

UPPER ROOM BIBLE CLASS
“Famous People You Never Heard Of”
Spring, 2019
Pastor Jim Otte

1. Opening Discussion:

- a. What experiences do you have with giving or receiving performance reviews?
- b. What training did you receive in order to handle that well?
- c. Was it a helpful experience?

2. Jethro (Exodus 18)

Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel his people, how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt. ² Now Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had taken Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her home, ³ along with her two sons. The name of the one was Gershom (for he said, “I have been a sojourner^[a] in a foreign land”), ⁴ and the name of the other, Eliezer^[b] (for he said, “The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh”). ⁵ 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. ⁶ And when he sent word to Moses, “I,^[c] your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her,”

- a. **“priest of Midian”** – Midian was one of the sons of Abraham; the Midianites were a nomadic people; they worshiped a variety of pagan deities: Baal & Ashteroth (of the Caananites)
- b. **“encamped at the mountain of God”** – after the Exodus from Egypt, the people settled at Mount Sinai to await God’s direction.

⁷ Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. And they asked each other of their welfare and went into the tent. ⁸ Then 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 in the way, and how the LORD had delivered them. ⁹ And Jethro rejoiced for all the good that the LORD had done to Israel, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians.

- a. **“bowed down and kissed him.”** – the respect Moses showed for Jethro
- b. **“Then Moses told...”** – in conversational flow, Moses shared the gospel of how God had worked, resulting in Jethro’s conversion to believe in the true God.

¹⁰ 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 has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. ¹¹ Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people.”^[d] ¹² And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

¹³ The next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning till evening. ¹⁴ When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning till evening?" ¹⁵ And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God; ¹⁶ when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make them know the statutes of God and his laws."

- a. **"saw all that he was doing"** – Jethro began by seeing what was happening.
- b. **"What is this that you are doing"** – Jethro takes a posture of curiosity, not judgmentalness or disapproval.

¹⁷ Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. ¹⁸ You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone. ¹⁹ Now obey my voice; I will give you advice, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God, ²⁰ and you shall warn them about the statutes and the laws, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do. ²¹ Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. ²² And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. ²³ If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace."

- a. **"What you are doing...wear yourselves out...too heavy for you."** – Jethro shapes his comments in light of his concern for Moses' well-being; not in a way that criticizes Moses' performance.
- b. **"So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you."**
- c. **"If you do this...you will be able to endure"** – emphasis on how this will help him; showing obvious compassion for his son-in-law

²⁴ So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said.

²⁵ Moses chose able men out of all Israel and made them heads over the people, chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. ²⁶ And they judged the people at all times. Any hard case they brought to Moses, but any small matter they decided themselves. ²⁷ Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went away to his own country.

3. Application in the Narrow Sense:

A parent-in-law has wisdom to share with his/her adult children and/or their spouse.

- a. Notice first. Listen second.
- b. Avoid judgmental language like guilt-tripping
- c. Ask if they want your opinions; respect their "No."
- d. Use conversation as a way to broach subjects.

4. Application in the Broader Sense:

- a. Is it justified for Christians to critique each other, whether or not they have the authority to do so?
 - i. **Matt. 7:1-3.** *“Judge not, that you be not judged. ² For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. ³ Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?”*
 - ii. **1 Corinthians 5:12.** For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church^[a] whom you are to judge? ¹³ God judges^[b] those outside.
- b. If so, how ought the critique to be delivered?
- c. For the one being critiqued, what is the best way to receive it?

5. Look for Conversation Moments, rather than Teaching Moments...

“It is interesting to consider the derivation of the word “conversation” which in Latin was “conservare.” “Con” means “with” and “versare” means “to turn.” The literally, conversation means to turn with, or to turn together. The analogy of a dance is often used to express the essence of effective conversation: of two people being together and moving in ways that are synchronized or coordinated. They move as an integrated unit with both being able to express their individuality within this integration....This is the potential power of conversations.”

Alan Sieler: Coaching to the Human Soul.