

PASS IT ON



counseling, mentoring,
coaching, discipleship
+ other relationships that
make a difference

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IT ON**

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Dedicated to all my mentors both past, present and in the future.

*The lessons I learned, although often challenging,
have been invaluable. Your guidance has made me who I am today,
and I am better off having met you. Thank you for touching my life.*

I will be forever grateful.

BEFORE WE BEGIN

When you look at the world around you, what do you see? I'm sure you could easily point out its many blessings, such as supportive church communities, unending opportunities and kind, generous people who love and support each other.

But what about the bad stuff? What about the greed, passivity and violence that run rampant, or the millions of people struggling from poverty, abuse, spiritual unrest and prejudice?

Our apathetic culture tries to convince us to ignore all the evil we see and tells us we could never make much of a difference. But deep inside we know that's simply not true. God calls us as Christians to be His representatives on earth, which means subduing, developing and taking care of the world we live in (Genesis 1:28). And in order to fulfill this calling, we must suspend our natural selfishness and let God give us the strength to initiate positive change everywhere we go.

While there are many ways we can make a difference on a broad scale, our biggest responsibility is to help the people we see throughout our everyday lives. In 1 Peter 5:2, Paul gives us a clear directive to be the leaders this world needs. He says, "Be shepherds of God's flock, the believers under your care. Watch over them, though not because you have to. Instead, do it because you want to. That's what God wants you to do." God wants you to tell everyone you meet about the good news of His active involvement in our

lives, and that starts with engaging the people around you. God placed you in their presence to lead them toward hope, success and His great purpose for their lives.

Over the years, God will direct you to numerous people He wants you to respectfully share His love with, several of whom He will call you to form meaningful, long-term relationships with. These are the people you are uniquely qualified to help become who God intended them to be. When you accept this challenge, you initiate what I call a pass-it-on relationship, which involves the great responsibility of passing on a legacy of honesty, courage and living up to Godly values. Through this relationship, you'll guide others in developing their ability to apply God's truths to every area of their lives and ultimately reach their full potential.

You may find this responsibility intimidating at first. It's not easy to accept that your words and actions have the power to turn someone either toward or away from God. You may think you're not cut out for it. But God isn't asking you to start from scratch—He's already given you all the skills and abilities you need to successfully mentor others. All you have to do is commit to trusting and following Him.

The good news is, by picking up this book you've already taken the first step. Whether you're a coach, counselor, teacher, parent, pastor, disciple-maker, sibling, friend or simply someone longing to make an impact, you've recognized the importance of taking control of what you pass on to others and helping them change for the better. Your specific role will create a unique dynamic with your mentee and will at times demand different approaches. But in the end we're all mentors and disciple-makers called by God to respond in love to the needs of others (Acts 1:8).

For this reason, I'll refer to these various complex relationships as mentorships throughout this book. Even though each mentoring relationship will have different requirements based on the boundaries, experience and personalities of the individuals

involved, they all have the same basic foundation and must follow the same core principles. This book will examine the fundamental aspects and requirements of mentorship and teach you how to invest in yourself, your mentee and your relationship. Then you'll be able to adjust every approach you learn to fit your relationship's unique needs, which will allow you to have the biggest spiritual impact possible on your mentee.

In Part I, we'll look at issues you must confront and work through on your own before taking on a formal mentoring role, which includes accepting the influence you have on others and learning how to involve God in every relationship. Then in Part II, we'll examine the process of mentorship and how to ease both yourself and your mentee into this life-changing relationship. And finally in Part III, we'll briefly go over the topics every effective mentorship must cover. Along the way, you'll learn how to tap in to your full potential to express God's love to everyone you meet. When you walk with God on this journey, He will work with you and through you to help your mentorship succeed.

Although mentorship is a lifelong mission, the ultimate goal is to guide your mentee into becoming such a strong leader that they don't need you anymore (Ephesians 4:13-15). Many years ago I taught sailing at a camp on the Chesapeake Bay. One particularly rebellious teenager decided to leave the boundaries we'd set on the bay and sailed out of our sight. The other instructors tasked me with disciplining her, so I looked around for a quick means of getting out to where she was. I spotted two young kids driving a rented motorboat around in circles as their mother watched from the shore. I hurried over and asked her if I could hop on board and let her children take me out to the rogue sailboat. She agreed, and we sped out into the bay.

