

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ listen to wise council.

SCRIPTURE

EXODUS 18:13-24

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Moses was one of the greatest leaders the people of God have ever had. But he couldn't do it all alone, and the weight of his leadership role was becoming heavy. Constantly mediating between God's people was taking its toll on Moses. We all know what it's like to be tired and facing burnout from an insurmountable workload. That's when Jethro stepped in to give some godly counsel.

Check out the *Teacher Prep Video* for this lesson: <https://vimeo.com/816576516>



FACILITATOR NOTE: We've giving you a lot of teaching material. Don't feel like you should cover everything here. You know your group better than anyone. Choose the material that will best fit your students and skip over the rest.

OPENING

PRAYER

1-2 minutes

Start your small group by asking the Lord to bless your discussion and time together.

OPTIONAL: Give students an opportunity to lead the prayer.

OPENING QUESTIONS

3-5 minutes

- How was the week? What's the best thing that's happened? Anything major going on?
- If you could do one thing to make the world a better place, what would it be and why?



EXPLORE

EXPLORE GOD'S WORD

3-5 minutes

Moses was trying to be the leader God had called him to be, but he was going it alone and burning himself out in the process. Moses, like us, needed to learn that we are not the heroes of our own stories. We need to invite people into our lives to help us see what we don't see and be willing to tell us the hard truths *because disciples of Christ listen to wise council.*

Read Exodus 18:13–14 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- **Why do you think it's so hard to share responsibility sometimes?**
Answers will vary. Sometimes we think that no one else can do it like us or will do it how we want.
- **Have you ever felt like only you could solve a particular problem or be the hero? What happened?**
Answers will vary. Feel free to share a personal story of when you thought you would be the hero.
- **Who do you think is responsible for your discipleship journey?**
Answers will vary. We have a level of responsibility, but we are not meant to do it alone.



Say something like: Jethro asked the hard question that everyone was probably thinking: Why are you doing this all by yourself, Moses?

Read Exodus 18:15–18 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- **What was Moses' excuse for doing everything himself?**
Moses was making himself the hero, saying, "they come to me and I decide" (v. 16).
- **Share a brief story about a time when things felt heavy or overwhelming.**
Answers will vary. This is a great opportunity to model vulnerability and get personal about a situation in your own life. Also be aware of any students who might need a follow-up conversation about what they shared.
- **Why do we like being the heroes of our own stories?**
Answers will vary, but possible reasons include that it makes us feel good, powerful, important, needed, etc.



Say something like: It can be easy to make ourselves the hero, and when we put ourselves in that spot, it can be overwhelming and even crushing. But the reality is that Jesus is the hero, and he can carry that weight.

FACILITATOR NOTE: If you have extra time, go through the next set of questions. If not, skip to the **Connection** section.

Read Exodus 18:19–24 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- **Jethro told Moses to find helpers "from all the people" (v. 21). What do you think that means?**
We need to find people in our lives who are not just like us. People who will not just be "yes" men and women telling us what we want to hear.
- **Why are fearing God, being trustworthy, and not taking bribes important qualities for those helping us in our faith journeys (v. 21)?**
We need other Christ-followers who love God and can be trusted to speak truth into our lives, or we will just go back to being our own heroes.
- **What difference do you think sharing the load with a team of people made in the life of Moses and Israel?**
Answers will vary. Possible answers: it was easier for everyone, things probably got done quicker, Moses wasn't as exhausted, etc.



Say something like: Just like Moses, we need to invite trusted friends and family into our lives to see what we don't see, help share the load with us, and remind us that we are not the hero of our story.



CONNECT & APPLY

CONNECTION

5-7 minutes

Show your students how Scripture connects to their lives: Use the example below OR share a personal story about someone who spoke truth into your life as Jethro did with Moses.



Example: Megan was stuck deciding what to do after high school. She had two options in front of her. She could move away and go to Bible school to become a pastor or stay at home and work locally while helping out in the youth group at her church. The problem was that she couldn't decide, and God seemed silent.

One day she had an opportunity to talk with a pastor she knew and asked for some advice. The pastor's advice was not to get caught up in the details but to instead think about it as a trust exercise. "Megan, will you trust God with the consequences of your choice? Whatever you choose, will you trust that God is with you?"

In the end, she chose to stay home, but God had a different plan. After three months, she felt God calling her to Bible school. So she went. Eventually, she became a pastor and shared this simple truth with other students over the years. It has become a key question she asks God whenever she has to choose. Megan listened to the wise council of her pastor, and that impacted her life and the lives of all those she interacted with later.

- Who in your life can you invite to give you wise council in your discipleship journey?
Possible answers might be parents, mentors, trusted friends, or small group leaders. We all need people who can see what we can't and help us stay focused on Jesus.

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

2-3 minutes

Disciples of Christ listen to wise council.

Use the Mark of a Disciple to reinforce the lesson and challenge students to apply it to their lives.

APPLY IT

5-10 minutes

This week look for one person you can ask to be part of your discipleship journey. Invite them to pray for you and ask them to help you see what you don't see in your life. Consider making a plan to meet and talk regularly.



Be specific:

- What are you going to do?
- When are you going to do it?
- Is there someone who can keep you accountable?



FACILITATOR NOTE: Allow students who are comfortable to share their plans for application. This may encourage or spark ideas for other students, plus add a level of accountability.



CLOSING

PRAYER

2-3 minutes

Take time to let your students pray for each other's applications in the upcoming weeks. Spend time praying that your students would understand that the Christ-following life is a journey in community and not a solo race. Pray they will all find people who can join them on the journey.

Write down any prayer requests mentioned and ask your students about them at your next meeting.

MEMORY VERSE

Send the memory verse graphic included in your download to your students later this week to keep the conversation going.

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30 (ESV)

NOTES

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