

Mentoring for Ministry
with Dr. Bob and Nancy Abramson
(www.mentoringministry.com)

Session Two: Patterns in the Skills of Mentoring

Let us begin this session with a look at what mentoring is not.

- It is **not counseling**, though it may include counseling.
- It is **not teaching** in the traditional sense, though it will include teaching.
- It is **not a discipleship program** the way churches often see it.

Mentoring is a pattern of skillful coaching that facilitates relational discipling in the true biblical sense.

Because the goal of mentoring goes far beyond counseling, teaching or a typical church discipleship program, it must be approached differently. The mentor must be aware that it involves a different stream of processes.

- Everything about mentoring is relational. The mentoring patterns you follow will require a demonstration of the covenant relationship between mentor and mentoree. A covenant may be defined as, “the agreement between two or more people to be fully committed to their relationship.” It is a contract of honor. Therefore, mentoring is built on, and functions, on a foundation of trust and integrity.
- A mentoring covenant is a two-way street. Do not waste your time and energy on people who expect or demand a one-way commitment from you, with little or nothing from themselves. You must understand the value of the people God gives you to mentor and they must value both you and the process. They need to put a press on you. Jesus told His disciples to follow Him. He never told them He would chase them.
- Demand accountability from them and give it from yourself.
- Earn their respect. Expect them to earn yours.
- From the beginning, involve them in discussions to find out their expectations and reveal yours to them. Remember your goal is not to replicate yourself. Your goal in mentoring is to help someone else be all God wants them to be and find their own gifts and strengths so they can fulfill the will of God for their lives.

Example: Saul and David. Saul was David’s leader, but he was not his mentor. (1 Samuel 17). When David comes to Saul and tells him he wants to fight Goliath, Saul tells David he cannot do it. When David insists, Saul

basically says, OK, but you have to do it my way. He tries to put his armor on David. We are not to force our methods and ways on those we mentor. If he were a mentor to David, he would have encouraged David to face the giant using his own gifts and strengths. (Maybe he could have pointed David towards the brook where he could gather some stones.)

Pastor Nancy's thoughts and testimony: Take your time with the mentoring process. Spend time meeting together. I once spent the first three months of mentoring examining ministry principles. (It is important to help people discover what their own philosophy of ministry is.) Then, we spent the next three months studying one verse Romans 12:2, about the importance of renewing our minds and being transformed. After that, we began a more focused study on how to mentor others. For the first 6 months we did not talk directly about mentoring. However, from the very first day we met together, the mentoring process began. I was seeking the Lord for how to proceed each time we met. I was learning about them and they were learning about themselves. The women I was mentoring were seeing how I was moving through the process - taking my time, seeking the Lord, allowing the Holy Spirit to direct our times together. Observing me and the process was as valuable as learning the skills.

There are two primary goals to mentoring. One is for the mentor and the other for the person or people being mentored.

The biblical goal for a mentor comes from 2 CORINTHIANS 2:14.

2 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV) "Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place."

You are a divinely empowered perfume (or cologne) bottle. God pours out what is in you so your mentorees can catch the fragrance... and it sticks to them.

(Pastor Nancy's comment: I am allergic to perfume. When I am in an elevator and someone gets on who is wearing perfume or cologne, the smell stays with me until I can get home, wash my hair and change my clothes. It affects me long after I leave that person.)

Our goal as mentors is that the Christ in us should transfer to others and stay with them long after they leave us.

Now, here is the primary goal you should have for your mentorees. You must communicate it and oversee it throughout the process.

READ ROMANS 12:1-2 - As I mentioned earlier, I once spent 3 months of mentoring time studying Romans 12:2.

Mentoring is all about transformation. It is concerned with what those you mentor will become. As we saw in the first session, the Apostle Paul wrote, *“Imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.”*

Transformation requires imitation - not of you, but of the Christ in you. The goal for our mentorees is that they become more like Christ.

Four Principles for Transformation

1. Mentoring for transformation is **not** reproducing yourself. It is helping or facilitating your mentorees to reproduce Christ within themselves.
2. Mentoring for transformation is done as an exercise of free will. Do not try to impose your will on them. Let them discover the will of God and embrace it. This will require humility and discipline on your part.
3. You can be certain that those you mentor will imitate what you imitate. That places a great responsibility on you. It is also a great opportunity for your own personal growth.
4. Whatever they learn or catch from you must be filled with the character and heart of Christ.

These four principles are the DNA of winners and champions for Jesus.

Five Keys to Fruitfulness

(Excerpts from page 172 of “Just a Little Bit More”)

1. Value the person-to-person quality of your mentoring relationships. You cannot have a fruitful mentoring experience without establishing and maintaining relationships. Anything that falls short of this may be good, but it is not mentoring. You have to invest yourself into people. Get to know the person you are mentoring.
2. Value them as people, not as tools to be used for ministry. (No selfish motives - Do not try to fill your needs by using those you are mentoring.)
3. Seek to discover their gifts. As you do, you can determine ways to develop and enrich these gifts. Then you can coach them in the effective use of their gifts.
4. Be observant of their weaknesses. Observe their limits. Everyone has them. These do not indicate that something is wrong. Some limitations are God-given boundaries from within which your mentorees can be successful. Nobody can do everything. Temper your expectations with this. You will discover how to tailor your mentoring to each individual.
5. Do not overlook the obvious. Do not let yourself be fooled. Wisdom is both a great teacher and a careful guardian. Utilize it.

