

Spiritual Growth Is Emotionally Challenging

[Ex. 5:17-23](#) and [Ex. 6:1-9](#). Moses was being stretched in faith in God. The spiritual demands of obeying the commands of God were shaping Moses into a great leader. Although he was scared and unsure of himself, he was depending on God to make things happen. **PLEASE GET THIS. *Your obedience and dependence on God puts you in conflict with other people.*** Moses' fight with Pharaoh set him up for a confrontation with the Israelites as well. Your fight is not only against the devil; you also have to push away his demons that only know the paths of evil. And you have to fight the crazy people who have been created by the system.

The most severe criticism and sabotage would not come from the Egyptians, but from the Hebrews. He would be messed up by his so-called friends. When the people demanded water, Moses made sure it was provided. Then they demanded food - meat to be exact. As long as Moses was giving them what they demanded, they cooperated with the program. Anytime he failed to immediately meet their needs they rebelled. [Ex. 16:3](#), [Ex. 17:3](#), [Num. 11:5](#), and [Num. 14:4](#).

Notice how the people continued to worship the past. [Ex. 14:11-12](#). They spoke of their past as if slavery was better than freedom. Their focused love of the past caused them to die in the wilderness. Their death was caused by their unwillingness to change. They were so frozen in their thinking that true freedom became their new slavery. To them the demands and responsibilities of freedom looked like the demands of Pharaoh. When you are not healed of your past you will recreate it wherever you go.

Often we read of Moses of asking God, "*What am I to do with these people?*", At times he was so angry with them that he wanted them punished. At other times he pleaded with God not to kill them. God often threatened to kill them Himself. Moses' heart grew each time he interceded for the people. It seems that the only way you can keep a tender heart in a cruel world is by constantly praying for those who spitefully use you. Consider the pain of his sacrifice when Moses chose to stay with the people in the wilderness rather than have them wiped out to start over. What about his wife and children? What about their vote? It is not an easy decision.

The children of Israel never fully accepted Moses. They never grew to a point of maturity where they could be led. However, their lack of maturity did not release Moses from his assignment. God knew the faults and failures of the people. Maybe the real plan of God was to get Moses prepared for heaven knowing that the people would never decide to make it in. Perhaps God is allowing you to face horrible challenges now, not because of the people around you, but because He is using those challenges to speed up your spiritual development. Do not misunderstand what I am saying. God placed His demands on both Moses and the people. Moses continued to struggle with his own emotions all throughout the journey. Could it be that God would go through all of this trouble just to have a leader that could stand in His presence? Have a leader all to Himself? Is it possible that Jesus did the same thing when He decided to die for the sins of the whole world, even if only one person accepted His death? Often, we want the blessings that come with spiritual leadership, but we fear the requirements to be ultra close to God. When you get close to God all of your emotions will be challenges. Your flesh will be challenged. Your mind will be overhauled.

This dance of rebellion and rejection that the people played on Moses is one of the great mysteries of spiritual growth. Moses wanted to experience belonging to the people. It never happened. Because it never happened, he fought harder for the people to experience belonging to God. In other words, he fought to give them what he so badly wanted himself. Think about your neighbors and family members. What are they really trying to tell you when they care for you, show you attention, or spend time with you? What is missing in their life? One of the best ways to do the work of God is by seeing the unmet needs of those around you. When you see what is missing, ask God to help you meet that need. Could it be that they are giving you what they so badly want for themselves?

Sometimes God will create a desire in you to experience something that you never had. Then God uses that desire of your heart as the fuel in you to make sure that others experience what they yearn for. I never had a father, mother, mentor, best friend, financier, spokesperson, so I will be yours. Maybe this is **what the bible means when it says you must love others as you love yourself.**

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