

**It May Be Midnight  
BUT God Determines My Fight**

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# **Lessons in Trust**



**Exodus 2:1-10**

## Introduction:

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The God we worship and serve is perfect in every aspect of His being. He is also realistic. He tells Isaiah:

***"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways ... for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."*** (Isaiah 55:8-9)

David reminds us, ***"For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust."*** (Psalm 103:14)

### **We Want Instant**

God knows very well that His thoughts and ways infinitely surpass our own. He is mindful that He created us as finite beings from a few pounds of garden soil. He understands that. He knows how to work with those limited in comprehension and frail of frame.

- My question is, why don't we understand it?
- Why do we expect perfection of ourselves and of our associates?

Through all my years of studying biblical characters, I have not encountered a single episode of instant effectiveness for God. Among all the biblical heroes, only Daniel (*and possibly Joseph and Joshua*) makes it to the pages of holy writ without recorded lapses and failures. And in my own experience, spanning more than twenty-three years of ministry, I cannot recall one believer who simply lifted off the runway and soared into the spiritual stratosphere, staying there until death.

### **We Get Intensification**

You and I, however, become terribly impatient with our own shortcomings and limitations and with each other.

- We despair because we think we ought to be in spiritual orbit by this time, when we're barely skimming the treetops, or still trying to lift off the runway.
- We think we ought instantly, constantly, and effectively to conquer vast territories for the kingdom, like some spiritual Alexander the Great.
- And when it doesn't happen when victory seems elusive—we grow discouraged.

Whenever I start feeling like that, I need to revisit the life of Moses. He helps me to take heart. Here was a man who didn't become effective for God until he was *eighty*. Long after most of us would be riding a rocking chair or pushing up daisies, Moses began his spiritual career. And guess what? God used him mightily.

## **We Get Increase**

The life of Moses, according to the **Book of Acts, chapter 7**, may be divided into three 40-year segments.

- He spent his **FIRST FORTY YEARS IN EGYPT**, nursed by his mother and taught by the Egyptian schools.
- He spent his **SECOND FORTY YEARS IN THE DESERT**, nursed by solitude and taught by God.
- He spent his **FINAL FORTY YEARS WITH THE HEBREW PEOPLE IN THE WILDERNESS**, nursed by trials, discouragements, and tests, and taught by the Law, which he received from God's own hand.

Dwight L. Moody gave his own spin on this remarkable biography.

- *Moses spent his 1<sup>st</sup> 40 years thinking he was somebody.*
- *Moses spent his 2<sup>nd</sup> 40 years learning he was a nobody.*
- *Moses spent his 3<sup>d</sup> 40 years discovering what God does w/a nobody.*

You and I, though we may never achieve the age of one hundred and twenty, **LIVE IN ONE OF THOSE THREE STAGES** at this very moment. We either think we're somebody, or we have advanced enough to realize we are nobody, or we have finally discovered what God can do with a nobody! It's kind of encouraging, isn't it? God never gives up!

The best of the three, of course, is the final phase. Moses had already blown out eighty candles on his birthday cake before that last fact began to take root in his soul (*and then only after a stubborn argument with the Almighty*). After he learned it, however—after the truth of heaven's desire and ability to use him finally gripped his heart—the very earth would shake, and the seas would boil with the power of God radiating through his life. If we observe nothing else in this sojourn with Moses, we're going to learn about the first few steps of a man who discovered late in life (*but not too late!*) what it meant to count for God, regardless of his age. I've titled this message ***"It May be Midnight, BUT God Still Determines My Plight."***

## I. In Life.....the Fight Can Be Unsteady

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### Illustration: Churchill and Roosevelt

For most of my adult life, I have been a fan of Sir Winston Churchill. His life, his recorded speeches, and his ringing prose never fail to inspire me. Recently I recalled his address to the House of Commons on the seventeenth of April, 1945, five days after the passing of his friend, President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Churchill said this to Parliament: "In Franklin Roosevelt there died the greatest American friend the islands have ever known. He died in the harness, and we may well say in battle harness. What an enviable death was his."

