

## Leading by Faith

### Session #11: Leading Groups & Teams

**Welcome** – Welcome back! Last session, we learned about conflict resolution. I gave you 5 principles:

**Discussion – What was your most impactful take away from the 10th session? Why?**

- 1. Encourage a culture for healthy disagreement** – Build Trust, Reduce fear of conflict, Hold people accountable, Insist on commitment in relationships, Define results.
- 2. Put on your shepherd's hat during interpersonal conflict.**
- 3. Categorize the conflict** – Opinion, Preference, *Understanding*, Personality, Style, Wisdom, Authority, Sin
- 4. Gauge the intensity.**
- 5. Deal with it accordingly.**

6:15 PM – For tonight, I'd like to give you a theology of groups/teams and then some sociological principles for high functioning groups and high performing teams. First, some Bible with application. And then some practical wisdom.

**Theology of Groups & Teams** – We see the importance of being in a group and working as a team in 6 examples in the Bible. Surely there are more than six, but here a six.

- 1. Trinity: Group & Team in God** – God is the best place to start on any topic. What is it about God that makes us think group & team are good ideas.

The Trinitarian aspect of God's being is more than a group & a team, for certain, and it does have implications for groups & teams and the leadership of them.

The Bible teaches that God's being is perfect, infinite, unchangeable, and Trinitarian.

- God is not an existence like any other existence.
- God does not change or progress. It is impossible to add to God. God is not growing in power or understanding.
- God is. God always will be.

And God is Trinitarian. God eternally exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- Whereas human beings are unitarian by nature, one being who exists as one person, God is Trinitarian by nature.
- God is not one being who expresses Himself in three different ways or operates in three different modes or takes three different forms or is made up of three different parts (modalism).
- God is one being who exists as three persons. The Trinity goes beyond our logic, but it is not illogical.

The Father is the first person of the Trinity. The Father is not the Son, nor the Spirit, yet is fully God.

- The Son is the second person of the Trinity. The Son is not the Father, nor the Spirit, yet is fully God.
- The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is not the Father, nor the Son, yet is fully God.

God eternally exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- The Father is fully God. The Son is. The Spirit is.
- The Father is not the Son is not the Spirit.
- There is one God.

I think one application of that to our lives is that God operates as a group or a team.

- Therefore, shouldn't we as his image bearers, operate as a group or a team too?
- Since we are unitarian in nature, we can't operate as a team within our self like God eos, we need other persons to do so.

Some simple applications to that theological foundation. Notice there are different roles.

- It would be a fascinating study to look at all the actions attributed to each person of the Trinity.
  - If I had to sum up those different roles it seems as though the Father initiates and plans, the Son implements and executes, and the Spirit empowers and administers.
  - If the three persons of God have roles, it seems appropriate to conclude that human groups and teams should have roles. Not everyone plays the same role.
- Roles.

Also, unity. While the three persons of the Trinity have different functions, they remain unified in essence and purpose.

All three are active in all the activity.

- There is one God.
- If the three persons of God have roles that are united, it seems appropriate to conclude that human groups and teams should be united. Roles. Unity.

And Mutuality.

- The persons of the Trinity honor one another, support one another, recognize one another, relate with one another, communicate with one another, share authority with one another, respect one another, depend on one another, collaborate with one another, etc.
- There is a “one another-ing” within God, and as God’s image bearers of God we want to emulate God in these ways.

6 examples in the Bible of being in a group and working as a team. The first is God himself. The Trinity. #2. Second.

**2. Creation: Group & Team in God, Adam & Eve** – We spent an entire session on Understanding Our Purpose, so we won’t take much time on it again.

Simply, God created us in his image.

- Humans were the center of God’s creation activity.
- Humans are unique amongst creation.
- And humans are representatives of God to creation.

God creates us to image him.

- To explore his good creation,
- To form the creation for the greater good,
- To fill the earth with everything good,
- To multiply the good of more images of God,
- To enjoy everything that is good,
- Now, after Christ, to redeem creation in the power of the Spirit of God for the glory of God: heal, enable, forgive, preserve, repair, renovate, etc.

Adam & Eve were created to be in God's group and on God's team, and there posterity afterwards. That's the second example. Third:

**3. Moses: A Shepherding Group & Team** – God provided Aaron & Jethro to Moses so that he would shepherd God's people as a group, as a team, through groups and teams. I'm simply going to read two Scripture passages so that you see this in the Bible. The first passage is Exodus 4:10-16:

**<sup>10</sup>But Moses said to the LORD, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue." <sup>11</sup>Then the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? <sup>12</sup>Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak." <sup>13</sup>But he said, "Oh, my Lord, please send someone else."**

**<sup>14</sup>Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, “Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. <sup>15</sup>You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do. <sup>16</sup>He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him.**

**Exodus 4:10-16 (ESV)**

Notice, it’s not okay to tell the Lord you aren’t going to do what he is calling you to do, but it is okay to ask God for help, especially in areas where you perceive you are weak. God will provide what you need.

