

Transcribed from:
“STIR UP THE GIFTS”
Empowering Believers for Victorious Living and Ministry Tasks
By: **George O. McCalep, Jr., Ph.D.**

CHAPTER 7
MENTORING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Proverbs 17:8 tells us, “A Gift is a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: withersoever it turneth, it prospereth.” This passage not only refers to a negative, such as a bribe, but most definitely it refers to the positive of receiving a Gift that sparkles in the love and grace of God that is to be shared with others. And the promise is wherever it (the Gift) is shared it will prosper. A better translation is wherever and whenever the owner of the Gift shares the Gift, they (themselves) will prosper. The bottom line is, Spiritual Gifts are precious stones and when they are shared, it is beneficial and good. Therefore, Spiritual Gifts should be shared, or mentored.

Many of the wise proverbial teaching of the book of Proverbs supports our need for spiritual mentoring. *Proverbs 27:17 tells us that “iron sharpens iron.”* This will be discussed later. Actually, the whole book of Proverbs bears witness and testimony to the concept of mentoring Spiritual Gifts. The entire book has as its basic theme an older wiser one mentoring one who is younger and not as wise. The writer of the book of Proverbs, Solomon, is obviously blessed with the Spiritual Gift of wisdom. Consider the first five verses of the book of Proverbs outlining its purpose: *The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the Words of understanding; To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice and judgment, and equity; To give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: The commentator of the Word in Life Study Bible brilliantly conceptualizes the book of Proverbs as a mentoring manual.*

“The purpose of Proverbs is straightforward, ‘to know wisdom’ (Proverb 1:2). It is common to conceive of wisdom as an advanced form of knowledge or learning, or else a raw sense of deep understanding and insight. The view of wisdom has a touch of the mystical about it, as if those who possess it had in some way tapped into profound, enigmatic truths from ages past.

“However, there is no mystery about the wisdom talked about in Proverbs, nor is it necessarily limited to a privileged few. The wisdom that Proverbs mentions more than 40 times and that Ecclesiastes mentions 27 times is the Hebrew *chokmah*, which means ‘the skill of living.’ This wisdom is practical, not esoteric. It means that a person knows how to live in a responsible, productive, and prosperous way.

“From that standpoint, the wisdom of Proverbs has a lot in common with what we might call common sense, or even ‘street smarts.’ It is an understanding of the way the world works. The issue is not so much what one knows intellectually, but what one does practically. It is truth applied.

“That is why Proverbs deals with so many day-to-day issues of life, especially those involving moral choices and other decisions that affect the future. The wise person (Hebrew Chakma) avoids evil and promotes good by observing what others have chosen and then pursuing a course of action based on the outcomes. Thus, the Proverbs are not so much promises of God as they are observations and principles about how life works.”

Although God divinely gives Spiritual Gifts, I believe and it is generally agreed, that they can be developed and cultivated. The previous chapter was dedicated to the development of Spiritual Gifts. Since we agree that Spiritual Gifts can be developed, it behooves us to explore and investigate how they may be developed. Mentoring is an excellent method to develop and cultivate Spiritual Gifts. Although biblically based, as has been demonstrated, mentoring is still in its infant stage as a method for Christian training. A more detailed, scriptural, and illustrative basis for Christian mentoring will be discussed later in this chapter.

WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring is a cooperative and nurturing relationship between a seasoned, proven person and a less experienced novice who wants to learn and gain valuable, practical information and insight into the particular God-given expertise of the more experienced person. The more experienced person is called the mentor and the less experienced person is called the mentoree. In the case of mentoring Spiritual Gifts, the most experienced would be a believer who has discovered, developed and is using his/her Spiritual Gift in ministry; whereas the less experienced would be a believer who has not yet finished the process. Several key factors have been incorporated into our working definition.

COOPERATIVE

In order for the mentoring process to work, there must be full cooperation between both mentor and mentoree. The mentor must want to share his/her Gift and the mentoree must want to receive. A key word might be “pursue.” The mentor must pursue opportunities to mentor his/her Gifts and the mentoree must also pursue the blessing of being mentored. The second of Promise Keepers’ promises describes the action necessary: “A Promise Keeper is committed to pursuing vital relationships with a few other men understanding that he needs brothers to help him keep his promises.”

RELATIONSHIP

Mentoring is a relationship between two persons. This is necessary for nurturing to occur. “There have been over 300 dissertation studies of mentoring, over 3000 articles written about it and over 30 books devoted to describing it. These writers all emphasize this: what makes mentoring successful or not is the *relationship* that develops between a mentor and protégé.”

