

MENTORING FOR LIFE

PRACTICAL TRAINING
FOR MAKING A BIGGER DIFFERENCE
IN THE WORLD AROUND YOU

CARRIE DAWS



IMMEASURABLE
WORKS

RAEFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

MENTORING FOR LIFE: PRACTICAL TRAINING FOR MAKING A BIGGER DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD AROUND YOU

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SESSION 1: WHAT IS MENTORING?

WELCOME TO SESSION 1 OF MENTORING FOR LIFE! You are taking your first steps into a learning program that will not end on this side of heaven. It's a daunting journey filled with potholes, unexpected twists, and hairpin turns. If you proceed down this road, before long you will face heartache, disappointment, and tough conversations. You will want to ignore some problems you need to confront and get stumped on how to respond to deep heartbreak. Let's be honest. Working with people is messy.

But digging into people's lives, getting to know who they are and who they want to be, watching them succeed in areas where they never thought they could—it's exhilarating. Inspiring. Amazing. Without doing any scientific calculations, I believe that for every moment of heartbreak, I've experienced ten moments of joy. For every tear, a dozen giggles. And when life crashed around me and I didn't think I could go on, those people I'd been loving on showed up, surrounded me, and reminded me of the truths that they'd been learning, sometimes even from me.

Please don't miss this journey. Grab your courage, pray for a dose of determination, and let's get started.

WHAT IS MENTORING?

The word *mentoring* calls forth all sorts of images in people's heads, so let's ease some of the most common concerns. This isn't as big a deal as we often make it.

Chuck Lawless, Vice President of the Spiritual Formation and Ministry Centers at Southwestern Seminary, says mentoring is "a God-given relationship in which one growing Christian encourages and equips another believer to reach his or her potential as a disciple of Christ" (Lawless, 10). Encouraging someone doesn't sound too difficult, but don't stumble at the word *equip*. He isn't suggesting you start formal classes or intensive seminars. "Investing in others requires only that you're one step ahead in some area—that you've learned something you can give to others" (Lawless, 18). One step ahead in some area. That's it.

In *Mentor Like Jesus*, Regi Campbell echoes Mr. Lawless's sentiment. "Mentoring isn't about coming to know something, that's education. Mentoring isn't about learning to do something, that's training. Mentoring is about showing someone how to be something. It's about becoming a learner and follower of Jesus Christ because that's what makes our Father most pleased. It's also what makes Jesus most famous because millions of us are running around the world emulating Jesus" (Campbell, ch. 1).

Perhaps C.S. Lewis, author of *Mere Christianity* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*, stated it best. "Think of me as a fellow patient in the same hospital, who having

**Investing in
others requires
only that you're
one step ahead
in some area.**

Chuck Lawless

been admitted a little earlier, could give some advice.”¹

Mentoring is nothing more than loving another person enough to point them to Jesus, encourage godly habits, and share what you’ve learned on your own path toward becoming more like Jesus. You don’t need a doctorate or the ability to argue the finer points of theology. A thorough grasp of apologetics is not required, and no one expects you to get up on stage and speak to the congregation on Sunday morning.

We want you to participate with God, praying that He opens your eyes to the person He most wants you to affect right now, who will also have the opportunity to affect you. Consider, if “mentoring is an opportunity to stretch and grow with another person” (Edwards, 84) then it “occurs as you’re doing life together” (Campbell, ch. 8).

But this is where it can get hard. If you desire to affect the world and enlarge the Kingdom, then you must be open and insist on openness from those you are mentoring. Referring to Romans 12:9 (ESV), the authors of *Creature of the Word* say, “*Let love be genuine*. True, gospel-saturated community is authentic. The original word translated *genuine* means love that is free of ‘pretending, simulating, or acting.’ In other words, the community is not surface-only or fake. It’s not filled with easy answers that justify the spiritual prowess of those involved. In essence, a sign hangs above the doorway that reads: **No Masks Allowed.**”²

No Masks

Allowed

No masks. That’s a tough standard, particularly when you first enter into a new relationship. When sharing your life with others, fight fear but never lose sight of wisdom. Weigh how much you share with the depth of the relationship, purposefully seeking and giving greater transparency as the relationship grows deeper.

This is an important distinction from casual small groups and friends having fun. As the authors of *Organic Mentoring* point out, “Mentoring is a relationship with a purpose. Without purpose the relationship can meander aimlessly, becoming little more than friends ‘hanging out.’ Mentoring is more than friendship or giving advice. Our purpose is to help [others] follow Christ and be transformed into His image” (Edwards, 128).

And the best way to do that is regular and consistent time together. “A huge part of mentoring involves the effective transfer of truth from one generation to the next. Leadership is caught, not taught. Men who spend tons of time with other men who embody Jesus, who embody the kind of person they want to become ... these are the mentees who ‘get it’ and experience growth” (Campbell, ch. 6).

¹ C.S. Lewis, “Letter to Sheldon Vanauken of 22nd April 1953,” in *A Severe Mercy*, Sheldon Vanauken (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1977), 134.

² Matt Chandler, et al. *Creature of the Word: The Jesus-Centered Church* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2012).

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. What are your biggest concerns or hesitations about mentoring? As you make your list,
 - Cross out the ones you recognize are excuses keeping you stuck and disobedient.
 - ✓ Checkmark the ones you can improve by entering into a mentoring relationship.
 - ★ Star the ones you can find books or other resources to help you grow in.
 - ⊘ Circle the ones that indicate you may need to talk with a pastor.

2. Name some areas in which you know something you can pass on to others.

3. What might stand in the way of you following the advice *No Masks Allowed*?

4. As you begin this journey, does anyone come to mind that God may want you to get into a deeper relationship with?

SESSION 2: IS MENTORING BIBLICAL?

BEFORE WE DIVE MORE INTO THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS of mentoring, we need to check the Bible to make sure mentoring is something God wants us to participate in. And if it is, it's good to look for examples from God's Word of how it is done.

One of the key verses to this discussion is Matthew 28:19–20:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

New International Version

Thanks to our school English classes, many recognize *Go* as a verb, but a little research reveals that's not quite right. *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew* says, "*Go ... baptizing ... teaching ...* are each participles dependent upon the main verb *make disciples of*. But in such a construction, it is not uncommon for the participles themselves to assume the force of an imperative. However, the command to *make disciples* is the primary command."³

New Testament scholar Leon Morris writes in his commentary *The Gospel according to Matthew*, "We teach because Jesus commanded us to teach, and there is no way of diminishing the importance of an activity that owes its origin to the command of our Lord himself. But Jesus is not speaking about education for education's sake. He speaks of the taught as 'observing' what Jesus has commanded. In other words, Jesus is concerned with a way of life. As we have seen throughout this Gospel, he continually urges his followers to live in a manner pleasing to God. He has objected to the sterile legalism of many in his day and has gone beyond the letter of the law to the things that are rightly seen as arising from its spirit. So there is to be instruction and there is to be purity of life."⁴

**The command to
make disciples is
the primary
command.**

**A Handbook on the
Gospel of Matthew**

The Apostles and New Testament churches took Jesus's words to heart. Luke writes in Acts 2 verses 42 and 46,

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.... They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity.

New Living Translation

³ Barclay M. Newman and Philip C. Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew* (New York: American Bible Society, 1988), 886.

⁴ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1992), 749.

Paul asks the church in Rome,

*But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him?
And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him?
And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?*

Romans 10:14, NLT

And he advises Titus to

*promote the kind of living that reflects wholesome teaching.
Teach the older men to exercise self-control,
to be worthy of respect, and to live wisely....
Similarly, teach the older women to live in a way that honors God....
they should teach others what is good. These older women must
train the younger women to love their husbands and their children,
to live wisely and be pure, to work in their homes, to do good,
and to be submissive to their husbands.
Then they will not bring shame on the word of God.
In the same way, encourage the young men to live wisely.
And you yourself must be an example to them
by doing good works of every kind.
Let everything you do reflect
the integrity and seriousness of your teaching.*

Titus 2:1–8, NLT

These principles permeate the Bible as far back as the law given to Moses.

*Commit yourselves wholeheartedly
to these commands that I am giving you today.
Repeat them again and again to your children.
Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road,
when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.
Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders.
Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

Deuteronomy 6:6–9, NLT

Our lives are to be so filled with God and His Word that we cannot help but overflow with Him when we work, when we spend time with our families, and when we talk with our friends.

