

Fire in the dryer: God's call—no excuses

By Sandi Michon, October 2005

We're a lot like Moses.

Are you surprised? I was, until I read Exodus, chapter 3 from a different perspective. This past week, my husband and I were watching Ken Davis' very funny video called, "A Whiny Prophet, a Butane Bush, and No Excuses. As I saw how Moses responded to God's call, I was brought back to when God first called us to homeschool. I found out I'm a lot like Moses – and after you hear me out – you may find that you are too.

First, a little background. Moses was son of descendant of the Levi tribe and, at the time of his birth, Pharaoh was killing all Hebrew male babies. His mom makes a bold move of faith, Moses ends up growing up in Pharaoh's house, leaves when he sees how Pharaoh mistreats his people, kills a guy and ends up in the land of Midian tending sheep.



Right away, some of us can relate to Moses. He has a shady background – and he's looking after little lambs.

In Exodus 3, we pick up the story as Moses leads the sheep to the backside of the desert next to Mt Horeb. He sees a bush burning, yet it's not consumed. From this point on, I'm going to take great liberty with the biblical text as I imagine what the scene would have been like for you and me. If you have a Bible, follow along for the exact rendering of Scripture.



Imagine a routine day, minding your own business, doing laundry. (Instead of sorting flocks, you're searching for socks!) All of a sudden, you notice that your dryer is on fire. Flames are licking around the front-loading window, but the clothes are still tumbling around inside not consumed by the fire.

Like the highly spiritual woman that you are, you say something like verse 3: "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the clothes are not burnt." The Lord sees He's got your attention and calls out your name! The dryer is not only on fire, it's talking to you! In shock, you answer, "Yeah?" (Moses said, "Here am I.")

In verse 5, the voice comes from the dryer again, "Don't come any closer, but take off those scruffy slippers, for your laundry room is holy ground." You rip off your slippers (wishing your feet were a little cleaner) and the voice continues in verse 7: "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Yikes! You dive behind the laundry baskets! You can't look upon God!

Peeking between the darks and lights, God starts speaking again in verses 7 -8. "I have seen the affliction of your children which are in school. I have heard their crying out by reason of the NEA and the school systems. I know how it is hurting them. I am come down to deliver them out of the hands of the government schools, drugs and violence – and bring them out of that education – unto a good education flowing with wisdom and love (milk and honey) – but this land is where superintendents, neighbors, in-laws and DSS live. Now, behold, the cry of thy children is come unto me; and I have seen the oppression wherewith the state and school systems oppress them. Come now, therefore and I will send thee to thy superintendent, that thou mayest bring forth your children of your household out of the worldly system."

Pretty clear call. At this point, would we have been on board? What is Moses', and our response?

EXCUSE #1 **"Who am I?"**

When God was calling me, my "Who am I?" sounded like: "You got to be kidding, God! I can't do that. And, besides, those homeschooling people are crazy!" (Now that I have been one of those people, I know we are crazy!)

When God calls us, we do the "but, but, but stutter." Besides, God said He came down to deliver them – how did I get dragged into this?

Isn't it always our first inclination to look at our own qualifications when God calls us to do something? From our first homeschool year, my key verse was I Thess. 5:24: "Faithful is He that calls you who will also do it." I can tell you that He has kept His promise! Go back to the beginning of Exodus 3... Moses was called while he was on the backside of the desert. I was called between Desert Shield and Desert Storm! Both my husband and I were in the military – our marriage was not doing well. Not only did I say, "Who am I?" but added, "Now???"

Okay, back to the story. When Moses (or we) say, "Who am I?" – God doesn't bother to respond because He knows it's not even relevant. In verse 12, God simply says: "Certainly I will be with thee... I have sent thee... Just in case Moses is confused, God elaborates in verse 14: "I am that I am. Tell them "I AM" sent me..." God doesn't pull any punches and for the rest of the chapter, he tells Moses to tell the king of Egypt to let His children go. He adds: Pharaoh will give you lots of trouble, but I'll prevail and you'll leave bondage with the spoils of Egypt!

God's not sugarcoating the call – He just says to do it – and predicts we will bring riches out of the struggle.