God is so gracious, isn’t he?

- He gave Moses an assignment.
- The team for the task was him and God.
- Moses didn’t think God was enough for him.
- So, God added to the team. He brought on Aaron.

The second passage is Exodus 18:13-24:

**<sup>13</sup>The next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning till evening. <sup>14</sup>When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, “What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning till evening?”**

**<sup>15</sup>And Moses said to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to inquire of God; <sup>16</sup>when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make them know the statutes of God and his laws.” <sup>17</sup>Moses' father-in-law said to him, “What you are doing is not good. <sup>18</sup>You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone. <sup>19</sup>Now obey my voice; I will give you advice, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God, <sup>20</sup>and you shall warn them about the statutes and the laws, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do. <sup>21</sup>Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. <sup>22</sup>And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. <sup>23</sup>If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace.” <sup>24</sup>So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said.**

**Exodus 18:13-24 (ESV)**

It's not good to do ministry alone. It should be done in groups and in teams. We can't do it alone. We will wear ourselves out.

6 examples in the Bible of being in a group and working as a team. #1. The Trinity. #2. Creation. #3 Moses. Fourth.

**4. Jesus: An Apostolic Group & Team** – The Son of God led a Life Group. Jesus worked with and through a team. He raised up disciples. He sent out apostles.

Who did Jesus choose to be part of his group? Who did he select on his team?

- **Simon Peter:** A fisherman who became a leader among the apostles. Known for his boldness and impulsiveness.
- **Andrew:** Peter's brother, also a fisherman. He was known for bringing others to Jesus.
- **James (son of Zebedee):** A fisherman nicknamed "Son of Thunder" by Jesus. He was part of Jesus' inner circle.
- **John:** James' brother, also called a "Son of Thunder." He became known as the "Apostle of Love" and wrote several New Testament books.
- **Philip:** Practical and methodical, he played a role in introducing others to Jesus.
- **Bartholomew (also known as Nathanael):** Described as honest and without deceit.
- **Thomas:** Often remembered for his initial doubt about Jesus' resurrection but also known for his loyalty.
- **Matthew:** A former tax collector who left his profession to follow Jesus. He authored the Gospel of Matthew.
- **James (son of Alphaeus):** Also known as James the Less, he served faithfully but is less prominent in the Gospels.

- **Thaddaeus (also called Jude):** Described as quiet and humble.
- **Simon the Zealot:** Known for his passionate nature, which was redirected to serve the Gospel.
- **Judas Iscariot:** The disciple who betrayed Jesus. He was later replaced by Matthias in the group of apostles.

He selected them, spent time with them, consecrated them, trained them, modeled for them, gave them responsibility, oversaw them and sent them out to reproduce his work in them into others. That's example #4. 5<sup>th</sup>...

**5. Paul: A Missionary Group & Team** – Even though the Apostle Paul didn't walk with Jesus in his Apostolic group, he did what Jesus did. He started a group. He had a team.

**Barnabas** – Barnabas was one of Paul's earliest and most significant collaborators. Their partnership began when Barnabas sought out Paul in Tarsus and brought him to Antioch to assist with the growing church there. *Describe that search committee!* Together, they ministered for a year before being commissioned by the Holy Spirit and the Antioch church for their first missionary journey.

Barnabas and Paul's first journey took them through Cyprus and parts of Asia Minor, including Pamphylia and Galatia. They faced various challenges together, including opposition from Jewish leaders and even attempts on their lives. Despite these difficulties, they successfully established several churches.

However, their partnership ended in a disagreement over John Mark's participation in their second journey. This led to their separation, with Barnabas taking Mark to Cyprus while Paul chose Silas as his new companion.

**Silas** – Silas, also known as Silvanus, became Paul's primary companion for his second missionary journey. A leader and prophet from the Jerusalem church, Silas proved to be a steadfast partner, enduring hardships and persecution alongside Paul. Their most notable shared experience was their imprisonment in Philippi, where their prayers and hymns led to a miraculous release and the conversion of their jailer. Silas's contributions extended beyond physical presence; he is mentioned in several of Paul's letters, indicating his ongoing importance in the early church and his role in Paul's ministry.

**Timothy** – Timothy joined Paul's team during the second missionary journey and quickly became one of his closest collaborators. Described as Paul's spiritual son, Timothy was well-regarded by local believers in Lystra. Paul saw great potential in the young man and decided to take him along, even circumcising him to avoid offending the Jews in the areas they would visit.