But if we want to emulate Jesus, we should be purposeful. The New Testament reveals that thousands upon thousands listened to Jesus during His three years of ministry. Hundreds followed Him. Yet He focused smaller.

**If we want to
emulate Jesus,
we should be
purposeful.**

“Jesus mentored twelve guys for three years. It’s well documented [in the Bible] ... by four different authors, two of which were eyewitnesses and products of His mentoring process. If there’s anything we should be able to learn from Jesus and replicate in our own lives, it’s mentoring. We have a documented model with proven results” (Campbell, Getting Started).

SESSION 3: WHY MENTOR?

THE FACT THAT JESUS DEDICATED HIS MINISTRY YEARS to mentoring the disciples is a significant reason to get involved in mentoring ourselves. But let's be honest. Jesus is a tough person to emulate. We're going to fall short, which we sometimes use as an excuse to not try in the first place. So let's talk about some additional reasons to mentor.

FRIENDSHIP

Modern Americans don't make a lot of time for relationships. Oh, we want to, but too often we're surrounded by people and only interact with them as necessary to live life and accomplish work. We don't take the time to find out how people are really doing, learn the stresses they carry, and hear their dreams for tomorrow. We know a lot of people, but we don't know a lot about those people.

Slowing down enough to regularly make time for a specific person or small group can address many of the issues that plague us, including loneliness, not knowing how to love well, feeling unwanted or inconsequential, and lacking accountability to grow and become more Christlike.

Friendships develop over time, and deep friendships build with shared laughter and burdens. Pastor Nathan Stanley of RockFish Church remembers someone telling him that you can't call a person friend until they know your ups and downs and choose to stand with and for you regardless. When two or more people come together, disclose the suffering and doubts hovering nearby, seek God's answers together, and determine to obey, the Holy Spirit forges a bond that is not easily shaken or destroyed.

**Deep friendships
build with shared
laughter and
burdens.**

The book of Ecclesiastes talks about this in chapter 4, verses 11–13.

*Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm.
But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be
attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer.
Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.*

NLT

GROW LIKE JESUS

Luke 2:52 says, *Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people* (NLT). God designed our bodies to grow up (stature) with minimal help from us; however, wisdom and favor demand more.

Perhaps you remember from your high school science days a man by the name of Isaac Newton and his laws of motion. The First Law of Motion states, in part, "A

body at rest will remain at rest.”⁵ If you want to grow in wisdom and favor with God and people, you must apply some force.

Nothing provides force, including all the necessary discipline, quite like accepting the responsibility to mentor another. Not only does it provide practical incentive to walk out what you are trying to convey, but the mentoring relationship naturally encourages you to stretch your faith. Another person walking closely with you will dare you to trust God a little more, believe God a little more. Obey God a little more.

GATHER BLESSINGS

As I've walked with other women in close relationship, I've witnessed and received tremendous blessing. Women stepped into freedom, rejecting the shackles our enemy pressed upon them.

- One sweet friend saw that she wasn't alone in her devastating past, grabbing tight to the truth that what was done to her didn't limit her.
- Another woman saw how her disappointment in life circumstances caused her toxicity to others, and she not only determined to change, she became a beautiful light to those around her.
- One lady realized she wasn't alone with her young children when her husband deployed to dangerous areas. She reached out, forging deep friendships that steadied her as she walked through serious health concerns in one of her children.

One dear friend fought back paralyzing fears, and another is experiencing beauty coming forth from what she once thought was a destroyed marriage. I could

**All of these women
who I reached out
to touch also
reached back to
touch me.**

share other instances where someone looked at what they thought was barren ground and recognized God moving. But the blessings continue. You see, all of these women who I reached out to touch also reached back to touch me. My life is different because I loved them. My hope and strength and grace was bolstered and refined as I walked out deep friendship with them. I've walked through tremendous heartbreak with ladies and families. But I wouldn't trade one moment of it

because of what I've seen and experienced of God through them.

INFLUENCE GENERATIONS

One of the defining characteristics of the millennial generation is that they want their efforts to matter. “In general, millennials are not motivated to do jobs that don't amount to much. They want to promote causes greater than themselves—to be a part of something instigating change” (McFarland, 126).

⁵ Jim Lucas, “Inertia & Newton's First Law of Motion,” LiveScience, September 27, 2017. www.livescience.com/46559-newton-first-law.html.

Each generation is known for different values forged from the obstacles of the time, but this characteristic to pursue meaning in all we do is one we can all embrace. “Meaning says the activity you’re involved with is really important” (Campbell, ch. 1), and what is more important to God than people?

But it can go much farther. Imagine, what you do today changing thousands! “Meaning says the consequences of the activity will affect the people involved for a long time. Meaning says there is a multiplier effect, that future generations of people will benefit” (Campbell, ch. 1). Loving on and striving toward God with one person doesn’t merely change them. It changes everyone they touch. And when they grab hold of Christ and move into deeper relationship with God, they will affect many in their family as well as friends you may never meet.

*Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God,
keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations
of those who love him and keep his commandments.*

Deuteronomy 7:9, NIV

GOD AT WORK

Now, let’s consider this. What if you affect eight people in your lifetime? Only eight. And what if those eight people go forth in their lifetime and affect only eight more. “If that process continues for just five generations, there will be more than one million Christ followers” (Campbell, Getting Started).

ONE MILLION ... ALL BECAUSE YOU MENTORED EIGHT.

How’s that for motivation?

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. How many deep friendships do you currently have? Consider that God has placed one or more people near you that will add to that number. What thoughts or emotions come to mind?

SESSION 4: WHO CAN MENTOR?

IF THIS QUESTION IS CIRCLING IN YOUR HEART AND MIND, can I ask why? Perhaps, deep down, you are thinking you're not cut out for this, so you want a list of qualifications to enable you to check off all the places you fall short. Or maybe the thought of mentoring terrifies you to your core and you want an easy way out. Sorry, you'll not get it from me.

Take a look at the New Testament and you'll find one of the greatest mentors of all time: the apostle Paul. He started multiple churches, challenged his peers, and encouraged younger men to follow their example. But as you think about the qualifications for a good mentor, think back to who Paul was before Christ.

"A zealot. A persecutor. A murderer. Did you include any of those characteristics on your job description for a mentor? Surely not.... Not even the best mentors come close to perfect.... Many mentors are effective precisely because they've navigated tough situations in their lives. Because they've overcome their own regrettable decisions, they can lead others to do the same. Some of the best mentors I know have a deep appreciation for God's forgiving grace because they've experienced it so deeply. They've conquered their pasts through the power of God" (Lawless, p. 43).

**If you're following
God, you're
perfect for the job
at hand.**

Got big mistakes in your life? Skeletons in the closet? Deep regrets? Good. If you've asked for forgiveness, followed God's leading, and strive to grow in Christ, then you're perfect for the job at hand. You must keep in mind that you will fail those you are mentoring just as those who mentor you will fall short. But our tendency to sin never means we have nothing to offer each other.

TYPES OF MENTORS

How many times have you learned something from someone you've never met? Maybe a preacher on the television or a podcast opened your eyes to a new truth, or your heart was touched by a song on the radio. Consider times when someone said something that caught your attention and helped you to think differently about an issue. Maybe it was your pastor during a sermon or a friend's passing comment.

Often, when people discuss mentoring, they think of one-on-one sessions that might include counseling or life coaching. But hopefully you're beginning to see that it's much more than that. In fact, God created mentors as diverse as He did types of leaders. Let's look at a few broad categories.

First are mentors who are easily accessible to all of us. They are the speakers, podcasters, book authors, and songwriters who we never meet or form a relationship with, yet God uses them to teach, guide, heal, and change us.

Next are those who occasionally speak into our lives but aren't around on a regular basis. This includes a counselor who helps you for a season or an older adult whose advice you seek on the big problems you face.

The next level of mentors includes the ones we most frequently think about—the people who dig deep with us for a specified period of time. Usually from six months to one year, these people often follow a set plan to cause us to evaluate our life,

where we want our relationship with God to go, and steps we are accountable to take to move closer to Christ.

While all of these are excellent and should have a place in our lives, it is my prayer that you will participate in the most intense level of mentoring: lifelong friends willing to go deep into your heart and allow you to do the same. This takes time, commitment, and determination. And, in my experience, it takes an openness to be flexible as God may separate you geographically. But imagine the relationship shared by the apostle Paul and Doctor Luke, all they witnessed together and loved each other through.

