

In the next few moments I want us to consider some sound advice given to Moses by his father-in-law, Jethro and how Moses reacted to that advice. From this I hope we can learn some things that might make us better people.

The set the stage for the story, Moses had committed a terrible crime in Egypt; he killed an Egyptian that was mistreating one of his fellow Israelites. Because of that he was forced to flee and he went to the land of Midian where he met Jethro and married Jethro's daughter Zipporah. While in Midian, Moses became a shepherd and for the next forty years he took care of Jethro's sheep. I figure Moses planned on living out his life in the hills of Midian. This is where God's intervened and through the burning bush instructed Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. After ten plagues Moses began leading the Israelites toward the Promised Land. This is when the Red Sea was divided. Once the Israelites were across the sea, it engulfed the Egyptians and now for the first time in over 400 years the Israelites were free. Also for the first time in over 400 years were they in need of provisions like food and water to sustain them. God provided these needs. He gave them food and water through instructions to Moses. Word of what had happened made its way to Jethro; so when Moses and the Israelites got near Midian, Jethro comes to visit Moses and brings with him Zipporah and two sons to him to reunite with Moses.

(1) When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father in law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt; (2) Then Jethro, Moses' father in law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back,

Moses went out to meet Jethro who had his family with him. Today we might think he would rush out and embrace his wife and hug his kids, but not the case. Instead he show respect to the head of the house and bowed down and greeted Jethro. ***(7) And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent.*** Moses could have been a bit arrogant; after all he was the leader of over 600,000 people and Jethro was a simple shepherd, but not the case. He showed courtesy and respect to his father-in-law and invited him into his tent.

Once in the privacy of the tent, Moses told them all that the LORD had done. Again we see the humility of Moses by giving all the credit of success the God and none to himself. This is how it ought to be with us. Glory should go to God for the successes we enjoy. **(8) And Moses told his father in law all that the LORD had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the LORD delivered them.**

I expect Moses was glad to have someone to talk too about what was happening. He couldn't really talk with the Israelites for advice or encouragement. In fact, they continued to bombard him with criticism and wished they were back in Egypt. He had no one to talk to except maybe his brother Aaron.

After hearing Moses, Jethro was thrilled at what he heard and praised God. **(9) And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. (10) And Jethro said, Blessed be the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.** Jethro was a descendent of Midian who was a son to Abraham. So he had a background of knowing about God and who God was. In fact in v11 he acknowledged that God is greater than all the other Egyptian and pagan gods that were seen thought-out the land. **(11) Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them.**

Here we see a father figure taking the spiritual lead with his family in praising and acknowledging the blessings of God. We see this leadership more clearly in verse 12. **And Jethro, Moses' father in law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father in law before God.** It was Jethro that offered the sacrifices. Later Aaron's descendents would offer sacrifices for Israel, but here it was Jethro taking the lead over both Moses and Aaron.

But it is the next day that we see the advice being given. **(13) And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening.** This was probably a typical day for Moses. There were people coming to him all day long with something that required a judgment decision by Moses. People were in line, one matter after

another all day long. When Jethro say this, he said **(14) ... *What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even?*** In essence Jethro asked, “What are you doing and why are you doing this alone?”

Now Moses answer was a good one. People come and asked me about God and I tell them about God’s laws and commandments plus I make judgment on some matters between people. **(15) *And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to enquire of God: (16) When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws.***

Jethro replies by telling Moses that what he is doing is not good (v17). Really it’s not what he is doing so much is how he was doing it. **(17) ... *The thing that thou doest is not good. (18) Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone.*** If Moses continued this schedule, what was going to happen – Burn Out. One person cannot maintain that pace for an extended period of time without feeling the repercussions.

The same is true today. We can spread ourselves so thin that we are not effective and/or soon give up and quit whatever we were doing. Sometimes we call this “*burning the candle at both ends.*”

(19) *Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: (20) And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. (21) Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: (22) And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. (23) If*

thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace. (24) So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said. (25) And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. (26) And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves. (27) And Moses let his father in law depart; and he went his way into his own land.