

AN EIGHT-WEEK STUDY FOR LEADERSHIP TEAMS



# 8 STEPS TO IMPROVING TEAMWORK

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## DISCUSSION GUIDE

## 8 KEYS TO IMPROVING TEAMWORK

## Common Vision

**Assess:** What specific role does vision play in a healthy team?

### Insights and Ideas

**T**eamwork is essential in any sport, company or church. Without teamwork, we place a lid on the capacity of the organization, department or ministry we lead. The old saying really is true — “teamwork makes the dream work.”

As the story of the Tower of Babel unfolds, a foundational key to teamwork emerges: a common vision. Genesis 11:4 says, “Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens. ...’”

The vision for the Tower of Babel certainly didn’t arise from God-honoring motives (we’ll explore that in another lesson). However, you cannot deny an important teamwork insight in the story: vision is a unifier. Vision directs the team’s energy, effort and focus toward a single goal that matters most.

A common vision represents the better tomorrow you see in your mind’s eye today. Vision takes the mundane and infuses it with meaning. As author and pastor Andy Stanley observed, “Too many times the routines of life begin to feel like shoveling dirt. But take those same routines, those same responsibilities, and view them through the lens of vision and everything looks different. Vision brings your world into focus. Vision brings order to chaos. A clear vision enables you to see everything differently.”

The first key to building a strong team is to ensure the church’s vision is clear and shared. A clear vision brings understanding. A shared vision brings buy-in. Both are critical.

Every staff member, board member, team leader and ministry volunteer needs to know the church’s vision. The vision is the compelling *why* that motivates *what* volunteers do. When the greeting team is welcoming guests and the kids’ ministry team is helping parents and children, they need to know why they do what they do. They’re not just opening doors or changing diapers. They’re helping the church fulfill a greater vision.

Every handshake, every smile, every conversation, every note played, every car parked, every cup of coffee poured ... all of it is an important part of seeing a vision fulfilled. It’s our vision that unites our hearts together. Without a clear vision, we feel like we’re doing the equivalent of shoveling dirt.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. What is the vision of our church?
2. How does our vision motivate you to serve with excellence?
3. A vision must be clear and shared. On a scale from 1 to 10, how clear and shared is our church’s vision among our teams?

### Apply

Living out the vision of the church is crucial, but again, the vision must be clear and shared. Without clarity or buy-in, our teams will start to feel as though they’re doing nothing more than shoveling dirt. Develop a plan to improve the clarity of your church’s vision, and to increase buy-in to the vision among your team members. Make sure your plan is practical and simple. As each team in the church aligns itself with the church’s vision, meaning will replace the mundane.



## 8 STEPS TO IMPROVING TEAMWORK

## Common Vision

**Assess:** What specific role does vision play in a healthy team?

**Genesis 11:4:** “Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens. ...’”

**Key Thought:** Vision is a \_\_\_\_\_ .

A common vision represents the better \_\_\_\_\_

you see in your mind’s eye \_\_\_\_\_ .

The first key to building a strong team is to ensure the church’s vision is clear

and shared. A clear vision brings \_\_\_\_\_ .

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### Reflect and Discuss

- What is the vision of our church?
- How does our vision motivate you to serve with excellence?
- A vision must be clear and shared. On a scale from 1 to 10, how clear and shared is our church’s vision among our teams?

### Apply

Develop a plan to improve the clarity of your church’s vision and to increase buy-in to the vision among your team. Make sure your plan is practical and simple. As each team in the church aligns itself with the church’s vision, the mundane will be replaced with meaning.

## 8 KEYS TO IMPROVING TEAMWORK

## Community

**Team Review:** Describe your plan to increase buy-in to the church's vision within your team.

**Assess:** On a scale from 1 to 10, how would you rank the sense of community that exists within your team?

### Insights and Ideas

**G** enesis 11:1–2 opens the story of the Tower of Babel with these words: “Now the whole world had one common language and a common speech. As the people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.”

Two insights stand out in this passage. First, they spoke the same language. Second, they settled together in one place. Both of these insights reveal another ingredient in teamwork: community. The best teams are more than groups of people working on a task or functioning in an organizational silo. The most effective teams are like a community. A sense of belonging emerges as they speak and settle together.

According to psychologist Ed Diener, “The happiest people have high-quality social relationships.”

Harvard University social psychologist Dr. David McClelland calls these social relationships a “reference group.” McClelland says a person's reference group determines as much as 95 percent of his or her success or failure in life.

