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**MOSES AND JETHRO**

**Passing on:** worship, delegating leadership

**What a mentor does:** questions

**Scriptures to study:** Exodus 2:14-22, Exodus 3:1, Exodus 18:1-27

**Key thoughts:**

* Jethro gave Moses a mentoring example by prioritizing worship.
* Jethro watched Moses and questioned his leadership practices.
* Jethro gave Moses advice on leadership based on his experience.

Jethro was Moses’ father-in-law. During his life, he observed Moses, and marriage to his daughter, Zipporah. Moses worked for Jethro in Midian for about 40 years, after fleeing Egypt and before he returned to free the Israelites from Pharaoh. Jethro joined Israel after they escaped Egypt to the wilderness of Sinai, and brought Moses’ family back to him. Jethro would remain with Moses for a time and continued to be an influence and mentor to the Israelite leader. Jethro had a large family, with seven daughters, and was a shepherd and farmer.

Throughout the Bible we will revisit the father-son mentoring relationship multiple times. In the culture of Bible times, with society oriented around families, this kind of mentoring—a father passing on wisdom to a son—was a natural and frequent occurrence.

Moses was thrust into one of the most crucial leadership roles of the Old Testament by God—to lead God’s people, Israel, out of Egypt. During his time as leader, Moses and God met often, first on Mount Moriah, and then later on in a tent of meeting outside the Israelite’s camp. God and Moses met “face to face”, so there was a great experience for Moses in mentoring. Moses himself held many face-to-face meetings to resolve conflicts and issues among the people of Israel.

In Exodus 18 we see two excellent examples of Jethro mentoring Moses. First we see Jethro’s faithfulness to God, upon hearing of the Israelite’s escape from Egypt. Jethro acknowledges the true God of Israel, worships and brings sacrifices and offerings. The Midianites were known to worship other gods, so Jethro’s humility before the true God is especially meaningful. Note too that Jethro offers praises to God *before Moses,* despite Moses having just crossed the Red Sea leading Israel to escape Egypt. This gesture—hearing of God’s miraculous acts and responding in worship—is a powerful mentoring example.

A second instance is Jethro’s advice to Moses regarding conflict resolution and administration of the Israelites. When seeing the endless line of people trying to meet with Moses, and Moses’ exhaustion at the end of a day, Jethro first questions Moses and how he has chosen to lead. Then he suggests recruiting help, delegating smaller meetings and tasks to lieutenants who are trustworthy and can be trained. Moses listened, heard the advice, and did just as Jethro said.



* Give an example from your life and leadership of delegating a task or authority. In what instance have you recruited, trained and positioned others to take on some of your leadership load?
* Has anyone ever been a spiritual mentor to you, and given you an example to follow through their worship, prayer or stewardship?
* Has your own father or grandfather been a mentor to you? What is something you have learned from the older men in your family?



* Read Exodus 18:7-12. What was Jethro’s reaction to what Moses told him that God had done? Why was this example important for Moses?
* Read Exodus 18:13-14. In what way did Jethro question Moses’ leadership? What did he observe?
* Read Exodus 18:17-23. What was Jethro’s advice to Moses? What experience would Jethro have in order to mentor Moses in this way?
* Read Exodus 18:24-26. What was Moses’ response to Jethro?
* Read Exodus 18:27. Did the mentoring relationship between Jethro and Moses end at this point? Should mentoring relationships always be ongoing, or for a time/season in life and leadership?



* Is there someone in your life right now who can ask you tough questions about your life and leadership? What might it take to invest in a relationship where difficult questions are asked?
* Can a close family member serve as a mentor to you, or can you serve as a mentor to a son or other close family member? What are the benefits/drawbacks of such a mentoring relationship?
* Jethro mentored Moses by his example in worship. What are some areas of life where your example can serve as a mentoring lesson for others?