Relationships are always a two-way street. Mentoring is two-way, one-on-one, on the job training. If not one-on-one, mentoring must be limited to very, very small groups. One of the reasons mentoring should be used in Christian training is because of its relationship nature. Relationships are the heart of the Christian faith. Whether we are referring to our relationship with God or our relationship with each other, Christianity is built on relationships. With something as important as God's way of teaching us to do church by using our Spiritual Gifts in ministry, we can ill afford to overlook a method of Christian training that is founded on relationships. Society has created a void in authentic sincere relationships. The harvest is ripe for learning through relationships.

NURTURING

One of the purposes of the Church is nurturing or ministering one to another. To nurture, one must possess the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. The mentor must sincerely care about the well being of the mentoree. The mentor must care enough about the mentoree to give correction when he/she is headed in the wrong direction, yet have patience enough to give time for the mentoree to make mistakes and develop while always remaining in a position of encourager.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

All information and knowledge is important. However, mentoring forces the sharing of practical information. Information that can be used productively. The emphasis in mentoring is on the "how do" rather than learning simply for the sake of learning. Therefore, the mentor must be actively practicing what he/she is teaching. In the mentoring process, more is "caught than taught." In other words, the mentoree will learn as much through simply associating and observing the mentor as through any academic exercise. Mentoring is not a textbook exercise and involves very little intellectual gymnastics. Rather, mentoring is a give and take between parties at the level of experience. The mentor, by example and through instruction, is a parent, friend, coach, equipper, advocate, counselor and empowerer. Notice that these are some of the same functions as the paraclete (Holy Spirit). A mentor is a co-laborer with the Holy Spirit to help where help is needed.

GOD-GIVEN EXPERTISE

Our working definition of mentoring recognizes and acknowledges that whatever expertise any of us have, whether natural abilities or special divinely given Spiritual Gifts, came from God. And because they came from God, they must be effectively developed and shared.

THE ORIGIN OF THE TERM

The concept of mentoring has been with us as long as people have been working together. The term mentor originated with an individual named Mentor who was, in Greek mythology, a faithful friend of Odysseus. The story of Mentor comes from Homer's Odyssey. When Odysseus went off to fight the Trojan Wars, he entrusted his son, Telemachus, into Mentor's care. Mentor was a tutor, guide, and protector to the boy over a number of years.

The relationship ended as mentorships should and when Telemachus started searching for his father, the Goddess Athena appeared in the form of Mentor to help him in his search. Thus, the spirit of Mentor lived on after him.

Although the term mentoring originated out of Greek culture, the process mirrors the Hebrew model of conveying information more than the classical Greek “classroom” model. The “classroom” model takes place when a teacher assumes his/her place up front, and the students sit passively to listen to a lecture. It is academic in nature; it is cerebral and cognitive. It is passive. And, while it is the fastest method to transfer information to another person or group- it is not the most effective method for the student to learn. Learning happens much more efficiently through the “Hebrew” model, where the teacher or “mentor” invites the student (s) to travel with him/her. The Hebrews learned through developmental relationships. No doubt, the mentor has much to say through verbal instruction, but this is not the only tool in their pocket. They demonstrate the principles or truths they want their mentorees to embrace. Then, they let those mentorees try their hand at it themselves. They understand that the best way to learn is to experience something firsthand. Finally, they give time for debriefing and feedback. They provide accountability and assessment.”³

Mentoring has become widely recognized in the secular world in schools and business organizations. It has proven to be a very effective way to transmit values and develop character. The Christian community must not overlook this age-old concept that existed during biblical days. It works too well and is an effective tool for “passing on” a legacy, a ministry to the next generation. In Titus 2:3-4, we find that mentoring is not just for men. Women can be very effective mentors and benefit from mentoring relationships. Titus 2:3-4.

3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things.

4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children.

Mentoring accelerates the growth rate of Christian leaders for the future. The mentoring that Christians use should be for the building of the kingdom. Christian mentoring is impossible without the use of Spiritual Gifts, for they are the tools of spiritual ministry.

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN MENTORING?

Christian mentoring is teaching another to become more like Christ by being a living example of Christ in the life of another person. This means teaching as Christ taught. Is it not the same as discipling? The answer is yes and no. Yes, if we understand that today, all who confess to be Christians are not disciples because a disciple is one who is Christ-like and teaching others to become Christ-like. The original disciples were first called Christians because they were acting like Christ (Acts 11:26).

However, discipleship as we understand it today is more of a closed synonym that focuses on what man has defined as spiritual rather than Jesus' focus on holistic ministry. Mentoring is more open and tends to emphasize growing and protecting the whole person.