EXCUSE #2 **"They won't listen to me. They won't believe God asked me to do this."**

Is that not the comment I hear from those considering homeschooling – and a few times from those that are! (If your kids don't listen to you, it may be the main reason you need to homeschool —so you have ample time to correct the problem.)

We pick up back in the laundry room. In verse 2, the Lord says, "What is that in thine hand?" We say, "A broom."

He says, "Cast it to the ground." All right! No more sweeping! We cast it to floor – and our broom turns into a snake and slithers through our laundry piles! Like any good mom, we scream and head for higher ground! The Lord catches our hand and says, "Put forth thine hand and take it by the tail." What??? (Why is it that God yanks us so far out of our comfort zone? Maybe to see if we trust Him – and to see His power...) One look in His eyes and we risk it. We take the tail and we have a broom again. Whew, the snake thing is over!

Before we go to the next part, let me suggest the possible significance of this. With Moses, God tells him to throw down his shepherd staff – I chose to make it a broom for us. Remember, Moses was tending sheep, we keep house. Obviously, God was showing His

power to Moses, but He may also be showing Moses to cast down his present priorities to follow God's call. Just a thought...

Now, God says, "Put now thine hand into thy bosom." It takes me a while to find my bosom, but when I do, my hand becomes leprous! Great! I do what God says and now I'm going to die. (God's calling always means the death of me somehow.) Just as I'm freaking out, He says, "Put thine hand into thy bosom again." I do, and my hand is restored to perfection! (God always gives back way more than we give up.) You think Moses, or I, am ready to follow God's call? Not yet. I'm not out of excuses.

EXCUSE # 3: "I can't speak very well... I won't know what to say." Homeschool translation: "How can I teach Algebra? I was never good at math!"

If our kids argued as much as Moses, we'd probably slap them by now – but God knows it's a big job, so He takes more time with us. In verse 11, He says: "Who hath made man's mouth? Or who makes the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the Lord? Now, therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say."

Why is it that we believe that God made us, but don't believe He can perfect us? In Phil. 1:6, Paul is persuaded that He how began a good work in him, would perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Paul blows the excuse of weakness out of the water in II Corinthians 12:9. After begging God to take away the "thorns", he finally succumbs to their purpose: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in your weakness." Paul concludes: Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of God may rest upon me." (I should tattoo that verse on my forehead!)

In verse 13, Moses still tries to avoid the call, and by verse 14, God's angry. But, even in His anger, He still raises up a provision for Moses through his brother Aaron. Aaron is eloquent and will speak for Moses. (Even in our whining, God still supplies a provision...)

We all know the rest of the story. Moses answered the call and obeyed. It wasn't easy – and at the end, it got downright bloody – but God prevailed and delivered His people from bondage. During the entire process, God challenged the people to obey Him – exactly. If they did, none of the plaques touched them.

I am convinced that we cannot lead our children out of bondage without full obedience to God's call. I've always told my kids that partial obedience is really not obedience at all. Most of us have overcome our excuses regarding our call to homeschool because we are already at the task. **But the work is not complete.** Even after the great Red Sea rescue from the Egyptian armies, God's people still made excuses for not believing God. Most of them died in the wilderness wandering and even Moses never made it into the Promised Land because of subsequent disobedience.

Each year, we must listen closely to God's instructions– and obey. **What was God's answer to all of Moses' excuses? God answered with Himself – His words, His signs, His power, His plan. God is the answer to all of our excuses as well!**



Whether we're new homeschoolers or seasoned veterans, we can be prone to excuses and unbelief. Like Paul, we want to finish the race and obtain the prize. Although highly exalted in Scripture, Moses still missed out on the Promised Land. *Let's not miss ours!*

Think you have a good excuse? Consider this:
Noah was a drunk... Jacob was a liar... Leah was ugly... Moses stuttered... Gideon was afraid... Rahab was a prostitute... Timothy was too young... David was an adulterer and a murderer... Elijah was suicidal... Jonah ran from God... Naomi was a widow... Job went bankrupt... John the Baptist ate bugs... Peter denied Christ... Martha worried about everything... Zacchaeus was too