In Churchill's mind, that famous president died at an enviable time. Hitler was dead, his evil empire in smoking ruins. The war in the Pacific was rolling on toward victory. The forces of tyranny would not swallow up the free world. Roosevelt slipped into eternity while seeing his goals fulfilled.

As enviable a death as FDR may have had, Moses, at the other end of the spectrum, endured a most *unenviable* birth. Born as a Jew into a land ruled by an anti-Semitic despot, Moses entered the world in desperate conditions. His people, the Hebrews, suffered horribly under the whip. They were oppressed, hated, misused, and maligned. Many were murdered by Pharaoh, the Hitler of Moses' day.

### **Desperate Times Require a Very Deep Faith (vs.1)**

Baby Moses entered a world of cruelty and pain, slavery and despair. He began life in a dark era, long after midnight ... the darkest day of Hebrew history to that point. Nevertheless, life went on for the Jewish people. Men and women married, cradled young ones, and tried to carve out a family life in the crucible of Oppression and brutality, Oh, they enjoyed brief moments of relief- perhaps the occasional feast of the inevitable "*leeks and garlics*"- but fear and dread shadowed even the best of times.

In the early verses of **Exodus chapter 2**, we read of a marriage celebrated under these stressful conditions. "*Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months*" (vs.1-2).

Moses became a great man of faith because *his* father and mother were people of faith. They were Levites, evidently committed to the things of God. We know that because of what we read in **Hebrews chapter 11**. "*By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict*" (vs. 23).

That king was Pharaoh, the iron-fisted ruler of Egypt. We are told here that this baby was protected for three months by *faith*. His mother and father feared the God of heaven more than they feared a king of earth. And *it* must have been no easy task to hide that healthy boy, but out of a deep reverence for God, an abiding confidence in the living Lord, they *did* just that.

### **Desperate Times Require a Very Keen Insight (vs.2a)**

**“...and when she saw that he was beautiful ...”**

Though **Exodus 2** doesn't mention it, Moses was not the firstborn. He had an older sister named Miriam, who was not yet a teenager, and an older brother named Aaron, who was three years older than Moses.

As we read in the second verse, Moses' parents *hid* their third *child* for three months because they saw he was a good (or well-formed) baby. The Hebrew word can mean several things. Many of our best translations render the word **“beautiful.”** Some *people* take *it* to mean that Amram, the father, and Jochebed, the mother, looked at the boy and saw a unique beauty in him. Frankly, that doesn't surprise me. Most parents, when they look at their *little* baby, see a unique beauty.

At times I have looked down *into* the pinched, red face of some *little* newborn and have been hard-pressed to say, **“My, isn't he beautiful.”** Sometimes it's difficult for a pastor to know *what* to say. (**“Yes, that's a baby, all right.”**) But all new parents the world over see nothing but beauty in their own babies.

Yet I don't think that sort of prejudiced response is what Scripture means here. I believe the Bible is telling us that little Moses really *was* beautiful, way down deep in his tiny soul. Possibly, his godly parents saw in him something more than physical beauty. Perhaps God revealed to them in the secrecy of their hearts that this boy had a very special destiny.

Whatever they may have thought about his birth, they knew immediately that grave danger faced their baby. To keep the child alive, his father and mother would have to risk everything. Had they not carefully hidden him, Pharaoh's troops would have seized the boy and fed him to the crocodiles, at the king's command.

### **Desperate Times Require a Very Dedicated Parent (vs.2b)**

**“...she hid him for three months”**

How would you like to try hiding a baby for three months in a miserable little hut? I remember well that our own firstborn never slept through the night for eighteen weary months. At times I longed for a basket and a Nile River nearby! Just kidding, Noah! How could we have concealed that boy of ours for three months? With the set of lungs he had, you couldn't have concealed him for three minutes.

