

## **A Father-in-Law Can Help**

Exodus 18:1-12

Thank you for joining us here on Hope for Today. This program is produced by Heralds of Hope, and we thank God for the opportunity to serve Him this way. Our mission is to use media to make disciples of Jesus Christ to accomplish the great commission in our lifetime. Media has many aspects to it, but the two we use the most are radio and the Bible. Currently, our radio program is translated into 23 different languages, and so far this year, we have distributed just over 50,000 Bibles.

Before Pastor J Mark joins us, I'd like to share a few testimonies from our listeners. The first testimony is from one of our partners in Zambia; he said, "The teaching yesterday, it really inspired me, especially the verse from I Cor. 10:31." It is encouraging for us to hear testimonies like this, and we are glad to hear the Spirit is taking the verses we share and using them to encourage Christians everywhere. What a miracle!

Here is another testimony, "It is a pleasure to listen to direct truth about the prophecies of God being taught here; I thank God that you preach it without hiding any truth."

This listener accurately describes what we aim to do. If God's Word includes it, we also want to include it in our teaching. We are in no position to say this is needed and that is not needed; if God put it in the Bible, it is important; we all need it. We want to be disciples of Jesus and make disciples of Jesus who honor all Scripture and grow in our love of Him. Jesus teaches in John 14 that the test of our love is if we obey His teaching. We want to pass this test, and we want you to pass His test.

The title for today's lesson is A Father-in-law Can Help, and it is taken from Exodus 18, and Pastor J. Mark is here to share this teaching with us.

Some cultures of the world have a very close-knit family life. Their emphasis is on community. Everyone has a place of importance; everyone matters. It is lovely when you see such family spirit expressed. In other cultures, people break up into their own little units and pay very little attention to each other. Their emphasis is on the individual. They miss the strength of community and the richness of sharing.

Moses was part of a culture that valued family and community. Yet when Moses was called by God to lead Israel out of Egypt, he left his wife and his sons with her father. We are not sure exactly why Moses did this, but Exodus chapter four provides some clues for us. Regardless, Moses went to deliver the people of God without his wife and children.

But now, the people of Israel are on their way from Egypt to Canaan. They were passing near the area where Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, lived. He wanted Moses' wife and sons to join him again. The father-in-law, Jethro, made plans to accomplish this. We read about how A FATHER-IN-LAW CAN HELP in Exodus 18:1-12.

*1. When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt;*

*2. Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back,*

*3. And her two sons; of which the name of the one was Gershom; for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land:*

*4. And the name of the other was Eliezer; for the God of my father, said he, was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh:*

*5. And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God:*

*6. And he said unto Moses, I thy father-in-law Jethro am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her.*

*7. And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent.*

*8. And Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the LORD delivered them.*

*9. And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians.*

*10. 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, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.*

*11. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them.*

*12. And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father in law before God.*

From this text, we can find the WAYS a father-in-law can help.

One way he can help is to

**Gather Information.**

Jethro heard all that God had done for Moses. The news of the terrible plagues in Egypt and Israel's miraculous release from there spread. People everywhere were talking about these amazing events. The news reached the country of Midian, where Jethro lived. The report emphasized the hand and work of God. Jethro heard all that God had done for Moses and for Israel, His people, in the process of bringing Israel out of Egypt. God and His actions were being talked about all across the land. Jethro gathered this information.

In response to this information, Jethro took Moses' wife, Zipporah, and their two sons, Gershom and Eliezer, and prepared to meet Moses. He said, "Let us go and see what has happened." So, he came with his daughter, Moses' wife, and his two sons to meet Moses in the wilderness where Israel was camped by the mount of God, Mount Sinai.

We draw this lesson from this account that a father-in-law should be interested in what is happening. He should gather information. He should be ready to respond appropriately when the reports he hears are confirmed.

The second way a father-in-law can help is to

**Make A Visit.**

So, Jethro gathered the family together, his daughter and her two sons, and started for the place where Moses was camped by the mount of God. You may recall that when Moses met God at the burning bush in the desert of Midian, He said to Moses, "You are going to worship me upon this mountain." And what God said came true. Moses worshipped God alone at the burning bush, but now, here he was camped by the mount of God with the children of Israel.

When Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, arrived in the camp, he sent his announcement to Moses, I, your father-in-law Jethro, have come to you, and I brought your wife and two sons.

Moses immediately went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed before him. He honored his father-in-law's age and position, and he kissed him. Then they talked to each other about what had happened in their personal lives and their families during their absence from each other. I'm sure they had a lot of catching up to do.

Naturally, Moses was glad to see his family. So, he welcomed them into his tent. Jethro was responsible for bringing Moses' wife and her two sons to their husband and father.

Moses told his father-in-law all the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake. He reviewed it all for Jethro: how God had vindicated His high and holy name in Egypt by bringing judgment to all the gods of Egypt. Moses was careful to give the LORD His rightful place. The LORD had judged Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and the LORD had delivered them out of all their troubles as they were traveling through the wilderness. It was a beautiful testimony that Moses gave to his father-in-law, Jethro.

A father-in-law can help his family if he pays a visit. He can see for himself what the LORD is doing, and he can hear about the marvelous things the Lord has done for his son-in-law. He ought to pay a visit so that he has firsthand information for himself.

The third way in which a father-in-law can help is to

**Give a Declaration.**

After their initial greetings, Jethro congratulated Moses on the success he had experienced. He rejoiced in the goodness of God in delivering Israel from Egypt. He said: "Blessed be the LORD who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians."

It's remarkable that a priest of Midian, who was not a member of the children of Israel, knew the work of God when he saw it! He could tell when God was working for His people. There was no other viable explanation for it. The people themselves had been murmuring against Moses and against God. But here was one who came from the outside and looked in. He blessed the LORD and said, "God has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and I rejoice in this."

But Jethro wasn't finished speaking; he made a confession, "Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they behaved proudly He was above them." There was no question left in Jethro's mind. He saw that God stands over all, and above all.

To show that his previous words were spoken in sincerity, he offered a burnt offering and sacrifices to God right there with the children of Israel. He acknowledged God's working and joined the elders of Israel in worship by offering a sacrifice unto the LORD. Aaron, Moses' brother and all the elders of Israel sat down with him and ate bread together before the LORD. That was their way of showing they approved of what he had said and done.

This text gives us a wonderful example of the role of a father-in-law. He should be interested in the life of his son-in-law, his daughter, and their family. He should care enough to find out what is happening in their lives. And he should take time to visit them, to hear what God is doing in their lives, and to bless God for His goodness.

When he takes time to do that, he will acknowledge the goodness of God. Even though Jethro was a religious man, it seems he didn't know the true God, Jehovah. But when he came face to face with the truth of God, he didn't turn his back on it. He believed it. He embraced it. He saw what was happening, and he joined with these people of God in worship. The testimony of a godly family can lead an unbelieving father-in-law to Jesus!

Are you a father-in-law? If you are, you now have several practical ways you can use to help your daughter and her family. What will you do with what you have learned?

Thanks, J. Mark, for this teaching, and thank you for being here for this teaching from God's Word. It is amazing how timeless the Bible is. We believe this book is the best foundation to live by. For all the hard questions in life, the Bible has the best answers—not the easy answers, but certainly the best ones. And He, Jesus, promises to be with us; what a comforting promise.

If you have any questions or if you'd like a copy of today's teaching, here are a few ways you can contact us. The best way is via email. Our email is [hope@heraldsofhope.org](mailto:hope@heraldsofhope.org). If you don't have email, you could write to us. Our address is: Hope for Today, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Or you can connect with us on our website. Our website is *heraldsofhope.org*. On our website, you will find other teaching similar to this and more helpful resources; please look around while you are there. If you go to the connect tab, you can message us directly. Again, the website is *heraldsofhope.org*.

Thank you so much for being with us. We look forward to next week and hope you will join us for more lessons from Exodus. I will leave you with the comforting promise Jesus left to all His disciples in the last verse of Matthew, "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."