They both are closely related. They both involve instruction based on relationships. They both receive their biblical command from the great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20). The difference, however, is not only related to the understanding of the nature of the terms, but also the methodology. The word “disciple” means learner. But mentoring is less about instruction and more about imitation. Whereas, the word disciple means learner, the word “protégé” comes from the Latin word meaning to protect. In a perfect world, they would probably be the same. Mentoring simply helps us refocus on what discipleship should be. So, for the purpose of this discussion, I will treat them as if they are the same. Personally, I rejoice in the buzzword “mentoring” because it puts us back into growing the Church through multiplication of relationships modeling Christ. Since we have not discipled, maybe and prayerfully we will mentor without compromising Christ and the gospel.

THE BIBLICAL COMMAND TO MENTOR

As mentioned earlier, the Matthew 28:19-20 scripture is the biblical command to mentor (make disciples). Significantly, this command was given after the resurrection, during the forty days that Jesus spent on earth before his glorious ascension. The Great Commission is the last commandment Jesus gave before ascending to His heavenly home. It represents the final marching orders given to the Church. It is a commandment, not a suggestion. The emphasis in the commandment should be put on the command verb “make” rather than on the “go.” Today, many churches seem to be eager to “go” but slow to “make.” Many churches today are doing everything but making disciples. We seem to be much more concerned with filling up buildings and adding numbers to church rosters than we are with making disciples. Make no mistake about this, mentoring is an excellent way to make disciples and fulfill the commandment of the Great Commission. As a matter of spiritual truth, it is the way Jesus made disciples.

JESUS AND MENTORING

God, himself choose to be a mentor in Jesus. God incarnated Himself and taught the world by example. He appointed the twelve, calling them disciples that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach (Mark 3:14). We, like Jesus, must follow the same procedure of chasing, pursuing, and inviting men and women, boys, and girls to become mentors and mentorees. Tim Elmore collected the following principle passages to relate how Jesus did it.

1. Initiative (Luke 6:12-13)

Jesus didn't wait for mentorees to approach Him. He was determined to leave His legacy behind through mentoring people. He prayed all night, then selected them.

2. Proximity (Mark 3:14, Luke 8:1)

Jesus employed the “with him” principle. Much of His mentoring was done through the disciples' mere observing His life; they were walking alongside of Him with each step.

3. Friendship (John 15:15)

Jesus called His mentorees His “friends.” It is difficult to mentor someone if you don't enjoy them as friends. He demonstrated this through His love, time, and transparency.

4. Example (John 13:15)

Jesus deliberately gave the disciples His life as an example to watch. He knew they would learn faster if He would *show* them and not just *tell* them. He taught with His life.

5. Commitment (John 13:12, Matthew 16:24)

Jesus both committed Himself to His relationship with the twelve and asked for this same commitment from them. Mentoring doesn't work without mutual commitment.

Scriptural Basis for Mentoring

Not only did Jesus mentor but also scripture supports the mentoring concept throughout the Bible.

New Testament Passages Referring To Mentoring-

He appointed twelve- designating them apostles- that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach. (Mark 3:14)

...but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher (Luke 6:40b)

Therefore, I urge you to imitate me (1 Corinthians 4:16)

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1)

Join with others in following my example, brothers and take not of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. (Philippians 3:17)

Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me-put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:9)

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:16).

You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so, you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia-your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it. (1 Thessalonians 1:6-8)

We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. (2 Thessalonians 3:9)

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)

You, However, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance.... (2 Timothy 3:10)

In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. (Titus 2:7-8)

Remember your leaders, who spoke the Word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. (Hebrew 13:7)

Not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. (1Peter 5:3)

Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God. (3 John 11)

AN OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURAL EXPOSITION

As illustrated, many scriptures refer to the mentoring process or method. However, I would like to highlight two, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament, that I think affirm mentoring from a Christian perspective.

From the Old Testament, Proverbs 27:17 says, “Iron sharpeneth iron, as a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend” Two minds, thoughts, insight are better than one. In any giving gathering, if we are intentional, we are smarter collectively than we are individually. This proverb deals with the influence which men have on each other. Of course this can be negative or positive. However, the term “sharpen” implies that the writer of Proverbs is dealing with the advantageous beneficial aspects of life wisdom, character, appearance, and control of conduct. Men’s thoughts are stimulated and sharpened by conversation. We learn much through intentional, scholarly dialogue. In the learning process an hour of intentional, instructional dialogue can exceed a day of solitary meditation. The Spiritual Gifts and experiences of one man can sharpen other men. God gives Gifts and allows men to come through trials and experiences so that other men can be enlightened and often protected from the dangers of another man’s experiences. Iron, indeed, sharpens iron. This is a spiritual law that can be applied to many situations. It definitely applies to Christian mentoring. One Christian spirit sharpens another’s Christian spirit. One Christian’s conduct sharpens another Christian’s conduct. Ones’ love for God sharpens another’s love for God. The discipler/mentor is sharpened by the disciplined/mentoree and vice versa.

