

LEADING FROM THE FRONT ROW

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I. Introduction

1. I want to share a few thoughts that are on my heart for you today. I believe this to be a long-standing leadership principle that I have learned along the way. It so needed in the body of Christ! I hope they will help you to become the pastor/leader you were called to be.
2. Title of this conversation is, “**LEADING FROM THE FRONT ROW.**”
3. I want to read two scriptures to you, tie them together with a BIG IDEA, and then we will pray.

SLIDE John 14:12 NLT “I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and **even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father [and sit in front row].**

SLIDE Mark 16:19 ESV So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and **sat down at the right hand of God [in the front row].**

PRAY

Growing up, I played baseball 6-years-old through High School. From a very young age, I loved the game and did pretty good at it. STILL LOVE GOING TO GAMES! Over the years I had many coaches in little league, Babe Ruth and High School. One coach that stood out to me, **Coach Everingham.** He made a huge impact on my life. He was relational, loving and still focused on winning. It never seemed to be about Him, but the team. Every game, he would always have a special seat on the bench [front row], on the end closest to home plate. It was “HIS SPOT.” He would spend the entire game sitting there. He would take notes, talk to batter before and after going to plate. Ask pitcher to sit next to him after coming in from the mound. He spoke hope-encouragement into the entire team regardless if we were winning or losing. Needless to say, I learned a great deal about leadership from Coach Everingham. **HE LED FROM THE FRONT ROW! THIS IS WHAT I LEARNED FROM COACH...**

4. **SLIDE** Where a leader positions themselves says everything about their life and ministry. Do they stand or sit? [NOT just Physically] Do they want the spotlight or a seat down front? Are they striving to be successful or make others a success? **Is it about their way, OR YAHWEH?** It says a lot about how they view their role, their view of themselves and their belief/lack thereof of their team.

C. **SLIDE** Jesus Led from the Front Row

1. If there was ever a leader who knew how to position himself it was Jesus; EVEN as son of God! Anyone who deserved to STAND it was Jesus. **He was a leader that chose to Sit... OFTEN!**
 - Jesus sat among **multitudes**, he sat at **tables**.
 - He sat at a well with a **hurting woman**.
 - He sat in the house of **sinners & tax collectors**.
 - He sat in the dirt with **prostitutes**.
 - He sat in the **boat** with His disciples.
 - He sat around table with His **betrayers**.
 - He sat among teachers in the **synagogue...**
 - **AND** he sat down on the **right hand of the Father** and is sitting there **even to this day**.
2. **Jesus spent much of his 3 ½ short years of ministry sitting in the FRONT ROW. He then went and SAT in the FRONT ROW next to the father.**

3. **SLIDE** It is from the FRONT ROW of heaven that Jesus cheers us on and models to us how to lead His church. Jesus is the Ultimate Front Row Leader.

[Mentioned 11 times in NT Alone - Mark 16:19; Acts 7:55; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:22; Rev. 3:21]

4. Is it possible that Jesus is trying to help us see where success really lies?

Unfortunately, many today are building *'their ministry' 'their name' 'their church.'* There are times we need to stand, but the win isn't found in standing, but in sitting in the FRONT ROW, like Jesus and like Coach Everingham multiplying ourselves into the leaders God has placed into our care.

5. **SLIDE** Front Row Leader, "Is one who commits their life to multiplying themselves by coaching others from the front row and measures their success by how others succeed."

William Booth vs. Charles Finney – Both great men of God... but ones fruit multiplied/remains.

QUESTION: Let me ask you... Are you standing or sitting? Is your life-dream to be a success or make others successful? Do you desire to be the ACORN today or an OAK TREE tomorrow? LETS DIVE IN...

III. Leading from the Front Row

I want to get really practical with you and share some principles I have learned along the way as a FRONT ROW LEADER. **I don't claim to be an expert or don't think I have arrived. I actually think I am just an ordinary guy.** I am fearfully leading every day the best I can with what I have. I still have much to learn.

A. **SLIDE** Front Row Leaders Understand Their Role in Fulfilling the Goal **BRIEF**

1. **SLIDE** The very first thing God communicated to humans was... **THEIR ROLE...**
Genesis 1:27-28 ESV So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, **"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.**
2. **SLIDE** In the NT, Jesus continually proclaimed **THE GOAL...**
Acts 1:8 NIV But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses **in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."**
3. **In order to fulfill the GOAL in Acts 1:8, we have to live out our ROLE Genesis 1:27-28.**
Our role is NOT to do all the work but to get multiply ourselves in others to get the work done.
We aren't called to do the work of ten leaders, but to empower many leaders to do the work! Jesus spent more time with 12 men than all of humanity combined. **Multiplied to 1.4 billion today!**
4. Jesus followed a very methodical plan of leading from the FRONT ROW. His intention was NEVER to do all the work, but to be strategic in coaching others to multiply. From the first contact with His disciples until the final meeting before His ascension, these principles are seen.

