

engage

It's the fourth issue of **engage**, and it's stuffed with even more Bible-y goodness and thought-provoking articles than usual. Check out what's in store for you inside. In this issue...

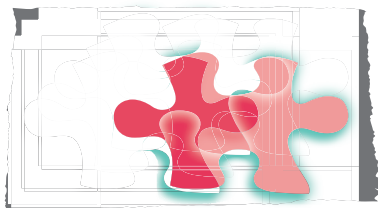
★ **DAILY READINGS** Each day's page throws you into the Bible, to get you handling, questioning and exploring God's message to you — encouraging you to act on it and talk to God more in prayer.

THIS ISSUE: God's spectacular rescue in **Exodus**; the power of the gospel in **2 Timothy**; God's greatness in **Psalms**; Jesus' incredible final words in **John's Gospel**; is life really meaningless? **Ecclesiastes** gives us the answers.

★ **TAKE IT FURTHER** If you're left wanting more at the end of an **engage** page, turn to the **Take it further** section to dig deeper.

★ **STUFF** Articles on stuff relevant to young Christians. This time: what's the Bible say about **self-esteem**?

★ **TRICKY** tackles those mind-bendingly tricky questions that confuse us all, as well as questions that our friends bombard us with. This issue: **Did the resurrection really happen?**



★ **ESSENTIAL** Articles on the basics we really need to know about God, the Bible and Christianity. This time we focus on the **Holy Spirit**.

★ **REAL LIVES** Amazing true stories, revealing God at work in people's lives. This time — **the teenager who was killed for his faith**.

★ **TOOLBOX** is full of tools to help you wrestle with the Bible and understand it for yourself. This issue we look at **the missing link**.

All of us who work on **engage** are passionate to see God's Word at work in people's lives. Do you want God's Word to have an impact on your life? Then open your Bible, and start on the first **engage** study right now...

HOW TO USE **engage**

- 1 Set a time you can read the Bible every day
- 2 Find a place where you can be quiet and think
- 3 Grab your Bible, pen and a notebook
- 4 Ask God to help you understand what you read
- 5 Read the day's verses with **engage**, taking time to think about it
- 6 Pray about what you've read

BIBLE STUFF

We use the NIV Bible version, so you might find it's the best one to use with **engage**. If the notes say '**Read Exodus 1 v 15–22**', look up Exodus in the contents page at the front of your Bible. It'll tell you which page Exodus starts on. Find chapter 1 of Exodus, and then verse 15 of chapter 1 (the verse numbers are the tiny ones). Then start reading!

In this issue...

DAILY READINGS

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ENGAGE EGGHEADS

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Exodus

Exit strategy

Welcome to the second book of the Bible. Exodus means 'exit' or 'departure'. It's all about God getting His people out of Egypt. In spectacular style.

WAY OUT?

In Engage 3 we saw God put His man Joseph in Egypt so that God's people would be able to get food and survive years of crippling drought. But how would they get out of Egypt — where they were treated like dirt by the locals — and get to the land God had promised them?

EXIT SIGNS

Step forward Moses, the reluctant hero of Exodus, who God would use in amazing ways to show the Israelites the way to the exit.

HISTORY LESSON

So it's all just ancient history, right? Wrong — Christians today have been rescued by God too, through Jesus' death and resurrection. So we'll see how Exodus sets the scene for what Jesus did.

This poses the big question: if you've been rescued by God, are you living His way right now?



1

Exterminate!

Sometimes things just seem to go from bad to worse. The Israelites were stuck in Egypt, ruled over cruelly by the Egyptians. But things would get much worse before they got better.

Read Exodus 1 v 1–14

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▶ *What was going well for the Israelites? (v7)*
- ▶ *What did the Egyptians fear?(v10)*
- ▶ *How did they react? (v14)*

God had chosen a bunch of people — the Israelites — to be His special people. He'd promised Abraham that He'd look after them, give them loads of kids, a homeland in Israel and that through these people the whole world would be blessed (Genesis 12 v 1–3).

And to help them survive a famine, God engineered it so that they ended up in Egypt, where He'd placed His man Joseph to organise food supplies. Clever!

The Israelites were growing rapidly, just as God had promised. This panicked the Egyptians, who tried to grind them down with forced labour. But it didn't seem to work — they

just kept growing (v12). So Pharaoh took desperate measures.

Read verses 15–22

- ▶ *What did Pharaoh order? (v16)*
- ▶ *But what happened?*
- ▶ *What's Exodus already teaching us about God? (v20–21)*

God had a plan for His people and, despite the Egyptians extreme cruelty, God's plans would not be stopped. We can already see a glimpse of His rescue, His love and His compassion for His people.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Ask God to show you His awe-inspiring love, compassion and rescue as you read Exodus.

THE BOTTOM LINE

God looks out for His people.

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

Want a little more? Then go to **Take it further** on page 109.



2

Water baby

God's people, the Israelites, are living in harsh conditions in Egypt. Pharaoh is worried about them getting out of control so he's ordered every Israelite baby to be thrown into the River Nile as soon as it's born.