In the New Testament, Paul describes the powerful process of mentoring in 2 Timothy 2:2.

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

Simply put, experiential teaching from one who has been there and done that is the best guarantee of the permanence of truth. Just as Paul helped Timothy during a formative stage in his development, he challenged Timothy to mentor others who in turn could become mentors and keep the reproductive cycle going.

If the Church consistently followed this pattern the Church would grow numerically and spiritually as well-taught believers would teach others and commission them, in turn, to teach others. Believers need to be equipped to pass on the faith. Our work is not done until new believers are trained well enough to make disciples/mentors of others.

MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS IN THE BIBLE

A biblical basis for ministry is supported by many mentoring relationships in the Bible. Tim Elmore expounds on thirty-two in his book "*The Greatest Mentors in the Bible*" They are worthy of listing on the next page.

| | |
|--|--|
| Abraham & Lot | Johoiada & Joash |
| Jacob & Joseph | Isaiah & Hezekiah |
| Jethro & Moses | Luke & Theophilus |
| Moses & Joshua | Elizabeth & Mary |
| Deborah & Barak | John the Baptizer & His Disciples |
| Naomi & Ruth | Barnabas & Saul |
| Nehemiah & His Kinsmen | Barnabas & John Mark |
| Mordecai & Esther | Paul & Aquila & Priscilla |
| Eli & Samuel | Aquilla & Priscilla & Apollos |
| Jonathan & David | Paul & Silas |
| David & His Men | Paul & Timothy |
| David & Mephibosheth | Paul & Titus |
| Nathan & David | Paul & Onesimus |
| David & Solomon | Paul & Philemon |
| Elijah & Elisha | Paul & Julius |
| Elijah & The School of the Prophets | Jesus & The Twelve |

As can be determined, the listing of biblical mentoring relationships is quite extensive. However, there are several that draw special attention. They are, from the Old Testament the Elijah and Elisha relationship; and from the New Testament the Barnabas and Paul (Saul) and Paul and others, especially Timothy.

ELIJAH AND ELISHA-

Elijah's ministry does not end with the call of Elisha who became Elijah's attendant and student. Instead, it continued for several years with Elijah as the mentor of Elisha. After his renewal by the Lord on Mount Horeb, Elijah began a ministry of mentoring or discipling Elisha. Mentoring others is one of the most important ministries any of us can have, especially leaders, but one that should not be limited to leaders. Elijah first went to find Elisha who became an encouragement to the prophet. "And Elijah passed over to him (Elisha) and threw his mantle on him" (1 Kings 19:19). The mantle automatically marked a man as a prophet, a spokesman of God. It was also a symbol of sacrifice and commitment. The life of a prophet was not a life of luxury. The mantle represented a man's Gift, the call of God and the purpose for which God had called him. Throwing it over the shoulders of Elisha was a symbolic act denoting his summons to the office of prophet, but it was also a sure sign of God's Gift that enabled him to fulfill the prophetic office and ministry. This act by Elijah was a prophetic announcement that the Gift of prophecy had been given (or would come) to Elisha. Elisha immediately understood it even without words.

Actually, the ministry here was dual. Not only did Elijah minister to Elisha, but undoubtedly, Elisha became a great comfort and encouragement to Elijah. At one time, Elijah thought he alone was left to carry on the work of God, but he was informed this was not the case at all. In fact, there were 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Among these were several schools of the prophets. Until this time, they were hiding in caves, afraid to come out and speak for the Lord. But after Elijah's experience and renewal on Mount Horeb, he began traveling over the country teaching in these schools with Elisha as his attendant and disciple.

BARNABAS AND PAUL

With the exception of Jesus, Barnabas gets the vote of being the Most Valuable Mentor Award, mainly because of his Gift of encouragement and the fact that he mentored Paul who mentored so many others. Barnabas, a wealthy landowner in the early Church, became an advocate and guide for Saul, the former enemy and persecutor of the movement (Acts 9:26-30). Over time, with Barnabas' coaching and encouragement, Saul (later called Paul) became the central figure in the early spread of the gospel.

The apostles chose the perfect Christian name for Joses of Cyprus when they called him Barnabas –Son of Encouragement. Every appearance of Barnabas in scripture finds him encouraging others in the faith. He serves as the supreme model for how to mentor young believers. Often unnoticed, Barnabas mentored Paul while he was yet Saul. Noteworthy is Barnabas's strength as a mentor in correcting Paul concerning leaving John Mark behind (Acts 15: 39); and the sensitivity, love, and encouragement of Barnabas in that he never gives up on John Mark. Barnabas not only had the Gift of encouragement, he had the Gift of mentoring.

