

# The Glory of Moses' Countenance

by George Warnock

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*True prayer is conversation with God, involving listening and obeying, and is essential for effective ministry and seeking God's glory.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 34:29, Isaiah 58:13, John 7:18, 2 Corinthians 3:13, Hebrews 4:3

**Topics:** "Prayer Life", "Gods Presence"

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## Description

George Warnock emphasizes the importance of being conscious of the presence and glory of God in prayer, highlighting how Moses' face shone from talking with God, signifying true conversation with Him. Warnock stresses the need to listen to God's voice and do His will, rather than solely focusing on our own desires. He discusses the significance of resting in God's plan, ceasing from our own striving, and allowing God to work in us to honor Him. Warnock encourages ministers to seek God's glory in their messages, reminding them of the necessity of abiding in God's presence for effective ministry.

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## Transcript

The more conscious we are of the presence and glory of God, the less conscious are we going to be of ourselves. "Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him" (Ex. 34:29). The clear implication is that the skin of his face shone because he was talking with God. This was conversation with God, not merely a prayer of asking. I think it would help us much if we realized this twofold aspect of true prayer. Too often we know exactly what we want, and are quick to tell God what we want, without listening to His voice in the matter. And until we come to the place where we have an ear that is open to His Word, and a heart intent upon doing His will, all our praying amounts to little more than the wailing at the broken-down walls of Jerusalem. True prayer is conversation with God. We talk to Him, yes. But more important than this, He talks to us. God says through the prophet, "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father" (Isa. 58:13-14). We are talking about God's true sabbath, and the apostle Paul tells us what this means. It is a ceasing from our own works, as God did from His when creation was finished.

It is resting in His plan and purpose for our lives, ceasing from our own fleshly striving, as God brings forth new creation life within us, enabling us to honor Him, going in His ways, doing His good pleasure, and

speaking His words. (See Heb. 4:3-11.)

Unconscious of himself, but conscious only of the presence and glory of God, "Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone." Aaron and the children of Israel saw the glory of his countenance and they were afraid to draw near. As Moses sensed the reason for their fear he called them. First Aaron and the rulers took courage, and came near. Then a little later the children of Israel gathered together fearfully, and Moses passed on to them the commandments that God had given him on the mount.

He spoke to them with unveiled face, the glory of the Lord radiating from his countenance like beams of light. The glory was so great that the Israelites could not look directly at Moses' face with fixed attention, but had to keep looking away, just as you would if you tried to gaze upon the reflection of the sun in a mirror. "The children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses" or, "They could not fix their eyes on the face of Moses." The brilliance of the light was too much for their weak and sensitive eyes, but still Moses did not try to hide his face in order to accommodate them.

Oh that God's ministers might so talk with God that when they speak to the people there will be a shining forth of the very presence of God! Without that radiance and that splendor his message will not be effective. Oh, how we must hold fast to the vision of His purpose for His people. That we come to that place in God where we abide in Him, and He abides in us, and we minister only in virtue of His abiding presence! For "he that speaketh of [or, from] himself seeketh his own glory" (Jn. 7:18).

But speaking out from the heart of God we seek only His glory. And so Moses ministered to the people the words that God had given him, with unveiled face, till something rather tragic began to happen. The glory of God began to fade away! Immediately Moses sensed the departure of the glory, though he was not aware of his shining countenance when he came down from the mount. Quickly he veiled his face, as he realized the beams of light were fading away. He must not continue to minister without that presence!

Nor could he permit the children of Israel to behold the departure of the glory. We read, "Till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face" (Ex. 34:33). But the word "till" is in italics, indicating that it was not in the original, but added by the translators to make the sense clear. A better rendering would be, "When Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face." This is the way it is rendered in other versions, and this is the way Paul understood it, where he says, "Not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished" (2 Cor. 3:13).

Clearly, Moses did not want the people to see the end of the fading glory. He had spoken out from the presence of God's glory, and he did not want the people to see it fading away. It was a transitory brightness, like the covenant he was mediating to them. The old covenant was given with the shining forth of God's glory, but soon it would fade away. Paul very clearly is telling us that in the new covenant we have something better than Moses was able to bring to the people of God.

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