

Week 7: “If Doing Too Much Was A Person”

1. READ

Pastor Watley’s Scripture: Exodus 18 : 13 – 24 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹³ And so it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening. ¹⁴ So when Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, “What *is* this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?”

¹⁵ And Moses said to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to inquire of God. ¹⁶ When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws.”

¹⁷ So Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “The thing that you do *is* not good. ¹⁸ Both you and these people who *are* with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing *is* too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself. ¹⁹ Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. ²⁰ And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. ²¹ Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them *to be* rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. ²² And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be *that* every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear *the burden* with you. ²³ If you do this thing, and God *so* commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace.”

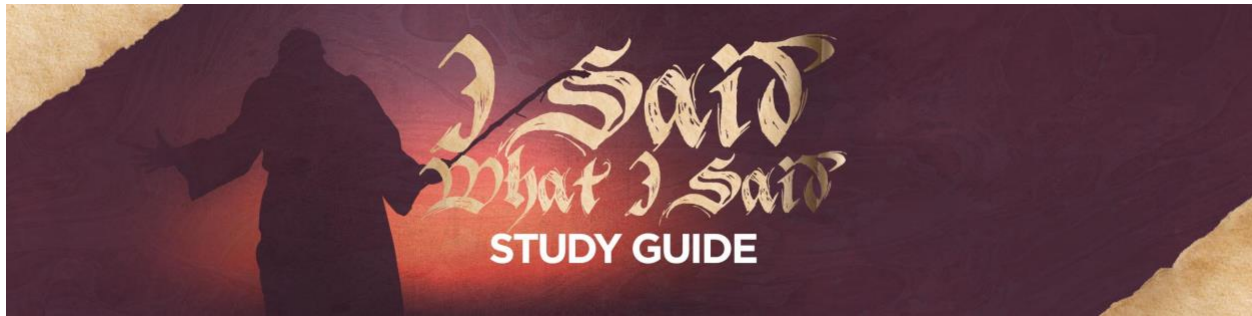
²⁴ So Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said.

Further Reading: Habakkuk 2 : 3 New International Version (NIV)

² Then the Lord replied:

“Write down the revelation
and make it plain on tablets
so that a herald may run with it.

³ For the revelation awaits an appointed time;
it speaks of the end
and will not prove false.



Though it linger, wait for it;
it will certainly come
and will not delay.

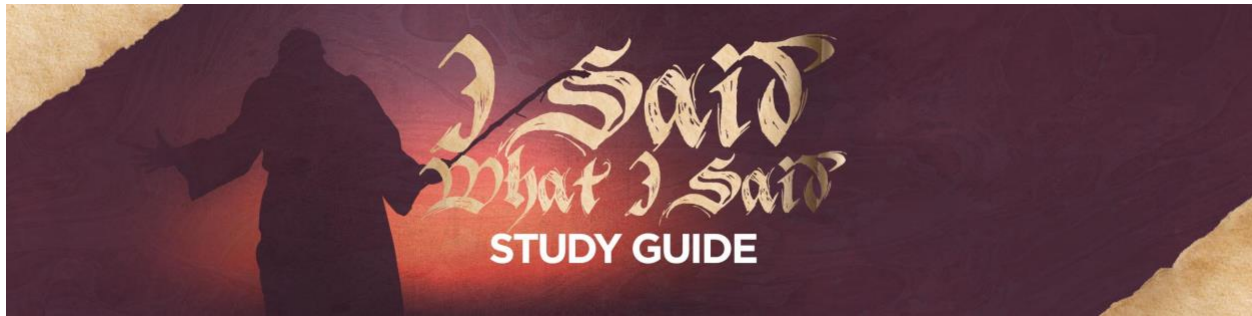
2. REFLECT

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This week our Senior Pastor Rev. Matthew L. Watley continued his sermon series entitled “I Said What I Said,” where we have been exploring the life, legacy, mission, and ministry of Moses. Each week we’ve studied some of the pivotal moments in the life of Moses that shaped his tremendous journey. Not only have we learned more about his incredible life, but we have also been able to learn vital lessons from his failures and his mistakes. His life reminds us that God knows our flaws and chooses to use us for his glory anyway!

