



**Into the Word:**

This week, Jeremy focused on how we are spending our time this Christmas. It is an extremely busy time of year for many of us and that can be dangerous. Consider this particularly un-Christmasy story:

For centuries nobody knew where locusts came from. No one understood how or where they originated. Scientist would see them laying eggs and label specimens but find none the next year. Years later, they'd mysteriously reappear for some reason.

The mystery was solved in 1921 by Uvarov, a Russian naturalist. Turns out that locusts were ordinary grasshoppers "gone berserk." When placed in crowded glass jars, grasshoppers became locusts. Here is his description:

"They literally and physically change from Jekyll to Hyde before our eyes. They will even change, all alone in their jars, if you stimulate them by a rapid succession of artificial touches. Their wings elongate; their color heightens; stripes and dots appear. They are restless, excitable."

How true is this for us when we are rushing and doing at unhealthy rates during this season.?

*How does this description of grasshoppers turning into locusts compare to humans with overloaded schedules during the holidays?*

*How do we let our busyness and all the kinds of things associated with the holidays affect us?*

**Read Exodus 18:4–27.**

Moses was the leader of the Hebrews, God's chosen people. He had led them out of slavery in Egypt and had seen God destroy the Egyptian army in the Red Sea. Now they were on their way to Mount Sinai, where God would give Moses the Ten Commandments. Exodus 12:7 tells us that about 600,000 Hebrew men came out of Egypt, which probably meant that with women and children there were over 2 million people. That's more people than live in Baltimore, Boston, and Washington, D.C., combined! And Moses was acting as judge for all their disputes! Though the passage doesn't say so directly, Moses was wearing himself ragged.

Moses had married a daughter of Jethro in Midian during the 40 years he spent in the desert after killing an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew. When Moses set out to lead God's people out of Egypt, he had sent his wife and family to be taken care of by his father-in-law. Now Jethro had come and brought Moses' wife and children with him.

*How do you think Moses was able to judge the disputes that arose among over 2 million people? How did it affect him?*

*What would have happened had Moses tried to continue doing all the same work once his family returned?*

*What do you think of the advice Jethro gave to Moses?*

*How is what Moses was doing similar to what we sometimes do, especially during the holidays?*

*What often happens to our relationships with our families when we're overloaded?*

*What often happens to our relationships with God?*

*How can you find a way—as Jethro helped Moses to do—to lighten your own load?*

### **Apply the Word**

#### **Read Psalm 23:1–3.**

*How does this describe the rest God offers? What's so great about the thoughts in this passage? Is this type of rest part of your Christmas season?*

*Take a minute to think about what you'll do this week to begin slowing down your schedule, spending more time alone with God and focusing on Him.*