

BATTLEZONE VICTORIES



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The Need for Teamwork
(excerpt from *Character Counts:
Who's Counting Yours?*)

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As a former athlete, I participated on a number of both excellent and terrible teams. It was very easy to distinguish the difference. The poor teams were filled with individuals seeking personal gain, a lack of concern for others on the team, virtually no discipline, rampant hypocrisy and lots of backbiting and unrest. On the other hand, the good teams exhibited humility, confidence in the other members, an attitude of togetherness, a commitment to a greater cause and a belief in one another.

Teamwork is a concept which God has stressed since the beginning of time. In the Garden of Eden God saw that man needed a "suitable helper." Moses had his brother Aaron help him lead people out of Egypt toward the Promised Land. David and Jonathan had a special friendship which encouraged and challenged one another; later Nathan played an important part in David's life, as he was willing to confront him openly regarding David's sin with Bathsheba. Daniel had three close friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, to stand beside him. Paul had his special missionary companions of Barnabus, Silas and Timothy. Jesus not only had His 12 disciples but an even closer intimate friendship with Peter, James and John. In fact, examine the Bible, and look for people who lived out their faith in God alone. You will not find anyone who successfully navigated their life without a support system.

Sometimes the "supporting" person was visible and at other times they were out of the limelight. Being sent out "two by two" has always been a Biblical pattern. No person can, or is meant to, live the Christian life alone. Eventually, our heart will turn towards evil. Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"

A Biblical view of teamwork is best understood through the word "interdependence." The Body of Christ is not characterized by dependence. Dependence keeps people from wholeness. Dependence means you are unable to function as an autonomous free agent. Dependence is crippling, not freeing. In contrast, independence is not characteristic of a believer either. We are not loners living out a private, eccentric, aloof Christian life. It is not just "God and me." Rather it is meant to be a life of interrelatedness and affirmation. We are neither dependent or independent but interdependent. Dependence produces weak, incomplete people. Independence produces proud, pretentious people. Interdependence produces whole, loving, serving people. Interdependence is the Body using the individual's gifts for the sake of the whole. It is the Body cooperating together in love, to see people coming to Christian maturity in accountable, interdependent relationships.

God never intended for us to live our Christianity out as a Lone Ranger. Even the modern day Lone Ranger had his sidekick Tonto and his beloved horse Silver. "A cord of three strands is not quickly broken," says the author of Ecclesiastes. In other words, we can't walk through life solo. Today, God intends for us to not live an independent lifestyle but one of complete dependence upon Him and interdependence on others around us.