

*The Life of Moses:*  
**“I CAN’T Do It Myself!”**  
*Exodus 17:8-18:27*

“I can do it myself!” is a great thing for little kids to tell themselves...when they’re learning to do simple, everyday tasks like button a shirt or pick up their toys. But as we’ll see (again!) this morning through the experience of Moses and the Israelites, such an independent spirit is the absolute *last thing we need* as we journey through life together as the people of God.

**THE FOURTH TEST: EXTERNAL CONFLICT** (Exodus 17:8-16)

**THE LESSON:** The battle is ultimately won \_\_\_\_\_.

**THE FIFTH TEST: INTERNAL CHAOS** (Exodus 18:1-27)

**THE LESSON:** The community is best served \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

For the “**overworked**”...

**“The thing that you are doing is not good.”** (*Jethro, in Exodus 18:17*)

Signs\* you *might* have the “I Can Do It Myself” syndrome (i.e., you’ve taken on too much):

- **Relational struggles:** Your relationships at home (with spouse, children or siblings) are more distant and less intimate. At best, you co-exist; at worst, you experience chronic conflict over competing schedules and the furious pace of life. Perhaps also you’ve begun to pull away from vital friendships.
- **Irritability or hypersensitivity:** Little things that normally wouldn’t bug you trigger excessive, over-the-top reactions; you have a shorter-fuse-than-usual.
- **Restlessness:** You can’t shake the vague sense that something isn’t right, that you should be doing something *more* or something *else*. You are over-stimulated and can’t turn off your brain. You may have trouble sleeping. You may have difficulty concentrating or focusing.
- **Compulsive overworking:** You can’t stop or slow down. You have no boundaries. You can’t unplug from the demands of your job—it follows you everywhere, consumes you all hours of the day and night, and dominates your life.
- **Emotional numbness:** You don’t deeply feel much of anything—good or bad. Since it takes energy to process emotions, and since your reserves are depleted, you don’t dare pull over and listen to your heart. You just keep zooming down the interstate of your life.
- **Escapist behaviors:** You find yourself—in the few breaks you do get—not engaging in life-giving, replenishing hobbies but instead choosing soul-draining activities (e.g., compulsive over-eating, drinking—or other substance abuse, spending, watching TV excessively, surfing the Net mindlessly, escaping into pornography, etc.).
- **Disconnection from your identity and calling:** You mostly react to whatever urgent need presents itself, and you are no longer clear on who you really are and what God has actually created you to do.
- **Lack of self-care:** You can’t find time (or don’t make time) to exercise, eat healthy, get the right amount of sleep, or do the basic things needed to keep your life manageable (cleaning, maintenance, etc.)
- **Hoarding energy:** You pull back from people and little engagements that used to be fun because the thought of another event or social interaction feels like it will drain the last dregs of energy out of your soul.
- **Difficulty in making decisions:** Having too many options is paralyzing. Choices feel bigger than usual.
- **Slippage in spiritual practices:** Even though we know these things are necessary, good, and life-giving, they start feeling like time-consuming luxuries we can’t afford (or even burdens or ‘have-tos’).

\*adapted from *Leading On Empty* by Wayne Cordeiro & *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership* by Ruth Haley Barton

For the “**underworked**”...

If you are NOT currently using your gifts and abilities as part of a healthy spiritual community, spend a few minutes wrestling with these questions:

1. **Why** am I NOT doing what I could be doing? (This is the question Jethro asked Moses, only flipped around.) Is it because I don’t know how God has gifted and “wired” me? Or is it because a few others seem to be doing everything and I don’t see a place to jump in and help? *Or is there another reason?*
2. What are the things I’m really NOT good at (and probably shouldn’t attempt to do)?
3. What is my unique ability (i.e., the one or two things God has enabled me to do really well that seem to have the biggest impact on others and that also energizes me when I do it)?

If you’d be interested in learning more about your God-given design and how you can find your unique place in the work of God in the world, contact The Bridge office (251-1951), or write your name, your contact info, and the word “S.H.A.P.E.” on the Connection Card in the bulletin and drop it in the offering bucket.