Research by the Gallup organization found that employees with the highest level of engagement have a close friend at work.

Community really is critical among teams, and teams can experience community at three levels: the hand level, head level and heart level. The hand level of community is shallow, consisting of nothing more than handshakes, smiles, and small talk about the weather. The head level of community engages in meaningful discussions, so long as we're not too vulnerable. The heart level is the deepest expression of community. It's where team members care deeply about one another.

The human soul longs for relationships, community and belonging. As leaders, we have the opportunity to cultivate this community within our teams. Community not only bonds a team together, it also impacts the team's performance.

Author and pastor Rob Ketterling observed, “Our relational circle has an effect on the direction and speed of our lives.”

Have you ever stopped to consider that a sense of community among your team members might positively impact the direction and speed of your team?

### Reflect and Discuss

1. How would you describe the sense of community we experience as a team: hand level, head level or heart level? Can you give an example?
2. What can we do to move our team to the heart level of community?
3. How can we increase a sense of community within and among the teams we lead?

### Apply

Community is an important part of teamwork. While it certainly has an emotional side to it, there are practical steps you can take to cultivate genuine community, too. Because relationships are at the core of community, spending time together is essential. Take a few minutes to identify one thing you will do in the next 30 days to improve relationships within your team. Highly relational activities, environments that foster good conversation, and special times of prayer can help your team move toward the heart level of community. What will you do to take your first step in the next 30 days?



## 8 STEPS TO IMPROVING TEAMWORK

## Community

**Assess:** On a scale from 1 to 10, how would you rank the sense of community that exists within your team?

**Genesis 11:1-2:** “Now the whole world had one common language and a common speech. As the people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.”

### Three Levels of Community:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ .

2. \_\_\_\_\_ .

3. \_\_\_\_\_ .

### Reflect and Discuss

- How would you describe the sense of community we experience as a team: hand level, head level or heart level? Can you give an example?
- What can we do to move our team to the heart level of community?
- How can we increase a sense of community within and among the teams we lead?

### Apply

Because relationships are at the core of community, spending time together is essential. Take a few minutes to identify one thing you will do in the next 30 days to improve relationships among your teams. Highly relational activities, environments that foster good conversation, and special times of prayer can help your team move toward the heart level of community. What will you do to take your first step in the next 30 days?

## 8 KEYS TO IMPROVING TEAMWORK

## Clear Roles

**Team Review:** What activity or strategy did you plan last week to improve relationships among your team?

**Assess:** What roles do you currently need to fill on your team

### Insights and Ideas

**A**fter the people settled on a plain in the land of Babylonia, Genesis 11:3 says, “They said to each other, ‘Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.’”

Each member of this team had a clear role. Some of them made bricks. Others put the bricks in place. Still others were part of the transit system to get the bricks from the oven to the tower.

For a team to function effectively, each team member needs a clear role, and each role needs to connect to the fulfillment of the vision. This essential ingredient to effective teamwork is illustrated well in the story of Charlie Plumb.

On May 19, 1967, Plumb’s F-4 Phantom Jet was shot down over Vietnam. Plumb parachuted into Vietnam, was captured, and spent six years in a POW camp where he repeatedly suffered torture. It was Plumb’s faith in God and belief in his country that gave him the inner strength to survive.

Years later, as Plumb was eating at a restaurant with his wife, a man walked up to him and said, “You’re Plumb. You flew jet fighters in Vietnam.”

Plumb affirmed his identity as the man continued: “It was fighter squadron 14 on the Kitty Hawk. You were shot down. You parachuted into enemy hands. You spent six years as a prisoner of war.”

The man seemed to know an awful lot, but Plumb didn’t know who he was. Plumb finally asked him, “How in the world did you know that?”

The man looked at Plumb and said, “I packed your parachute.”

Plumb was dumbfounded. He looked at the man and said, “I must tell you, I’ve said a lot of prayers of thanks for your nimble fingers, but I didn’t realize I’d have the opportunity of saying thanks in person.”

Plumb probably didn’t think he’d ever need his parachute, but when the situation required it, Plumb had what he needed because somebody had faithfully executed his role. Every role serves an important purpose on a team. It’s our job as leaders to ensure the responsibilities of each role are clear, and to connect those roles to the vision of the church.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. Where is there confusion among our team members regarding roles and responsibilities?
2. What should a role description include for each member of the teams we lead?
3. Are there any roles on our team that are difficult to connect to our vision? How can we bring greater clarity?

