

Living on the EDGE: Each Day as God's Emissary

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LEADER NOTES AND BIBLE PASSAGES

(Please do NOT use the "if time permits" sections when your study session time is limited; those sections could possibly be done by the participant in private.)

Describe a time in your life when you metaphorically found yourself on the "edge" of an important decision. Where did you go for advice? In hindsight, was the decision the best one? Share with a partner or your small group.

Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. Make it clear that everything confided within the group stays within the group throughout the study. Remember that, as sisters in Christ, everything shared in this group stays within this group."

During this study of God's Word, we will look at Moses and the "edges" of his life as he led the people of Israel out of Egypt to the Promised Land at God's command. We will study what it means to live **Each Day as God's Emissary**.

Opening Prayer

Dear Awesome God, we humbly ask You to be present in our study of Your Word. We rejoice and thank You for sending Jesus to be the Light in a very dark and sinful world. We look forward to eternal life in heaven with You. Empower us through the Holy Spirit and with the gifts and abilities You give us to be Your emissaries daily, so we can boldly share the message of salvation in Jesus with people we meet every day. Bless our study of Your Word. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

Moses is an important Old Testament patriarch who lived his life **Each Day as God's Emissary**. He was God's representative to the people of Israel. Read about his birth and rescue from death as a baby in Egypt in Exodus 2:1–10. What miracles (not coincidences!) do you see occurring in these verses?

Answers will vary to some extent.

Edge of Darkness

The life of Moses as God's leader of the Israelites out of Egypt into the Promised Land was colored with various "edges" or decisions that did not always give all honor or glory to God. In short, Moses, like all people, was a sinner who often fell short of God's expectations.

Identify the sin and the consequence in **Exodus 2:11–15b**.

Sin = murder; Consequence = banishment to the edge of civilization

Exodus 2:11-15b ¹¹ One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. ¹² He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. ¹³ When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, "Why do you strike your companion?" ¹⁴ He answered, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, and thought, "Surely the thing is known." ¹⁵ When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian.

Read **Numbers 20:2–12**. What is God's instruction to Moses in **verse 8**? _____

To tell the rock to bring forth water

What did Moses do in **verses 10-11**? _____

Shall "we" bring water out of this rock and then he struck it – took credit for the miracle

According to **verse 12**, what was his sin? _____

He did not uphold God as holy and did not do as God instructed

Read **Deuteronomy 32:48-52** and **34:1-6**. What was the consequence of this sin to both Moses and Aaron? _____

They both died before they could go into the Promised Land

Numbers 20:2-12 ² Now there was no water for the congregation. And they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. ³ And the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Would that we had perished when our brothers perished before the LORD! ⁴ Why have you brought the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we should die here, both we and our cattle? ⁵ And why have you made us come up out of Egypt to bring us to this evil place? It is no place for grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, and there is no water to drink." ⁶ Then Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the entrance of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them, ⁷ and the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ⁸ "Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle." ⁹ And Moses took the staff from before the LORD, as he commanded him. ¹⁰ Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?" ¹¹ And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock. ¹² And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them."

Deuteronomy 32:48-52 ⁴⁸ That very day the LORD spoke to Moses, ⁴⁹ "Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, opposite Jericho, and view the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel

for a possession. ⁵⁰ And die on the mountain which you go up, and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died in Mount Hor and was gathered to his people, ⁵¹ because you broke faith with me in the midst of the people of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, and because you did not treat me as holy in the midst of the people of Israel. ⁵² For you shall see the land before you, but you shall not go there, into the land that I am giving to the people of Israel."

Deuteronomy 34:1-6 ¹ Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan, ² all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the western sea, ³ the Negeb, and the Plain, that is, the Valley of Jericho the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. ⁴ And the LORD said to him, "This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, 'I will give it to your offspring.' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there." ⁵ So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD, ⁶ and he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows the place of his burial to this day.

Sin is every thought, desire, word, and deed which is contrary to God's Law (Exodus 20). [*Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*; Question 78.] See **1 John 1:8** and **1 John 2:11**.

1 John 1:8 ⁸ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1 John 2:11 ¹¹ But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Is sin connected to darkness or to light? _____

Darkness

Romans 3:23 reminds us that ...*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* "All" means all and includes Moses and each one of us.

Read 2 Corinthians 4:6 and Colossians 1:13-14.
What is the opposite of sin and darkness? _____

Through Jesus we have forgiveness of sins, redemption, and light!

2 Corinthians 4:6 ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:13-14 ¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Thanks be to God for His work, even in the edges of our darkness, to give us the light of salvation through Jesus Christ!

If Time Permits

Find other names for sin in the following passages.

Exodus 34:7 _____
⁷ Keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.

Matthew 6:12 _____
¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Matthew 18:15 _____
¹⁵ "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.

Romans 5:17 _____
¹⁷ For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:19 _____
¹⁹ For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

Romans 6:13 _____
¹³ Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

Colossians 3:25 _____
²⁵ For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

Faith Talk

Identify a time in your life when you might have felt on the edge of darkness. How did the dark-dispelling light of the Gospel help you during that time? Share with a partner or in a small group.

Answers will vary. Encourage sharing within the group.

God's Edge

Read **Exodus 3:1-10** to learn of God's plan for Moses to be His emissary – His representative.

Exodus 3:1-10 ¹ Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. ³ And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." ⁴ When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ⁵ Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." ⁶ And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. ⁷ Then the LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, ⁸ and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the

Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹ And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰ Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”

God spoke to Moses in a burning bush. According to the following Scripture passages, how does He speak to and work in us today?