REMEMBER HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

It is easy to get over-involved with ministry. When people hurt, most of us want to help however we can. But you are not the Holy Spirit, and you must learn to differentiate between what you want and what God asks.

In the introduction to his book *Mentor Like Jesus*, Regi Campbell talks about when he first started mentoring other men. "I was busy. I was also exhausted. I was meeting with guys all over Atlanta ... breakfast, lunch, and dinner. I was serving up advice like Starbucks serves up lattes. I didn't know any better; I was serving the Lord by serving these folks, and God honored that with some spiritual breakthroughs for people here and there. But mostly I was just busy ... spreading myself hopelessly thin trying to be all things to all God's (single) people. Then I heard a speaker (author Tim Elmore who has since become a good friend) make this statement: More time with fewer people equals greater kingdom impact" (Campbell, *Getting Started*).

**You are not
meant to help
everyone.**

Perhaps you've heard of Moses, the man God chose to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. In charge of thousands of men and women, he spent time each day to settle disputes and remind them of God's decrees. When his father-in-law witnessed this, he pulled Moses to the side and said,

*What you are doing is not good.
You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out.
The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone.*
Exodus 18:17-18, NIV

My advice to you is no different. You are not meant to help everyone, only the ones God brings to your heart and mind. And He's not asking you to form deep relationships with all of those people either. Some you will pray for, some you will mentor occasionally, and some you will be involved with for a time. Only a select few will go deep for many years.

Remember, the man Jesus taught thousands. He's affected millions. But he got up close and personal with twelve.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Who are your passive mentors, the ones you don't know in person but learn from? Expand this group by asking at least two other friends or family members who they like to read or listen to.
2. List some of your occasional mentors. What are some things you've learned from them that you can pass on to others?
3. Have you ever had a deep but time-limited mentor, someone who helped you gain traction where you were struggling? In what area did they most help you?
4. List some friends who either are or who you would like to be lifelong mentors. How do you naturally encourage each other in following God? Where might you need to place a greater focus in the future?

SESSION 5: THINGS MENTORS DO

WELCOME BACK! I'M GLAD YOU ARE STILL HERE. If you are like me, then you still have a dozen questions you want answered. While I'll tackle more specific responsibilities and expectations in a couple of weeks, let's talk today about what mentoring looks like from a practical standpoint. Outside of all the theory and Scriptural references, what might mentoring look like for your everyday life?

Well, first, a mentor follows Jesus. That may seem obvious, but take a few moments to consider how much of a priority God takes in your own life. Are you more like Jesus today than you were one year ago? Are you growing in faith, trust, prayer, relationships, and knowledge of God? Is the Bible important to you, and does your life show that? Often we quickly say the right answer—Yes, Jesus is a high priority for me—but our life doesn't show it. Take the time to get quiet with God and ask if you are moving closer to Him or farther away. Then, ask what He wants you to change.

"It's impossible to be a disciple or a follower of someone and not end up like that person. Jesus said, *A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher* (Luke 6:40). That's the whole point of being a disciple of Jesus: we imitate Him, carry on His ministry, and become like Him in the process. Yet somehow many have come to believe that a person can be a 'Christian' without being like Christ. A 'follower' who doesn't follow. How does that make any sense?" (Chan, p. 16).

Ask God what He wants you to change.

Second, note that "Jesus tailored His message ... His answer ... to the needs of the asker" (Campbell, ch. 2). This requires good listening skills and a bit of inductive reasoning, because many of those you will work with are not good at communicating what they need. Sometimes, they don't even recognize the need themselves. An overwhelmed mother may think she needs more time in the day when she really needs to learn to say no. A scatterbrained college student may think he needs to take a semester off from meeting with you when he really needs time management skills.

FOUNDATIONAL WAYS TO MENTOR

In tailoring the message to the person in front of you, some principles will be universal. In Titus chapter 2, the apostle Paul provides an excellent list:

- Promote the kind of living that reflects wholesome teaching
- Teach the exercise of self-control
- Be worthy of respect
- Live wisely
- Possess a sound faith
- Be filled with love and patience
- Do not slander others
- Do not be a heavy drinker

- Teach what is good
- Train spouses to love each other and their children
- Be pure
- Do good works of every kind
- Be submissive
- Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching
- Teach truth
- Obey your masters and do your best to please them
- Do not talk back
- Do not steal
- Show yourselves trustworthy and good
- Turn from godless living and sinful pleasures
- Live with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God
- Look forward with hope to that wonderful day when God's glory will be revealed

Before you run for the hills, recognize that this is the goal. Some days will be difficult, and you will fall short of this ideal standard. God knows it, but He doesn't release you from His command to do it. It is not your responsibility to perfectly obey and teach those around you to perfectly obey. That's a legalistic trap that will keep you from a close relationship with God.

Instead, love God and then love people. "The real focus is not on teaching people at all—the focus is on loving them. Jesus's call to make disciples includes teaching people to be obedient followers of Jesus, but the teaching isn't the end goal. Ultimately, it's all about being faithful to God's call to love the people around you. It's about loving those people enough to help them see their need to love and obey God. It's about bringing them to the Savior and allowing Him to set them free from the power of sin and death and transform them into loving followers of Jesus Christ" (Chan, p. 44).

**Love God.
Then love
people.**

MENTORING IN DAILY LIFE

What does this practically look like? Outside of encouraging those around you to get involved at church, read the Bible, memorize Scripture, and talk to God, it means you learn more about relating to and communicating with people. It might mean you help a family create and stick to a budget, or help them navigate the crazy waters of insurance. Maybe you go look at a couple of houses with someone to help them determine which one to buy, or you labor to pack up a house or load and unload a moving truck.

Maybe you show up at the hospital when someone faces surgery, or you attend his kid's high school football game and cheer from the stands. You could be an accountability partner as she battles addiction or meet up for ice cream when he

SESSION 6: WHY ME?

WHY SHOULD *YOU* MENTOR, as in you specifically? And how long do you have to do this? Let's change the focus a bit to get to the heart of those questions. What dream fuels you, gets you out of bed every morning and through the grueling workday grind? Where do you hope to be in twenty or thirty or forty years? Now, consider this: Does your dream line up with God's?

In his book, *Don't Waste Your Life*, John Piper writes,

Consider a story in the February 1998 edition of the *Readers Digest*, which tells about a couple who “took early retirement from their jobs in the Northeast when he was 59 and she was 51. Now they live in Punta Gorda, Florida, where they cruise on their 30-foot trawler, play softball, and collect shells.” At first, when I read it I thought it might be a joke. A spoof on the American dream. But it wasn't. Tragically, this was the dream: Come to the end of your life — your one and only precious, God-given life — and let the last great work of your life, before you give an account to your Creator, be this: playing softball and collecting shells. Picture them before Christ at the great Day of Judgment. “Look, Lord. See my shells.” That is a tragedy. And people are spending billions of dollars to persuade you to embrace that tragic dream. Over against that, I put my protest: Don't buy it. Don't waste your life.⁷

“As Christians, when we accept the Father's offer of salvation through Jesus, we get life ... eternal life. We get a life of peace while we finish out our days here on Earth. But if we want the second part, ‘and have [life] to the full’ [John 10:10], we have to move beyond the gift of our salvation. We have to want more. To get involved in the cause Jesus started ... the cause of redemption. We have to become others-focused. To start thinking outside our own little world and ask God: ‘How can I help? What would You have me do? I know my purpose is to bring glory to You, but how would You have me do that?’” (Campbell, ch. 1).

Pastor and teacher Francis Chan echoes this sentiment in his book *Multiply*. “Making disciples is far more than a program. It is the mission of our lives. It defines us. A disciple is a disciple maker.... Following Jesus means that you will be teaching other people to follow Jesus” (Chan, p. 31, 35).

Jesus said in Matthew 5,

You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father
Verses 14–15, NLT

Following Jesus means that you will be teaching other people to follow Jesus.

Francis Chan

⁷ John Piper, *Don't Waste Your Life* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 45-46.

BUT THE WORLD DOESN'T WANT JESUS

What does this mean in our modern era of people who are easily offended and hostile to the truth of the Bible? “Our focus is not inward. We live in the midst of a threatening environment, but we are more like a lighthouse than a bomb shelter. We are not called to hide from trouble but to guide others through it” (Chan, p. 66).

