

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

EXODUS 16-18

Several years ago, Japanese senior citizen, Akitoshi Okamoto, was arrested. The 71 year old was charged with *“Fraudulent Obstruction Of Business.”* Put another way... **the man was a chronic complainer.**

When the retiree got angry with his phone company he placed 24,000 complaint calls, claiming the company violated his contract. When arrested Akitoshi was placing 33 calls a day to log in his grievances.

In Japan *customer harassment* is against the law. So when he realized investigators were watching his actions he shifted his grumbling and murmuring to public pay phones. Finally, Okamoto was jailed.

Yet, if there were ever a people you could call *harassing customers* it was the Hebrews who came out of Egypt. Ask Moses, *they were chronic complainers!* As I said last time, *“Some people rise and shine, while other people get up in the morning to rise and whine.”* The folks who followed Moses were whiners indeed!

Chapter 16 begins, *“And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin* (Understand, this word *“Sin”* has nothing to do with evil or displeasing God. It’s actually short for *“Sinai.”*), *which is between Elim and* (or Mount) *Sinai, on the 15th day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt.”* This date marks one month after their exodus. Now they find themselves in a dry, dusty, and dehydrated desert.

“Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them, “Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.” What an ungrateful, unbelieving group. They’d been free just a month, but were already unhappy.

Be glad Israel wasn’t a democracy. They would’ve voted to return to Egypt... *Which is why God governs His Church through godly leaders, not majority rule.*

And notice, the three traits of a complaining people...

First, grumblers like to **rewrite history**. The people said, in Egypt they *“sat by the pots of meat... ate bread to the full...”* *When did slaves ever go to bed with a full stomach? Why did they pray for a Deliverer if they had it so well off in Egypt?* It was

never as good as they now claimed. Complainers like to exaggerate the past.

Second, complainers **think negatively about the future**. God said He'd provide their needs and bring them to a place of blessing. But they talk of starving in the desert - *they'd be better off just dying in Egypt*.

And **third**, they **question the motivation of their leader**. Moses had risked his neck to stand up for them before Pharaoh. Under great pressure he'd behaved in an impeccable manner. Yet now they ignore Moses' track record, and claim it was his intention to kill them.

Verse 4, "Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you." In response to their *grumbling*. A God of grace promises them bread. Six days a week for the next forty years God will supernaturally provide them with **the wonder bread**.

Each morning God will rain bread from heaven on His people Israel. They'll rise to exit their tents and find wafers on the ground. Everyday God will cater a meal.

"And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not." The test came at gathering time. God said "*gather a certain quota*" - *a single day's portion*. If their faith wavered, and they doubted God's faithfulness, and *with stingy hands* took an extra portion just in case God didn't come through; then that day's stash would rot. They would fail the test. They had to trust God to meet their need every single day.

"And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily." On Day Six the Hebrews collected enough for two days. In the Law God will forbid work on the seventh day - the Sabbath - so on the sixth day the Hebrews will gather a double portion.

"Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, "At evening you shall know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt." In verse 13 God will also send them coveys of quail. God's menu had two entries - bread in the morning, and meat at night.

"And in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD; for He hears your complaints against the LORD. But what are we, that you complain against us?" Also Moses said, "This shall be seen when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to the full; for the LORD hears your complaints which you make against Him. And what are we? Your complaints are not against us but against the LORD." Notice, the Hebrews vented their angst at Moses, but their complaints were actually against God. Moses just happened to be the convenient scapegoat.

Guys, God is sovereign over all situations, so when we complain about *the resources He provides - or the direction He leads - or the situation He allows - or the authority He sets over us* - we're really complaining about the Lord Himself... It's been said, "When we swear we take the name of the Lord in vain, but when we grumble we take the purposes of God in vain."

It's a lot easier to complain, than it is to believe. Murmuring and grumbling are but masks for unbelief.

Yet God in His mercy still has blessing for Israel. Verse 9, "Then Moses spoke to Aaron, "Say to all the congregation of the children of Israel, 'Come near before the LORD, for He has heard your complaints.'

Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud." Remember, God had provided Moses a wilderness navigational system. He followed a glory cloud by day and fiery pillar at night.

"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am the LORD your God.' So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp..."