I instructed the teenager to head back to shore, and then directed the kids to circle around. As we motored toward the shore, a huge barge came by us, creating big waves. I yelled to the kids to

turn off the motor so we could bob over top of them. But before they could, the first wave smacked against the side of our boat. It immediately filled up with water and tipped downward. The motor pulled the boat down into the water until it disappeared. Thankfully we were wearing life jackets, so all three of us simply ended up bobbing out in the middle of the bay.

I braced myself for screams of terror from the two kids with me, but amazingly they never came. Despite being so young, they stayed calm the entire time. Their mother, on the other hand, wasn't quite so calm. When help arrived and I returned to shore with her children, her desperation and fear for them manifested as anger toward me. But they really were fine—and that was largely due to the excellent job she had done raising them.

It's the same with the people we mentor. We try to teach them how to live so they can develop all of their abilities and handle any challenge that comes their way. But we can only know if we succeed when the barges of life appear. In those cases, we won't always be available to help them, just like that mother wasn't. They're going to have to be prepared to make the right choices and let God drive their boat. What they do at that moment demonstrates whether they internalized our messages to love others, follow God and build a firm, lasting identity.

God has and will send you people who are ready to learn from you. Use this book to prepare yourself now for this divinely appointed task. Then you'll be ready to give your mentee the best of yourself so they can honor and glorify God with you.

PART 1

THE IDENTITY

OF A

MENTOR

A GODLY MANDATE

I've spent the past 40 years counseling men and their families, and though I've given a lot of advice and spoken a lot of truths, my favorite thing to tell these men is something I know will make them cringe. I get their attention, look them right in the eye and say, "You're a poet."

Unsurprisingly, most of the time these men scoff at what is apparently a ludicrous statement. "What do I know about rhyme schemes and metaphors?" they think. Women aren't much better. Although they do tend to be more in tune with their God-given creativity, many of them also dismiss their poetry simply because they can't write sonnets like Shakespeare.

But what I'm talking about is a different kind of poetry. Isaiah 64:8 states, "LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay. You are the potter. Your hands made all of us." Like Shakespeare molds words into beautiful, rhythmic descriptions of life, you have the power to mold those around you into the best versions of themselves.

Of course, how exactly you mold others can manifest itself in many different ways depending on your specific God-given gifts and skills (1 Corinthians 12:5-6). When you help a friend fix a strange sound in their car engine, you're an artist. When you plan a successful party that brings people closer together, you're an artist. When you help your son study for his history exam—you guessed it—you're an artist.

So welcome to pottery class, Mr. and Ms. Artist! Like it or not, disciple-making is not set aside for a special few—it's for *all* of us. If we truly want to be more like Jesus, we have to accept our responsibility to shape the people in our lives (Matthew 28:19-20). God is constantly opening doors for you to be His representative, and it doesn't matter how or where you do it. Any way you express the creativity God gave you has significance as long as you do it for Him. Your purpose is to share His character and wisdom through your particular poetry in order to improve the lives of everyone you meet (Psalm 37:30).

As you begin to understand your role as a mentor, you must realize mentorship isn't confined to the deep, meaningful relationships you create. Everyone seeks guidance, especially children and young adults. They don't yet understand the world and have questions about what it means to discover and live up to their God-given worth. And while they'll likely learn many of those valuable life lessons from their parents, teachers and friends, they'll also learn by observing strangers. And that includes you.

Mentorship isn't what you do—it's who you are (1 Peter 2:9). Whether you realize it or not, you represent God in every interaction and every situation to everyone who talks with you, observes you or even hears about you. I like to refer to this everyday impact as informal mentorship. The ways you shape others informally can have just as powerful an influence as any other relationship.

Realizing how greatly you impact others can feel scary, especially because of the domino effect of mentorship. Just as strengthening one part of your body increases the effectiveness of your body overall, building up one person spiritually can have a miraculous effect on their loved ones and community. It can encourage a mother to talk to her daughter about a complicated issue, teach a father to show his love for his children or guide a child to learn and grow. And when you teach others bad habits, even inadvertently, they will pass that destructive behavior along to someone else. In

my years as a counselor, I've seen the damage that can be done by someone who's never had a healthy mentor. They feel lost and alone and often drag others down with them in their attempts to satisfy their selfish desires.

Since you don't always know when you're informally mentoring someone, you need to continually examine your strengths and weaknesses, your emotional responses and your thought processes in order to see how you might be impacting others. Are you demonstrating God's love through your actions? How well do you apply His Word to your life? Are there areas where you still need to grow? Is each person you meet better off after being around you? Did you make them feel valued, or did you drain from their bucket of self-confidence?¹

Until you become aware of your complexity as a human being and find ways to describe it, you limit your ability to make lasting change, which in turn hinders the effectiveness of your leadership. Once you can put words to what's going on inside you, you'll be able to ask God for His help in integrating His Word into every area of your life. With God's transforming power, you'll find the strength to put in the hard work of internalizing Godly principles and reaching your full potential.