Let us look again at our “Concise Definition of Mentoring”

[Previously, we unpacked this first portion:] Mentoring is our intentional, sacrificial, imitation and modeling of Christ and His love, in the company of those we are given to care for, lead and develop.

[Here is the second portion.] We model and teach them what they need to know. We help them practice what they have learned.

Now, let us unpack these key elements of a mentor’s methods. They are, “model,” “teach,” and “help them practice.”

Let us take another quick look at “modeling.”

Think about the act of modeling in clay. It begins with a formless lump and through the efforts of the potter; it becomes an object of beauty. While we are certainly not the divine Potter, He will use us to model and be a reflection of His heart. In the process of us modeling Christ, God shapes our mentorees who begin to radiate a beautiful image of Him.

One more thing, we are to be more than someone for them to observe. We are to take an active, deliberate part in the process, using our gifts and God-given skills.

The Next Element: “teach.”

Here are some basic teaching patterns for your Mentoring Methods. The key word “teach” cannot be ignored. Specifically, you are to teach them, as our definition says, “what they need to know.” Remember, this is not the same as a teacher in front of students. Teach like Jesus did. This means the following.

1. Make what you teach a matter of prayer and discernment. This is to be a mentor’s fundamental pattern of preparation and lifestyle. Every mentoring meeting should be spirit-led. Spiritually prepare yourself ahead of time. Every person you mentor will be a unique experience.
2. The focus of what you teach is to be patterned after what will help your mentorees model Jesus. Keep your methods a matter of simple communication.

Keep things simple and communicate with simplicity.
Mentoring new believers is a challenging communication effort.

They do not understand “Christianese” or Christian principles. Keep things simple and talk in terms and use stories and examples that they

can understand. (Pastor Nancy: I did a teaching to Chinese new believers and thought that I had carefully used words that were easy to understand. The first question I got was “what does Amen mean?” (It means it is truthful and I agree with it.)

3. Let the patterns you find in the Lord’s teaching influence how you teach. Your mentorees will find value in these patterns and gladly embrace them. As you study the Word, notice how Jesus related to His disciples. For example: Let us go back to John 13 when Jesus washes the disciples’ feet. John 13:12 - Make sure they understand what you are trying to teach them; 13-15 - give them a clear example; 16-17 - explain the Biblical principle behind what you have demonstrated. Jesus was not telling the disciples they needed to wash each others’ feet every time they ate together. He was modeling servanthood to them and explaining the blessing of serving others.
4. Encourage a pattern of open feedback. You will not always like what you hear. Listen patiently. Judge the merits of what they say. This is often the hardest pattern to establish. Your flesh will try to reject it.
5. Strive to improve your communication skills. Mentoring is all about the ability to connect. You will either connect or disconnect. There is no neutral ground.
6. Infuse your teaching patterns with encouragement. **Never** discourage or uncover individuals (even when you discipline someone). Doing so will create a pattern of disconnection. (As mentors, we must constantly remind ourselves to keep our hearts soft and see through the eyes of grace.)
7. Biblical wisdom is among the most important things you can impart. Use the Scriptures as you teach it.

The third key element of a mentor’s method is “help them practice.”

How do you help them practice what you impart to them?

- Mentoring is the measured continuing interaction of mentor and mentorees. You must observe and measure how well they are catching what you have imparted to them.
- Be willing to allow them to practice what you taught and what they caught in their own ways. Mentoring is **not** a top down exercise, where you dictate how to do things. Your mentorees’ ways may or may not be better than your ways. They might just be different.

Your job is to provide principles, input and guidance, but leave plenty of room for growth and individual expression for their gifts and strengths.

- You can argue with many things, but you will never successfully argue with a person's experience. Experience is always the best teacher, especially when it is guided by a mentor.
- Guide them through their mentoring experiences with encouragement and correction that helps them. Never speak down to them. Always lift them up with your words, especially when you have to correct them.

Discussions should happen from the beginning and be part of your mentoring patterns. These discussions should continue through the good, bad and ugly all the way to the end. Do not lose sight of the fact that you too, as the mentor, will gain and grow from every step of this process. Look once more at the two parts of our mentoring definition that we have covered so far.

[1] Mentoring is our intentional, sacrificial, imitation and modeling of Christ and His love, in the company of those we are given to care for, lead and develop.

[2] We model and teach them what they need to know. We help them practice what they have learned.

(In the next session, we will talk about inspiring those you mentor to have greater faith and what this means for their personal strength.)

This ends Session Two.