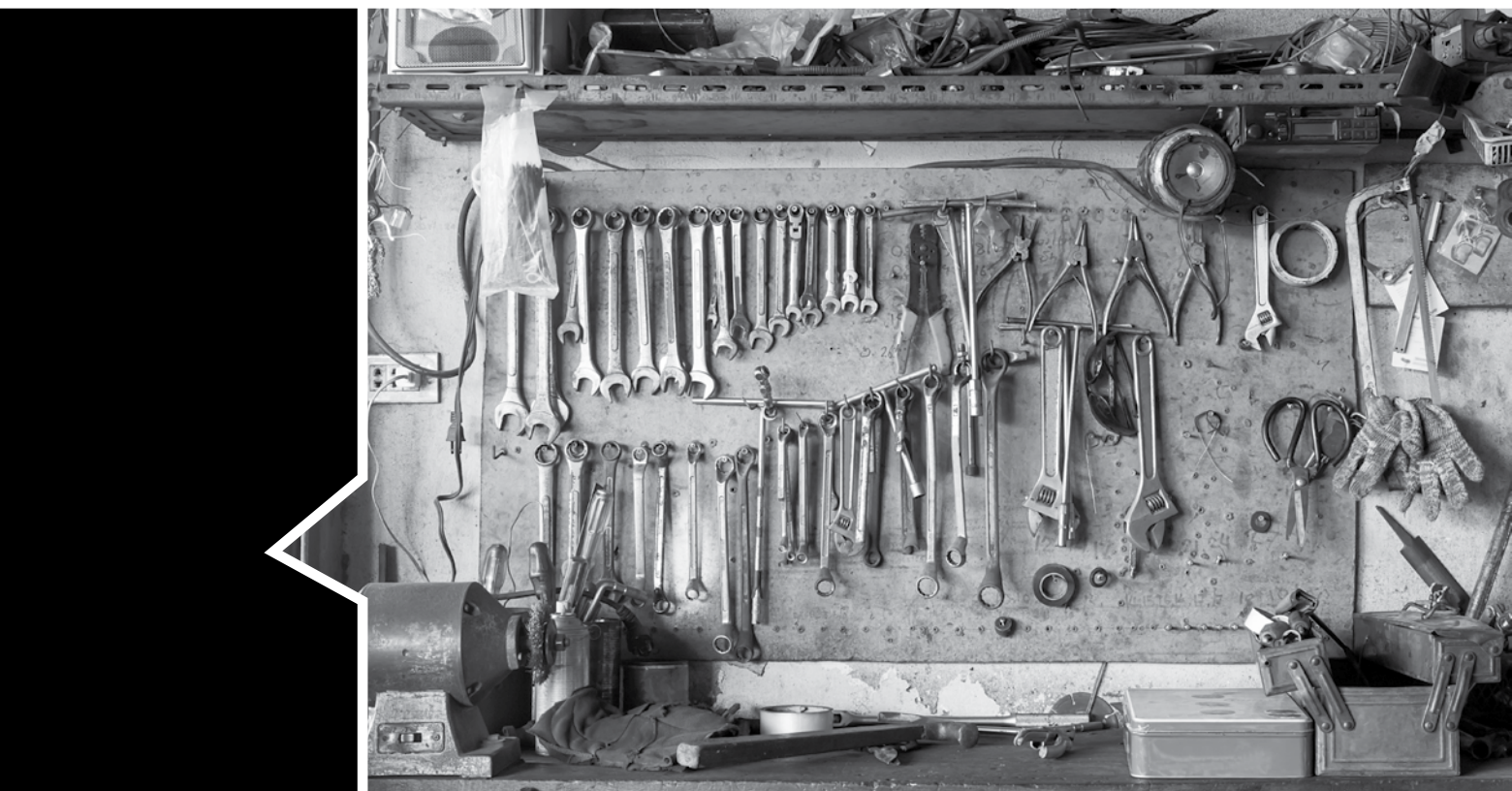


MENTORING: HOW TO EQUIP AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS



Everybody needs a mentor?