SLIDE	Jesus' Method	Principle Learned
	I Teach, You Listen	Preparation
	I Do, You Watch	Observation
	I Do, You Help	Cooperation
	You Do, I Help	Application
	You Do, I Watch	Delegation
	You Do, I SIT DOWN	Multiplication

5. Coach EVERYONE to understand the GOAL and understand their ROLE.

#Scoreboard change – Measure success by how many we send, NOT how many we seat/keep.

B. **SLIDE** Front Row Leaders are Sitting Down

Ephesians 4:11-13 ESV And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

1. **Paul is making a critical point that most miss.** He is giving a sequential order in how we are to build.
Vs. 11 – Gifted leaders primary call is to equip and not do.
Vs. 12 – Coach others to do while you mentor [Front Row Leader]
Vs. 13 – They mature as a result.

2. **We have tendency to mix it up.**

Vs. 11 – Gift leaders use all their time to build their own platform... STANDING

Vs. 13 – Hoping one day others will mature enough to eventually get a chance to serve/lead.

Vs. 12 – THEN they can eventually do what we do, but they must SIT DOWN in the meantime.

B - Jim Collins, book, ***Good to Great***: Studied good companies that made strategic shifts in order for their company to be the best in their industry. One of the primary keys of a great company was that it was led by a “LEVEL FIVE” leader; one who leads from the Front Row. **They measured their success by how successful others were and not themselves.** #Lee Iacocca L4 vs. Jack Welch L5.

C. **SLIDE** Front Row Leaders Stay Close to the Action.

Luke 24:15 NIV As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them

One of my greatest hobbies is sitting at the front row of my Grandsons basketball games. All three play on Varsity Team this year. I love sitting **in the front row, 2 feet from side-line**. It is close to the action. You are immersed in the intensity. You see nothing else in the gym. It is exhilarating.

1. Front Row leaders sit closest to the action like Coach Everingham. They aren't missing any of the plays. They are observing their team, taking notes and making sure they don't miss a thing.

#Me with Execs – PLEASE Keep me close to the game...

2. You may not be able to be involved in every ministry area, but you should do your best to stay informed. As hard as it is for me I still am reading **EVERY Slack channel**, asking **team leads for updates**, smelling the sheep and doing my best to be 2 feet off the side-line.

D. **SLIDE** Front Row Leaders Coach From the Seat.

1. **Jesus still coaches from the front seat.**

John 14:12, Mark 16:19... you will do greater works, because I go to the Father... and sit down on the Front Row.

2. **NEWSFLASH: Jesus isn't doing ministry FOR you.** Yet He has sent His spirit to coach you, guide you, instruct you, convict you, empower you, protect you, & bless you. He coaches from the FRONT ROW.

3. We must do the same. My greatest passion is coaching from the front row.

- I realize it isn't about me and will never be about me.
- My win isn't by how many followers I have on Instagram.
- My success isn't measured by speaking every weekend, so the church thinks I am awesome.
- **It's SITTING.**

4. **We are called to coach!** Coaching takes dying to self. It takes maturity. Coaching takes wisdom. Coaching takes humility. Coaching takes expertise. Coaching takes time...

5. Here are some of my favorite **FRONT ROW Coaching Tips** I am building into Mannahouse Family. What you communicate and the spirit in which you communicate determines the health of your team.
#We see in college sports all the time. Coaches who do one or the other!

- **SLIDE "This is a Mentoring Moment."**

2 Timothy 2:2 NLT You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.

Reality is, your teams WILL fail. They WILL make mistakes. So did/do you! AMEN? The truth of the matter is, that times of failure are prime opportunities to build leaders into the leader you want them to be. **# We don't recruit seasoned leaders... we make them.**

When a leader makes a mistake, count it as an opportunity to come alongside and mentor them.

Encourage them, let them know you believe in them, give them a few tips, a 'mentoring moment' and then send them back out to do it better! CARE...COACH...DEVELOP

Sunday AM – we all ask each other, "Any changes? What can I do better next service?"