In Moses' case, the day soon arrived when he could no longer be concealed. His hiding place would have to change. Can you imagine the tension and fear in that little household?

***"Keep that baby quiet! Miriam, you have to keep him still or we'll lose him. Aaron, you just keep away from the baby. You mustn't tease him or he'll cry. Shh! Quiet! I think someone might be coming down the path!"***

Perhaps the Egyptians had instituted house-to-house searches on the rumor of hidden babies. Undoubtedly at least a few Hebrews cooperated with the authorities, in fear of their own lives. Whatever the reason, Moses' parents arrived at a terrible conclusion: They could not keep the secret any longer. Something had to be done. In that moment of agony, somewhere between grief and despair, Jochebed devised a creative plan.

## **B. Unsteadiness Produces Desperate Measures (vs.3-9)**

***But when she could hide him no longer, she got him a wicker basket and covered it over with tar and pitch. Then she put the child into it and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile. (vs. 3)***

### **Desperate Measures Require a Planning Faith (vs.3a)**

***"But when she could hide him no longer, she got him a wicker basket and covered it over with tar and pitch...."***

With great care and tenderness, Jochebed mixed a tar-like substance from the banks of the Nile and covered the sides of a little wicker basket, rendering it watertight. We can assume she placed some soft pieces of cloth into that floating bassinet, and perhaps a bit of hay. And then, with what must have been a breaking heart, she set that little basket among the reeds along the bank of the river.

All my life, until I began digging more deeply into this passage, I visualized Jochebed thrusting that basket out into the current of the Nile, until it happened to come to rest where the princess came out to bathe. But that's not what the text says. It says, ***"She put the child into it, and set it among the reeds by the bank"***.

### **Desperate Measures Require an Absolute Faith (vs.3b)**

***"...Then she put the child into it and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile."***

I have never seen the Nile River, but I have seen plenty of river reeds. Perhaps you have, too. For all their flexibility, those reeds are rather sturdy plants. Moses' mother apparently waded out a ways into the water and secured this little floating basket in a very special place. She didn't merely push it out into the current, singing, ***"Que sera, sera, whatever will be, will be ...."*** She positioned that little basket precisely where she wanted it. As I said, Jochebed had a plan.

Here we meet a woman with great faith in God. But it was not foolish faith! On the contrary, she took steps to devise the very best plan she could under those terrible circumstances, leaving the ultimate results to a sovereign God.

### **Desperate Measures Require a Believing Faith (vs.4-5)**

*His sister stood at a distance to find out what would happen to him. The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the Nile, with her maidens walking alongside the Nile ... (vs. 4-5)*

As I ponder this passage, I am confident that this wise mother had identified certain habits of Pharaoh's daughter. She knew that in a certain place, at a certain time, the princess came to the river to bathe. She also reasoned that, if she placed that basket in just the right spot, at just the right time, the princess and her attendants would see it, or at least hear the baby crying, which is precisely what transpired. You'll never convince me that Jochebed didn't rehearse the whole plan with Miriam time and again—where Miriam would stand, how she would act, what she would say. I can just hear Jochebed's voice: *"Make it look like a surprise, Miriam. Make it seem spontaneous. You can do it, honey; I know you can. And I'll be waiting. I'll be right there, ready to come."*

At that juncture in the history of Egypt, two daughters of the Pharaoh reigned for a time as co-regents over a section of the Nile. It may be that Jochebed knew that and deliberately placed her precious bundle near one of those co-regents. Jochebed hoped that the princess, who carried a lot of clout, might see the helpless baby and take pity on him. Egyptians, after all, considered the Nile one of their gods. Would the princess believe that the river god had delivered the child to her? Jochebed thought she might, but how could she know for sure? She could only place her baby and herself at God's mercy. Nothing else could be done.

