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THE INSTITUTE
OF BIBLICAL
LEADERSHIP

because leaders who
honor God don't just
come out of nowhere



HEY, DID YOU HEAR ABOUT JOHN?

By Dr. David Phelan

▶ As I work with leaders and leadership teams around the world, I am regularly reminded of the compelling need to be thoughtful and careful regarding how we speak about other people not in our presence. If I am breezily careless as I speak about other people behind their back, I commit a sin that is grievous in God's eyes, I cause those listening to me to think negatively about the other person (and which often leads them to repeat my careless words), and I can easily disrupt

When we become fanatical about this practice, we stand out from most people, because this is a practice which has fallen into disuse within our culture and is rare even among Christians.

godly plans. In all of this, God is not glorified.

The Bible uses several words to describe this kind of harmful

communication: tale-bearing, whispering, gossiping, slandering, and malicious talking, among others.

These words refer to the spreading of rumors and worthless tales, often of a private or personal nature, and that are likely to cause trouble. This kind of talk is often done secretly, behind a person's back, but with others who know the person

being spoken of, and always results in conveying a negative impression of the individual. This kind of talk is often slanderous, involving falsehoods or misrepresentations which damage the person's reputation. When this kind of sinful communication is directed against a leader and their ministry, it does great damage to the cause of Christ.

God's Word powerfully exhorts us to guard our tongue. In Romans 1, in describing the utter lostness of mankind, Paul places gossip and slander in the same category as "...every kind of evil and depravity." Peter is adamant in his letters: "...put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander." (1 Peter 2:1) We must eliminate careless speech from our life!

The Proverbs speak to the damage caused by idle, foolish talk. In 16:28, "A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends." In 18:8, "The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body." In 20:19, "Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets; therefore,

do not associate with a simple babblers." And in 26:20, "For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases."

So, we see that telling tales destroys reputations, spreads strife, causes fights, and separates friends. Not only are we exhorted to not gossip (or

How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell... From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

James 3:5-6,10

slander or whisper), but we are also instructed to not associate with or listen to someone who is gossiping (or slandering or whispering)! The kind of biblical unity Justin Halder describes in *Managing to be One* (elsewhere in this newsletter) is impossible to achieve if a practice of careless talk has found a home in our church.

Success in this area requires us to be slow to speak, to check the words forming in our mind, and to filter those words through a biblical grid, so they only bless, encourage, and build-up the listener, honor the people we are speaking about, and further the cause of Christ. We must be quick to set aside any thoughts/words that are careless, thoughtless, and harmful (see Paul's instructions in Ephesians 4:29-32).

In need of counseling?

IBL provides confidential biblical counsel for men, women and couples in positions of leadership. Leaders often face periods of significant personal struggle. It is during these challenging times that God can use counsel from His Word to great effect.



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When we become fanatical about this practice, we stand out from most people, because this is a practice which has fallen into disuse within our culture and is rare even among Christians. A person who guards his tongue is seen as a mature follower of Christ and has a powerful impact on everyone around him. Let us take up this largely lost discipline and ask the Holy Spirit to help us only speak words which honor, encourage, inspire, and proclaim truth.



Dr. David Phelan

President, IBL

...if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.

James 3:2



BUILDING ON A LEGACY

By: Willer Montesinos

Willer Montesinos is one of the key leaders with whom IBL partners as we develop pastors and church leaders in Ecuador.

▶ I met Floyd and Amy Dauber when I was only fourteen years old. They were missionaries with the then Gospel Missionary Union. They had previously been missionaries in Colombia and Latacunga, Ecuador. I met them when they came to work with other missionaries planting a church in my hometown of Machala, Ecuador. They were the people God

used to bring me and my family to the Lord.

For my family it was shocking to see a couple leave their families, homes, and customs, and bring their children to a country completely different from their own. Seeing their love for the Lord manifested in service to others spoke to my family of a real God, a God that “religion” had hidden from us. Floyd and Amy were a great influence on my family. Through them everyone in my home came to know Christ. They also walked with us in

discipleship and service to the Lord up to this day, now twenty-six years later.

