
LEADERSHIP AT AGORA

- WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS
- LEADERSHIP IN WHEELS
 - † INTRODUCTION
 - † PRAYER
 - † PRAISE
 - † WISDOM
 - † MEEKNESS & HUMILITY
 - † DISCIPLINE & AUSTERITY
 - † INDOMITABLE RESOLVE
 - † UNCONDITIONAL LOVE
 - † FORGIVENESS, RECONCILIATION & RESPONSIBILITY
 - † GATHER, CONSIDER & EXAMINE
- APPENDICES

LEADERSHIP AT AGORA

WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS

In August of 1995, when Agora was in the earliest stages of conception, Rich was challenged by his bishop to consider what God's vision was for the future Agora. More specifically, he was challenged to consider the organization and function of its people. After prayer and listening, Rich had the vision of Wheels Within Wheels, drawing it in flurry of passion and excitement. Later, Rich found his drawing described in Ezekiel. Ezekiel describes the glory of the Lord touching mankind so that all move together in unison with the Holy Spirit, participating in His plan.

¹⁵ Now as I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the earth beside the living creatures, one for each of the four of them. ¹⁶ As for the appearance of the wheels and their construction: their appearance was like the gleaming of beryl. And the four had the same likeness, their appearance and construction being as it were a wheel within a wheel. ¹⁷ When they went, they went in any of their four directions without turning as they went. ¹⁸ And their rims were tall and awesome, and the rims of all four were full of eyes all around. ¹⁹ And when the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures rose from the earth, the wheels rose. ²⁰ Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, and the wheels rose along with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. ²¹ When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those rose from the earth, the wheels rose along with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. (Ezekiel 1, ESV)

There are several points of imagery from this passage that are foundational for our organization. These points should be implemented by leadership for the realization of our vision as God's will:

- The wheels are within wheels.
 - As the creatures' spirits are within the wheels, so the Holy Spirit is within our teams of people. We'll refer to our teams or groups as wheels.
 - As the wheels are within other wheels, so our wheels exist within and intersect other wheels.
- The Spirit moves the wheels.
 - As the spirit of the creatures is within and moving the wheels, so the Holy Spirit is in our wheels, accompanied by miracles, signs and wonders.
 - As the wheels move according to the Spirit, so do ours to the Holy Spirit.
 - As the creatures moving the wheels are unified in spirit, so the different expressions of God's Holy Spirit are unified, including Prayer, Praise, Service and Fellowship.
 - As the wheels move but do not turn, so it is with ours.
- The wheels are gleaming and full of eyes.
 - As the wheels are full of eyes, so our wheels are full of people discerning and implementing the heart of God.
 - As the wheels are unified in spirit and the eyes are fixed onto the wheels, so our people are unified by the Holy Spirit, recognizing the importance of and leaning on the roles of people from other wheels.
 - As the wheels are full of eyes all around, so our wheels are full of people looking all around, in circumspection.

LEADERSHIP IN WHEELS

INTRODUCTION

Wheels within wheels is a fresh look at how we organize people to gather and serve. The leadership within that organizing is what this document seeks to define. That leadership should recognize the way particular leaders led in the scriptures. It is necessary that those serving in leadership have deeply rooted spiritual values guiding the manner of their leadership and all ancillary relationships. These leaders are pioneers learning to flow together without reducing anyone down to merely cogs on a wheel. Remember that our wheels do not turn, they “rise up” and go “without turning”; they are people floating together in the passions of His work. That means that people serve on wheels to be more than just underlings. All leaders must work in congruence with that concept.

Every leader should hear and value every member of his wheel. This will cultivate good values and open the door for the inspiration of the Spirit. A profound biblical example is given to us by James, the brother of Jesus, as recorded in the book of Acts. James served as a strong leader that trusted in the presence and working of the Holy Spirit within both leadership and participants.

James found that trusting in the working of the Lord among His people was good. As a result of his Holy Spirit led leadership other wheels were engaged and people all over the world have experienced the joy of receiving from God. Facilitating the work of God, as James did, requires a unique style of leadership.

At Agora, we seek leaders with that style.

PRAYER

Every Wheels Within Wheels participant needs to have a prayer life on which his practical life depends. This is a prayer life of intimacy with the LORD that is a source of strength within, understanding for God’s way forward, and a vital beginning point of listening and hearing from the LORD. Everyone should pray for others on their wheels and the various tasks. Leadership should lead the way with prayer. Every formal meeting should start and end with prayer because meetings without prayer are illegitimate in that they do not recognize the unseen presence of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus spent regular time away from the masses for prayer and told his disciples to do the same. When faced with his greatest task, enduring betrayal and the cross, he encouraged his followers to find strength from God in prayer, and he was speaking from his own life experience. Paul speaks of such a time of close intimacy with the Father regarding the problems of this world for which he does not know how to pray, that one’s spirit within “groans in travail” as the Father is working His good in all things (Romans 8: 23, 26, 27). Daniel had a daily regimen of prayer as well as calling on the Lord in special times of extraordinary need. Daniel and Esther both called on those in fellowship with them to pray in concert with them regarding those times in which they needed a special work of the hand of God (Daniel 2: 17, 18; Esther 4: 16).

Remember how the Lord taught us to pray. We were taught to pray for our Father’s Kingdom and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6: 5-15). It was not Moses’ idea to deliver the Israelites to the Promised Land, it was God’s. It was not Paul’s idea to go on his first missionary journey, it was God’s, and it was shown to Paul by a circle of peers during prayer (Acts 13: 1-3). Our prayers need to be consistently focused on the strictest of terms for the Lord’s will. The heartbeat of our pursuit of God must be for His will and His purposes.

While one should be disciplined with such conversation with God, the practice or tradition of prayer by itself is nothing more than ritualistic words and tradition. The action of prayer is valued because it is our way of conversing with God, as taught to us by Jesus Christ; it is not because of diligence. Talking and listening to God makes it possible that each be strengthened, inspired, given wisdom and understanding, and relieved of disabling pain of the soul. It should never become merely an item on the agenda, but a beginning point of listening for God's passions for our lives and the challenges presented by the world around us.

PRAISE

"The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me; to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!" (Psalms 50:23, ESV)

¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. ¹² We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord...." (1 Thessalonians 5, ESV)

We should start our work with praising Jesus Christ for what the work of His Spirit has done, is doing and will do. Praise and blessing nurtures creatives, overcomes adversaries, and releases everyone to excel.