There are quails that migrate from southern Europe to Arabia, and cross the Sinai Peninsula. They're small birds that fly close to the ground and roost at night. They would be easy prey for the Hebrews. Quail was actually an Egyptian delicacy, so the Hebrews will be eating better in the desert than most citizens in Egypt.

"And in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground. So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "**What is it?**" For they did not know what it was." The Hebrews called the substance "manna" which literally means "*what is it?*" Here're a few ideas of what it may've looked like...

Though the Hebrews didn't know what the manna was, God knew! Scripture always refers to it as "**bread from heaven.**" Psalm 78:25 calls it "**angel's food.**" Me and my grandkids are huge fans! Later we're told it was as sweet as honey. *Maybe it was a thin cake!*

There is a provocative passage in Psalm 74:13-14, "You divided the sea by Your strength; You broke the heads of the sea serpents in the waters, You broke the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gave him as food to the people inhabiting the

wilderness...” Was manna sea serpent meat or dragon wafers? We chuckle, but indigenous Greenlanders eat whale blubber, which is white like manna. Did God’s spiritual victory in the Red Sea somehow provide nutritional fuel for His people?

Whatever it was, I’m sure if you’d run chemical tests on the manna, it would’ve contained 100% of the USDA daily nutritional requirements. It was the perfect food for desert life - and God was always right on time with His supply. The Hebrews never missed a meal.

And Moses said to them, "This is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. This is the thing which the LORD has commanded: 'Let every man gather it according to each one's need, one omer for each person, according to the number of persons; let every man take for those who are in his tent.'" Here was the daily portion of manna. An “omer” which was a Hebrew measurement equivalent to 7 1/2 pints or fifteen cups.

“And the children of Israel did so and gathered, some more, some less.” Depending on the number of mouths to feed in the family. “So when they measured it by omers, he who gathered much had nothing over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one's need.” Imagine that first morning... “glory to God! He is so faithful.” That should’ve been their attitude on the 12,480th morning, after forty years, but they quickly took it for granted.

Verse 19, “And Moses said, "Let no one leave any of it till morning." Take only the amount needed for that day. Don’t horde it *just in case*... “Notwithstanding they did not heed Moses.” After they gathered for one day, there was still food on the ground - so they grabbed as much as they could. Yet this is not how God wants His people to live. Remember Jesus told us to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” We should live by faith.

God wants us to trust Him daily. Sadly, our tendency is to trust in our surplus rather than God. Horde God’s provision and you can forget God. A hefty bank account can be wise, but it can also obstruct our faith.

Well, to teach the Hebrews to walk by faith God spoils their excess... “But some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them.” And what did they do with the stinky manna? They probably took it out and tossed it over the fence – *making it an over-the-fence omer*.

Verses 21-26 tells us this all played out the way God had said. Every morning the manna appeared, until the sun got hot and it melted. On the sixth day they gathered two omers of manna to get them through the seventh day. The Sabbath Day was to be

a day of rest.

And yet some of the Hebrews were unbelieving and greedy. Verse 27, “**Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather...**” *Why, when you gathered a double portion the day before?*

“**But they found none. And the LORD said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? See! For the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day."** Trust and rest, not grab and horde - are the attitudes that please God.

Verse 31, “**And the house of Israel called its name **Manna**. And it was like white coriander seed, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.**” Here’s a great description... manna had *the texture of a seed* - it was gritty when you chewed it - and it had *the sweetness of honey*... sort of a *Hebrew Nut’n Honey*.

Coriander seeds are the size of pearls, and give off a sweet aroma. Today they’re an ingredient in curry powder, and sweets. They’re also used to flavor bread.

There is a Jewish legend that describes how manna tasted, “**One only had to desire a certain dish, and no sooner had he thought of it, than manna had the flavor of the dish desired. The same food had a different taste to everyone who partook of it, according to his age; to the children, it tasted like milk - the strong youths like bread - to the old men like honey - to the sick like barley steeped in oil and honey.**” Interestingly. Jewish legend also claims manna tasted bitter to the Gentiles.

Verse 32, “**Then Moses said, "This is the thing which the LORD has commanded: 'Fill an omer with it, to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.'" They kept a sample for posterity’s sake. "And Moses said to Aaron, "Take a pot and put an omer of manna in it, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations." As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept.**” Later, Moses will place a jar of this manna in the Ark of the Covenant with Aaron’s rod, and the two tablets of the Ten Commandments.