“Mentoring” is a buzzword these days. The business world loves the term, but what does mentoring mean in the church?

Mentoring is one believer intentionally investing in another believer to help him or her become more like Christ. It’s discipleship the way Jesus and Paul did it.

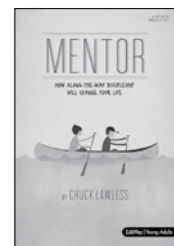
Jesus and Paul made disciples through mentoring. They prayerfully watched for potential mentees, initiated relationships with them, trained them, corrected them as needed, and then released them to do ministry themselves. They modeled for us what we need to be doing today, especially when we remember how others have helped us grow.

This study focuses on the mentoring relationship between Paul and Timothy. It’s only an introduction to the topic, but you’ll get enough to start mentoring. Someone probably helped you in your walk with Christ; now you can do the same.



CHUCK LAWLESS

Chuck is Dean of Doctoral Studies at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. He also serves as Team Leader for Theological Education Strategists for the International Mission Board. He and his wife, Pam, started mentoring students more than twenty years ago. He is the author of a more detailed study on the subject of mentoring: *Mentor: How Along-the-Way Discipleship Can Change Your Life* (Nashville: LifeWay, 2018).







SPECIAL FOCUS

MENTORING: HOW TO EQUIP AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS

► ***The Point***

Someone helped you grow in Christ; do the same for someone else.

► ***The Passage***

2 Timothy 2:1-2; 3:10-17

► ***The Bible Meets Life***

“My mentor told me I should be open to getting remarried,” Tom remarked. That wasn’t surprising, as I knew Tom was lonely after his wife of forty-nine years had passed away. What did surprise me was hearing he still had a mentor; after all, he was more than seventy years old. And his mentor was over ninety years old himself!

Tom is one of my heroes in the faith. I count him not only a friend, but also a mentor and a model of faith. His prayer life is powerful, and his commitment to godliness is deep. He walks so faithfully with God that I invite him to my seminary classes every semester because I want my students to know him.

Tom’s mentor invests in him. In turn, Tom walks beside me as my mentor. I then pour into the students I’m mentoring. Through these relationships, I teach them what Tom has taught me—and I’m trusting they will teach others, too. Mentoring: one person investing in another. Our look this week at Paul and Timothy’s relationship helps us prepare to be mentors ourselves.

► ***The Setting***

Paul wrote 2 Timothy from a Roman prison. He apparently already had been or shortly would be condemned to death at the hands of notorious Roman Emperor Nero. This last known letter of the apostle was directed toward his friend, son in the faith, and protégé Timothy. Paul sought to pass along to the young preacher many pastoral instructions and guidelines. He did by written word what he had done so intentionally through the years—mentored one who would take his place.

What does the Bible say?

2 Timothy 2:1-2; 3:10-17

^{2:1} You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus,

² and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

^{3:10} You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness,

¹¹ my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me.

¹² Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

¹³ while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it

¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.



10 minutes

STUDY THE BIBLE

Notes

2 Timothy 2:1-2

¹ You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, ² and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

ALTERNATE QUESTION:

What are some ways we can intentionally pass on what we believe to others?

READ: Ask a group member to read aloud 2 Timothy 2:1-2 on page 69 of the PSG.

DISCUSS: Question #2 on page 69 of the PSG: “When has someone gone out of their way to encourage or strengthen your spiritual growth?”

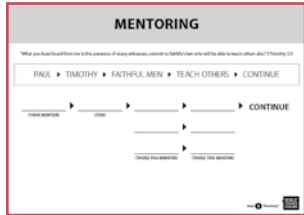
GUIDE: Use the Commentary for the verses on the next page of this Leader Guide to emphasize the importance of accountability in mentoring relationships.

LEADER PACK: Make copies and distribute **Pack Item 6**, the “Mentoring” handout, to help group members understand the biblical mentoring process.

