

Bible partnerships  
A lesson for fifth grade  
Tom Deaderick

Did you ever wonder why God made us to live here on Earth first, instead of just creating us in Heaven? Are we supposed to learn things here on Earth that He wants everyone in Heaven to know?

Could it be that we're supposed to learn to work together? Giant termite mounds for example, look how similar they are to the pyramids.

Schools of fish for example. I used to think that fish swimming in schools made no sense. They always said there's safety in numbers but I thought that what this meant was that maybe one of the other fish would be eaten instead of you. Seems like either way the predator was eating a fish, right?

So somebody was the unlucky loser. But now scientists who study this schooling or swarming behavior in animals have found that isn't true. Actually the random, fast movements of swarming or schooling animals confuses the predator, who could easily catch a single victim, constantly changes its mind about which one might be easier to catch and ends up not catching any of them because they can't focus on just one.

Do you feel safer when there are other people around or when you're alone, doing something by yourself? Has anyone ever been home alone at night? (Await responses)

Your house is the same at night, you have all the same defenses, but instead of feeling safe and comfortable, you notice every little sound and feel vulnerable.

I think we're made to work with other people. Maybe God wants us to learn how to depend on others and learn what it means to be dependable ourselves.

Let's look at a great example of partnership, Moses and Aaron.

### Moses and Aaron

Aaron was Moses' brother. He was three years older than Moses. They were separated when Moses was set floating down the river to the Pharaoh's daughter so baby Moses would not be killed by the Pharaoh's decree.

Moses grew up in the Pharaoh's palace, being taught as if he were the Pharaoh's son in the royal court.

Meanwhile, Aaron and their sister, Miriam grew up with their family in the land of Goshen. Goshen was the best land in all of Egypt for growing crops and raising sheep. Genesis 46:34 says "You may live in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians". Have you ever heard someone from the city talk down about people who live in Tennessee or Appalachia? I think it was the same for the farmers and rural areas back then. Of course, we know that without these farmers and shepherds there would be no food to send to the cities, but that never seems to prevent the city people from feeling superior to the people from the country does it?

So Moses grew up very differently from his brother Aaron, one the son of the Pharaoh and the other from a common family of farmers and shepherds.

Do you ever wonder why we are all so different when the Bible says we are all created in God's image?

If we were all made to like the same things and think the same way, do you think that would be a good thing or a bad thing? (let them answer)

Well what if we all like to eat oranges and didn't like apples. Do you think there would be anyone that grew apples? Do you think there would be enough oranges for everyone?

Do you know the word ecosystem? What's an ecosystem? It's a set of creatures and plants that thrive together. If a balanced ecosystem is upset, it will collapse quickly with animals starving. This has happened many times throughout history. There's Easter Island, where the people overpopulated and ate all of the food. There's Greenland, that used to have farms and settlers, but the people who lived there over used the trees and plants to the point where it couldn't sustain life, so there are whole villages that were abandoned.

Men are not smart enough to create and maintain the complexity required for an ecosystem to thrive. I had this sphere that was filled with tiny brine shrimp. It was totally sealed up with no food coming in or out. There wasn't an opening of any kind. The shrimp would eat enough of the algae to keep the algae from overflowing the sphere. The algae grew by photosynthesis, turning the light that came through the glass sphere into energy. The waste from the shrimp provided nutrients for the algae. So this was a very simple ecosystem that would last for about seven years without breaking down – as long as it received the right amount of sunlight. If the light was too much, the algae grew too fast and the shrimp would overpopulate – breaking the whole thing down.

Men are not smart enough to create the kind of ecosystem that God has made for us – the Earth. Think of how amazing God's ecosystem design is compared to ours. He made something so complex that we'll never even discover all of the creatures he made – and designed it so there are failsafes and backups for any creature that becomes extinct. If we were to just sit down and try to understand God's amazing plan, we'd spend our whole life and never scratch the surface.

So God wanted a messenger to lead His people out of Egypt. He created Moses, so we would think He would just have create Moses to be perfect for that job and be done with it, right?