Celebrating should happen at each stage of development. Consider God's example for us in Genesis. Every day God does an act of creation, He blesses His work saying, "... that it was good." There is something about blessing and praise that cultivates creativity. Negativity that is fault-finding is destructive. In Romans, Paul identifies a refusal to thank God as one of four steps towards godlessness. Praise God for all successes, with thankfulness and readiness to receive from Him.

Psalms 22:3 speaks of how God is enthroned on the praises of His people. In II Chronicles, King Jehoshaphat sent those who praised the LORD ahead of his army into battle. As they did, the scriptures tell us that "...the LORD set an ambush against their enemies." It is spiritually strengthening and empowering, and it invites the fresh inspiration of the LORD to praise Him. This is vital in the overcoming of the destructive work of evil that is constantly at work against God's missions and purposes.

Bless God by blessing your team members. It requires the leader to celebrate the people God has given him, through whom God has worked in achievements accomplished. It is all about honoring God and encouraging people as they avail themselves to seeking, discerning, and doing the will of God. As the Holy Spirit moves through people, team members need to be able recognize when they are receiving from the Spirit of God. It is a blessing to God when people are affirmed and celebrated for the good that is happening as a result of their service. Praise God and bless others before and after battles.

WISDOM

²¹ Folly is a joy to him who lacks sense, but a man of understanding walks straight ahead. ²² Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed. (Proverbs 15, ESV)

Be not envious of evil men, nor desire to be with them 2 for their hearts devise violence, and their lips talk of trouble. 3 By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; 4 by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches. 5 A wise man is full of strength, and a man of knowledge enhances his might, 6 for by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory. (Proverbs 24).

There are many references of wisdom versus foolishness in the scriptures, especially in Proverbs. Wisdom comes from God, and it flows in environments where leaders welcome Godly counsel. It requires active listening, circumspection, and acknowledgement of the Holy Spirit working in people.

One best practice for such a leader is to use question asking instead of statement assertion as a tool for guidance. Just as every team could have critical thinking and strong leadership, it could also have insecurity and timidity. Any person who is both a critical thinker and a strong leader be warned! He that is too quick to criticize ideas stifles and discourages willing participants and therefore new ideas. Leaders should require active listening and do a good job modeling it for the group to encourage participation. When in doubt, skillful questions encourage necessary critical thinking in each participant.

Another best practice is circumspection. In Ephesians 2:15, the apostle Paul tells us “see then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,” (KJV.) He is writing to the group to instruct them in how to understand the Lord’s will in their relationships with one another. The Proverb listed above, from Proverbs 15, speaks of the value of many counselors. This is an essential part of our vision and a requirement for leaders at Agora. Circumspection leads to prudence and has even come to be a synonym. Yes, we use circumspection for careful steps and prudence, but more importantly for confirmation of the Holy Spirit. A witness from the Holy Spirit may be shushed and un-heard if an assertive leader is not committed to circumspection. With circumspection, the most significant decisions have been made at Agora, which seemed impetuous to onlookers at the time. In retrospect, they were proven wise. (For more on circumspection, refer to the last section “Gather, Consider, and Examine.”)

Lastly, leaders should rejoice in decisions brought about through circumspection, even when idea origination had nothing to do with leadership. If a leader in a secular setting were to take credit for something not of their own it would be labeled as idea theft and therefore unconscionable. At Agora, a leader claiming credit for God’s ideas is similarly unconscionable. This should feel particularly unnatural when people are praising God and blessing one another. We have the privilege of understanding and implementing what originates from God. Praise and celebration shall reflect this even to the core of ownership of ideas.

MEEKNESS & HUMILITY

Meekness and humility are important qualities for leadership at Agora, and should always be considered during the selection of leaders. However, it is important for everyone to recognize that modern connotations of meekness and humility are inconsistent with biblical definitions. Meekness is not weakness or discouragement. Humility is not self-humiliation. Instead, these words have more complex meanings that depend on the existence of faith.

Without faith, one cannot be described with the biblical definition of meekness or humility. As such, it is unfortunate if one uses a faithless definition of meekness to refer to Moses. Anyone that does, has an incorrect view of leaders like him, Jesus, the Apostle Paul and others recognized to have this virtue. The biblical virtue of meekness refers to those who totally depend on God and do not depend on anything else including insecurities like self-preservation or defensiveness. They find inner strength from God and are not intimidated by the contribution from others, even when faced with hostility. A meek person finds bullying and the intimidation of others repulsive. In their relationships with others, the meek have no need to squash another person, whether verbally or otherwise. While Moses initially struggled with huge insecurities, he found God to be a faithful and abiding presence on whom he depended. Even after multiple challenges to his leadership, he advocated to God on behalf of those who chose an adversarial

position against him. Consider Miriam, his sister. She challenged his leadership and contracted leprosy as a result of God's judgement. It was Moses who pleaded to God for her subsequent healing.

Humility is a natural companion of meekness. Humility can emerge from many sources including brokenness within. Humility should not be rooted in insufficiency, but in walking in the confidence of the Holy Spirit and thereby in stride with God. Humble people have a deep understanding of what Paul speaks to when he says, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." The witness of people serving together with humble leaders will be that of humility. Even with assertive energy, a team will be freed to take ownership of the ideas, the initiative, and productivity if biblical humility and the resultant inner strength is present. Exercising arrogance will have the opposite effect over the course of time.

Take note of the difference between the state of the disciples before and after Pentecost. They discovered a powerful source of life when they were transitioned from being merely physical followers of Christ to followers of his spirit. They were rooted in inner strength, but strength that was supplied through a humble dependence on the Holy Spirit, enabling them to be humble yet powerful leaders. Having a full knowledge of the effect of this dependence, they also gained the ability to nurture a reproduction of this inner strength in others.

DISCIPLINE & AUSTERITY

DISCIPLINE

"Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but he who rejects reproof leads others astray."
(Proverbs 10:17 ESV)

"Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid." (Proverbs 12:1 ESV)

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness..." (2 Timothy 3:16 ESV)

"Whoever ignores instruction despises himself, but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence."
(Proverbs 15:32 ESV)

The use of the words discipline and reproof in the passages cited above should not be trusted. Their mistranslation and lack of context make it hard for us to understand the intentions of these passages in the modern context because they refer to instruction and refutation not punishment and shaming, respectively. Jesus' fulfillment of the law makes punishment and shaming futile and unnecessary. Additionally, there are different ideas about the English denotations of these words, and those different denotations have changed over the last 400 years. The denotations that we know and use today are not those which we read in scripture, as translated from the biblical languages. Yet, Bible translators continue to use the now obsolete denotations for the sake of tradition, instead of allowing for the adaptation of more accurate words. As a result, we first need to understand the bond and Jesus' effect on it, the re-shaping of denotations over time, how it impacts leadership and its role within teams, and the implications it has with the great commission.