The world wants us to keep our mouths shut and live quietly apart from them. But “part of what the church of God (as the people of God) must do is show a better way.”⁸ That seems an insurmountable task. Pressures weigh on us and issues divide us. But, what if it didn't have to be that way? What if history proves the church can do more than we currently are?

“About 350 years after Christ, the Roman emperor Julian (AD 332–363) wanted to reinstitute faithfulness to the pagan religions of Rome but struggled because

**You do not know
what a stream of
salvation you may
set in motion.**

Dwight L. Moody

Christians were doing such good things for people, even strangers, that they rendered the Roman gods irrelevant” (Campbell, ch. 1). Can you picture it? What if your obedience is all that is required to make our modern pagan gods irrelevant to your next-door neighbor or the family who sits behind you at church? We should also consider it from the opposite side. What if your disobedience reinforces our modern pagan gods?

“A life well lived according to the will of God, a life that loves neighbor as self, is what attracts those seeking a better way.”⁹ The apostle Paul wrote it this way:

I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

Ephesians 4:1–3

Why should *you* mentor? Because God calls you to it. How long should it be part of your life? God never releases you from that call this side of heaven. Let your mind wander with the possibilities of what He can do with your life completely surrendered to Him. “No matter how weak you are, God can use you, and you do not know what a stream of salvation you may set in motion” (Moody, p. 139).

⁸ Ed Stetzer and Eric Geiger, *Transformational Groups: Creating a New Scorecard for Groups* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 2.

⁹ Alex McFarland and Jason Jimenez, *Abandoned Faith: Why Millennials Are Walking Away and How You Can Lead Them Home* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2017), 60.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. How did this session affect your dreams for the future? Are you reconsidering what you once held dear or modifying it in some way?
2. What if your obedience is all that is required to make our modern pagan gods irrelevant to your next-door neighbor or the family who sits behind you at church? What are you willing to do or sacrifice to make that reality?
3. What thoughts or feelings emerge from this quote from Dwight L. Moody?
“No matter how weak you are, God can use you, and you do not know what a stream of salvation you may set in motion.”
4. This week, pray for the people God is bringing to mind for you to mentor. Ask Him to make it obvious who He wants you to draw close and to give you great wisdom on how best to love them.

SESSION 7: MENTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

IN THIS SESSION WE'RE GOING TO START getting more practical. So far, I've given you lots of broad strokes and foundational principles, the reasons why this is not merely a good idea but something every Christian should engage in. Now, let's discuss four of the most common issues and concerns about your responsibilities as a mentor.

DO I WAIT FOR PEOPLE TO COME TO ME? OR DO I HAVE TO GO FIND PEOPLE TO MENTOR?

Yes. God works both ways. Gordon Bamberg, my pastor in my early 20s, operated under a simple philosophy: *God knows where I am. All I have to do is be available.* That is beautiful in its simplicity and takes some of the pressure off when it comes to ministry. Over the years, a few women approached me to ask if I would mentor them. Each time, I knew this was God bringing me someone I wanted to love well, so it was an easy yes.

However, I've also experienced God laying a person on my heart that I needed to approach. Sometimes it was not a person I desired to get into a deep relationship with, but I knew it was God bringing them to mind. As I looked at the New Testament, I saw that "Jesus initiated the mentoring relationship with His disciples. He approached them. He chose them. In Mark 3:13–14 (NIV), we're told *Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach.* Everything He did was about His agenda, not theirs" (Campbell, ch. 9).

This isn't always comfortable, and it's not always highly successful. Remember Judas's rejection of Jesus? Some of the people I've approached for deeper relationships stuck around for a long time. Others, not so much. But this is not your primary concern. As Regi Campbell says in *Mentor Like Jesus*, "I'm only responsible for being what I am, doing what the Lord asked me to do, and using the gifts, talents, and experiences He's placed in me" (Campbell, ch. 1). Leave the rest to God.

God must be the master of these decisions.

HOW MANY DO I PICK? HOW CAN I PICK SOME AND NOT OTHERS?

God must be the master of this decision, which also means He is ultimately the one choosing who gets to be a deep part of your life and who doesn't. But understand that how He guides you today may not be how He guides you a year from now. When I first started mentoring, it was one-on-one. As I write this chapter, I'm part of a small group of five where I'm guiding them to encourage and challenge me as much as I encourage and challenge them.

Some of you will struggle more with feelings of excluding others. At different times, this will be easier or harder on all of you than it is today. As a mentor, one of

your responsibilities is dealing “with the reality that I didn’t pick others. That’s tough, particularly in light of the church’s penchant toward ‘more, more, more’” (Campbell, ch. 4).

But remember, “Mentoring is an opportunity to stretch and grow with another person” (Edwards, p. 84). On this earth, every one of us has a limited ability to stretch and grow in healthy ways.

WHAT DOES THIS REALLY LOOK LIKE? IS IT REALLY JUST HELPING PEOPLE MOVE AND SHOWING UP FOR CRISES?

Well, sort of. I listed out numerous suggestions in the last chapter of both spiritual and practical things mentors do. But let God and those you are mentoring lead you. “A relational environment meets spiritual needs, but it also meets physical needs as well. That was part of what attracted others to the disciples in the book of Acts.

Go walk with people.

Mike Denehey

People outside the church witnessed a caring community that did more than talk. They shared their possessions, time, and energy in meeting the needs of each other” (Putnam, p. 107).

Tenth Avenue North’s lead singer Mike Donehey says, “I take Jesus’s command, *Go and make disciples*, to mean ‘Go walk with people. Wherever you are, whatever you’re doing, be available to the people in your life. Walk with them step by step until they begin to see how much I love them and learn how to remain in Me.’”¹⁰

BUT I’M NOT PERFECT. I MEAN, I’VE DONE SOME STUFF.

Yep, I get it. And the more shame you feel over that stuff, the more hesitant you likely will be about this. But keep in mind, “Stepping into the role of guide doesn’t mean we are perfect people; it means that we are familiar with the path ahead and the possible pitfalls along the way. We accompany the new traveler through unknown territory, point out safe routes, warn of dangerous detours, offer helpful information, and apply first aid if necessary” (Edwards, p. 86).

How much you share about your past depends on a lot of factors, including how much healing you’ve received and if those you are attempting to lead are ready to hear it. But let me assure you that when I dare to tell others about my own shortfalls and bad decisions, it never brings condemnation from those who need to hear it. “Instead of losing credibility, you gain stronger standing when you share honestly about your life” (Edwards, p. 125). Satan doesn’t want you to accept that, but it’s truth.

¹⁰ Mike Donehey, *Finding God’s Life for My Will: His Presence Is the Plan* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2019), 218.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. How difficult is it for you to consider excluding or not choosing some from those you will mentor? Why do you think this is?
2. Read 1 John 3:16–20. Put these verses into your own words.
3. Do bad decisions in your past haunt you? Are you hesitant to share some things, even if you think it may be beneficial to another? What do you think God is asking you to do with this knowledge?
4. This week, continue to pray for the people God wants you to mentor. Does anything specific come to mind? Is the Holy Spirit bringing to mind any bad habits or character issues you've witnessed, suspected, or heard about from others?

SESSION 8: LAYING OUT EXPECTATIONS

AUTHOR AND TEACHER DAVE RAMSEY HAS A SAYING: “To be unclear is to be unkind.” Most relationships go better when everyone involved understands everyone else’s expectations. Those who won’t abide or can’t commit to mentoring for whatever reason will say so more quickly with less hurt feelings all the way around if you discuss up front what you expect from those you work with.

WHAT KIND OF THINGS SHOULD I DECIDE AHEAD OF TIME?

While praying for your mentoring relationships, think about how God made you. Do you work best in a more or less formal environment, with set agendas or relaxed overarching goals? For the more disciplined among us, some flexibility is wise for those times when someone’s life is falling apart. For the more spontaneous, a set of goals to prod you into achieving something is best. Keep in mind, this is neither a lecture series nor a casual friendship.

This is neither a lecture series nor a casual friendship.

When do you want to meet, and how often? What fits well into your calendar? How often can someone miss a meeting and still participate? Remember, not only do you need to clear time in your calendar, so will the people you mentor, and some will not be as committed as you need them to be.

