

Teamwork in Education – Part 1

“Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.” Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (KJV)

“Shared joy is double joy. Shared sorrow is half the sorrow.”
Ancient Swedish motto

Lesson Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson the participant will be able to accomplish the following:

1. Explain why the study of teamwork in the educational setting is important.
2. Define and discuss what a team is and how teamwork affects the success or failure of a Bible school’s educational goals.
3. List and discuss the five critical elements of teamwork.
4. Discuss the lesson’s biblical teamwork examples and explain why each example is a negative or positive one.
5. List the common barriers to effective teamwork and discuss how each impacts the success or failure of the team.
6. Conduct a self-assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of the team you are currently working with. Is your team effective and efficient? If not, discuss why?

Why is it Important to Study Teamwork?

First, in educational organizations, teamwork must be an essential leadership strategy to ensure the organization’s vision and purpose are achieved effectively and efficiently. Team members from every level of the organization (from the executive administrator to the latest enrolled student) must recognize the invaluable benefits of working together, maximizing their collective and individual talents and abilities, and remaining focused on a common vision for all.

Secondly, the success of such organizations depends upon every member being actively engaged in at least one team effort within the organization. The combined efforts of each team will encourage increased innovation, improved communications, and better methods for achieving both large and small tasks and projects.

Definitions - an Excellent Starting Point

Team – a number of individuals *working together* for a common goal or purpose

Teamwork – the cooperative or coordinated effort of a group of individuals *acting together* as a team or in the interests of a common cause; also, work done by team effort

Teams may be formed at the organizational level (example: board of advisors), the administrative staff level (example: graduation committee), the departmental level (example: curriculum review group), the faculty level (example: instructor collaboration teams), and the student level (examples: student advisory or student government teams). Notice that these teams, by definition, are cooperative and coordinated efforts and their team members are not working independently, but in harmony with one another, combining individual talents and skills into an overall team effort. Regardless of the organizational level, it is absolutely critical that team members share the same vision and values and work cooperatively together toward the same team goals and objectives.

Team Member Collaboration and Cooperation

With these definitions as our foundation, it becomes clear that teams function best when individuals set aside personal differences and individual goals, and energetically collaborate with each other to achieve team goals and tasks through unified teamwork. In a biblical context, every Christian should be working together with other members of the body of Christ, not as a single individual for personal goals, but to advance the preaching and teaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ – fulfilling His vision and calling.

A Bible school is not a business enterprise or a government agency; its primary goals are not high profit margins or better manufacturing efficiency. While Bible school leaders do have concerns about adequate finances, faculty and staff availability, and the number of student enrollments, their primary purpose is directed by God’s anointing, His priorities, and His biblical principles and spiritual values.

The business world uses the word, *synergy*, to describe the positive effects of teamwork on company employees.

Synergy - the interaction of combined elements that when combined produce a *greater total effect* than the sum of the individual elements’ contributions; Greek word origin: *synergia* – “working together”

Essentially then, teamwork is literally “working together” to gain the multiplying effects of synergy, but its meaning goes beyond just mutual team effort. When individual team members make the team’s goal their goal, the combined team effort is multiplied, and “the combined team effort is greater than the sum of individual team member efforts.” In other words, the combined effort of an entire team is larger (more effective) than if the individual efforts of each member were simply added together.

As Bible educators, we already understand *spiritual* synergy – the anointing hand of God on our lives. His Spirit makes us so much more effective than we ever would have been without Him. So, when we “work together” as a spiritual team, He multiplies our effectiveness and the impact we have, as a team, on our students and the tasks at hand. Scripture emphasizes the effects of teamwork in all our efforts for Him.

“Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.
For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth;
for he hath not another to help him up.” Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (KJV)

One translation of the above scripture says, “Two can accomplish *more than twice as much* as one, for the results can be much better.” This is the very definition of *spiritual* synergy and its impact on godly teamwork in the educational setting. Andrew Carnegie said, “Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. It is the fuel that allows common people to obtain uncommon results.” Godly educators understand this to be true, but it might be restated: “Godly, unified teamwork enables Spirit-led men to do miraculous things by His power.”