SUMMARIZE: Highlight the main points from page 70 of the PSG. Paul could prepare for his own death knowing Timothy would carry on his work. Paul challenged Timothy to:

- ▶ **Be strong in grace.** Paul knew from his own journey that God could give Timothy all the strength he would need.
- ▶ **Teach others all he had learned from Paul.** Many had learned at Paul’s feet, and they could attest to the truth of his teaching. Paul expected Timothy to find other faithful leaders and teach them all he had learned.
- ▶ **Challenge them to teach another generation of followers.** Paul taught Timothy. Timothy taught others. His students then would teach another generation of followers. That’s exactly the way mentoring is supposed to work!

TRANSITION: Mentoring requires an intentional relationship. In the next verses, we also see that mentoring involves walking together in life’s ups and downs.



2 Timothy 2:1-2 Commentary

[Verse 1] Like Jesus Christ, Paul became a mentor to a handful of special men. One of Paul's best students was Timothy. Timothy had been raised in a religious home with consistent and loving instruction from the Word of God. Having served under Paul's leadership for many years, Timothy's leadership in the church at Ephesus still had numerous challenges, including theological differences and ungodly behavior. Paul wanted Timothy to train leaders, allowing Timothy to move forward to the next place of service, while having trained his replacement to be ready to serve. Accountability is a big part of mentoring. Without it the goals of these partnerships go unreached. Paul's mentoring of Timothy can serve as the current-day readers' mentoring guide. Paul addressed Timothy by **You**, followed by **then**. **Then** means therefore and reminds the reader Paul was referring back to something previously stated, likely, his teaching from 2 Timothy 1:13-14. There Paul told Timothy to hold on to the pattern of sound teaching he had heard from Paul. Paul continued, revealing the close nature of his relationship with Timothy by referring to him as **my child**. Timothy wasn't Paul's literal son, but it conveys Paul's fatherly concern for Timothy's future and the effectiveness of his mission as he served the Lord. The most powerful statement in this passage is **be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus**. Timothy's source of strength was not self but God's grace. Paul's powerful reminder affirms that God's grace is not only for salvation, but it also refers to the totality of all God provides to believers from the point of salvation through all eternity. Everything we receive from God is based upon the work of Christ Jesus and not of ourselves.

[Verse 2] **What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses** reveals more proof Timothy had developed a close relationship with Paul. Timothy was an eyewitness and disciple of Paul. The key was that Timothy reproduce and perhaps expand Paul's work. Whatever method Timothy used to record or remember Paul's words would be vital for his ministry as he recalled lessons Paul had provided. Like any good teacher, Paul reminded Timothy he had already been shown what do and say. As Timothy contemplated the great tasks that filled his future, Paul wanted Timothy to be strengthened by God's grace to accomplish his mission.

A key concept in this phrase relates the importance of finding the right people with whom to establish a mentoring relationship. These relationships are not random. Paul offered specific instructions. Timothy was to **entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also**. The term rendered **entrust** means to place beside or set before. It is important to note that if Timothy's student refused to have students of his own, Timothy's work with that student would be deemed a failure. The mentor has to focus on the student and the student's students. This passage focuses on a four-step progression of leadership: from Paul, to Timothy, to faithful men, and finally to others. If one step were missed, the mission failed. As a believer in Christ, someone helped you grow in Christ and in turn you must intentionally help others grow.



10 minutes

STUDY THE BIBLE

Notes

2 Timothy 3:10-13

¹⁰ *You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, ¹¹ my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. ¹² Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³ while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

READ: Ask a group member to read aloud 2 Timothy 3:10-13 on page 70 of the PSG.

RECAP: Mentoring is about sharing life together. It's journeying together, encouraging each other in the difficult times and celebrating together in the victories. It's the mentee walking in the footsteps of the mentor until the mentee is ready to be a mentor to others.

GUIDE: Use the Commentary for the verses on the next page of this Leader Guide to explain the types of spiritual attack Paul warned Timothy he would face.