### Apply

Some members of your team may feel as though all they do is pack parachutes that nobody will ever see or use. Other members may be unclear about what exactly you are asking them to do.

As leaders, we need to clarify roles and responsibilities and connect the contribution of each team member to the church’s vision. This week, create (or revise) your team members’ role descriptions to ensure they are clear, concise and connected to the vision. Then set a time to meet individually with team members to review their roles and answer any questions they may have.

## 8 STEPS TO IMPROVING TEAMWORK

**Clear Roles**

**Team Review:** What roles do you currently need to fill on your team?

**Genesis 11:3:** “They said to each other, ‘Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.’”

**Key Thought:** For a team to function effectively, each team member needs a \_\_\_\_\_, and each role needs to \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the vision.

Every role plays an important \_\_\_\_\_ on a team. It’s our job as leaders to ensure the \_\_\_\_\_ of each role are clear, and to connect those roles to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the church.

**Reflect and Discuss**

- Where is there confusion among our team members regarding roles and responsibilities?
- What should a role description include for each member of the teams that we lead?
- Are there any roles on our team that are difficult to connect to our vision? How can we bring greater clarity?

**Apply**

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As leaders, we need to clarify roles, responsibilities and connect the contribution of each team member to the church’s vision. This week create (or revise) your team member’s role descriptions to ensure they are clear, concise and connected to the vision. Then set a time to meet with each team member to review their role and answer any questions they might have.



## 8 KEYS TO IMPROVING TEAMWORK

## Correct Tools

**Team Review:** What did you learn as you revised your team members' role descriptions?

**Assess:** How well equipped are your team members to fulfill the roles you've assigned to them?

### Insights and Ideas

**M**aking bricks to build the Tower of Babel required the right tools. Genesis 11:3 says, "They said to each other, 'Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly.' They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar."

Two of the tools (and there were many more) for fulfilling the task were bricks and tar. Without these essential tools of the trade, there would have been no progress.

Every team member has a specific set of responsibilities that requires the fourth lesson of teamwork — correct tools. Those tools may be hardware, software, technology, curriculum, instruments, equipment, budgets or a hundred other items. Without the right tools, two things will happen.

First, teams will experience decreased efficiency. Work becomes harder, takes longer, costs more and suffers in quality. When teams don't have the tools to execute the responsibilities assigned to them, the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the team suffers.

Second, teams will experience increased frustration. Internal frustration swells and team morale diminishes when you give members tasks without tools. You may not be able to give your teams the very best equipment, the highest quality technology, or the budget they dream of, but what can you do? I always ask my team to give me options. Option A may not be possible, but option B or C may be in reach.

As a leader, get in the habit of asking yourself, *What can I do to help my team do what they do?* Anything you can do to make their jobs easier, more efficient, or more productive will provide a boost in morale. It will communicate that you notice their needs and care about what they do

### Reflect and Discuss

1. What frustrations or inefficiencies are the teams we lead currently experiencing?
2. What tools do our staff members need (option A, B or C) to lead and function with a greater level of effectiveness?
3. What tools do our teams need to do their jobs more effectively?
4. Which of these tools would provide the greatest or most immediate boost in team morale?

### Apply

The best way to find out which tools your team needs most is to ask. Put together a survey, or sit down with a few members of your team and explain your desire to equip them with the tools they need to succeed. In that discussion, ask them three questions:

- What tools or resources do you need most in order to do your job effectively?
- What causes the most frustration among the members of your team?
- If you could have one thing to take the quality or efficiency of your work to the next level — or to decrease frustration among your team members — what would it be?

These simple questions will open your eyes and help you gauge the needs and morale of your team. It's amazing how simple tweaks, or basic resourcing, can make a big difference. Above all, it communicates that you care.





## 8 STEPS TO IMPROVING TEAMWORK

## Correct Tools

**Team Review:** What did you learn as you revised your team members' role descriptions?

**Assess:** How well equipped are your team members to fulfill the roles you've assigned to them?

**Genesis 11:3:** "They said to each other, 'Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly.' They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar."

**Without the right tools, two things will happen:**

1. Teams will experience \_\_\_\_\_ .

2. Teams will experience \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Question:** \_\_\_\_\_ ?

### Reflect and Discuss

- What frustrations or inefficiencies are the teams we lead currently experiencing?
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- What tools or resources do you need most to do your job effectively?
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- If you could have one thing to take the quality or efficiency of your work to the next level — or to decrease frustration among your team — what would it be?