Five Critical Elements of Teamwork

Leaders must consider five critical elements of teamwork when establishing teams in the educational setting. These elements are:

1. **Delegation** – the assignment of specific tasks and responsibilities to a team based on individual team member strengths and weaknesses and how to ensure critical tasks are accomplished by the most qualified teams

Leaders should understand and continuously update: 1) the current list of tasks or projects to be completed; 2) the allocated timeframe for each task or project and the scheduled deadline for work to be finished; 3) the required team member skills and abilities required for the team; and 4) available individual strengths and weaknesses to successfully complete the tasks or projects. It is important that critical tasks or projects are assigned to the most qualified teams.

2. **Effectiveness** – the degree to which a team can accomplish assigned tasks to required quality standards; how successful was the team in meeting expectations?

Leaders must take special care when assigning tasks or projects. If they consistently assign difficult or critical tasks to the same, highly qualified team, that team may become overworked or feel others teams are not properly contributing to the Bible school’s overall effort. When determining which team to assign a specific task, leaders must also consider the current workloads of all teams, and as a result, assign the task to another team rather than the one most qualified. Remember, teamwork means that everyone works together for the common good; and not just the most effective teams. By this process of assigning tasks,

leaders will soon discover any gaps in training or missing skill sets that are essential to carry out the organization's purpose.

3. **Efficiency** – the degree to which a team can successfully accomplish assigned tasks with the least amount of time and resources

Tasks and projects often come with time and resource limitations. Leaders use several types of project teams to meet the challenges of time and money. Such teamwork efficiencies allow many subtasks to be completed simultaneously, reduces total project work time, and spreads the workload among all team members.

4. **Innovation** – team members often “brainstorm” with one another about organizational and team issues and problem areas.

Teamwork can spontaneously produce a variety of new ideas or methods that may result in improved solutions to team procedures or tasks. Research shows that the teams with open lines of communications between team members and between the team and its leader identify more exceptional and workable ideas than teams with less interpersonal communications. Team innovation is actually a byproduct of excellent teamwork between members. The challenge for team leaders is to encourage and anticipate new team ideas and suggestions, and not to view those new ideas as a personal criticism of their leadership. Change is often difficult for everyone involved with a team effort, but strong leaders recognize that innovative ideas and solutions can quickly improve the organization's policies, standard operating procedures, work schedules and sequences, personnel issues, and in fact, every area of the organization's operation. Insightful leaders will realize that team innovation will be appreciated and rewarded by the organization. Change is not a threat to leader authority, but an opportunity for the leader, the team and the organization to positively benefit from the change.

5. **Internal support** – an effective and efficient team's first priority should be to fully understand the educational organization's vision and purpose; and in doing so, it becomes a powerful supportive resource for the organization.

Teamwork builds strong member camaraderie creating a very cohesive group that possesses the required team culture to work together effectively, to solve difficult problems as they arise, to form close personal and professional relationships with team members, and to strongly support the organizational vision.

Biblical Examples of Teamwork

Old Testament Teamwork Examples

The Tower of Babel

“And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." Genesis 11:4, 6 (KJV)

From the beginning of God's word, there are biblical examples of how teamwork affected the lives of mankind. One example is found in chapter 11 of Genesis – the Tower of Babel. Though their motives were wrong, the children of men, who were building the Tower of Babel, used teamwork to accomplish a massive project:

- 1) they were united in one purpose ("the people is one");
- 2) they shared a common language ("they have all one language") (effective communications);
- 3) they had begun the work ("they begin to do") (decisive action); and
- 4) they had removed all barriers to the project ("now nothing will be restrained from them").

God knew that if one of these critical elements were lost the project would ultimately fail. We can learn an important teamwork lesson from this. When God confused their common language, He destroyed what may have been the most important teamwork element – effective interpersonal communications. Clarity, understanding, empathy, and feedback are all essential traits of effective interpersonal communications. Teamwork, to be successful, also requires these same traits. A team effort will likely fail when its interpersonal communications are closed or ineffective. The free and open exchange of ideas, viewpoints, and respectful feedback to leadership is absolutely critical for teams to be successful. Bible school educators should be some of the most effective communicators in the world today. By vocation, teachers must be excellent communicators. Serving as team members, exceptional teachers can help teams develop free and open communications.

