

# CHRISTIAN MENTORS

## Youth Bible Study

### Questions to Cover

- What is mentoring?
- How is mentoring different than ordinary friendships?
  - Friendship often between equals (knowledge, skills, virtue)
- Should everyone have a mentor(s)?
- Who has mentored you?
- How does mentoring occur?
- How can every Christian be a mentor?

"Consider for a moment a young tree. It easily bends and sways, thrashing about in a storm. In contrast, an old oak stands strong amidst the changing seasons. One method to secure and stabilize a young tree is to tether it to an older, more mature tree. In a similar way, the mentoring relationship is one where a younger believer is tethered to a more mature believer for a season so that she might grow firm in her faith and be equipped for ministry"  
 (Mentoring: A Call to Spiritual Growth by Melissa Kruger).

### • Discuss/Consider

- Read Would You Like to Play Marbles? by Howard Hendricks (pg. 8 of this lesson)
- One of the 12 Reasons Millennials Don't Like Church (by Sam Eaton) was "We want to be mentored, not preached at."
  - Why do you think that is?
  - "If we don't have real people who actually care about us, why not just listen to a sermon from the couch?" (<http://faithit.com/12-reasons-millennials-over-church-sam-eaton/>)
  - "For what is likely the first time in the history of the Christian church, generations aren't worshipping together." (<http://www.lifeway.com/Article/Biblical-model-of-mentoring>)
    - morning service/after service
    - conservative worship (hymns) – dressed up
    - praise and worship bands – casual dress
    - missing the opportunity to be mentored by older or more experience people
  - One of the main reasons people leave their church is they have no real relationships there!
    - Discipleship is the means for relationship building!
- **What Is a Mentor?**
  - **Definition**
    - "Mentorship is a relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person." (Wikipedia)
  - **Mentoring Children**
    - Big Brother/Big Sisters
    - Reading programs

- Tutoring (provides guidance or companionship)
- **Peer Mentoring**
  - another student who can serve as a resource, a helping hand, a sounding board, and a referral service
  - can sometimes get through to another teen when an adult cannot
- **Mentoring in the Workplace**
  - "over 71 percent of Fortune 500 companies offer mentoring programs, showing that mentoring programs are becoming a standard in many workplaces"
    - Four Key Benefits of Workplace Mentoring Initiatives
  - provides guidance to a less-experienced employee
  - shares knowledge and advice
  - helps employees feel less isolated
  - introduces employees to other professionals
  - listens to concerns
  - employees who are mentored
    - smaller turnover
    - greater loyalty to the company
    - make fewer mistakes
    - greater job satisfaction
- **Mentoring in the Family/Community (in the past)**
  - quilting and canning
  - harvesting (preparing meals together for workers)
    - times for the older women to give advice & help to the younger
    - today – mothers are working & have less time to spend with the older generation
- **"Mentoring" in the Bible**
  - this word not in the KJV
  - but the concept IS in the Bible
  - sometimes one on one
  - sometimes in a group setting
  - discuss/consider examples
    - Jethro & Moses
    - Moses & Joshua
    - Eli & Samuel
    - Naomi & Ruth
    - Samuel & Saul
    - Samuel & David
    - Jonathan & David
    - Nathan & David
    - David & Solomon
    - Solomon & Queen of Sheba
    - Elijah & Elisha

- Elisha & King Jehoash
- Daniel & Nebuchadnezzar
- Mordecai & Esther
- Elizabeth & Mary
- Barnabas & Paul
- Barnabas & John Mark
- Paul & Timothy
- Paul & Titus
- Jesus & 12 Apostles
  - Jesus spent time with them
  - Jesus listened
  - Jesus asked a lot of questions
  - 3 years of preparing His disciples and equipping them for the ministry
- further Bible study
  - read Bible passages
  - look at the mentoring relationships
  - how/when/what
  - questions to consider:
    - how does God prepare mentors?
    - does mentoring require perfection?
    - what are risks and rewards of mentoring?
    - how is mentoring a two-way street?
  - **online study questions**  
<http://www.holston.org/media/ministry/resource/BiblicalReflectiononMentoring.pdf>
- **Why Do We Need Mentors (Purpose [Goal] of Mentoring)?**
  - someone to challenge us
  - someone to pray with us
  - someone to share life experiences
  - someone to share problems, ideas, burdens
  - someone to help us grow spiritually
  - accountability
    - no man is an island, no "lone-ranger" Christians
    - accountability in discipline
    - accountability in struggles
  - developing leaders
  - transfer of knowledge
  - building relationships
    - sense of belonging (see Millennial quote in the beginning of lesson)
- **Who Needs to Be Mentored?**
  - Children
  - New young people in youth group
  - Newly saved

