

Stories 3.0: Balance Before Burnout

Story: Bruce Sutherland

Exodus 18

Life is out of balance when we [dismiss our family](#).

📖 Exodus 18:1–3a (NIV) “Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses, heard of everything God had done for Moses and for His people Israel, and how the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt. ² After Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, his father-in-law Jethro received her ³ and her two sons.”

📖 Exodus 18:5–6 (NIV) “Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, together with Moses’ sons and wife, came to him in the desert, where he was camped near the mountain of God. ⁶ Jethro had sent word to him, “I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons.”

Life is out of balance when we [try to do it alone](#).

📖 Exodus 18:13–16 (NIV) “The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. ¹⁴ When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, “What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?” ¹⁵ Moses answered him, “Because the people come to me to seek God’s will. ¹⁶ Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God’s decrees and laws.”

Life will become balanced when we [apply Godly advice](#).

📖 Exodus 18:19–23 (NIV) “Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people’s representative before God and bring their disputes to Him. ²⁰ Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. ²¹ But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. ²² Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. ²³ If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.”

The Jethro Principle:

1. [Give God your job](#). (vs. 19)
2. [Guide by example](#). (vs. 20)
3. [Delegate carefully](#). (vss. 21-22)
4. [Stay engaged](#). (vs. 22)

📖 Exodus 18:24–27 (NIV) “Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. ²⁵ He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. ²⁶ They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves. ²⁷ Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and Jethro returned to his own country.”

Life will become balanced when we [practice sabbath rest](#).

📖 Exodus 20:8–10a (NLT) “Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ You have six days each week for your ordinary work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the LORD your God.”

📖 Mark 2:27 (NIV) “...He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”

📖 Psalm 34:17–18 (NIV) “The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; He delivers them from all their troubles. ¹⁸ The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

📖 Matthew 11:28–30 (NIV) “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

📖 Matthew 11:28–30 (MSG) “Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. ²⁹ Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. ³⁰ Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

Digging Deeper: *What is the best advice you have ever received? Would you say your life is balanced or out of balance? – What makes you say that? Would your family or friends say your life is balanced? Is it easier to ask for help or do things on your own? Are you, or have you ever been angry at God? Are you now, or have you ever experienced burnout? What is the difference between being tired and being depleted? What does the following quote mean? “**Instead of resting from our work, we need to work from our rest.**” ~Alan Briggs*