

The Sense of a Goose

I Corinthians 12:12-31

I. INTRODUCTION: 1, 2

- I. In the fall when you see geese heading south for the winter flying in “V” formation, you might be interested in knowing what science has discovered why they fly that way.
 - A. First, flying in a “V” helps them conserve energy.
 - (1) Each bird flies slightly higher than the bird in front of him.
 - (2) The trailing bird is essentially “drafting” the bird immediately in front of him like an Indy car or NASCAR racers; reduced wind resistance.
 - (3) By flying in a “V” formation, the whole flock adds at least 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.
****Lesson:** People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier, because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.
 - B. Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone, and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front.
****Lesson:** If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed the same way we are going.
 - C. The birds take turns being in front, rotating back in the “V” as the lead goose gets tired.
 - (1) Research has found that when these birds fly alone they beat their wings more frequently and have higher heart rates than when flying in a “V.”
 - (2) It follows that birds that fly in formation glide more often and expend less energy.
 - (3) Also, in this way the geese can fly for a longer time before they must stop for rest.
****Lesson:** It pays to take turns doing hard jobs—with people or with geese flying south.
 - D. A second benefit of the “V” is that it is easy to keep track of every bird in the group.
 - (1) Flying in formation assists with communication and coordination within the group; fighter pilots use this same formation for similar reasons.
 - (2) The geese also honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.
****Lesson:** What messages do we give when we honk from behind? Encouragement or discouragement?
 - E. Finally, when a goose gets sick, or is wounded by gunshot and falls out, two geese fall out of formation and follow him down to help and protect him. They stay with him until he is either able to fly or until he is dead, and then they launch out on their own or with another formation to catch up with their group.
2. If we have the sense of a goose we will stand by one another, cooperate with one another and care for one another like they do.
3. I heard the above material several years ago at a conference for university educators and administrators.
 - A. It illustrates the important and lasting benefits of teamwork.
 - B. I’ve done a bit of research and the description it provides of geese is quite accurate.
 - C. These descriptions illustrate important lessons for us.

4. Do we have the sense of a goose? **
 - A. The church of Christ is composed of many different people, yet we are “one body in Christ”:
Rom. 12:5: “...we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.”
I Cor. 12:12: “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.”
 - B. Though individuals, we are connected together by and in the Lord (I Cor. 12:20, 27) and each of us has something to contribute to “the body”:
Eph. 4:16: “from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”
 - C. **3** Do we have the sense of a goose to work together as one body so that every member of the body is carried forward to the goal of heaven?
 - D. Our formation should be tight, like geese, so we may effectively cut through this world’s resistance to godly living.

II. DISCUSSION:

1. **4** Common direction and a sense of community:
 - A. Christians will arrive at heaven easier with the help of other Christians (brethren, spouse).
Gal. 6:2: “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”
Ecc. 4:9-12: “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. 10 For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. 11 Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; but how can one be warm alone? 12 Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him.”
 - B. Division destroys our ability to effectively work together (**Matt. 12:25:** “...a house divided against itself will not stand.”).
 - C. The early Jerusalem church had this sense of community: “Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common” (Acts 4:32, 33-35).
 - D. Our common direction in Christ is walking in the light of truth as we press onward toward heaven.
I Jn. 1:6-7: “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”
Phil. 3:15-17: “Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. 16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. 17 Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.”
 - E. God’s faithful ones are headed for heaven. Stay headed in the right direction!
 - F. We need to cultivate a love for the souls of others! I Tim. 2:4
2. **5** Stay in formation with your fellow Christians:
 - A. The Lord has arranged our formation by and through His word, and we must be careful not to fall out of rank or walk disorderly (**2 Thess. 3:6:** “But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.”).

- B. We can fall away, we must be careful instead of arrogant, knowing that we can also stray from the formation of faith (**1 Cor. 10:12**: “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”).
- C. Our “formation” is our “unity” which we must diligently guard (**Eph. 4:3**: “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”).
- D. Our unity in Christ is built on divine truth, divine truth is the “V” formation in which we travel.
 - (1) “Can two walk together, unless they are agreed”? (**Amos 3:3**)
 - (2) The church must stay in God’s united formation (**1 Cor. 1:10**: “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”; **Eph. 4:4-6**: “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”).

3. **6** Take turns doing the hard jobs:

- A. We are fellow-workers in the church; no one does all the work (recall 80:20 rule).

1 Cor. 3:6-9: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God’s fellow workers;”
- B. We work together, sharing tasks and easing one another’s loads (**Eph. 4:16**: “from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”).
- C. A helper is one who takes his turn doing work that must be done in the local church; be a worker, not a drag on and a discourager of your brethren.

******“It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.”
—Harry S. Truman

4. **7** Give encouragement:

- A. We all need and benefit from being encouraged in love and good works:

Heb. 10:24: “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,”

1 Thess. 5:14: “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.”
- B. We need to use our language in ways that build up instead of destroy (**Eph. 4:29**: “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”).
- C. Our conduct should set examples for others, whether we are young or old:

1 Tim. 4:12: “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

Titus 2:2-7: “that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; 3 the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things — 4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. 6 Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, 7 in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,”

- (1) When we “honk” we need to give helpful encouragement instead of destructive, discouraging obstacles that hinder our brethren and the cause of Christ.
- (2) It’s easy to be a complainer, and many folks are really good at it; but it takes real character to be an encourager! Remember Barnabas? Acts 4:36
- (3) His name meant “Son of Encouragement,” how about you, could others say that of you?

5. **8** Stand by one another:

A. The whole body hurts when one part of the body hurts (**1 Cor. 12:26**: “And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.”).

B. Bear one another’s burdens instead of adding to them:

Gal. 6:1-2: “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

1 Thess. 5:14: “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.”

C. Like geese, let us show “the same care one for another” (1 Cor. 12:25).

Eccl. 4:9-12: “Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. 10 For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. 11 Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? 12 And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.”

(1) Standing by each other does not mean we stand by sin and condone it; that’s not true love.

(2) It means we stand by to protect each other from sin and help when one is overtaken by sin (Gal. 6:1).

Jas. 5:19-20: “Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.”

(3) The church is stronger when we stand by each other.

II. CONCLUSION: 9

1. Do we have the sense of a goose?
2. Invitation

Adapted from two articles (*The Sense of a Goose & Do We Have the Sense of a Goose?*) by Joe Price.