Timothy's youth and mixed heritage (Jewish mother, Greek father) made him a unique asset to Paul's ministry. He traveled extensively with Paul and was entrusted with significant responsibilities, including delivering letters and overseeing churches.

Paul's two pastoral epistles to Timothy reflect the deep mentoring relationship between them and Timothy's important role in church leadership.

**Luke** – Luke, the physician and author of the Gospel of Luke and Acts, was another key member of Paul's team. His detailed accounts in Acts provide valuable insights into Paul's journeys. Luke joined Paul at Troas during the second missionary journey and accompanied him through various regions, including Philippi and Jerusalem. Luke's medical skills, literary talents, and faithful companionship were significant assets to Paul's ministry. He remained with Paul during his imprisonment in Rome, demonstrating his loyalty and importance to the apostle's work.

**John Mark** – John Mark, often referred to simply as Mark, initially joined Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey but left early, returning to Jerusalem. This led to the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas before the second journey. However, Mark later reconciled with Paul and became a valued collaborator, as evidenced by Paul's positive mentions of him in later letters.

**Titus** – Titus was a Gentile convert who became a trusted co-worker of Paul. He played a crucial role in the early church, particularly in Crete and in resolving the conflict over Gentile circumcision. Paul's letter to Titus demonstrates the trust and responsibility placed in him for church leadership and organization.

**Priscilla and Aquila** – This married couple were fellow tentmakers and close friends of Paul. They worked with him in Corinth and Ephesus, providing both practical and spiritual support. Their involvement in Paul's ministry demonstrates the importance of lay leadership and hospitality in the early church.

**Epaphras** – Epaphras founded the church in Colossae and was praised by Paul for his fervent prayers and dedication. His work exemplifies how Paul's companions often took initiative in establishing and nurturing new congregations.

**Aristarchus** – A Macedonian from Thessalonica, Aristarchus was a faithful companion who shared in Paul's hardships, including imprisonment. His presence on various journeys and during Paul's captivity shows the deep commitment of Paul's team members.

**Tychicus** – Described as a beloved brother and faithful minister, Tychicus was entrusted with delivering Paul's letters to the Ephesians and Colossians. He also provided updates on Paul's situation to the churches, serving as an important liaison.

**Tertius** – Paul's stenographer for the Epistle to the Romans was Tertius. It was common practice in that era for authors to dictate letters to scribes. Paul likely used stenographers due to potential issues with his eyesight, though this is debated by some scholars. Paul may have used different scribes for his other epistles.

What can we learn from all this about Paul and his group, his team?

- **Diverse Backgrounds** – Paul's teams included individuals from various ethnic, cultural, and social backgrounds. This diversity reflected the inclusive nature of the gospel and helped in reaching a wide range of people across the Roman Empire.
- **Complementary Skills** – Team members brought different skills and gifts to the ministry. While Paul was the primary preacher and apostle, others like Luke contributed medical knowledge, Priscilla and Aquila offered practical skills and hospitality, and Timothy and Titus developed as church leaders.
- **Flexible Roles** – Paul's companions often took on various roles as needed. They could be messengers, representatives to churches, co-workers in evangelism, or leaders in Paul's absence. This flexibility was crucial for the dynamic nature of the missionary work.
- **Deep Relationships** – Paul's letters reveal that his relationships with team members went beyond mere professional associations. He often used familial terms to describe them, indicating deep emotional and spiritual bonds.
- **Training and Mentorship** – Paul's approach included mentoring younger members like Timothy and Titus, preparing them for leadership roles in the growing church. This focus on developing future leaders was crucial for the long-term success of the mission.

- Collaborative Decision-Making – While Paul was the leader, the missionary teams often made decisions collaboratively, as seen in the Jerusalem Council and in various situations described in Acts.
- Disagreements – The split between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark shows that even successful missionary partnerships could face internal conflicts. However, the later reconciliation with Mark demonstrates the team's ability to overcome such challenges. That's #5. Lastly:

**6. The Body of Christ: The Church as a Group & Team – 1**  
 Corinthians 12:12-26 teaches that we are a group and a team and therefore should operate in groups and teams.

**<sup>12</sup>For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup>For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. <sup>14</sup>For the body does not consist of one member but of many. <sup>15</sup>If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup>And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup>If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? <sup>18</sup>But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. <sup>19</sup>If all were a single member, where would the body be?**

<sup>20</sup>As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. <sup>21</sup>The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” <sup>22</sup>On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup>and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, <sup>24</sup>which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, <sup>25</sup>that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup>If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.”

1 Corinthians 12:12-26

Notice: You are distinct (v.12-13).

- You are part of a whole (v.12-13).
- You don't have a say in this matter (v.14-16).
- You don't make sense alone (v.17).
- You are what and where God wants you to be (v.18).
- You need every other Christian (v.21).
- You are important no matter what your perception is about yourself (v.22).
- You have a personal relationship with God, but not a private one (v.24-27).