Read Exodus 2 v 1–4

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

► *What desperate measures did the baby's mother take?*

This couple were Levites, one of the 12 Israelite tribes. When the woman gave birth to a boy they must have been devastated, knowing he'd have to die. She tried to keep him hidden, but in the end sent him to float down the river in a watertight basket.



Read verses 5–10

► *Who rescued the tot?*

► *Flick back to Exodus 1 v 22. What might she have done with him?*

► *What else worked out brilliantly? (v7–9)*

Unbelievably, baby Moses was protected by an Egyptian! Pharaoh's daughter took pity on the little mite, even though he was a Hebrew (Israelite). God had big plans for

Moses: He kept Moses alive, got his own mother to look after him, and he was brought up as an Egyptian. This boy was special, and God would use him in surprising ways.

Throughout the Bible we read about God's enemies attacking and trying to destroy God's people. But God is in control, and He will never be wiped out. In fact, they will survive to live eternally with God.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Thank God that He's with His people even through the toughest of times. Thank Him that no one can destroy His people.

THE BOTTOM LINE

God's people will not be destroyed.

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

Appetite for destruction? Page 109.



3

On the run

Imagine being born in one country but growing up in a totally different one. Where would your loyalties lie? Moses had Hebrew parents but was brought up as an Egyptian. Let's see where his heart was...

Read Exodus 2 v 11–15

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▶ *Who did Moses side with?*
- ▶ *What do you think about his actions and motives? (v12)*
- ▶ *What were the consequences? (v14–15)*

Despite being brought up in Pharaoh's family, Moses knew who his people were (v11). When he saw how cruelly the Egyptians treated Hebrews, he snapped. His murderous anger caused him to have to flee Egypt in a hurry. How could God possibly use this runaway killer?

Read verses 16–22

- ▶ *How did things work out for Moses?*

Moses ran for his life into the desert. But God was looking after him and led him to a friendly family, and even a wife and son.

THINK IT THROUGH

- ▶ *Do you believe God can use **you**?*
- ▶ *Do you think you're too sinful to serve God?*

God often uses weak, sinful people in His plans. Moses had killed a man, yet God kept him safe and would still use him to rescue His people.

Don't limit God. He can do anything, including using seemingly useless people like us. He can use us to spread the gospel and to serve other Christians. The question is, are you ready to let Him use you?

PRAY ABOUT IT

If you actually mean it, ask God to use you in His big plans. But be warned, He will!

THE BOTTOM LINE

God uses the least likely people.

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

Back to school on page 109.



4

Cry for help

Family illness. Depression. Natural disasters. Suffering. It's often in the darkest times that people turn to God for help.

 **Read Exodus 2 v 23–25**

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

 *What are we told about the Israelites?*

 *What do we learn about God?*

 *What did God remember?*

The Israelites in Egypt were being treated brutally by the Egyptians — living in slavery, forced to do back-breaking work, and many of their children were drowned at birth. In this moment of great suffering, they cried out to God for help.

 **Read Genesis 17 v 6–8**

 *What did God promise Abraham?*

v6:

v7:

v8:

When the Israelites groaned to God, He remembered His covenant agreement with Abraham. God had promised to make Abraham's family into a great nation, giving them the land of Canaan. He would be their God.

The Israelites were God's people — He loved them and would keep His promises as always. He would rescue them from slavery.

PRAY ABOUT IT

God promises to be with all of His people. He hears our prayers too and is concerned for us. Use Exodus 2 v 24–25 to thank God for what He's like.

THE BOTTOM LINE

God hears His people's cries.

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

Prayer pointers on page 109.



5

Warning: bush fire

The Israelites cried out to God to free them from slavery. By now, Moses was pushing 80 years old, minding his own business, looking after sheep in Midian. He wouldn't have expected to get the big call-up from God.



Read Exodus 3 v 1–6

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▶ *What was Moses required to do in God's presence? (v5)*
- ▶ *How did God introduce Himself? (v6)*
- ▶ *How did Moses react to that?*

God grabbed Moses' attention in a bizarre way — a bush on fire that didn't burn up. It worked. God let Moses know exactly who was speaking to Him: the God of his ancestors.

No wonder Moses was terrified. He took off his sandals to show respect for God in His presence. And he hid his face, completely humbled by the perfect, holy God of all history.



Read verses 7–10

- ▶ *How would v7 have encouraged Moses?*



But what was the shock news for Moses? (v10)

The Lord promised a great future for His people — freed from slavery and taken into a land overflowing with the good life (v8). Moses must have been thrilled. Until God gave him the job of rescuer. Panic attack time. We'll look at Moses' reaction tomorrow.

TALK IT THROUGH

- ▶ *Do you show God enough respect?*
- ▶ *What do you need to change about the way you talk to God or talk about God?*

PRAY ABOUT IT

If you're a Christian, God has called you too — to spread the word about Jesus and to serve Him throughout your life. Ask God to help you do what He wants you to do.



