

GODLY MANHOOD

Lessons from Moses

By Jerry Schmoyer

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GODLY MANHOOD

Lessons from Moses

1. MAKING GODLY DECISIONS

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Decisions: some are easy, others are hard. Some we don't mind, others we dread. Some are so clear they make themselves, others it seems we lose no matter what we decide. Still, this is an important part of being a Godly man. Ever since Eve made her very wrong decision, God has put decision-making in the man's job description (I Tim. 2:11-14). Think for a minute: what is the hardest decision you have ever made? Which decisions still give you the most trouble? Why are these so hard for you? Making Godly decisions isn't always easy. This difficulty isn't something new to us, either. Let's look at Moses for some principles about making Godly decisions.

MOSES' FAMILY BACKGROUND. Moses came from a godly family in a time when most people just went through religious motions. His father, Amram (Ex 6:20; Num 26:59), and mother, Jocabed (Ex. 6:20; Num 26:59) are both from the tribe of Levi. Jocabed means "Glory of Jehovah," showing something of her parents' faith. When born Moses had a 12 year old sister, Miriam (Ex. 2:4; Num. 26:59) and a 3 year old brother, Aaron (Ex. 7:17). As the baby of the family, Moses would have been anything but a natural leader. Last-borns are usually spoiled, indulged, not taken seriously and not given a lot of responsibility. None of this prepared him for God's future work.

God had his hand on Moses in a unique way from his birth (Ex 2:2) for there was something special about him from the start (Acts 7:20). Even Pharaoh's daughter, a woman named Hatshepsut, recognized this when she found a three month old baby when going to the river to worship (Ex. 2:1-10). Moses was 'planted' there so she would find him, for they could no longer hide Moses and they felt (rightly so) that her mother's heart would have mercy and spare him. Thus Moses was able to be raised by his parents until about 4, and they were paid for doing it! This early influence on him was enough to keep him committed to God the rest of his life (Prov 22:6).

WHAT A CHILDHOOD! Moses then grew up in the Egyptian city of Thebes. I'm sure it was hard leaving his birth family to go live with another. Still God took care of him. Families today who split can find comfort in this. As the only son and heir Moses was probably indulged and had everything done for him. The woman who found and raised him, Hatshepsut, was a very intelligent woman and great leader. She had a great impact on his life.

When a male grows up with a woman or women as his main care-givers (mother, grand-mother, teacher, baby-sitter, Sunday School teacher, etc.) he finds he is more comfortable around women than men for the rest of his life. Also, he develops a dependency on female acceptance, affirmation and approval. This can be very manipulative, however, and keep a man from making decisions he feels he should because of the female rejection the decision may bring. This pattern was built into Moses, and will eventually contribute to the breakup of his first marriage. To make matters worse, Moses was a sensitive introvert and Hatshepsut a strong-willed, controlling, domineering woman. To keep her approval and acceptance Moses would have done all he could to please and impress her.

WHAT AN EDUCATION! Moses got the best education available anywhere in his day: archery, horseback riding, swimming, wrestling, reading & writing (hieroglyphics, Akkadian cuneiform, Ugarit, Hebrew, Egyptian, etc.), mathematics, music, and administration. Usually Cecil B. DeMille overdoes his Biblical heroes, but Charlton Heston probably doesn't even come close to being as great as Moses really was. Tradition says he was a genius in several areas, including math, writing/poetry, music and leadership. His athletic ability and physical appearance seem to be tremendous, even up to the day he died (Deut 34:7).

One historical tradition about Moses tells about the time when, in his early 30's, Egypt was invaded by the Ethiopians. One by one the four Egyptian generals led their armies against the Ethiopians as fast as they could get to them, but each was defeated. The story goes that Moses gathered the remnants of the armies, called up the national guard, by brilliant leadership skills and strategy defeated the Ethiopians and saved Egypt. Of course, he was a national hero!

MOSES' OPPORTUNITY History tells us that Hatshepsut had no brothers to become Pharaoh so the man she married was the next Pharaoh and she became queen. She reputedly strongly influenced him, poisoning him to get rid of him when tired of him. For awhile it seems she even dressed and ruled as a man. It seems she married again, though. She had no sons to follow in line, only one daughter. Her husband, though, had a son by a concubine whom he wanted to replace him. Of course she opposed this, preferring Moses whom she carefully trained and groomed for this top position. Whomever the daughter chose to marry would therefore be the next Pharaoh, and the daughter loved Moses, as Moses loved her. Moses was a winner, used to everything going his way. He assumed that would happen here, too, but something interfered that caused him to have to make a life-changing decision.

