

Session 2: Personal God

SESSION GOALS

Every session has specific goals—things you want your group to walk away knowing, feeling, and committing to do.

Main Idea: Yahweh is a personal God, eager to have a relationship with us.

Head Change: To know that God is ever-present and always active.

Heart Change: To feel safe and secure in God's unchanging love.

Life Change: To seek a deeper relationship with God.

OPEN

How much does your best friend know about you? What makes your relationship with him or her so unique?

Having someone in your life who knows the real you is special. In a culture that thrives on networking and gaining more social media followers, it can be hard to find someone who knows you on a deep and personal level. In the same way, God has not only revealed himself to us but desires a deep and personal relationship with us, unlimited in quality time and intimacy.

In this session, Dr. Pointer will walk through Exodus 3–4 and talk about our personal and relatable God.

READ

Read Exodus 3:1–15.

Note: *This series touches on parts of the story of Exodus. If you would like to read the whole book of Exodus, check out our daily reading guide in **Go Deeper Section 3** at the end of this study.*

WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Dr. Pointer’s teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

What name does God reveal to Moses? Why is it important?

Where does God first get Moses’s attention?

Show Session 2: *Personal God* (10 minutes).

DISCUSS

In Exodus, Moses meets God for the first time through a unique and supernatural encounter. Within a moment, Moses's normal day turned into a life-altering experience. Read Exodus 3:1–6.

Verses 3–4 say that instead of turning away, Moses investigated the strange sight in front of him. It wasn't until Moses decided to go look that God called out to him. God sometimes makes himself known in our everyday routine. But we may be too busy to focus on him. **In what ways have you ever allowed busyness to distract you from prayer time or spending time with God?**

Dr. Pointer said that seeing a bush on fire wouldn't have been unusual. But God's presence in the burning bush was unique. The mundane tasks of his day-to-day activity became the source point of his life forever changing. **When in your schedule do you expect to meet with God? What could you do to be on the lookout for God as you go throughout your day?**

Sometimes we wait around for God to move in our lives, wanting some special or unmissable sign, but Moses's experience with God at the burning bush shows us that God's presence is what makes a situation special. We just have to pay attention. **What captivates your attention? What could you do to reduce distractions so that you can focus on God?**

This is the first time Moses experienced, heard from, or met God. And the first thing he heard was his name. God was personally acquainted with Moses before he ever had a chance to choose God. **Have you ever thought about whether you chose God or if he chose you? What is your reaction to the fact that God knows all about you, even if you never share the details of your life with him?**

Read Exodus 3:7–10.

God has heard the cries of his people. He shared with Moses that he had plans to lead them into the land he promised their ancestors—a land flowing with milk and honey. **Do you ever feel like your prayers are ignored or unheard? What hope could this passage give you as you wait for God's plan?**

Note: To learn more about Canaan, the Promised Land, go to **Go Deeper Section 1** at the end of this study.

Read Exodus 3:11–15.

Moses questioned whether he was good enough to serve God. He brought up a list of his insecurities—reasons he thought disqualified him from doing what God asked. Like Moses, our insecurities can hold us back from our God-given potential and even give us reason to not serve him at all. **What do you feel disqualifies you from meaningful service to God? How might your insecurities be keeping you from the work he has prepared for you?**

Instead of giving Moses a list of qualities that make him ideal for leading Israel, God reassured Moses of his presence. God’s presence with Moses was far more important than Moses having a powerful résumé. In the same way, God’s presence with us is far more powerful than our strengths or insecurities. **Where do you turn when you are feeling insecure or fearful? What can you do to remind yourself of God’s presence during times of struggle?**

God revealed himself as “I AM.” This name may seem confusing but reflects who God is—an ever-present, all-knowing God. **How could the meaning behind God’s name give you comfort today?**

Note: To learn more about God’s name in Exodus 3, go to **Go Deeper Section 2** at the end of this study.

God did not need to be introduced to Moses; he knew Moses already. God also knows us, even if we are not aware of him. He is not far away. **How would you describe your current relationship with God? What could you do to deepen your relationship with him?**

LAST WORD

Not only is God faithful, but he is also a personal God—present and knowable. He wants a relationship with his people and is available when we cry out to him. For Moses, that looked like his presence manifesting in a burning bush. For us, he has sent his Son and the Holy Spirit who promises to be with us at all times.

How has God shown himself as a personal and relatable God in your life? Reflect on what you learned about God's presence and thank him for making himself known to you in a miraculous way.

GO DEEPER

This section has two potential functions:

1. It can supplement your small group discussion with topics your group may be interested in. We've highlighted where each of the following segments could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide. As the leader, it would be good to familiarize yourself with this section just in case your conversation turns to one of these topics.
2. These sections can also function as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting. Consider using these sections to deepen your group's study of the book of Exodus.

