many years ago, as a brand new Christian, I was asked to lead an adult Bible study using a short book study entitled "*How God Can Use Nobodies*". In this book, I came across a quote by the 19th century preacher, D.L. Moody, that really impacted my thinking about my own life experiences. Moody was preaching on the life of Moses and he said this about him: "*Moses spent his first forty years thinking he was somebody. He spent his second forty years learning he was a nobody. He spent his last forty years discovering what God can do with a nobody.*"

It's been nearly 45 years and I've never forgotten that quote and the lessons behind it. Moses' life is a story of the miraculous, the elitist life, of sweeping opportunities, longevity of life, unparalleled intimacy with God...and also, epic failures!

Let's explore a portion of his story and gain some insight on how God can still use our failures for our good and the fulfillment of His plan to benefit others.

Book:

Exo 2:11 Many years later, when Moses had grown up, he went out to visit his own people, the Hebrews, and he saw how hard they were forced to work. During his visit, he saw an Egyptian beating one of his fellow Hebrews.

Exo 2:12 After looking in all directions to make sure no one was watching, Moses killed the Egyptian and hid the body in the sand.

Exo 2:13 The next day, when Moses went out to visit his people again, he saw two Hebrew men fighting. "Why are you beating up your friend?" Moses said to the one who had started the fight.

Exo 2:14 The man replied, "Who appointed you to be our prince and judge? Are you going to kill me as you killed that Egyptian yesterday?" Then Moses was afraid, thinking, "Everyone knows what I did."

Exo 2:15 And sure enough, Pharaoh heard what had happened, and he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in the land of Midian. When Moses arrived in Midian, he sat down beside a well.

Exo 2:16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters who came as usual to draw water and fill the water troughs for their father's flocks.

Exo 2:17 But some other shepherds came and chased them away. So Moses jumped up and rescued the girls from the shepherds. Then he drew water for their flocks.

Exo 2:18 When the girls returned to Reuel, their father, he asked, "Why are you back so soon today?"

Exo 2:19 "An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds," they answered. "And then he drew water for us and watered our flocks."

Exo 2:20 "Then where is he?" their father asked. "Why did you leave him there? Invite him to come and eat with us."

Exo 2:21 Moses accepted the invitation, and he settled there with him. In time, Reuel gave Moses his daughter Zipporah to be his wife.

Exo 2:22 Later she gave birth to a son, and Moses named him Gershom, for he explained, "I have been a foreigner in a foreign land."

Exo 2:23 Years passed, and the king of Egypt died. But the Israelites continued to groan under their burden of slavery. They cried out for help, and their cry rose up to God.

Exo 2:24 God heard their groaning, and He remembered His covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Exo 2:25 He looked down on the people of Israel and knew it was time to act.

Let's get into the Word:

Although God can use our failures for good, knowing this should not give us freedom to intentionally make all kinds of mistakes. Thoughtful decisions based on godly principles should always be our goal. With that in mind, let's consider what led to Moses' failure on that return visit to his Jewish relatives.

-What role did emotions play in his decision to act against the Egyptian? How can emotions be a positive or negative impact on our decision-making?

-What is suggested about Moses' decision when it describes him, first, as "*After looking in all directions to make sure no one was watching...*(Ex. 2:12)? How can "caring what others think" be a good or bad thing when choosing an action?

-What assumptions do you believe Moses made about the following and how does one insure against false assumptions:

-His human abilities and strength

-God's leading

-God's timing

-The expectation that others would be receptive to his leadership

True understanding for Moses came after he left Egypt and found himself tending another man's sheep on the backside of a mountain. It could be described as a "40 year detour". All of us have experienced "divine detours" in life and if it is "divine", then there's something in it for us. Take a few moments and discuss the following Bible detours and the lessons that these men might have learned:

1. Moses and the 40 years in Midian...what did he learn?

2. The Apostle Paul and 3 years in the Arabian desert (Gal. 1:17-18)?

3. Philip's detour that moved him from preaching to many people to just one (Acts 8)?

Let's consider one more detour: the one that God prepared for you! Can you identify a time when you felt that God detoured your life/plans from what you intended? What did you learn from this experience? How would you counsel others when plans take a sudden turn or reversal?

When God brings about changes in our lives, what does it mean? Can you make a list of potential divine possibilities? What Scripture would you use as an "umbrella" over your list?

Homework:

Unlike Moses, it's doubtful we will live 120 years, broken down easily into 40 year chapters. Yet, let's consider our life experiences thus far in the following three categories:

-In what ways, were you taught, right or wrong, that you were a Somebody?

-In what ways and experiences have you humbly learned to be a Nobody (not in a poor self-worth way, but in a I-can't-do-it-myself way)?

-How has God taught you that you are EVERYTHING to Him and that you can be an instrument of good in His hands?