God has a plan for you to build up others and help shape them into who He made them to be (1 Thessalonians 5:11). You can't ignore this calling. Your willingness to accept your God-given identity and commit all of who you are to this mission will touch countless lives and even benefit your own development. As you follow His lead, your strength will grow, your vision will become clearer and your actions will be more effective. The road before you is long but full of promise and rewards. Let's enjoy the journey together.

1 For a great leadership resource on building up others, check out the book *How Full Is Your Bucket?* by Tom Rath and Donald O. Clifton.

THINK ABOUT IT

We can't improve ourselves unless we think about and digest what God is trying to teach us. The questions at the end of each chapter in Part I and Part II will help you assess your own journey as a mentor and discover better ways of mentoring others. Although this journey is a personal one, I recommend discussing these questions with a friend, spouse or accountability partner. Their outside perspective, thoughtful feedback and consistent support will help you discover even more about yourself and encourage you to accomplish all that God has planned.

- 1 Think about the groups you've been part of that are designed to help others, whether it's some form of ministry, a charity or another type of community program. How has that experience helped you impact others? How has it helped your own spiritual growth?
- 2 Name 10 people you have an informal influence on, whether or not you were always aware of it. How have you impacted them?
- 3 How difficult is it for you to regularly involve God or others you trust in evaluating yourself and developing future goals?
- 4 How does 2 Corinthians 13:5 relate to your need to continually examine yourself?

Take a good look at yourselves to see if you are really believers. Test yourselves. Don't you realize that Christ Jesus is in you? Unless, of course, you fail the test!

THIS IS A SAMPLE. SOME PAGES HAVE BEEN OMITTED.



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MORE RESOURCES FOR MENTORING

The following resources include discussion questions at the end of each chapter or in the back of the book to guide conversations about the various lessons. You can purchase these products or learn more about them at liveupresources.com.

VIDEO SERIES FOR MENTORING MEN

The Heroic Man's Journey

A 5-part series that teaches men to recognize their God-given design and unique potential. Each part contains 24 lessons.

Following God in the Raw

A 14-lesson series that emphasizes the importance of brotherhood and relationships with others.

The Genesis of Manhood

A 6-lesson series that explores God's original plan for manhood and encourages men to rediscover their life purpose.

Real Men (Volumes 1-3)

A 15- to 16-lesson series that brings together a group of dynamic speakers to lead males toward becoming real men of God.

Fighting for Your Manhood

An 8-lesson series that redefines manhood to reflect God's view of the characteristics and actions that make up a true man.

VIDEO SERIES FOR MENTORING WOMEN

The Genesis of Woman

A 3-part series that takes a deeper look into God's original plan for women and helps women take hold of their God-given strength. Each part contains 9 lessons.

Living Better

A 2-part series that leads women to join together to uncover their great value and unique purpose. Each part contains 18 lessons.

BOOKS FOR YOUTH MENTORING

The Campfire Gang (10+ Books)

(Recommended age: 5-13)

A character-building fiction adventure series for boys that explores God's plan and valuable life lessons.

Bull

(Recommended age: 12-15)

A coming-of-age book for fathers and sons that covers the most foundational aspects of manhood.

Being God's Man

(Recommended age: 12+)

An in-depth look at Godly manhood that can be studied by fathers and sons or men's groups.

Basic Warrior Training

(Recommended age: 16+)

A true story of a male's search for manhood through his experience of becoming a United States Marine.

BOOKS FOR ALL AGES

Why Not Try to Hit the Real Target—Men

A step-by-step guide for building and sustaining an effective men's ministry.

You're Not Dead Yet

A book to help men over the age of 50 discover the purpose God has for the second half of their lives.

Off the Page and Into Your Life

Inspirational stories of how seven different women discovered how to relate to God's Word in new and wonderful ways.

“SO YOU MUST GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS.”

Jesus’s words in Matthew 28:19 don’t apply only to the great spiritual leaders of the past—they are a command to you today, no matter your age, profession or life experience.

Pass It On will show you how to take the first steps toward fulfilling this great call, starting with developing yourself as a leader and learning the mentorship process. Dive into a journey that will impact the lives of everyone you meet.



D R . R O Y S M I T H

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