DISCUSS: **Question #3** on page 71 of the PSG: **"When have you seen difficult seasons of life create opportunities for encouraging others?"**

RECAP: Making time for others may be one of the most difficult tasks of mentoring. Most of us are already trying to spin too many plates. If we add this call to invest our lives in somebody else like Paul did, it can feel like it's too much to ask. On the other hand, we can lose much if we don't make this effort. We'll miss opportunities to help others learn from what God has taught us. And we'll miss seeing believers love Jesus and walk faithfully in the midst of their own trials. Mentoring is about living life together—all of it. It will take time to invest in someone, but it will be worth the effort.

TRANSITION: In the next verses, we learn that mentoring encourages us to stay grounded in God's Word.

ALTERNATE QUESTION:

What are some principles and values that are important to pass on to someone else?

2 Timothy 3:10-13 Commentary

[Verses 10-11a] **But you have followed my . . .** indicates Timothy watched from a front-row seat as the great apostle accomplished some of the most heroic and historic missionary work in the annals of Christianity. Timothy witnessed two types of activities. First, Paul demonstrated seven actions that benefited his audience: his **teaching**, preaching, and teaching of the Word of God; his **conduct**, how he presented himself in daily activities; his aim in life, motivation for service (his commission from Jesus Christ); his **faith**, faithfulness to his mission and to Jesus Christ; his **patience**, forbearance toward people and circumstances within which he worked; his **love**, for Jesus who commissioned him and for people who needed forgiveness by faith alone in God; and finally his steadfastness, his ability to continue work regardless of circumstances. Secondly, Paul shared that he had endured two specific types of attacks: **persecutions** and **sufferings**. Although these difficulties were not unique to Paul, his list of persecutions and sufferings is found in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28.

[Verse 11b] Yet from them all the Lord rescued me is one of the most powerful encouragements in all Scripture. Paul wrote these words while surviving in one of the most deplorable places he was ever imprisoned. In spite of that, Paul praised God for his past rescues. That God rescued him gave Paul humble confidence for his present circumstances or future challenges. Paul's testimony of the Lord's rescue was a powerful lesson for Timothy. God is able to free us from what may appear to be the darkest times in our lives. Just as a healthy relationship is required for effective mentoring, the Christ follower's relationship with God is the ultimate mentoring relationship. The student must be connected to the mentor, but the most critical connection for all Christians is the connection to God the Father through Jesus Christ.

[Verse 12] Indeed, all who desire **to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted**. Paul shared a stark reality. As Timothy continued to follow the advice from his mentor, he would also face similar persecutions. Paul was not just speaking as one with personal experience, he sounded like a prophet. Keep in mind Paul did not say all Christians would be persecuted. He said all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Not all Christians live godly lives—perhaps they are trying to avoid persecution. Paul's warning makes it clear that all believers living godly lives will need God's deliverance. They will receive it, whether in this life or the next.

[Verse 13] In this verse, Paul's warnings of persecution became more personal and intense. Paul stated that evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. Timothy likely knew some of the very people who wanted to harm him. The battles Timothy had to fight could become more discouraging as he became increasingly in the minority. Physical threats might come, but emotional and mental stress from personal attacks are many times more difficult to survive. Hard as it might be, Timothy was to teach and live the truth he taught to show the contrast between a true follower of Christ Jesus and the **evil people and impostors**.



15 minutes

STUDY THE BIBLE

Notes

2 Timothy 3:14-17

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

READ: Ask a group member to read aloud 2 Timothy 3:14-17 on page 71 of the PSG.

RECAP: Paul understood the importance of building a solid foundation. He may have been Timothy's mentor, but he was building on the foundation of God's Word. Timothy had a godly heritage through his mother and grandmother, and they had taught him the Scriptures from early in his childhood. Those Scriptures ultimately pointed Timothy to Jesus, in whom he found salvation by grace through faith.

DISCUSS: Question #4 on page 72 of the PSG: "What practical steps do you need to take to be a mentor for someone else?"