Consider this from *The Word in Life Study Bible*.

BARNABAS - A Model for Mentoring

Barnabas' example serves as a textbook case in Kingdom style mentoring.
This model mentor...

- *Befriended Saul (Paul) as a new believer (9:26-27).

- *Recruited a forgotten Saul from his home in Tarsus to help him stabilize a new group of multiethnic believers at Antioch, a year- long project (11:25-26).

- *Helped organize an international team of leaders in prayer, fasting and decision making. Result: he launched out with Paul to bring the gospel to peoples in the western empire (13:1-3).

- *Moved Paul to the forefront of leadership. "Barnabas and Saul" (13:7) became "Paul and his party" (13:13).

- *Contended with ethnic hostility, personal attacks and idol worship (13:46-14:20).

- *Resisted well-meaning but misguided attempts at Lystra to make him and Paul into gods of Greek culture (14:8-18).

- *Took the lead with Paul in defending Gentile believers before the Jerusalem Church council (15:1-4, 12).

- *Stood up to Paul over a negative assessment of young John Mark (15:36-38).
Notice: Encouragers like Barnabas need not avoid conflict.

A schematic Chart duplicated from *The Word in Life Study Bible*, Page 1949, shows the influence of Barnabas' mentoring gift.

KINGDOM – STYLE MENTORING

Chart is on separate page.

PAUL AND TIMOTHY -

Probably the most popular New Testament mentoring relationship is that between Paul and Timothy. "When we think of ministry/mentoring/ in the New Testament-we usually think of the Apostle Paul first. And, when we think of the classic mentoring match-up from his life –we usually think of young Timothy. Paul called Timothy, 'my son in the faith.'

"Why did Paul feel so devoted to this young disciple? In Philippians 2:20 he writes that he knew of no one who had such a kindred spirit for the people as Timothy did. In this young mentoree, Paul saw a youthful version of himself. Consequently, he poured himself into Timothy –mentoring him in Lystra, taking him on mission trips, letting him preach, leaving him to pastor emerging churches, writing instructional letters to him, etc. There wasn't anything Paul wouldn't do for this young protégé."

The background theme for the title of this book is based upon this mentoring relationship when Paul encourages his young son in the ministry to “stir up the Gift.” Paul, having founded the Church at Ephesus, seemingly ordained Timothy, “*laying on of my hands*” (2 Timothy 1:6b). Timothy, who himself had been first mentored by his grandmother, Lois, and mother Eunice, both having the Gift of faith and encouragement. *When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also* (2 Timothy 1:5).

Timothy became pastor of the early church at Ephesus and although having a genuine faith, or maybe even the Gift of faith, was still lacking in some other area that was needed for effective ministry. Therefore, his father in the ministry and mentor had to admonish him to “stir up the Gift of God.”

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND MENTORING

Spiritual Gifts are God-given power tools for ministry that when identified, developed, and put to use, lead to an entire non-traditional yet biblical way of doing church. Mentoring is a process of learning by individual instruction, guidance, coaching and modeling that is also non-traditional yet biblically based. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, although Spiritual Gifts are God-given, we are held responsible for their development and utilization. Mentoring represents an excellent training method of developing Spiritual Gifts. The Gift is the tool and the method of development is mentoring. Much the same as a saw, hammer and nails are the tools of carpentry, the Spiritual Gifts of leadership, teaching, shepherding, encouragement, etc. are the tools of a believer. The more experienced and accomplished carpenter teaches the less experienced apprentice how to use the tools of the trade. Likewise, the more experienced believer can teach, guide and coach the less experienced believer on how to develop and more effectively use the Spiritual Gifts that have been given. The result should be phenomenal.

There are at least four major advantages in developing Spiritual Gifts using the mentor-mentoree relationship method:

1. Mentors are sincerely concerned about the welfare of the mentoree. The mentor is trained to put all ego and all personal agendas aside. The only agenda is how to help the mentorees develop and use their Spiritual Gifts in a task of ministry. Mentors truly serve in the role of servant in that they invest their lives in the life of another. However, the mentor fully realizes that in helping mentorees develop and use their Spiritual Gifts, their own Spiritual Gifts are being further developed to the glory of God. The mentor model is very much a Christ model, for Jesus said, *But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: (Mark 10:43).*
2. Mentors gently yet surely cut the apron strings. Part of the coach/discipling model is leading by example and teaching another to lead by example. Eventually, all mentorees must become mentors.