For me, Floyd's life, as well as the other members of the team, was both a blessing and a testimony. First, his love and compassion for unbelieving people was evident as they gave everyone an opportunity to know Christ. He was very intentional in approaching people and telling them about the gospel. Also, Floyd's great interest in preparing me to serve the Lord was the instrument God used to lead me to the Hebron Bible Seminary in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, where I prepared myself for the ministry.

My training at the Bible seminary was extremely important. It provided me with the necessary tools to search the Bible, to know the Lord better, and to understand how to serve people. When I returned to Ecuador along with my wife, I still had a lot to learn, but what we learned in the seminary helped us to better communicate the message of the gospel, help believers to apply those truths, and see how the Word of God was

My value does not come from what people think about me but from what Christ has already said I am.

transforming their lives. That is why during our pastoral ministry in Ecuador, we encouraged believers to prepare themselves for Bible study and ministry.

It is very easy to fall into the temptation of seeking to fulfill people's expectations. When you are in leadership, everyone has expectations of you, who you should be and what you should do. Often, you find yourself being or doing what Christ never asked of you. However, the truth in the Bible sets us free from all human expectations, to look to Christ, to know our identity in him, and to live according to it. My value does not come from what

people think about me but from what Christ has already said I am. As much as I love Floyd and the ministry he had with our family and on me personally, I realize that it is the work of Jesus Christ that is most important. That is why I am so excited about being part of the continuing work in Machala as we build on the evangelistic foundation laid by Floyd. We are training pastors and church leaders with the truth of God's word,



preparing them to be the leaders God desires them to be.

I currently live in Edinburg, Texas serving in the Rio Grande ministry. However, my heart is in Ecuador. One of my longings is to see my people not only being reached with the gospel, but fully equipped to communicate the Word of God throughout the country and among the least reached people groups in Ecuador and beyond. For many years Ecuador was seen as a mission field, but the times have changed. The gospel has grown a lot in my country. This has allowed us to address our own local needs. It has also enabled us to focus on people where the name of Christ

has not been known and where Ecuadorians—by culture, customs, and physical resemblance—have open doors to go, live among them, and share the good news of salvation. That is why I am excited about the IBL training, because it empowers and equips local leaders to do the work of the ministry.

I am grateful for the investment of IBL and the U.S. churches that support IBL's ministry. People like Floyd, Pastor Richie Bean of Christ Community Church in Nisswa, Minnesota, Dave Deets, and others on the IBL team are truly investing in the eternal. Through this ministry, many men and women are equipped and empowered

Is God giving you a heart to invest in leaders in Ecuador?

Through praying, financial support, or participating in the training with us, you can be part of what God is doing to raise up the next generation of Ecuadorian pastors, evangelists, and church planters.

For more information contact Dave Deets at: daved@iblministry.org or 616.482.9101.

to fulfill the Great Commission. They are giving the opportunity to many believers in Ecuador and Latin America, preparing them to be leaders, to take the post of

what many North American and European missionaries did in generations past. They are being trained for their own ministries and to train others to better know and serve their Savior in their Jerusalem and to the ends of the earth. I love what God is doing in my country with my people as we build on the work of Floyd and Amy Dauber and many others. We are laborers together for the cause of Christ and we look forward to hearing the stories of workers from Ecuador serving in other countries, sharing the gospel, and advancing a new cycle of the Great Commission.

Would you please pray for us?

1) For lives fully consecrated to the service of the Lord. 2) For churches in Ecuador to have leaders trained and equipped to teach the sound doctrine of God's Word to others. 3) For churches in Ecuador to multiply within the country and send prepared workers to unreached peoples.

Thank you for your love and prayers and support for the work in my country of Ecuador.



Willer Montesinos

IBL Ecuador Partner

TESTIMONY



MANAGING TO BE ONE

By: Pastor Justin Halder

Justin is the Lead Preaching Pastor at Dale Bible Church in Indiana. IBL has served Justin and his leadership team through role clarification, organizational leadership planning, long range ministry planning, and leadership coaching.

▶ God's Word is abundantly clear: the church of Jesus Christ is to have unity. In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he builds an entire argument that the church should be unified. His argument begins in the opening chapter when the Ephesian believers are reminded of their position in Christ due to all Christ accomplished in his life, death, burial, and resurrection. The first three chapters make up the imperatives of the epistle: the things

that the Ephesians need to know. The second half of the epistle contain the indicatives: the things that the Ephesians need to do in light of what they know and have just been reminded.