MOSES' DECISION You see, as next Pharaoh Moses would be the head of Egyptian pagan religion, the top priest. He would lead in sacrifices and worship to idols. Even more, he himself would be considered a god and receive worship as such. This caused a great problem for Moses. Think of all the good he could have done the Jews had he been the Pharaoh, why give it up just because of this? Then what about Hatshepsut -- how could he go against his strong-willed, controlling mother after all she did for him? The rejection would be tremendous! What about the woman he loved and whom loved him? What about the life style he loved and fit in so well with? Should, could he leave these?

As all men did and still do, his self-image was built on what he did. His career identity gave him his prestige and his identity. That's why men want to know what another man does, that's how we label and categorize each other. Men who retire or are unemployed seem to lose something their purpose and meaning. This isn't right, but it's the way it is. Moses would have to give up virtually everything, and what would he get in return? You see, this wasn't an easy decision. Any one of those factors would make it hard for any man to make the right choice: pressure from a woman (especially if we've been trained to give in), career identity, rejection by a loved one, giving up life's comforts and perks, and public opinion. This was certainly the biggest decision Moses ever had to make, perhaps the first major decision for him. What should he do? What would you have done?

MOSES' DECISION God Himself tells about Moses' decision in these words. "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward." (Hebrews 11:24-26) What a tremendous stand Moses made! All because he gave up immediate gratification for what was best in the long run. Family peace, job security, opinions of others, personal pride and ego, his own ease and comfort -- none of these were as important to him as doing what God wanted him to do. Sometimes it's not as clear what God would have us do, but if we, like Moses, are committed to doing His will whatever it is, He will make sure it gets done.

Which of these influences that Moses had to overcome give you the hardest time deciding to do what God wants? Is it your parent's approval? Maybe it is keeping your wife and children happy with you? Could it be you use your work to find your identity and that affects your decisions about work? Or perhaps your own pleasures and comforts are hard to give up? Then, too, losing power and prestige in the eyes of others may have too much influence. Learn from Moses. He had hard times because of his decision, and probably even questioned it while on earth, but for the last 4000+ years (since he's been in

heaven) you can bet he hasn't regretted that decision! Make your decisions now based on how you will feel about them in 4,000 years, and you'll make the ones God wants!

GODLY MANHOOD

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2. BEING A GODLY FATHER

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If your family had to describe you as a father in one word, what would it be? Are you satisfied with that image as a father, or do you want something better? I guess a better question would be: are you really able to do what is necessary to be a better father? I carry that guilt around with me, and I think I'm not alone. I don't want to live with regrets of what I should have been and done. I know what I should be doing (at least I think I do), but doing all those things day after day isn't so easy. It wasn't easy for Moses, either.

MOSES THE REFUGEE Moses had it made. He was in line to be the next leader of the most advanced nation in the world. He had all the training, skills and opportunities one could want. He gave it all up, along with the love of the woman he wanted to marry, to follow God. Now one would think that such a sacrifice would earn God's blessing in everything he did. Not so. Moses had an anger problem. He stuffed it, called it 'frustration,' and tried to ignore it. It kept raising its ugly head, though. When it did he'd put his hand through a wall or kick a dent in the car. Then he'd feel guilty and defeated, vow to never do it again, and the cycle would start all over again. With Moses it wasn't a wall or car, it was an Egyptian slave master (Acts 7:23-29). Instead of hanging a picture over the hole in the wall, he buried the body in the sand (Exodus 2:12). At this very emotionally vulnerable time Moses was hit with something most men can't handle very well -- rejection (Acts 7:25-29). Instead of responding to his sacrifice and leadership, the Jews mocked and rejected him. His sensitive male ego felt hurt, and that always shows itself in fear or anger (or a combination of the two). Moses handled it like many men do: he withdrew -- all the way to Midian (Acts 7:29; Exodus 2:15). When he cooled off he committed the whole situation to the Lord and trusted Him to take care of Moses (Heb. 11:27; Romans 8:28).

RETEST! We can't run from or withdraw from problems, for they follow us. Moses found himself facing the same thing: male shepherds taking advantage of female shepherds. He helped the women and ended up spending the next 40 years with them (Exodus 2:15-21). There is often a fine line between sinful anger and righteous indignation. Here Moses stayed on the right side of that line.

MOSES THE FAMILY MAN Moses lived with Ruel ("friend of God") whose priestly title was Jethro. He married the first-born daughter and they had two sons (Exodus 18:3-4): Gershom ("banished to a strange land," Moses accepts his place before God but is a bit bitter) and Eliezer ("My Father's God was my helper," he is putting faith in God, but God still isn't his personal

God). It was one thing for Moses to trust God when he was on top in Egypt, but to trust when he is on the bottom in the desert is another thing!