The Mosaic Covenant is one of six covenants and a most important agreement between God and His people. It served as the basis for the community of Israel from the parting of the Red Sea to the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. and for the fulfillment of the law by Jesus Christ indefinitely thereafter. It was a strong bond between God and His people, as a bond is between father and son. In fact, scriptures even refer to Yahweh as Father in Moses' covenant hymn (Deut 32:6, Isa 1:2), which is a

familial reference. This word, מוֹסֵר, has an extremely deep meaning and context worthy of exhaustive of explanation. In short, it has been used as *instruction, education, chastening, check, doctrine, correction, chastisement, reproof, warning, restraint* and occasionally *bond* (Strong's 04148). Interestingly, the other Hebrew word that means *bond* or *bands* is מוֹסֵר (Strong's 04147), which, without the vowel and cantillation marks, is identical to מוֹסֵר. Knowing that the vowel and cantillation marks were only added in the middle ages (p5, *The Masoretes and the Punctuation of Biblical Hebrew*, http://lc.bfbs.org.uk/e107_files/downloads/masoretes.pdf) and that our oldest Hebrew texts are without them, it is probable that the words were one and the same until diverging in pronunciation and differentially in meaning at some point in the very fragmented Hebrew history. Understanding that the word for discipline and bond are the same provides the context we need to understand how God intended to use it.

God's bond with the people was intended to continually draw them in and cling exclusively to Him. He wanted His people to gather around and be focused on Him, as a son is with his father in a familial way. God taught through a close community of followers in a system that involved everyone. When people crossed a line with God, God would correct them and require sacrifice for atonement. The purpose of that was to cause people to flee from sin, and toward God. When people sin against each other, there was to be restitution to compensate for the destruction caused by the sin. Some restitutions were as extreme as death, similar to the extreme nature of Jesus' death on the cross. Unfortunately, time has filtered out the **instruction** motif from the bond. In modern English the denotations of words surrounding the bond illuminate the effects of this filter in **APPENDIX B**.

A pattern of change emerges when we compare the different forms of the words today as opposed to what they have been. This pattern seems to follow a negative viewpoint:

- The denotation for discipline (noun) in 1604 was "instruction, or training up," without the mention of a verb form. Then in 1708, while the denotation for disciple now includes a reference to its Latin origin, the reference to discipline now includes "Scourging, such as is us'd in Monasteries" is added, as though it was known to occur in Monasteries to an extent that it provided a good example for scourging. It should also be noted that a disciplinarian is defined at the same time as "Sectaries that pretend to a stricter Discipline and Purity than their neighbors." It would seem that, while recognizing the Latin origins pointing back to *disco*, people began relating it to monastic scourging, punitive discipline and baseless strictness. As a more negative viewpoint of discipline developed over time, the 'punitive', 'controlling' and 'corrective' denotations gained more and more prevalence, and the Latin roots were made obsolete.
- The verb form of disciple is incompatible with this negative viewpoint and is marked obsolete or archaic and denotations are even removed from dictionaries.
- Reproof does not follow the same path as the words with the *disco* origin. Instead, its origin is the French word, *reprover*, which is a verb that means 'to shame.' Interestingly, this noun started with the meaning from its French origin, then in 1913 gained the meaning, 'to prove again,' or 're-prove,' suggesting an argumentative or refutative meaning. Current denotations for reproof have inexplicably returned to the French origin of the word, while discipline has not returned to its Latin origin.
- No mention of the Mosaic Covenant or a bond between Father and son is mentioned, despite having conspicuous significance in the history of these words.

To complicate things further, Bible translators seemingly move laterally between historic and modern dictionaries as they use terms, utilizing variegated denotations and thereby creating further confusion. Consider the following passage:

²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. ²⁵ Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27 ESV)

Interestingly, the Greek word that the ESV translated into discipline is ὑπωπιάζω, and it actually means ‘to hit’ or ‘to strike’ under the eye, as in boxing. The ESV could have considered translating the passage like this: “But I *strike* my body and keep it under control...” However, using discipline does fit with the current denotation of the word but is inconsistent with other uses of the same word. Consider the Old Testament passage in Proverbs 12:1:

“Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.” (Proverbs 12:1 ESV)

Here, the Hebrew word translated into discipline is מוּסָר, consistent with the concept of the bond, found in the Mosaic Covenant, and obviously referring to the oral instruction that is tradition in Hebrew communities to this day. The word reproof is only correct if one uses the denotation from 1913, as the Hebrew word translated, תוֹכַחַת, means “argument, impeachment, spoken by lips and mouth” (BDB – j.bl.ac). The ESV could have considered translating the passage like this: “Whoever loves *instruction and training* loves knowledge, but he who hates *refutation* is stupid;” this seems to make more sense in English.

As another example, the following quote written in the late 16th century is comical or even insensitive when using the negative viewpoint of discipline:

Certainly wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity; (Francis Bacon, Of Marriage and Single Life).

However, applying the Latin origin with the educative denotation is better, as Bacon goes on to write about how family life *teaches* men to adopt healthier lives and tenderer hearts later in his essay.

Conclusively, the Latin that discipline comes from is *disciplina*, or ‘training.’ While disciple comes from *discipulus*, or ‘student.’ Both words originated from *disco*, which according to Charlton T. Lewis, in *An Elementary Latin Dictionary* means “to learn, learn to know, acquire, become acquainted with.” (Found at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>)

Discipline is supposed to mean something else entirely than what is presented in dictionaries and its translative uses. It is true that it means partly instruction and partly correction, but the nature of that correction has also changed both over time and by the fulfillment of the law. Development of this idea is shown to us in Jeremiah 2:30 (ESV):

In vain have I struck your children; they took no correction; your own sword devoured your prophets like a ravening lion. (Also, in Jeremiah 5:3, 7:28, 17:23 and 32:33)

Jeremiah prophesied and spoke on behalf of the Lord. What the Lord shows us with this passage is that punitive correction does not work. It was a futile last resort measure by Father God to encourage turning back to Him. It proved futile because what was needed was a new heart that would choose to cling to Him (Jeremiah 24); this would require redemption, a buying back. It is similar to the idea of salvation, but paid for with unconditional love, instead of the blood of the perfect lamb. The medieval church should have learned from this progression in the scriptures. What happened instead is a tragedy. The Bible does not communicate goodness through the controlling of people by people, yet through these

mistranslations and the twisting of scriptures a 1700-year subjugation of all Christians occurred and is ongoing in tradition; the tragedy is that we have been misled.