Additionally, consider how you best communicate (phone, email, text) and the ways you are willing to communicate (say, if someone else hates the phone or doesn’t check email regularly). How often do you want to be able to check in with each other, and how are you going to do that? The small group I mentioned meets every other Monday for two hours, but we have a private message group on a social media platform that allows us to talk as much as we want to between meetings.

WHICH IS BETTER? ONE-ON-ONE OR A SMALL GROUP? AND IF A GROUP, HOW MANY?

Well, that depends upon what God is asking you to do and what those around you need. Follow His lead first. But also consider that perhaps this isn’t one of those questions that must be either/or but rather both. Think back to Jesus, our ultimate example. He taught in large groups while mentoring a group of twelve, going even deeper with three: Peter, James, and John.

Additionally, within a group, your relationship isn’t with the group itself but with individual members of that group and each of them with you and with each other. In other words, even in mentoring a small group, you mentor individually. And as the members get to know and trust each other, they’ll begin to reach out and encourage (mentor) each other without you.

Groups inherently include impressive advantages. First, one of the big worries among potential mentors is not having all the answers. In a group, whenever you are stumped, you can look at the others and ask what they think. “Not only does

[the mentor] get himself off the hook for knowing everything, but he allows the mentees to exercise their ability to give advice in a nonthreatening, non-preachy way” (Campbell, ch. 3).

“Another dimension to mentoring in a group is the peer pressure the guys in the group put on one another. Because I make a big deal about being on time, there’s an uproar when someone shows up a few minutes late. The guys chastise the late guy big time ... I don’t have to say a thing” (Campbell, ch. 3).

**The smaller I’ve allowed
my group to go,
the more individuals
are willing to open up.**

But remember, small is key to a mentoring group “so each person can be known. When our motives are exposed, our lives can be challenged, encouraged, and developed” (Putnam, p. 67). The bigger the group, the less real communication happens between members and the more they will ask you for individual time. The smaller I’ve allowed my group to go, the more individuals are willing to open up and share what is going on within their hearts and homes, the better we’ve been able to hold each other accountable for what we know God is asking. “Authenticity and accountability are necessary for growth. It’s difficult—if not impossible—to grow spiritually without both” (Putnam, p. 98).

ARE MENTORING GROUPS TRULY SUPERIOR TO SUNDAY SCHOOL OR SMALL GROUPS?

A valid question. We’ve already discussed in other sessions why mentoring is biblical, and while small groups or Sunday school classes can emulate some of what mentoring relationships are about, you must remember that the key difference is purpose. Sunday school classes teach. Small groups serve a variety of functions depending upon the leader. However, for a purposeful mentoring group, “the mentor is the embodiment of the Christian life, observable and accessible to the mentee. While anything but perfect, the life of the mentor transparently exposed and fully committed, shows the [other person] a real-life example of what a fully-alive Jesus-follower is like and what it *can be for him* if he goes all-in. In a mentoring group, guys see glimpses of Jesus in all the other guys too. A composite begins to emerge ... a way to believe, behave, and belong” (Campbell, ch. 1).

WHAT EXPECTATIONS DO I LAY ON OTHERS TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE MENTORING HAPPENS?

Practically, communicate that if a person agrees to participate, he must show up to meetings. If you are reading a book or working through a study together, he must do the assigned homework. Allow grace for family emergencies and the occasional overwhelming week, but discuss what qualifies in those categories.

Within meetings, safe environments include “compassion, praying for one another, a spirit of gentleness, an awareness of your own vulnerability, restoration of those caught in sin, and bearing one another’s burdens” (Putnam, p. 99). You’ll likely hear some things that break your heart, possibly things that you can’t

SESSION 9: ARMOR FOR THE BATTLE

“IF YOU CHOOSE TO BE A CHRISTIAN MENTOR, you’ll wear a bull’s-eye on your back for Satan’s attacks. If he can seriously wound the mentor, those who follow will bear the scars of that fall” (Lawless, p. 20). Our enemy does not like deep, Christian relationships. He knows they propel the gospel’s roots so far into a person’s heart and mind that he becomes an imposing force on the Kingdom battlefield.

Many Christians are at least somewhat familiar with the spiritual armor listed by Paul in Ephesians 6. However, fewer understand the imagery. When Paul wrote this passage, he was a prisoner in Rome watching soldiers every day. Let’s look closer at the weapons at our disposal. This will be short, so I recommend two books in Additional Resources.

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.
Put on the full armor of God,
so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.
For our struggle is not against flesh and blood,
but against the rulers, against the authorities,
against the powers of this dark world
and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
Therefore put on the full armor of God,
so that when the day of evil comes,
you may be able to stand your ground,
and after you have done everything, to stand.*
Ephesians 6:10–13, NIV

STAND FIRM THEN, WITH THE BELT OF TRUTH BUCKLED AROUND YOUR WAIST (v. 14, NIV)

“The loincloth was the least attractive ... piece of armor” (Renner, p. 261). Yet, it was vital as “it held all the pieces of his armor together.... The Roman soldier’s shield was attached to the loincloth. If he had no loincloth, he had no place to hang his sword ... nothing for his lance to rest upon ... nothing to keep his breastplate from flapping in the wind” (Renner, p. 262).

Our belt of truth is the written Word of God. “The enemy’s overarching device is deception. He shades reality with enticing and alluring colors, seducing us away from black-and-white principles.... His packaging is so clever that unless we know what’s true—I mean *really know it*, know it at our core—we easily fall prey to his ploys” (Shirer, p. 43).

WITH THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IN PLACE (v. 14, NIV)

In contrast, “The breastplate was the ... most glamorous piece of weaponry that the Roman soldier possessed” (Renner, p. 292). Designed to protect the soldier’s heart and core, the massive pieces of metal were comprised of smaller pieces like fish scales. As the soldier moved, those pieces rubbed against each other, “causing

each piece to develop a beautiful luster” (Renner, 293) that dazzled on a sunny day. Imagine the blinding spectacle of a legion.

Our breastplate of righteousness worn daily protects our heart. But don't negate the symbolism: the more we use it, the greater its brilliance, turning it into an offensive weapon that blinds and repels the enemy.

AND WITH YOUR FEET FITTED WITH THE READINESS THAT COMES FROM THE GOSPEL OF PEACE (v. 15, NIV)

Think shoes of peace are only defensive? Satan is “always out to steal your peace” (Shirer, p. 96). And the better you wear this gift from your heavenly Father, the better you will stand firm in a “deeply entrenched sense of harmony, health, and wholeness in the midst of chaos” (Shirer, pp. 98–99).

However, the Roman soldier's shoes were equipped to guard their peace in battle with one to three inch metal spikes! Soldiers could either stomp firmly down on the turf, securing their stand as they fought, or they could stomp down on an enemy, crushing him under their feet. Calls to mind Romans 16:20, *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet* (NIV).

IN ADDITION TO ALL THIS, TAKE UP THE SHIELD OF FAITH, WITH WHICH YOU CAN EXTINGUISH ALL THE FLAMING ARROWS OF THE EVIL ONE (v. 16, NIV)

The word Paul uses here refers to the Roman battle shield, “used by the Greeks to refer to *a door that was wide in width and long in length ... just like the door of a house*” (Renner, p. 347). God “has given us enough faith to make certain we are completely covered” (Renner, p. 348).

However, we must pick it up. “Faith is acting like God is telling the truth. The key thought here is action. By definition, faith is not talking about or thinking about or even celebrating God's truth. It is the process of adapting your behavior, your decisions, and ultimately your whole lifestyle so that it accords with what God has asked you to do—without needing to see the evidence that it will all work out in the end” (Shirer, p. 127).

TAKE THE HELMET OF SALVATION (v. 17, NIV)

The Roman soldier's helmet was “a flamboyant piece of weaponry ... highly decorated with all kinds of engravings.... A huge plume of brightly colored feathers or horsehair stood straight up out of the top of the helmet.... The helmets undoubtedly made the Roman soldier noticeable” (Renner, pp. 374-375).

“Your salvation is the ... most ornate gift God ever gave you” (Renner, p. 375). Not only does God offer us “redemption for our sins and escape from its penalty” (Shirer, p. 156), your salvation “protects you from the schemes of the devil. It enables you to lead whole, healthy lives not fractured by the enemy's deceptive strategies” (Shirer, p. 156). Another note, the helmet was “so strong, so massive, and so heavy that nothing could pierce it—not even a hammer or a battleaxe” (Renner, p. 375).