MOSES THE FATHER We don't have much information about Moses as a father. We can easily read between the lines when we see how his relationship with Zipporah turned out (next article), and it's obvious he wasn't in charge of his family as God wanted him to be (Exodus 4:24-27). God expects men to lead their families in godliness (I Timothy 3:4-5). Unfortunately when you look at men in the Bible and church history, you find that very few were really able to fully meet these standards. Often we learn more from what they did wrong than what they did right. Eli the priest was such a man.

ELI THE FATHER Eli was the top leader in Israel in his day. He was the leading civil/secular leader as well as the high priest. He held these positions for 40 years and carried them out with faithfulness and excellency (I Samuel 4:18). He was a godly man, a man of deep faith and commitment. However his sons were very rebellious. They stole meat which was offered to God (I Sam 2:12-17) and even had sex with various women right in the Tabernacle (I Sam 2:22). The people encouraged Eli to do something about it (I Sam 2:22), as did a prophet (v. 27-34) and even God Himself (3:11-12). Still, Eli didn't do anything. Even though the boys were grown, he was still responsible as the high priest, and also because he didn't raise them to obey God. How could such a godly man have such ungodly sons? Why would they rebel against the God their father loved? What causes MK's and PK's to have such a bad reputation? I think it's because Eli put his work for God and country before his family. As little boys, his sons resented that which seemingly took their father from them and rebelled against it. Instead of wanting to grow up and be like Dad, they hated all he stood for because he withheld from them what they needed most: himself! Do you see your family in any of this?

GOD THE FATHER Many years ago I realized that my view of God is the same as my view of my earthly father. There is both good and bad in that. I know that as a father I am the sovereign authority in my children's lives, the one they totally depend on for protection and provision. I am 'god' to them. How I treat them is how they will later feel God treats them. If I am overly strict, or inconsistent, or distant and busy, or easily manipulated, or rule by fear, or withhold love, or expect perfection -- whatever I am they will see God as being. I don't want to build an improper picture of God into them. I try to ask myself how God would handle a certain situation and respond in the same way. Ask yourself: what image of God do you have that came from how your father treated you? What kind of an image of God are you building into your children?

GODLY FATHERS TODAY Fathers are responsible to pray for their families, in detail, specifically for the needs of each person. This takes time. Job, one of the good fathers in the Bible, did this (Job 1:4-5, 10). Fathers are to lead in family devotions. This doesn't have to be long or deep or profound, just read a passage and share your thoughts about it, then pray. A man's insecurity, fear, and avoidance of intimacy make this one of the hardest things for men to do on a consistent basis. Yet it is of the utmost importance. Fathers are to use daily opportunities to teach and reflect the truths of God by word and example (Deut 11:19-21). Regularly taking time alone with each child to talk, play and pray is also key.

Being a godly father isn't easy. In fact, humanly speaking it is impossible. Yet that is the responsibility God gives us. Therefore He also gives us the help we need to carry out that role. It's not just a responsibility but a privilege, about the highest privilege a man could want! It can be very rewarding and satisfying. It means putting others before ourselves and our needs. It means treating others like God treats us. It isn't easy, but nothing worthwhile is. It's a task worth sacrificing for. Its benefits and rewards will last for eternity!

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3. AGING IN A GODLY MANNER



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Life doesn't always turn out like thought it would. Young men always assume they will achieve a certain measure of success and prestige in their chosen career as well as in life itself. Most have to realize somewhere around their middle years that it isn't going to happen. That doesn't mean their life is bad as it is or is a failure, but that they need to adjust their sights downward a bit. That certainly was true of Moses.

CAREER CHANGES Moses was groomed to be the next Pharaoh of the leading country of its day. He had all the education and luxuries the world could offer. Before he knew it he found himself far removed from Egypt, spending his days and nights walking behind a flock of sheep. Instead of leading armies and nations he was leading dumb animals. Instead of planning cities and military campaigns, he was planning the next day's pasture for his sheep. Instead of fine food and rich clothing he was dusty, sweaty and ate poor food. No longer surrounded by insightful advisors and beautiful women, now he was completely alone. Why? Because he put God first and followed Him! It seemed like God had demoted him for his failure to free the Jews from bondage. Instead, God had promoted him to the next level of training to prepare him for God's ultimate purpose -- the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt.

DESERT CURRICULUM God was using this time to humble Moses and make him pliable and usable. He had to learn contentment and patience. What better way to develop a shepherd's heart than by spending time with sheep. What was coming next (the Jews) would be much more difficult to shepherd than just sheep! God was mellowing and maturing Moses. Moses had worldly knowledge and skills, now he needed spiritual ones. It was probably during this time that Moses wrote down the book of Genesis as well as Job. It seems like God had forgotten him, but Moses was right on track for God's next career change, but he didn't know it.