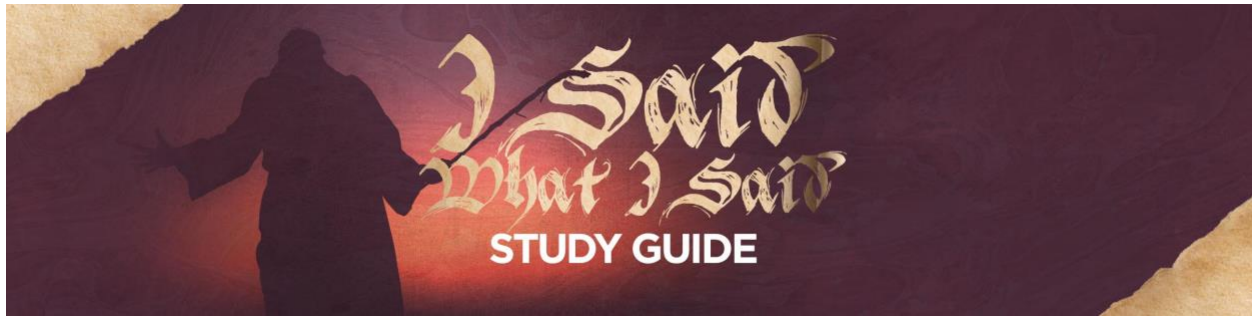
In our lesson for week seven entitled “If Doing Too Much Was A Person,” Pastor Watley urges us to follow God’s system and order. Many of us can agree that the God we serve has a tendency to create order and operate through systems. For example, the story of the creation of the world and all of its inhabitants was orderly and timely as God selected what he would create each day.



Similarly, when God instructed Noah to build the ark and to save various species, God was extremely detailed about every aspect of the process and the chronology of events. Time and time again, God has proven that His order and systemic way of doing things always leads to greater protection. And yet, we often get antsy along our journey and begin to follow our own path. We see this at work in our scripture for this week (Exodus 18:13-24), when we find Moses employing his system for listening and judging the needs of the people. Although we assume his intentions were good and he was trying to help, Moses was doing the right thing in the wrong way. After observing what Moses was doing, his father-in-law approached him and proposed that Moses try something different. In verses 17-18, Moses' father-in-law says the following: "The thing that you do *is* not good. ¹⁸ Both you and these people who *are* with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing *is* too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself." His father-in-law accurately assesses the situation and determines that Moses is doing too much.

By pointing out the shortcomings of his original plan, Moses' father-in-law provided a **critique** of his system that is helpful for us to keep in mind. The critique points out that what Moses was doing was ineffective, unsustainable, and inefficient. It was ineffective because it was leading to unproductivity as the people stood before Moses from day until night. It was also unsustainable because as his father-in-law tells him, "this thing *is* too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself." And lastly it was inefficient because God had something much greater in store for Moses rather than sitting alone as a judge all day. This is important for us because if we are not careful, we can find ourselves operating in ineffective, unsustainable, and inefficient ways. Even when we think we are doing the right things, we must be mindful of God's desired system and order for our lives. Thankfully, Moses' father-in-law does not only provide the critique, but he also provides the **criteria** necessary to produce an alternative. As an alternative, he suggests that Moses create a system of people to help carry the burden.

In verse 21, Moses' father-in-law declares, "Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens." His statement indicates to us that the people trusted to serve must have character, be capable, and have a connection with their leader. All of these traits were specific requirements in order for Moses to be able to effectively lead and trust the system of people that was in place in his absence. Moses needed people by his side who were qualified to get the job done, yet they were also trustworthy, and shared his heart for the people so they could be a proxy for Moses. However, Moses' father-in-law also gave him a **charge** as a leader to provide guidance and governance in a specific way. His father-in-law calls him to serve in a priestly, a prophetic, and a pastoral role. He must stand before God on behalf of the people as priest, teach them the laws as prophet, and guide them forward as pastor. This is what each of us are also called to do in various areas of our own lives!



3. RESPOND

Introspective Questions

- What is this passage of scripture saying to you?
- Identify an area of your life that is ineffective, unsustainable, or inefficient. How can you let God guide you as you implement a different way to address that issue?

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think Moses' father-in-law was that specific about the type of people Moses needed to help him lead?
- Why do you think Moses decided to try to listen and judge the people by himself in the first place?