What Christ intended for us as leaders was clearly modeled in the way that he interacted with His disciples. Why Christ never exacted censures, blame, or punishment on the disciples, even in the extreme example set for us by the betrayal of Judas, when Jesus refutes him with a mere question, “you betray the son of man with a kiss?” (Luke 22:48, ESV), could be explained by His similar fulfillment of the law, or the Mosaic Covenant. Yes, everything comes back to the foundation of our atonement. Just as our atonement is through the blood of Christ, so our redemption is through acts of love from one to another, as Jesus did. While atonement is through the blood of Christ, redemption is through God’s abounding love working through His people. Just as the animal sacrifice to atone for our sins is futile and unnecessary, so are our punishments and attempts at restitution. Yet this is not the message of the traditional church. Not only have the scriptures been twisted, but the very part of the bond between father and son that is now futile and fulfilled by Christ is the part that endured! We are left without the meaning intended by the actions of Christ.

APPLICATION

Reproof in the form of blaming, shaming and harsh rebuke should never happen. If Jesus answered the worst betrayal in history with a question, with his truth and grace we can do the same. All leaders should take note that a cutting punishment has no place at Agora. All reproofs should be more like refutations, aligning themselves to thoughtful reason, consideration and argumentation as the end goal. Redemption should be found in the endless stream of God’s unconditional love both in spirit and in its practicing, as it covers over all wrongs, not demanded through reparations.

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. (1 John 4:18, ESV)

Despite this passage in 1 John, our world freely employs punitive measures and depends on pain and fear in lieu of thoughtful communication and understanding. If that happens in a team, the basis of leadership becomes skewed, respect is compromised, and any intention to encourage the “heeding [of] instruction” is sabotaged. The frightened individual feels manipulated, used, resentful, and pressured to do something that is not really a personal choice but a path taken under duress. The punished team member, although an adult with gifts to offer, will feel like a child without any value. Any leader employing punishment, fear and condemnation will disable his team, lose all value in it and fail. Instead, a leader should think of instruction in the training of his team and calm correction that stands on reason to address a wrong position or misstep.

With regard to how leaders apply discipline to themselves, things are a little bit different. Every person working in leadership should be presentable, prompt, and prepared so as to model it for their teams. They should demonstrate self-control in their personal lives and be of upstanding moral character, doing their best to follow the principles in this document.

CONCLUSION

Being disciplined is to be educated, and to be a disciple is to be a student. Leaders need to be disciples of the Bible and to have the highest regard for it, as it is useful and contains wisdom that spans cultures, ethnicities, and eras. Being disciplined means to be instructed, and to receive reproof means to reason together as the way instead of any other way. While we work together to answer the calling of the great commission, we should recognize that these ideas apply to the way we bring Jesus to all peoples, with the mindful instruction, education and grace of the bond.

AUSTERITY

²² *And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.'* ²³ *His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'*
(Matthew 25, ESV)

If you have found honey, eat only enough for you, lest you have your fill of it and vomit it.
(Proverbs 15:16, ESV)

Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys. (Proverbs 18:9, ESV)

We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.
(John 9:4, ESV)

¹⁵ *Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise,* ¹⁶ *making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.* (Ephesians 5, ESV)

Without austerity there is waste. Only with austerity can we have good stewardship. Every leader should be looking for ways to improve efficiency that enhances focus without diminishing mission. This is especially necessary in a nonprofit organization, and even more so in an organization with a goal to serve the Kingdom of Heaven. Leadership should exemplify staying focused on God as a constant and all that is required, increasing one's personal and the program's capacity for overcoming hardships and achieving more with less.

The focus of Jesus is stunning in John 5 where Jesus healed a man at the pool of Bethesda. There were many sick and afflicted people at the pool, but Jesus healed only *one* person. In verse 19, Jesus exclaims that he can only do what he sees his Father do, as he can do nothing of his own accord. Many of us in mission are distracted by overwhelming need, as we are often only a small light in a large dark place. We can also be distracted by activity. Martha complained to Jesus that Mary should be helping her with serving, "Martha was distracted with much serving" (Luke 10:40, ESV). This happened when she was sitting at Jesus' feet listening to his teaching.

If we take the time given to us to do things outside of the Father's agenda, we can compromise the mission. We should devote ourselves to His work, whether in spiritual devotion or with our labor. Everything should be for Him. Interestingly, our efforts for Him are often not for the financial benefit of Agora in the short-run, yet they are never wasteful. In hindsight, our efforts for Him always happen with provision from Him and for a purpose. We believe that being austere for the Kingdom requires faith. It also means that distractions from our work can come from a lack of faith.

Discipleship in the kingdom of God should bring us closer to God, simplifying life. Jesus disciplined using instruction, reproved using reason, and kept his group on task, wasting nothing for the greater work at hand. Relationships with Him should result in a plain and simple quality of life. Leadership will do well to always be disciples who follow Jesus, keeping things simple, trim, and on task.

Awe-inspiring leaders have resolved to carry out God's purposes with conviction. This conviction should be obvious as it emanates from the core of a leader that possesses it. "With God, all things are possible" but only if leadership is committed to doing only God stuff. (Matt 19:26) As a result, this commitment should be clearly differentiated from grit. While grit can be a virtue and a strength, a leader with grit may blindly adhere to the path taken, inattentive to course-altering instructions from God. Our God calls us to have indomitable resolve that is deeper than stubbornness or determination.

Indomitable resolve

shows itself in leaders who always get back up after being knocked down,

shows itself determined to accomplish the mission, yet adapting to inspired adjustments to it (not quite determinism that excludes will),

shows itself to be greater than the mountains it faces, and

shows itself to honor God's anointed leaders.

THE APOSTLE PAUL WAS KNOCKED DOWN.

²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; ²⁶ on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; ²⁷ in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food,[b] in cold and exposure. ²⁸ And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. (II Corinthians 11, ESV)

In another community, after getting beaten and dragged out, he went right back.

¹⁹ But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. ²⁰ But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. (Acts 14, ESV)

THE APOSTLE PAUL'S PLANS WERE ADJUSTED.

Paul was resolved to be where God wanted him. In Acts chapter 16 we learn of Paul's intention to take the gospel to Spain. This did not happen, as Paul was given a vision of a man waving for him with a passionate plea to come over to Macedonia to help them. When the mission was clear, the course was set and there would be no turning back. Grit could have kept him on the path to Spain, despite the Spirit calling him elsewhere. His indomitable resolve could have been seen as grit when it sent him back into a town that beat him and left him for dead, yet it would have made an about-face turn the instant the Spirit called.