MEANWHILE, BACK ON THE RANCH... In Egypt the Pharaoh had died, and with that the death sentence against Moses was lifted. The people had endured 40 miserable years and were finally ready to follow God's deliverer to freedom. All they needed was the right leader.

OUT OF RETIREMENT Assuming his usefulness and productivity was over, Moses was coasting until a younger man could take over with the sheep so he could lie in his tent until death came. He was in a rut with no stimulation and had gotten mentally lazy. Nothing was stretching or challenging him -- until God came with a new assignment: go back to Egypt and

lead 2 1/2 million slaves to freedom, turning them into a function nation of God's chosen people! Now there is a real challenge!

“THANKS, BUT NO THANKS” While Moses was duly impressed by God putting in a personal appearance to him, he had no desire to do what God said (Exodus 3 - 4). He has slowed down and was in a retirement mind-set, coasting in to the end. However he had put himself out to pasture way too early. He was just getting to the point where God could use him, not retire him.

Today many men seem to make the opposite mistake. We try to keep going long after it is time to slow down and pace ourselves. It's hard for men to realize they can't do as much as they could and won't reach the goals they assumed for themselves in younger years. Male ego is so wrapped up in our careers what we accomplish with our lives that it is hard to settle for less. Those who accomplish great things with their lives aren't happy and don't find peace, but the rest of us still think that when we hit it big life will be fine!

CONTINUAL PROCESS OF FINE TUNING It's very important for Christian men to continually make small adjustments mentally as they age. If they don't a significant event or birthday will hit one hard. This often knocks a man off balance so he grabs for something to steady himself and reassure him he's still young. Usually he'll grab for something like a sports car or young woman. We can't fight or hold back aging, it's so much better to keep making the mental adjustments that need to come so we can have a balanced picture of where we are.

Since everything in our society focuses on being and staying young, moving away from that takes mental adjustments. We no longer have our whole futures before us. We may never achieve what we thought we would. We can no longer produce the quantity of work we once did and must focus on quality instead. We are forced change our definition of what 'success' is (success is being in God's will and doing what He wants -- whatever that may be).

In seminary I assumed I would be like all their typical graduates: large church, write some books, maybe travel and speak (or have people come hear me). Here I am: 50 years old, been in the same church for the last 15 years and it's the same size as when I got here (50 on a very good Sunday). Yet I believe I'm where God wants me doing just what He wants. I've had to change my definition of success. I no longer can teach Bible studies every night of the week. I have to make physical and mental adjustments as I age.

TESTOSTERONE DECLINING Starting in the 20's, testosterone declines by 50% by middle age. Eventually it drops to where it was when puberty started. We can't run as fast, compete with the younger men at work, or do what we used to be able to do. When we try to keep up, our body tries to produce more testosterone but can't. The result can be depression, nightmares, loss of memory, hot/cold flashes, insomnia, boredom, loss of sex drive, etc.

WHAT'S A MAN TO DO? Those without Jesus, who have only this life and that's it. They panic as they age (and rightly so). We can, and must, keep this life in perspective with all eternity. God is preparing us for something better, too -- and that's serving Him for all eternity in heaven! He calls the shots in our earthly station and worldly 'success' but what really matters is being a godly man, husband and father. Moses slowed down prematurely. We usually don't slow down soon enough. neither way is right. Acknowledge your physical decline without thinking it makes you less of a 'man.' Enjoy today without getting overly concerned about the past or future. Keep active and in good health (rest, diet, exercise). Make sure you are in God's will and be satisfied with that (Philippians 4:11-12). Don't take your present situation as failure, but as God's perfectly planned training course to prepare you for whatever He next has for you. Don't hang onto the world's ideas about masculinity, 'success,' productivity, youth and such

things. Immerse yourself in God's word and be filled with His Spirit. Renew your mind (Rom. 12:1-2) and attitude in Him. Enjoy life right where you are.

GODLY MANHOOD

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4. DEFUSING AN UPSET (ANGRY) WIFE

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A recent “Rose is Rose” cartoon pictures Rose storming out of the room while her husband follows, asking “Is it about a person, a place or a thing? Is it larger than a breadbox?” Without answering Rose leaves and slams the door. Their son says, “What’s the fame called?” Dan answers: “It’s called ‘What are you angry about?’ and you’re too young to play!” While there really isn’t anything funny about this ‘humor,’ it does strike a familiar cord in all of us. Often we as husbands don’t know what we’ve done wrong until our wives are upset, and even then we often don’t realize what it was we did (or didn’t do). the TV show *Home Improvements* is a good example of this. As the show reveals, women often are upset for justifiable reasons. If men would better understand them then a lot of heartache would be avoided.

