

WHAT IF . . . ?

What If God Chooses You to Do Something Great?

Exodus 3:1–8, 10–11, 13–15; 4:1–4, 10–11, 13, 29–31

LET'S BEGIN HERE

We plan a new venture, and as we scan the landscape of possibilities that stretches before us, our hearts leap with visions of a fruitful future. But then doubt grows like a weed in our freshly planted field of dreams. The question we all fear creeps in . . . and multiplies!

What if . . . ?

What if I run out of money? What if others criticize me? What if I fail? A hundred questions like these spring up from the seeds of fear that lie dormant beneath the surface.

Alongside every bad seed of fear, however, are good seeds of faith waiting to sprout. Money may run out, but God will provide. Others may scoff, but God will smile. I may fall on my face, but God will pick me up. What's the answer to the *what if* questions? God!

This series helps us manage the *what ifs* of life, the ones that spring from fear but are answered by faith. In this study, we'll look at the question from both sides. What if God chooses you to do something great? Fear replies, "Oh, no!" But faith answers, "Let's go!"



DIGGING DEEPER

When God called Moses to do something great, fear choked his initial response. At age 80, Moses was no superhero of the faith. Quite the opposite, he was like us—human to the core and a fearful victim of life's hard knocks. What difficult circumstances frayed his faith? Let's explore Moses' past as it's chronicled in Exodus 1–2.

Quotable

*God is not through
speaking and
choosing individuals
to do great things
for Him.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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Searching the Scriptures Study Tool

In this series, we'll use our *Searching the Scriptures* skills of observation, interpretation, correlation, and application, as well as a Bible dictionary, concordance, and a reliable commentary on the book of the Bible we're studying. We recommend *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament* and *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*. You'll find these and other resources at the "Bible Study Tools" section of Insight for Living Ministries' online store.

Another key resource is *The Zondervan Essential Atlas of the Bible* by Carl G. Rasmussen. In this atlas, locate the map of Egypt and Sinai during the period in which Moses lived. A Bible atlas is worth owning because it features pertinent historic details that aid understanding. If you have a study Bible, you can turn to the back and locate the maps. You'll find a map that shows lands of the Bible in the Old Testament. Use one of those maps to find Egypt. Take a few moments to study whatever map you find, and make some notes about what you see.

Moses' Background

The pharaoh during the days of Joseph gave Jacob and his family the land of Goshen, which you can locate on your map (Genesis 47:5–6). In the four hundred years that followed, the family grew into a nation large enough to loom over the security of the Egyptians.

Observation

What policies did Pharaoh enact to enslave the Hebrews and check their population growth (Exodus 1:11–22)? Locate Pithom and Rameses on the map.

Moses was born during a perilous time for Hebrew babies. To save him, his mother set him adrift in a basket on the Nile near Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted and raised him as an Egyptian prince. Review the thrilling story in Exodus 2:1–10 and the insightful commentary in Hebrews 11:23–25.



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If anyone was suited to save the Hebrews, it was Moses. But he ran off to Midian! Locate Midian on a map. What happened to cause Prince Moses to flee Egypt for Midian and trade his royal scepter for a shepherd's staff (Exodus 2:11–15)?

Moses' failure signals a shift in the story from no hope of freedom to new hope for divine deliverance. Read Exodus 2:23–24. What does God promise?

When God Speaks: Four Common Answers

Forty years later, God set the wheels of freedom in motion by calling Moses to the Hebrew people in Egypt. The setting was the Sinai wilderness, specifically the “mountain of God”—a place where God would later meet His people (Exodus 3:1, 12; 4:27; 19:1–25). In this sacred place, God spoke to Moses through a bush that “was engulfed in flames” but “didn't burn up” (3:2).

Interpretation

The following chart follows the dialogue between God and Moses. Take a few minutes to read the entire interaction in Exodus 3:1–4:17. Then fill in the sections of the chart that summarize Moses' resistance to God's calling to do something great and God's response to Moses' resistance.



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God's Calling

“Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh.
You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt.” (Exodus 3:10)

Verses	Moses' Resistance	Verses	God's Response
Exodus 3:11, 13		Exodus 3:12, 14	
Exodus 4:1		Exodus 4:2–9	
Exodus 4:10		Exodus 4:11–12	
Exodus 4:13		Exodus 4:14–17	



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Correlation

Let's lay Moses' fears on the table and compare them with God's responses to each fear as supported by other Scripture passages. Fill in the blank to indicate what fear his resistance may indicate. We filled in the first one as an example.

Moses' Resistance

- "I will not have all the answers." *Fear of ignorance.*
- "I may not have all their respect." *Fear of _____.*
- "I do not have all the ability." *Fear of _____.*
- "I'm not as qualified as all the others." *Fear of _____.*

God's Responses

- "You will have Me!" Compare Exodus 3:12 with Deuteronomy 31:8 and Hebrews 13:5.
- "You will have My power!" Compare Exodus 4:2–9 with Psalm 17:7.
- "You will have all that is needed!" Compare Exodus 4:11–12 with Philippians 4:19.
- "You will have help!" Compare Exodus 4:14–17 with Hebrews 13:6.

Summarize what you learn as you compare Moses' resistance and God's responses, along with the correlated verses.



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Bring It Home

Application

Do you see yourself in Moses' worried face? Do your knees buckle like his did when God pulls up your secure anchor? Can you hear your voice in Moses' protests when God sets a course into unknown, treacherous seas?

God's calling for you to do "something great" may be rearing children in godliness, going back to school, reaching out to love a neighbor, volunteering at a crisis pregnancy center, signing up for a short-term mission trip, or any number of ventures that require you to depend on Him. If God is speaking, answer yes!

Chuck Swindoll offers an encouraging word:

Maybe you've run ahead of your own strength. Maybe you've retreated in the shadow of shame. . . . Maybe you're still resisting even though you know that God might very well have plans for you. . . . Stop the resistance. Stop the retreating. Say yes. Just say yes, and watch God work.

What might God be calling you to do? In the space below, reflect on His call, and express your heart to Him.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, may I not see this study simply as the story of Moses but as my story. Thank You that I have You. Your power is all I need. And the help of others—the Aarons You bring to stand with me when I feel weak. Do Your work of greatness as I do my part, which is to obey. Amen.



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SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



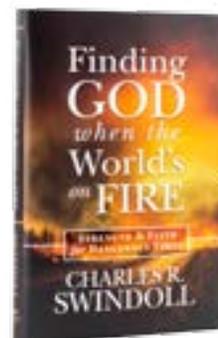
Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2017 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by the Pastoral Ministries Department in collaboration with Mark Tobey, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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