



Too Soon to Quit by Warren W. Wiersbe Chapter 5 - Moses, the Deliverer
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I. An Amazing Life

- A. Moses was a gifted leader, teacher, husband, father, man of prayer and organizer. He was also a great man of faith. God called him “Moses my servant” twice in Numbers 12:7-8; Joshua 1:2.
- B. Moses spent his first forty years as a brilliant student in Egypt, the next forty years he was a fugitive and a humble shepherd in Midian.
- C. At God’s command he returned to Egypt, delivered Israel from bondage and for forty years lead them from place to place in the wilderness.
- D. After 120 years of faithful service to the Lord and His people Moses ascended Mount Nebo where he died and the Lord buried him in an unmarked grave (Deut 34:1-6).
- E. But life wasn’t easy for Moses.
 - 1. As a newborn his life was in jeopardy because Pharaoh had ordered all male Hebrew babies be drowned in the Nile;
 - 2. While defending a persecuted Hebrew slave he killed an Egyptian foreman and had to flee to Midian to become a shepherd;
 - 3. God sent him back to Egypt and helped him deliver Israel from slavery and an oppressive Pharaoh, and to start Israel on their journey to the Promised land.
- F. However, at Kadesh Barnea the Jews refused to enter the Promised Land, so God made them wander in the wilderness.
 - 1. Psalm 106 offers a summary of what the Lord and Moses had to endure.
 - 2. In those difficult years the people complained about Moses, secretly worshipped idols and threatened to stone him.
 - 3. Twice God offered to wipe out the Israelites and build a greater nation from Moses but he rejected both offers (Exod. 32:1-10; Num 14:1-12).
- G. What kept Moses serving the Lord when everything and everybody seemed against him?
Warren Wiersbe states *Moses was a man who lived for God and in God.*
- H. Psalm 90 is the only Psalm attributed to Moses, and in the first verse he states “Lord you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.

II. Different Locations, Same Address

- A. After Israel's rebellion at Kadesh Barnea, Moses and his people spent the next thirty-eight years traveling in the wilderness. They finally ended up on the plains of Moab at the border of Canaan (Deut. 2:14).
- B. In all these changes Moses maintained the same belief: No matter where he and his people pitched their tent God was his dwelling place throughout all generations. (Psalm 90:1) **Psalm 90:1 (NRSV)** ¹ Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Moses understood he was frail but God is eternal.
- C. Moses knew God personally.
 - 1. He heard God's voice;
 - 2. He often cried to Him for help and God answered;
 - 3. He knew God's name and God's character;
 - 4. He had the privilege of interceding for God's people.
- D. The Lord spoke to Moses face to face **Exodus 33:11 (NASB)** ¹¹ Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.
- E. At the end of a day's march when the camp was quiet Moses would lie down in his tent and know that he was safe in the arms of the Lord God.
- F. Each time the camp of Israel was being set up Moses pitched a special "tent of meeting outside the camps where he could be alone with God or meet with people who needed his help (Exodus 33:7-11).
- G. Moses demonstrated the value of solitude. Each of us needs a special time and place to meet God every day, to listen to His counsel from the Word, to thank Him and worship Him and share our concerns with Him. Howard Thurman says in *Meditations of the Heart* "it is a central stillness of spirit that is so vital it can tame the wildness out of almost any tempest, however raging it may be."
- H. Remember even Jesus slipped away from the crowds to spend time alone with His Father (Matt 14:22-23, Mark 1:35-39; Luke 4:42 and Luke 5:16).
- I. Beware of the barrenness of a busy life.

III. The Slave Mentality

- A. Taking the Hebrews out of Egypt was not the greatest challenge Moses faced. That miracle was accomplished overnight. The greatest challenge Moses faced was *taking Egypt of the Hebrews*.
- B. To accomplish this an entire generation had to die so that a new generation could lead.
- C. The older generation had been slaves for so long that they had forgotten the meaning of freedom