### **Desperate Measures Require a Trusting Faith (vs.5)**

*"And she saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid, and she brought it to her" (vs. 5).*

And then the moment came. As if on cue, the princess strode down to the Nile to bathe. No mother hearing these words has any trouble imagining the feelings of Jochebed at that moment. Can't you see her, behind a tree or perhaps behind some reeds at a distance ... standing on tip-toe ... clutching her hands together ... holding her breath? Can't you imagine her dry throat? Her heart pounding in her chest? How could she know what the Egyptian woman would do? She might have her hunches, but how could she *know*? The princess might just as easily obey her father's stern decree, plunge the baby into the water, and drown him right there. There were no guarantees. All Jochebed could do was trust God to give that Egyptian woman a mother-heart.

Through archaeological digs in recent years, researchers have uncovered an ancient religious ritual associated with the god of the Nile. It included a statement of trust that many Egyptians may have repeated. The statement read, *"I have afflicted no man. I have not made any man weep. I have not withheld milk from the mouths of sucklings."*

## **Desperate Measures Require a Winning Faith (vs.6-8)**

Could the princess have taken such an oath? It's certainly possible. Perhaps she took that baby among the reeds as from the womb of the river itself. Scripture simply says this: ***"When she opened it she saw the child, and behold, the boy was crying. And she had pity on him and said, 'This is one of the Hebrews' children'"*** (vs. 6).

When the princess saw the baby, she recognized him as a Hebrew, perhaps belonging to some mother who didn't have the heart to drown her own child. But now, what was a daughter of Pharaoh to do? She had a baby on her hands. And he was hungry.

Josephus adds an interesting thought here. I have no idea whether it's true, but it is interesting. The ancient historian said the princess took the baby to several of her maidens to see if one of them could nurse the child, without success. Only at that point did Miriam come forward to deliver the little speech she had so carefully memorized.

Now that makes a neat little story, but it's not found in Scripture. Here is what the Bible says: ***"Then [Moses'] sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for you'"*** (vs. 7)?

Miriam never mentioned that the Hebrew nurse happened to be the baby's own mother. Certainly not! The girl had practiced making it all seem casual and impromptu, as though she were saying, ***"Oh goodness me, look at that. Perhaps I could find someone to help, your highness." "Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Go ahead.' So the girl went and called the child's mother"*** (vs. 8).

## **Desperate Measures Require an Amazing Faith (vs.9)**

Now can you picture Jochebed? In her eagerness, she must have longed to *sprint* to that river bank. But she had to play the part of a respectful but disinterested female slave. She had to remain cool. She couldn't show any signs of recognition. She mustn't allow her eyes to shine with love and tenderness for that crying infant. No trembling hands. No quick breathing. No catch in her voice or tears in her eyes. The life of her little son was at stake!

And here's what happened next: ***"Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child away and nurse him for me and I will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and nursed him"*** (vs. 9).

Wow! That's terrific, isn't it? You not only get your child back from the edge of the grave, you not only get the official sanction and protection of Pharaoh's daughter, but you get *paid* to raise him! That, my friend, is no coincidence. That is the hand of God. Scripture tells us, ***"When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him"*** (Proverbs 16:7, NIV). Never doubt that. When your ways really please the Lord, He'll take care of those enemies one by one, day by day.

## II. In Life....the Endings Can Be Solid

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### A. Solid Endings Require Faith and Planning (vs.9-11)

Jochebed had faith. She also thought through a very creative plan. I'd like to pause to reflect on this tension between careful planning and full-hearted faith. Are they mutually exclusive? Not on your life! Yet to talk to some believers, you might be led to think otherwise.

I've counseled with unemployed men and women who tell me, *"I'm just waiting on the Lord to provide a job."* *"Fine,"* I reply. *"And where have you placed your resume"* *"Well, I'm not going that route. I'm just waiting on God."* *"Oh really?"* I say. *"Then I hope you don't mind going hungry for awhile."*

The old motto of soldiers during the Revolutionary War applies to many areas of life: *"Trust in God, but keep your powder dry!"* In other words, place your life in the Savior's hands, but stay at the ready. Do all that you can to prepare yourself for battle, understanding that the ultimate outcome rests with the Lord God?

