

5 Lessons Moses Taught About Honoring Parents

There are so many faith lessons that we can learn from Moses. Just think about it: Moses stood up to power, and walked in obedience to authority. Moses stood up for the people, and also stood up for the government.

Moses taught us about the victories of having great faith, and taught us the tragic results of having moments of weak faith. However, of all the lessons we can learn from Moses' faith/life experiences, one of, if not the most important, are the five lessons we learn about honoring our parents found in Exodus chapter 18.

I will not be sharing these lessons in the order they appear in the chapter, rather I will be sharing them in the order of importance—at least in my mind.

Lesson One is found in Exodus 18:7:

“So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, then bowed down and kissed him. They asked each other about their welfare, and went into the tent.”

Moses provides a perfect example of honoring a parent in this verse. Just look at the ways Moses honors his father-in-law in this one verse. Moses, in all of his authority as a leader of all Israel, doesn't sit in his chair and wait for Yitro to come to him. No. Moses gets up and goes out to meet Yitro. Next, we see that Moses bows down to Yitro. Again, Moses was a leader who showed humility toward his father-in-law. Third, when they have their conversation, Moses isn't only concerned about himself, but he allows Yitro to share about his welfare also.

Lesson Two is found in Exodus 18:5-6:

“So Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses into the wilderness where he was encamped at the mountain of God. 6 He had told Moses, ‘I, Jethro your father-in-law, am coming to you, along with your wife and her two sons.’”

While Moses is clearly grateful for the assistance that Yitro provided by taking care of his wife and sons, when Yitro brought them back to Moses, Moses took responsibility for them. Moses didn’t believe that his leadership responsibilities were more important than his family responsibilities.

Lesson Three is found in Exodus 18:8:

“Moses told his father-in-law all that Adonai had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel’s sake, as well as all the travail that had come upon them along the way, and how Adonai delivered them.”

Moses took the time to share his life and experiences with Yitro, and Moses made sure to include Adonai’s involvement in those life experiences. Notice in this one, Moses honored both an earthly father and his heavenly Father.

Lesson Four is found in Exodus 18:14:

“When Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, ‘What’s this you’re doing to the people? Why sit by yourself, alone, with all the people standing around from morning until evening?’”

When Yitro challenged the way Moses was serving the people, Moses not only listened to his good advice, but Moses listened to his good advice. Moses didn’t only listen condescendingly and then just continue to do what he was doing. No. Moses accepted that his father-in-law was correct, which meant Moses admitted that he was wrong and then implemented the correction suggested by his father-in-law.

Lesson Five is found in Exodus 18:1:

“Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and Moses’ father-in-law, heard about everything God had done for Moses and for His people Israel, and how Adonai had brought Israel out of Egypt.”

Moses honored his father-in-law, even though they were from different cultures, different countries, different people groups and possibly different faiths. This didn’t mean that Moses accepted or allowed those differences to change his beliefs and faith, but he didn’t dishonor Yitro just because they were not in alignment in all ways.

I believe it is because Moses honored his father-in-law, even though they didn’t start out aligned in all ways, that we read the following verses in Exodus 18:

“Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness that Adonai had shown to Israel, since He had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians. Jethro said, ‘Blessed be Adonai, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, and has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that Adonai is greater than all gods, since they had acted arrogantly against them.’ Then Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, presented a burnt offering and sacrifices to God. Aaron also came along with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses’ father-in-law before God.”

✘ Imagine just how much impact we could have in the lives of our parents, especially those who may not yet know Yeshua and have a relationship with the G-D of Israel, if we followed Moses’ example and honored our fathers and mothers. It isn’t a coincidence that the commandment to honor our fathers and mothers is found in the same Torah parsha as Moses’ example of honoring a parent in Exodus chapter 20.

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