Rebuilding Jerusalem's Walls and Temple

"So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work. Nehemiah 4:6 (KJV)

"And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy. Ezra 6:15-16 (KJV)

Nehemiah, Ezra, and other Hebrew refugees had returned from their Babylonian captivity only to find the city of Jerusalem and its walls completely destroyed. The

rebuilding of the city walls and the temple provide teamwork examples of two teams led by two different leaders. While Nehemiah and Ezra had different personal perspectives on their tasks, their teams responded positively to their leadership. Both teams achieved astonishing results.

The Jerusalem Walls – A Short-term Team Effort

Nehemiah's focus was as a cupbearer to the king and understood the importance of authority and power exercised by a king. He immediately recognized the danger facing Israel if its capital city remained without protective walls. Nehemiah knew the city could not be defended without walls, and urged his team, working as both masons and soldiers, to labor together as a team to rebuild the destroyed walls as quickly as possible. This was an emergency and it required an intense sense of urgency on the part of the leader and the team members. Any delay in the wall's construction might result in an enemy invasion. Team member unity and commitment were required individual traits to ensure team success. Nehemiah relied on God's anointing, local Jewish labor, and resources provided by a foreign king. The team achievements were spectacular; the walls were rebuilt in 52 days! But Nehemiah's successful teamwork would not have been complete without Ezra's long-term effort to rebuild the Jerusalem temple.

God's Temple – A Long-term Team Effort

Ezra's perspective was that of a priest. His concern was the spiritual; the temple of God lay in ruins. If no temple existed in Jerusalem, then there was no place for the presence of God to reside. There would be no place of worship or sacrifice, no physical symbol of God's presence, and no relationship between God and his people. The construction of a magnificent temple could not be accomplished quickly; it would require years to build properly and with the appropriate materials. For many years, Zerubbabel and others faithfully labored in the rebuilding of the temple. These team efforts first began in 536 B.C., but were delayed several years by severe opposition and the lack of temple materials and other resources. The final team effort began in 520 B.C. and the construction of a second temple of God in Jerusalem was completed in 516 B.C. The teamwork and resources of so many people were required to finally realize the dream and vision of Ezra. Over a period of twenty years, this long-term team effort demanded that its leaders and team members have strong personal conviction, courage, dedication, determination and faith in order to see this great task through to its eventual completion.

New Testament Teamwork Example

Jesus and His Disciples – The Model of the Gospels

When examining the New Testament for examples of teamwork, it would be difficult to ignore the perfect example of the Lord Jesus as our master teacher. As He began His earthly ministry, He provided us with not only an earthly model of day-to-day teamwork, but also a profoundly spiritual one. Why would Jesus, the incarnate God, require a team of

mortal men or the help of others? Even in His selection of His disciples, the Lord was teaching us by example that teams need not to consist of those of high birth, impressive pedigree, or notable social rank. It is generally believed that at least five of the disciples were fishermen, one was a tax collector, and others were tradesmen or had unknown occupations.

“It [teamwork] is the fuel that allows common people to obtain uncommon results.”
Andrew Carnegie

Interestingly, Jesus’ disciples were common men who would go on to accomplish miraculously uncommon things through the power and the name of the Lord Jesus. Also, it should be noted that Jesus also chose Judas Iscariot and allowed him to serve as the group’s treasurer. Though Judas would eventually betrayed Jesus, the Lord gave Judas every opportunity to overcome his weaknesses and succeed as one of the twelve Apostles.

“And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.” Matthew 4:18-20 (KJV)

Jesus was always teaching; if you were around Him, you were continually in an educational setting. He taught one-on-one, in small groups of 2 or 3, privately with His disciples, and in large masses of people numbering in the thousands. Jesus’ teaching was powerful and inspiring, but never complicated; and He always included His disciples (His “team”) in His teaching and ministry. Yes, He often taught thousands of people at a time, but in these instances, He was simultaneously teaching His disciples – how to lead, how to influence and how to minister to others; how to teach simply using everyday examples and objects; and how to work together effectively toward a common goal – the kingdom of God.