To walk by faith does not mean you stop *thinking*. To trust God does not imply becoming slovenly or lazy or apathetic. What a distortion of biblical faith!

- You and I need to trust God for our finances, but that is no license to spend foolishly.
- You and I ought to trust God for safety in the car, but we're not wise to pass on a blind curve.
- You and I God for our health, but that doesn't mean we can chain smoke, stay up half the night, and subsist on potato chips and Twinkies without consequences.

***Wisdom says, do all you can within your strength, then trust Him to do what you cannot do, to accomplish what you cannot accomplish.***

Acting foolishly or thoughtlessly, expecting God to bail you out if things go amiss, isn't faith at all. It is *presumption*. Wisdom says, do all you can within your strength, then trust Him to do what you cannot do, to accomplish what you cannot accomplish. Faith and careful planning go hand-in-hand. They always have.

Susanna Wesley, that great Christian lady of yesteryear, gave birth to nineteen children. Now you might well be a woman of great faith, but if you have children, you'd better have more than faith going in your home. Can you imagine feeding such a brood? (*Actually, a number of the Wesley children died as infants.*) But the fifteenth child born into that home was a fellow named John ... John Wesley. The youngest boy, Charles, ultimately penned over eight thousand hymns. At the height of his career, Charles declared that he owed much to the faith and example of his mother.

If you study the life of Mrs. Wesley, however, you'll discover she was more than a woman of faith. Here was a thoughtful, clear-eyed mom with carefully developed strategies for rearing her children. In fact, she employed twenty-one principles in bringing up her boys and girls. Here is

one of them: ***"When my child turns one year old, and some of them before then, he is taught to fear the rod and cry softly, by which he escapes an abundance of correction which he might otherwise have had."***

That's a plan, isn't it? She not only trusted in the Lord, she employed the rod when necessary. You don't raise nineteen kids without a rod, by the way. You can have all the faith in the world, but if you have no consistent plan for discipline, you run a *circus*, not a family. Susanna Wesley had both a deep, abiding faith in God and a plan.

That's what impresses me about Jochebed. She trusted the Lord so fully that the Holy Spirit includes her in the **Hebrews 11 "Hall of Faith."** What Moses drank into his life, he most likely imbibed from his mother.

But on that dark morning when Jochebed placed her little one in a tiny basket coated with pitch and tar, she also had a plan. It may have been desperate, but these were desperate times. And she put her plan into action, fully realizing the results lay completely in God's good hands. The result? God rewarded her faith beyond her fondest hopes. Pharaoh's daughter paid Jochebed to rear her own son. *Paid!* How many others among the multitudes of Hebrew slaves were paid for their labors? The greatest part of all, however, was to get her baby boy back in her arms again. She took that little one and ***"nursed him,"*** as it says in **verse 9.**

We're not told how long she kept the child. But the next verse begins with an intriguing hint. ***"The child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son"*** (vs. 10).

This record suggests that she had the boy longer than the age of weaning, at three or four. She had the child while he was *growing*. In God's grace and in His plan, Moses may have been allowed to remain with his family long enough to firmly establish his Hebrew roots and learn of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

We know that Jochebed did not have him until he was full grown, because of what we read in **verse 11: *"Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his brethren and looked on their hard labors ...."***

So Moses wasn't grown up by the time he left home; but he was growing. Jochebed undoubtedly had him during what we would call the preschool years. You can bet that mother treasured everyone of those days with her youngest boy. Would that mothers of our own era treasured those years with their little ones to the same degree.

B. Solid Endings Require Sacrifice and Opportunity

I may be going out on a limb here, but so be it. (I've been there before, and I will likely be there again.) Considering the example of Jochebed before us, I feel constrained to say that, if you are a mother of preschoolers, you ought to think and pray long and hard before you turn your children over to someone else to rear.