**Discussion – What is best group or team you have ever been part of? Why was it the best?**

6:55 PM – That's some Bible and application. Here's a bit of life experience and sociology, more briefly. 7 Practices of Exceptional Groups and High Performing Teams.

**1. Knowing Yourself & Your Group or Team** – We spent an entire session on knowing yourself.

Personality & Interests. Family. Past. Gifts, Aptitudes & Skills. Work Motivations. Leadership Style. Character. Current Responsibilities.

As a leader, you want to know all of that about yourself and as much of that about everyone in your group or team as you can. Further, what do they know about you and what do they know about each other. That's #1. Second:

**2. A Stated Purpose** – There will be different motivations for why people are part of the group or team you are leading, but there must be a purpose that has been stated. THIS is why WE are together.

That purpose should be clear, common, and compelling.

- Everyone should be able to repeat it.
- Everyone should be able to do it.
- Everyone should want to be part of it.

Even more, the best leaders are maniacal in a good way. They go beyond purpose to identify strategy and tactics that will achieve that purpose, and current priorities. That's 2. #3:

**3. Clear Roles** – There's the general role of a group member or a team member. There are also specific and gifted roles. All must be clear to be exceptional and high performing.

For example, there is general role for every team member – what every person has to do and be as part of being on the team. Usually that involves Conversion, Call, Character, Competence, Chemistry, Culture, Capacity.

Then, there are specific roles. That's what they do on the team that others don't, what they do in the group that others generally don't. Ideally, ability & experience in their role should exceed other team members for that role, even the leader.

Then there are gifted roles in which there's unique experience and distinctive aptitudes come into play. That's what they bring that others don't bring.

Less application to a group than a team but there's designing roles, recruiting, orienting, and even terminating.

- 7 Practices of Exceptional Groups and High Performing Teams.
- #1 Knowing you and your people. #2 Stated Purpose. #3 Clear roles. #4:

**4. Respected Leadership** – The most important aspect of the leader is that he or she is respected by the group or team. If they lose respect, the group & team will decline.

Leaders gain respect in a lot of ways. Here are some. They lead themselves well. They do the first three: lead themselves, state purpose, clarify roles. They are consistent. They motivate others. They monitor pace. They cross the finish line. They are direction setters, boundary managers, facilitators, and negotiators, coaches, managers, shepherds, and developers. That's #4. 5<sup>th</sup> is:

**5. Effective Processes** – How do we do life together in this group? How do we work together on this team? What are our operating principles? Do all those work well?

Without some structure, groups often flounder unproductively, and the members then conclude they are merely waiting their time. The fewer constraints given a team, the more time will be spent defining its structure rather than carrying out its task.

For example, some groups have a covenant about how to operate with principles like:

- We are open and honest with one another.
- We treat each other with dignity and respect.
- We listen to and respect each other's ideas and opinions.
- We hold confidences.
- We honor our commitments.
- We support and invest in each other's development.
- We routinely critique our processes.
- We have fun.

That's #5, which could contain 6 & 7:

**6. Committed Relationships** – Everyone doesn't have to be best friends in a group or on a team, but they should be committed to one another.

The Bible calls us brothers and sisters in Christ. That doesn't mean we have sibling level relationships. There are a capacity and a chemistry issue there. It's more like extended family. But, spiritual family level commitment, nonetheless.

Aim for relationships that are warm, respectful, loyal and w/o ongoing conflict. I try my best to focus on people's hearts rather than merely outward behavior at any one specific moment. Patterns of behavior over time reveal the heart, but I don't overreact as a leader to occasional behaviors. It's important to do relationship as much as possible through the ups and downs. Commitment. Lastly, 7 Practices of Exceptional Groups and High Performing Teams.#7.

**7. Candid Communication** – Communication is the very means of cooperation. Work on it as an individual and as group. Listening is, of course, one of the most important skills and practices.

Being candid though is vital. I don't mean being rude. And being candid it different than being honest. Sometimes we say, to be honest, and what we mean to say is, to be candid. I'm going to tell you something that is on my mind, that is important enough for our relationship or the group relationship, that I must say it out loud to you, and clearly to you.

That sounds like I am going to say something negative, but it should also be positive statements.

For me personally, the higher the importance or intensity of the communication, the more I prepare, but I try to be prepared for most every conversation. When I wing candid communication off the cuff, I generally have speakers' remorse.

The difference between and my view on: Face to Face. Video Call. Phone. Text. Email. Other.

**Discussion – What is worst group or team you have ever been part of? Why was it the worst?**

7:25 PM – Next assignment

- Prep to say something out loud in front of the entire group in 60 seconds.
- Let's pray.