Jesus, as Savior, teacher, and miracle worker, called twelve common men. His “team members” were men from different backgrounds, somewhat undisciplined, with a few national zealots and little formal education. Looking back on Jesus’ choices today, His decision to call several fishermen first seems obvious because He would transform these experienced fishermen into “fishers of men.” These choices were deliberate, not accidental. As team leaders, we can learn from Jesus’ disciples and can see His detailed planning and structure in His early choices of “team members.” First, He selected a team inner circle as the team’s foundational group to function as follows:

1. Teams need an inner circle of team members who share common traits and values.
2. The team’s inner circle can quickly bond and provide the following:
 - a. Understand each other completely.
 - b. Form the team’s “core group.”

- c. Become the foundational “building blocks” that will produce strong team stability prior to other team members being introduced to the team, and
- d. Help reduce any negative effects resulting from the introduction of new team members with varied backgrounds, values, and cultures.

After calling five fishermen, Jesus now had a core group with a common background and culture. However, He did not avoid diversity or the potential for conflict within the team membership. Instead, He actually embraced both. Among the new disciples are Matthew and Simon – one a tax collector and the other a national zealot. Matthew cooperated with the Roman Empire by collecting its taxes from Jewish citizens. Matthew may have illegally collected more taxes from Jews than were legally due. Men like Peter, Andrew, Philip, James, and John hated the Roman Empire and its heavy-handed taxation, but worst of all, hated the Jewish tax collectors who did their bidding (See Chart below.).

Simon was a fanatical zealot that adamantly resisted the Roman Empire’s influence and power in his country. Simon literally hated all things Roman and now he was a team member with Matthew, its tax collecting representative. There had to be significant distrust between Simon and Matthew, and Jesus knew all of that and chose them both in spite of the tensions that arose from time to time. However, once called by Jesus, these 12 disciples became quite an interesting group of characters, but completely dedicated to the teachings and ministry of Jesus Christ (including Judas – at least for a period of time).

Jesus and His Disciples – Teamwork Lessons Learned

Much can be learned about effective teamwork when viewing Jesus and His disciples as a unique example of an actual team in action. However, these lessons to be learned can be properly analyzed when we identify them within the Lord’s teamwork model.

JESUS’ TEAM MEMBERS – THE 12 DISCIPLES

Team Member	Culture/Background	Worldview/Attitude
Andrew	Fisherman/Uneducated	Unifier/Evangelistic
Peter	Fisherman/Uneducated	Impulsive/Bold preacher
John (son of Zebedee)	Fisherman/Uneducated	Ambitious/Young/Loving
Philip	Fisherman/Uneducated	Questioning/Evangelistic
James (son of Zebedee)	Fisherman/Uneducated	Short temper/Deeply committed
James (son of Alphaeus)	Unknown/Unknown	Young/Unknown
Matthew	Tax Collector/Publican	Left tax collecting/Dedicated

Bartholomew (Nathanael)	Unknown/Unknown	Honest/Straight forwardness
Thomas (Didymus)	Unknown/Unknown	Doubtful/Courageous
Thaddaeus	Unknown/Unknown	Questioning/Faithful
Simon (the Zealot)	Unknown/Unknown	Fierce patriot/Committed
Judas	Unknown/Merchant?	Treacherous/Greedy

Lesson #1 – Jesus chose a team inner circle with common values and backgrounds

Peter, James and John were all fishermen who were open to the call of Jesus and were from such common backgrounds that they were immediately ready to work together as a cohesive group. Team leaders would be wise to initially select team members from similar backgrounds, educational levels and cultures in order to establish a compatible core group upon which to build the entire team membership.

Lesson #2 – Jesus chose team members with a wide range of backgrounds, worldviews and individual values

Jesus obviously knew the strengths and weaknesses of every potential disciple. But in spite of this knowledge, He called a diverse and unusual conglomeration of team members. Here are perhaps the most diverse and unexpected of His choices:

Matthew was a man with a questionable character, suspicious allegiances and who had been a Roman collaborator.

Judas was the man the other disciples did not really understand or know, who would demonstrate his greed and love of money on several occasions, and who would eventually betray Jesus.

Simon was the out-of-control man, an overly zealous Jewish nationalist, a political extremist, and the Romans would have called him a terrorist.