3. Mentors hold their mentorees accountable for their behavior. This whole issue of accountability is void in most Christian training. Mentors, however, are not afraid to correct mentorees when they are wrong. An excellent example is Barnabas correcting Paul concerning his decision not to take John Mark on the second missionary trip (Acts 15:36-39). Afterward, Paul changed his viewpoint and asked Timothy to bring John Mark (2 Tim. 4:11). The mentor/ mentoree relationship does not avoid conflict.
4. The mentor/mentoree is a networking ministry. Spiritual Gifts are continuously networking with other Spiritual Gifts. Spiritual Gifts are affirmed as well as developed in the process. Spiritual Gifts are never judged or belittled in the process. Rather, Spiritual Gifts become supportive of one another.

THE GIFT OF MENTORING

The Gift of mentoring is not listed by name as one of the New Testament Spiritual Gifts. Noteworthy, for the point I am about to make, neither is music listed as one of the New Testament Spiritual Gifts. However, God has truly affirmed and demonstrated that he has given some special musical skills, either as natural talents or Spiritual Gifts. Remember, they both come from God, therefore, it is somewhat fruitless to argue how they should be categorized. I believe God has given some believers the special abilities to mentor.

The Gift of mentoring is the desire and capacity distributed by the Holy Spirit to effectively support and encourage others in their quest to know God; and His way and will through spiritual counseling and example. Notice the word “desire.” Those with the Gift of mentoring not only have the capacity but also have the desire. As alluded to earlier, the same can be said of all Spiritual Gifts. What you like to do helps you identify and discover your Gift. Some believers have the desire to guide others. Those that have the Gift of mentoring probably have a special Gift mix of Spiritual Gifts. Without exception, those who have the Gift of mentoring have the Gift of encouragement. Like Barnabas, they could be called the “sons and daughters of encouragement.” In addition, their Gift mix will also include the Gift of helps, shepherding, teaching, wisdom, and leadership.

Believers who have the Gift or Gift mix of mentoring are people growers.

**He has a sort of green thumb
When it comes to handling folks.
He'll listen to their troubles;
He'll chuckle at their jokes.
Somehow they know his interest
Is genuine and true,
And right before your eyes you'll see
Them grow an inch or two.
You'll see their faces blossom out
In smiles of budding cheer.
You know they've found a ray of hope**

**To drive away their fear;
You know he's sowed the seeds of faith
And showered them with love,
And made them sense the presence
Of the good Lord up above.
He clears out all the weeks of doubt
And fear and hate and greed
And gives them room to breathe.
He seems to sense their every need
He nurtures them with praises for
The good things that they've done
And trains them to look upward
And to stand tall in the sun.
He has a sort of green thumb
like a farmer with the sod-
But his work is growing people
In the image of his God.**

-Helen Lowerie Marshall

Believers with the Gift of mentoring should be given an opportunity to use their Gift in a ministry task. However, one does not have to have the Gift of mentoring to mentor Spiritual Gifts. One of the hindrances of effective mentoring programs is the idea of the “perfect mentor:” Such a believer does not exist. To be a mentor one only needs to have a God-given resource and a willingness to share it with another. Actually, a believer could be a mentor and a mentoree concurrently, but most likely in different partner relationships. A believer could be teaching someone and learning from someone else. The potential in spiritual mentoring is unlimited if we do not lock ourselves into some rigid idea model. Simply put, mentoring Spiritual Gifts is an empowering experience connecting two people.

Mentoring Spiritual Gifts is almost unheard of. But the same relational experiences and underlying mentoring principal that worked for Elijah, Barnabas, Paul, and Timothy, as well as the thousands in the secular world, are applicable to any situation where God has given a resource that needs to be developed and passed on to others. Spiritual Gifts can be mentored. Elijah passed the mantle to Elisha. Your Spiritual Gift is your mantle. God wants us to pass it on to another. Mentor/mentoree relationships can be established where both believers have the same Spiritual Gift mix; and mentor/mentoree relationship can be formed where believers have an altogether different Spiritual Gift mix. The Gifts of helps and encouragement could mentor any Gift. Oftentimes the believer with the Gift of leadership can benefit greatly from one who has the Gift of wisdom. The possibilities of benefits from Spiritual Gifts mentoring are enormous.

APPLICATION— (DOING IT)

There is no one right way of implementation. As long as you include the mentoring principle as outlined, defined, and discussed, you are mentoring. For example, mentoring is about relationships. It is not a program. Mentoring absolutely cannot take place without a relationship. Just as there are many ways to mentor, there are many mentoring models. To list a

few, there is the business model, the athletic model, the education model, the parent model, the counselor model, and the discipler model. I am simply suggesting another model: The biblical Spiritual Gifts model. Needless to say, if you decide to start a Spiritual Gifts mentoring ministry in your church, you will be plowing new ground.