CALEB'S RESOLVE WAS GREATER THAN THE HILL COUNTRY AND THE GIANTS HE FACED.

⁷ I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I brought him word again as it was in my heart. ⁸ But my brothers who went up with me made the heart of the people melt; yet I wholly followed the Lord my God. ⁹ And Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land on which your foot has trodden shall be an

inheritance for you and your children forever, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God.’¹⁰ And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, just as he said, these forty-five years since the time that the Lord spoke this word to Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness. And now, behold, I am this day eighty-five years old.¹¹ I am still as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me; my strength now is as my strength was then, for war and for going and coming.¹² So now give me this hill country of which the Lord spoke on that day, for you heard on that day how the Anakim were there, with great fortified cities. It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall drive them out just as the Lord said.” (Joshua 14:7-12, ESV)

Here is a man who never complained about wandering in the wilderness, wasting 38 years of his life because other people were afraid. Then, as five years passed and other tribes were conquering their lands, he never exhibited entitlement of what others should do for him. He was not only availing himself to go to battle like a young man, but at 85 years old, he wanted to conquer the land of the giants, the Anakim, the very people of whom his peers were terrified 45 years prior. He settled in the land of Hebron, home of Arba, the greatest man among the Anakim.

DAVID HONORS GOD’S ANOINTED LEADER.

For any leader adhering to the discernment of the Holy Spirit may be something only seen with testing. For David, it may have been very difficult, and he was tested in it:

¹⁰ Behold, this day your eyes have seen how the Lord gave you today into my hand in the cave. And some told me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, ‘I will not put out my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord’s anointed.’¹¹ See, my father, see the corner of your robe in my hand. For by the fact that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you, you may know and see that there is no wrong or treason in my hands. I have not sinned against you, though you hunt my life to take it. (Samuel 24, ESV)

Many people thought that David should be king, and some even told him to kill Saul. As we know, David was destined to be king, but David knew that Saul was meant to be king for this time, as he was anointed to be. He was so resolved on following the anointing of the Lord that he did not take the Kingdom for himself, even when it would have been easy to do it.

So, it should be for leaders of wheels. No leader should wrongfully usurp, take advantage of others, or take anything that does not belong to him. Instead, he should be indomitably resolved to do the will of God, as it is revealed to him.

Leadership with indomitable resolve will have an extraordinary determination to move mountains for the kingdom of God or determination to grow into such a person. This requires a willingness to endure attacks and afflictions without allowing courage to erode. While this may seem inhuman, for just people, faith is something you *do* in the power of God. This power works in them and they experience it. Where this happens, a leader faced with attacks, necessary course adjustments, the challenges of age or any formidable circumstances prove not to be faith-endangering but belief-enabling.

It is because of the Spirit of God as the epicenter of the force at work within leaders that makes all of this possible. There is alignment within one’s spirit that makes room for inspired course adjustments. Consequently, when God’s will is unpopular, a leader aligning his will with God’s could be a difficult person to work with. Because indomitable resolve will always be about God and acting on His will, the team committed to God will find His way. One will never usurp authority, which is dishonorable. A person

of indomitable resolve will exercise control within his spirit such that discernment prevails over impulse, whether of himself or his team.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. ⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5, ESV)

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. (John 4:19, ESV)

¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” ²⁰ To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12, ESV)

In what is traditionally referred to as The Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught an extreme path of spiritually self-disciplined living which illustrates a self-sacrificing love that was new to the world. He called for nothing less than the perfect love of God to be lived in our lives. Redeeming lives is made possible when one has indomitably resolved to love on a deep and personal level. Indomitably resolving to love unconditionally leads to redemption.

Leadership should have this kind of deep commitment to love unconditionally. The perfection of God’s love is commended to us as something we are to do, without qualification. Everyone must accept that love is not a feeling but a choice to act for others. Accepting this is a condition for accepting any leadership role on a wheel. Unconditional love is not the same thing as pacifism, but a choice to exercise a position of Holy Spirit driven power, and a commitment to be a vessel of God’s extravagant love.

One thing misunderstood regarding The Sermon on the Mount is that Jesus demanded perfect love from weakness. However, Jesus never taught us to be passive, but to be those who would exercise God’s love with power and self-control. So, Jesus tells us to carry another’s burden if asked. In fact, if another asks for our help for one mile, we should offer to help him for two. If we are mistreated and struck on one cheek, we are to turn the other instead of striking back. Jesus was not teaching and instructing us to be weak, spineless, and cowardly. He was teaching us that despite having the right and ability to say no or strike back, we should instead exercise a position of power with His love. Choosing to love instead of becoming indignant is strange and it requires courage. This love is the love that Jesus used to hang on the cross. Yes, if a leader has the perfect love of God inside, he has the same power that Jesus used to pay the full price of sin for all of humanity.

Pacifism is not the same thing as allowing the power of the Holy Spirit to exhibit greatness as an expression of love instead of indignance. “Non-resistance” is a term coined by Christian pacifists used in place of pacifism in reference to verse 38. However, the two terms are different in that non-resistance

not only implies passive political nonviolence, but passive personal nonviolence as well. That passive personal nonviolence is defined using heinous hypothetical situations involving intruders that violate and kill family members. They conclude that a person should never fulfill his duty to protect others. However, the word resist is an imperfect, yet common, translation of ἀντιστηναι. According to Liddell Scott Jones, it means “to stand against, as in battle,” “to match oneself against,” or to make a stand. “Standing your ground,” or “standing up for yourself” are what come to mind colloquially. As a result, the formal argument for non-resistance has been developed to extremes beyond the few words spoken by Jesus. Jesus’ teachings are logical and make sense. When we consider the formal argument of non-resistance (a modern argument), it is simply unsound. If it is rewritten for soundness, it then commits the fallacy of four terms, for any categorical syllogism that contains four or more terms is invalid. Refer to APPENDIX A.

What we see in the cross and teachings of Jesus is the most powerful exhibition of the prevailing love of God for humanity. It must not be confused with weakness or cowardice. It makes sense; no one would call Dr. King weak or a coward; however, we should recognize that Dr. King was far from perfect. He was a sinner saved by grace like the rest of us. What Dr. King did with love through nonviolence is what we should focus on because he understood how to apply the power of God’s love to the civil rights issues of the day, and it worked. Dr. King has a lot to offer us in our necessary efforts of unconditional love, as he understood the power of God’s love of the civil rights issues of the time; it was not only right and good, it was effective.

