

Leadership Lessons from Moses

Introductory passage: Ex.18:13-23.

Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, was a wise Midianite. In some ways at least, he encapsulated the essence of spiritual leadership as being made up of: 1) *fellowship* with God, v.19a; 2) *mediation* for the people to God, v.19b; 3) *education* in the *statutes and laws*, v.20a; 4) *interpretation* and *instruction in application*, v.20b; 5) *division of labor*, v.20c; 6) *provision for further/future leadership*, v.21. He also understood- and communicated to Moses, the **ultimate purpose** of spiritual leadership, v.23b, “*and all these people also will go to their place in peace.*”

Moses, as all good leaders do, *listened to* and *followed wise counsel*, v.24!

Moses was a man like no other in all of Scripture. God said things about him that were not and can not be said of any other individual in the Old or New Testaments, cf. Num.12:1-8a.

But have you considered *how* and *when* Moses became such a great *prophet* and *leader* of God's people?

- For the first third (40 years) of his life, Moses was educated in all the learning and wisdom of the Egyptians- the best education Pharaoh's money and power could procure. Though God's people were already enslaved, and were being badly abused, this education hadn't fully prepared him to be God's *spokesman* and Israel's *deliverer*, Ex.2:10; Acts 7:22.
- It wasn't until he spent another third (again, 40 years) raising a family and tending sheep that God called to him from the burning bush and commissioned him to be the *prophet* and *leader* we remember, Ex.3:1-10; Acts 7:29-34.
- Then, and only then, was he adequately prepared to spend the last third (yep, another 40 years) *speaking for God* and *leading His people*, Acts 7:35-38!

Are there lessons to be learned from these things for God's *spokesmen* and the *Shepherds* of His flock today? Absolutely and positively! What are they? In this message, we'll only consider a couple (more than *one*, less than a *dozen*) of these *leadership lessons from Moses*:

1. **Be humble.** No matter the extent of your education- whether *great* (cf. Acts 7:22), or next to none (Acts 4:13a), your capacity to *speak for God* or *for His people*, or to *lead them* in His ways, is not dependent upon you, but upon your *alliance with, allegiance to, and reliance upon* God, cf. Acts 4:13b.

From the very beginning, Moses seems to “get it,” Ex.3:4-11. Even after he had requested, and been allowed to see God's *back* (as well as His *goodness, graciousness, and compassion*, cf. Ex.33:18-23), Moses “*made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship*” and to entreat the Lord to *go along in our midst*, and *pardon “our” iniquity*, and *take us as Thine own possession*, Ex.34:8-9. See Num.11:26-29 for another example of Moses' humility. There's no wonder God said of him, “*Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth,*” Num.12:3. Moses never let his *former position of power* or

education prevent him from seeing himself as a *servant of God*, put into a position of *leadership* to *serve* both God and His people, cf. John 13:12-17.

2. **Make sure to spend time alone with God.** After the sin of the *golden calf* and the subsequent *punishment* of the people (cf. Ex.32:20,25-29), and Moses' *intercession* and *atonement* for them to God (cf. Ex.32:30-33), but before Moses *convinced* God not to *take away His presence from them* (cf. Ex.33:1-5,12-17), there is a little almost parenthetical set of verses that seem (to me at least) to hold great significance in relation to the regard God had for Moses, and his abilities as a leader. Note Ex.33:7-11.

Moses, even in the midst of all the chaos of everything that had and was happening, spent time alone with God. He did so *outside the camp*, and a *good distance from it*, in a *tent he pitched* for the specific purpose of *meeting with God*, v.7. Moses *allowed* (if not *invited*) others to join him, but it was a place where he *met with* and *listened to* God, v.9. Others note only *noticed* these things, but *respected* and *revered* them, v.10.

Whoever you are, and whatever your particular position of leadership in the kingdom might be, you need time alone with God- even Jesus did, cf. Matt.14:1-12,13. Make time to be alone with God. Make yourself available to *listen* to Him. You are not "in this" leadership position alone, nor must you ever "decide" or "act" alone- God is *with you*, cf. vv.13-14.

3. **Don't ever lead or go anywhere the Lord won't go.** While we're here in Ex.33 and have the context in mind, please note v.15. God had promised to send "*an angel before you*" and to "*drive out the Canaanite... to a land flowing with milk and honey*," vv.2-3a, but had also said that "*I will not go up in your midst, because you are a stubborn and obstinate people, lest I destroy you on the way*," v.3b. So, Moses has the assurance of God's help, but he wants more- he wants the *presence* of God to be with them. Furthermore, he states that if "*Thy presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here*," v.15! Good thinking. Good leadership!

We should never attempt to *go* or *lead God's people* anywhere His *presence will not go*. Unfortunately, Israel would not understand or remember this lesson, cf. Num.14:36-45. Efforts to go or lead where God's presence won't or doesn't go are never successful, and always end in *spiritual* if not *physical* disaster! Remember Col.3:17.

Conclusions

Many and great are the lessons in leadership that can be gleaned from God's *spokesman* and Israel's *leader*. We have but "scratched the surface"! Perhaps at another time or in another format (bible class setting), we can explore them more fully. But whatever your particular role may be in *speaking for God* or *leading His people*, remember: 1) be humble; 2) make and spend time alone with God; and, 3) never go or lead where His presence won't go!