

The Encouragement Newsletter

1st Quarter - 2011

The Mentoring Experience- Pt. 1

I was blessed to be raised in a home with both parents. However, it was my mother who provided the discipline of Christ. She was the one who told me that I did not have to get saved every week. Let me explain...I thought because I had sinned during the week (probably because I did not do some chores) I had to get saved again. My mom corrected that mindset. She definitely followed the scripture to train me and my siblings in the way of Christ and make us into His disciples. She taught me about prayer, reading the Bible, faithfulness and commitment to God and His house. She taught me all of the foundational things that would make me stable in Christ. So, my mother was my first spiritual and natural mentor. Thanks Mom! This was my initial development, but in my adulthood, the Lord saw fit to place someone else in my life to add to what my mother had imparted deep within.

About 25 years ago, my heart was knitted to two people that continue to provide input and be a positive influence in my life. The individuals are my husband and my friend and mentor Verna Broady. You see, I am this unique complex "work in progress" (*uh...I can be a handful*) and because my Father is so mindful of my purpose, who I am and what I need to bring balance to my life, He decided to give me some special people to help me fulfill His purpose. My mentor has been very instrumental in keeping me on "the straight and narrow" and putting disciplines in me that helped make me the woman I am today.

There are many ways one can mentor. I like to refer to this as "direct mentoring" and "indirect mentoring". Indirect mentoring is done at a distance or by one who may not consider him and herself a mentor to the individual. There is no understanding or agreement of a mentoring relationship. In other words, it is not formal. You learn by watching their life. This type of mentoring is result preaching, teaching, reading books and other media forms. Direct mentoring is formal and the mentor has agreed to form a mentoring relationship. This type of relationship is more personal and what I call - "in your face". The mentor has a vested interest in making sure the mentee is well equipped for the plan and purpose of God - as long as the relationship lasts.

This concept of mentoring seems to be embraced as a key element for business growth in the corporate world. In actuality, it is a Biblical concept that needs to be restored to the church. There are many examples in the scriptures where we can find mentoring relationships. In Matthew 28:19 Jesus told the disciples to go and make (produce, build, create, to prepare for use) disciples. They were to

reproduce what Jesus had produced in them. So our mandate is "to be" disciplined (or mentored) and then "make" disciples. By the way...please note, the process of "becoming" a disciple is a lifelong process.

To begin, I want to lay the foundation with some definitions, provide purpose, a few biblical examples and then end with my personal experience.

DEFINITIONS

Webster's Dictionary -

Mentor - A wise trusted teacher/counselor; guide; tutor; coach

Mentoring - The act of providing counsel; guidance; tutoring; coaching. It is also the act of receiving counsel; guidance; teaching

Disciple - One who believes and helps disseminate the teachings of a master

Discipline - Training expected to produce a specific type of pattern of behavior; 2) To be trained by instruction and control (restraint, command, authority); and 3) Training and conditioning to produce obedience and self-control; to bring under control

Strong's Concordance -

Disciple - Learner; Pupil

Wycliffe Bible Dictionary -

Disciple - A believer; A learner in the school of Christ; One who is committed to a sacrificial life for His sake; One who acts to fulfill the climactic obligation of discipleship, namely to make disciples of others

Discipline - This implies instruction and correction; the training which improves, molds, strengthens, and perfects character.

*Therefore,
go into all of
the world
and make
disciples,
teaching
them to
observe all
that I have
commanded
you.*

Discipline is a major part of the mentoring experience. Discipline is the sure evidence that one is a son or daughter of God and evidence of God's love. Lack of chastening (no discipline) is an evidence of hatred rather than love. In the natural, times of discipline creates the feeling that we will not survive, but the end result is godly character and maturity. (Heb. 12:10,11 & Proverbs 13:24) Although we are "grown", we need discipline, training, guidance and teaching from spiritual mentors.

What is the Purpose of the Mentoring Experience

The Lord has plans for each one of us. It is for good and not evil. (Jeremiah 29:11) However, to fulfill his plan, He will use mentors to make us and build within us what is necessary. Transformation into his full purpose is a process, not an event that will just happen. Since it is a process, we must always remember — We are a work in progress.

