

## A ROLE MODEL FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS

*2 Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi. 2The woman conceived and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him for three months. 3When she could no longer hide him, she got an “ark” made of bulrushes for him and coated it with tar and pitch. She placed the child in it and set it among the reeds by the bank of the River. 4His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.*

*5Pharaoh’s daughter came down to bathe in the River, and her attendants were walking along the river bank. She saw the “ark” among the reeds and sent her servant to retrieve it. 6She opened it and saw the child; the baby was crying and she had compassion on him. She said, “This is one of the Hebrews’ children.” 7Then his sister asked Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and call a nurse for you from among the Hebrew women so that she might nurse the child for you?” 8Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Go and do so.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother. 9Then 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 it. 10The child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, “I give him this name because I drew him out of the water.” (Ex. 2:1-10)*

### **Introduction**

Let me read to you some excerpts from a letter written by a grown child to his parents:

I am writing this letter to tell you something you already know. But it helps me to be able to say it. I want you to know how much I appreciated the Christian home you both provided for me.

Because you loved God’s Word, I learned to love it, too. You always felt the presence of Jesus. You talked to Him all the time.

I want to thank you not only for giving me life, but also for being a special part of my life.

Your loving son,  
Moses

Actually, this letter was not written by Moses to his parents—it was written by a young woman named Marlene, expressing her love and appreciation for her Christian home. (*POWER*, 5/9/93, pp.4-5) But it could have been written by Moses, because he, too, had a godly home with dedicated Christian parents, just like the home described by Marlene in her letter.

As we consider the second chapter of Exodus, let us turn our attention to Moses' parents and the powerful role they played in the life of their son. Moses' parents made a profound spiritual impact on the life of their son, an impact that survived and thrived despite the seductive allurements of Egypt.

Christian parents, consistently live out your faith, so that you may have a profound spiritual impact on your children.

## **I. Live a Consistent Christian Life, by Exercising Spiritual Insight**

Hebrews 11:23 informs us that Moses was hidden for three months because his parents *"saw that he was no ordinary child."* Moses' parents possessed spiritual insight and acted upon it.

At the time of his birth, Moses' parents, especially his mother (note Ex. 2:2), noticed the uniqueness of their child. In Acts 7:20 Stephen describes the infant Moses as being pleasing to God, (i.e., as being the special object of God's favor and purpose); or, literally, *"beautiful (αστειος) to God."* The word used here to describe the infant Moses means an attractiveness or physical beauty that is striking. In the case of the infant Moses, God chose to use the striking beauty of this infant to call attention to His unique purpose for this child—and Moses' parents had the spiritual insight to recognize this. They recognized that Moses was beautiful *"to God;"* beyond this physical attractiveness, or actually by means of it, Moses' parents discerned that God had a special purpose for this child. God could have accomplished this same purpose by giving to the infant Moses an unusual amount of physical strength, or a unique measure of alertness and perception; but in this particular case the LORD chose to accomplish His purpose by giving to the infant Moses an abundant measure of physical beauty.

Recognizing the uniqueness of this child, the parents made every effort to preserve his life. Once again, it is Moses' mother who takes the lead. She hid him for three months. She built him an *"ark,"* placed him in it, and set it among the reeds of the Nile. In building an *"ark"* (תֵּבָה), Moses' mother is recalling how the LORD spared Noah from the flood waters of death. Genesis 6:13-14a informs us, *"Then God said to Noah, I have determined to bring all mankind to an end, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; surely, I will destroy them together with the earth. <sup>14</sup>Therefore make an ark (תֵּבָה)."* In making an *"ark"* for her infant son, by her actions she is reminding the LORD of what He did for Noah, and is requesting that He would do the same for her infant son, Moses. She stationed her daughter, Miriam, to watch over the *"ark,"* and then instructed Miriam to offer her mother's services as nurse to the child when he was retrieved from the river by the Egyptian princess.

Moses' parents, (especially his mother,) possessed spiritual insight and acted upon it. They recognized that their child was uniquely set apart by God and that God had a special purpose for his life. Note: As Christian parents we should likewise recognize

that each one of our children, as covenant children, is uniquely set apart for God, as the Apostle Paul asserts in 1 Corinthians 7:14, *"your children ... are holy."*

Now consider the profound impact their exercise of Christian insight had upon their son:

*By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. <sup>25</sup>He chose to share mistreatment together with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. <sup>26</sup>He regarded sharing in the reproach of Christ to be of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he looked forward to the reward. (Heb. 11:24-26)*

When he had grown up, Moses came to exhibit the same spiritual insight that had been characteristic of his parents: *"he ... refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. <sup>25</sup>He chose to share mistreatment together with the people of God."* He willfully renounced the privileges of Egyptian royalty. He willingly chose to identify himself with Christ and His people, even though it meant hardship, deprivation, ostracism, and persecution. Why did Moses make such a choice? What enabled him to do so? He did so because he recognized that the pleasures of sin *"are only for a short time"*—i.e.; they are only temporary and fleeting. Moses was looking to eternity and the reward God promises to those who love Him and serve Him.

Moses possessed true spiritual perception—discerning the true nature of things, appreciating what is of true value, taking into account the long range view of eternity—and he acted upon it; he chose allegiance to Christ instead of following the course of this present world. By the grace of God, Moses in his day was able to discern the truth of which the Apostle John writes:

*Do not love the world ... <sup>16</sup>for everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. <sup>17</sup>The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. (1 Jn. 2:15a, 16-17)*

May we live a consistent Christian life, by exercising spiritual insight. May God grant us the ability to distinguish between right and wrong; ...the ability to distinguish between truth and error; ...the ability to distinguish between the superficial and the profound; ...the ability to distinguish between the holy and the unclean. What are the means by which you gain and grow in spiritual insight?

