Narrowing Our Focus and Setting Boundaries



OU ASKED ME WHAT I THOUGHT. DON'T GET ANGRY because you don't like it. I think you already knew my opinion before you asked."

The pastor of a large church near Cleveland had just answered a question posed to him by members of his congregation. He was addressing a crowd of workplace professionals, and an obviously pregnant insurance company representative had asked his opinion of child care.

His response: "If you choose to have children, and it's not a question of having enough money to feed, clothe and house the family, then one of you ought to be home when the kids are home."

Angry, the woman turned to the human resource manager sitting to his right. "What do you think?"

Her response: "If you choose to have children, and it's not a question of having enough money to feed, clothe and house the family, then one of you ought to be home when the kids are home."

Are they correct? Why or why not?



Scripture Passages

Exodus 3:1-22

Exodus 4:1-31

Exodus 18:1-27

Galatians 2:1-10

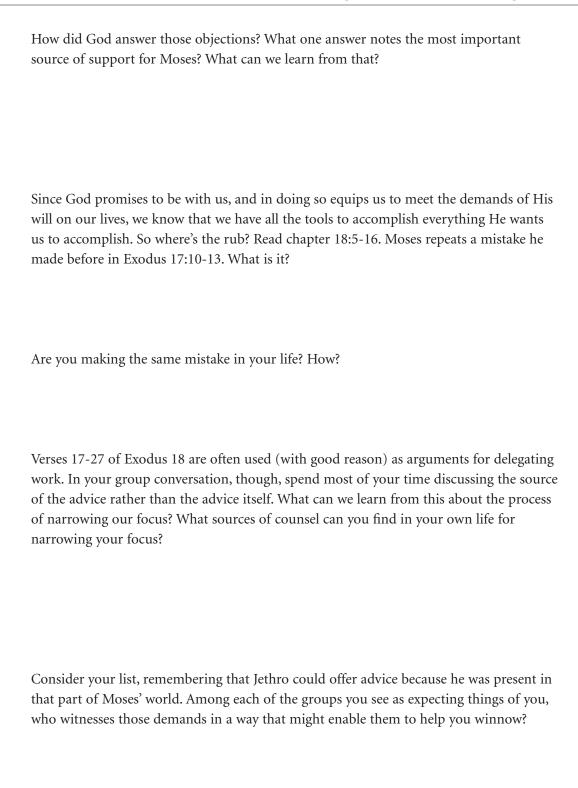
Study

Christians are often besieged on many fronts. Work demands our attention. Family demands our attention. Rest demands our attention. The church demands our attention. Friends and relationships demand our attention. Our prayer and quiet times demand our attention.

The lawn, the house, the car, our community—all of these demand our attention as well. With so many demands, how can we possibly hope to narrow our focus in a way that leaves us open to God's daily direction? The answer sometimes comes from those around God places around us.

In the space below, list the demands people, institutions and circumstances make on your

you. For many of us a quick look back at last week's calendar will make these demands very clear.
Demands
People and things that you feel are expecting something from you
What thoughts run through your mind as you review this list?
What process do you follow in deciding who or what gets your attention?
In your reading of Exodus 3 and 4, what objections did Moses offer God when he was assigned the task of leading Israel out of Egypt?



Will you commit in the coming days to approach these counselors?

Jesus was always busy, but one never gets the sense that He was hurried. Certainly His mission was more important than any on our lists, yet its urgency was not punctuated with a harried overtone. If our mission is to be His ambassadors, we should emulate His approach. Review one of the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life and notice how often He went to a quiet place to seek His father's will and to be in His presence.

Author's note: The Holy Spirit needs to be identified in the course of this study as a source—in fact, our primary source—of counsel and guidance. While the focus is on the temporal support we can receive from others, it's important to remind ourselves that sitting silently before God as the Holy Spirit works in us is always an important part of any Christian's spiritual regimen.

Common Sense and Eternal Principles

- No man is an island. We need wise counselors to help us sort out our spiritual journeys.
- Just as He did with Moses, God promises to be with us. Jesus reinforced that promise in Matthew 28.
- Also like Moses, if God asks us to do something that's beyond our skills and abilities, He will also draw people to us who have the ability and desire to help us.
- Remembering that God is the author of results can help us stop over-committing.