It’s a shame we don’t have that manna sample today. After Indiana Jones retrieved the Ark from the Nazis they stuck it in a warehouse in Washington DC. *Now that the government has it who knows where it is.*

Verse 35, “**And the children of Israel ate manna forty years, until they came to an**

inhabited land; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan. Now an omer is one-tenth of an ephah.” So the Hebrews ate an omer of manna each day for forty years... That’s seven pints a day for 3 million people over 365 days a year for forty years. The total yearly requirement of manna would’ve been 2½ million tons.

Think of it this way... *Let’s say we take on the wilderness food service for just one day...* We won’t tackle manna, we’ll just feed 3 million Hebrews a cheeseburger, fry, and coke. Well, here’s our shopping list: we’d need 3 million beef patties a quarter pound a piece, or 750,000 pounds of beef. If we were shipping it by rail it would take a freight train 200 cars long, and to pull those cars the train would require ten locomotives... We’d also need another seven cars to pull the 750,000 pounds of potatoes for the fries... and 75 cars to carry the 750,000 gallons of coca-cola... To ice down those cokes we would need 375,000 pounds of ice, which would require another four railroad cars.

So here’s the rest of the grocery list... buns: 250,000 dozen - mustard: 11,000 gallons - dill pickles: 12,000 gallons - tomatoes: 50,000 gallons - cheese: 200,000 pounds - onions: 175,000 pounds - lettuce: 150,000 head. Now we’re talking a freight train of well over 300 cars long. Such a train would extend 2 1/2 miles.

Now, imagine preparing and cooking that volume of food. You’d cook 1000 patties per minute - *which would take a lot of grills*. And work 48 hours to cook 3 million burgers. That’s not figuring the time to peel and cook the fries, slice the onions and tomatoes, and pour the cokes... Now keep this up every day, six days a week, for forty years... Not even the Calvary CSM conference servers and barbecue team could pull this off. The provision in the desert was also an amazing miracle!

Exodus 17, “**Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink.**” Notice, God leads the Hebrews to a place where there is no water. This is not what we’d expect. *Oh surely, God always leads us into bountiful places? God would never lead His people to a dry well... and yet that’s exactly what God does!*

I’m afraid many of us have a preschool faith: *where bad things happen to bad people, and good things happen to good people*. Hey, every time you make a choice that causes stressful circumstances it doesn’t mean you’ve missed God’s will. God does lead us into difficult places to test and refine us. AW Pink writes, “**We need to realize that in every circumstance and situation where faith is tested, the Lord Himself brought us there. If this be apprehended, it won’t be so difficult for us to trust Him to sustain us while we remain there.**”

Verse 2, “Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, “Give us water, that we may drink. And Moses said to them, “Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?” And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, “Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” The Hebrews are back griping. There’s now manna each morning and quail at night, *yet because there’s no bottled water they revolt!*

“So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!” A mob had formed to permanently fire Moses. “And the LORD said to Moses, “Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.” *Here’s another miracle!* Moses hits the rock with his shepherd’s staff, and the stone becomes a sprinkler. The ledge becomes a fire hose. Water gushes out that quenches the people’s thirst. There is a split rock on top of what some folks think was Mount Sinai in today’s Saudi Arabia. Jabal Maqla could’ve been the site where God worked this miracle.

In 1 Corinthians 10:4 Paul reveals that there’s a spiritual application to this passage. He writes of the Hebrews, “all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.” When Moses struck the rock he was not just supplying water to thirsty people, he was also painting a picture of how God slakes our spiritual thirst.

In the Bible, the rock is an idiom for Messiah. On the cross God will strike the rock. Fifty days after Jesus’ crucifixion the Holy Spirit was poured out on Jesus’ disciples, bringing spiritual refreshment to thirsty souls. Jesus cried out in John 7:37, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.” Spiritual life still gushes from our Rock, Jesus Christ. He is the true thirst quencher!

Verse 7, “So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah...” which means *tempted* and *contention*. “because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?” They were terminal doubters.

“Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim.” A month after Israel escapes bondage, they’re thrust into a skirmish. Which makes a point, *become a friend of God, and you end up a target for Satan*. Hey, life is not a *playground*, it’s a

battleground.