- **SLIDE "We are Building the Plane Mid-Air"**

Proverbs 16:9 NLT We can make our plans, but the **LORD** determines our steps.

I am building a culture that shows everyone, none of us have it figured out. I don't; you don't!

- **We aren't going** to postpone moving forward in hopes we have everything perfect.
- **We are going** to do our best to discern God's will and build as we go.
- **We are open about the journey.** Honest, Transparent, Vulnerable. If we find a mistake or a way to do it better, we will change it then.

Everyone gets to be a part of the process. Teams are empowered to help develop. If someone has a better way, I am the first to listen and change.

- **SLIDE "Messy is Okay."**

Psalms 40:17 MSG And me? I'm a mess. I'm nothing and have nothing: make something of me. You can do it; you've got what it takes - but God, don't put it off.

No one is perfect. No one does everything right. That doesn't give us an excuse to be sloppy, but it does give room for things to be messy at times. We recognize our inabilities and embrace God's infinite ability! WE do the best we have with what we got and celebrate it!

#Moving 29 staff positions within 90 days. THAT IS MESSY! BUT IT IS OKAY

There is a huge difference between Perfection and Excellence.

- Perfection demands no mistakes: It builds uptight, fear-filled, anxious leaders who are insecure and dislike their ministry positions.
- Excellence is not being the best but doing the best with what you have: We just want leaders to be the best "YOU" can be. Give it your best. Give it your all. Failure is not just ok, it is recommended.

#Kid drawing given to parent:

- Perfection = "That is terrible... try again [and tear up throw on the floor]."
- Excellence = "That's awesome... it's upside down? Cool..." [Put on refrigerator]

#Worship Teams – Young, green, building entire new team and culture.

- **SLIDE “We are going to have FUN doing this.”**

Proverbs 17:22 MSG A cheerful disposition is good for your health; gloom and doom leave you bone-tired.

Our teams know that Jesus is our joy not our job. We want to have FUN! Party! Laugh! Joke! We are creating a culture where people hang out, laugh, mock each other, celebrate.

Too often, people put too much pressures upon themselves. It is no wonder we have people that are anxious, depressed and burned out. STOP IT! Work hard but have FUN!

- **SLIDE “I am not the smartest guy in the room.”**

Luke 14:11 MSG What I’m saying is, if you walk around with your nose in the air, you’re going to end up flat on your face. But if you’re content to be simply yourself, you will become more than yourself.”

Proverbs 12:15 NLT Fools think their own way is right, but the wise listen to others.

First of all, I am confident in who I am. I am also confident in who I am not! I don’t claim to have it all and only Jesus really did. The beauty of the way Jesus is building his church is through teams. We all have certain gifts and talents and thrive in some areas and don’t in others.

I build every team surrounded by people who are better than me and different than me. I do this for SEVEN reasons:

- It builds a culture of empowerment.
- It builds a culture of team relationships.
- It dissolves any hint of a “man-of-God” spirit.
- It builds healthy, thriving, well balanced decisions.
- It honors people for the unique gift and value they bring to the table.
- It produces a better end product.
- It makes a better ME!

- **SLIDE “When you win, we all win.”**

Ecclesiastes 4:9 NLT Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed.

The church is a body! It is a family of believers that have been placed together by divine design and are called on a journey together. When one part of the body fails, the entire body suffers. When everything is healthy, everyone wins.

#Notre Dame Football Uniforms – No names, but numbers. Not about the man, but the team.

We do this in our meetings, staff devotions, services, emails, cards, and even SLACK!
When the team wins, you will and we all win.

There is no greater joy I have than to see others succeed. It tells me that we are doing something right.

E. SLIDE Front Row Leaders Receive a Greater Reward

1. I often wonder what Jesus is thinking as He looks down upon humanity. Although there is a world filled with darkness, pain, suffering, sin, and violence; there is also a thriving, bright, triumphant church filled with almost 2 billion followers who are reaching over 250,000 people every day. They are populating Heaven and plundering Hell.
2. His great reward is being forever together in Eternity!
Hebrews 12:2 NIV ...for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3. What was His joy? YOU AND ME! What is His reward? Spending eternity with His People.
How did He accomplish this? He understood the GOAL and He understood His Role.
4. **How about us? Will we choose to be FRONT ROW LEADERS?** Will we commit our lives to building churches from the front row? Will we be passionate to measure our success by the success of others? Will we live like Coach Everingham?
5. **LET ME PRAY FOR US TODAY**

IV. Conclusion