

Exodus 18: 7-9, 13-24

Discussion Questions

Warm Up

What injustices get under your skin? Mine is when companies don't honor their warranties. Hidden in the fine print are ways they have to get out of paying a claim. I must admit, I don't handle this injustice on the phone very well. I have lost my temper a few times!

Have you had a similar experience? What can we do to calmly address a grievance?

Passage

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. 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. 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. ...

...The next day, Moses took his seat to hear the people's disputes against each other. They waited before him from morning till evening. 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?" Moses replied, "Because the people come to me to get a ruling from God. 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."

"This is not good!" Moses' father-in-law exclaimed. "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. 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. Teach them God's decrees, and give them his instructions. Show them how to conduct their lives. But 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. They 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. If 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."

Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said.

1. Why is it important to follow cultural customs or family rules when it comes to showing honor and respect to others? What happens when we violate those customs or rules, or diminish their importance?

Exodus 18: 7-9, 13-24

2. *"Give honor to those honor is due."* Romans 13:7 How good are we as a culture in giving honor to those to whom is due? What group or subgroup of people do we have the hardest time honoring? How about personally? Who do you have a hard time honoring?

Does this passage teach us to only honor those who are deserving of honor? What if the people over us in authority are dishonorable people?

3. *"Honor your father and mother."* Exodus 20:12 Talk about your family of origin. How was honor shown within the family? Was honor deserved or demanded? What's honoring to you as a parent? How can parents show honor to their kids?
4. Is this form of honor waning: *"You shall rise up before the gray-headed and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the Lord."* Leviticus 19:32

Read I Timothy 5 and what it says about the relationship between the young and the old. How true to life is it?

5. It's going to be a crazy political year. If the reports are true, both leading candidates have blemishes on their lives and/or character. How can we honor those in authority whom we do not respect or agree with? Scriptural basis: Romans 13:1-2; I Peter 2:17
6. What do you like the most about Moses' and Jethro's relationship?
7. Pastor Richard applied the importance of showing respect to a lot of relationships. Comment on of the things he said?

8. *"Love each other with genuine affection and take delight in honoring each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all! Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone."* Romans 12:10, 16, 18

What would happen in churches if we delighted in honoring one another and did all that we could to live in peace with everyone? What's the worst church fight you've ever witnessed? (It's sad isn't it when Christians fail to get along!)

9. Moses and Jethro were very honest with each other. So were most of the characters in the Bible. They shared the good, the bad and the ugly about their lives.

Why is it hard for us to be honest with each other and share the hurts, struggles, mistakes, and doubts that we have? Why is it important for us to be real about our walk with God with each other?

10. How hard is it for you to take advice or ask for help? Why? What's the best piece of advice you have ever received?

Exodus 18: 7-9, 13-24

11. Who should we seek advice from? Should we give people advice if they ask for it? I was told as a counselor to never give people advice. If it turns out to be bad advice, you could be in big trouble. What do you think? Jethro gave advice to Moses, so what's the harm in it?
12. Talk about this statement: *"Truth is truth despite who it comes from."*
13. Share a time when God spoke to you, not audibly or from scripture, but through ordinary circumstances and ordinary people.
14. When it comes to involving people in our lives we have competing proverbial wisdom. Talk about both. Which one do you tend to believe and live by?

"Too many cooks in the kitchen spoils the broth."
"More hands make for lighter work."
15. As always, any final comments or reflections?