

Camping with God – pt. 6

Ex. 18.

Stephen Bramer, department chair and professor of exposition told a story about his five-year-old son. They were eating dinner and he asked, “What’s so dangerous about sex?” His sisters giggled while his wife referred the question to the father, who wisely paused... then his son added, “There are bugs, and spiders and ‘sects.’”

It seems that it is easy to get in trouble if we don’t listen carefully to others. Last week the children of Israel were attacked while they were at Rephidim. “Rephidim” means ‘rest’, and it seems as if that wasn’t what happened. First they were nearly overcome by thirst. After arriving they were without water until Moses struck the rock in front of all the leaders. It was important that they understand Moses as their leader and the Lord as their great provider. After an incredible grumbling session that was joined by all God renamed the place *Massah* because they “tested” the Lord; and *Meribah* because their grumbling accelerated to the point of “quarreling”.

The Lesson for Israel was to acknowledge and practice the presence of God.

The next trial they faced was an attack from a warring people – the Amalekites. A young man named Joshua, led those who could fight in a battle against Amalek. While the fighting was going on Moses would intercede for the troops by holding up the Rod of God. As long as Moses held up the Rod the Israelites would win. When Moses’ arms grew weary he sat on a rock and with the help of Aaron and Hur he was able to keep his arms up. That day Amalek was soundly defeated.

The lesson for Israel was simply Trust God for protection.

Amalek was a type of spiritual warfare of the flesh against the Spirit. The old sin nature Vs. the New nature. In a sense Paul’s letter to the Galatians gives us the solution to this continuing war:

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16).

As Moses lifted his hands the Israelites experienced victory over Amalek, exemplifying our victory over the flesh by the Spirit – new nature.

After this Israel would move to Sinai.

There a very special lesson was about to be given.

#6 -- Allow God to speak to you through others.

Do you listen to others?

What if they have criticism?

“A thick skin is a gift from God”¹

“If what they are saying about you is true, mend your ways.
If it isn't true, forget it, and go on and serve the Lord.”

H. A. Ironside

1). Visitors: Family

Now **Jethro**, the priest of Midian, **Moses' father-in-law**,
heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel
His people, how the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt.

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law,
took Moses' wife Zipporah, after he had sent her away,
and her two sons,

of whom one was named **Gershom**
for Moses said, “I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.”

The other was named **Eliezer**,
for he said, “The God of my father was my help,
and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.”

Then **Jethro, Moses' father-in-law**,
came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness
where he was camped, at the mount of God.

He sent word to Moses,
“**I, your father-in-law**, am coming to you
with your wife and her two sons with her.”

(Ex. 18:1-6)

Jethro – “his Excellency.” [title]

Priest of Midian

Ex. 2:18 – Reuel their father – “Friend of God”

- Ex. 2:16-22 (meeting/marriage)
- Priest of the true God.

Ex. 4:18 Moses leaves wife, Zipporah and two sons,

1st son, Gershom – “an alien here”

2nd son, Eliezer – “my God is helper”

Reunion of Moses and Jethro

2). Sharing and praising --Their meal before the Lord God of Israel.

¹ Konrad Adenauer.

⁷Then Moses went out to meet his father-in-law,
and he bowed down and kissed him;

and they asked each other of their welfare and went into the tent.

⁸Moses told his father-in-law all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had befallen them on the journey, and how the Lord had delivered them.

⁹Jethro rejoiced over all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel, in delivering them from the hand of the Egyptians.

¹⁰So Jethro said, "Blessed be the Lord who delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh, and who delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.

¹¹Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods; indeed, it was proven when they dealt proudly against the people."

¹²Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses' father-in-law before God. (18:7-12)

Great times: memories

3). Judging: Moses' never-ending-job

¹³It came about the next day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening.

¹⁴Now when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge and all the people stand about you from morning until evening?"

¹⁵Moses said to his father-in-law,

"Because the people come to me to inquire of God.

¹⁶When they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor and make known the statutes of God and His laws."

(18:13-16).

"Moses, You're too busy!"