MOSES’ SIN OF OMISSION Moses and Zipporah had the same problems. Moses obeyed God and headed to Egypt with his family (Ex. 4:20-23), but one night God struck Moses down and was about to kill him (v. 24)! Doesn’t that seem strange? Moses is finally obeying God and doing what He wants, but God is about to remove him? Moses seems unable to do anything, but he obviously knows what God is righteously indignant about and has Zipporah correct the omission. *At a lodging place on the way, the LORD met and was about to kill him. But Zipporah took a flint knife, cut off her son's foreskin and touched feet with it. "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me," she said. So the LORD let him alone. (At that time she said "bridegroom of blood," referring to circumcision.) (Exodus 4:24-26)*

Because of his continual, willful disobedience God was about to take Moses’ life. Why else would God hold him so accountable? Moses obviously knew what the sin was -- he hadn’t circumcised his youngest son (who was anywhere from a young boy to an adult). This is the sin unto death (I John 5:16), where God removes a believer in sin to keep his sin and it’s influence from growing. He did this with Saul, Ananias & Sapphira (Acts 5), Corinthian believers (I Cor 11:27-32), and others. Satan wants Moses to disobey and die, but God is giving Moses a last chance.

“YOU BLOODY JERK!” Why hadn’t Moses circumcised his second son? It seems Zipporah is really against it! She has to do it now, for it was customary believe then that to deny a dying request would bring a curse on her. It is obvious she doesn’t want to do it, though. She threw it at his feet (better translation than “touched” his feet), called him a “bloody bridegroom,” took her sons and left. Instead of following her and being with his family, Moses followed God to Egypt. God provided Moses’ brother, Aaron, as companionship for Moses (Ex. 4:27f). Still, this event ended their marriage. Zipporah’s father tried a reconciliation a year later but it totally failed. Moses’ price in obeying God is the loss of his family - both wife and sons. Later on God would provide a godly, faithful wife for Moses (Num. 12:1).

WHY ZIPPORAH GOT ANGRY. What happened to Moses and Zipporah? At first it seems to be all her fault for not submitting, and she is accountable for that, but it isn't that simple. Marriage problems never are. It seems Zipporah did go along with Moses in the beginning, for she had their first son circumcised. Now she has had it with Moses. The circumcision on top of moving their family hundreds of miles from home is more than she can take. Why? Well, we know she is the firstborn in her family (the oldest had to marry first - Ex 4:21), typically a strong, determined, independent type person. Moses, a third-born, would have been more a natural follower. Also, Moses seems to have been gone from home a lot with the sheep, leaving her to take care of the home and children. That can bother a woman, and rightly so. Then when the husband comes in and says they are moving from all she knew it gets too much. Her family and friends were where she turned to have her needs met, for it doesn't seem Moses was meeting them. Now he expects her to leave them. This sets her up inside for an explosion. The circumcision was the spark. Perhaps she wasn't as spiritually attuned as Moses, and resented him imposing his beliefs on their sons. Maybe it was just the straw that broke the camel's back. Whatever, the scene on the way to Egypt was set up by years of unmet needs.

Isn't uncommon for an easy-going man to find he has a upset woman on his hands. Abraham had that with Sarah (he didn't meet her needs for security and protection), as did Isaac and Jacob with their wives. As with them, this is often a pattern passed on down from generation to generation. Following the pattern they grow up with, a girl wants a husband who won't boss or dominate her and a boy wants a wife who will be like his mother and not demand him to take care of all of life's little problems and headaches.

WHY WOMEN GET ANGRY. After marriage women get frustrated when they don't feel their needs are being met as they'd like. This may be legitimate or perhaps they are expecting too much. Whatever it is, the result is the same. Add to this the fact that many women have a hard time trusting men (because of past experiences with father and boy friends) and are afraid of giving up control. Little girls can't control little boys physically, so they learn a better way -- with their emotions and feelings. Little boys grow up being afraid of their mother's anger, and that carries right over with their wives. Then, like Moses, they give in to keep the peace until they finally have to make a stand about something and the results are ugly. Just because a woman fights her husband for control doesn't mean that, deep inside, she really wants it. Often she'd prefer him to be strong enough to take the control from her, in a gentle and loving way, instead of letting her have her own way. Men don't realize this. She can't change herself. Even if he realized what she needed, most men have no idea how to handle an angry woman!

