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THE BIBLE IS THE LEADING TRAINING MANUAL

Today's text: Exodus Ch. 18; 2 Tim. 3: 14-17

Extracts:

- a) **“And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening...And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, the thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it alone” [Ex. 18: 13, 17-18]**
- b) **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” [2 Tim. 3:16]**

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Bob Pike's position is not surprising because Scripture [the content of the Bible] is God-inspired and it is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” [2 Tim. 3:16], and “a sound heart is the life of the flesh” [Prov. 14:30]. Therefore, when we study the Bible, we are actually handling the best training manual on any subject under the sun! Whether it is training to manage a family or business or church, to prepare for earthly or heavenly blessings, to settle interpersonal disputes, etc., the Bible is a ready training manual.

In today's lesson, we shall study how Moses came to learn the management principle of delegation from his father-in-law, the knowledge of which helped him to lead a congregation of two-and-a-half million through the wilderness for 40 years!

¹ “Top Ten Reading List on Training Topics,” www.asted.org/moreinfo.cfm

1. Background

All this while, when Moses was battling with Pharaoh in Egypt, he had left his wife, Zipporah, and two sons, Gershom and Eliezer, with his father-in-law, Jethro, in Midian [Ex. 18: 1-4], a region in the Arabian desert occupied by the Midianites [Gen. 25:6; Ex. 2:15]. Jethro was a priest. Now that Moses had brought the children of Israel close by to Mount Sinai where they would receive the Ten Commandments, Jethro felt that it was time for the man of God, Moses, to bear his family responsibilities. I doubt if Moses ever sent any maintenance allowance to his family during his period of absence!

When Jethro came to his son-in-law, he was amazed by what he saw. From morning to evening, everybody came to Moses, now 80 years old, with his or her individual problems. My goodness! When would he have time for his family? Were they not wearing Moses out? There had to be a better way!

It has always baffled me. In rebuking Aaron and Miriam for envying Moses' closeness to God, the Lord said, "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all Mine house. *With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of God shall he behold*" [Num. 12:6-8]. So, if God could send a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to lead the children of Israel towards the Promised Land, why did He not tell Moses directly how to organize the people? Secondly, why did Moses accept his father-in-law's "interference" in his ministry, when he could have brushed him aside by saying, "if that is the right thing to do, God would have directly told me so"?

Here is an important lesson for all of us. Many of us are still carrying our problems because we refuse to accept that God can also speak to us through others who may not be as spiritually gifted as we are. Jethro was a priest, not a prophet like Moses. Secondly, he offered to give Moses "counsel" and added, "and God shall be with thee" [Ex. 18: 19]. Why did Moses listen? First, he respected his father-in-law [v. 7]. Second, Moses knew that he was passing through hell, managing the huge and unruly crowd all by himself. I wonder how much sleep or rest he had had since they left Egypt! Third, he had the Spirit of discernment [1 Cor. 12: 10] to know that what he was about to hear was more than advice. It came from God for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned; *but he that is spiritual judgeth all things*" [1 Cor. 2:14-15]. I wish all men and women of God could imitate Moses' humility!

2. Principles of Delegation

Jethro carefully taught Moses as follows:

a) *The problem*

He made Moses realize that there was a problem. First of all, Moses was wearing himself out because there was no way that he alone could minister to the spiritual needs of two-and-a-half million people [**Ex. 18: 17-18**]. Second, he would not have time for his wife and children at that rate.

Many men and women of God behave as if they are indispensable. In fact, they will enjoy it better if they are the lone stars and everybody comes to them. They do not see the need to develop successors or subordinates or associates. As a result, when they die, everything dies with them. Contrast that with the position of Jesus who told His disciples that they would do greater things than He did after He would have returned to His Father [**Jn 14:12**].

The marriages of many ministers of God are in distress under the guise that they are doing God's work. However, the word of God has made it quite clear that a man who cannot manage his own family cannot take care of the church of God [**1 Tim. 3:5**]. Therefore, ministers and, in deed, all of us, need time for our family members, no matter how busy we are in the Lord's vineyard. Moses had the problem and we do!

b) *The incentive to seek a solution*

After helping Moses to see the problem, Jethro also opened Moses' eyes to the benefits of finding a solution to the problem. By sharing the burden with others, the administrative load would be much lighter for Moses, and he would no longer be so worn out each new day [**Ex. 18:17-18**]. "Thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace" [**v. 23**]. His spiritual position would not diminish because he would remain the people's channel to God [**v. 19**]. Of course, Jethro did not add that he would feel comfortable leaving his daughter and grandchildren with Moses only if he would be available for them!

When we share the management of our families, ministries and offices with others, we would have more time to do many things for ourselves. Jesus delegated the chore of baptizing new converts to His disciples [**Jn 4:2**]. After selecting His 12 Apostles, He sent them out to preach and to heal [**Matt. 10: 1-5**]. That gave Him time to Himself, like the opportunity He had to speak with the Samaritan woman when His disciples went shopping for food [**Jn 4:8**]. The Apostles selected seven deacons for administrative duties from among the "multitude of the disciples" so that they themselves could concentrate on pastoral work [**Acts 6:1-6**].

c) *Building values*

Delegation involves *responsibilities* and *authority*. When you give tasks to people to perform, you have to give them the authority to do so. Otherwise, nothing has changed. For example, some people go on leave and claim to have left the office in the care of a subordinate. Meanwhile, they are on their cell phones from their vacation spots, to find out what is happening or to be asked their approval for one decision or the other. To avoid that kind of situation, it is necessary to properly train your subordinates to accept responsibilities.

