



# **BATTLING THE CONFIDENCE CRISIS**

*Exodus 3:11-4:20*

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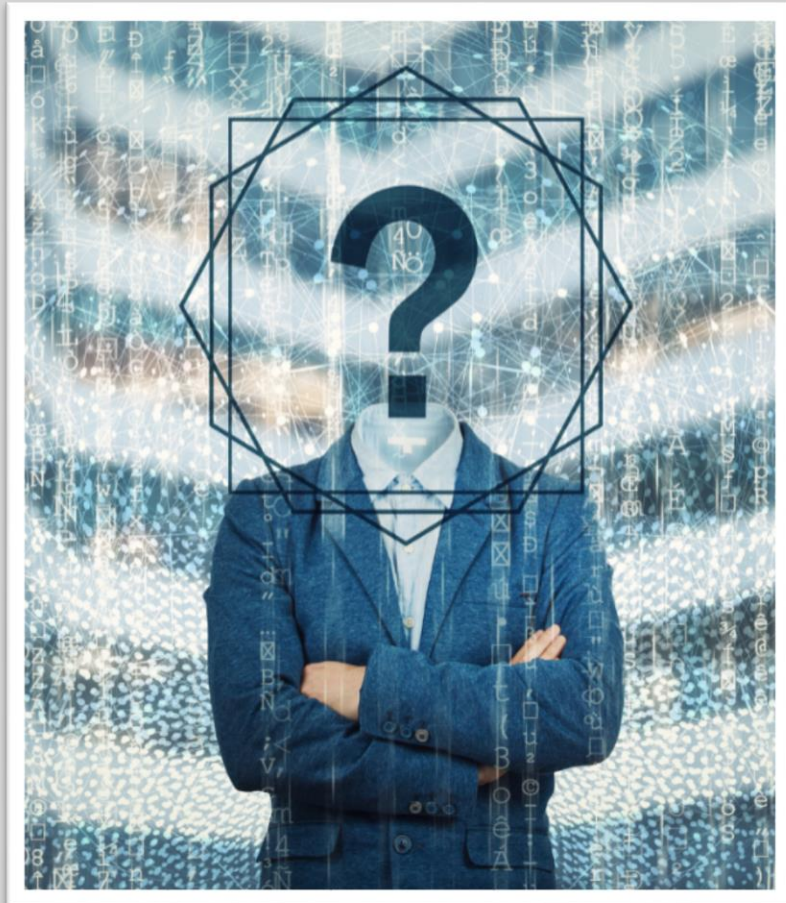
# BATTLING THE CONFIDENCE CRISIS

*Exodus 3:11-4:20*

If you struggle with a lack of self-confidence, you'll do well to look carefully at Moses' conversation with God when The Lord gave him the task of liberating the Israelites from Egypt.

Moses seriously questioned his ability to carry out the Lord's assignment. He gave God five excuses, each of which indicates a crisis of confidence in certain areas that we as servants of the Lord may also find ourselves wrestling with.

Now let's take time to examine each and learn how we can place our confidence in the God of the universe to give us all we need to complete ANY task He calls us for.



## 1. The Crisis of Identity - Exodus 3:11-12

When Moses rhetorically asked, "*Who am I?*" (Ex. 3:11), he appears to have had an answer already firm in his mind: "I'm a nobody!" Three aspects of Moses' background may have caused him to feel inadequate for the task.

First, he was a Hebrew by birth, but the Hebrews were slaves to pharaoh. Furthermore, why should his people accept him now, when 40 years earlier they had rejected his help (2:22-14)?

Second, Moses was an Egyptian by upbringing, but he had left behind a reputation for murder and perhaps rebellion. He no longer had influence among Egyptian royalty.

Third, Moses became a Medianite Shepherd by vocation, and guess what?! -- the Egyptians despised shepherds (Gen. 46:34). Nor was Median of any importance to Egypt.

Perhaps Moses was like many of us today who struggle to integrate our ethnic or cultural heritage into a larger society. Often we can go through a crisis of identity and self-doubt. But God reassured Moses by giving him two strong promises: the **promise of His presence** and the **promise to bring Moses back** to the very spot where he was standing. In like manner, God gives his people today the same strong word of encouragement: "He will never leave you nor forsake you" (Deut. 31:6; Josh. 1:5; Heb. 13:5-6).



