



**THE
MENTOR
RELATIONSHIP**

THE MENTOR RELATIONSHIP

DISCIPLESHIP FOCUS: LOVING OTHERS

KEY SCRIPTURE:

2 Timothy 2:2, 1 Timothy 1:2, Acts 13

OVERVIEW:

Spiritual Mentorship is not a program. It is not a 1, 2, or 3 step easy process that you follow in order to have great relationships in your life. It is the intentional pursuit of relationships as you live out a life of following God and loving Him.

These types of relationships take time, prayer and pursuit. What we hope to uncover is the value of spiritual mentorship, the types of people you should pursue, and examples we see in the Bible of such relationships. We will specifically be looking into the lives of Paul, Barnabas, and Timothy and why we all need someone like each of these men in our lives.

BIG IDEA: Why invest in mentor relationships? What is the point? Through these next several weeks we will uncover the importance of intentional connection, mentoring, and how to get started.

KEY PASSAGES: Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 8:27-31, 1 Thess. 2:8

TEACHING/DEVOTIONAL: Isolation. It takes on a new felt meaning as we all have experienced isolation in some way or another. A new frame of reference we all have in common is the Covid 19 pandemic. What I loved watching unfold during this time were new ways people found to connect, to reach out, and to see each other. Our bodies and our souls are longing to be in connection with one another.

We were never created to go through life alone. God created us for community and connection with one another. In fact, it is through connection and relationship that a person's faith can soar. I've often been reminded of how important one-on-one ministry really is. As a person invests their life in the life of another real growth can occur, and in remarkable ways. This one-on-one connection is a key way our faith has been passed down through centuries. The why behind mentoring is simply because it is needed for growth, connection, and it is how we were created. It is through a great mentoring relationship that a person can truly flourish. Mentoring put very simply is an intentional relationship with another person.

SHARING LIFE:

Share a time you've felt totally isolated or alone.
Have you ever been in a mentoring type of relationship?

OPENING SCRIPTURE:

Read Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 8:27-31

Matthew 28:19-20 is a command. What are the commands?

How do you make disciples?

What is intentionality? Why should we pursue it in relationships?

Summarize Acts 8:27-31. What key things stick out?

In vs.31 the Eunuch says, "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" (Acts 8:31). How does this relate with mentoring?

Why pursue these types of relationships?

PRAYER: Take a moment to share prayer requests and pray for each other. Specifically pray that over these next several weeks that God would impress on the hearts of everyone the importance of pouring into the life of another. That God would bring the names of people to everyone's mind.

BIG IDEA: What do mentor relationships look like? The why is because it is important for connection, for growth and it was God's design. The what is practical application.

KEY PASSAGES: Hebrews 10:24-25, John 13:12-15

TEACHING/DEVOTIONAL: I was 12 yrs. old when a middle school staff member, Val, saw me and poured into my life. At the time I had no idea this was called, "mentoring." She would take me to coffee, have dinner with my family, and more importantly, she challenged me in my faith. That relationship helped my walk with God flourish. Fast forward to adulthood, as I look back, I can see how God provided different people to pour into me at various times in my spiritual journey. Consequently, I began investing in the lives of others when I was in college, and even to this day. I can say from experience, there is not much out there more rewarding, powerful, and life changing than to have the honor to pour into someone's life, and to have someone pour into your own.

A mentor is simply a Christian who comes alongside another person or group to help them pursue God. The what that I have learned about mentoring and discipling is that it really takes two things. One - it takes intentionality. It takes the thoughtful pursuit and prayer that God would bring someone to be mentored or to mentor you. Relationships just don't happen, you have to be intentional. Two - it takes time. I know time is a precious resource that is scarce in the Bay Area. The time it takes isn't a ton, and you do have to invest time in order to make mentoring happen, but it is well worth it. Relationships are the primary means God established for learning about and preserving His commandments. However, close relationships are often lacking in today's society. Mentoring is a way of raising up mature Christian disciples within the Body of Christ.

SHARING LIFE:

Can you think of someone in your life who had an impact on your spiritual growth? Who were they and what kind of impact did they make on you?

What are the benefits of being a mentor and being mentored?

OPENING SCRIPTURE:

Read: Hebrews 10:24-25

How can you intentionally "spur" one another on?

How can we apply this verse to mentoring?

Read John 13:12-15. Jesus was obviously the master Mentor. He taught His disciples everything. What did He teach His disciples in these verses?