This exhortation to action begins with a call for unity within the church: "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3). In other words, the Apostle Paul argues the Ephesian church can and should have unity because of what Christ has done and who they are in him. Unity is defined as a state of oneness, and the church must keep in

mind that oneness is possible through Christ. But the reality of the situation in Ephesus, as well as in many churches today, is that unity is not present. The consequences of the lack of unity are catastrophic.

Paul also highlights that unity accomplishes Christian maturity as the body of believers is built up in love: "... until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ... speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love." (Ephesians 4:13-16)

The unfortunate truth today is that just as the Ephesians needed to be reminded of their need for unity, so do many of our churches today. Unity can be difficult to attain even when

we know biblical truths. Anytime people are involved, unity must be intentionally sought after. Unity never comes naturally; hence the reason Christ's sacrificial life and death were necessary. Good people who truly love Jesus and who love one another can sometimes struggle to find unity. Lacking unity is simply a reality of different people having different experiences and preferences. This is

where organizations like the Institute of Biblical Leadership (IBL) can make such a difference in the life of the church.

Our local body reached out to IBL following the pandemic of 2020. It was a new season that was made up of all kinds of challenges, questions, and concerns for our body of Christ. One of our primary struggles was how to go about conducting ministry in a way that was helpful for those to whom we were ministering but was also efficient for those doing the ministering. One of the impactful ways IBL made a difference in our ministry was by being

The unfortunate truth today is that just as the Ephesians needed to be reminded of their need for unity, so do many of our churches today.



an outside voice that came from many walks of ministry. Some of the men were former pastors, some were lay leaders in the church, some were men who had earned educations given to the topic of leadership in the church. This combination brought much experience and expertise to our church, to help guide us through many of the questions being asked.

IBL first took our leadership through a role clarification exercise. The men who participated expressed just how much their eyes were opened to all that is necessary to make a ministry work. We learned through that exercise how important communication, as well as channels of communication, is to the health (unity) of a ministry. IBL has served not just as an outside organization prescribing a set of steps to take to improve our ministry, but as partners in the Gospel of Christ to help strengthen our leadership team to better equip us for Gospel ministry. IBL believes godly leadership doesn't happen by accident. They recognize that only through using God's Word are godly leaders and the local church built up into unity, both in the USA and internationally.

One of the best tools IBL has taught us to achieve unity is what they call "manage by agreement." Without

stealing their thunder, IBL taught us to use this tool to guide us in our process of making decisions. This approach ensures that everyone involved in the decision are heard, any concerns are expressed, and any biblical objections are shared. This one simple tool has helped prevent disunity because every member of the group expresses their views on a situation. There is no guess work, no "yes-men," no ambiguity or lack of clarity. When used as intended, managing by agreement ensures that unity is developed.

Working with IBL has been a tremendous blessing for me personally as well as for our ministry. We still work alongside IBL to be strengthened and built up in Christ for the furthering proclamation of God's Word. I look forward to continuing to grow with and get to know those who make up the ministry of the Institute of Biblical Leadership.



Justin Halder

Lead Preaching Pastor,
Dale Bible Church



BEING A TEAM PLAYER

By: Dr. Dave Deets

▶ Slammin' Sammy Sosa was a staple for Chicago Cubs fans from 1998 through 2006. During his tenure in the Windy City, Sammy put on spectacular displays of power at the plate and in the outfield. Although His career was marred by performance enhancing drugs and a corked bat incident, all of that could be forgiven by loyal Cubs fans. However, there was an incident that could never be forgiven by the fans. In April of 2020, a report from the Chicago Cubs front office stated, "Sammy Sosa said he had Dusty Baker's permission to leave during the final game." Why does this statement matter? On Sunday, October 3, 2006, the Cubs were set to play the last game of the season against the Atlanta Braves at Wrigley Field. Just fifteen minutes after the

first pitch was thrown, Sammy was seen leaving the ballpark. Any player who knows anything about being part of a team understands that Sammy Sosa committed the fatal mistake of abandoning his team.