## 2. The Crisis of Authority - Exodus 3:13-18

Moses' second concern was that he wouldn't know what to tell his fellow Hebrews. He especially wondered how he ought to explain who had sent him: what is [God's] name?" (Ex. 3:13). This was an issue of authority.

Moses had a legitimate concern. Why should the people believe in an old man coming out of the wilderness claiming to be from God? To meet that concern, God gave Moses an extensive outline of His identity and authority as The Supreme Lord: He gave His eternal name, "YHWH", "I AM" (3:14-15). He reminded Moses of His promises to the Hebrews (3:15-16). He declared that He was more powerful than the Egyptians and their King (3:16, 19-22), as well as the Canaanites (3:17). And he reaffirmed his special role as the Lord God of the Hebrews (3:18).

Moses received a lesson in theology. But actually it was a lesson in authority. The Almighty YAHWEH is in control. He is The Lord of lords. He rules over all the earth and its people.



### 3. The Crisis of Faith - Exodus 4:1-9

Moses' third concern was that his people would neither believe him nor listen to him (Ex. 4:1). Perhaps this crisis of doubt was a result of his concerns about his own identity in God's authority. The unbelief that he anticipated was not unlike that of many people today who say, "I can't believe in a God that I can't see or hear. How do I know he's real?"

In response, God gave Moses three "signs", or miracles, to perform (4:2-9). The supernatural Acts will demonstrate God's presence and power. However, the nature of unbelief is such that miracles alone do not always prove convincing. Faith is largely a matter of choice. The stubborn hearts may remain steadfast in their unbelief no matter how powerful a sign happens to be (7:13, 22; Luke 16:30-31; John 12:37).

On the other hand, the Lord's miracles can go a long way to strengthen the faith of those who sincerely seek Him. That's one reason why scripture reports so many of God's supernatural acts. By reading about them, we who were not there to witness them can know and believe that the God who performed them and who spoke to Moses is the same God who has spoken to us (Ex.4:5; John 20:30-31).



## 4. The Crisis of Communication – Exodus 4:10-12

Moses' fourth concern had to do with a perceived lack of ability as a spokesperson: "I am not eloquent" (Ex. 4:10). This statement contrasts sharply with Stephen's assertion that Moses was "mighty in words and deeds" (Acts 7:22). However, there is no discrepancy. Stephen referred to Moses **after** God empowered him to stand before pharaoh and to lead the children of Israel.



But as we see in Exodus 4, Moses saw himself as "slow of speech". Yet whatever deficiencies Moses may have had as a speaker (and which of us does not have at least some trouble communicating our thoughts?), God indicated that He is the Lord of communication. He promised to be with Moses' mouth in a way that Moses' words would be understood (Ex. 4:11-12). This is an encouragement for all of us who are called to represent the Lord to our associates (1 Pet. 3:15).

## 5. The Crisis of Obedience – Exodus 4:13-20

Moses' final excuse was a clear case of unwillingness to carry out the Lord's command. In effect, he was asking, "isn't there someone else you can send?" (Ex. 4:13).



Moses' question may seem incredible after all the promises and signs that God had given. Apparently God felt put off, because his anger was kindled as a result of Moses' statement (4:14). In reading about that, we can imagine how God must feel when we as believers today resist his clearly revealed will or refuse to carry out his purposes for our lives.

But God had anticipated Moses' reluctance. He had already started Aaron on the way to meet his brother Moses (4:14). Perhaps God had intended to surprise Moses with that joyous and encouraging news. Instead, he related the coming of Aaron out of exasperation with Moses' refusal to trust him.

This conclusion to Moses' conversation with God points to an important truth: doing God's will is ultimately a matter of obedience. We may have legitimate concerns and needs as we consider God's directives. But after all our issues have been addressed, the question still remains: are we going to obey Him? Thankfully, Moses did obey God, with the result that the Israelites were liberated.

What good things, great or small, may God want to accomplish through us if we would but follow His Word, keep our confidence in His game plan for our lives and obey his commands?