Plowing new ground has its expected problems and frustrations, but that is what cutting edge ministry is all about: being ministry driven and going where others have not gone before. This excites me and I take great comfort in knowing that Jesus did go this way and was indeed a divine mentor. I believe God would have mentoring Spiritual Gifts –based ministry in our churches. Why? Because mentoring is about relationships and that is what Christianity is all about. It's all about our relationship with God, each other and the world. In my book, *Faithful Over a Few Things: Seven Critical Church Growth Principles*, I stated that in the area of church growth the word *relationship* is second only to the word *gospel*. The vision of the Church I pastor is “to become a biblical community of loving relationships whose members daily and devoutly love, follow and model Christ.” Also, I believe in Spiritual empowerment. This book is about empowering believers for the task of ministry. Mentoring is a relational experience through which one person empowers another by sharing God-given skills, Gifts, talents, and abilities. To be empowered means to have the resources, freedom, and life changing experiences that result in believers becoming all that God would have them to become. Congregations need to be empowered. The laity needs to be empowered. The Latin root word for laity is the word “idiot.” Congregations are not idiots. They are believers Gifted by God for a purpose. We must release this power. Furthermore, if we empower the congregation to minister to one another, the clergy will have more time to attend to their various roles of Spiritual leadership. Let's just do it.

STARTING A GIFT-BASED MENTORING MINISTRY IN YOUR CHURCH

STEP ONE- Get the senior pastor and the leadership of the church to sign on and “get online.”

My basic assumption to church ministries is that they simply do not effectively take place unless the senior pastor and the leadership, significant others, decision makers, core, movers and shakers, or whatever name you would like to call them, buy into the ministry. Giving permission or signing on the bottom line, could result in simply “signing off” or saying “I'm OK with it.” What is needed to effectively implement the ministry is for pastors and leadership to actually promote, participate and own the idea. That is what I call (LOL) “leadership online.”

STEP TWO- Create opportunities for relationship development.

Remember, just because you pair two people together does not mean that there is a relationship. Coupling, twinning, and pairing doesn't guarantee a relationship. You cannot make a relationship, but you can provide opportunities for relationships to develop. For example, prayer breakfasts, retreats, fun days, athletic contests, and mission projects represent excellent opportunities for relational interaction. Also, existing small groups such as Sunday school classes, ushers, and choirs are places where relationships can be intentionally formalized.

STEP THREE- Determine how mentors and mentorees are going to be selected.

The major pitfall here is resisting the temptation to find the “ideal” person. If the chemistry is right and the two are wanting and willing, the selection can be determined. Regardless of the selection process, three categories should be identified: (1) The Barnabases- the ones with the Gift of encouragement or the mentoring mix. (2) The Pauls- The older, more experienced, proven believer. (3) The Timothys- The younger learner.

STEP FOUR- Training Mentors.

Regardless of the mentoring model, mentors should be trained in the mentoring process. There are excellent resources that will help you with this step and step three. Tim Elmore’s book, *Mentoring: How to Invest Your Life in Others*, treats both of the necessary steps quite adequately.

STEP FIVE- Name It And Go Public.

It has been my experience that what you name a particular ministry can influence the success. For example, we have been more successful calling the traditional 9:45 to 10:45 a.m. Sunday morning hour “Fulfillment Hour” rather than “Sunday School.” We need not swim or paddle upstream when we can either coast or glide on dry land. The word *mentoring* has many connotations. Due to our lack of knowledge, the very word may cause anxiety. Without question, the word is most often associated with secular society, which could cause some roadblocks. So, I would suggest giving it another name like ‘Passing the Baton,’ “Transferring the Mantle,” or either of the 32 biblical relationships listed in Tim Elmore’s book, particularly the Barnabas or Paul/Timothy ministry. Personally, I like the “Iron Sharpens Iron” ministry based on Proverbs 27:17. I call it the ISIR, which stands for “Iron Sharpens Iron Relationships.”

STEP SIX- Select, appoint, assign a mentor coordinator.

Leaders determine the success of a ministry. It is not likely that the senior pastor or any of the paid ministers will have time to give adequate leadership to a new ministry. Plus, the fact that using paid staff could defeat the purpose of congregational empowerment. Needless to say, the coordinator should have the Spiritual Gift of leadership as well as the Gift of mentoring or a Gift mix that has been discussed in this chapter.