Yet, all these disciple choices were completely compatible with the good news and gospel of Jesus Christ. This gospel has a totally universal invitation to anyone and everyone to come and receive the free gift of His salvation.

“...And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”
 Revelation 22:17 (KJV)

In every aspect of His earthly ministry, Jesus displayed an all-encompassing love for every individual from every kindred, tribe and tongue. Even in the selection of His disciples, He modeled this “whosoever” principle in selecting the members of His team who

would become His Apostles to the world. He gave each of them, regardless of their backgrounds or weaknesses, the opportunity to embrace their calling and His vision.

Lesson #3 – Jesus recognized the value of team diversity and the benefits of having a team composed of different viewpoints and perspectives on current events and issues

Prior to Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, His disciples were often confused, frustrated, and focused on a future earthly kingdom and they lacked a common consensus as to how the gospel and vision of the Lord Jesus would actually be accomplished. His death and burial only made matters worse. They denied him, fled for their lives, huddled in the dark and hid from the authorities. But after His ascension and the day of Pentecost, these same cowardly and paralyzed disciples were empowered by His Spirit to be His witnesses and to preach and spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to the four corners of the earth.

“...and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1:8 (KJV)

Now having become Apostles of the Lord Jesus, these misfits were united in one purpose by Jesus' victory over death, hell and the grave. No longer confused or fighting among themselves, these mighty men of God formed the most dynamic and powerfully anointed team ever assembled on the planet. Scripture describes the historic impact made by this uncommon band of brothers as having turned the known world upside down at the time:

“...These that have turned the world upside down are come here also;”
Acts 17:6 (KJV)

In a similar manner, God can and will place manifold blessings and anointing on the teaching efforts of our Bible school administrators and faculty members who are daily impacting the lives of their students with the life-saving gospel of Jesus Christ worldwide. There is no limit as to what can be accomplished for the kingdom of God if we follow the principles of effective teamwork, unity and the pursuit of His common vision – winning the lost!

None of these blessings will come until there is a common sense of dedication and sacrifice. Team disagreements and personal conflicts will distract team members and cause both His blessings and anointing to be lost. Jesus and the disciples overcame tremendous obstacles – political and religious opposition, threats of imprisonment and death – but overcame all these by loving one another and working together for the cause of Jesus Christ. It is true that we “can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth” us (Philippines 4:13, KJV), but the Lord has already fulfilled this promise by living out the teamwork principles for you and me to employ in our teaching and preaching. If the best teachers are the best learners, then each of us must learn to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and His disciples, working in harmony and purpose with one another.

Common Barriers to Effective Teamwork

Poor Leadership

“If a leader doesn’t understand the concept of “service above self” they will not engender the trust, confidence and loyalty of those they lead.”
Mike Myatt (2015)

Poor leaders fail to lead themselves; fail to establish ethical standards; and fail to meet any standard. Myatt also says, “Any leader is only as good as his or her team’s desire to be led by them.” Poor leaders display lots of arrogance, pride and personal ego – none of which are excellent leadership traits. Poor leaders take the credit and assign the blame to others. Effective leaders always know that if anything goes wrong it’s their responsibility and not the team’s fault. Poor leaders look behind themselves and do not see anyone following.

Whether leaders are born or made has been a continuous debate throughout history. But when it comes to spiritual leaders, Scripture clearly reveals that they are God-called. Bible school leaders should be no exception to this rule. Anointed leadership is essential to the achieving the school’s educational and spiritual objectives. When educational teams do not have effective leaders both the effectiveness and the efficiency of those teams can be lost. Effective leaders should model excellence in performing their leadership duties, in personal godliness and in their interaction and communications with all team members. Leaders establish and implement team policies, procedures and standards that govern team operations, tasks and performance measures that directly support the team’s combined effort in accomplishing its assigned goals. Poor leadership not only hurts the team effort; it does damage to the individual leader. Special care, deliberation and prayer are essential when selecting team leaders. Poor leaders produce poor, unmotivated followers who, in turn, produce confusion, frustration and equally poor results.