AND THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD (v. 17, NIV)

The Roman soldier had five different swords, but the one indicated here was a “brutal weapon.... Both sides of its blade were razor sharp” (Renner, p. 405), and “the tip of the sword turned upward.... Before a Roman soldier withdrew this particular sword from the gut of his enemy, he would hold his sword very tightly with both hands and give it a wrenching twist inside his enemy’s stomach. This would cause the opponent’s entrails to spill out as the soldier pulled the sword from his enemy’s body” (Renner, p. 406).

Word in this segment refers to the spoken word of God. Remember, though, this sword hung on the loincloth, a beautiful picture indicating God’s spoken word will always flow from and depend upon His written word.

AND PRAY IN THE SPIRIT ON ALL OCCASIONS WITH ALL KINDS OF PRAYERS AND REQUESTS. WITH THIS IN MIND, BE ALERT AND ALWAYS KEEP ON PRAYING FOR ALL THE LORD’S PEOPLE (v. 18, NIV)

Finally, prayer, the weapon that frequently gets overlooked. Lances in the “Roman army varied greatly in size, shape, and length.... The average soldier in the infantry carried five short lances and one long lance” (Renner, pp. 437-438). Different kinds of prayer are necessary for different situations, so don’t fall into the trap of thinking only one kind of prayer is best.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Which piece of armor most appeals to you? Do you naturally reach for it, or does picking it up come from training and discipline?

2. Which piece do you most struggle with—either to understand its purpose, use, or usefulness?

3. Between reading this session and listening to the discussion, what do you most want to remember?

4. As God brings people to mind for mentoring, use your long lance of prayer to intercede for them. Does God bring forth any piece of armor they might need to pick up or use more effectively?

SESSION 10: STUDYING THE BIBLE

“**W**E CANNOT OVERESTIMATE the importance of being thoroughly familiar with the Bible” (Moody, Preface). American evangelist and founder of Moody Publishers Dwight Moody said, “If a man neglects his Bible, he may pray and ask God to use him in His work, but God cannot use him, for there is not much for the Holy Spirit to work upon” (Moody, p. 2).

Consistent Bible study breeds a plethora of benefits. Psalm 119:165 (NLT) says, *Those who love your instructions have great peace and do not stumble.* “Take those Christians who are rooted and grounded in the Word of God, and you will find they have great peace” (Moody, p. 8). Have you ever noticed how those familiar with the Bible exude a quiet confidence and the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23)? Mr. Moody also wrote that as we feed on the Word of God, we grow “in grace the entire time, and others will notice the change in our walk and conversation. So few Christians grow, because so few study” (Moody, p. 4).

HOW DO I STUDY THE BIBLE?

We know we should *read* God’s Word, but is that enough? When someone says *study the Bible*, memories of college spring forth, all-night study sessions and nightmarish tests. Who wants to do *that*? So we set our Bible on the table nearby and live with the guilt of not picking it up. Let’s adjust our thinking.

“Bible study begins with reading it” (MacArthur, p. 107). And don’t be afraid to try different methods. For example, I learn best when I read for myself with my eyes; however, I’ve found value in listening to the Bible as I do chores. While it doesn’t sink in as well, the ability to get more of it on a regular basis makes up for that.

Bible study begins with reading it.

John MacArthur

Does my mind ever wander? Absolutely—whether I’m reading with my eyes or listening with my ears. While we should strive to focus on the words and message of Scripture, don’t negate the benefits of reading or listening even when distracted. How many songs have caught your attention as they played in the background?

DO I NEED TO FOLLOW A PLAN?

Yes, but maybe not in the way you think. “In order to study the Bible we must be diligent. We can’t study Scripture in a haphazard way—there has to be a commitment to it” (MacArthur, p. 88). What does that look like? However you and God decide it should.

Pastor John MacArthur recommends reading through the Old Testament each year to build your comprehension as well as a different New Testament book each month. The Greek language of the New Testament is more complex than the Hebrew of the Old Testament. “For this reason we need a greater diligence in studying the New Testament” (MacArthur, p. 110). In seminary, he’d pick a book of the New Testament, and read it every day for one month. Longer books he might

break up into three segments, reading the first part every day for the first ten days, the second part for the second ten days, and the final part for the last ten days. “If you push through and just stick with it for thirty days, you’ll have a tremendous comprehension” (MacArthur, p. 111).

THAT SOUNDS LIKE JUST READING THE BIBLE. ISN’T THERE MORE?

Yes. Most definitely. But developing the habit of reading is an important first step. Don’t ignore it. As you dig in, begin to read “as if you were seeking for something of value” (Moody, p. 54). Past that, you can try different methods of study, but don’t get discouraged if one or more feel laborious or boring. “If you don’t keep up your interest in one way, try another. Just keep reading” the Bible (Moody, p. 104). Mr. Moody’s suggestions include:

1. “Two opposite ways to study the Bible. One way is to study it with a telescope, taking a grand sweep of a whole book and trying to find out God’s plan in it. The other way is to study it with a microscope, taking up a verse at a time, dissecting and analyzing it” (Moody, p. 67).
2. “Take five great divisions: History, Type, Prophecy, Miracle, and Parable. It is a very interesting thing to study the types of the Bible. A type is a representation of one thing that represents something else. For example, a sacrificial lamb might be a type, or representation, of Jesus” (Moody, p. 101).
3. “Study Bible characters; take them right from the cradle to the grave” (Moody, p. 104).
4. “Sometimes it is good to study just one topic from the Bible. I once studied the word love, and I spent many weeks studying the passages in which it occurs, until at last I could not help loving people” (Moody, p. 105).
5. “Take one word and follow it up with the help of a concordance, or take just one word that runs through a book” (Moody, p. 117).

**If you don’t keep
up your interest in
one way, try
another.**

Dwight L. Moody

WHAT ABOUT DEVOTIONS, COMMENTARIES, AND OTHER REFERENCE BOOKS?

While they all have value, they are not God’s Word. “Read the Bible itself; do not spend all your time on commentaries and helps. If a man spent all his time reading up on the chemical constituents of bread and milk, he would soon starve. Devotional books can be helpful too, but do not think that a devotional book can replace your time in the Word of God” (Moody, p. 61).

However, keep in mind that we live and think differently today than people did in Bible times. To better understand what God says, investigate the culture, the language, the geography, and the history. You will find helpful reference tools listed in Additional Resources.

SESSION 11: POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

“**R**ICK WARREN, IN A CATALYST CONFERENCE TALK, said, ‘The church has amputated its hands and its feet, and all that’s left is its mouth. We talk about serving, but in large part we serve the institution of the church. We serve each other within the church ... and that’s about it’” (Campbell, ch. 1).

Why is this the reality for many churches? Because serving each other outside of the church is hard. “Sometimes ministry is like herding cats, messy and ambivalent” (Edwards, p. 139). Longtime mentor Regi Campbell says, “You can get dirty mentoring people. They bring real issues to the table. And those issues require mentors to get personal, transparent, and exposed” (Campbell, ch. 1).

No one can adequately prepare you for some of the concerns you will hear. However, some of them are predictable. Here are six.

MY WAY IS THE RIGHT WAY

Some personalities lean this way, but each generation also believes it. Some of the biggest problems in the church occur when a younger pastor wants an established (aka older) congregation to update its worship or seating or décor. “Each generation believes its way of thinking and being is the right way to live” (Edwards, p. 25). If you have a variety of ages or cultures within your mentoring group, listen for this and be prepared to discuss it openly.

TUTORING OR LECTURING RATHER THAN MENTORING

This is an easy one to fall into because teaching is easier than mentoring—at least in the short term. “At times the mentee just listens and learns, but a mentor’s role isn’t simply giving answers. He or she should help a mentee figure out an answer. It’s the difference in the old adage between giving a hungry man a fish and teaching him how to fish.... Mentoring should lead to independence from the mentor and dependence on God” (Lawless, p. 91).

REFUSING TO CONFRONT/DEAL WITH PROBLEMS

I hate confrontation, and I prefer to avoid it whenever possible. However, this tendency will stifle your relationships and your ability to grow and affect others.

The Bible demands that we be willing to confront one another when our lives are marred by sin.