APPLICATION

Interestingly, loving unconditionally in our daily lives works in the same way that God’s love worked in those demonstrations in the 60’s. Think of how a resistant demonstration of nonviolence works in comparison to non-resistance. With nonviolent demonstrations, resistance to oppression occurs but without “standing against, as in battle.” With non-resistance, no demonstration occurs at all. It is through this hair-splitting distinction that we are shown for our true identities: children of God.

Leadership should have a deep commitment to be vessels of unconditional love. This commitment should be one that is willing to make a demonstration of that love, even at the risk of losing one’s own life for the glory of God. However, one should never risk the failing of any duty, whether moral, ethical or civic in pursuit of this demonstration, including the defending of innocents and justice. Anabaptists were the first to believe that baptism is only significant if it is chosen, and that children are innocent until they are able to make that choice. Similarly to baptism with anabaptists, the demonstration of God’s unconditional love should never be chosen for someone; a child is unable to make such a decision but should be instructed in the way of unconditional love starting at a young age.

The work of redemption is an application of unconditional love. Redeeming people from the afflictions of bad choices requires investment in their lives. The cost is enormous in the battle over evil and its destructive work in the lives of people. Christians engaged in God’s work in the world cannot avoid the practice of unconditional love, because it is through such love that evil is overcome (Ro 12:19-21). So there should always be an active pursuit of the demonstrating of unconditional love by individuals, whether in relationships with team members, those with whom the team is interacting, and with people both inside and outside of the organization. Every action of each team should demonstrate this love, or their work will mean nothing.

CONCLUSION

Unconditional love comes from the wells of God’s mercy and grace. Therefore, it cannot be a technique of manipulation. Though, we can show a pattern for how it works. Jesus exemplified it for us. While Jesus did tell the man He had just healed to “go and stop sinning or something worse might happen to him,”

Jesus loved him with healing and did not hold the man's ability to walk again as a contingency to receive such an extravagant gift. It was also the case with every other act of God's love in Jesus. We are called to love without condition, just like He did.

FORGIVENESS, RECONCILIATION & RESPONSIBILITY

FORGIVENESS & RECONCILIATION

¹⁴ For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6, ESV)

¹⁵ "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." (Matthew 18, ESV)

The mission of Jesus Christ is reconciliation. His mission is to reconcile God and fallen humankind and to reconcile broken relationships between all humankind. It is not an optional growth point, it is required that each forgive when there is wrongdoing, as Jesus required it. Leadership should be committed to that end, and the passion for reconciliation that His Spirit has. This passion is most dramatically seen as he hung on the cross crying out for forgiveness for his crucifiers. Forgiveness is completely letting go of whatever it is that one is holding against another, regardless of fairness or recompense. We are called to simply let go and do what we can to restore the relationship. However, one should never apologize for wrong actions included in a false narrative, or righteous actions falsely accused. This is either self-abasing and fuels that false narrative in the minds of any who might be involved, or it mischaracterizes righteous actions, and is ultimately destructive to the work of God.

Where there are broken relationships, the mandate to any person is to be proactive in restoring and rebuilding. Firstly, one is to attempt conversation with the goal of reconciliation and healing. If that fails, he is to attempt it again with the engagement of two or three. If that fails, it should be brought to the larger gathering. It should never happen out of that order. It should always happen with the highest regard for the establishing of truth. The goal of forgiveness and reconciliation is the celebration and releasing of the power of God's love. It is for the purpose of overcoming the destructive and divisive strategies of the devil with the prevailing power of God's love and restoration.

Leadership that is mature enough to let go of the wrongdoing of others frees his team and his own creativity and spirit within. Those who just cannot let go, have little faith in God as they simply cannot trust God to be big enough to speak into the lives of others. They also encourage division.

RESPONSIBILITY

Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. (Exodus 18:21, ESV)

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:4, ESV)

⁴² *And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ⁴³ But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,[a] ⁴⁴ and whoever would be first among you must be slave[b] of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10, ESV)*

To move any object, a person needs to grasp it and not let it drop. While one is moving that object, it is in his possession. Similarly, responsibility should be taken up and owned until it is passed on to another. Responsibility is not an entitlement, it is ownership. There are consequences for taking responsibility for something without assuming its ownership. Leaders who want to take responsibility for the accomplishment of a wheel, should be people who own messes even if they had no part making them, and people who own their flaws and mistakes and the mistakes and short-comings of their teams.

God did take responsibility with the birth of Jesus Christ. Jesus was sent because of the mess made of creation by others. That was God taking a firm grip on a problem He did not create, yet inside his own creation. Father God was fulfilling His plan of redemption in the world. The idea that God was fixing a problem He created in His work with humankind is incorrect, and yet commonly understood. Correcting the mistake of sin in taking on its ownership was how he took responsibility of it, which is not the same as being the originator of sin itself. Leadership should take ownership of messes, even of those which they did not create, and without condemnation or resentment. Jesus tells us that we are to “take up the cross and follow;” which is a calling to responsibility. Just as we take up responsibility through ownership, we take on the ownership of the cross. That does not include salvation, for only Jesus can save; but it does include redemption. Also, it does not include claiming origination for a mess, for it would be false to do so. His work of redemption is a means to redeem the lost through a variety of wheels. In the *parable of the talents*, Jesus teaches the virtue of taking responsibility for and owning that for which we have been entrusted. Similarly, one who recognizes the talent he has, should take ownership, fully invest, and work towards a return.

We are not perfect, even at our best. When mistakes are made, responsibility is seen in the one who takes a firm grip on owning those missteps. Making excuses is directing blame elsewhere and is a bitter opposite of responsibility; it is the abandoning of ownership. One should own his flaws and mistakes.

When we take responsibility for a team on a mission, we have to understand that we will make mistakes as individuals and as a team. Leadership must own the failures with a full trust in God to breathe inspiration and pick up the pieces of the mess. That should be done without condemnation of any form. However, leadership should always speak the truth, especially during the sorting out of a mess.

Taking ownership is different than taking a title and a position. We take ownership by receiving the appointment of position, and this appointment is for the accomplishing of a mission not the exercising of misguided authority.

