

Leadership Lessons from the Life of Moses
Lesson #18, God Doesn't Accept Excuses- Especially from Those
He's *Prepared* and *Appointed*

Text: Ex.6:10-13,30

Lesson 7 (and to some degree at least 9 also) dealt with *excuses* and how God doesn't accept them. In this text, Moses seems to fall back to a familiar one, cp. 4:10. Excuse-making is not just a *sheep* problem; even *leaders/shepherds* can resort to it when things aren't "working" the way we desire or expect, cf. 1Sam.13:11-12; 15:15,21,24. But as was the case with King Saul, God doesn't accept excuses, especially from those whom He has *prepared* and *appointed* to lead, 1Sam.15:17-19. He didn't with Saul; He didn't with Moses; and He won't from us either, Matt.25:24-30! So why do we make excuses? Likely, several reasons: 1) It's easier than admitting failure; 2) In our minds, it justifies our failure, cf. 1Sam.15:24; 3) Lack of faith (including *trust*, *patience*, and *commitment*); and, 4) We define "success" by our standards rather than God's, Isa.55:10-11. Good leaders don't make, or accept, excuses.

Now let's notice some specifics from our text:

- "**The Lord spoke to Moses...**, v.10. Though not included in our text, vv.28-29 seemingly repeat and slightly expands v.10 with "*I am the Lord...*". What Moses needed to remember was *to whom* he was making an excuse- to the *omniscient*, *omnipresent*, and *omnipotent Lord!* If He issues a command, then: 1) there is a *good* reason for it, whether we understand that reason or not, Isa.55:8-9; 2) we **are** capable of fulfilling it- regardless of the apparent difficulty involved, with His strength and our faith, cf. Matt.14:25-32; and, 3) because He is **the Lord**, He has the *right* to command and we only to *obey*, 2Chron.20:6; Dan.4:35! If we are to lead others to truth and righteousness, we must have a heart that *remembers* who He is, and *obeys* without *question* or *excuse!* Then, we must also teach others to do the same!
- "**But...**", v.12a. The importance of this little contrasting conjunction is seen in the command of the Lord from the previous verse, "*Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the sons of Israel go out of his land.*" Thus, "*But...*" indicates a problem with whatever follows next. Anytime God says *do*, and a contrasting conjunction ensues- either in the text or in our minds/activities, it's not good!
- "**Behold, the sons of Israel have not listened to me...**" v.12b. As noted above, anytime we assume that God is *unaware* or has *failed to notice* something, and that we're going to *point it out* to Him, we presume upon His omniscience and omnipresence, cf. Psa.139:7-11. But Moses also lays the groundwork for his coming excuse by *telling* the Lord that (even) Israel *did not listen to me* (as if He was *unaware*). Even good leaders sometime fall into the "it won't work" trap. Perhaps we, like Moses, make the mistake of assuming that because it didn't work *before*, it won't work *this time*. Question: Did you believe and obey the gospel *the first time* you heard it? Or, was your obedience instead derived from repetition? See? We sometimes *deny* others that from which we benefited. Good leaders understand human nature, and provide multiple opportunities for others to *hear* and *obey* rather than merely *excusing* the effort with "I/we tried that before and it didn't work."
- "**How then will Pharaoh listen to me...**", v.12c. On the surface, Moses' logic seems sound. If Israel, God's own children, would not listen (cp. 4:31 with 5:21) to him, then why would pagan Pharaoh give heed (cf. 5:2)? However, for all the reasons noted above, it just wasn't Moses' place to *question* such things, or seek to *excuse* himself from doing what God commanded, v.11. Good leaders know that their job is to *plant* and *water*, but God provides the *results*, 1Cor.3:6ff!

"But you didn't even mention Moses saying he was '*unskilled in speech*'." No, I didn't because: 1) he's made that excuse before; 2) like all excuses we make for NOT doing what God commands, it doesn't change the command, nor was it accepted by God, v.13. The same is true for our excuses today. Good leaders don't make or accept them. They just get busy *sowing the seed; beside the road, on the rocky ground, among the thorns, and on the good ground*, letting the Lord take care of the rest, Matt.13:18-23!

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Discussion Questions

1. What two *excuses* did the *one talent man* make in Matt.25:24-30? How is this comparable to Moses in our text of Ex.6:12?

2. What *excuses* did *King Saul* make in 1Sam.13:11? What was the *real* problem?

3. What are the two significant points, especially to *leadership*, of Samuel's statement to Saul in 1Sam.15:17?

4. What did Moses, and *leaders* today, need to remember before making an *excuse* to God?

5. What three things do we need to remember when God issues a command?

6. What does Moses' use of the word "*Behold*" in v.12a indicate?

7. What is Moses' real point when he said, "*the sons of Israel have not listened to me*" in v.12b?

8. What do good leaders, because they understand *human nature*, provide for those whom they're attempting to help?

9. What's wrong with Moses' logic in v.12c (*i.e.* that *Pharaoh won't listen*)?

10. Is it *leadership's* responsibility to provide *increase*? Why, or why not?