- Prayer:

*Give your servant a discerning heart ... so that I may distinguish between good and evil* (1 Kings 3:9), this was Solomon's prayer

the apostle Paul's prayer for the church should also be our own prayer: *I pray that your love* (for Christ) *may abound more and more in knowledge and all*

*insight, <sup>10</sup>so that you may discern the things that are worthy, in order that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ—<sup>11</sup>being filled with the fruit of righteousness which is through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.* (Philippians 1:9-11)

- Probing into the Word of God:

*I have more insight than all my teachers, because I meditate on your statutes.* (Psalm 119:99)

- Practicing what we learn from God's Word:

*I have more understanding than the aged, because I obey your precepts.* (Psalm 119:100)

*... [spiritually] mature [men] ... by means of use have their senses exercised to distinguish good and evil.* (Hebrews 5:14)

May our choices, our outlook, our lifestyle, be consciously fashioned by the exercise of godly spiritual insight.

## **II. Live a Consistently Christian Life, by Exhibiting Christian Courage**

Hebrews 11:23 further informs us that Moses' parents took the action they did because they did not fear the king's edict. At the time of Moses' birth, there was in force a royal edict that stipulated that all sons born to the Hebrews must be thrown into the Nile River: *"Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every boy that is born [to the Hebrews] you must throw into the River, but you must let every girl live."* (Ex. 1:22.)

Moses' mother took a great risk in hiding her infant son for three months. She could have lost her life and she was putting her whole family in jeopardy. Sometimes we must sacrifice our safety and security for the sake of obedience to Christ. Moses' mother took an apparently foolish risk. There would come a time when the child could no longer remain hidden, then what would they do? Sometimes we must take an act of obedience and leave to God the ordering of future events. Moses' parents, (especially his mother,) lived a bold Christian life. They not only possessed spiritual insight and discernment, they also exhibited the courage to act upon that insight.

Now consider the profound impact their life of Christian courage had upon their son:

*By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, ...<sup>27</sup>...forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king—and he survived, almost seeing him who is invisible.* (Heb. 11:24,27)

When he had grown up, Moses came to exhibit the same spiritual boldness that had been characteristic of his parents: he forsook Egypt, *“not fearing the wrath of the king.”* Here is a reference to his flight into the wilderness of Midian, following his killing of the Egyptian taskmaster, as recorded in Exodus 2:11-15,

*Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to see his brothers and he observed their hard labors. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of Moses' brothers. <sup>12</sup>He looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no one else present, he killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand. <sup>13</sup>And he went out the next day, and he saw two Hebrews fighting with each other. He said to the offender, “Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?” <sup>14</sup>The man replied, “Who made you a ruler and judge over us? Do you plan to kill me like you killed the Egyptian?” Then Moses became afraid and thought, “Surely, what I have done has become known.” <sup>15</sup>When Pharaoh heard about this, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh's presence and went to live in the land of Midian, where he sat down beside a well. (Ex. 2:11-15)*

Note, rather than viewing his flight into Midian as an act of fear, Scripture presents it as an act of boldness. The reason for this is found in such a passage as Ecclesiastes 10:4, *“If a ruler's anger rises against you, do not leave your post; meekness can moderate great offences.”* The act of fleeing from a king indicates to him that you are both guilty of offense and a potential threat to lead rebellion against his rule. By refraining from fleeing you indicated that you desire to be under his jurisdiction and that you seek his mercy. When one exhibits a meek spirit it makes it easier for the king to tolerate and forgive great offenses.

Like his parents before him, Moses' courage stemmed from his faith in Christ: *“By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king”* (Heb.11:27.) It was his relationship with Christ that enabled him to display godly courage—and it was his commitment to Christ that caused him to display such courage. Displaying a godly courage that stemmed from his faith in Christ, *“he survived.”* God upheld him, provided for him, and did not let him perish. Indeed, his relationship with God actually became deeper, more personal and more real; this seems to be expressed by the statement, *“he survived, almost seeing him who is invisible.”*

May we live a consistently Christian life, by exhibiting Christian courage. May God not only grant us the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, but the courage to do right; ...not only the ability to distinguish between truth and error, but the courage to live the truth; ...not only the ability to distinguish between the superficial and the profound, but the courage to embrace the profound; ...not only the ability to distinguish between the holy and the unclean, but the courage to choose the holy.

What are the means by which we gain and grow in spiritual courage?

- Reliance upon Christ to supply the strength needed to exercise Christian courage:

*I am able to do all things by him who gives me strength. (Phil. 4:13)*

*You then, my son, be strong with the grace that is in Christ Jesus. (2 Tim. 2:1)*

- Recognition that Christ commands us to exercise Christian courage:

*In the world you have tribulation. But have courage; I have conquered the world. (Jn. 16:33b)*

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; for Jehovah your God will be with you wherever you go. (Josh. 1:9)*

*Live your life only in a way that is worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that if I come and see you—or if I remain absent what I will hear about you is that you are standing firm in one spirit, and with one soul are contending for the faith of the gospel,<sup>28</sup> and that you are in no way being intimidated by those who oppose you. (Phil. 1:27-28a)*

May our decisions, outlook, lifestyle, be informed and fashioned by true spiritual insight—being lived out by the exercise of godly courage; and may it be a life that has a profoundly Christian impact on our sons and daughters.

## **Conclusion**

As we read the Scriptures carefully, we discover that Moses' parents were used by God to make a profound spiritual impact on the life of their son, an impact that survived and thrived despite the powerful allurements of the world. Like Moses' parents, may we also have a profound spiritual impact on our sons and daughters; like Moses' parents, may we, too, by the grace of God, live a consistently Christian life.