

# Superintendents' Certification Lesson 4

## Coaching: What's in a Word?

### Learning Objectives:

- To move the Sabbath School leaders and members from dialogue to action.
- To develop leadership potential in Sabbath School members.
- To equip members for discipling new believers.

The approach that started the early church was people investing in people. Jesus invested in His disciples. Barnabas invested in Paul. Paul invested in Timothy. One person at a time. It started slowly, but gained in power and momentum. From a few people, invested intensely and holistically, a movement was born.

All leaders have had that need for someone to listen, guide, be there, and ask the questions that no one else would ask. We need to care, pray, and coach. Most people consider a coach to be a person who works with athletes, but a person investing in people is also a coach.

*In the church coaching is a process for enabling both individuals and the church to achieve their full potential. Coaching is fundamental to everything we do in ministry—from discipling new believers to developing new leaders.*

### The What

Coaching has become of growing interest to many leaders, both in the secular world and in the church. Many people train and become certified as coaches who invest in people in a wide variety of ways. Some people specialize as executive, management, or team coaches. Others specialize as life coaches, business coaches, or congregational coaches.

*A coach guides as an encourager and an uncritical enthusiast. A coach is an encouraging, prayerful presence.*

According to The Coaching Academy, Europe's largest coach training organization, coaching is the world's second-fastest growing business skill. Coaching is a rapidly growing profession, primarily because many people find it to be a uniquely satisfying career. All coaches have something in common—they are people who want to help others be the very best that they can be in a particular endeavor.

I've often said, "I wish teachers would view themselves as coaches, because coaches have a vested interest in the success of students." Sabbath School coordinators have a vested interest in the success of the Sabbath School members.

### The How

Coaching is a deliberate process that uses focused conversations to create an environment for individual or team growth, purposeful action, and sustained improvement. Gary R. Collins says, "At its core, coaching is the art and practice of guiding a person or group from where they are toward the greater competence and fulfillment that they desire" (*Christian Coaching: Helping Others Turn Potential Into Reality*, p. 16). Coaching consists of three parts:

- Helping people to see *their reality*, where the person or team is at the present.

- Exploring the options, what he, she, or the team wants in *the future*.
- Finding ways to get there, leading individuals or the team to own an *action plan*.

So coaches help individuals or teams discover and leverage their strengths, recognize obstacles to success, and identify a course of action to maximize performance. Coaches use questioning techniques to facilitate processing the thinking on a subject that will identify solutions and actions rather than taking a wholly directive approach.

A coach does not need to be an expert in the areas that concern the person or team, because coaching is about action and moving forward. A coach needs to be able to listen, understand the need and a solution, guide a person or team to reach conclusions about what to do, and take action. A coach guides as an uncritical enthusiast. A coach is an encouraging, prayerful presence.

### The Benefits

- More done in less time and with greater life and ministry satisfaction.
- Travel in a new direction.
- Faith and function on the move.
- Accelerated action and depth of learning, transitioning in areas of ministry, and clarifying spiritual and strategic journeys.

Edward H. Hammett says, "Coaching offers hope, focus, accountability, and a pathway of leadership development and discipleship that produces quality for a postmodern culture and guidance for churches struggling to be relevant in a rapidly changing and challenging world" (*Spiritual Leadership in a Secular Age*, p. 143).

The coach is a servant leader, because coaching requires a lot of time and is hard work. Coaching is not an end but a means to developing new leaders and accomplishing tasks.

### The Path

1. Form a study group to develop and practice coaching skills.
2. Purchase books on Christian coaching, and make them available in your lending library.
3. Develop a team of Sabbath School coaches.
4. Attend one of the many seminars on Christian coaching that you can find on the Internet or through your local conference education director.

### The Review

#### Coaching Is:

"A process that enables learning and development to occur and thus performance to improve. Successful coaching requires knowledge and understanding of the process as well as the variety of styles, skills and techniques that are appropriate to the context in which the coaching takes place" (Eric Parsloe, *The Manager as Coach and Mentor*, 1999, p. 8).

#### Coaching Does:

- Provide encouragement.
- Bridge vision and reality.

- Cultivate wisdom and strategic planning.
- Unearth breakthrough opportunities.
- Maintain focus on what is important.
- Empower fulfillment of God's calling.
- Provide traction and momentum in ministry to transform lives.

**Coaches Use:**

- Focused listening
- Powerful questions
- Strategic insights

**The Spiritual Arsenal**

**Exodus 4:10-12**

**1 Chronicles 4:9, 10**

**Psalms 5:1-3**

**Proverbs 3:5, 6**

**Isaiah 26:3, 4**

**Isaiah 30:21**

**Isaiah 40:29-31**

**Zechariah 4:6**

**Luke 7:38**

**Matthew 6:33; 7:7, 8**

**Ephesians 3:20, 21**

**James 1:5, 6**

**James 4:2 (last part)**