- New parents
  - Someone who is struggling
  - Older people
  - Everyone – some less, some more
  - Different stages of life require different mentors
- **Who Should Be a Mentor?**
    - **Pastor & ministers only?**
      - Is that humanly possible? (No.)
    - **Parents**
      - Psalm 145:4 – "One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts."
      - Hebrews 13:7 – "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith."
        - parents, Sunday school teachers
    - **Non-relative**
      - brings perspective
    - **Spiritual Leaders**
    - **Older Youth**
    - **"Every one of us can and should be a mentor"**
- **What Does Mentoring Look Like?**
    - **Types of mentoring**
      - formal (scheduled) or informal
      - one time event
      - long term
      - forever (parenting)
      - passive mentoring – finding opportunities in conversations or actions to influence/help
    - **Purpose**
      - more than just hanging out
      - not becoming best friends
      - not assuming the role of one's parent
      - not telling (and expecting) someone to do exactly what you tell them to do
    - **Qualities of a Mentor**
      - **good listener**
        - practice "attentive listening"
        - practice talking less & listening more
        - don't finish sentences, don't assume you know what they're going to say
      - **trustworthy**
        - keep confidences
      - **stable and reliable**
      - **willing to speak the truth** (even when it is hard to hear)
      - **someone who lives it, not just talks it**

- Bible reading, praying, Bible study, meditation, church attendance
- what do others learn by watching your life?
- do others have confidence in your life, in your advice?
- **model Christlike behavior**
  - not all youth are taught it in the homes
  - reverence
  - appropriate dating behavior
  - participation
- **encourage others to step out of their comfort zone**
  - model it
  - Timothy thought to be very timid
- **Mentoring Ideas**
  - **share life stories**
    - what did I learn?
    - how might my past experiences help someone now?
  - **ask questions**
    - questions encourage conversation
    - questions restate what the other is going through
    - questions are less threatening
  - **accountability**
    - missed you at youth group – did you need a ride?
    - youth leaders – how to get them involved during youth group?
      - calling on one to pray
      - encouraging one to give a testimony
      - give them leadership roles
        - "I'm putting you in charge of this area"
  - **don't give up**
    - some need more than one contact – more than one time of reaching out
- **How can older youth be mentors?**
  - to new youth (13 or newly saved)
  - to youth that are struggling, different, etc.?
  - talk to them – ask questions, follow up
  - consider: what would you have liked a 18+ year old to have done when you first came into youth group?
- **Mentees: Looking for a Mentor**
  - Discuss/consider: who has mentored you so far?
  - What do you need in a mentor?
    - might write it down
    - challenges of new life changes (newly married, new parent, new job, college, job change); need someone who has been there
    - more than just a Christian
    - has more experience than you

- strong faith as a foundation
- someone who has the same goals as you
- someone who is positive, doesn't run down people
- Look for someone who cares, believes in you, who will check on you, and will encourage you
- some mentors good when you need prayer
- "Instead of seeking a single mentor, develop a multitude of mentors. Look for people who can challenge you professionally, with your finances, in your marriage and as you parent. Those aren't going to be the same people. We do an injustice to our mentors when we expect one person to be the end-all-be-all wisdom-dispensing guru in every area of life."
  - (Source: <https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/homelife-10-keys-to-finding-the-mentor-you-need>)
- **How to Begin?**
  - Develop your own foundation – your faith must be real
    - so that you will not lead someone astray
    - Bible reading & prayer
    - build your credibility – build a reputation
    - walk the walk and talk the talk
    - have a learning attitude
      - great mentors are ones who are constantly trying to learn themselves
      - would you rather be mentored by someone whose mind is shut (I know it all) or open?
  - Pray for opportunities
    - "Lord, who would You like me to invest in?"
    - "Lord, who should I look to to mentor me?"
  - Look for opportunities
  - Pray for God to direct you concerning mentors in your own life
- **Be . . .** (back of handout)
  - **prayerful:** pray for them as well as having a regular prayer life
    - "Perhaps the most bonding experience we can have is praying aloud regularly with another person. Prayer is a mentoring necessity. We need to pray specifically, openly, freely, crying out to God in intercession and petitions. Set aside time for prayer together, whenever you meet to mentor. Be careful how you pray. You are modeling" (5 P's for Productive Discipleship by Waylon and Martha Moore).
  - **real:** don't portray yourself as perfect, admit that you struggle too
  - **genuinely interested**
  - **a good listener**
  - **listening for God's direction**
  - **open:** share your experiences
    - mentors need to share "how I did it right" as well as "how I did it wrong"
  - **trustworthy:** don't share things told in confidence; don't speak negatively of them to others

