



Scripture: Exodus 3:1-15, John 4:13-14

Hey everyone! I'm so excited that you're here today. I want to start with a question: What is happiness? If I asked ten different people, I might get ten different answers. That is because what makes each person happy can be different. If we look up the definition, happiness is simply "feeling or showing pleasure or contentment." This is often tied to our circumstances like our health, our friendships, our successes. When things are going well, we feel happy.

Now, this brings us to a phrase you may have heard before: "God just wants me to be happy." Have you ever heard that before? Maybe you've even said it yourself! It sounds good, doesn't it? It is natural for people to draw this conclusion because we know that God loves us, so why wouldn't God want me to be happy?

The truth is that God wants so much more than your happiness. He certainly does not enjoy watching you suffer, but God's plan for your life is so much bigger than just being happy. That's what we're going to wrestle with today. Let's pray.

[Take a minute to pray for student's hearts to be open to what God has for them.]

To really understand this, we're going to look at a moment in the life of Moses in Exodus 3:1-12. If you have your Bibles, go ahead and open them. We're going to be reading a lot of Scripture today, which is way better than just listening to me talk, so let's dig in together.

Before we dive into the passage, let's take a moment to set the scene. Moses was born during a time of great danger for the Israelites. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had ordered that all Hebrew baby boys be killed, but Moses' mother hid him, hoping to save his life. In an unexpected turn, Pharaoh's own daughter found him and chose to adopt him, giving him a life of privilege and security in the palace.

As Moses grew older, he became increasingly aware of the suffering of his people, who were enslaved under Pharaoh's rule. One day, he witnessed

an Egyptian beating a Hebrew slave, and in a moment of anger, he killed the Egyptian. When Pharaoh learned what Moses had done, his life was in danger, so he fled to a distant land called Midian. There, he spent 40 years living as a shepherd, building a new life, and starting a family.

Now, let's jump into the passage. **Exodus 3:1-6 (NIV):**

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."

When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am."

"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

This moment changed Moses' life forever. God called him to something that was way outside his comfort zone: to go back to Egypt and lead the Israelites out of slavery. I can't even imagine how Moses must have felt. I bet he wanted to go back to Egypt as much as someone who fears heights wants to go sky diving.

We see his reluctance show up in the following verses as Moses tried desperately to change God's mind. Let's keep reading: **Exodus 3:11-12 (NIV):**

But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

And God said, "I will be with you." And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."

Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you.'"

God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.'

"This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation.

When God called Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses was filled with doubt. He questioned his own ability, asking, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?" But God reassured him, saying, "I will be with you." Still uncertain, Moses anticipated resistance from the Israelites and asked what he should say if they question his authority. In response, God revealed His divine name, declaring, "I AM WHO I AM." He instructed Moses to tell the people that "I AM" had sent him—the God of their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. With this, God established His name as eternal, the one they would call upon for generations to come.

Unfortunately, Moses continued to give excuses to deflect the responsibility that God had given him. But that didn't not stop God. He continued to answer him with reassurance and support. He provided him wonders and signs to validate his message and when Moses said that he is not a good speaker, God provided him with his brother, Aaron, to be his mouthpiece.

You get the feeling that Moses would have been a lot happier just staying in Midian, taking care of his sheep, and living a quiet life. But was happiness God's priority for Moses? No. God had something bigger in mind, something that would change the course of history.

Let's bring this back to our main question: Doesn't God just want us to be happy?

Looking at Moses' story, it's clear that God's priority wasn't Moses' comfort or personal happiness. In fact, God's calling was overwhelming and

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