DISCUSS: Question #5 on page 72 of the PSG: "How can our group prepare one another to mentor others?"

DO: Direct group members to complete the activity, "Mentors" on page 73 of the PSG to help them.

Choose some of the following categories and write the name of someone who has served as a mentor to you [PSG list several categories with blanks]. Then answer the questions.

GUIDE: Refer back to "The Point" for this session: "Someone helped you grow in Christ; do the same for someone else."

ALTERNATE QUESTION:

When has someone shared God's Word with you in a way that changed your direction?

2 Timothy 3:14-17 Commentary

[Verses 14-15] The primary focus of all Christian mentoring must be the Word of God. If the Scripture is not the center-piece, there is no eternal truth, no power, no wisdom. Paul reminded Timothy of his roots in God's Word. As Timothy dealt with daily challenges, he first had to **continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed**. Paul knew of Timothy's spiritual formation. God's Word had been poured into Timothy's life and was the primary ingredient that established Timothy's core beliefs and led to his salvation. Paul communicated confidence in Timothy's ability to overcome the persecutions he would encounter by advising him to depend on what he knew about God through his current practices and training he received as a child. There was no learning curve for Timothy; he already had personal experience with the power of Scripture, and it was the bedrock of his faith.

[Verse 16] Paul transitioned to his famous big-picture description of the Word of God. Paul's words should have even greater meaning knowing the context of this passage. Paul reminded Timothy that the Word of God deserved to be his primary weapon in the theological and spiritual battles he would fight in that deeply pagan society. The Word would also be his trusted companion as he traveled and faced even more serious challenges.

Paul stressed that **all Scripture is breathed out by God**. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the inspired message was communicated to the writer. In the power of the Holy Spirit, the words that flowed through the tip of the writing instrument maintain their integrity. This is a fundamental lesson of theology. All Scripture is inspired. Without inspiration these words are merely words and have no power. With inspiration, they are profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. Paul shared four functions of the Word of God: the source of all **teaching**; used to reproof—to boldly challenge the non-biblical behavior and doctrine of believers and non-believers alike; correction, restoring a person's behavior or doctrine back to the biblical standard once followed by that individual; and **training in righteousness**. This phrase should remind the reader of Paul's inspired words in verse 12 about wanting to live a godly life in Christ Jesus. This final function is best described in verse 17.

[Verse 17] The process of using Scripture as described in verse 16 is a significant challenge because it works contrary to our sinful behavior. Sinners do not want rules nor consequences. Yet Paul offered Timothy hope that the use of Scripture in this manner would ultimately pay wonderful dividends. The promise is **that the man of God may be complete**. Scripture, with the Spirit's interpretation and empowerment, completely prepares the follower of God to face challenges with the wisdom and power needed to be victorious. Not only will the Christ-follower be completely prepared for challenges, he or she will also be **equipped for every good work**. The difficult work of service to the Lord **is good**. Timothy's opponents would not be able to stop God's intended result. The encouragement Timothy received from these words must have eased his anguish. They can have the same impact today.



Notes

- ▶ **Pray.** Ask God for someone who might help and mentor you in the faith. Keep your eyes open for a potential mentor.
 - ▶ **Invite.** Invite someone to share a meal with you. Share your testimony, and learn more about the other person. Trust the Lord in whether that meeting will begin a mentoring relationship.
 - ▶ **Commit.** Make a commitment to meet regularly (at least twice per month) with someone. If you need help in the mentoring process, read *Mentor* by Chuck Lawless (LifeWay, 2018).

The mentoring relationships you form may bear little resemblance to Paul and Timothy's as far as outside pressures and suffering are concerned. But modeling our lives after theirs and the biblical principles they lived out will bear much fruit now and in the future.

PRAY: Conclude by thanking the Lord for sending people into our lives who have shaped us and helped us grow in Christ. Ask Him for the wisdom and opportunity to do the same for others.



Free additional ideas for your group are available at
BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra