



Hey, throughout our series we've been considering what does winning look like. With that let me ask, what does it look like to you? Maybe being a star basketball player and the captain of your team? Maybe playing QB on an NFL football team (woo! Dallas in 2022) or head cheerleader? Maybe being a corporate executive of one of the top firms in the industry Or even, a rock star leading your own rock band!

Over the past weeks we've been discovering how to get the big "w" as individuals and more importantly, as a team. Recall,

Week 1: Pastor Mike discussed what it means to win.

Week 2: Pastor Mark reminded us that we are, indeed, designed to win.

Week 3: Pastor Theresa and Pastor Glenn shared why playing as a "TEAM" is critical for the win.

Last week: Pastor Earl discussed the winning attitude of a team that is set for victory

Today, we discuss what it means to be a leader. Here's a question, just by show of hands - How many of us would agree every team needs a leader? No sked 'um. Raise those hands high. Yup.

On rare occasion will a team win without a leader. How many of us know in cases where there is no leader, an "unofficial" leader or captain will rise up. Why? Because every team needs a captain. A leader. A leader will set the vision, course, and direction of that team. Without him or her a team will spin, get distracted and often end up everywhere but victorious. Now, what if I told you every one is a leader. That's right, you are a leader. Stop for a moment, CONSIDER. You have family you lead or co-lead. You have friends or relationships that seek your insight. You have people at work that look to you, share with you, and gather information and opinions from you. You may not be sitting in the captain's seat, but you are sitting in a seat which means you have influence. You are a leader leading somebody.



So, now that we've established you are a team captain, a leader (pause and say it to yourself – I am a team captain, I am a leader). HERE'S THE MILLION DOLLAR QUESTION. How do we help our teams get the big "W"? What is that "W"? Like the double rainbow, (What does it mean?) See how one defines winning and leads could be the difference between success or failure of a team. Even more important, leadership of a team could be the difference it takes for team members to realize their passion and their full potential. WITH EVERYTHING GOING ON IN THE WORLD, IT IS CRITICAL FOR OUR FAMILIES, FOR OUR WORKPLACES, FOR OUR COMMUNITIES, FOR OUR RELATIONSHIPS THAT WE CONSIDER THE IMPORTANCE OF GODLY LEADERSHIP. Just a warning ... It might not be what you think.

What if team leadership was not about getting team goals done with the help of the people but rather, getting the people done as we journey to achieve team goals? What if at the forefront of leadership is helping team members find their passion, strengths, and "calling" for their lives? So that they could stand in confidence to lead others to do the same all the while striving and realizing the goals of the team? What if as leaders we could help our team members experience greater lives, create greater pathways of love and generosity that don't just give you the win, the greater profit margin, the grades AND accolades, but rather, greater connection to God resulting in people who can express their creativity, feel valued, and in turn, fulfill their fullest potential, including your team goals?

Leadership experts tell us there are 7-10 leadership models. With so many leadership styles to choose from how do we choose which one is the best? Well there's the transactional model, the autonomous model, the transitional model, SCRATCH RECORD SOUND ...

Well, I am no expert and that is why I felt particularly led and excited at the idea of helping us explore what it means to learn, grow and operate as a servant-leader. In 1970, Robert Greenleaf coined the term servant-leader. But servant-leadership began long before Greenleaf taught his first leadership development class at one of the largest corporations of its time, AT & T.



Now while Greenleaf may have COINED the term servant-leader, he did not create the model. Nope. The original model goes all the way back to ... can you guess? That's right, JESUS.

When it comes to servant leadership, JESUS IS THE GOAT! (Greatest of all time). Jesus not only started but has led the longest-lasting, largest team of all time. And it's one that continues to grow. Amidst crisis, internal and external strife, barriers, and the like. JESUS and his model of servant-leadership is the GOAT!

So hey if we want to be the best we gotta follow the best. So let's follow Jesus. Easy-peasy. Lol!

Like I said earlier it's not what u think. — Mark shares a story of Jesus and His disciples walking to Capernaum. Imagine, Jesus at the front and in the distance you can just imagine the disciples under their breath bantering about. The story goes on to say, that upon their arrival in Capernaum Jesus asks them what were you arguing about. No one could answer (probably because as P. Earl would say, dey was shame) because they were arguing about who is the best. Jesus' response. Simply, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all."

This basic principle is the underpin of what it means to be a servant-leader. Serve first. Lead second. Say it with me, Serve first, Lead second. Jesus' model is diametrically opposite, totally opposes, traditional authoritarian or power-based leadership models where those who lead, lead first and then, possibly serve. It is different from other models that say you serve me first, then I will serve you. I think we have all worked with those models and have the scars to prove it. Take a moment and consider,

What leadership characteristics have you benefited from? What have you found to be positive or motivational? What type of leadership helped you grow to be your very best?



At the very heart of servant leadership is just that, the heart. Your heart (Jesus heart) to love God and love people. To see the very best in people and help them develop to the plan God has given. Knowing that the very best for them is not our plan for them but, God's plan.

So that a mark of a servant-leader is that his/her leadership is transformational for the better of those on the team. The true test is to ask "are those served growing as people? Are they becoming healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous and more likely themselves to become servants? Are team members serving each other while serving and achieving team goals while together moving toward victory?

Michael Jordan is one of the best, if not THE best basketball players of all time, some might argue the GOAT of the game. Man is fierce. He has a "can do", fixed on the "W" FOCUS not just to win but to destroy his competition in the process. And he's got the skills to back it up. Yet, it was in the '91 playoffs that Jordan learned a valuable career changing lesson. It was about midway through game 5. The Bulls were trailing the Lakers. Jordan was focused on winning the game. His teammate John Paxson was open yet, each time Jordan had the ball rather than passing to Paxson, Jordan drove the ball to the basket. Costing him and the Bulls points. What Jordan didn't realize is that each time he overlooked Paxson he sent a message to the team that told them they were not needed. It wasn't until Coach Jackson called a time out and asked Jordan "who was open for the shot" that Jordan realized his error in playing the game alone. He needed to trade the "me for the we, and decrease to win." Jordan realized winning was about him being not the best on the team, but being the best for the team. Following that revelatory time out, Jordan began to steer the defense so Paxson was open and had time to make the shots needed for the Bulls to win the game. Jordan learned a valuable lesson about team and servant-leadership that day. Contrary to what the world would say, "being number 1 means you experience the victory as number 1." Jordan learned being number 1 was much sweeter when he shared the victory with a number 1 team. Jackson and Jordan cemented what would become a legacy of playing as a TEAM for the Bulls.



How many of us have expressed the same sentiment perhaps Jordan had that day, “more easy do ‘em myself?” But is that what is best for the team? Is that what is best for the organization? Is that God’s plan? Jordan learned that we must decrease so the team can increase together. Sound familiar?

John the Baptist said something similar when he summed up his relationship to Jesus. He said, “He (JESUS) must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less,” (John 3:30). da good and spesho book says it like this ... “He (Jesus) gotta come mo importan den me, cuz I not dat importan.”

John knew his role on Team Jesus. He knew while he had influence, his influence wasn’t to bring folks unto himself but to represent Team Jesus well and point others in Jesus’ direction.

Jordan experience reveals to us that servant leadership encourages the team to not only work with each other, but work for each other so that every team member not only feels, but is valued. Every individual then, strives collectively toward team goals, knowing their place is secure and needed. The need to be territorial is eliminated because each individual is not “the star” but understands it takes a team of stars to see the win. No more cat fights. Trust increases and the team grows. The result is a more rewarding, closer and more transparent community members. This is God’s heart. The heart of ONE in unity who values each one.

Paul calls us to this by asking us to “be like-minded, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, ...” (Philippians 2)



Although He is King, He humbled Himself as a servant. He denied deity that he would be as a man to and for all. Son of Man, Son of God and revealed to us characteristics of a servant leader. So, practically what makes a good servant leader? Courage, humility, and time. Servant-leadership takes time because people take time. Jesus lived with his team. Day in and day out. They traveled together, he coached them through everyday life situations. When we examine Jesus' leadership, He said follow me, but led from behind and lifted up.

So we learn a servant-leader is:

- a servant and at times even a slave as they help others in their passions and gifts;
- responsible for understanding before speaking;
- one who lifts others up with their words and actions;
- one who has consistent and clear goals equated with consistent and clear rewards for all;
- one who helps others build themselves to live a life worthy of their heavenly calling

As believers, servant-leadership is the greatest way to express God's love and point the way to the true leader – Jesus Christ.

Consider leading a group of people on a journey. You come to a cave. Your goal to get to the end of the cave and into the light. Now as a leader we have two choices: one, to lead ahead of the group with my lantern. But think about it, if I am the only one with that light, the light is more than likely for me not to stumble and possibly those who are nearest to me. But now consider me taking a branch and lighting it passing some lit branches to those who are able, and the lantern to someone in the front and me taking the light and holding it up high from behind everyone, so that all can see their way to the victory. This is what Servant-leadership is. To trust others while we journey together and shine the light of JESUS for all to see so that the entire team realizes the VICTORY.

How does your role in your family, work, school, sports, clubs, relationships, breathe life? What would breathing life into your teams look like?