I have no desire to stir up controversy or raise guilt. I simply want to declare what I see to be biblical principles; principles that ought to be soberly, carefully considered. I'm not speaking here to single moms ... nor am I addressing every working mother. I'm not really addressing working mothers with older children in school. I am writing especially to mothers with preschool children. I am calling on you to think very carefully about those crucial, irretrievable years of your child's life and development. If you must work, if no other option exists, then I strongly urge you to work the bare minimum and make sure your child enjoys the best possible care. Having said that, I still maintain it is better to sacrifice almost any material goal; short of food on the table and a roof overhead; than to sacrifice those precious years of opportunity with your little ones.

I cannot help but be impressed with how God exalts the role of the mother. Not once is Moses' father mentioned in these first few verses of Exodus chapter 2. Hebrews 11:23 certainly indicates that he participated in the decision to hide baby Moses and that he was willing to trust God in the face of great risk to his own life. But it is Jochebed who plays the major role in saving and nurturing the child. And that underlines my point: Nobody can take the place of the mother with a preschool child. Nobody.

## **C. Solid Endings Require Accidents and Design (vs.9-10)**

### **A Strange New Home for a Baby**

*So the woman took the child and nursed him. The child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. And she named him Moses, and said, "Because I drew him out of the water." (vs. 9-10)*

A deep sea of emotions surges beneath these two verses. The boy Moses suddenly had a new home. And what a change of scene!

- From the security of his loving family to a lonely and unfamiliar place of strangers.
- From slave quarters to a palace.
- From the simple and the familiar to the strange and overwhelming.

This wasn't like moving down the block, into another neighborhood, or across the state to a new city; this was like relocating to a different planet.

- Perhaps somewhere along the way you have endured such a radical, upsetting change.
- Perhaps you have suffered the crushing fracture of your home by the divorce of your parents. You have shifted from one home to another and the memory of those days will stay with you for the rest of your life.
- Perhaps you spent time in a foster home and found yourself living with total strangers. I have known some who were shuttled in and out of more than a *dozen* homes in their growing up years. Coming from a stable home as I did, I struggle even to imagine such an experience.

Those must have been difficult, lonely years for young Moses. I imagine he must have wept night after night in the privacy of his palace room, his tears soaking into those royal linen sheets. No soothing touch from his mother. No comforting word from his father. No smile of sister Miriam or antics of brother Aaron. Though Scripture draws a curtain over those years, it is easy to imagine the lad pouring out his heart to the God he had learned to seek.

### **An Empty Baby Carriage for a Mother**

But Moses wasn't the only one to suffer. A mother wept, too. Picture, if you can, Jochebed taking her little son by the hand and walking away from that little hut in the slave quarters of the Hebrew slum. Within the shelter of their humble home, she had nursed him and reared him and taught him what she knew of the one true God, the God of heaven and earth. She had taught him his Hebrew roots, and perhaps planted in his imagination a picture of a beautiful land to the north ... a land promised to their fathers ... a land called Canaan.

For all Jochebed knew, she would never see her little boy again. After all, what reason could she claim for visiting him? She was only his *nurse*. A female slave. A member of a despised, rejected race. Nevertheless, when the royal summons came, she cleaned him up, washed one last time behind his ears, tenderly slicked down his hair, and dressed him in his best tunic (*probably a homespun hand-me-down from Aaron*). Like boys the world over, little Moses would have wanted to take some of his own treasures along ... the ancient equivalent, I suppose, to a bag of marbles and a few comic books. And down the path they went toward the palace.

With tenderness, F. B. Meyer writes: ***"The mother's heart must have suffered bitterly as she let her boy go into the unknown world within the great palace gate; and very lonely must the little household have felt when the last kisses had been exchanged, the last instruction given, and the last prayer offered. What a crowd of tender thoughts, curious speculations, and eager yearnings must have followed the little nursling of the Hebrew home, as his mother took him and brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son!"***

Just picture that sad scene. Moses became the son of another woman with a completely different set of values. A stranger. An idolater. A foreigner.