You're going to burn out!

Moses was the leader but the demands of leadership can become very heavy.

“The leader’s true worth may sometimes be measured by the amount of time he could remain dead in his office without anyone noticing it.”²

How many jobs have taken up all priorities in people’s lives?

Are you earning a living, but left without a life?

I can’t help but notice that something is missing in Moses’ life...

His wife and children – [mentioned in the first section of this chapter - :2-6]

...He meets with God, with Jethro, with elders, spends all day judging...

4)Wise Counsel

God uses wisdom through Jethro to address the crisis

¹⁷Moses’ father-in-law said to him,

“The thing you are doing is not good.

¹⁸You will surely wear out, both yourself
and these people who are with you,

for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.

¹⁹Now listen to me: I will give you counsel, and God be with you.

You be the people’s representative before God,
and you bring the disputes to God,

²⁰then teach them the statutes and the laws,
and make known to them the way in which they are to walk
and the work they are to do.

²¹Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people
able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and
you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands,
of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.

²²Let them judge the people at all times;
and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to you,
but every minor dispute they themselves will judge.

So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you.

²³If you do this thing and God so commands you,
then you will be able to endure,
and all these people also will go to their place in peace.”

(18:17-23)

Delegation and trust in others is necessary.

“Moses, you need to learn how to delegate, how to mentor.”

Why delegate? (:23)

² W. J. Redden.

So you can endure. A load weighing 200 Lbs. split four ways weighs only 50 Lbs.
It makes impossibilities do-able. Efficiency... More people can be served.

The late president Harry Truman often referred to leaders as people who can get others to do what they don't want to do – and make them like doing it.³

Who do you delegate to?

Fear God, honest, and hate dishonest gain [covetousness]. (vs. 21)

Integrity.

After his Sunday messages, the pastor of a church in London got on the trolley Monday morning to go back to his study downtown. He paid his fare and the trolley driver gave him too much change. The pastor sat down and fumbled the change and looked it over, counted it eight or ten times.

And, you know the rationalization, "It's wonderful how God provides." He realized the was tight that week and this was just about what he would need to break even, or at least enough for his lunch. He wrestled with himself all the way down that old trolley trail that led to his office.

And finally he came to the stop and he got up, couldn't live with himself, walked up to the trolley driver, and said,

"Here, you gave me too much change. You made a mistake."

The driver said, "No, it was not mistake. You see, I was in your church last night when you spoke on honesty, and I thought I would put you to the test."

5). Moses listens

²⁴So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said.

²⁵Moses chose able men out of all Israel
and made them heads over the people,
leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.

²⁶They judged the people at all times;
the difficult dispute they would bring to Moses,
but every dispute they themselves would judge.

²⁷then Moses bade his father-in-law farewell,
and he went his way into his own land. (18:24-27)

God may be using someone else to speak to you.

³ J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*.

If someone's lifestyle is sinful, wrong or unbalanced, they need a voice of reason.

From the Advisory position...

I have been wrong in much of my approach to other's disobedience.

I thought that if people understood the truth, they would change.

Now I see that most people are willfully disobedient.

The Ten commandments aren't suggestions.

I have said this, "If you don't like God's Laws, go create your own universe, and run it any way you please. Until you do that, get with the program."

Will you give those close to you, permission to challenge your priorities?

Priorities:

Learn to say "No", so you can say "Yes" to what God wants for you.

The devil may promote you so you won't have time for your family.

On the receiving end...

When your wife comes to you with her perceptions, how do you handle it?

One man's answer. "I've heard you, just give me time to process it."

What's this lesson all about?

Learning to trust God to speak to you through other people.

Reason: so you can finish strong.

It's amazing how many leaders in Scripture did not finish well.

When a leader is accountable he doesn't just do a job, he pays attention to everyone's perspective. It might be helpful to have a Jethro evaluation.

One day we will give an account to God. The Final Evaluation:

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10)

That day is coming. One thing will matter— Was my life pleasing to Christ? Or were my priorities up-side-down? Are you willing to listen and change?