

THE INCREDIBLE POWER OF 'WE'

By Robert J. Tamasy

Recently a friend drew my attention to a comment someone had made on social media. This statement seems to summarize the thinking of many people we encounter in the business and professional world today: *"I am working on myself, for myself, by myself."*

Nine simple words, but they reveal a mindset that is very common wherever we go. In fact, it can be boiled down to an even shorter, even more familiar declaration: "It's all about me." We all have heard sentiments like this said in many other ways as well. But what if we change that last phrase slightly and see the difference it makes: *"It's all about WE"?*

Years ago, while still an inexperienced journalist, I took a job as assistant editor on a suburban newspaper. During my time there I learned a number of important principles, but perhaps none more significant than what I call "the power of 'we'." A senior editor was grooming me for a more responsible position, so I closely observed how he approached his job and interacted with staff reporters. When giving an assignment, or discussing how an article should be written or revised, he always said things like, "Why don't **we** check with so-and-so...?" or "How can **we** change this opening paragraph?" Rather than using the more directive "you," he regularly used "we" to underscore the reality that we were working together as a team.

This was helpful in many ways. The staff members always felt the senior editor's support. Even when problems arose, they did not feel isolated – "we are in this together" was the prevailing attitude. And they also were reminded that most of the time more is accomplished working in concert with others than in working alone. This principle is repeatedly emphasized in the Bible as well:

Knowing we all have important roles. Sometimes it is hard to sense the "we" aspect of work when the roles of others seem more valued. However, whether our jobs are visible or not, whether we receive public acclaim for our work or not, our contributions are valuable for accomplishing the overall goals. *"The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts, and though all its parts are many they form one body... Now you are the body of Christ, and each of you is a part of it"* (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

Understanding we achieve more working together. Have you ever noticed how a task that seems overwhelming suddenly becomes much easier when someone joins you to help in getting it done? *"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work"* (Ecclesiastes 4:9).

Joining to confront opposition. When the ruins of Jerusalem were being rebuilt thousands of years ago, the builders understood the "we" principle, sharing in both the

work and the challenge of fending off those who opposed the enterprise. *"When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to his own work... So we continued the work with half the men holding spears, from the first light of dawn till the stars came out"* (Nehemiah 4:15-21).

Working on a common mission. Not only are we directed to work together for God's purposes, but we also are assured God is an active participant on the "team." *"For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building"* (1 Corinthians 3:9).

At your workplace, try an experiment. Instead of concentrating on "me," focus on "we." See what happens.

Robert J. Tamasy is vice president of communications for Leaders Legacy, Inc., a non-profit based in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A.

CBMC INTERNATIONAL: Jim Firnstahl, President

2850 N. Swan Road, Suite 160 ▪ Tucson, Arizona 85712 ▪ U.S.A.

TEL.: 520-334-1114 ▪ E-MAIL: mmanna@cbmcint.org

Web site: www.cbmcint.org

Please direct any requests or change of address to: enquiry@cbm.org.hk

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. What is your reaction to the statement cited, "I am working on myself, for myself, by myself"? Does it sound self-centered to you, or do you understand it in another way, with a different meaning or intent? Explain your answer.
2. The statement, "It is all about me," is common throughout much of society today. What are some problems that could arise from that kind of thinking?
3. Consider the idea presented, "the power of 'WE.'" Have you seen that validated in your workplace? Do you know of anyone – perhaps yourself – that consistently takes an "us" or "we" approach at work? What impact does that make, in your opinion?
4. How do you think the tone, and overall environment, of the modern-day workplace would change if more people adopted the "we" philosophy instead of the more prevalent "me" attitude?

If you would like to look at or discuss other portions from the Bible that relate to this topic, consider the following brief sampling of passages:

Proverbs 27:17; Ecclesiastes 4:10-12; Mark 6:7; Acts 6:1-6; 2 Timothy 2:2