- D. They had grown accustomed to the small certainties of their Egyptian (Egypt was a worldly society, one without God).
- E. They were content to sacrifice their precious freedom in exchange for shelter, food and a certain amount of security.
- F. It didn't enter their minds that they had been destined by God to be a free and a great people.
- G. Moses understood that the deeper problem, the people of Israel were enslaved to their own appetites. (Exodus 16:3; Exodus 17:3 Numbers 11:4-6, Numbers 14:2).
- H. Tragically the people thought slavery in Egypt was better than the hardship experiences in following God to the Promised Land (Heb. 3:13).
- I. Moses had to teach the nation of Israel that living obedience to authority is the royal route to joy and true freedom. To be controlled by your appetite is a terrible form of servitude. (Lust of the eye, Lust of the flesh and the pride of life).
 - 1. God asks for our obedience, not to make us slaves but to help us become free
 - 2. 1 John 5:3 **1 John 5:2-3 (NASB)**² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.³ For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.
 - 3. God's commands are invitations for us to enter into a deeper relationship of liberty and love, His commands are no burdensome.
 - 4. When we love the Father and obey His will we have nothing to fear
- J. The slave mentality caused the children of Israel to fear despite all God had done for them.
 - 1. Relating to God like a taskmaster demonstrates fear and one evidence of immaturity is fear. The tighter you squeeze, the less you have. Thomas Merton
 - 2. When we love the Father and obey His will, we have nothing to fear. There is no fear. But perfect (mature) love drives our fear. **1 John 4:18 (NASB)**¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.
 - 3. Another sign of immaturity is repeatedly complaining. Every time there was a crisis in Israel's journey they complained instead of remember all that God had done. Maturing Christians don't complain but are patient and trusting in times of testing, knowing that trials are appointments and not accidents, disciplines and not punishments. (p. 92)
 - 4. Israel had a wonderful history of God's miraculous deeds, yet they repeatedly forgot. (Psalm 106:7,13,21)
 - 5. Israel often forget the stories of their ancestors. Remember the saying of Philosopher George Santayana "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to relive it

IV. The Road to Maturity

- A. There is a vast difference between growing old (aging) and growing up (maturing)
- B. The Lord encourages His people to mature as they made their way to the Promised Land. He did this in many ways.
 - 1. He challenged their faith by putting them through various trails, because obedience and patience in trails will help produce maturity—there were no shortcuts
 - 2. Often shortcuts only make the journey longer are more difficult than taking the main road. God led Israel in a roundabout way (Exodus 13:17-18)
 - 3. Taking the shortcut gave the Egyptian opportunity to pursue them until they were trapped at the Red Sea.
 - 4. But trusting the Lord in “impossible” situations is what builds our faith and glorifies God
- C. When Israel came to Mount Sinai they camped there for about two years (Num. 10:11)
 - 1. At Sinai they learned to worship, give generously and to submit to authority.
 - 2. There can be no true maturity in our lives until we have learned to submit to authority. P.T Forsyth , a theologian wrote “the first duty of every soul is to find not its freedom but its Master” That Mater is Jesus Christ.
 - 3. At Mount Sinai Israel saw the glory of God, received the law and entered into a covenant with God to fear and obey Him.
 - 4. The freedom God gave them was not an occasional thing like a holiday, but a total life experience that carried responsibilities as well as privileges.
 - 5. Israel was reminded by their calendar of feasts (Lev. 23) to remember and understand the past and acknowledge what God Had done for them. We too must remember we stand on the shoulders of giants like John Lewis, Rosa Parks, Fannie Lou Hammer, Dr. Martin Luther King. Not remembering our history and historical amnesia is one of the worst things that can happen to an individual, a family, a church or a nation.
- V. Leading Others into Maturity**
 - A. God had to mature Moses and equip him to be able to lead Israel.
 - B. Moses never stopped growing in the grace and knowledge of God.
 - C. We can never lead others where we haven’t been ourselves.
 - D. The apostle Paul compared the maturing of believers to the birth of a baby (Gal. 4:19) and even a wrestling match (Col. 1:28-29; 2:1-3) This indicated there will be some agony, some sacrifice, some pain.
 - E. How many times Moses met God on the mountain or in the tent of meeting and interceded for the people he loved, only to have to listen to their foolish accusations and complaints.

- F. But Moses knew better, He knew that the transformation of slaves into free men was more difficult and painful than transforming free men into slaves. In order to do this type of work Moses himself had to be transformed.
- G. God developed Moses into a mature leader and Moses never gave up.