Jethro taught Moses how to *select* the right people (“able men such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness” [v. 21]), and *place* them in the right positions (“rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens” [v. 21]). They were to be taught “ordinances and laws” and shown “the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do” [v. 20]. Finally, they should be given authority, “let them judge the people *at all seasons... and they shall bear the burden with thee*” [v.22]. So, these other rulers would be encouraged to work because they had their pockets of influence and they had a stake in the success of the whole organization. They felt empowered to participate in the great task of leading the children of God to the Promised Land.

The Apostles chose men “of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom” to administer the early church. Then, they prayed and laid hands on them to spiritually empower them [Acts 6: 3-6].

d) *Delegation is not abdication!*

Delegation does not mean that you give away all your responsibilities, while you now do nothing. In fact, you have the responsibility to ensure that the empowered subordinates are making the necessary reports and seeking your assistance to handle *exceptional cases*. This rule is known as the *Exception Principle*.

Jethro told Moses the same thing as follows: “every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge; so shall it be easier for thyself” [v. 22]. We also saw the situation when the disciples of Jesus could not heal a lunatic. Jesus healed him. Later, the disciples asked Jesus, “Why could not we cast him out?” Jesus replied, “This kind goeth out by prayer and fasting” [Matt. 17: 14-21]. In other words, this was an exceptional case.

e) *Process consultation*

It is not enough to introduce a new skill or practice. You should monitor its implementation and be prepared to fine-tune it so as to make it better.

Moses did as he had been taught by his father-in-law who remained to ensure that the new system was working properly. It was after it appeared successfully implemented that “Moses let his father in law depart” [vv. 24-27].

Jesus sent out 70 disciples, two by two, “before His face into every city and place, *whither He himself would come*” [Lk 10:1]. He taught them what to take, how to behave, and what tasks to perform [healing and preaching]. They returned with joy, telling Him how even the demons were subject to them through the name of Jesus. He congratulated them and raised their motivation to a higher level: “Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven” [vv. 17-20]. On another occasion, John brought a report that he came across somebody casting out demons in the name of Jesus, and that they had tried to stop him because he was not one of His disciples. Jesus corrected that attitude by saying, “forbid him not; ... for he that is not against us is on our part” [Mk 9: 38-39].

3. Lessons

Delegation has become an important principle in modern management, and any honest management expert in management concepts and practices will acknowledge it in his or her works that it came from the Bible. So, what lessons do we learn from that in terms of our daily training needs? Here are a few of them:

a) *God is a multi-channel communicator*

Most times, we tend to only accept that God is speaking to us when the voice is thunderous as in Mount Sinai [Ex. 19:16-19], or like a rushing mighty wind as on Pentecost day [Acts 2:1-4]. The still small voice, as in Elijah’s experience [1 Kgs 19:12-13], we may still tolerate. But advice from others? That is going too far! The truth is that there are people who have the spiritual gifts of wisdom, knowledge and understanding [1 Cor. 12: 8], “for who hath known the mind of the Lord that He may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” [1 Cor. 2:16].

Towards the evening of his ministry, Moses anointed Joshua, in accordance with God’s command, to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land. “And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a *charge* and said, be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swear unto them: and I will be with thee” [Deut. 31: 23]. Now, compare that with what God Himself told Joshua after Moses had died, “Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them” [Josh. 1:6]. There is no difference between Moses’ and God’s

words! When you have His authority, “thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee” [**Job 22:28**].

Therefore, we need to train our ears to know when God is speaking to us through suggestions and counsel from others. Otherwise, we could be refusing the answers to our prayers. The test is that the said advice does not contradict the word of God. If it will make your present predicament better, you could actually be opening the door for Christ to come in and sup with you [**Rev. 3:20**].

b) *Make the Bible your first source of training information*

If the training experts have acknowledged that the Bible is Number One on the ***Top Ten Reading List on Training Topics***, it follows that believers should form the habit of looking it up when they have training needs. For example, here is the grievance procedure prescribed by Jesus Christ when a believer is offended by another:

*Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But, if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or more witnesses, every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven [**Matt. 18:15-18**]*

Can you beat that?

4. Conclusion

The remarkable thing about the Bible is that it is a book for all times, being the inspired word of God. Therefore, its principles and teachings remain the same, even when the world is changing rapidly. As your daily living becomes more complicated, you should realize that “my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” [**Phil. 4:19**]. Therefore, study the Bible, and learn the ways of Jesus: His examples, coaching and encouraging words to His disciples and followers, His humility and caring nature, etc. Soon, you will discover that nothing can separate you from the love of God, “which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” [**Rom. 8: 39**].