The approach to the above steps for starting a Gift-based mentoring ministry in your church can be formal or informal. From a formal standpoint, either a new ministry or existing ministry can be utilized. Following the above step-by-step procedure with the formal structure approach, the mentor must always select the mentoree. If your church already has a Gift-based ministry, such as that which is recommended in the next chapter entitled, “Starting a Gift-Based Ministry in your Church,” I strongly suggest that you simply integrate the Spiritual Gifts mentoring relationships into that existing ministry. However, a much more informal approach could be taken by simply asking those who have discovered their Spiritual Gifts to look for another who has a Spiritual Gift that could sharpen theirs. In this case, the mentoree selects the mentor. This has its advantage because the mentoree knows what they are looking for and in the process of selecting will indeed affirm another’s Gifts. This is a win-win situation. Although

informal and non-structured, some provision should be made for monitoring and record keeping relative to the amount and effectiveness of the mentoring that takes place.

In conclusion, God has placed a mantle, a call, upon every believer in Jesus Christ (1Peter 4:10-11). As believer priests, this mantle is our God-given Spiritual Gift(s). As Gifted ones, we are each to be good stewards of the stewardship He has entrusted to us regarding our time, talents (including our Spiritual Gifts), treasures and His truth. This requires commitment. When commitment is not there, we will be tottering on the fence, and we will be unable to make the tough decisions needed to follow the Lord. This is undoubtedly what Jesus Christ meant in Luke 14:26, 27, and 33. Luke 14, deals with the necessity of total surrender. Without total surrender, we cannot be His disciples; we simply will not be able to make the sacrificial decisions that following Him will require. This means a re-evaluation of our values, priorities, attitudes, and pursuits, but above all, answering the question, who and what is the source of my faith? Is it the Lord? Do I truly believe He will be all I need? Or is my faith in reality anchored in the details of life-pleasure, position, power, prestige, possession? Elisha, Elijah, Barnabas, Paul, and Timothy were ordinary, but they became extra-ordinary because they were available to the Lord; because they turned their lives over to the Lord, lock, stock and barrel and God was able to use them in tremendous ways. Your Gift is your mantle. Decide today to mentor your Gift to the glory of God.

CHECKPOINT

1. What is mentoring?

Mentoring is a cooperative and nurturing relationship between a seasoned, proven person and a less experienced novice who wants to learn and gain valuable practical information and insight into the particular God-given expertise of the more experienced person.

2. Where did the term mentoring originate?

In Greek mythology. The story of Mentor comes from Homer's Odyssey.

3. What does the scripture tell us about mentoring in Matthew 28?

The Great commission is a biblical command to mentor (make disciples).

4. Who was Jesus' mentor?

God Himself chose to be a mentor to Jesus.

5. How does Proverbs 27:17 relates to mentoring?

Iron sharpeneth iron; as a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. It deals with the influence which men have on each other whether positive or negative. Mentoring is a relationship where one influences another.

6. List one of the four advantages of developing Spiritual Gifts using mentoring relationships.

Mentorees becoming Mentors.

7. List the six steps to starting a Gift-Based Ministry in your church.

(1) Get senior Pastor and Church leadership support. (2) Create opportunities for relationship development, (3) Determine how Mentors and Mentorees are going to be selected, (4 Train the Mentors,) (5) Name it and go public and (6) Select, appoint, and assign a mentoring coordinator.

FILL IN THE BLANK

Mentoring forces sharing of _____ . (practical information)

HELPFUL DIALOGUE

1. Although mentoring has its origins in Greek mythology, Christianity today is based on relationships of nurturing love and sharing understanding. Do you currently participate in a mentoring relationship? Are you the mentor or mentoree?

2. As a mentor, who do you know who would benefit from a one-on-one relationship in which you could share your practical knowledge of Spiritual Gifts and your experiences of how they work and in what circumstances?

WHAT IF I DON'T BELIEVE

If I don't believe...

* I will never allow someone to mentor me and I will never mentor anyone else in the Christian life. I will never experience the blessed nurturing relationship.

* I may end up reinventing the wheel because I lack the practical knowledge and the benefit of someone else having already been there and done that.

A CHALLENGE:

Proverbs 17:8

Proverbs 27:17

Proverbs 1:2

Acts 11:26

Matthew 28:19-20

Luke 16:12-13

Mark 3:14

Luke 8:1

John 15:15

John 13:15

John 12-12

Matthew 16:24

Mark 3:14

2 Thessalonians 3:9

1 Timothy 4:12

2 Timothy 3:10

Hebrews 13:7

1 Peter 5:3

3 John 11

2 Timothy 2:2

Acts 9:26-30

Acts 15:39

Mark 10:43

2 Timothy 4:11