

Are You the One?

Connecting the Old and the New

Studying people in the Bible teaches us more about God and ourselves. Today, we will be reading about Moses and John the Baptist. They were both instrumental in God's redemptive plan. Moses led the Israelites out of slavery, while John pointed them to the one who could save them from sin. But who were Moses and John, really? Let's look at two fascinating passages of scripture to find out more.

- Read Exodus 4-6 and discuss the following question
 - What did God appoint Moses to do? How did Moses react?
 - Why did Moses respond the way he did? (Hint, it's the obvious and more). In what ways have you felt inadequate or discouraged in your life?
 - When we limit ourselves, we limit God. How can your differences, fears, or shame become strengths instead of something that stops you? How can knowing what God thinks of you change your perspective?
 - Like Moses, we all know how it feels when people won't listen to us. Yet, Moses was stubborn to listen to God. Think of how God felt angry when Moses wouldn't listen. Think of how the Israelites worshiped God when they learned of His concern for them. How does listening build trust in our relationship with God?
 - When Moses and Aaron obey God, it comes at a cost. Pharaoh hardens his own heart, cruelly increasing the Israelites' labor and refusing to let them go. But God had told Moses that this would happen and that the ultimate outcome would be freedom. What might God be calling you to do in obedience to Him right now? What costs might your obedience incur, and how is it worth it?
 - Sometimes, trials lead us to doubt God's goodness and question our purpose and identity, like Moses and the Israelites did. We don't realize the meaning of our suffering, existence, or life in general until we come out on the other side. What is some insight that you can impart from overcoming a struggle in your life?

- Read John 1:14-34 and discuss the following questions:
 - Who did the priests and Levites think John the Baptist was?
 - John says he is not Elijah in the literal sense, though Jesus and the angel Gabriel said that he was Elijah in a figurative sense (see Matthew 11:10-14; Luke 1:13-17; Malachi 4:4-6). Instead, who did John say that he was in answer to the religious leaders? What do you think he meant? (Also read Isaiah 40:1-8 and Matthew 3:1-3 for context).
 - John was honest about who he was. Think of a time when you were tempted to pretend you are someone who you are not. How does it feel to fake it versus to be yourself?
 - The Pharisees questioned John's authority to baptize. What is his response to them? Why did John baptize?
 - Who did John say that Jesus is?

- What is the difference between John's baptizing and Jesus's baptizing? (Also read Matthew 3:11-12 for context).
- To consolidate what we've learned, discuss the following questions:
 - What are Moses's and John's roles in scripture? How are these roles complementary and distinct?
 - What is the distinction between law and grace?
 - What is the difference between Moses and John's attitudes toward God?
 - What is the effect of being self-conscious or problem-focused? In contrast, what is the effect of focusing on who God is?
 - What can we learn about God's character from the passages we have read? How does knowing this encourage and humble us?