When the nomadic Amalekites heard a new watering hole had opened up at Rephidim they came to grab it for their own. Israel fought, and their victory teaches lessons for how we too can win spiritual battles.

Incidentally, Josephus points out that in this fight the Hebrews used the weapons of the drowned Egyptians. Apparently, God caused their swords and armor to float to the seashore where the Hebrews plucked it up. God foresaw their need for weapons, providing in advance. Which may explain why few Egyptian weapons and artifacts have been found on the floor of the Red Sea.

“And Moses said to Joshua, “Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.” So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.” It was a seesaw battle. As long as Moses held the rod of God high in the air Israel’s troops were encouraged and prevailed. But the moment Moses’ arms fell, and the rod disappeared from their view, the Amalekites got the *upperhand*.

“But Moses’ hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.”

Moses’ arms had to be supported for Israel to win. And this is a key for us in the spiritual battles we face. Uplifted hands are a sign of faith. We’re reaching out to heaven for help - we’re trusting God for victory. But often our faith gets tired as our arms get weary. That’s when we need the support of friends. Charles Spurgeon once wrote, “Friendship is one of the sweetest joys of life. Many might have failed beneath the bitterness of their trial had they not found a friend.”

This is why *the isolated Christian* is destined to fail. When his faith gets weary there’s no one to help hold up his arms... At times we’re Moses in need of a lift. At other times we’re Aaron, or Hur... *even a Him*. We’re the person who provides the lift. But for us all to win the victory we need to help hold up each other’s arms!

Verse 14, “Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.” The Amalekites will ultimately be defeated. “Moses built an altar and called its name, The-Lord-Is-My-Banner...” or *Jehovah-Nissi*.

"For he said, "Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." Every army has a flag, and Yahweh is our banner. Our Father God is our flag and our inspiration.

I want to begin Chapter 18 with a poem that sets the stage for what follows... "Now I imagine **few of us**, would care to lead an **Exodus**. With all their problems, hopes, and **fears**, a-wandering for forty **years**? Moses did not **want to grip** the lonely role of **leadership**. But God, one brilliant **desert dawn** commanded him to **take it on**. And feeling he could ill **afford** to disobey his living **Lord**, He acquiesced to his **request**, and gave the job his **very best**. No enterprise will long **survive**, whose leader works just **9 to 5**. So Moses, being in **his prime**, began to work some **overtime**. His office soon became the **site** of meetings nearly every **night**. It wasn't long before **he'd scoff** at any thought of **taking off**. With so much work that must be **done**, he hadn't time for play or **fun**. Nor could he laugh, relax, or **frolic**, Moses was a **workaholic**.

Now men with hefty **power drives** are seldom heroes to **their wives**. The man who leads a busy **life** has little time for home or **wife**. Spouses do not have a **yen**, to join in praising famous **men**. They give success a cool **reception**, and Zipporah she was no **exception**. The placid Moses whom she **married**, was tired, edgy, tense, and **harried**. And she suspected he was **very**, ready for a **coronary**. And so, Zipporah felt, it was time she **had**, a little chat with mom and **dad**. She journeyed where her parents **dwelt**, and told her folks just how she **felt**. *'I didn't want a bed of roses, when I agreed to marry Moses. I know it takes a lot of gall to argue with a holy call. But Moses, as you clearly see, has time for God, but not for me. I cry myself to sleep at night, tell me, do you think that's right?'*

It caused those parents great **distress**, to see their child's **unhappiness**. And Jethro, dear Zipporah's **dad**, was more than just a trifle **mad**. *'The time,'* he thought, *'is overdue, to teach that chap a thing or two.'* Jethro's temper **rankled raw**, as he sought to find his **son-in-law**. But then he saw, to his **dismay**, how Moses spent the **working day**. People came from far and **near**, in hopes of catching Moses' **ear**. No problem was too small to **mention**, they brought them all to his **attention**. The sheer amount of people **who**, were waiting for an **interview**, caused Jethro then to feel quite **dizzy**, *'My son-in-law is much too busy! I think I'll play a bit of cupid, he's not bad, he's simply stupid!'*

And so, I'm happy to **relate**, Jethro told it to him **straight**. *'Whosoever said you were commanded to run this country single-handed? You know you're just the protégé, of God who rests the seventh day. Why you've become (this is very odd), more indispensable than God. This schedule you are keeping will, put you to bed in*

Ulcerville. *And that's a price we can't afford, so get some help, thus saith the Lord!* So under Jethro's gentle nudges, Moses chose some able judges. And he discovered to his glee, that they did the job as well as he... And here's the lesson, that will be your blessing, there's ample help for all our task, once we have the sense to ask.

