

Leadership Lessons from the Life of Moses

Lesson #11, Try the “Easy Way” First

Text: Ex.5:1-3

Moses has spent 40 years in Egypt- both in his parents' home and Pharaoh's. In the former he learned who *he* was and who *God* is, Ex.2:1-9; Acts 7:17-20. In the latter he learned who *Egypt* was and what he was expected to do about it, Ex.2:10-15; Acts 7:21-29. Then over the next 40 years in Midian, his *preparation* for leadership was completed, Ex.2:15b – 4:26; Acts 7:30-35. As commanded, he went to Egypt and prepared both *Aaron* and the *elders of the sons of Israel*, Ex.4:27-31. With the *preparations* all (*Moses* and his *family, assistant, and objects*) completed, it was time for ACTION! But if Moses (or man) had scripted this “program,” it would have probably proceeded very differently. Surely there would have been a call for “*fire to come down from heaven and consume*” Pharaoh and the Egyptians (cf. Luke 9:54) for the 400 years of slavery they exacted from God's people. But God *planned* and *wrote* this particular script, so it proceeded very differently. Remember, we're not so much looking to *Moses*, but to *God* for leadership lessons through him.

- **Do what God says whether you understand why or not, vv.1-3.** As previously stated (in Lesson #8- You Don't Always Have to Understand “Why?”), I don't know exactly why God instructed Moses to ask Pharaoh that Israel might have a *three-day furlough* into the wilderness to worship Him when deliverance was the ultimate objective. But at the very least, *trust* and *obey* is a principle that must be not only communicated by leadership, but employed. God has a history of instructing His people to do things that to them at least, seem strange, e.g. 14:2,3-31; Josh.2:10. But when we *trust* and *obey*, God's will is done and often revealed, Josh.6:5ff. Good leaders *obey God* even when they don't understand the “why(s)” of the command, and they guide others to do the same, just like Moses did.
- **Try the Easy Way first, vv.1-3.** Sounds simple, right? God sent Moses to Pharaoh to say “Let My people go.” Furthermore, say “Please,” cf.3:18; 5:3. How often we (humans) jump straight to Plan B without trying the *simple* and *direct* first? “It won't work” is usually the justification- and even in this case, God said it wouldn't, cf. Ex.3:19. But it was still the right thing to do *first*. How does this work in *leadership* applications? Read Matt.18:15-17 carefully. Yes, there's a Plan “B” and also “C” and “D,” but Plan “A” is simple, direct, and avoids a lot of unnecessary effort and hardship if it works! Not every “sheep” problem needs a “goat” solution. Good leaders know this, and are willing to try the “easy way” first.
- **Relationship and worship need to come first, vv.1,3.** Given that I've already admitted that I don't *fully* understand the initial request, it seems to be for a *three-day furlough* into the wilderness to *worship*. But wouldn't such imply a *return* to Egypt and a *continuation* of the present arrangement (of slavery)? Such surely seems like *limited relief* or *compensation* for people who have been enslaved 400 years! So what should we glean from this? Perhaps it is that Israel needed to trust God *fully*. Perhaps a three-day journey into the wilderness would help prepare Israel for the journey through the wilderness to Canaan. Most likely (to me at least) Israel needed to be *reconnected* to *their* God by *worshipping* Him free from the hardships of “work” and “present circumstance” Mark 2:27 (cf. Ex.23:12 and Deut. 5:14). We still need, and need to understand, this. Good leaders do and teach it to others.
- **Not every one will hear and heed words even from God, v.2,3b.** As much as “the easy way” needs to be offered *first*, not everyone will accept the offer. Some prove themselves to be “goats” rather than merely “lost sheep,” and have to be treated as such. This doesn't invalidate the “easy way,” it merely acknowledges that there are Plans “B/C/D.” Though good leaders offer “Plan A” (see again Matt.18:15), they are also willing to use subsequent measures when the “easy way” is refused. Good leaders understand and communicate that *failure* to put and keep God *first* brings *hardship*, v.3b; cp. Matt.6:33-34 and Prov.13:15.

Good leaders *obey* God even when they don't understand “Why?”- they also encourage others to do the same. Good leaders are always willing to try the “easy way” first, but are also willing to employ “goat” measures if needed. And, good leaders understand and help others to understand that *relationship with* and the *worship of* God must come first, but recognize that some must learn firsthand that “*the way of the treacherous is hard.*”

