

Fear Driven Questions

Written by Bill Perkins

One day you'll face an impossible challenge. The opposition will be strong, entrenched and organized.

Moses felt that way when God appeared in the burning bush and said, "I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt" (Ex.3: 10). Moses didn't snap a salute and say, "Yes, sir." Instead, he asked four questions driven by fear.

"Who Am I?"

First, Moses asked, "Who am I?" Forty years before he had tried to deliver the Jewish people. After failing he fled into the wilderness. Upon hearing God's command he recalled that past failure and projected it into the future. Who was he to carry out such a task?

God uttered five words: "I will be with you" (Ex.3:12). And he will be with you.

"What Shall I Tell Them?"

Next Moses asked, "What shall I tell them?" (Ex. 3:13). Moses realized few Egyptians would remember him. He would need a higher authority to persuade Pharaoh to release two-and-a-half million slaves.

God told Moses to tell them, "I AM has sent me to you" (Ex. 3:14). With that name God revealed himself as the eternal God who is always present with his people. Because it's hard for men to grasp the concept of an eternal being God said he was the God of "Abraham" and the God of "Isaac." The eternal God stepped into time and delivered those two men. He would also deliver the Jewish slaves. And he will deliver you.

"What If They Don't Believe Me?"

Unconvinced Moses asked a third question: "What if they don't believe me?" (Exodus 4:1). Moses remembered what had happened before. While trying to settle a dispute between two Hebrew men one of them asked, "Who made you ruler and judge over us?" (Ex. 2:14). As those words echoed through his mind Moses feared rejection and failure.

The Lord told Moses he would validate his leadership with a series of miracles that would convince every skeptic. As long as Moses stayed at God's side, he had nothing to fear for the God of miracles would confound his enemies. And he will confound yours.

“I Can't Speak”

Moses' fourth and final question wasn't a question but a statement. He implied he couldn't lead the people because he couldn't communicate. At this point Moses' fear of failure overcame his memory. Years later, Stephen would say that Moses was a powerful communicator (Acts 7:22). It had been so long since Moses had used his skills of persuasion he thought he had lost them.

God told the fearful leader, “I will help you speak and will teach you what to say” (4:12).

What a wonderful promise made more wonderful by the words of Jesus: "When they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit." (Mark 13:11; Matthew 10:19).

Identity, Knowledge, Credibility, Competence

Don't we all ponder these issues? Who am I? Identity. What will I say? Knowledge. What if they don't believe me? Credibility. What if I say it wrong? Competence. For us, as with Moses, God not only shows us the way, he is with us along the path.