### **An Adopted Son of a Princess**

As we will discover a bit later in the story, Moses became an eager student in a whole new school of learning, designed to prepare him for the throne. I am convinced that the daughter of Pharaoh had in her heart the desire, someday, to make Moses the Pharaoh of Egypt. And it almost happened.

The adopted son of the princess stepped into a whole new world. On top of everything else, he was given a new name, which seems to be a mixture of two words: an Egyptian word that means ***"son,"*** and a Hebrew word that means ***"to draw out."*** The daughter of Pharaoh ***"drew out her son"*** and named him Moses. He didn't bear that name until she gave it to him.

The amazing irony of God's divine plan was that this one whom the princess renamed, nurtured, reared, and educated in all the ways of the Egyptians, became the instrument of judgment in the very house where he grew up.

### **No Accidents with God—Your Density Up Ahead**

Perhaps these images have stirred some memories of your own that haven't been nudged for awhile. You may feel some pain in recalling certain aspects of your childhood. Maybe you, too, feel as though you were "*born after midnight.*" Perhaps you never knew what it was to nestle securely in a parent's love. Your home life may have been strained or even fractured from your earliest memory. From a human point of view, your birth might have come at a difficult or awkward time in the lives of your parents. It may be that you've never known the reassurance of a faithful mother and father who built their faith into your heart. When you think back on your growing-up years, you realize you don't have much to shout about.

I'd like to deliver a beautiful message to you, my friend. God's hand on your life may be just beginning to make its mark. That steep hill you've been climbing for such a long time may be the ramp to a destiny beyond your dreams. I do not believe there is any such thing as an accidental or ill-timed birth. You may have arrived in a home that was financially strapped. You may have known brokenness, hurt, and insecurity since your earliest days-but please hear me on this: *You were not an accident.*

#### **Illustration: Accidental Birth**

**At some point in my youth (*and no doubt with the best of intentions*), my parents informed me that I was an *accident*, an unintended child. So I figured if I was *born* an accident, I might as well *live* like an accident. And that's precisely what I did. That knowledge greatly shaped my early life.**

And then one day I learned that God can use so-called *accidents*. God uses those who seem ill-fitted for a significant life. All of a sudden the pieces began to fall together. I began to realize He had a specific reason and purpose for me to be alive. To my parents, I may have been an accident, but in His eyes, I wasn't an accident at all.

### **Strong Finishes**

I began to understand some of the same things that struck the heart of David, insights which led him to pen these words of awe and worship:

***You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit them together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! It is amazing to think about. Your workmanship is marvelous-and how well I know it. You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in your book!***

***How precious it is, Lord, to realize that you are thinking about me constantly! I can't even count how many times a day your thoughts turn toward me. And when I waken in the morning, you are still thinking of me!*** (Psalm 139:13-17, TLB)

Even though my life hadn't been everything I wanted it to be, or everything it should or could or might have been, God wasn't finished with me yet!

And the good news is this: He isn't finished with you, either. Not by a long shot.

## Conclusion:

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Moses could very well have turned into a bitter, angry young man. He could have held a grudge against his birth mother, despised his new situation, fought the system, and never become the man destined for greatness. But he didn't. Instead, he stayed, he learned, he grew, he trusted, and he never forgot his roots in an eternal, sovereign God.

As you read these words, you may look back on a record as black as midnight. But I've got great hope for you. ***"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning"*** (Psalm 30:5).

We will see that demonstrated in astonishing ways in the life of Moses. And you too will experience that morning in your life, as you refuse to live in the bitterness of the past, trust a sovereign God, drink deeply of His grace, and wait for Him to use you in His great plan.

He makes no mistakes, my friend. And He is able to take your life, with all of the heartache, all of the pain, all of the regret, all of the missed opportunities, and use you for His glory.

Never forget His promise: Joy comes in the morning. Look! The sun is already starting to rise.