## 8 KEYS TO IMPROVING TEAMWORK

## Communication

**Team Review:** What did you discover after meeting (or surveying) your team about the tools they need to succeed? What is your plan to provide those tools or resources?

**Assess:** In what areas do you struggle to communicate with clarity?

### Insights and Ideas

**T**hroughout the story of the Tower of Babel, we see the extraordinary value and importance of our next teamwork ingredient: communication. Genesis 11:1 says, “Now the whole world had one language and a common speech.”

All of us are smart enough to know that speaking the same language does not equate to good communication. It’s obviously helpful, but just because we share the same language doesn’t mean we share the same message. Good communication within a team has three characteristics.

**1. Good communication clarifies.** Communication is what allowed the people building the Tower of Babel to clarify their vision and rally around their cause.

**2. Good communication unifies.** Even the Lord said, “The people are united, and they all speak the same language” (Genesis 11:6, NLT). Again, the power of communication is not speaking the same language, but understanding the same message. If we all interpret what’s being said differently, we’ll go a hundred different directions.

**3. Good communication magnifies.** The Lord said, “After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them!” (Genesis 11:6, NLT). Good communication is like a momentum multiplier. It magnifies and multiplies the efforts of the team.

Perhaps you can point to a time when your team (or a team you served with) experienced the benefits of communication that was clarified, unified and magnified. Imagine the renewed energy your existing team would experience with this type of communication.

There’s one more insight to consider: Communication also has an unspoken side to it. The legendary management expert Peter Drucker once said, “The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn’t being said.”

Paying attention to body language and unspoken cues is essential. What’s not being said is just as important as what is being said.

We can all point to communication gaps in our lives and leadership and among our teams. We’ve all experienced the frustrations that happen when communication is unclear, disjointed or incomplete. But for a team to maximize its potential, good communication must be everybody’s responsibility. Without healthy communication, it really doesn’t matter whether we have a message.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. Can you share an example of how communication on a team clarified, unified or magnified?
2. What communication systems are missing (or broken) in our church or organization?
3. What frustrations would be eliminated if we implemented or improved these communication systems?
4. What are the biggest communication gaps that exist on the teams you lead? How can you close those gaps?

### Apply

Do a communication audit of your teams this week. How does communication need to improve? How do you personally need to exhibit better listening skills and communication skills? What are three things you can do quickly to build a healthier communication culture? Come prepared to share your insights at our next meeting.

## 8 STEPS TO IMPROVING TEAMWORK

**Communication**

**Assess:** In what areas do you struggle to communicate with clarity?

**Genesis 11:1:** “Now the whole world had one language and a common speech.”

**Three Characteristics of Good Communication:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ .

2. \_\_\_\_\_ .

3. \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Key Thought:** Communication also has an \_\_\_\_\_ side to it.

**Key Thought:** Good communication must be \_\_\_\_\_

responsibility. Without healthy communication, it really doesn't matter if we have

a \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Reflect and Discuss**

- Can you share an example of how communication on a team clarified, unified or magnified?
- What communication systems are missing (or broken) in our church or organization?
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**Apply**

Do a communication audit of your teams this week.

- How does communication need to improve?
- How do you personally need to exhibit better listening skills and communication skills?
- What are three things you can do quickly to build a healthier communication culture?

Come prepared to share your insights at our next meeting.



## 8 KEYS TO IMPROVING TEAMWORK

## Cooperation

**Team Review:** What strategies did you come up with last week to improve communication among your team members?

**Assess:** What does it look like to exhibit a spirit of cooperation?

### Insights and Ideas

**T**here was an “us” factor in the building of the Tower of Babel. The people said, “Come, let’s make bricks” (Genesis 11:3). It doesn’t say, “Let me make bricks,” or “You should make bricks,” or “Making bricks is a good idea.” “Us” was at the heart of the sixth teamwork key: cooperation.

Henry Ford once said, “Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”

For any team to thrive, there must be a spirit of cooperation. Without it, the team will disintegrate in three ways.

First, without cooperation, a church will adopt an inward mentality. Rather than focusing on the mission God has called them to fulfill in the community, the members of the church will become distracted when there is internal strife.

Second, without cooperation a team will adopt a silos mentality. An “us” vs. “them” mindset forms as turf wars develop between departments. Eventually, jealousy and bickering emerge as people fight for more resources without seeing the bigger picture.

Third, without cooperation an individual adopts a disengagement mentality. Rather than feeling energized by the work they do, they simply disengage. They drift into doing the least amount of work because they’re not convinced that what they do matters or is appreciated.