## Quotes About Mentoring

- "People want to grow up in Christ, but they don't know how. Mentoring is simply pointing them in the right direction and walking with them on the journey" (Good Mentoring by Mark Engelthaler).
- Mentoring is taking time to invest in others.
- "Think of me as a fellow-patient in the same hospital who, having been admitted a little earlier, could give some advice" (C. S. Lewis).
- Mentoring is not about a carefully outlined curriculum. It's about life-on-life relationships.
- Being a mentor is "giving back."
- "You cannot run this race alone."
- "Build a bridge of trust that will bear the weight of truth."
- "A person trying to make it on his own is an accident waiting to happen" (Howard Hendricks).
- True mentoring is not an act but a process. It simply takes time.
- John Wesley said, "The Bible knows nothing of solitary religion — watch over one another in love."

## Additional Study Resources

- "The Need for Christian Mentors" by David Stegmeier (2016 Camp Meeting – [onlineaudiofiles.com](http://onlineaudiofiles.com))
- As Iron Sharpens Iron by Howard G. Hendricks

## Sources

- <http://www.johnmallison.com/data/Mentoring%20to%20Develop%20Disciples%20&%20Leaders.pdf>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-mentoring.html>
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- <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/HomeLife-10-Keys-to-Finding-the-Mentor-You-Need>
- <http://www.christianity.com/christian-life/discipleship/mentoring-a-call-to-spiritual-growth.html>
- <http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/61820.pdf>
- <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/Biblical-model-of-mentoring>
- [http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/webfm\\_send/761](http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/webfm_send/761)

## Would You Like to Play Marbles?

Had it not been for Walt, I seriously doubt whether I would have ever become a follower of Jesus Christ. I came from a broken home. My parents were separated before I was born, and neither one paid much attention to my spiritual condition. To put it bluntly, I could have lived, died, and gone to hell without anyone even bothering to care.

But Walt cared. He was part of a tiny church in my neighborhood that developed a passion to affect its community for Christ.

Walt's passion was to reach nine- and ten-year-old boys like me with the Gospel. I'll never forget the Saturday morning I met him. I was sprawled out on a Philadelphia sidewalk playing marbles. Suddenly someone was standing beside me. I looked up to see this gangly guy towering over me—all six feet, four inches of him. My mouth sort of dropped open.

"Hey, son, how would you like to go to Sunday school?" he asked.

That was an unfortunate question. To my mind, anything that had the word "school" in it had to be bad news. So I shook my head no.

But Walt was just getting started. "How would you like to play marbles?" he asked, squatting down.

Now he was talking my language!

"Sure!" I replied, and quickly set up the game. As the best marble player on the block, I felt supremely confident that I could whip this challenger fairly easily.

Would you believe he beat me in every single game! In fact, he captured every marble I had. In the process, he captured my heart. I may have lost a game and a bit of pride that day, but I gained something infinitely more important—the friendship of a man who cared. A big man, an older man, a man who literally came down to my level by kneeling to play a game of marbles. From then on, wherever Walt was, that's where I wanted to be.

Walt built into my life over the next several years in a way that marked me forever. He used to take me and the other boys in his Sunday school class hiking. I'll never forget those times. He had a bad heart, and I'm sure we didn't do it any good, running him all over the woods the way we did. But he didn't seem to mind, because he cared. In fact, he was probably the first person to show me unconditional love.

He was also a model of faithfulness. I can't remember a time that he ever showed up to his Sunday school class unprepared. Not that he was the most scintillating teacher in the world. In fact, he had almost no training for that. Vocationally, he worked in the tool and die trade. But he was for real, and he was also creative. He found ways to involve us boys in the learning process—an approach that made a lasting contribution to my own style of teaching.

Overall, Walt incarnated Christ for me. And not only for me, but for thirteen other boys in my neighborhood, nine of whom also came from broken homes. Remarkably, eleven of us went on to pursue careers as vocational Christian workers—which is ironic, given that Walt himself completed school only through the sixth grade. It just goes to show that a man doesn't need a Ph.D. for God to use him to shape another man.

Howard Hendricks