

LIFE'S WILDERNESS SHORTAGES AND GOD
Part VI: Following God's Lead To Spread Out His Ministry's Workload
(Exodus 17:8-18:27)

I. Introduction

- A. There always seems to be so much that needs to be done for God's work to be accomplished. However, often it is the "few" who do the "work", and that can lead to their "burnout" and frustration for others.
- B. This problem existed for Moses in the wilderness until, in various ways, the need to address it became apparent and a workable solution that God approved was recommended by Moses' father-in-law. That solution is found in Exodus 17:8-18:27, and it offers us direction for meeting similar needs we face today:

II. Following God's Lead To Spread Out His Ministry's Workload, Exodus 17:8-18:27.

- A. God indicated the need for Moses to obtain some **HELP** in a crisis Israel faced in battle, Exodus 17:8-13.
 - 1. When the Amalekites came out to attack Israel at Rephidim, Moses was compelled to form a military defense, Exodus 17:8-10. He assigned his personal servant, Joshua with the responsibility of leading Israel's army while he lifted up his famous rod, the symbol of God's miraculous help in his ministry.
 - 2. In the battle, the aged Moses felt his upheld arms grow weak to the point they eventually fell, leading to the turn of the battle from God's favoring Israel to the success of Israel's foe, Ex. 17:11-12a.
 - 3. The solution to this traumatic crisis came in the form of **help for Moses**: the people of Israel slid a rock under Moses so he might rest on it, and Aaron and Hur each supported one of his arms so Moses' rod could stay aloft, a move that God honored by continuing to giving Israel the ultimate victory, 17:12-13!
- B. Following this event, God used Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, to suggest he get some **HELP** in his ministry by delegating authority to other good men and so save his strength for his oversight role, Exodus 18:1-27:
 - 1. Exodus 18:13-14 reveals Moses became overloaded with judging all of the legal conflicts of Israel, a nation that numbered from 2 to 3 million people, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., fn. to Num. 1:46!
 - 2. At the time, Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, was visiting him and saw the load Moses bore in his daily work of judging the people, and suggested he delegate out some of his judicial responsibilities:
 - a. Jethro saw that Moses was overloaded, and stated that his fatigue created problems not only for him, but that it stressed the people who had to wait a long time to get a hearing from him, Ex. 18:15-18.
 - b. Jethro thus urged him to delegate his responsibility out to other qualified men: (1) Jethro stated Moses should rightfully personally oversee major matters of the whole nation especially as it related to God's relationship to the nation as a whole, Ex. 18:18, 26a,b. (2) He suggested Moses instruct the lower judges on details of applying God's Law so they could judge such matters of lesser weight, Ex. 18:20, 26a,c. (3) The lower judges of course needed to be qualified men, men who respected God, who were honest and not covetous so they could not be influenced by bribes to produce errant rulings, Ex. 18:21a. (4) Accordingly, lower cases were to be judged by the lower courts with these helpers for Moses, and there would be a rising series of courts of appeal to where Moses would preside over the Supreme Court to hear the most difficult cases that could not be adequately resolved by the lower courts, Exodus 18:21b, 26.
 - c. Of importance to note is Jethro's suggestion that Moses get God's approval to this idea of a delegation of authority, a Biblically correct route to take, cf. Exodus 18:23b.
 - d. Moses accepted Jethro's suggestion, and God approved it to where everything worked out well both for Moses and the rest of the people of Israel, Exodus 18:24-27.

Lesson: *The solution for the overworked Moses and its resulting negative frustration of the people of Israel as they had to wait long to gain a hearing with him was for SOME of Moses' responsibilities to be DELEGATED out to OTHER qualified, trustworthy, instructed judges under him in an orderly way.*

Application: *(1) If in the ministry both the overseer is overworked and his subordinates are likewise frustrated by their consequent failure to have their needs addressed by him, GOD wills that some of his work be DELEGATED OUT in an orderly way. (2) God may expose the need's existence by way of crises that expose the need (the battle of Amalek) or even via suggestions from onlookers (Moses' father-in-law). Both the leader(s) and subordinates should be sensitive to spot such operational logjams and address them by properly delegating out responsibilities for the good of all involved.*