Cooperation begins with servant leadership. Author John Dickson observes that in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, the word “humble” means “low,” as in “low to the ground.” Used in a negative way, these terms mean “to be put low,” that is, “to be humiliated.” It implies being conquered or put to shame (which was the dominant use of the word in Jesus’ day).

But Dickson notes that when used in a positive way, it means “to lower yourself” or “to be humble.” When Jesus washed His disciples’ feet, He wasn’t being humiliated. He was making a noble choice to redirect His power to the benefit of His disciples. Dickson defines humility as, “The noble choice to forgo your status, deploy your resources or use your influence for the good of others before yourself.”

Developing a spirit of cooperation begins with us — the leaders — modeling servant-leadership. If we’re unwilling to cooperate (by listening, learning, seeking counsel, acknowledging others, serving our teams and protecting unity), we’ll only reinforce unhealthy mentalities that create division and dysfunction.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. How have you seen the three mentalities play out in our church — or another church or organization where you have served? What were the ramifications of these mentalities?
2. What are practical ways we, as leaders, can model cooperation?
3. How have we allowed silos to form between our departments? What do we need to do to break down those silos between our staff members and between our volunteers?

### Apply

Commit to one another as a staff (or leadership team) to protect unity, cooperate, and stay focused on the vision. Furthermore, communicate this week with the teams you lead about the value another team (led by another leader) is bringing to our church or organization. Model a spirit of cooperation by celebrating them publicly.

## Study 6

## TEAM GUIDE

## 8 STEPS TO IMPROVING TEAMWORK

**Cooperation**

**Assess:** What does it look like to exhibit a spirit of cooperation?

**Genesis 11:3:** “Come, let’s make bricks.”

Henry Ford once said, “Coming together is a \_\_\_\_\_ . Keeping together is \_\_\_\_\_ . Working together is \_\_\_\_\_ .”

**Three Ways Teams Disintegrate Without Cooperation:**

1. A church adopts an \_\_\_\_\_ mentality.
2. A team adopts a \_\_\_\_\_ mentality.
3. An individual adopts a \_\_\_\_\_ mentality.

**Key Thought:** Cooperation begins with \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .

**Reflect and Discuss**

- How have you seen the three mentalities play out in our church — or another church or organization where you have served? What were the ramifications of these mentalities?
- What are practical ways that we, as leaders, can model cooperation?
- How have we allowed silos to form between our departments?
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**Apply**

Commit to one another as a staff (or leadership team) to protect unity, cooperate, and stay focused on the vision. Furthermore, communicate this week to the teams you lead about the value another team (led by another leader) is bringing to the church or organization. Model a spirit of cooperation by celebrating them publicly.



## Commitment

**Team Review:** What did you do this week to communicate to your team the value that another team (led by another leader) brings to your church or organization?

**Assess:** Who is the most committed volunteer on one of the teams you lead? What difference does that person's commitment level make?

### Insights and Ideas

**T**he seventh teamwork ingredient the people at the Tower of Babel modeled was commitment. They were so committed that they ultimately got God's attention. God said, "After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them!" (Genesis 11:6, NLT).

Notice that God said, "After this ... ." In other words, after they finish the tower. God acknowledged that they would not only complete the tower, but they would go on to do even bigger things. That's the kind of commitment these people exhibited. Obviously, they failed, but not until God stepped in.

Commitment can take the church further than ever imagined, or it can hold the church back from reaching its God-given potential. True, God-honoring commitment reveals itself in the three E's: **effort**, **excellence** and **energy**.

Effort is all about how hard we work, how many hours we work, and how focused we stay on the task at hand. It's choosing to exhibit commitment with a strong work ethic. Colossians 3:23 says, "Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people" (NLT).

Excellence is about the quality of the work we provide. It's being committed to deliver the best work every day, and doing so with a posture of continual improvement. Walt Disney World demonstrates a commitment to excellence by paying attention to details. For example, in an effort to keep the parks clean, Disney determined how far a guest would walk with a piece of trash in hand before finally pitching it. As a result, you'll find a trash can every 27 feet at Disney World. That's a commitment to excellence.

Energy is all about attitude. It's living out the other two E's — effort and excellence — without complaining, griping, or draining the energy of others. John Maxwell said, "When our attitudes out distance our abilities, even the impossible becomes possible."

Everybody has to own his or her commitment to commitment. As Abraham Lincoln once said, "Always bear in mind that your own resolution to success is more important than any other thing."