Chuck Lawless

“Although a mentor needs to listen well, he or she must also be willing to confront a mentee if the situation warrants it. To do anything less is uncaring. The Bible demands that we be willing to confront one another when our lives are marred by sin” (Lawless, p. 92). Read how God wants us to do this in Matthew 18:15–16. If that process does not work, make an appointment to discuss the matter with a pastor or mentor.

JEALOUSY

You may struggle when someone you mentor begins to do better than you in some area. “As much as we want to respond differently, our self-centeredness becomes apparent when someone we know grows beyond us and is recognized accordingly” (Lawless, p. 94).

Additionally, those within your group may fight jealousy of one another. The Bible describes two interesting circumstances between Jesus’s disciples in Matthew 20:20–28 and Mark 9:33–38. “The kind of pettiness and jealousy we see among the disciples, we can observe in ourselves. And the result is the same for both—anger and broken relationships” (Lawless, p. 94).

PEDESTAL LETDOWNS

“Mentoring demands sharing along-the-way time, and time spent together opens the door to seeing each other’s faults. The more time you spend with a person, the more likely you’ll see his or her sin,” or they’ll see yours (Lawless, p. 95). When this happens, the one who saw the sin may feel letdown, betrayed, or confused while the one who sinned feels vulnerable and shame. Fight the tendency to back away from your relationships in these moments.

CHOOSING NOT TO MULTIPLY

The entire purpose of mentoring is to raise up men and women who will leave us. Perhaps not forever or entirely, but your time together should grow and change. Much like a parent-child relationship, those you mentor are designed to move on. Sometimes the mentor fights against this, and sometimes the mentee does. Occasionally, the mentor doesn’t teach the necessity and blessing of investing in others, or perhaps the mentee believes the cost is too high.

The entire purpose of mentoring is to raise up men and women who will leave us.

“One solution to this problem is for a mentor to talk about this eventual goal early in the relationship” (Lawless, p. 96). And recognize that just because they move on doesn’t mean your friendship ends. Longtime mentor Chuck Lawless works to “serve as a sounding board and resource for my mentee as he moves toward investing in the next generation” (Lawless, p. 97).

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Which of the listed issues concern you the most? Why?

SESSION 12: DIFFERING PERSONALITIES AND LOVE LANGUAGES

LIKE IT OR NOT, GOD CREATED US TO NEED EACH OTHER (Psalm 133:1, 1 Corinthians 12). Each of our personalities and love languages influence how we act and react. We know in our heads that God created us differently, yet we can struggle to accept others the way God made them. Let's talk about personalities first. Some use different names, but personalities boil down to four main categories: sanguine, choleric, melancholy, and phlegmatic.

THE EXTROVERTS: SANGUINES AND CHOLERIC

Sanguines and choleric are active, outgoing people, the ones who must be busy. Sanguines are the popular ones who love parties. They are talkers, and never let facts get in the way of a good story. They can seem unorganized or scatterbrained, but this is because God created them with a love for people. Relationships control sanguines, not details.

Choleric, on the other hand, are powerful. They must find someone to lead. While they come across as bossy or arrogant, they want to make sure tasks are done correctly! Choleric love to work, and while they are not overly emotional people, if they think they can't win, they may try simply to prove they can. Very strong-willed, they are goal-oriented, live independently, and exude confidence.

Sanguines and choleric are active, outgoing, busy people.

Emotionally, sanguines are like children who never grow up. They need attention and acceptance. If they don't get uncompromised approval, they will not try something again. They measure their self-worth by how many people love them. In contrast, choleric are so controlling of their emotions that they are underdeveloped. They thrive on opposition and excel in emergencies but can be domineering and impatient. Choleric measure their self-worth by how much work they accomplish.

THE INTROVERTS: MELANCHOLICS AND PHLEGMATICS

Melancholic and phlegmatic are restful people. With a tendency toward passiveness, they enjoy the sidelines, watching others rush about life.

I am very melancholy, which means I am detailed and scheduled. In addition to my endless lists, I like to plan and research. Every job is analyzed so a task will be done perfectly the first time. Melancholic can spend hours in silence thinking and rarely answer questions with a simple yes or no.

Melancholic and phlegmatic are restful people with a tendency toward passiveness.

Phlegmatic want peace and will sacrifice personal desires in favor of letting others make decisions. They are easy-going people who prefer things calm, cool, and collected and will go out of their way not to make

problems for anyone.

Emotionally, melancholics are mature, recognizing the difference between similar emotions like anger and fury. They make friends cautiously but become fiercely loyal. They tend to be both self-sacrificing and idealistic, combining the reality of problems with the optimistic hope that others will change. Melancholics tend to measure their self-worth by how well they complete a task. On the other hand, phlegmatics keep their emotions hidden. They tend to be sympathetic listeners and do not get upset easily. They have many friends, and are generally unconcerned about things going wrong. More than anything else, they need to know they have value.

Between God's design and our environment growing up, we tend to reach adulthood with a blend of two or three of the personalities. Each blend is designed and given by God, which means that each one is a precious gift.

THE FIVE LOVE LANGUAGES

Love Language is a term coined by author and Christian marriage counselor Gary Chapman. He recognized that different people express and receive love in five different ways. These differentiations can cause as much frustration as standing in a foreign airport with no one who speaks your language. I highly recommend you read Dr. Chapman's book on this, *The Five Love Languages*¹¹, but I'll summarize the five types for your convenience.

Each blend—of personalities and love languages—is designed and given by God, which means that each one is a precious gift.

First is Words of Affirmation. If you are a person who speaks this language, loving words are very important in order for your heart to feel loved. You thrive on compliments and words of encouragement from people. When someone speaks kindly to you or writes you a note, you immediately feel like that person loves and appreciates you, but when anyone speaks harshly toward you or is unkind in their comments, you feel crushed. You can feel hurt just because someone fails to acknowledge you with their words. Words of Affirmation people have to be careful not to place too much emphasis on the opinions of others in their lives.

The second is Quality Time. People who operate in this language need full, focused attention, to have time set aside through quality conversation or sharing an activity. Becoming a good listener is vital to giving focused attention. Trying to listen while reading the paper, watching TV, or talking over the children's heads is the surest way to tell them you aren't interested in spending time with them. And to them, that says that you don't love them.

Third is Receiving Gifts. This one seems self-explanatory, but the key is that gifts are visual symbols of love. The cost of the gift is typically immaterial. In fact, they would probably be more excited to receive a homemade gift that they knew required more effort on your part to produce.

Next is Acts of Service. A person who speaks this language has the heart of a

¹¹ Gary Chapman, *The Five Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts* (Chicago: Northfield Publishing, 2015).

SESSION 13: CONFLICT RESOLUTION

REGARDLESS OF YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT CONFRONTATION, most of us could improve how we handle conflict. Remember, our goal is to grow deeper with people, not be right. And sometimes, that's hard. Arduous. Exhausting.

First, recognize that disagreements are normal, even good! When it comes to marriage, Dr. Les Parrott, a clinical psychologist, and his wife Leslie, a marriage and family therapist, say, "Conflict is the price smart couples pay for a deepening sense of intimacy. Conflict helps us peel away the superficial layers of a relationship and discover who we really are."¹²

The key to doing this well is to fight productively, becoming more like Christ and fulfilling God's purposes in the process. When a battleground lies before you, try these seven steps.

STEP 1: BREATHE.

*I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart.
And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give.
So don't be troubled or afraid.*

John 14:27, NLT

First, get everyone involved to take a breath. You may need to interrupt someone or get in another's face long enough to gain his attention. In most arguments, emotions and blood pressures rise while relational skills fly out the nearest exit. Forcing everyone to take a deep breath will restore a level of calm and help everyone regain perspective.

STEP 2: REMEMBER WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT.

*Your love for one another will prove to the world
that you are my disciples.*

John 13:35, NLT

What's the ultimate point? Relationship. God's goal for us and your goal for your mentee(s) is relationship. Whatever issue is presently before you is secondary. Yes, it may be important, but remind everyone that if you get to the end of the argument and you've lost each other, you messed up. Understand that this doesn't mean you'll always agree on the issue at hand, but you can disagree on many things and still love each other well.

¹² L. Parrott and Leslie Parrott, "Learn to Fight Fair," *Focus on the Family*, February 23, 2016. focusonthefamily.com/marriage/learn-to-fight-fair

STEP 3: CONSIDER WHAT YOU'VE ALREADY LEARNED IN THIS COURSE.