Getting angry back makes things worse (anger works OK for women, but men just aren't able to do anger and have anything good come of it. Giving in is wrong, for man is the leader and God gives him the guidance for the family. God holds the husband accountable and responsible. What are men to do about this?

HOW TO HANDLE AN ANGRY WOMAN First and foremost a husband must look for his blame in his wife's anger. After all, a woman is a responder, someone who reflects back what's been built into her. What needs of hers aren't being met? Does she feel 100% loved and secure, protected and provided for? Men, admit that your passivity often causes her anger. Avoid extremes. Honestly convey your feelings and emotions but not in anger or accusation. Don't stuff your feelings, but don't dump them, either. If she shows overt anger, watch out for your more subtle, hidden fighting styles: ignoring what is important to her, withholding love and attention, pointing out little mistakes of hers, putting off work she needs you to do, putting up emotional walls between you, being too busy to be available, avoiding serious discussions, turning off the romance, taking the children's side against her, or using 'humor' (sarcasm, teasing, jokes at her expense) to pick at her. Remove the log in your eye before you attack the speck in her eye. Learn about the role PMS can play in her emotions and be understanding about that and other factors that influence her. Remember what happened to Moses.

Every marriage relationship takes adjustment. Two people who are quite different (opposites do attract) have the potential for great richness together, or great turmoil. It's up to you, men, to determine which it is. Ask yourself: "How would Jesus respond? What would Jesus say? What would Jesus do? How does Jesus see my wife? What does He want for her?" Put yourself in her place, remembering the

Golden Rule. Pray constantly for patience, wisdom, love and self-control. *"I CAN do all things through Him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13).*

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5. HANDLING UNGODLY ANGER



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We've all seen the news reports of the quiet, withdrawn man who one day goes berserk and kills his family or fellow employees. We wonder, "What could cause a man to do something like that?" Yet at the same time we know, we most men have that hidden black beast of anger hidden down deep inside. Most of the time we can keep it hidden where no one sees it, but every once in a while it escapes and runs free -- and it's not a pretty sight to behold! What is it with men and anger? What is it with men and any kind of emotion?

MOSES: AN ANGRY MAN Moses tried to hide his beast his whole life, but in the end it got him! We first see it when Moses killed the Egyptian who was hurting and Egyptian slave (Exodus 2). God put him in a desert for 40 years to learn self control.

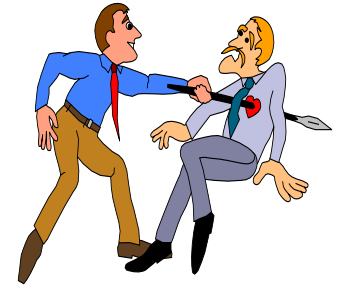
When God appeared to him and told him to go lead the Jews out of Egypt Moses obeyed. He gave God's message to Pharaoh. However we read that he was "furious" with Pharaoh after plague 9 (Exodus 22). God brought about the Jew's deliverance from Egypt with the death of the Egyptian firstborn (Ex 12), and then by opening the sea for the Jews to safely escape (Ex 14). The Jews traveled to Mt Sinai, defeating the Amalekites on the way (Ex 17). Through all of this Moses exercised exemplary self control, obeying God despite the criticism and complaining of the people. At Mt Sinai, though, when Moses was getting the 10 Commandments and rest of the law from God, the people built and worshipped a Golden Calf. When Moses came down from the mountain and saw this, the ugly monster of anger raised his head again. Moses broke the 10 Comm. (God made him write them himself the next time).

For the most part Moses was very humble (the most humble man ever - Num 12:3). He grew spiritually and mellowed. When the Jews rebelled and refused to enter the land because of the giants he was faithful. When they tried to kill him he was courageous. When he, too, had to wander for 40 years until the next generation had its chance to enter, he was patient. Finally the time came to enter the land, what Moses had wanted to do 80 years before!

The black beast of anger came out again, though, just before the Jews entered the land. They were out of water and complaining -- "singing the desert blues" again. Once again Moses and Aaron took the problem to God who mercifully said He would provide water as Moses spoke to the large rock nearby (Num. 20:2-9). But instead of just speaking, Moses derided the people and took credit for what God was about to do (v. 10). Then he struck the rock twice in anger (v. 11). Publicly God kept His word and provided water, but privately He dealt with Moses and

Aaron by telling them they could not enter the Promised Land (v. 12-13). For God to do this shows that this obviously was no minor, one-time sin. It was the culmination of a life long pattern, 120 years of trying to control his anger but failing. Moses meekly accepts this discipline and only once asks God to remove it (Deut. 3:23-26) but the damage has been done.

