

"The First 40 Years of Moses' Life"

Part 4

Exodus 2

Introduction: Many believers struggle with knowing the will of God for their lives. This is especially true of those who are thinking about stepping into the ministry as a missionary, teacher, or pastor. I can remember back to when God was calling me into the ministry, and I remember how I struggled because I wanted to be sure that it was God I was following as I proceeded forward. I remember years ago reading Chuck Swindoll's book, "Knowing the Will of God", and in his book he explained that following God is sometimes like driving in a very dense fog. In the fog you cannot see much past the hood of your car and there are times when following God can be the same way because He does not give you a picture of His will much beyond the day you are in. Now I will say that after you find the will of God you can get settled into what He has called you to do but when a person is trying to decide which path God has for them there will be some sleepless nights. The reason for this is because following God often requires a major change or sacrifice in a person's life and the change will not just impact their lives but also the lives of their family. Often believers are called to step away from a profession that has supported their family for years, or they may be called to leave the comforts of home and move overseas to the jungles of Africa. Some are called to leave the safety of the US and go into a country where Christians are hated and killed for their faith and if they are married it means moving their family into a hostile environment.

Getting back to Moses, his choice to refuse the power, position, popularity and the pleasures of sin was a life changing decision. We know by reading the book of Exodus, Acts, and Hebrews that he was walking in the will of God for God had made a choice to use him as the great emancipator of Israel. But how did Moses know he was supposed to walk away from the palace and refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter?

Moses and the Will of God

1. The Knowledge

In the book of Acts, Luke gives to us some very interesting information.

Acts 7:23-25

²³ And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

²⁴ And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:

²⁵ For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.

Here in verse 25 we see that Moses understood that God desired to use him to deliver the nation of Israel. This then raises another question, "How did he know it was God's will for him to be the one to lead Israel out of Egypt?" I believe we get a glimpse of how he knew in Acts.

Acts 7:23

²³ *And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.*

Here we see that IT CAME INTO HIS HEART to visit his brethren. God had placed within his heart two things:

- a. **A burden for his people.**
- b. **A desire to be used by God to lead them out of Egypt.**

These were two ways in which Moses knew it was God's will for him to be the emancipator of Israel. God used the same two things to get Nehemiah to go back to Jerusalem to lead a wall building mission.

The Burden

Nehemiah 1:2-4

² *That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.*

³ *And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.*

⁴ *And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven.*

When Nehemiah heard the news about his people in Jerusalem his heart was broken. God placed upon his heart a great burden to go to Jerusalem and help the rebuilding of the walls.

Nehemiah 2:1-5

And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence.

² *Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid,*

³ *And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?*

⁴ *Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.*

⁵ *And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, **that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.***

Nehemiah not only had a burden for the people, but he also had a burden to be part of the solution to the problem. He wanted to be used by God and he was willing to leave the comforts of the palace to be used. He was very much like Moses in all of this. But there were significant differences which we shall see.

The Desire

Nehemiah 2:11-12

¹¹ *So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days.*

¹² *And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; **neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem:** neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon.*

God had placed within his heart a desire to go to Jerusalem and spearhead the building project.

Application:

These are two of the ways in which we can know the will of God for our lives. God will place a burden on your heart, and He will plant within you a desire to do what needs to be done.

But these alone cannot always determine the will of God. Let me show you something from David's life.

1 Kings 8:17

¹⁷ And it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

Here we see that David had a desire within his heart to build a house/temple for the Lord. He had even shared this with Nathan who encouraged him to do what was in his heart.

1 Chronicles 17:1-2

Now it came to pass, as David sat in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, Lo, I dwell in an house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD remaineth under curtains.

² Then Nathan said unto David, Do all that is in thine heart; for God is with thee.

With Nathan's response one would believe that it was surely the will of God for David to build the temple. But then we read on.

1 Chronicles 17:3-4

And it came to pass the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying,

⁴ Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in:

1 Kings 8:18-19

¹⁸ And the LORD said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.

¹⁹ Nevertheless thou shalt not build the house; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name.

So, David had a desire within his heart and it was not the will of God for David to build the temple. Nehemiah and Moses both had desires within their hearts and it was the will of God. The question then is, "What was the difference?"

There are several points that need to be seen from Moses', Nehemiah's, and David's situations which will help us to better know the will of God. They all three had desires within their hearts but each situation was different. All three situations, Israel coming out of Egypt, the building of a temple, and the rebuilding of the walls were all God's will. The difference was that each man would be used in a different way. This would be determined by several things:

1. Open doors.

Nehemiah knew it was God's will for him to leave the palace because God opened the doors for him to leave.

Nehemiah 2:4-8

⁴ Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.

⁵ And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.

⁶ And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.

⁷ Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah;

⁸ And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

When it is God's will for one of His people to step out and serve Him in some way God will open the doors. When He does, we must step through the open door in faith because there may only be a short window of time when the opportunity is before us. If we face a closed door then we must wait for God closes doors for a reason.

2. The Word of God.

All three men knew the will of God by the Word of God.

Moses received the confirmation 40 years later at the burning bush.

Exodus 3:10

¹⁰ Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Nehemiah, as far as we know did not hear directly from the Lord, but God did use His Word to lead Nehemiah. In Nehemiah's prayer we read the following words:

Nehemiah 1:8-9

⁸ Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations:

⁹ But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.

David knew, by the Word of God, that it was not the will of God for him to build the temple.

1 Chronicles 17:3-4

And it came to pass the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying,

⁴ Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in:

We need to understand that if the desire within our heart is contrary to the Word of God then we can be sure the desire is not from the Lord. Satan is a counterfeiter and he too can put desires within our hearts, and they will be contrary to the Word of God. No matter how great a situation may look, and no matter how we may perceive the ending, if it is not in agreement with the will of God it cannot be God's will. It may actually be a trap set by the enemy.

There is yet something else from the life of Moses that we need to see that is very valuable.

The Timing

We must always keep in mind that God has a set time for all that He does. It is our responsibility to **PATIENTLY** serve Him and wait upon His timing.

Notice Exodus 2:11-14

Moses was correct about God calling him to be the emancipator of Israel, but he was forty years early. So why did God place the desire within his heart forty years before His appointed time to lead Israel out?

Moses had to be prepared. Here in the text before us Moses believed he could deliver Israel in HIS power and might. Moses had to learn that deliverance would only come by the power of God. Moses had to be stripped of his self-dependence.

Application:

This is such an important lesson for all of us. In our power we can do nothing. If we are going to bring forth fruit for God, it must be by the power of the Spirit within us.

John 15:1-5

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

² *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*

³ *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*

⁴ *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

⁵ *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

Philippians 4:13

¹³ *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

Conclusion:

It is so important that we know the will of God for our lives and to know the will of God means we must live separated lives.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*