

Leadership Lessons from the Life of Moses

Lesson #6, Preparation of Support: Get the Family On Board

Text: Ex.4:18-20,27-31

We considered some of the ways that “family” is important to preparation for leadership in Lesson 4. However, the emphasis was mostly (except Zipporah, *cf. vv.24-26*) toward *personal* preparations for leadership. Now, let’s add a few more *external* “family” preparations.

So from **4:18-20**, consider the importance of *family* concerning:

- **Though commanded by God (v.19), Moses asked Jethro for his permission or blessing to go, v.18a.** The point is not what Moses would have done had his father-in-law said “No,” but that Moses asked. Moses and Zipporah were married and had children together, but evidently still lived with or near Jethro. Since apparently Jethro had only *daughters*, *cf. 2:16ff*, Moses had become an integral part of the family and the family business. His departure would have ancillary ramifications to Jethro’s family and “business.” Moses was sensitive to these matters. *Leadership* in the spiritual realm *for* and *in* God’s kingdom affects our families. While we must always “*obey God rather than men,*” *Acts 5:29*, common courtesy demands that we approach these decisions with a degree of propriety and sensitivity to the *sacrifices* required of our families, *2Cor.8:21*. Obviously, these are delicate matters requiring careful consideration, *cp. 1Cor.7:25-35*. There are often *financial* and other sacrifices that affect more than just “me,” *cf. 1Cor.9:3-14*. Get the family “on board” before making commitments that will undoubtedly affect them also, *v.18b*. In this case, Jethro was understanding and amenable, *v.18c*.
- **Leadership is a family affair requiring family commitment, v.20.** Zipporah, Gershom, and Eliezer left the only home they had likely ever known in Midian. They were also moving to a land of *captivity* (for the Israelites, of whom Moses was one), and from which their husband/father had fled for his life! Furthermore, and surely it was unknown to them at the time, it would be a 40-year journey of extreme hardship and trial that he (Moses) would never really complete. Yes, leadership is “hard” on families! Be sure they are “on board” and willing to also make the required sacrifices.
- **Leadership also comes with God’s assurances and provisions, vv.19, 20b.** God assured Moses that “*all the men who were seeking your life are dead,*” *v.19*. Additionally, He provided *the staff* (*cf. vv.1-4*) as a symbol of His abiding presence and power. Though *spiritual leaders* are sometimes *sent out “as sheep in the midst of wolves”* (*cf. Matt.10:16a*), they are also provided all the required *instructions* (*Matt.10:16b-23*) and *assurances* (*Matt.10:24-33*). Indeed, the Lord’s *soldier* is sent into battle *fully-armed*, *Eph.6:10-17!*

And from **4:27-31**, note two additional points related to *family*:

- **Full Disclosure is important, v.28.** Moses “*told Aaron all the words of the Lord with which He had sent him, and all the signs that He had commanded him to do.*” If Aaron was to be *involved* in the work of leadership, he needed to be *fully informed* as to the reasons and the methods that would be employed. Even good spiritual leaders are sometimes inclined to “protect” their families by keeping things to themselves. Occasionally, such is required and even beneficial. But if they are going to be involved and sacrifices required of them, our families need to understand the “whys” and “hows.” Moses told Aaron *everything* because he was to be involved, and we should do likewise to/for our families.
- **Make full use of all available talent from your family, v.30.** Moses had been *given* Aaron to take advantage of his (*natural* or *learned*) abilities, *cf. vv.14b-16*. We’ve already seen this with regard to Zipporah (*vv.25-26*), Jethro (*v.18*; and *18:12-23*), and now we see it also with regard to Aaron. Without these three family members, Moses would have been *worn-out*, *ineffective*, or *dead!* Most spiritual leaders will tell you how valuable their wives, parents, in-laws, and children are to them in their efforts. And even good men can’t become *shepherds* without good *families*, *cf. 1Tim.3:2-5*. But *having* valuable resources is of no value unless we are willing to *involve* and *use* them, and of course, they are *willing to contribute!*

If we’re going to be effective *spiritual leaders*, we need to be carefully considerate of our families, and elicit their support and involvement in the work to be done!

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Discussion Questions:

1. Since God commanded Moses to “*Go back to Egypt*” (cf. 3:10; 4:19), why did he ask his father-in-law Jethro’s permission to do so in v.18?

2. What are the implications of your answer to question #1 for spiritual leaders today?

3. In Lesson 4, recognizing and “staying put” in a good situation (in Midian) was emphasized. Now, Moses’ willingness to *uproot* his family to depart Midian for Egypt is highlighted. What’s the differentiating consideration?

4. What *factors* should be included in this kind of decision (in question #3) as it relates to spiritual leadership today?

5. Why is spiritual leadership sometimes *hard on/for* the leader’s family? What makes these incumbent hardships easier?

6. What *assurances* and *provisions* did God supply to Moses?

7. What *assurances* and *provisions* does God make for those willing to become spiritual leaders today?

8. Why was it important that Moses told Aaron “***all the words of the Lord with which He had sent him, and all the signs that He had commanded him to do***”?

9. What are the implications your answers to question #8 regarding modern spiritual leaders?

10. How did Moses’ family help and support him in his role of *leading God’s people*? Why is this important to would-be spiritual leaders of today?