



**Sermon Series:** Mentoring: Investing in Others

**To be used with** Session 1: Jethro and Moses

**Sermon Title Possibilities:** From Celebration to Delegation

**Scripture:** Exodus 18:9-11,14-21

**Connection with Unit Theme:** To complement the Bible study “Mentoring: Investing in Others” this sermon teaches us how to celebrate the blessings of God in the lives of others, while offering critiques in love. We learn that the order of celebration, evaluation and recommendation is not only biblical based but a practical road map for offering wisdom. We cannot force people to do anything they do not want to do, but offering oneself in love makes it difficult for advice to be ignored. Ask Jesus!

**Introduction:** In 1966, the song “Tell It Like It Is,” recorded by Aaron Neville for Par Lo Records, reached # 391 on Rolling Stone Magazine’s list of the 500 greatest songs of all time. The song, wildly popular in American culture, highlighted the shortness of life, the uselessness of playing games, and the avoidance of beating around the bush. By challenging people to speak honestly and forthrightly, the song goes down in history not solely because of the melodious instrumentation and Neville’s smooth vocal cords, but because the lyrics imply that something is at stake if people do not tell it like it is.

In our text, Jethro, who became the father-in-law of Moses after giving his daughter Zipporah to him in marriage (Ex. 2:11-21), seemed to possess the core theme of a song he never heard. Jethro had no problem telling it like he saw it because much was at stake.

### **1. Do Not Withhold the Truth If It Gives Glory to God (Exodus 18:9-11)**

In Exodus 18:9-11, Jethro could have been bitter and envious of the success of Moses. He modeled the mentor/mentee relationship by celebrating with Moses the wonderful things the Lord had done. Jethro acknowledged how the Lord rescued the children of Israel from the hands of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Jethro’s celebration modeled the loving bond between a mentor and a mentee. Using a sports analogy, Moses scored a touchdown, and Jethro celebrated in the end zone with a touchdown dance. Jethro also acknowledged the power of the God of Israel by giving Him the glory as the God above all gods. By celebrating with

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Moses what the Lord did, Jethro gave all glory to God. Mentors who are jealous or envious of mentees success and accomplishments, forfeit the right to disciple making.

**2. Do Not Withhold Questions If It Helps with Understanding (Exodus 18:14-16)**

In Exodus 18:14-16, Jethro observed Moses as he led the children of Israel and seemed concerned with what he saw. However, instead of offering his immediate critique, Jethro presented Moses with a series of questions to gain understanding. Jethro's approach to advising his mentee is significant for mentorship. Instead of appearing bossy or overbearing, Jethro took an inquisitive approach to address something he saw as a significant flaw. By offering questions, Jethro modeled a technique for the mentor/mentee relationship. Jethro's wisdom to ask questions in verse 14 allowed Moses to explain himself in verse 15-16. After properly diagnosing the problem, then, and only then, could Jethro offer a solution for Moses to consider. Understanding is essential for the proper leading of a mentee, and Jethro, even though he had his own opinion, allowed Moses to explain himself. This allowed Jethro to insert his experience into Moses' life.

**3. Do Not Withhold a Conviction If It Promotes Unity (Exodus 18:17-21)**

In Exodus 18:17-21, Jethro revealed blind spots in Moses' approach to judging the children of Israel. First, Jethro addressed the physical and emotional toll Moses unknowingly heaped on himself in carrying the responsibility of judging all the people. Second, Jethro awakened Moses to the physical and emotional toll upon the children of Israel, who waited extended periods for Moses' ruling. Thirdly, Jethro explained the reason for the physical and emotional toll due to the heaviness of the task, unbeknownst to Moses. Jethro's ability to see the blind spots of Moses demonstrated the effectiveness of mentorship worth noting. Mentors must be able to foresee challenges before they materialize. Jethro's presupposition of Moses' organizational structure protected Moses from causing harm to himself, the children of Israel, and the task of judging so desperately needed by the children of Israel. In verse 21, Jethro not only offered a solution but included other God-fearing and trustworthy individuals to stabilize the efforts of Moses.

**Conclusion:** With a relationship built on honesty, trust, and telling it like it is, Jethro and Moses exemplified a mentor/mentee relationship worth modeling. We, as believers, must also tell it like it is to a world that desperately needs to hear the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Failure to do so does not give glory to God, does not provide understanding, and does not promote unity. Jethro's conversation with Moses lifted the burden off Moses and allowed him to live a life unshackled by heavy responsibilities. We live in a world where millions of people live under the heavy bondage of sin. However, Jesus Christ offers to lighten the load when we take His yoke and learn from Him (Matt. 11:28-30). Jesus assured us that His "yoke is easy and his burden is

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light.” In the same way Moses heeded the words of Jethro and lightened his earthly load, may we heed the words of Jesus and enlighten our eternal load.

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