

# Group Dynamics - Part 1

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## Introduction.

A. Yesterday we tried to help you draw the line of your communications target by defining two areas.

1. The process of communication; seven steps.

a. Feedback is not only what you derive from others but also your own observations.

1. A wife can be a great critic.

2. She can also have blind spots.

3. I write a critical evaluation of myself when I speak.

4. Don't pick yourself apart but strive for excellence.

b. Feedback is crucial if you want to become an effective communicator.

2. The problem of communication, trying to become sensitive to this area.

a. Identify the causality areas.

b. Then take remedial steps..

B. Today I want to turn to Biblical principles of group dynamics for two reasons.

1. Sharpen your focus.

2. Provide material you can use in communicating to others.

a. Identifying distinctive as your own instead of biblical distinctive is a mistake.

b. Emphasize the biblical nature of your distinctive.

c. The basis of what we communicate is found in the word of God.

C. I have studied the life of our Lord with a view to discover how he develops people.

1. I want to share some basic principles I have discovered.

2. Any serious student of Scripture needs to answer the question of how God launched the church.

3. God could have chosen an infinite number of means.

4. Why did he work the way he did?
5. God's plan works as a pattern for the disciples.
6. Peter said Jesus left us a pattern we should follow.
7. I want to surface four principles employed by Jesus.
8. A. B. Bruce *The Training of the Twelve* is profound for discipleship.

#### I. Principles employed by Jesus.

##### A. The first principle Jesus used was quality, not quantity.

1. He chose 12 men, not the multitude of men.
2. He knew that quality develops quantity.
3. He built qualitatively into the lives of 12 men.
4. The test of your ministry is not how many but what kind.

##### B. The second principle Jesus used is multiplication, not addition.

1. Spiritual mathematics involves not plus but times.
2. He conceived of each man as a center of reproducing ministry.
3. A Pauline expression of Jesus' principle is teaching others who will teach others. (2 Timothy 2:2)

##### C. The third principle Jesus used is priority, not pressure.

1. The greatest problem each person confronts each day is how to use time.
2. Time is the one thing we all have in common.
3. Jesus had no more time than you do, yet Jesus was never too busy.
4. The Bible says, Jesus went about doing good; we just go about.
5. Jesus never got fogged out in developing a group of men.

##### D. The fourth principle Jesus used was potential, not problems.

1. Do you see people as problems or as potential?
2. Some pastors complain about their board.
3. Jesus' disciples were an unimpressive lot.

- a. Peter often said the wrong things at the wrong time.
- b. Philip and Andrew weren't too smart yet they led people to the Lord.
- c. Philip was lost in John 14.
- d. Philip and Andrew had their noses in the boy's lunch pail before Jesus multiplied the loaves and fish.
- e. Jesus chose Judas, but he also chose me and you.
- e. God chooses things that are despised. (1 Corinthians 1)
- f. Some of my students graduate "maga cum laude" and some graduate "laude how cum?"
- g. One rather poor student graduated and took a church that had not grown in years, yet he made it grow.
  - 1. I preached in his church once and marveled at the growth.
  - 2. I realized that God chooses not on the basis of what we are but on the basis of what we might become.

II. Every principle has one thing in common.

A. God works through individuals who form groups.

- 1. He worked qualitatively through men to build into their lives.
- 2. He saw those men in terms of what they could become.

B. Modern research on group dynamics can be found in the Gospels.

- 1. Dr. Edgar Dale has developed the Comb of experience with ten levels of learning that I'd like to relate to group dynamics.
- 2. The first four relate to mass communication while the final four relate to small groups.
- 3. These are arranged in terms of effectiveness so the least effective involves the use of words alone.
- 4. Words alone are only 10% effective.
- 5. Words with visuals are 50% effective.
- 6. Think how often Jesus used illustrations to communicate.
  - a. I am the vine.

b. All knew the vine was the national emblem of Israel.

7. A teacher of law I know sets up his class room by deconstructing his students arguments first then constructing a winning argument.

a. He would rather have his students lose in the classroom and win in the world than win in the classroom and lose in the world.

b. Evangelicalism has too many winners in the classroom and losers in the world.

c. Jesus could have taught and given his disciples an exam based on notes they had taken.

d. Instead he took them through real life experiences like the storm on the sea.

e. I took a student out sharing the Gospel and a student who prayed with us said, "Things are going to be a hell of a lot better now."

f. He suddenly apologized for his speech and a student with me told him the Holy Spirit just convicted him of his improper words. This taught the now believer much about the ministry of the Spirit.

g. There is nothing better than personal experience in ministry to teach how to minister.

h. Some time ago two boys from a cult came to my home to share, boasting of some pseudo knowledge of Greek. When I challenged them they left, but even though they are wrong in what they share they are right in the way they disciple each other in the real world.

III. Review of the principles employed by Jesus.

A. The first principle Jesus used was quality, not quantity.

B. The second principle Jesus used is multiplication, not addition.

C. The third principle Jesus used is priority, not pressure.

D. The fourth principle Jesus used was potential, not problems.

1. Some teachers in my past were helpful, but most were not help at all.

a. One teacher used to tie me to a chair.

b. Another teacher communicated to me that she believed in me.

i. I remember working to please Ms. Simon.

ii. I did not want to let her down.