GATHER, CONSIDER & EXAMINE

Pay attention to all that I have said to you, and make no mention of the names of other gods, nor let it be heard on your lips. (Exodus 23:13, ESV)

The ESV translates תִּשְׁמְרוּ to ‘Pay attention...’ The word means to keep, watch, or protect like a shepherd does for his flock. The KJV translated it to ‘circumspect’ which is more descriptive of the action behind its

meaning. Combining the ideas brings to mind the image of a shepherd turning his head slowly back and forth, looking for predators. Google tells us that circumspect means “wary and unwilling to take risks.” Google’s definition is of course jumping to the conclusion that being on guard also means losing decisiveness. As it turns out, the word circumspect was borrowed from the Latin word, *circumspectus*, which came from *circumspicere*. The basic meaning of the Latin word, *circumspicere* is ‘to look around.’ David was just a boy doing a man’s job of shepherding when he killed lions, bears, and other predators that were after his father’s sheep. It was this virtue at work, being circumspect, which alerted him of the threats before his father’s flock. Yet, he was not at all unwilling to take risks, for he was able to fearlessly defeat Goliath, a risk of his own life.

Similarly, at the beginning of the Ten Commandments is written that all that God has spoken should be protected (from a 360-degree view) for the purpose of preserving all that God has spoken. In the coming of the Spirit of Jesus Christ at Pentecost upon believers, poured out on all who receive Him, God releases His Word to His people to discern one with another. This process of gathering people around a mission, to receive and hear from each of them is essential to finding our way through faithful achievement of God’s work among us. The hearing from each participant is vital to the integrity of the process because it is God’s Word released to His people that we want to hear, not the singular word of any one leader or team member.

Consider the crisis of the early church navigated by the Apostle James. He brilliantly led the people in Holy Spirit discernment. In Acts we read of the early church gathered to resolve a dilemma which threatened to split the church. “The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter.” (Acts 15:6 ESV) This team of leaders was searching for the heart of God in an environment that was racially and religiously diverse. In lieu of assuming controlling authority, James exercised Holy Spirit leadership and facilitated circumspective discernment. Gathering leadership together was for the purpose of listening to persuasive convictions for group discernment of the Holy Spirit. This was a circumspective exercise wherein people freely spoke to represent clashing views, but with honor. Afterwards, James requested all to listen to him, as his position was one that was precipitated from the listening and discerning process. While it was recognized as a judgement in Scripture, let us remember that this was not an authoritarian style of leadership typical of those times. Whether high priest, governor, or king, leaders ruled over people without regard for them. This was not the case with James. Not only did he have regard for people, he submitted to the leadership team who was watching for a witness of the Holy Spirit with one another and the whole church. The conclusion of this example speaks volumes to us:

For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to.... (Acts 15:28, ESV)

APPLICATION

Drawing from this example of James, a well-led meeting is one that:

- gathers the right people,
- introduces and maintains an open environment,
- withholds any leader’s preemptive assertion,
- experiences the joy of Holy Spirit affirmation, confirmation, and enrichment,
- and segues from thought to implementation without compromising togetherness.

As a result, leaders should use facilitation as a focus during meetings. Facilitation does not mean a cowardice or fickle presence in a group. It does mean looking for the Holy Spirit in each individual and his contributions. When a leader is preemptively assertive, there is less opportunity for the group to witness Holy Spirit confirmation. It is also less conducive to active group input and freedom of creativity from introverts. Once a leader asserts, non-confrontational people stay quiet.

CONCLUSION

It could be argued that James had the respect of the church to continue in the traditional authoritarian rule of the synagogue and avoid the risks and demands of circumspection and discernment. Many probably expected him to, as it would have saved everyone a lot of time and emotional energy. Instead, the brilliance of the Lord burst onto the scene through James' leadership as he facilitated God's work among His people. He trusted the Holy Spirit, as the prophet he quoted indicates:

¹⁷ that the remnant[b] of mankind may seek the Lord,
and all the Gentiles who are called by my name,
says the Lord, who makes these things ¹⁸ known from of old. (Acts 15, ESV)

APPENDIX A

From <https://web.stanford.edu/~bobonich/terms.concepts/valid.sound.html>

Valid: an argument is valid if and only if it is necessary that if all of the premises are true, then the conclusion is true; if all the premises are true, then the conclusion must be true; it is impossible that all the premises are true and the conclusion is false.

Invalid: an argument that is not valid. We can test for invalidity by assuming that all the premises are true and seeing whether it is still possible for the conclusion to be false. If this is possible, the argument is invalid.

Sound: an argument is sound if and only if it is valid and contains only true premises.

Unsound: an argument that is not sound.”

Formal Non-resistance argument (valid, but unsound):

Major premise: All resistance to evil is wrong.

←unsound.

Refer to αντιστηναι in “Unconditional Love”

Minor premise: Resistance is required to protect your family.

Conclusion: Protecting your family is wrong.

Formal Non-resistance argument (rewritten for soundness, invalid):

Major premise: All violence in self-defense is wrong.

Minor premise: Violence is sometimes required to protect your family.

Conclusion: Protecting your family is sometimes wrong.

←invalid.

Read below about “fallacy of four terms.”

Example of the fallacy of four terms (by equivocation):

Major premise: Nothing is better than eternal happiness.

Minor premise: A ham sandwich is better than nothing.

Conclusion: A ham sandwich is better than eternal happiness.

(This argument is obviously invalid because of equivocating “Nothing” in the premises, which means “no thing can be found that” in the Major premise and “nothing at all” in the minor premise. The dual meaning introduces a fourth term. Categorical syllogisms can have no more than three terms.)

Do not stand your ground (valid and sound):

Major premise: All violence in self-defense is wrong.

Minor premise: Violence is required to defend yourself in the street against a mugger.

Conclusion: Defending yourself in the street against a mugger is wrong.

Dr. King's statements about love and nonviolence can be arranged into an argument (valid and sound):

- Premise: "Violence as a way of achieving racial justice is both impractical and immoral."*
- Premise: "There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe nor politic nor popular, but he must take it because his conscience tells him it is right."*
- Premise: "Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed."*
- Premise: [Demonstrative] "Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon, which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals."*
- Conclusion: [Demonstrative] "... Nonviolence is a good starting point."*

Put simply: All violence to achieve racial justice is wrong.

One must take a righteous position, even if it is dangerous.

Freedom does not come to the oppressed without resistance.

[Demonstrations of] Non-violence heals, and is a weapon [a kind of resistance] that is not violence.

Starting with [demonstrations of] nonviolence is a way to achieve racial justice.

(It could be assumed that Dr. King saw resisting racial injustice as a kind of self-defense. Though, it is necessary for the validity or soundness of this argument.)

Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum or a General English Dictionary, 1708
(https://www.lexilogos.com/english/english_modern_early.htm)

discipline
 instruction, or training vp.

Discipline
 Instruction, Education, strict Order, Management: Also Correction, Scourging, such as is us'd in Monasteries.

to Discipline
 to instruct, to rule, or order; to Correct, Scourge, or whip.

disciple
 scholler

Disciple (L.)
 a Scholar, or Learner

Reproof
 Rebuke, Check.

