

**Stressed by My Job**

**Core Competency**  
*Identity in Christ*  
**Exodus 13:8-27**

**Core Competencies****Core Beliefs**

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- **Identity in Christ**
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

**Core Practices**

- Worship Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

**Core Virtues**

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

Dear Fellow Stressed-Out Friends,

So far we've looked at stress produced by our pace and by our circumstances. We continue with an area where many of us deal with stress...that is by our **Jobs**.

Maybe you are a volunteer at Grace or in another organization and you consider it's your 'job.' Maybe it's your role of being a mom or dad where you are feeling an unhealthy amount of stress. Maybe, as the bread winner for the family, you are experiencing stress that is 'well over the top.' Or maybe, as a husband or wife, your attempts in loving 'for richer or poorer' or 'for better for worse' is becoming so stressful you're not sure where to turn for help.

For those of us who work in the church, we also join with many of you who are stressed by your job. When you add in the responsibly of an eternal destiny for the people God has entrusted to your care, all of a sudden the job is never-ending. We live in a perfectionist, highly productive consumer culture where people often expect the best from the food they eat, the cars they drive, the homes they build, the marriages they're in, the children they have ... even to the church they attend.

Moses undoubtedly felt stress. It took another person to help Moses "see the light." It took another person, and dare to say a family member, with a fresh perspective to notice the unhealthy balance occurring in Moses' pace with his job — a job that was very, very important! Not only did Moses need an open heart to hear, he also needed to trust who was speaking into his life. He needed to train and trust the people he was putting into leadership.

This week...in your prayers, be praying for God to open your heart to trust others so you can hear them. Basically have someone speak into your life. Open your heart to trust, equip and lead others so they may also share in the mission God has for them. This applies to all of us...stay-at-home moms, grandparents, secretaries and professionals. I'm sure there are many opportunities to train someone to assist you in your important task so that you can also have balance in your life.

Learning to strike the balance with you,

*Juno*

## Engaging Our Minds & Hearts

### Day 1

#### Today's Passage: Exodus 18:1-27

Once again, before you begin your time in reading and studying God's Word, take time to go to the "Author" in prayer and request that He would use His Word to speak to your heart and life. Rely on the Holy Spirit to reveal "Truth" to you and commit to walking in that Truth.

This week's core scripture passage is **Exodus 18:13-27**. We will take a look at an incident in the life of Moses who occasionally and understandably displayed stress over his job and responsibilities.

Begin your study time this week becoming familiar with the entire chapter of Exodus 18. Read it several times noting the people, places and events recorded. If you have internet capabilities, you can go to [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) to access a variety of versions.

Before you stop for the day, record the main characters and the nature of their relationship, as well as the main events written about here.

## Day 2

### Today's Passage: Exodus 18:13-27

#### *Pray first!*

As we read and study scripture, it's good to remember that the "plain" thing is the "main" thing.

1. Read through the passage once again. Record the "plain" problem that Jethro is warning Moses about.
2. What exactly and specifically is Moses doing?
3. Does Jethro think that Moses is doing a bad job or is somehow not qualified to do what he is doing?
4. What does Jethro warn will happen, if Moses continues on as he is?
5. What is Jethro's advice to Moses? What does he advise him to keep doing and what does he advise him to change?
6. Did you notice that Jethro does not advise Moses to just "walk away" from his responsibilities, but outlines some specific qualifications and safeguards? What are they?
7. What does Jethro say will be the result?
8. What is Moses' response? Do you think he chose wisely? Why or why not?

## Day 3

### Bible Passages: Cross References

#### *Pray first!*

Today we will look at a few cross references that may help us as we deal with stress regarding our job and other responsibilities. As you read each passage, record what you learn that could be applied to your life.

- Numbers 11:1-17, 24-29:
- Isaiah 40:28-31:
- Proverbs 12:15:
- Proverbs 13:10:
- John 4:34:
- John 8:28-29:
- Acts 6:1-7:
- 2 Timothy 2:1-2:
- 2 Timothy 4:5:
- Titus 1:4-5:
- Ephesians 2:10:

## Day 4

### Today's Passage: Exodus 18:13-27

#### **Pray first!**

Read through the core passage once again. Moses' problem was in trying to be indispensable and necessary, and in finding his identity in being needed and important. Moses had to learn to do what only he could and should do. Likewise, each of us has been given specific callings in life that are meant only for us. As we focus on those things and release others, we will find our stress level dropping and life satisfaction on the rise.

Read through the following illustrations and reflect on their application to your life and finding your identity in Christ.

#### **Be Somebody**

I've always wanted to be somebody, but I see now I should have been more specific. - Lily Tomlin  
*The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*, by Jane Wagner.

#### **The Mask**

In *The Mask Behind the Mask*, biographer Peter Evans says that actor Peter Sellers played so many roles he sometimes was not sure of his own identity. Approached once by a fan who asked him, "Are you Peter Sellers?" Sellers answered briskly, "Not today," and walked on.

Today in the Word, July 24, 1993

#### **You Are an Eagle**

While walking through the forest one day, a man found a young eagle who had fallen out of his nest. He took it home and put it in his barnyard where it soon learned to eat and behave like the chickens. One day a naturalist passed by the farm and asked why it was that the king of all birds should be confined to live in the barnyard with the chickens. The farmer replied that since he had given it chicken feed and trained it to be a chicken, it had never learned to fly. Since it now behaved as the chickens, it was no longer an eagle.