So, how does this story about Sammy Sosa have anything to do with IBL and leadership? Simply put, unity and co-laboring ministry demands that we all be team players. There is a myriad of gifted people in ministry. However, some of them will wind up "bouncing" from ministry to ministry, and sometimes out of ministry all together, simply because they cannot or will not be a team player. So, what exactly does it look like to be a team player? What defines a team player? How do we identify the people we should have on our team?

To begin with, we need to establish a standard for being a team player. The Godhead is always our standard for everything we do. When we think about co-laboring and unity, the Godhead perfectly exemplifies what it means to be a team.

We see this in some very specific ways such as creation (Genesis 1) and redemption (Ephesians 1-2). The Godhead works perfectly together. Therefore, if that is our standard, then it stands to reason that we must seek to emulate the Godhead as best as possible. We know from John 17:20-23 that the Godhead is our standard for co-laboring. Afterall, God is a team player!

If you will humor me, I'd like to use some real-life examples from the Cubs which demonstrate how team players advance the cause of the team.

A team player works in others' best interests. Joe Maddon did it! Finally, after 108 years, the unthinkable had happened. Maddon led the Chicago Cubs to a World Series Championship in 2016. How did he do it? Well, he was creative. Joe knew the best way to get the most production out of his players was to work in the team's overall best interest. He knew what motivated each player individually and he knew how to utilize each player to get the maximum production out of them. Each player's best interest was not doing whatever they wanted as individuals, but rather to have someone help them function as a team and to challenge them as individuals to perform to the best of their ability. This allowed them, together, to be the

team they needed to be!

A team player helps others grow. David Ross was a relatively unknown catcher in the major leagues. By comparison, he was certainly no Johnny Bench or Yogi Berra. However, Ross came to the Cubs as a seasoned veteran; and he used his years of experience to mentor, train, and help the younger guys. There are some in ministry who are just "average Joes," but whose wealth of experience and knowledge should be used to train, disciple, and mentor younger ministry leaders. If you are like that, never underestimate the impact you can have on a younger generation.

A team player is not greedy for the limelight. Almost every team has a "star" player who is known to be gifted and highly skilled and becomes the center of attention. Everyone wants the "star" on their team. However, a successful team is not defined by one person. Winning teams have other gifted and skilled people who are happy not to be the center of attention. Kyle Hendricks was that guy on the Cubs. He was consistently the main stabilizing pitcher behind the Cubs' much more famous pitchers. As talented as Kyle was, he was always content to play that stabilizing role in the middle of the rotation. A good team player realizes that the success of the team is more important than the success of their own career.

A team player is quietly faithful. One of the most beloved Cubs of all time is Ryne Sandberg. Without a doubt, to know and love the Chicago Cubs is to know and love Ryne



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Sandberg. Yet Ryne was one of the quietest, keep-your-head-down-and-play kind of guys. He was dependable, faithfully executing his second baseman role for years. A team player is just that: quietly faithful. You hardly know they are there. Yet, if for some reason they were not there, everything would seem to fall apart. A team player does their job with precision, without complaint, and without having to be coddled or reminded. They are as reliable as Old Faithful.

A team player has an “open palm.”

The MVP of the 2016 World Series was Ben Zobrist. To be fair, Ben is a great guy and a great player, but he is not the one who people predicted to take that honor. How did Ben become the MVP of one of the most iconic World Series? Ben learned early on that to be

used to the best of his ability, he had to keep an open palm. Do you need an infielder who is ready to play any position? Ben was your guy. Do you need an outfielder to play any field? Ben was your guy. Do you need a pitcher, like on September 29, 2019? Yes, even to pitch, Ben was your guy. Ben was the ultimate utility player: he was willing to play any position, any day, for any reason, and to do so without complaint. Ben kept an “open palm.” That is, he maintained a posture of humility which allowed him to be used however he could best serve the team. That humility and flexibility is what would ultimately land him as the MVP of the Cubs 2016 World Series Championship.

Ministry is not a solo sport! Even though each member of the

Godhead is individually wholly God and completely sufficient, they nevertheless co-labor as a team in perfect harmony. The persons of the Godhead do not operate solo, and neither should we! How much more than God do we need to co-labor in our teams? The cause of Christ does not need any “rockstars.” We simply need people who are willing to play any position, any day, and be the faithful team player day in and day out, who simply serve as pawns in the King’s hand for His glory and honor.



Dr. Dave Deets

VP of Ministry, IBL



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