He led first by example in servanthood. How does this apply to mentoring?

What other things can we learn from Jesus as He mentored His disciples?

Jesus imparted knowledge and values through His words and actions. He showed the disciples that values of the Kingdom of God were different from values of the world. What are some of those values? How can you share them with someone you are mentoring?

PRAYER: Take a moment to share prayer requests and pray for each other. Pray specifically that God would help you make time for and to be intentional with mentoring. Pray that God would begin to prepare your heart and mind to take on this role or to pursue someone who can mentor you.

BIG IDEA: We are going to focus on the lives of 3 people as it relates to mentoring. Barnabas, Paul and Timothy. We'll start with Barnabas. We are going to look into his life and how he was called to mentor Paul.

KEY PASSAGES: Acts 4:36-37; Acts 9:23-31; Acts 11:22-26

TEACHING/DEVOTIONAL: Life is hard. As we discussed and learned, we were never meant to go through it alone. God knew we would need encouragement, support, and help. Just friendship is not enough to grow in our walk with God, we really need the intentional relationships that come in the form of mentoring. One such example and one of my favorites is Barnabas. Barnabas was described as a selfless, wise, and an encouraging man of God.

One of the first people God brought into Paul's life was Barnabas. Paul had an amazing conversion story found in Acts 9, and it was Barnabas who reached out to this new believer. Paul had a past that had been opposed to Christians. The believers at the church in Jerusalem were understandably afraid, but Barnabas trusted Paul and built relationships, not only with Paul and himself, but also between Paul and the church family. Barnabas became a mentor for Paul. He trained him, taught him, encouraged him, and served alongside of him.

Later in Acts 11, Barnabas was sent to check on new believers in other areas. He found a thriving group of believers in Antioch who needed shepherding and a church for their support and ministry. Barnabas again reached out to Paul and asked him to come and assist in this church planting ministry. They traveled on several mission trips together and spread the Good News of Jesus wherever they went. We can see through Barnabas' example that he was very intentional in pouring into the life of Paul. He spent time with him, teaching him, and encouraging him. Paul then went on to accomplish great things...and served God in all he did.

SHARING LIFE:

Describe a time in your life where your load was made "lighter" by another person.

At times we want to believe the lie that we can do it all on our own, we don't need anyone's input or help. Share a time when this may have been true in your own life?

OPENING SCRIPTURE:

Read: Acts 4:36-37.

What kind of man do you think Barnabas was? Do you know anyone like him?

Read: Acts 9:26-27. What did Barnabas do to help Paul? How does this relate to mentoring?

In Acts 11, Barnabas needed to encourage a church in Antioch. Why do you think Barnabas chose Paul to travel to Antioch with him? Is there anyone in your life that you could bring alongside of you to teach and mentor?

Barnabas wisely invested his years of experience into this man, Paul. What did Barnabas get in return?

In Acts 13, we see God calling this duo, Barnabas and Paul, from the church at Antioch to mission work in other areas. Why do you think God called both of them to go?

PRAYER: Spend time in prayer. Pray for one another and lift one another's burdens up to the Lord. Ask God to give you time this week to pray for others, and to make it your focus to pray specifically to be a Barnabas in the life of another person.

BIG IDEA: Paul mentored several churches and several individuals. We are able to see his mentoring style by reading his letters in the New Testament. In these letters we see Paul was extremely invested in those he mentored and always strived to direct or redirect their understanding of true doctrine.

KEY PASSAGES: 1 Corinthians 1:10-23, 2 Titus 1:1-5, Philemon 1-7

TEACHING/DEVOTIONAL: Last week we saw Barnabas take a chance on Paul and walk alongside him early in his Christian faith. Barnabas couldn't have known his act of obedience would result in Paul traveling over 10,000 miles (in sandals!) with the sole (pun intended) purpose of proclaiming Christ. And, that Paul would write close to half of The New Testament proclaiming Christ to people around the world thousands of years later. Paul has now become a spiritual mentor through his letters, not only to those in the first century but to each of us. While most of us will not be called to strap on sandals and travel the globe, we are called to walk alongside others as disciple makers. Paul was an extraordinary disciple maker. He not only introduced people to Christ but also brought them deeper into living a life more closely resembling Christ. As we look at the way Paul walked alongside and mentored the next generations of Christians, a few things stand out. First, he put in the time and remained invested, second, he kept the main thing the main thing. The first hurdle most of us must overcome to enter a mentor/mentee relationship is prioritizing our lives to make the time. We are busy. It's hard to switch to an eternal mindset when the here and now is clawing for attention.