"Still it has the heart of an eagle," replied the naturalist, "and can surely be taught to fly." He lifted the eagle toward the sky and said, "You belong to the sky and not to the earth. Stretch forth your wings and fly."

The eagle, however, was confused. He did not know who he was, and seeing the chickens eating their food, he jumped down to be with them again.

The naturalist took the bird to the roof of the house and urged him again, saying, "You are an eagle. Stretch forth your wings and fly."

But the eagle was afraid of his unknown self and world and jumped down once more for the chicken food. Finally the naturalist took the eagle out of the barnyard to a high mountain. There he held the king of the birds high above him and encouraged him again, saying, "You are an eagle. You belong to the sky. Stretch forth your wings and fly."

The eagle looked around, back towards the barnyard and up to the sky. Then the naturalist lifted him straight towards the sun and it happened that the eagle began to tremble. Slowly he stretched his wings, and with a triumphant cry, soared away into the heavens.

It may be that the eagle still remembers the chickens with nostalgia. It may even be that he occasionally revisits the barnyard. But as far as anyone knows, he has never returned to lead the life of a chicken.

From *Theology News and Notes*, October, 1976, quoted in *Multnomah Message*, Spring, 1993, p. 1.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Galaxie Software. (2002; 2002). *10,000 Sermon Illustrations*. Biblical Studies Press.

## Day 5

One of the core competencies that reflect our growth in Christ-likeness is the belief that “I am significant because of my position as a child of God.” - our identity in Christ. The key verse for this belief is **John 1:12-13**, “**Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.**”

Prayerfully read over the following Assessment Statements for this belief and ask God to show you if these beliefs are evident by the way you live your life, or if there is any way that you are looking for significance apart from who you are as His child.

- I believe that God loves me and therefore my life has value.
- I exist to know, love, and serve God.
- I believe God loves me, even when I do not obey him.
- I believe I am forgiven and accepted by God.

At the beginning of the week you were encouraged to pray and ask God to reveal His truth to you and to apply it to your life. Once He has done that, we are responsible, under the power of the Holy Spirit, for walking in the truth He has shown us. In chapter two of James, this truth is repeatedly stated and illustrated.

### **James 2:14, 17, 20, 22, 26**

<sup>14</sup> What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?

<sup>17</sup> Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

<sup>20</sup> But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

<sup>22</sup> You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;

<sup>26</sup> For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

How has God spoken to you this week? Has He brought to your mind and heart areas of responsibilities that you have taken on that may need to be temporarily laid aside, carefully delegated, or possibly completely abandoned, in order that you can faithfully and joyfully perform those things that He has given specifically and exclusively to you?

Agree with Him in a prayer of commitment and submission to **do** what He has shown you and to allow your faith to be perfected (matured, completed) in this area of life.

## Engage the Context

## Feedback

### Exodus 18:13-27

Usually this section of the “Engage” is a commentary on the passage looking at some of the more detailed nuances in the text. This week’s passage is relatively straightforward. However, there are two deeper themes that would be more beneficial to explore to get a fuller understanding of what God is doing in **Exodus 18**. First, we will look at God’s faithfulness to his people. Second, we will analyze the theme of how other nations respond to God’s people.

What is helpful?  
What could be better?  
What is missing?  
Is it helping you be more prepared for Sunday?

Send your feedback to  
[engage@gccaz.org](mailto:engage@gccaz.org)

### God’s Faithfulness

Exodus 18 is, at first glance, a wonderful illustration of the principle of delegation. Jethro shows his son-in-law that delegation is necessary for the leader. While this is true and important, the depth of what is going on in this chapter is much deeper when we consider the context within the book of Exodus.

Moses has just led the sons of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. Remember, that the exodus from Egypt was a cornerstone of Old Testament history for the Israelites. As hard times came, they would look back to God’s faithfulness in bringing them out of Egypt (Deuteronomy 6:1-4). After bringing the people out Egypt, God continually provided for the Israelites.

When Moses’ father-in-law comes with his family to meet with Moses, the first thing Moses does is recount the faithfulness of God through these trials. “Moses told his father-in-law about everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel’s sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the LORD had saved them.” Paul reminds the Corinthians of how faithful God was to their forefathers, “For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.” Each of these instances that Paul recounts are times when the Israelites were in need in the wilderness and God provided.

The chapter of Exodus we are studying this week is significant because it fits right in the middle of the Israelites’ greatest memory of God’s faithfulness – the Exodus from Egypt and delivery into the Promised Land.

### Foreign Nations’ Response to Israel

A second major theme is how foreign nations will respond to what God is doing with Israel. Every nation had their own hosts of gods who would protect and fight for that nation. However, Israel was different. They believed that there was one God, YAHWEH (translated “the LORD” in English translations). Yahweh had led this tiny nation out of slavery and to the Promised Land. As Israel blazed its way through foreign lands, how would the other nations respond to Israel, and more importantly to her God, Yahweh?

In Exodus 17:8-16, Israel fought against the Amalekites. Moses and the Israelite army handily defeated them. Chapter 17 ends with God declaring that He “will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

Now remember that in the original Hebrew there are no chapter divisions. We go straight from this declaration against the Amalekites to a statement of a Midianite’s belief in what God had done. “Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses’ father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for His people Israel, and how the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt.” (Ex. 18:1) Jethro proceeds not only to acknowledge what God is doing, but also to come to the aid of Moses.

This sets up a theme that will run throughout the Old Testament — of how other nations will respond to the people of God. As an example, look at last week’s text, Psalm 46, and see how God responds to nations that war with His people.