1. A Land of Milk and Honey

There are numerous times throughout the Old Testament that God refers to Israel's promised land—Canaan—as “a land of milk and honey.” We see the phrase for the first time in Exodus 3. Read Exodus 3:8. **What comes to mind when you think of milk and honey? What could make them important?**

In the ancient Near East, milk and honey were symbols of economic prosperity. Happy and fertile livestock create milk. Honey is a product of healthy plants and insects. If the land is flowing with milk and honey, it must be a paradise! God was promising more than a space for his people—he was promising a flourishing future. **In your opinion, what does God's provision of such a pleasant place reflect about his character? How could the Israelites' Promised Land encourage you to remember that God is a giver of good gifts?**

God's promise of new land required the Israelites to leave Egypt. Oddly, they grumbled the entire way to Canaan, doubting God and blaming Moses for making them leave behind the life they knew. The normalcy of life in Egypt came with a cost, but the unknown future came with a promise. Sometimes, we can similarly think our lives are fine as they are, but God always has better for us and desires us to move toward his promised future. **What situation in your life might God be calling you out of? What areas of your life feel comfortable but stagnant?**

As believers, we can also look forward to our own promised land in the new heavens and new earth. Eternity with Christ is not just about being able to rest but being with God in a place he has prepared for us. Thanks to Jesus and his redemptive work, we also have a promised land that we will see when he returns.

This week, take a moment to dwell on the faithfulness of God and his desire to give us good things—ask him to help you keep an eternal mindset, remembering that we are foreigners until we get to heaven just like the Israelites. Pray that he would reveal to you any area of stagnancy that he wants you to walk out of in faith.

2. God's Names in Exodus 3

At the burning bush, God told Moses to lead the Israelites out of captivity. When Moses wanted clarity about how to talk about who sent him, God simply says, “I AM that I AM.” It is an odd answer to Moses’s question, but one with incredible depth and purpose.

What stands out most to you about the name “I AM”?
What questions do you have about the name?

It was common for people in the Old Testament to have names that reflect who they are. The Hebrews named their children after events that characterized them or their hope for their children. For example:

- God changed Abram’s name to Abraham when he was promised a multitude of descendants. Abraham means “father of many.” (Genesis 17:5)
- Naomi changed her name to Mara, meaning “bitter,” after the death of her husband and sons. (Ruth 1:20)
- Moses was named by Pharaoh’s daughter when he was pulled from the Nile. (Exodus 2:10) His name was probably Egyptian but sounds like a Hebrew word that means “to draw or pull out.” Despite his Egyptian upbringing, Moses’s name pointed to God’s providence in his life: he was pulled from the Nile and would pull God’s people out of slavery.

God’s name may seem unusual, but when God called himself “I AM,” he revealed his existence, self-sufficiency, and active, ever-present nature. No matter what is going on in the world, God is present and active. **In what situations can it feel like God is not present? What**

feelings or thoughts can convince us that he is not present?

In Exodus 3:15, God used his name for the first time—Yahweh. This name is a kind of pun on the Hebrew word we translate as “I AM.” God began with the meaning and promise of who he is (“I AM”) then formalized it into a name to identify himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God is the same God today that he was for our ancestors. **Why is it important to know who God is and what he has done in the past?**

When God says he always was, is, and will be present and active in the world, he shows us how much authority he has over his creation. **How does knowing that God is always active and present help you endure the difficulties of life?**

God revealed himself to us through Jesus. And in his name, we learn more about God. Read Matthew 1:18–21.

In this passage, an angel appeared to Joseph after he learned that he and his wife would give birth to a son. **Put yourself in Joseph’s place—how would you feel during this encounter?**

To comfort Joseph, the angel told him the name of his son—Jesus. The Hebrew translation of “Jesus,” or *Yeshua*, is “Yahweh saves” or “The Lord is salvation.” This name reminded Joseph of God’s nature, his relationship with his people, and the purpose of his son. **In what ways can it be helpful to remember who God is when we are in times of confusion and anxiety?**

God's names are not just the ways we identify him, they are insights into who he is, promises of what he will do, and assurance of his presence. They comfort us in our pain, embolden us when we are weak, and calm us in our distress. **In what ways is God ministering to you through his name?**

3. Weekly Reading Plan

Exodus is a long book, and we won’t be able to study every verse of it during our group sessions. This reading plan will help you familiarize yourself with the entirety of Exodus so that you can dig more deeply into God’s Word. Some weeks will have more reading than others, so feel

free to complete the daily readings at a pace that makes the most sense to your group.

Day 1: Exodus 3:1–6

Day 2: Exodus 3:7–12

Day 3: Exodus 3:13–22

Day 4: Exodus 4:1–17

Day 5: Exodus 4:18–31