TAKE IT FURTHER

Into the fire — page 109.



6

I AM WHO AM

Things are starting to kick off. The Israelites cried out to God to rescue them. God appeared to Moses in a burning bush, telling him to bring God's people out of Egypt. But Moses wasn't too excited about the job...

Read Exodus 3 v 11–12

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

▶ *What was Moses' first excuse?*

▶ *What did God say to reassure him?*

Moses didn't think he was the right man for the job. But God said: *'I'll be with you, so trust me.'* Only once the Israelites were out of Egypt would Moses fully realise it was the work of God (v12).

Read verses 13–15

▶ *What was Moses' second excuse?*

▶ *What fantastic truth was Moses to tell the people? (v14–15)*

The awesome name for God: **I AM**. The one who is, forever. The God of His people — past, present and future (v15). He was Abraham, Isaac and Jacob's God, and He would always be the God of the Israelites. Astonishing stuff.

The God of the Israelites is our God too. He has always existed. He is perfect and will never change. And He will rule His people for ever.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Take time out to praise God for what His name means.

THE BOTTOM LINE

God is, was and always will be. He's the God of the past, present and future, who will always be with His people.

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

More about **I AM** on page 110.



**7****Back to the future**

Calendars are usually filled with scribbles detailing all your future plans. Today in Exodus we get to see what God has planned for the Israelites. Not only the events, but the results too!

Read Exodus 3 v 16–22

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- How would all this info encourage Moses?*
- Describe the series of events:*

v16–18:

v18–19:

v20:

v21–22:

What an amazing response to the Israelites' cries for help. God promised to rescue them in a spectacular way. God even told Moses exactly how He would do it, so they could look back and see how God had kept His promises. To the letter.

Yesterday we read how God is the great I AM: He has always existed, He never changes and He'll rule for ever. God knows everything that has happened and everything that will happen. So He could tell Moses what would happen to the Israelites.

GET ON WITH IT

Ever tempted by horoscopes or fortune-telling to find out about the future? Throw them out of your life — they're pointless. God knows all about you. He knows what plans He has for you in the future. We don't need horoscopes — we have a perfect God in control of our future.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Thank God that your future is safe in His hands. Ask Him to use you to serve Him loads in the future.

THE BOTTOM LINE

God knows and controls the future.

TAKE IT FURTHER

Step into the future on page 110.



8

Excuse me

Are you a willing volunteer who's happy to get stuck into anything, or do you prefer to hide in the background? God had promised to use Moses to free the Israelites from slavery, but Moses was full of excuses.

Read Exodus 4 v 1–9

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▶ *What was Moses' excuse?*
- ▶ *What three signs would God give him as proof?*

Moses was trying to wriggle out of his responsibilities. But God was patient with Moses and gave him proof to show the leaders that he really had met God. But Moses was desperate to get out of it...

Read verses 10–17

- ▶ *What were Moses' two last desperate excuses? (v10, 13)*
- ▶ *How did God respond to Moses' lack of trust? (v14–16)*

Moses let his doubts in his own abilities lead to him not trusting God. The Lord can do anything (v11). Of course he could use cowardly Moses. God was angry with Moses' lack of trust, yet still showed

incredible patience and reassured Moses by getting his bro Aaron to help him.

GET ON WITH IT

- ▶ *What responsibilities are you avoiding at the mo?*
- ▶ *What excuses are you using for not fully serving God?*
- ▶ *Do you let self-doubt stop you obeying God?*

PRAY ABOUT IT

Bring these things before God right now. Ask Him to help you trust Him to give you the strength and abilities to serve Him.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Stop making excuses with God.

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

No excuses... go to page 110.



9

The wanderer returns

Years ago, Moses had fled from Egypt after killing an Egyptian. Finally, he was about to return — this time to rescue God's people from slavery. But would the Israelites trust God and follow Moses?

Read Exodus 4 v 18–23

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- What was the good news for Moses? (v19)*
- What was the bad news? (v21)*
- What did God call the Israelites? (v22)*

God encouraged Moses that it was safe for him to go back to Egypt, so Moses grabbed his family and left. The bad news was that despite Moses performing miracles in front of Pharaoh, he would still refuse to let God's people go. But the Israelites were God's chosen people and God would care for them (v22) and punish Pharaoh for his unbelief (v23).

Read verses 24–26

What a bizarre story. It seems that Moses hadn't circumcised his son (as God had commanded His people to do in Genesis 17 v 9–14) and faced God's punishment. Zipporah saved

the day by doing the deed herself and associating Moses with it (v25).

Read verses 27–31

- How did the Israelite elders respond to Moses and Aaron?*
- Had Moses been right to worry and try to get out of it?*

Aaron was now onboard to help Moses. And so were the Israelite leaders. When they realised that God had heard their prayers, they bowed down in worship

PRAY ABOUT IT

- Have you seen God answer your prayers?*
- Do you know that He loves you?*
- So what will you say to Him right now?*

TAKE IT FURTHER

Hard hearts on page 110.