

WINNING TEAMS - AND WEAKEST LINKS**By Robert J. Tamasy**

A time-honored adage tells us, “A chain is only as strong as its weakest link.” A chain, whether wrapped around someone’s wrist, restraining an aggressive dog, or suspending a heavy object, cannot serve its purpose if one or more of its links are weak. This principle also is true for many areas of life – such as building and sustaining strong teams, whether on athletic fields and arenas or in the marketplace.

Another truism that applies here is, “One person can’t make a team, but one person can break a team.” In other words, the most gifted and talented member of a team cannot guarantee the team’s success. But the failure of one individual on the team can contribute greatly to its downfall.

Years ago, I had the privilege of going to Brazil for a series of meetings with business and professional leaders wanting to learn how to represent Jesus Christ more effectively where they worked, using CBMC strategies. During one session I used the sport of soccer (futebol) as an example. When all the players are playing their positions in a unified way, victory can often be achieved. However, if even one player fails to do his or her job – especially the goalie – defeat is probable.

Using that analogy, I explained to my friends in Brazil the key to fruitful marketplace ministry was not relying on a single individual, which had been the case in the past, but recognizing their various strengths, making allowances for one another’s weaknesses, and determining how to assign various responsibilities while striving toward the same goals: To present Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord to those they encountered through the workplace, and to help followers of Jesus to become fruitful disciples.

The Bible is not a sports guidebook, but it says much about the importance of teamwork. For instance:

All play an important role on the team. Imagine if the percussionists failed to perform their parts in Peter Tchaikovsky’s rousing “1812 Overture.” Or if two keys on the piano were terribly out of tune when a virtuoso pianist was playing Beethoven’s “Moonlight Sonata.” The results would not be good. “The body is a unit though it is made up of many parts, and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.... God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked, so that there should be no division in the body” (1Corinthians 12:12-31).

Teams provide support when needed. Even on a good team, things do not always go smoothly. A struggling team member can benefit from the support and encouragement of others on the team, “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work. If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him

up!... Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).

Everyone can make a unique contribution. Some members of a team may receive more attention, but each one contributes, from the CEO to the custodian. We need them all. “...Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment according to the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us...” (Romans 12:3-6).

© 2025. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Marketplace Ambassadors: CBMC's Continuing Legacy of Evangelism and Discipleship*; *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace*; *Pursuing Life With a Shepherd's Heart*, coauthored with Ken Johnson; and *The Heart of Mentoring*, coauthored with David A. Stoddard. Bob's biweekly blog is: www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever been part of a team – at work, in sports, or a community endeavor – when one or more members consistently failed in carrying out their responsibilities? What was that like? How did you feel about it?
2. How do you respond if asked to perform a role on a team that you feel ill-equipped to do? Is it best to simply decline the assignment? In what ways can you help to identify how you – and others – fit best in pursuing the team's broader objectives?
3. Does the analogy of how the human body functions, with its different parts, help in having a better understanding of the dynamics of how an effective team works? Why or why not?
4. In what ways can we be certain to recognize the contributions of each team member, especially those whose roles are not as visible or prominent?

Challenge for This Week

Take some time to evaluate yourself in terms of how well you function as part of a team. Are you recognized as an effective team player, or do you prefer to operate independently? Even if your personality is such that you work best on your own, how can you strive to become a stronger member of a team when necessary?

For help in assessing your strengths and weaknesses in terms of being part of a team, ask for feedback from a trusted friend, or mentor, accountability partner, or your CBMC peer advisory group.

NOTE:

For more about what the Bible says, consider the following passages:
Exodus 35:30-25; 2 Chronicles 30:12; Nehemiah 4:13-17; Mark 6:7; Acts 1:8

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