

**NBC Devotional**  
**November 15, 2023**  
**“Would Things Have Been Different?”**

“Pardon your servant Lord. Please send someone else” (Exod. 4–9 NIV). This was the response of Moses to God’s call to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. I’m not proud of it, but this is me, at least sometimes. Maybe it has been you. Why would Moses, a man passionate enough to kill a man because of his mistreatment of a fellow Hebrew, beg God to leave him out of the deliverance plan? His passion wasn’t the issue because even before God officially spoke to him at the burning bush, he knew that something needed to be done, and Moses responded ferociously to the injustice he saw and killed the Egyptian. His problem wasn’t his calling; God spoke to him clearly in Exodus 3:9, “I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.” I think his problem might have been what my problem is, he understood all too well his inadequacies.



*Focus on God*

If I were to share my life’s story with you, the early part of that story would sound something like this. I grew up poor. My dad had a heart attack when I was eight years old. The heart attack essentially decimated the function of the lower part of his heart, but it stole from him something even more important - his dignity. He felt “less than” after his heart attack, and he passed that feeling onto his children who could never live up to the standards he set in literally every area of life. My teeth were horribly crooked, my clothes came from garage sales, and our financial situation made me feel conspicuous in just about everything. I was determined to prove that I was better than what I appeared to be, but my greatest fear was that, despite my best efforts, I really was the loser I appeared to be.

Then at age 16, God changed my life. He didn’t change my circumstances, but he changed my life. When I surrendered my life completely to God, I was prepared for the worst. What I received instead can only be described as miraculous. I went from hopeless to abounding in hope and optimism. What used to define me, no longer defined me. God went from being a list of unachievable tasks to - God. With this change in perspective, my relationship with God flourished. I saw God do incredible things as I focused on Him and His will for me. I invited a friend to a Christian rock concert, and she accepted Christ as her Savior. I joined the Army and experienced significant spiritual opposition, but God strengthened me and emboldened me. I have seen God work again and again in my life, as I have focused on and trusted in Him.

Regrettably, however, there have been times, like God’s call to Moses, when I have responded, “Pardon your servant Lord. Please send someone else.” I was in my early twenties and newly married when I experienced a powerful dream. In this dream, I’ll spare you the details, God was going to bless me. Unfortunately, what I thought was a blessing for me, passed through me and was given to someone else. Awakened by what seemed to be the fact that God was speaking to me, I began to ponder what this all meant. I woke my wife up and told her the dream. Despite the fact that it was after midnight, and

we were two hours away from her mom's house, we got in the car and headed her way. My mother-in-law had been losing her eyesight from macular degeneration, and we had been praying for years for God to do a miracle. As we got closer to her home, the more afraid I became. Despite this incredible dream that seemed to be from God, I told my wife that if there was going to be a prayer for healing that she would have to pray it.

Would things have been different if I had prayed that prayer that night? I will never know. Unfortunately, there are probably at least a half-dozen of these experiences in my life. Why, especially when I know better? I think I know why. When I got in the car I was focused on God, by the time I reached my in-laws, I was focused on me and my inadequacies. Hopefully you do not have any of these experiences in your life. My concern for both you and I are not the moments that we have missed, but those moments we may miss. When you feel yourself getting ready to say to God, "Pardon your servant Lord. Please send someone else," get your eyes off the impossible nature of the task, and your own inadequacies, and back onto Him. May it be so.

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