Denotations in 1828
(webstersdictionary1828.com)

DISCIPLINE, noun [Latin , to learn.]

1. Education; instruction; cultivation and improvement, comprehending instruction in arts, sciences, correct sentiments, morals and manners, and due subordination to authority.
2. Instruction and government, comprehending the communication of knowledge and the regulation of practice; as military discipline which includes instruction in manual exercise, evolutions and subordination.
3. Rule of government; method of regulating principles and practice; as the discipline prescribed for the church.
4. Subjection to laws, rules, order, precepts or regulations; as, the troops are under excellent discipline; the passions should be kept under strict discipline
5. Correction; chastisement; punishment intended to correct crimes or errors; as the discipline of the strap.
6. In ecclesiastical affairs, the execution of the laws by which the church is governed, and infliction of the penalties enjoined against offenders, who profess the religion of Jesus Christ.
7. Chastisement or bodily punishment inflicted on a delinquent in the Romish Church; or that chastisement or external mortification which a religious person inflicts on himself.

DISCIPLINE, verb transitive

1. To instruct or educate; to inform the mind; to prepare by instructing in correct principles and habits; as, to discipline youth for a profession, or for future usefulness.
2. To instruct and govern; to teach rules and practice, and accustom to order and subordination; as, to discipline troops or an army.
3. To correct; to chastise; to punish.
4. To execute the laws of the church on offenders, with a view to bring them to repentance and reformation of life.
5. To advance and prepare by instruction.

DISCIPLE, noun [Latin , to learn.]

1. A learner; a scholar; one who receives or professes to receive instruction from another; as the disciples of Plato.
2. A follower; an adherent to the doctrines of another. Hence the constant attendants of Christ were called his disciples; and hence all Christians are called his disciples, as they profess to learn and receive his doctrines and precepts.

DISCIPLE, verb transitive

1. To teach; to train, or bring up.
2. To make disciples of; to convert to doctrines or principles.
3. To punish; to discipline. [Not in use.]

REPROOF', noun [from *reprove*.]

1. Blame expressed to the face; censure for a fault; reprehension. Those best can bear reproof who merit praise. He that hateth reproof is brutish. Proverbs 12:1.
2. Blame cast; censure directed to a person.

APPENDIX B

Denotations in 1913
(websters1913.com)

Discipline (noun)

Dis'ci*pline (?), n. [F. discipline, L. disciplina, from discipulus. See Disciple.]

1. The treatment suited to a disciple or learner; education; development of the faculties by instruction and exercise; training, whether physical, mental, or moral.
2. Training to act in accordance with established rules; acustoming to systematic and regular action; drill.
3. Subjection to rule; submissiveness to order and control; habit of obedience.
4. Severe training, corrective of faults; instruction by means of misfortune, suffering, punishment, etc.
5. Correction; chastisement; punishment inflicted by way of correction and training.
6. The subject matter of instruction; a branch of knowledge. Bp. Wilkins. (entries 7 – 9 excluded)

Syn. – Education; instruction; training; culture; correction; chastisement; punishment.

Discipline (verb)

Dis'ci*pline (?), v. t. [imp. & p. p. Disciplined (?); p. pr. & vb. n. Disciplining.] [Cf. LL. disciplinarian to flog, fr. L. disciplina discipline, and F. discipliner to discipline.]

1. To educate; to develop by instruction and exercise; to train.
2. To accustom to regular and systematic action; to bring under control so as to act systematically; to train to act together under orders; to teach subordination to; to form a habit of obedience in; to drill.
3. To improve by corrective and penal methods; to chastise; to correct.
4. To inflict ecclesiastical censures and penalties upon.

Syn. – To train; form; teach; instruct; bring up; regulate; correct; chasten; chastise; punish.

Dis*ci"ple (?), n.

One who receives instruction from another; a scholar; a learner; especially, a follower who has learned to believe in the truth of the doctrine of his teacher; an adherent in doctrine; as, the disciples of Plato; the disciples of our Savior.

Syn. – Learner; scholar; pupil; follower; adherent.

Disciple (verb)

Dis*ci"ple, v. t. [imp. & p. p. Disciplined (?); p. pr. & vb. n. Disciplining.]

1. To teach; to train. [Obs.]
2. To punish; to discipline. [Obs.] B. Jonson.
3. To make disciples of; to convert to doctrines or principles. [R.]

Reproof (noun)

Re*proof, n. [oe. Reproof. See proof, reprove.]

1. Refutation; confutation; contradiction. [obs.]
2. An expression of blame or censure; especially, blame expressed to the face; censure for a fault; chiding; reproach.

Syn. – admonition; reprehension; chiding; reprimand; rebuke; censure; blame. See admonition.

Current denotations

discipline (noun)

dis-ci-pline | \ ˈdi-sə-plan \

- 1 a : control gained by enforcing obedience or order
- b : orderly or prescribed conduct or pattern of behavior
- c : SELF-CONTROL
- 2 : PUNISHMENT
- 3 : training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character
- 4 : a field of study
- 5 : a rule or system of rules governing conduct or activity
- 6 obsolete : INSTRUCTION

(https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/discipline)

discipline (verb)

disci-pline

disciplined; disciplining

transitive verb

- 1 : to punish or penalize for the sake of enforcing obedience and perfecting moral character
- 2 : to train or develop by instruction and exercise especially in self-control
- 3a : to bring (a group) under control

discipline troops

b : to impose order upon

serious writers discipline and refine their writing styles

(https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/discipline)

disciple (noun)

1 : one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another: such as

- a Christianity : one of the twelve in the inner circle of Christ's followers according to the Gospel accounts
- b : a convinced adherent of a school or individual

2 capitalized, Christianity : a member of the Disciples of Christ founded in the U.S. in 1809 that holds the Bible alone to be the rule of faith and practice, usually baptizes by immersion, and has a congregational (see CONGREGATIONAL sense 3) polity

Disciple (verb) (used with object), dis-ci·pled, dis-ci·pling.

Archaic . to convert into a disciple.

Obsolete . to teach; train.

(https://www.dictionary.com/browse/disciple)

Disciple as a verb is no longer defined by www.merriam-webster.com)

Reproof (noun)

Re-proof | \ ri-ˈpruf \

c : criticism for a fault : rebuke

Synonyms - censure, commination, condemnation, denunciation, excoriation, objugation, rebuke, reprimand, reproach, riot act, stricture

(https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reproof)

(green printed text reflect the more instructional side of the bond, blue printed text reflect the more punitive side of the bond)