As we read about the many people Paul met on his missionary journeys and read his letters, one thing is clear, Paul's main objective is to ensure those he was mentoring understood doctrine and how to incorporate its message into their daily lives. And while Paul was zealous to proclaim Christ, he still took the time to notice any potential hang-ups. He noticed where encouragement and affirmation were warranted. He noticed where misinterpretations were creating roadblocks for others to come to Christ. Paul continually met people where they were and did not forget those he met. He continued to check on them, encourage them, and redirect them when needed. We are fortunate to have direct access to the ways Paul did this through his letters to the Galatians, Thessalonians, Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and personal letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. Next week we will take a closer look at Paul's relationship with Timothy and what it has to teach us about the Gospel spreading and living on through the next generation.

SHARING LIFE:

Do you have or have you had a Paul in your life that took the time to walk alongside you and point you to Christ? What impact did it have?

How did/do you make time for these relationships? Discuss creative ways to prioritize and create this aspect of the Christian walk into your schedule.

OPENING SCRIPTURE:

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:10 - 16, 2 Titus 1:1-5, Philemon 1-7

Paul wrote letters to the Romans, Corinthians, Thessalonians, Ephesians, Philippians, Galatians, Colossians, and Philemon, Titus, and Timothy. Some of these letters are great affirmations to the people in these cities while in others are more confrontational, pointing out changes that need to be made.

What do these passages indicate about Paul's devotion to the churches and people in which he invested? How does this serve as a model in our own mentor/mentee relationships?

Read: Colossians 1:15 - 23

Paul's letters generally focused on three areas:

Doctrine: What Christians should know.

Application: What Christians should do with doctrine.

Logistics: Specific instructions, greetings, etc.

Using Paul as our model for mentor/mentee relationships, how can we incorporate these three aspects into time spent with our mentor/mentee? Share practical and clear ideas.

PRAYER: Spend time investing in the lives of each other and praying for your group. Ask God to guide you in how to make time for each other and especially for those He wants to establish a mentor/mentee relationship.

BIG IDEA: God entrusts each generation to pass the Good News onto the next. We see this play out in the mentor/mentee relationship of Paul and Timothy.

KEY PASSAGES: 1 Timothy 1:18; 3:14-15; 2 Timothy 1:1-15; 2:1-3; 3:10-15

TEACHING/DEVOTIONAL: Paul mentored thousands during his days on earth and millions who now have access to these relationships through his letters in the New Testament. Paul understood the message of Christ was to be passed onto the next generation. This was not a new concept. Long before Paul came along, his spiritual ancestors were told in Deuteronomy to...

Deuteronomy 6:5-9 Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. Take to heart these words that I give you today. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you're at home or away, when you lie down or get up. Write them down, and tie them around your wrist, and wear them as headbands as a reminder. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 4:9-10 But watch out! Be careful never to forget what you yourself have seen. Do not let these memories escape from your mind as long as you live! And be sure to pass them on to your children and grandchildren. Never forget the day when you stood before the Lord your God at Mount Sinai, where he told me, Summon the people before me, and I will personally instruct them. Then they will learn to fear me as long as they live, and they will teach their children to fear me also.

Deuteronomy 11:19 Teach them 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.

The book of Timothy in the New Testament frequently uses the word "entrusted" as it relates to continuing the Gospel message to the next generation (should you want to expand on the concept of being entrusted with the Gospel message, there is a lot of great material and studies out there). The books of 1 & 2 Timothy are appropriately named because they are copies of a letter Paul wrote to Timothy. Timothy was Paul's junior by several decades and became like a son to Paul. In these first century letters we are able to see a close relationship between Paul and Timothy. Out of their relationship and time spent doing ministry together, Paul sees Timothy can be entrusted to spread the Good News and encourages him following the same formula of entrusting the next generation that has been part of God's plan since the beginning.

SHARING LIFE:

Is there a time you were entrusted with something valuable? Share your experience.

Does vulnerability with others come naturally for you or is it more of a struggle? Why would vulnerability and allowing others into our life be an important aspect of the mentor/mentee relationship?

OPENING SCRIPTURE:

Read: 2 Timothy 1: 1-15

In verse 2, Paul calls Timothy his "beloved child". What are the implications of this title when placed adjacent to the verses in Deuteronomy, instructing us to pass our understanding of God onto our children?