*Since everything God created is good,
we should not reject any of it but receive it with thanks.*
1 Timothy 4:4, NLT

Personality conflicts create many problems between people. Perhaps a choleric (I'm right!) disagrees with a melancholy (I'm perfect!). Or a sanguine (More people!) wants to serve, while a melancholy (Less people!) wants to dive deep into the Bible, and the phlegmatic (Let's not fight!) refuses to offer an opinion.

What about love languages? Does someone not feel loved by the group because you've not discovered, they haven't shared, or no one is speaking their love language? Perhaps you or another in the group has been in crisis, which easily lends to neglecting others.

And don't forget spiritual attacks. Remember, Satan likes to mess with deep relationships, and anyone not wearing his spiritual armor provides an easy target.

STEP 4: CHECK TO SEE IF SIN CROUCHES AT THE DOOR.

*"Why are you so angry?" the Lord asked Cain.
"Why do you look so dejected?
You will be accepted if you do what is right.
But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out!
Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you.
But you must subdue it and be its master."
Genesis 4:6-7, NLT*

Most of us cringe when someone confronts sin in our lives, and a fear or shame-filled attack is common. It takes maturity to accept responsibility, and sometimes even a mature Christian will give an ungodly, emotional response before you see evidence of repentance. But you are never responsible for the other person's response—only your own. Whether you are the one being confronted or the one doing the confronting, strive to keep the Cross in the forefront of your thoughts. Jesus's sacrifice and God's great love can break through the pride that keeps us enslaved to sin.

STEP 5: THINK FROM THE OTHER PERSON'S PERSPECTIVE.

Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.
Romans 12:18, NLT

When emotions are high, this difficult step can make a tremendous difference. Drs. Les and Leslie point out, "We assume we know what [the other person] is experiencing. We don't. Everyone interprets life from a composite of unique insights and perceptions."¹³ They recommend we ask two questions:

¹³ Parrott and Parrott, "Learn to Fight Fair," *Focus on the Family*.

1. What does this situation look and feel like from his perspective?
2. How is his perspective different from mine?

“Accurately understanding [the other person’s] hurts and hopes will change you. Once you consciously feel his or her feelings and understand his or her perspective, you will see the world differently. And in the majority of cases, empathy is enough to bring ... conflict to a screeching halt.”¹²

STEP 6: OFFER AND RECEIVE FORGIVENESS.

Forgive us our sins as we have forgiven those who sin against us.
Matthew 6:12, NLT

Although tempting, never miss an opportunity to ask for forgiveness and never negate another’s sincere apology. Author and speaker Corrie ten Boom taught that when we sin, we open ourselves to our enemy’s influence much like a break in a circle allows other things to enter its interior. By asking for and receiving forgiveness, we close the circle, protecting ourselves from Satan’s invasion.

Relating a time when she spoke rudely to a woman, she went to her to ask for forgiveness. “She was embarrassed and tried to pass it off.... She was returning my unkindness with kindness, but that was not what I needed. I needed for her to admit that I was wrong ... and forgive me.... To withhold forgiveness often leaves another person in bondage, unable to close the circle, and thus open to further attacks from Satan. It is as important to forgive as it is to ask forgiveness.”¹⁴

STEP 7: WHAT NOW?

Always try to do good to each other and to all people.
1 Thessalonians 5:15, NLT

Decide upon a plan forward to restore the relationship. Sometimes, this is easy. Men shake hands and move on without another thought. Women go out for ice cream and share a few giggles after the tears. But other times, this requires focused attention, so consider what can be done to promote healing and restoration.

A CAUTION

This session was written with the mindset that the problem occurred between two or more Christians striving to follow Christ. They acknowledge their sin or part in the pain, at least within a short time frame from the moment of offense, and earnestly want to (re)build a healthy relationship with all involved.

However, sometimes healing will not include both parties or a restoration of the relationship. Some hurts are so grievous that trust cannot and should not be rebuilt quickly. If you believe you might be facing this type of situation, talk with a pastor or another mature, Christian mentor.

¹⁴ Corrie ten Boom, *Tramp for the Lord* (Fort Washington, PA: CLC Publications, 1974) 172.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. What do you feel about conflict? Do you love it, hate it, or something in between?
2. Which of the seven steps will be most difficult for you? Why? Do you see value in that step?
3. What thoughts or feelings came to mind as you read about closing the circle?
4. Brainstorm some ways you can encourage healthy relationships. Ideas include meeting for coffee once a week or gathering to clean up a local park. Consider personalities as well as schedules, but get as creative and involved as you desire.

SESSION 14: WRAPPING IT UP

YOU DID IT! YOU REACHED THE END of the training and are ready to journey forth into new territory. Remember, Satan is targeting you, and often the first attacks include thoughts like “I don’t know if I can do this” or “This will require considerably more time than I have available right now.”

Stop. Breathe. Repeat with me 2 Corinthians 10:5: *We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ* (NIV). Repeat as necessary over the next few days when your enemy comes back to discourage you again. Don’t let fear win!

You can do this.

You have time to do this.

You should do this.

You will be glad you did.

Let me tell you one final story. In the 1920s, our circle-closer Corrie ten Boom was a watchmaker in The Netherlands who lived with her father and sister and worked in her father’s shop. As the Nazis began to persecute Jews and other “inferior races,” her family got involved with the Dutch Resistance. They were arrested in 1944, and she and her sister were sent to Ravensbrück concentration camp, where her sister died.

After the end of the war, she traveled to Munich to speak about God’s forgiveness. While there, a man approached her who she recognized instantly as one of the cruelest guards at Ravensbrück. He explained that he’d become a Christian and knew God had forgiven him but wanted her forgiveness as well.

It could not have been many seconds that he stood there—hand held out—but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do.

For I had to do it—I knew that. The message that God forgives has a prior condition: that we forgive those who have injured us.... I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion—I knew that too. Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. “Jesus, help me!” I prayed silently. “I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling.”

And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes. “I forgive you brother!” I cried. “With all my heart.”

For a long moment we grasped each other’s hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God’s love so intensely as I did then.¹⁵

¹⁵ Boom, *Tramp for the Lord*, 56-57.

Imagine meeting face-to-face the man you witnessed do unspeakable horrors. Yet, like Corrie said, “Forgiveness is an act of the will.” So is obedience.

All Corrie had to do was lift her hand. What is God asking of you—not in the big picture, broad stroke of things—but today? Right now.

Don’t focus on the thousands that you could affect through the lives you will touch in your lifetime. Focus on this moment. Today, who does God want you to approach and offer a deeper relationship to?

Go. Obey. You can do it.

You’ll be so glad you did.

THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

Time to get serious! Write down your plan, as much as you have. Include who, when, where, how often, and anything else that comes to mind. Then give yourself a deadline to start inviting people to join you.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

MENTORING

- Campbell, Regi. 2016. *Mentor Like Jesus: His Radical Approach to Building the Church*. 2nd ed. Atlanta, GA: RM Press.
- Chan, Francis. 2012. *Multiply: Disciples Making Disciples*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook.
- Dungy, Tony. 2011. *The Mentor Leader: Secrets to Building People and Teams that Win Consistently*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
- Edwards, Sue, and Barbara Neumann. 2014. *Organic Mentoring: A Mentoring Guide to Relationships with Next Generation Women*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.
- Krause, William S. et al. 2010. *Real-Life Discipleship Training Manual: Equipping Disciples Who Make Disciples*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.
- Lawless, Chuck. 2018. *Mentor Revised: How Along-the-Way Discipleship Can Change Your Life*. Nashville, TN: LifeWay Press.
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SPIRITUAL ARMOR

- Renner, Rick. 2013. *Dressed to Kill: A Biblical Approach to Spiritual Warfare and Armor*. Tulsa, OK: Teach All Nations.
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STUDYING THE BIBLE

- Arthur, Kay. 2014. *How to Study Your Bible: Discover the Life-Changing Approach to God's Word*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.
- Edersheim, Alfred. 2009. *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. Charleston, SC: BiblioLife.
- Gower, Ralph. 2005. *The New Manners & Customs of Bible Times*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.
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- Tenney, Merrill. 1975. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible (5 Volume Set)*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Vine, W.E. 1996. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers. (NOTE: This is included in some versions of Strong's Concordance.)
- Wilkin, Jen. 2014. *Women of the Word: How to Study the Bible with Both Our Hearts and Our Minds*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway.

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