The word Experience means - Active participation in events or activities, leading to accumulation of knowledge or skill. This means the mentor is not doing all of the work. The mentor is not the one doing all of the praying, fasting, studying the scriptures, investing in materials and sacrificing. While the one being mentored just take from the mentor. There must be active participation of the mentor and mentee in order for the relationship to accomplish His purpose.

Mentoring has many purposes, but here are a few—

- To bring the one being mentored into a closer relationship with Christ. It is not to make one dependent upon the mentor as if he or she is the Lord. It is not for exploitation of the mentor or mentee.
- The mentor's role is to be a positive influence in the mentees life and the mentee's role is to embrace that influence. Resulting in fulfillment of God's will.
- The mentor, sent by God, will see the purpose within the one being mentored and direct their input into their life in that direction. The teaching and instruction will be designed to make the mentee into a true "Disciple of Christ".
- To learn from someone who has been where you are trying to go.
- Mentoring is for maturity, growth, character development and equipping for the Kingdom of God.

I only listed a few purposes. The list could go on, but I must move on. There are so many looking for purpose and I believe they are in need of some direction from a mentor. To fully reach the individual purpose of God, I firmly believe we need godly mentors and mentees that will give themselves unselfishly and mentees that willingly sit at the feet of those who know the way.

Biblical Examples of Mentoring

Jesus Christ and the Disciples The Ultimate Example

Let me start by saying, Jesus is our pattern. In everything we do, we can look into the scriptures to find principals and learn out how He accomplished things while on earth. Jesus shows us how to choose and develop disciples. He had many disciples, but they did not have the same level of relationship with Him. He had the crowds who were referred to as disciples, then he had the 12 that were handpicked to be trained as Apostles (the leaders of the move of God after his ascension) and then there were three out of the 12 that experienced what the others did not experience. Like the transfiguration seen in Matthew 17:1-2.

An important note I want point out here about mentoring is - The closer you are to your mentor, the deeper the relationship, dealings and growth.

In the gospels we see where Jesus trained, encouraged, exhorted and rebuked his disciples, even after his resurrection. (Mark 16:14 & John 21:15-22) Peter always stands out as the disciple that was in trouble. So, I want to make some points about his experience with Jesus.

- Peter was always saying something and responding in ways that got him in trouble. At one point we see him with a mighty revelation; then we see him being rebuked by Jesus. (Matthew 16:13-20,21-23)
- Jesus told Peter he would deny him. Peter said he would not (Matthew 26:33), but Jesus knew His heart (Matthew 26:34). He said he would never disown Jesus and the other disciples said the same thing. (Matthew 26:35) But we all know what happened. When the heat was turned up at the crucifixion and the events that led to it, Peter crumbled. He was afraid for His life. Jesus already knew this would happen. Scripture says that Peter wept bitterly because he denied Jesus. (Matthew 26:75) I am sure he felt totally condemned; however, Jesus still loved him.
- Peter's disposition and personality did not keep Jesus from choosing him nor continuing his relationship with him. Jesus saw purpose and focused on it. He saw passed Peter's negatives. Jesus knew that Acts 2 was coming and He made sure Peter was well equipped.

We see a fruitful and godly life after the disciple's relationship with Jesus. This is a major point to consider when looking for a mentor. Look at their fruit, their offspring or children (those that have been in a mentoring relationship them). Take into account that some who were mentored may have strayed like Judas, but he was one out of the 12 chosen to walk with Jesus. After encountering a healthy mentoring relationship, the result is fruitfulness, godliness, righteousness and holiness.

