

## 7. Creativity, Chaplains, and Coaches – Part 1

Two of the most common types of leaders in churches, and other Christian ministries, are chaplains and coaches. However, very few of them have those titles. This is due to the fact that those two titles tell how they minister, instead of where or to whom they minister. Chaplains are usually people who respond to crisis situations. They are focused on what has already happened. Coaches are people that look to the future. They prepare people for what will happen in the future. They develop a goal and equip a team to reach that goal. Both may have great creativity. However, they will use their creativity in two very different ways.

Christ is an example of an individual who carried out both ministries effectively. Christ certainly showed His creativity in crisis situations when He healed the sick, cast out demons and raised the dead. In every one of those situations, Christ ministered to people who were in crisis. He brought great comfort and encouragement to all of those people in their different situations. Mark 1:32-34 says, “At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.” Christ ministered to all of those people with great creativity as he healed those who were sick and cast out many demons. Christ responded to the crisis in the life of each of those people.

In that same chapter, Christ also showed great creativity as He prepared people for the future. In Mark 1:17, we read, “Then Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” Here, we see that Christ was recruiting Peter and Andrew to become a part of the team Christ was preparing for the future. Christ had already been doing things with these two men for about a year. Now, He invited them to begin training to become part of the leadership team of the early church.

Christ gave them two things. He gave them an invitation to be on the team, and He gave them a promise if they chose to become a part of the team. The invitation was to follow Him. The promise was that He would train and equip them to become fishers of men. A coach focuses not on what people are now, but on what they will become as he helps them develop and learn to work together as a team. These men were with Christ when He performed the miracles mentioned in Mark 1:32-34. They saw Christ heal the sick. They saw Christ cast out demons. Later, they saw Him raise the dead. Christ ministered to people in crisis but He was also coached His team and equipped them for the future.

One of the tragedies, today, is that many Christian leaders have never learned to become both chaplains and coaches. As a result, they spend most of their time dealing with the past instead of equipping others for the future. We might say that they spend all of their time fighting fires and do not spend any time doing fire prevention. Christ showed that it is important to deal with the past, but Christ also worked to prepare people for the future. A good coach will continually help people become more effective.

In John 8:1-11, the religious leaders brought a woman, who had been caught in the act of adultery, to Christ. They wanted Christ to focus on her past. When they kept pressuring Christ, He finally responded. John 8:7 says, “So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, ‘He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.’” Then, John 8:9 says, “Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.” Christ helped the religious leaders move their focus on the past from the woman’s past to their own past. As a result, we see that Christ gave them a very creative answer.

However, Christ was not just satisfied to be a chaplain to the woman during her time of crisis. Instead, Christ also became a coach and helped her prepare for the future. John 8:10-11 says, “When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, ‘Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?’ She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said to her, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.’” Christ helped her to change her past by forgiving her, and then, served as a coach by helping her focus on what to do in the future.

In Mark 1:17, Christ had given the disciples a promise that He would prepare them for the future. A big part of that preparation for the future was training. Training starts with vision. Christ first showed them that vision begins with prayer. Mark 1:35 says, “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.” The disciples found Christ praying and told Him that all of the people wanted Him. The people wanted a chaplain who would be available the next time they had a crisis. Here, we see that the disciples saw the need of the people for a chaplain and forgot that Christ had promised to be a coach to them.

Mark 1:38-39 shows how creative Christ was in developing the vision of the disciples. Those verses say, “But He said to them, ‘Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.’ And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.” Instead of telling the disciples about the needs in other areas, He took them with Him and showed them the needs in other areas. He also showed them what to say and what to do. In the process, the disciples were being coached and shown how to become fishers of men. At the same time, they were expanding their vision.

Christ also showed the disciples another lesson about being both a chaplain and a coach. In Mark 2:1-12, four men brought their paralyzed friend to Christ. First, the disciples saw a good example of teamwork. They also saw how teamwork and creativity go together. The men could not get their friend to Christ, so they became creative and went up on the roof and made a hole in the roof to get their friend to Christ. In Mark 1:29, it says that Christ was in Capernaum and went to the house of Peter and Andrew. Here, in these verses they are in Capernaum and it just says “the house”, so it may have again been the house of Peter and Andrew. If so, the creativity of these men meant that Peter and Andrew had to do some roof repair. The disciples were being shown that people are more important than possessions.

Since Christ had promised the disciples that He would help them become fishers of men, Christ

showed the disciples how to be creative in ministering to the paralyzed man. Mark 2:5 says, “When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven you.’” Christ was a coach by showing the disciples that the greatest way to change the past of any person is through forgiveness of sins, even if that person is paralyzed. He was coaching them by showing them that the basic need of all people is forgiveness of sins. Christ also showed the disciples how to be a chaplain and minister to the physical needs of the man.

In Mark 2:14-15, Christ expanded their vision to the people the other religious leaders rejected. In fact, Christ even added one of the “rejected group” to His team. Those verses say, “As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ So he arose and followed Him. Now it happened, as He was dining in Levi's house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him.” Here, we see that Christ showed the disciples how to build relationships with those the religious leaders rejected. People will listen as we share the Gospel if we have built a relationship with them.

The religious leaders decided that they better try to conform the disciples to their ideas of good and bad. Mark 2:16 says, “And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, ‘How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?’” Here, we see that the scribes and Pharisees were trying to get the disciples to conform and act like them. In contrast, Christ said, in Mark 2:17, “When Jesus heard it, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” Christ again coached the disciples by showing them that the basic need of all people is repentance and forgiveness of sins. Christ expanded the vision of the disciples by showing them how to reach the people society rejected. Christ had also shown that eating with tax collectors and sinners was a creative way to build relationships with them.

Christ calls us to help people deal with their past through forgiveness, instead of continuing to dwell on their past. Otherwise, they will constantly be in a crisis. That is why an effective leader must be both a chaplain and a coach. Once a person places his or her trust in Christ, we want to help them learn to let go of the past as quickly as possible. At the same time, we want to help them develop a vision for the future. Once they begin to have a vision for what Christ wants to do in and through their lives in the future, we need to invite them to become a part of the team. We need to promise to give the training needed to all that join the team. In doing this, we coach and equip them to reach the goal Christ has for their lives. As you are a chaplain to those you lead in their times of crisis, and then, as you coach and train them to reach the full potential God has given them in their lives, the Lord will richly bless you and multiply your ministry through the lives of those that you coach.