

Podcast Companion

Week 4: Moses & Jethro | Featuring Adam Dean

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Listen to this week's conversation with Adam Dean before gathering. The episode uses Moses and Jethro's exchange in Exodus 18 to explore the hidden weight of leadership, honest feedback, wise delegation, and the courage to have difficult conversations.

WHAT STOOD OUT?

- What statement, story, or leadership insight stayed with you? Why did it connect with you?

THE HIDDEN WEIGHT OF LEADERSHIP

Adam described appearing calm and confident while sometimes feeling anxiety and insecurity inside. Leadership often looks clearer from the outside than it feels from the inside.

- Why can responsibility feel isolating, even when a leader appears confident?
- How should understanding the unseen weight leaders carry change the way we support, question, or pray for them?

A CLEAR DECISION FILTER

"What's best for kids?"

A shared purpose helps leaders make hard decisions when no choice will please everyone.

- What core purpose should guide decisions in your family, team, church, or workplace?
- Where are you tempted to choose what is personally convenient over what best serves the whole?

THE GIFT OF HONEST FEEDBACK

Jethro saw a blind spot Moses could not see: his approach was exhausting both him and the people. Adam described trusted colleagues who challenge him privately and support the final decision publicly.

- Who has permission to tell you, "What you're doing is not good"?
- What makes honest disagreement feel safe on a healthy team?
- How can a team disagree candidly behind closed doors and still move forward in unity?

PROBLEM OR COMPLAINT?

"I'm into solving problems; I'm not into listening to complaints."

A concern gains credibility when it is specific, aimed at the mission, and brought with a willingness to help pursue a solution.

- How can you tell whether you are bringing a solvable problem or simply spreading frustration?
- When is listening without fixing the most helpful response?
- How does a history of encouragement make necessary criticism easier to hear?

CONVERSATION CHECK

Before raising a concern, ask:

Is it true? Is it mine to address? Does it serve our shared purpose? Am I willing to help make it better?

SERVING WITHOUT BECOMING THE BOTTLENECK

Adam serves wherever needed, from driving a bus to helping with the grounds. But he also named the risk of reclaiming delegated work when someone does it differently or makes a mistake.

- What is the difference between servant leadership and doing work that someone else needs to own?
- Where might your standards, impatience, or desire for control be creating a bottleneck?
- When someone falls short, are you more likely to coach them or quietly take the responsibility back? What does that choice produce over time?

KEEP THE MAIN THING IN FOCUS

Visible tasks can feel urgent and satisfying, but they are not always the leader's most important work. Adam returns to student growth, responsible stewardship, and a community people can be proud of.

- What work can only you do in your current role?
- Which good but secondary tasks are crowding out your primary responsibility?
- What could you delegate, improve, or stop so your best energy reaches the mission?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A shared purpose clarifies decisions that cannot please everyone.
- Trusted people help leaders see what position and pressure can hide.
- Healthy teams disagree honestly and support decisions consistently.
- Useful criticism moves toward a problem and a possible solution.
- Delegation requires coaching, patience, and room for others to grow.
- Serving matters, but leaders must protect the work only they can do.

THE COURAGE TO LEAD

"The inability to have difficult conversations is the inability to lead."

Adam acknowledged that hard conversations still bring dread, but they are rarely as bad as anticipated. Courage is not comfort; it is choosing to engage what leadership requires.

- Which conversation have you been avoiding because you fear the discomfort more than the cost of delay?
- What would it look like to enter that conversation with both courage and humility?

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Choose one next step this week:

- Invite honest feedback from someone you trust.
- Turn a recurring complaint into a clear, solvable problem.
- Coach someone through a delegated task instead of taking it back.
- Remove one secondary task that distracts from your primary role.
- Begin the difficult conversation you have been postponing.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

"This is not good! ... You're going to wear yourself out - and the people, too. This job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself."

EXODUS 18:17-18 · NLT

- What burden are you carrying alone that God may be asking you to share?
- Who could help you see a healthier way forward?