Poor Vision Casting

"If you don't know where you are going, you will wind up somewhere else."
Yogi Berra, New York Yankee catcher

Teams must know where they are going in order to arrive there. Leaders are responsible for casting vision, defining the goals, and determining how well the objective was met. Team members will lose motivation and trust when leaders fail to define in clear terms what the team’s goals are. Vision can be both short-term and long-term goals, but both must be stated clearly and simply. In many cases, long-term goals must be broken down into smaller goals with specific milestones set along the way. The more the team understands the team objectives the more likely it will be successful. Without defined team goals, team members will not know what skills and talents are necessary to succeed. In other words, the best people may not be

actively involved in accomplishing the team goals because no one knows what skills are required to do so. There cannot be effective teamwork where the team is not working together. Leaders are responsible for casting the team vision; the team is responsible for carrying out that vision. If there is no vision; there is no team.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish.” Proverbs 29:18 (KJV)

Poor Communications

Poor team communications is the single greatest barrier to effective teamwork. Team leaders and members must establish open lines of communication that are an efficient and rapid means of transmitting vital information to all team members. The old saying is true: “Knowledge is power.” Without current information being distributed throughout the team, that team will be frustrated and will lose confidence in the team’s leadership when major changes are demanded of them without sufficient notification or warning. A good team communications system is one that ensures every team member has the information he or she needs to do their individual job or accomplish a particular task. It also means all team members are confident that the information is accurate and correct. Team communications must be free of personal agendas, bias or opinions; data and instructions must be accurate and leaders communicate how much effort and work each team members is being asked to do. Individual workloads must be balanced between team members to ensure every member is carrying his or her load.

Leaders will lose the respect and trust of team members if information is always late, contains critical errors or does not pertain to the team’s objectives at hand. Team members will readily bond as a cohesive unit when they can efficiently work together for the common goal. However, teams will never truly work together when there is a serious lack of effective communications. Teamwork will produce innovative ways to solve serious problems, but this benefit will not be realized when team communications fail.

“The heart of the wise makes his speech judicious and adds persuasiveness to his lips.”
Proverbs 16: 23 (KJV)

To develop a productive work environment, all team members must work together to ensure all lines of communication are open. Leaders also need an “open door” policy that allows any team member to speak with that leader. Without this “open door” policy, leaders may not know about a serious problem within the team. The most junior member of the team may have the answer or solution for which the leader was looking. When the vision is at stake, everyone on the team has an interest in being successful. Leaders will not always have the right answer or the correct solution. Teams that work together listen to each other and succeed. Team leaders must continually evaluate the quality and quantity of team communications. Is everyone getting the information or data they need? Is the leader hearing from anyone who has a “better idea?” Are milestones and deadlines always given to the team in a timely manner? The best thing that can happen for teamwork to flourish is for everyone to say, “Let’s talk!”

Poor Goal Execution

While the previously discussed barriers do contribute to poor goal execution, the biggest contributors to poor team execution are uncontrolled egos and personality clashes. Effective teamwork cannot exist in a team atmosphere where team members are unwilling to compromise with one another or will not agree to a team consensus for the good of the group. Effective (high performing) and efficient (time and cost conscious) teams will quickly become unsuccessful teams when there is a lack of respect on the part of team members for one another or for the team leader. When leader or team member egos and personality clashes are allowed to negatively impact the team's performance, serious conflict will develop within the team and cause unneeded disruptions that can completely undermine the team's overall effort.

Each team member should understand that their individual success is dependent upon the entire team's success. If the team is not successful, individual successes have little meaning. Teams will not mature into highly effective units if everyone is not working for the group's benefit. The efficiency of a team is very susceptible to the actions of selfish individuals who believe the rules do not apply to them. The lack of team unity or the lack of a sense of ownership by all team members will frustrate the efforts of its leader, and result in team failure. Every team member must recognize that individual egos and team conflict are the enemies of teamwork and team success. Individual discipline and self-control can make all the difference in team dynamics.

While team communications are a critical factor in performance, great leaders will get out of their offices, show genuine interest in team members, and "see for themselves" how the team is progressing and where the trouble spots are that endanger the team from completing its objectives. Team members do not require continuous supervision, but the team's work process does require frequent monitoring by leadership to ensure standards are being maintained, that the team is on schedule, and there are no personnel issues or complaints that require the leader's attention or action.