2. The difference is how you see and individual.

IV. Now we want to study the Gospel of Matthew. (Matthew 18:15-20)

A. The Scriptures are relevant because they're revelational.

B. Matthew 18:1-14 is the first section, but we will deal mostly with 15-20.

1. Jesus deals with the significance of the group in light of the individual. (Matthew 18:1-5)

a. He begins with a question: Who is the greatest?

b. They need a conversion, becoming childlikeness, not childish.

c. Humility is essential.

d. Leaders are not found in the New Testament, servants are.

e. The importance of the individual to God is essential.

1. Offending even a little one is a serious offense.

b. How do you react to a hostile individual that disagrees with you?

c. If you react rather than acting you are immature.

d. We must treat the immature as if they are mature.

3. Use stories such as the parable of the lost sheep. (Matthew 18:11-14)

a. Jesus does not ask the child to become like an adult but he asks the adult to become like the child.

b. Jesus' illustrations are personal, with human interest elements.

3. Jesus also used visual aids, putting the child in the midst of them.

4. Jesus also emphasized the need for individual help from others in the group. (Matthew 18:15)

a. The more mature need to go to the immature.

b. The one wronged needs to take the initiative.

c. It could be that this individual is so insecure they are afraid to take a step.

5. The pressure of the group helps the immature conform to the standards of the group.

a. Do you like the idea of group pressure?

- b. It's definitely there and we need not run from it.
  - c. We need to exert positive pressure.
- 6. Allow the body to minister.
  - a. The group has a ministry.
  - b. That ministry needs to flow.
- 7. Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost.
  - a. Jesus is asking the stronger brother to launch a salvage operation.
  - b. We need to go to the lost.
- 8. The power of two or three in agreement can move heaven and earth. (Matthew 18:18-19)
  - a. A group is a corrective agency according to verses 15-17.
    - 1. You cannot blame the individual, because the group shares the responsibility for correction.
    - 2. If someone trespasses against you go personally to confront him.
    - 3. This is personal responsibility, the one tells the other listens.
    - 4. If this works fellowship is restore.
    - 5. If the one will not hear then take more to confront him.
    - 6. If this fails to work then take the problem to the church.
    - 7. If he will not listen to the church then excommunicate him.
    - 8. One person refusing to accept the authority of the group will torpedo the group.
    - 9. We don't like exercising discipline but it's essential to forming effective groups.
    - 10. Problems are never solved by avoiding them.
    - 11. I take group dynamics seriously, including discipline. (Galatians 6:1)
    - 12. We have not begun to explore the therapeutic value of a Christian group.
  - b. From God's perspective the group has authority. (Matthew 18:18)

1. What we bind in agreement God binds.
2. We need each other yet this is not attractive in individualistic America.
3. We all need to submit to authority.
4. We won't like all the decisions of the group but we need the group.

c. A group is a powerful instrument of accomplishment. (Matthew 18:19)

1. To agree means instrument; meaning you need two instruments in agreement with God.
2. Instruments out of tune with God accomplish nothing.
3. Ananias and Sapphira agreed together but they were out of agreement with God and they died. (Acts 5)
4. I memorized a Scripture I never understood because I focused on my desire rather than on the Lord. (Psalm 27:4)

d. The presence of Christ in a group is powerful.

1. Verse 20 says that two or three gathered together in Jesus' name experience the presence of Christ.
2. Christ indwells the individual believer but the group experiences a greater sense of the presence of Christ.
3. Do you recognize Christ in the group?
4. Why does Jesus say two or three instead of two or forty?
  - i. Small groups have no indication on significance.
  - ii. Many erroneously think they need a large group.
  - iii. I watch surgery and saw ear surgery to restore hearing on a man who hadn't heard in twenty years. The fusion of two tiny bones restores his hearing.
  - iv. Never sell short the size of a group because Christ is with the group.

C. The early church was not a perfect church: There is no such thing as a perfect church. (Acts 15)

1. The speakers in this chapter were men who had risked their lives for the Gospel.

- a. I heard two men speak recently on giving; one put me to sleep.
  - b. The other riveted me because I know he gives much to the Lord's work.
  - c. The men here described the conversion of the Gentiles bringing great joy to the brethren.
  - d. Many in the group have a bad attitude.
  - e. We need to rejoice in God's work.
  - f. It is easier to weep with the weeping than to rejoice with the blessed.
  - g. A key to group dynamics is to magnify the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
2. If you are impressed with what God is doing you can rejoice, but if you are impressed with what you are doing you will have a difficult time rejoicing.
- a. Dr. W.A. Criswell of First Baptist Dallas regularly encouraged the Sunday School leaders to lead their class members to faith. He saw them as fellow ministers in a mutual ministry.
  - b. Christians who are secure enough to appreciate others are rare.
  - c. My wife is spiritually mature enough to manifest the life of Christ at home with four children.
  - d. I am unimpressed with spirituality that is removed from reality.
  - e. These practical principles result in a real ministry.
3. The group recognizes the leaders in the group
- a. It seemed good to the whole group.
  - b. It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to the group.
4. The group needs freedom from nonessentials.
5. The group took unified action after a decision had been reached. (Acts 15:35)
- a. We are not trying to make the group speak your point of view; we are seeking the mind of the Lord.
  - b. The leaders could have pontificated and fractured the group; they sought the mind of God.
  - c. The product is not the only benefit; the process is equally important.
  - d. Problems occur in a group when only a few participate.