Read: 1 Timothy 1:18, 3:14-15, 2 Timothy 2:1-3, 3:10-15

As Timothy's mentor, Paul was quick to both encourage and correct. How do you see a bit of each in these verses and what is the implication for our own mentor/mentee relationships?

PRAYER: Take time thanking God for entrusting you with the Good News of Christ. If you are not in a mentor/mentee relationship, ask God to pair you with a spiritual lineage so you can both receive and give what you have been entrusted with. If you have such relationships, ask God to infuse them with His Holy Spirit and a safe vulnerability that reflects the truth of who He is.

BIG IDEA: We have seen how God used mentor/mentee relationships with Paul, Barnabas, and Timothy as a vehicle to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth and to the next generation. These relationships serve as an invitation for us to do the same in our life time.

KEY PASSAGES: Acts 2:41-47, Hebrews 12:1

TEACHING/DEVOTIONAL: Barnabas, Paul, and Timothy were three men among millions who mentored others and were mentored themselves. Some mentor/mentee relationships will have a short season like that of Barnabas and Paul (they parted ways after a few years) while others will last a lifetime like Timothy and Paul. Nonetheless, it's a relationship worthy of our time and one that God uses to advance His Kingdom and Kingdom message. Whether you are interested in pursuing this important relationship or are already in one, below are a few ideas for your time together.

Where to Find Mentors/Mentees:

- Look around! We are very fortunate to have a multigenerational church at Calvary. Become involved in serving in an area that interest you such as, The House of Hope or Shining Stars. In these places you will see volunteers of all ages and stages of their spiritual journey.
- Come early and stay late to the weekend service. Look for familiar faces each week and introduce yourself.
- Ask around! Let your desire be known and ask to be connected.
- Pray for a mentor/mentee!

Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing:

The purpose of the relationship is to deepen relationships with God. Whether mentor or mentee, the objective is the same. It can be tempting in mentor/mentee relationships for the mentor to provide the fish rather than teaching how to fish. Ultimately, we want to know the voice of our Shepherd so intimately that His voice is loud and clear. All good mentor/mentee relationships will focus on how to draw closer to His voice and His will. So, make sure a good chunk of time is spent in scripture. Whether our Bibles have worn used pages or are crisp and new, there is much to absorb and sort through. It is critical we have an understanding of how to approach the text, your mentor will help you.

Suggested Resources: The Bible Project; Women of the Word by Jen Wilkin; Things to do together: Devotionals from The You Version Bible App; Celebration of Discipline by Richard Foster; read and discuss a book of the Bible together.

Pray. Always Pray:

Again, the point of the mentor/mentee relationship is to deepen our relationship and dependence on God. Prayer is key in this process. Pray in different ways and in different places and in different physical stances. Recommended Readings: Sacred Pathways by Gary Thomas. Ideas: Choose a verse and pray it (the Psalms is a great place to start).

Establish Routines:

- Break bread a few times a year (with family if possible).
- Commit to scheduling a time to meet and put it on your calendar.
- Share your highs and lows outside of those meeting times with texts, emails, calls, messages, etc. Allow access to your life and willingly share it.

Serve Together:

If we are to model the mentor/mentee relationships of Barnabas with Paul, Paul with Timothy, and Jesus with the disciples, then we will move beyond the cozy corner of a coffee shop into opportunities that shine God's love onto others. Many opportunities can be found on Calvary's website.

SHARING LIFE:

If you have or have been in a mentor/mentee relationship, how was it initiated? Do you still meet? What do/did you do during your time together?

What would you add to the above suggestions and resources?

OPENING SCRIPTURE:

Read: Acts 2:41-47, Hebrews 12:1

What aspects of this description of the Early Church stands out? How can these aspects be woven into the fabric of mentor/mentee relationships?

Verses 41 and 47, mention a growing body of believers and Hebrews 12:1 refers to a lineage of spiritual ancestors, specifically a "Faith Hall of Fame" in Hebrews 11. Do you feel you have a role to play in the growth of The Church and this lineage of believers who have come before us? How do mentor/mentee relationships contribute to this?

As we conclude the study, share with the group what your next steps will be and ask for the group to hold you accountable for any action in which you need encouragement.

PRAYER: For mentor/mentee relationships that were, are, and will be. May they draw us closer to Him, glorify Him, and grow the body of believers.