Every team needs a leader and every leader must rely on his or her team. There is a mutual respect and dependency upon one another. Leaders can delegate authority, but can never delegate responsibility. Leaders must delegate as necessary, act as a resource for team members, and "double check" on the team's progress.

"The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer;
The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks;
The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands;" Proverbs 30:25-27 (KJV)

Discussing Teamwork in Education

- A. Discuss your personal challenges considering teamwork in your educational setting.

- B. Effective teamwork is hard work and every team member must be both collaborative and cooperative. As a team member, how can you support your team leader and other team members through collaboration and cooperation?
- C. Discuss the differences between team effectiveness and team efficiency. How are both important to teamwork?
- D. Reflect on your experience with your Bible school team. How did your Bible school encourage teamwork? Did it succeed?
- E. Discuss the duties and responsibilities of a team leader in an educational setting. What makes a team leader successful?
- F. What made the Tower of Babel an example effective teamwork? Why did it fail?
- G. Considering Nehemiah and Ezra and their respective teams, what are the significant similarities and dissimilarities between the two teamwork examples?
- H. Reflect on the 12 disciples Jesus selected in the Gospels. In your opinion, which disciple had the most influence with the other disciples? Explain why.
- I. Considering the four common barriers to effective teamwork, which barrier has the greatest negative impact on effective teamwork? Explain your choice.
- J. Your objective is to have the most effective team at your Bible school. What is the single most important trait your team leader should have?

Conclusion

In the Bible school setting, teamwork plays a vital role in achieving both educational and spiritual goals; and administrators, staff, faculty and students must all be involved. In order for students to receive a comprehensive Bible school education, effective teamwork must be integrated into the organization at every level. Working together for the greater good is an individual and organizational responsibility. Administrators can encourage teamwork in several ways: 1) by promoting staff, faculty and student collaboration and cooperation; 2) by creating teams at every level of the organization; and 3) by assigning team members with diverse backgrounds and viewpoints to work together in harmony.

By creating more opportunity for staff, faculty and students to experience the benefits of effective teamwork on a variety of challenging tasks, leaders can significantly increase the organization's success rate in meeting its overall objectives. Leaders should also encourage student-to-student collaboration because research has shown that this accelerates student learning and more time is available for more advanced materials.

There will always be barriers to effective teamwork, but knowledgeable leaders will recognize them and take the appropriate corrective action to reduce their adverse impact. When Bible school administrators and staff ensure its team leaders are well trained and experienced and are faithfully casting vision and clearly communicating with their teams, any potential negative effects are diminished and goals and objectives are achieved more efficiently. Problems, mistakes and difficulties will happen, but successful teams overcome them by an unbreakable unity and group bond that produces innovative ideas and workable solutions.

Biblical teamwork examples also provide workable models with real-world people working in highly successful teams to accomplish tremendous projects and callings. The New Testament teamwork example of Jesus and His disciples is especially inspiring and reveals the key elements for successful teamwork under less than perfect circumstances. Just as Jesus confidently knew His purpose on earth and selected a diverse, even unusual group of men to become His disciples, so too, can we be confident of our calling and select capable individuals at all levels of the organization to serve in successful and productive teams. Teamwork in the educational setting is an essential characteristic of a successful, caring and effective 21st century Bible school.

Teamwork in Education – Part 1

Lesson in Review

Name: _____

Nation: _____

1. Teamwork is an important concept in today’s educational setting. Explain why.

2. Select one biblical teamwork example. Discuss how and why it is either a positive or negative teamwork example.

3. Two important definitions are critical to a discussion of teamwork in education. List and define these two terms.

4. Collaboration and cooperation are critical to effective teamwork. What are the differences between them, if any?

5. How does the term, *synergy*, relate to effective teamwork?

6. Delegation is one of five critical elements of teamwork. Discuss how delegation affects teamwork.

7. The lesson states a leader can delegate authority, but not responsibility. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

8. Jesus and His disciples is a major teamwork example in the New Testament. List three reasons and why.

9. What are the four common barriers to effective teamwork? Explain why.

10. Think about your current role and duties on your Bible school team. What is/are your greatest challenges to effective teamwork in your team? How can you overcome this challenge?

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