That's the way we think, but apparently, not the way God thinks.

God created a situation that separated Moses and Aaron and gave them both different experiences. They grew up doing very different things, with Moses living as a prince and Aaron living as a farmer.

In the land of Goshen, Aaron became known for being a convincing speaker.

Read Exodus 4:1-17

Moses is obviously trying to get out of the responsibility that God is ready to put on his shoulders. Moses sees how hard it will be to do what God wants and he tries to make enough excuses that God will give up. It's really hard to win an argument with God as Moses demonstrates. He complains about not being a good speaker and God gets frustrated with him and points out that He actually created Moses' mouth and He knows exactly what it is capable of.

Think about how funny this situation is. God created Moses, arranged for his life to be spared floating an infant Moses down a river right into the hands of the princess. And here is Moses trying to hide from God's plans for Moses' life by pretending he can't do it. It's crazy right?

Now, let's stop here a minute and point the finger back at ourselves. Have you ever seen someone who needed help, maybe your friends or your family and you decided that you were too busy to help, or justified to yourself that someone else would be able to help them better than you?

I have. I think we sometimes read about these folks from the Bible and we think how ridiculous they were and we don't realize that we do the same sorts of things every day. There's no difference to God in when He sees us trying to duck our responsibilities. He was furious and frustrated with Moses – don't we realize He feels the same way with us when we don't step forward?

So Aaron becomes the spokesperson for Moses and they are both the spokesperson for God.

When Moses and Aaron were reunited they were very happy to see each other (read Exodus 4:27).

But even when we are following God's plans, they are not always easy and not always successful. The first meeting between the Pharaoh, Aaron and Moses didn't go well at all. Read Exodus 5: 1-21.

So the people are punished because of Moses and Aaron and the people are angry about it. Think of how this must have felt to Moses and Aaron – they didn't want to go to Pharaoh in the first place and tried to get out of the job, then when they do it, not only do they not succeed, but they make all their own people angry with them for making their life harder.

Did God promise Moses and Aaron an easy life? No. He didn't say it would be easy, He just said He wanted it done.

Did God promise the Israelites an easy life? No. He didn't.

Did God promise any of you an easy life? No. He didn't. Your life won't be easy just because you do more of the things God wants for you. You will still have people you love who get sick and who die. You will still have days when your heart is broken. You will still have times when you feel lonely and you may fail to do the very thing you feel God wants you to do.

Failing once isn't failing and it doesn't let you off the hook.

Moses and Aaron stand side-by-side against Pharaoh in meeting after meeting. Never giving up, never backing down. Just like David standing up to a giant, they had the awesomely powerful creator of the entire universe asking them to stand up to a man. The pharaoh thought he was a god. He thought he had lived forever and that he would live forever. All the people around the pharaoh also thought he was a supreme authority whose will could not be questioned without penalty

of death. And you've got to think how the people must have shaken their heads to hear how they faced down the Pharaoh.

And finally, Pharaoh releases the Israelites and they escape into the desert.

Moses and Aaron work together to lead the Israelites and both were honored by God many times afterward. Aaron became the first high priest.

Today's lesson is an encouragement for you. The story of Moses and Aaron encourages us in many ways, what lessons do you think it teaches us?

- God wants us to be obedient
- Doing what God wants doesn't mean we'll have it easy
- We are supposed to work together
- We need to be good and dependable partners
- Differences with other people sometimes make them more complete partners to us

We are drawn to people who are like us. We tend to alienate people who are different. People from cities might look down on us and we might think they do strange things too. We look down on people who are different. God made them. God made us. God was frustrated when Moses tried to tell Him that the mouth that He'd made for Moses wouldn't work. God must be just as frustrated when we look at the people He has made for us to work with, as partners in God's plan, and we think it won't work because they are different from us, or because we don't like them.

He made every one of us. He made a complex ecosystem of different people with every kind of difference you can imagine and He wants us to be a willing part of His plan, not a reluctant one. Look for people who also want to do God's will and make them your partner.

**Ecclesiastes 4:9**

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.

**1 Corinthians 3:9**

For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.