In Exodus 18 Moses' father-in-law Jethro, gives him a course on priorities, time management, delegation, and organization... In the the battle with Amalek, Aaron and Hur had been an invaluable help to Moses. God was teaching Moses, he can never do it all himself.

Spiritual leadership can be taxing. Pastors and church leaders have a big job. And to be successful we too have to learn to prioritize and involve others.

Verse 1, "And Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people (The news was already getting to other nations in the region) - that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt. Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back with her two sons, of whom the name of one was Gershom (for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land")" *Gershom* means stranger. "and the name of the other was Eliezer (for he said, "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh"); *Eliezer* means helper or comforter.

"and Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness, where he was encamped at the mountain of God." Here we learn Zipporah wasn't with Moses. Prior to the exodus He'd sent his family back to Midian. *We have no idea why.*

Verse 6, "Now (Jethro) had said to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her." So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed down, and kissed him.

"And they asked each other about their well-being, and they went into the tent. And Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had come upon them on the way, and how the LORD had delivered them." *To have heard Moses himself tell this story... that would've made an audible bestseller!*

"Then Jethro rejoiced for all the good which the LORD had done for Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, "Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, and who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.

Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, He was above them." Remember each plague on Egypt was designed to show God's superiority over a particular idol... The Nile was sacred so God defiled it with blood... Frogs were sacred, so God dispatched so many frogs *it made Egypt croak*... The sun was considered sacred so God orchestrated a solar eclipse.

"Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and other sacrifices to offer to God. And Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God. And so it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening." Jethro could see Moses was doing too much. Imagine, trying to counsel and judge between three million people. Moses is dealing with problems all day long. His caseload is enormous. There isn't enough of him to go around, and Jethro can see his son-in-law is headed for serious burnout if drastic action isn't taken.

It was probably Moses' wife, Zipporah, who prodded her dad to talk to Moses. Wives often see burnout's danger signals long before their husbands do.

"So when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?" And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws." Moses meant well. Like a good pastor he had *a passion for God's Word and a compassion for His people*. But working longer isn't always the answer.

I've learned the hard way ministry fills up the time it's allotted. Give it 50 hours and it fills 50 hours. Work 80 hours and you'll find 80 hours worth of things to do. A pastor's work is never done. As long as there's one more lost soul he has work to do. There comes a point where the answer is not to work *longer*, but *smarter*.

Verse 17, "So Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you do is not good. Both you and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing is too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself." Moses represented God, but he needed to remember he was not God. *And this is what all pastors have to grasp if they want to survive...*

Psalm 121:4 says the God of Israel neither slumbers or sleeps - but pastors require 6-7 hours. God is in all places at all times, but I'm limited to the speed of Atlanta traffic... *Try to do it all and you'll wear out!*

Jethro continues in verse 19, “Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do.

Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be that every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear the burden with you. If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace.” A little delegation will save Moses and bless the people.

And this is our strategy here at Calvary Chapel. We have assistant pastors, and elders, and deacons that are available to handle the “*small matters*” - and if they have a problem they can’t solve, they bring it to me.

But rather than spend all my time answering the phone and arranging the chairs this allows me to focus on the three priorities Jethro gave Moses... Verse 19, he’s to **pray for people**... Verse 20, he’s to **teach people**... And in verses 21-22, he’s to **oversee the bigger issues that arise among the people**... **Moses’ job, like every pastor’s is to plead, to feed, to lead.**

Verse 24 tells us how Moses responded to his father-in-law’s advice, “So Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people: rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. So they judged the people at all times; the hard cases they brought to Moses, but they judged every small case themselves.” *The Deliverer becomes the Delegator.* Sometimes we have to choose, “Agitate or delegate.”

“Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went his way to his own land.” What a blessing when a father-in-law cares for his son-in-law, and that son has the good sense to take his father’s advice to heart!