

Jethro and Moses – A Mentoring Relationship Exodus 18:1-27

1. Jethro's Visit to Moses (Verses 1-6)

¹ Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, heard about everything God had done for Moses and his people, the Israelites. He heard especially about how the Lord had rescued them from Egypt.

- Jethro had a familial relationship with Moses
- Jethro Knew of Moses' Trials and Successes
- Moses was so busy that he had sent his wife Zipporah and their sons to live with her family
- Jethro sent a note to Moses telling him he was coming (Communication in a family is important)

2. Moses' Status Update to Jethro on his work (Verses 7-12)

⁷ So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law. He bowed low and kissed him. They asked about each other's welfare and then went into Moses' tent. ⁸ Moses told his father-in-law everything the Lord had done to Pharaoh and Egypt on behalf of Israel. He also told about all the hardships they had experienced along the way and how the Lord had rescued his people from all their troubles. ⁹ Jethro was delighted when he heard about all the good things the Lord had done for Israel as he rescued them from the hand of the Egyptians. ¹⁰ "Praise the Lord," Jethro said...

- Moses' report pleased Jethro.
- Moses was "winning" or succeeding.

3. Jethro's Constructive Criticism

¹³ The next day, Moses took his seat to hear the people's disputes against each other. They waited before him from morning till evening. ¹⁴ When Moses' father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he asked, "What are you really accomplishing here? Why are you trying to do all this alone while everyone stands around you from morning till evening?"

- Note: Everyone in Israel saw everyday what Jethro saw that day.
- Everyone saw and felt that Moses was overwhelmed and trying to do too much.
- Everyone's life was impacted because they had to wait on Moses because he wasn't leading, he was doing everything himself.

4. Moses Reply to the Constructive Criticism (Verses 15-16)

¹⁵ Moses replied, "Because the people come to me to get a ruling from God. ¹⁶ When a dispute arises, they come to me, and I am the one who settles the case between the quarreling parties. I inform the people of God's decrees and give them his instructions."

- Moses' initial reply was defensive.
- Moses' initial reply was in large part ego driven.

5. Jethro's Observation and Prediction (Verses 17-19)

¹⁷ "This is not good!" Moses' father-in-law exclaimed. ¹⁸ "You're going to wear yourself out—and the people, too. This job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself. ¹⁹ Now listen to me, and let me give you a word of advice, and may God be with you. You should continue to be the people's representative before God, bringing their disputes to him.

- MAYBE: Many wondered why Moses couldn't trust anyone else to do some of the work.
- MAYBE: Many wondered why he couldn't let go of some of the power/responsibility/authority?
- CLEAR: Jethro had the experience to realize that what Moses was doing ... wasn't good.
- CLEAR: Jethro had earned the right to say to Moses what everyone else was afraid to say to him.
- CLEAR: "This isn't working. This isn't good. This needs to change."

Jethro's Observation and Prediction (Verses 17-19) Part Two

- Jethro affirms Moses' purpose and calling. (Failing at something and being a failure are different)
- Jethro encourages Moses that God is with him.
- Jethro then walks Moses through how to do it better.

6. Jethro reminds Moses to remind the people of their foundation.

²⁰Teach them God's decrees, and give them his instructions. Show them how to conduct their lives. ²¹But select from all the people some capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes. Appoint them as leaders over groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten. ²²They should always be available to solve the people's common disputes, but have them bring the major cases to you. Let the leaders decide the smaller matters themselves. They will help you carry the load, making the task easier for you.

- Jethro reminds Moses of the role of the leader: to teach, train, and equip other people.
- This is so difficult to do.
 - It doesn't stroke our ego.
 - It makes quality control an issue. No one does it as well as I do. Can you find people to do it 85% as good as you?

Seven Important Traits/Goals to look for in yourself and others

- Look for these traits when job-hunting, investing, hiring, friendship building, or looking for a spouse.
 - Work to develop these traits in children and grandchildren, developing workers, or choosing people to lead within your organization.
1. Capable = Competent
 2. Honest = Trustworthy
 3. Fear God = revere and respect God
 4. Hate Bribes = they have character even when most/nearly all people aren't looking
 5. Problem Solvers = able to not just see what is wrong, but able to build something that is right
 6. Discernment = Able to discern matters between people; i.e. think strategically
 7. Humble = willing to start out learning with small things first and to not think too highly of oneself

²³If you follow this advice, and if God commands you to do so, then you will be able to endure the pressures, and all these people will go home in peace."

- Jethro: "This is a solid plan, that is submitted to God, that is workable for you and the people."
- Endurance – This plan is sustainable for you and the people. It "scales."

²⁴Moses listened to his father-in-law's advice and followed his suggestions. ²⁵He chose capable men from all over Israel and appointed them as leaders over the people. He put them in charge of groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten. ²⁶These men were always available to solve the people's common disputes. They brought the major cases to Moses, but they took care of the smaller matters themselves.

- Moses took the constructive criticism and kept developing his leadership.
- Moses ACTED upon Jethro's advice. (James 1:22-25)

²⁷Soon after this, Moses said good-bye to his father-in-law, who returned to his own land.

Mentoring Components

1. Provide open, honest listening and welcomed constructive criticism (Experience)
2. Encouragement to be the person/leader that God has made them to be. (Calling)
3. Impartation of Biblically rooted, practical Wisdom (Guidance/Accountability)