As leaders, our commitment sets the standard for the people we lead. Is it a commitment worth multiplying?

### Reflect and Discuss

1. Which of the three E's of commitment — effort, excellence, or energy — is the easiest for you to exhibit, and which is the hardest? Why?
2. Which of the three E's of commitment is strongest on our team (or a team that you lead)? Which is the weakest?
3. How would the three E's change our culture if we all choose to embrace them and live them?

### Apply

Schedule a time to teach the three E's of commitment — effort, excellence or energy — to your team. Then have your team come up with ways to improve in the three E's. This will create buy-in and improve overall commitment. Most importantly, be sure you model the three E's for your team.



## 8 STEPS TO IMPROVING TEAMWORK

## Commitment

**Assess:** Who is the most committed volunteer on one of the teams you lead? What difference does that person's commitment level make?

**Genesis 11:6b (NLT):** "After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them!"

### The Three E's of Commitment:

E \_\_\_\_\_

E \_\_\_\_\_

E \_\_\_\_\_

"When our attitudes outdistance our abilities, even the impossible becomes possible." — John Maxwell

### Reflect and Discuss

- Which of the three E's of commitment — effort, excellence or energy — is the easiest for you to exhibit, and which is the hardest? Why?
- Which of the three E's of commitment is strongest on our team (or a team that you lead)? Which is the weakest?
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### Apply

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## 8 KEYS TO IMPROVING TEAMWORK

## Correct Motives

**Team Review:** When have you scheduled to teach your team the three E's of commitment?

**Assess:** Why are the right motives so important in ministry?

### Insights and Ideas

**C**orrect motives are the final ingredient in effective teamwork. This was the missing piece at the Tower of Babel. The people's motives for building the tower were self-centered and arrogant. Genesis 11:4 says, "Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.'"

Impure motives will debilitate any team or ministry effort. A friend once told me, "Pride builds monuments, but humility builds ministry."

James, the brother of Jesus, said, "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble" (James 4:6). A good cause with a wrong motive equals a fight with God.

Because the people's motives (and cause) were wrong, God chose to disrupt their efforts. He removed one of the ingredients necessary for effective teamwork: communication. Genesis 11:7–9 says, "'Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.' So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel — because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth."

Motives matter. Regardless of our work ethic, or the fruit of our labor, without the right motives, we're wasting our time. God weighs the heart. King Nebuchadnezzar learned this lesson the hard way. Despite a warning from Daniel after interpreting the king's dream, Nebuchadnezzar looked out across the city and said, "Look at this great city of Babylon! By my own mighty power, I have built this beautiful city as my royal residence to display my majestic splendor" (Daniel 4:30, NLT). While the words were still in his mouth, God's judgment came, Nebuchadnezzar was driven from his kingdom, and he lived like a wild animal for the next seven years.

You can only break the cycle of pride when you see God for who He is, and you for who you're not. R.C. Sproul observed, "The grand difference between a human being and a supreme being is precisely this: Apart from God, I cannot exist. Apart from me, God does exist. God does not need me in order for Him to be; I do need God in order for me to be."

### Reflect and Discuss

1. How can pride undermine our lives and our teams?
2. What safeguards can we put in place to live (and build teams) with a posture of humility?
3. Are there any impure motives we need to repent of as a team?

### Apply

Spend some time in prayer as a team. During this prayer time, ask the Lord to search your hearts (individually and corporately). Acknowledge any unrepentant sin, or any motives that are displeasing to the Lord. Then commit to use your devotional time for the next week to study what Scripture has to say about pride, humility and motives. Discuss your observations at your next meeting.





## 8 STEPS TO IMPROVING TEAMWORK

**Correct Motives**

**Assess:** Why are the right motives so important in ministry?

**Genesis 11:4:** “Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.’”

**Key Thoughts:**

1. Pride builds \_\_\_\_\_, but humility builds \_\_\_\_\_.

2. A good \_\_\_\_\_ with a wrong \_\_\_\_\_ equals a \_\_\_\_\_

with God.

3. You can only break the cycle of pride when you see \_\_\_\_\_ for who He

\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ for who you're \_\_\_\_\_.

**Reflect and Discuss**

- How can pride undermine our lives and our teams?
- What safeguards can we put in place to live (and build teams) with a posture of humility?
- Are there any impure motives we need to repent of as a team?

**Apply**

Spend some time in prayer as a team. Acknowledge any unrepentant sin, or any motives that are displeasing to the Lord