ANGRY MEN TODAY How many men today wish they could go back and remove the damage done but an outburst of the demon of anger? While often men have trouble with all emotions, especially compared to how comfortable and natural women are in expressing their emotions, it seems anger is the most troublesome. Some men allow it all out, shouting and raging, controlling others by making them afraid of their anger. Most men, though, are afraid of anger both in themselves and in others and so try to avoid it at all costs. As little boys we learned to hide anger, for it only brought greater anger and/or feelings of rejection from our mothers. We probably didn't have a father who showed us a good, mature example of how to handle anger either. It always got us in trouble so we learned to stuff it.



Stuffing it, though, is like trying to deal with a live hand grenade by hiding it under your coat. Suppressed anger doesn't go away. It simmers, then boils, and finally implodes, often devastating the man and his family. Emotional and/or physical health are ruined. Much of the physical ills and stress men deal with today is from hidden, unresolved, often unadmitted anger.

What can we do? Letting it all hang out is sin, so is ignoring and denying our anger. When we do try to express it, it often comes out as hostility and makes things worse instead of better. Women can 'do' anger and get away with it, even accomplishing some positive things by it. Men can't 'do' anger -- it just blows up in our face and makes everything worse! Have you ever noticed that when your wife gets angry, it's your fault. But when you get angry, that's your fault, too! No wonder we withdraw in our minds to rationalize, self-righteously looking down at our out-of-control-wife, while we feel superior because we don't get so carried away over nothing! Yet, if the truth were known, it is usually our refusal to take the things that matter to our wives seriously that cause this anger in her! We can't win by out-angering her, but we can win by being passive and withdrawn, and it drives her crazy (rightly so, for marriage isn't a win-lose proposition, but working together for the best of both as one).

Most men fear women anger, and women can use the threat of it to manipulate men into doing what they want. However when this happens a woman loses respect for the man, for down inside she needs him to do what is right, to control her in love, to take the reins from her hands. When we don't do what we feel God wants but give in for the sake of peace we are sinning against God and our family. We **MUST** do what is right, in kindness and love, no matter the consequences. If you keep in mind that most women have a hard time trusting men you'll understand better why they act this way. Fathers, boy friends, even previous husbands, have hurt them and let them down, so they are afraid to open themselves up to hurt by trusting again (this is what happened to Sarah when Abraham said she was his sister).

HANDLING ANGER AS JESUS DID We can't ignore anger, nor deny it. In fact, there is a time to get angry and it is commanded of us (Ephesians 4:26a). It must be handled, though, and not allowed to remain for long (Eph 4:26b). We must control it, and not it control us, as evidenced by Jesus braiding a whip in his anger before chasing the money changers out of the temple (John 2:15). Ask yourself: "How would Jesus handle this anger" and then do the same thing.

I think the key to handling anger in yourself or others is to realize that anger is a secondary emotion, always a result of hurt or pain. It is a wrong, immature way of responding to hurt, for pain must be admitted and felt, then taken to Jesus to have it removed. Anger seeks to remove pain by transferring pain back to the one we feel hurt us. We know anger doesn't really do that, but we keep on trying just the same. To be free from anger, forgive the hurt! To respond to an angry woman, find out what hurt her. Apologize if necessary, reassure her, and do what you can to remove the hurt and increase her trust in you. Ask God to remove your own fear of anger, both in yourself and in others. Anger is an emotion, a very strong one. Still, the beast can only be tamed by your mind: by understanding it and what causes it, by doing what is necessary to correct or prevent it, and by regularly taking it to God in prayer. It isn't a beast that we need hide and fear. It doesn't have to come take

control of us periodically. It doesn't have to live inside. It can be killed -- by the blood of Jesus. Only in Him can we be free from that demon, but that freedom is available and its easier than we may think. Face and defeat it with Jesus' help, but don't put that off. Who knows when it will next try to attack!

GODLY MANHOOD

Lessons from Moses



6. SETTING GODLY GOALS

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Men, do you ever wonder how you will be thought of after you die? What will you be remembered for? When those who loved most and knew you best gather around your grave and think of you, what will be going through their minds? “He was _____.” If they would write a short phrase on your tombstone summarizing your life and what you stood for, what would those words be? I know what I want mine to be: “Man of God.” That’s been my life goal for a long time. I often feel I’m getting further from it instead of closer to it, though. How am I to meet that goal? How am I to take control of my life so that it counts for something I want it to count for? Perhaps looking at the life of Moses will help.