*Fruitfulness
is
the result
of a
healthy
mentoring
relationship.*



Naomi and Ruth

The mentoring relationship of Naomi and Ruth can be found in the book of Ruth, but here is a little background. Naomi's husband and sons died while they were living in Moab. Ruth was married to one of Naomi's sons for at least 10 years. Because of these deaths and the way her life turned out, Naomi was in a depressed state as she was on the way back to her native land. Looking out for the well being of her daughter-in-laws, she encouraged them to go back home to their own mothers. The daughter-in-law named Orpah decided to go back home, but Ruth decided she did not want to leave Naomi. Even in Naomi's state of bitterness, she displayed a life that inspired Ruth to desire to stay with her, learn from her and serve her God. She was not thinking about a husband or children. One thing that we see consistently in the life of Ruth is her obedience to Naomi. She did whatever Naomi told her to do, which is key in a mentoring relationship. I am not saying the mentor has control of the life of the one being mentored, but the instructions provided should be carried out. Ruth submitted to counsel and guidance, which made a healthy relationship. Naomi gave up on her own feelings of lost and dismay to guide Ruth into a bright God ordained future.

Paul and Timothy

Paul met Timothy on a journey in Lystra. We see the development of this relationship in Acts 16.

There were many outstanding qualities already built into Timothy's life. The brothers spoke well of Timothy (v. 2) He gave himself to the prayer and Bible study etc., which was the preparation for him to become a part of Paul's life. We must prepare ourselves because we do not know whom the Lord will have us learn from. Paul was a man about the Father's business. He could not waste his time and energy on someone who was not trying to go anywhere. We see how he did not want Mark to come along because of the way he left on one of the journeys with Paul (Acts 15:38). Many times people see someone and want what they have, but have done nothing to prepare themselves for that relationship.

I am sure it was only after a lot of thoughtful consideration that Paul decided to take Timothy on the journey, but there was one problem. Timothy was not circumcised and where they were going this was essential. Timothy submitted to being circumcised - as a man. (v3) Can we be circumcised? When I ask this, I am speaking of spiritual circumcision — the cutting away of things that offend the heart of God and keep us from fulfilling His purpose. Can we submit to someone looking into our hearts, dispositions and allow them to cut away, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, those things that will hinder us from taking the journey? God will use our mentors to circumcise our heart to make us disciples. We may get offended at the process, but it is our Father bringing discipline to us. We do not understand His way and respond in the wrong way at times. Thank God for those mentors who still see beyond our temper tantrums.

Because of Timothy submission, he was able to travel to many places with Paul. He was trained and developed to the point where he was able to take on some weight and responsibility. He

became the pastor of the church at Ephesus. In the books of I/II Timothy we see where Paul is constantly giving Timothy advice, counsel, encouragement admonishment and affirmation. Paul gave Timothy warnings of the types of behavior to run from, the types of conversations not to engage in and who to stay away from. Now when Paul called names (like in I Tim. 1:18-20, II Tim. 4:14-15) and warned Timothy of certain people, it was not gossip or because Paul did not like these people. Paul knew Timothy's life and what God had put in him. Therefore, keeping company with these type of people would be a distraction and ultimately take Timothy off course. This is what a good mentor will do – encourage, affirm, encourage and warn. Why? Because it's about being developed for God's work.

The mentoring relationship between Paul and Timothy created such a bond that Paul called Timothy son. Many times this is the end result of a mentoring relationship. The mentee becomes so connected they are like a son or daughter.

Some mentoring relationships will last for a short season and some will last a life time.

We have seen what happens in the mentoring relationship from scripture. Some relationships will last for a short season and some a life time, just so we can fulfill the Father's purpose. The season is determined by God. Again, I believe mentoring is essential to development in Christ. We need trusted mentors to guide in the journey of life. Every mentor must know whom they are assigned to and the one searching for a mentor must know who should have input into their life. Both must carefully and prayerfully consider the relationship because this type of experience takes time, patience and endurance. Let me encourage you, if you have not been directly mentored, ask the Father to direct you in this. It may be what is necessary for this phase of your journey.

This is the end of Part I, but in Part II, I will share my personal "Mentoring Experience" along with some essentials of a mentoring relationship.

If this newsletter has been an Encouragement to you, please let me know by e-mailing me at - [The _EPlace@yahoo.com](mailto:The_EPlace@yahoo.com). I would love to hear from you. Also, the newsletter along with other writings are available at TheEncouragementPlace.com.