Romans 15:13 Holy Spirit

¹³ The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 Word of God

¹³ And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

Titus 3:5 Baptism

⁵ He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 26:27-28 The Lord's Supper

²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Moses had five excuses not to do as God had requested. Identify each excuse in the passages below and how God promised to give to him the “edge” he would need to be God’s emissary.

Exodus 3:11-12

¹¹ But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” ¹² He said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”

Exodus 3:13-14

¹³ Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” ¹⁴ God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

Exodus 4:1-9

¹ Then Moses answered, “But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you.’” ² The LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?” He said, “A staff.” ³ And he said, “Throw it on the ground.” So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it. ⁴ But the LORD said to Moses, “Put out your hand and catch it by the tail”—so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand— ⁵ “that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.” ⁶ Again, the LORD said to him, “Put your hand inside your cloak.” And he put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. ⁷ Then God said, “Put your hand back inside your cloak.” So he put his hand back inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh. ⁸ “If they will not believe you,” God said, “or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. ⁹ If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.”

Exodus 4:10-12

¹⁰ But Moses said to the LORD, “Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.” ¹¹ Then the LORD said to him, “Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? ¹² Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.”

Exodus 4:13-16

¹³ But he said, "Oh, my Lord, please send someone else." ¹⁴ Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, "Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. ¹⁵ You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do. ¹⁶ He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him.

What gifts – what "edge" – does God daily give to His people through the Holy Spirit to enable them to be His emissaries? As time permits, see the following Bible passages for specific encouragement.

As time allows, highlight several of the passages below!

Psalm 51:10 Daily forgiveness and the Holy Spirit

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

John 15:5 Nourishment through Jesus Christ to bear fruit

⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Romans 6:23 We have eternal life!

²³ The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 10:31 Daily opportunities to glorify God

³¹ So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 5:17 We are new creatures in Christ; we are sanctified by the blood of Jesus our Savior

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Galatians 5:13 Freedom to love and serve each other

¹³ For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Galatians 5:22-23 Fruit of the Spirit to draw upon in our daily lives

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Ephesians 2:8-10 Salvation by Jesus to do good works that glorify God – His emissaries – God both prepares the work and enables it

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 6:10-20 The armor of God: belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shoes readied by the gospel of peace, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, sword of the Spirit, prayer

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all

the saints,¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Faith Talk

Have you ever experienced an opportunity to serve the Lord, but did not do so with gladness? What excuses did you have? Share with a partner or in a small group.

Answers will vary. Encourage sharing within the group.

With God's edge and despite his faults, Moses became a great leader. He spearheaded the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt; he communed with God on Mount Sinai and received God's Ten Commandments; he sustained the wandering people of Israel through trials in the wilderness; he defeated enemies with the "edge" of God's sword (Numbers 21:24); he governed the people in God's name; and he remained faithful to God and His promises. In short, Moses lived Each Day as God's Emissary. Read **Exodus 24:15-18; 33:17-23; 34:29** and **Mark 9:4**. What do these verses remind us about Moses' unique relationship with God?

It was an intimate relationship – God loved Moses and Moses loved God; God talked with Moses; God knew his name.

Exodus 24:15-18¹⁵ Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain.¹⁶The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.¹⁷ Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel.¹⁸ Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

Exodus 33:17-23¹⁷ And the LORD said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name."¹⁸ Moses said, "Please show me your glory."¹⁹ And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be

gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."²⁰ But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live."²¹ And the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock,²² and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by."²³ Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."

Exodus 34:29²⁹ When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God.

Mark 9:4⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

Because Jesus has redeemed you, what is *your* relationship with God? See **Isaiah 43:1; Psalm 141:1-2; and Matthew 6:9-13**.

Ours is also an intimate relationship; He loves us because of Jesus saving work; He knows our name; we can talk with God in prayer; Jesus even taught us to!

Isaiah 43:1 But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine."

Psalm 141:1-2 O LORD, I call upon you; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to you!² Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!

Matthew 6:9-13 [Jesus said] Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,¹² and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Faith Talk

What gifts or qualities has the Lord given to you? How do you use these gifts to daily further the Lord's kingdom? Give specific examples. Share with a partner or in a small group.

Answers will vary. Encourage sharing within the group.

Faith Walk

Consider your intimate relationship with your Savior. Be God's emissary faithfully, courageously, bravely, confidently, fearlessly, unswervingly, unflinchingly, and do not hesitate to share what it is you believe and why you believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior with a friend today!

1. Be alert to, and rejoice daily in, the opportunities that God provides to serve Him.
2. Thank Jesus for His saving work in your life.

3. Thank the Holy Spirit for giving you faith in Jesus, the Light of the World.
4. Summer Challenge: Read the entire books of Exodus and Numbers from two different translations. Learn more about Moses and his life as a leader.

Closing

Pray together the following prayer based in part on the words of **Psalm 103**.

Dear Heavenly Father, We bless Your holy name. We thank and praise You for forgiveness of sins, relief from pain, healing of sicknesses, and salvation through Your beloved Son. We rejoice that because Jesus lives, we, too, will live with You in eternity. Thank You for Moses as an example of a faithful leader. Help us to be Your emissaries each day as we tell the Good News of Your truth and grace in Christ throughout the world, beginning right where we are. We boldly ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

Sing together "O Bless the Lord, My Soul" (LSB #814, LW #457, TLH #27).