GOD’S EULOGY OF MOSES After being told by God that he wouldn’t enter the Promised Land because of his lifelong failure to get control over his anger problem, the Jews traveled through Moab to get near the Promised Land. Aaron died, God sent serpents to discipline the complaining people, and Balaam was hired to keep the Jews out of Moab. After numbering the people again, Moses stepped down and appointed Joshua the new leader. He taught the new generation (the book of Deuteronomy contains his teaching), then he went up Mt Nebo. He was in fine health (Deut. 34:4-7) and had no fear of death.

God allowed him to see the Promised Land before taking him home. I wonder what went through Moses’ head as he thought back on his life. Was he satisfied with it? What would he have changed (besides the times his anger got him into trouble and hurt those he loved)? Did he, like Paul, feel he had fought the good fight and finished his race (II Tim. 4:7-8)? It is a goal of mine to come to the end of my life without any more failure and guilt than I now have. I don’t want to regret the direction my life went, the use of my time, my priorities in life. I want to know I have spent my life the way God wanted me to spend it.

I’m sure Moses had regrets, but I know God said his life counted. “Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew fact to face, who did all those miraculous signs and wonders the Lord sent him to do in Egypt -- to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land. For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.” (Deut. 34:10-12). I’d love to have God write something like that on my tombstone! His life wasn’t a failure. It wasn’t perfect, but it counted in what was important.

How did Moses manage to do that? Did he just ‘give it his best shot’ and hope for the best? No! He learned earlier in life to plan for what mattered, to set priorities to meet his goals. He learned this from his father in law, Jethro (Exodus 18:13-26).

SETTING PRIORITIES

When the Jews left Egypt they had no government, no training, no one to give advice or settle disputes but Moses. Thus he was busy from early morning to late at night every day handling petty arguments, making decisions, giving advice and helping people. There would be crowds around his tent at all times awaiting their turn (Exodus 18;13-26). He was burning himself out, the people were frustrated and impatient waiting, and Moses was unable to do what was most important for him to do: pray, (v. 19), teach everyone (prevention of problems is better than correction of them - v. 20), and train assistants (v. 21). Like the early apostles who needed deacons to help relieve them so they could make their time count best (Acts 6), Moses needed to do the same thing. He was advised to delegate, let others help with the easier situations. Thus he would be freed up to do the best instead of just something good.

You know, it's easy to stay busy doing good things. But often that keeps us from doing the vest best things we could do with our time. Moses had to see what was most important and make that his goal. He has to realign his priorities around God's goals for him. If not, he wouldn't have been able to make his life really count.

GOAL SETTING TODAY Since Moses couldn't do everything that screamed for his attention, he had to decide what to do and what not to do. We budget our money to make it count, knowing it is a limited resource. Failing to do this results in serious problems. We must do the same with our time, for the same reasons. Goals are like stake posts in the distance to help us plow a straight line with our life, to help us get and stay on track with what God wants and stay on track. Setting goals helps us look forward, not backward. It helps us objectively divide our limited resource (time) so it is spent where we know it will count most. Goal-setting helps us make some hard choices about what to leave out of our lives, which needs to meet and which to let go. I've been doing this for years and it has helped me a lot. Let me share a simple format that can help you get started. Adapt and adjust it any way you need.

	DAILY	BY NEXT YEAR	END OF LIFE
FINANCIAL			
PHYSICAL			
SOCIAL (relationships)			
MARRIAGE			
PARENTAL			
SPIRITUAL			
Prayer			
Worship			
Bible knowledge			
Use of Spiritual Gift			
EDUCATIONAL			
CAREER			

I suggest you start by filling in the "end of life" column first, then "by next year" and finally "daily." Pray about these. Don't worry if you can't get them all done at once, just pick a few areas God would want you to start on. Talk to your wife about this. She has insight and advise that can really help. Lots of times women can see what is really important much easier than men. Doing this can be very revealing and enlightening. You'll be surprised how much you'll learn about yourself and your life. Start applying what you learn. It'll improve your life and family now, and have eternal results. Remember, men, we are writing our own eulogy now by how we live. What do YOU want on your tombstone? You're writing it by how you live.

GODLY MANHOOD

Lessons from Moses

GODLY

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What is the hardest decision you have ever made? Which decisions still give you the most trouble? Why?

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GODLY MANHOOD

Lessons from Moses

1. MAKING GODLY DECISIONS
2. BEING A GODLY FATHER
3. AGING IN A GODLY MANNER
4. DEFUSING AN UPSET (ANGRY) WIFE
5. HANDLING UNGODLY ANGER
6. SETTING GODLY GOALS

Lessons from Timothy

1. A FATHER'S INFLUENCE
(Father-Son Relationships)
2. SPIRITUAL GROWTH
(Fear, Stress, Discouragement)

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