

Passing the Faith Along



“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:1-5).

This has always been the pattern for discipling and mentoring young women in the New Testament Church. “Women spiritually mother women by sharing the gospel and our lives as we encourage and equip them to live for God’s glory” (*Spiritual Mothering and Titus 2 Tools* by Susan Hunt).

Discipling and Mentoring... Explain, Please

Although discipleship and mentoring go hand-in-hand and often blur together, they are separate processes in the Christian life.

“Discipling is helping an understudy (1) give up his own will for the will of God the Father, (2) live daily a life of spiritual sacrifice for the glory of Christ, and (3) strive to be consistently obedient to the commands of his Master” (The Fine Art of Mentoring by Ted Engstrom).

“Mentoring is a relational experience in which one person empowers another by sharing God-given resources” (Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life by Paul Stanley & J.R. Clinton).

“Mentoring is a process of opening our lives to others, of sharing our lives with others; a process of living for the next generation” (Mentoring: The Strategy of the Master by Ron Lee Davis).

Both should be positive experiences. So that you understand the mutual benefit, I share the words of Solomon, “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend” (Proverbs 27:17).

Discipling and Mentoring... Why?

That may be the very question you are asking. Why, indeed! Let me give you three reasons.

It Is Biblical!

Read Matthew 28:19-20. As you are going, what are you to be doing?

Read Titus 2:1-5 and in your own words state what the younger women were to learn from the older women.

For “them to observe all things,” we must disciple them in the Word of God. For “the things which become sound doctrine” to continue, we have a biblical duty to those who are younger or spiritually immature.

It is necessary!

Write 2 Timothy 2:2

What were the “faithful men” in this passage supposed to be able to do?

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9? What were the children of Israel supposed to diligently do unto their children?

How did the Psalmist David express this teaching in Psalm 145:4?

For God's Word, His Will, and His Way to continue, teaching must take place from generation to generation.

It is Rewarding!

Write Philippians 4:1

How did Paul describe his mentoring reward to the Philippians?

"The reward for work well done is the opportunity to do more" (*50 American Heroes Every Kid Should Meet* by Jonas Salk). Neither ministry is a "one and done" ministry, but a continuing process as God brings women into your sphere of influence.

God's Design

God's design always comes with an example. The Bible displays a plethora of discipling/mentoring relationships. Examine a few of these examples. Read the passage next to each "duo" and write your thoughts concerning the situation in each narrative. Then determine if each one is a discipling or mentoring process or both.

Moses/Joshua: Exodus 24:12-13;17:14; Numbers 27:22-23

Naomi/Ruth: Ruth 1-4

Eli/Samuel: 1 Samuel 3

Mordecai/Esther: Esther 2:7-11; Esther 4:1-17

Elizabeth/Mary: Luke 1:39-56

Aquilla & Priscilla/Apollos: Acts 18:18-28

Paul/Timothy: 1 Timothy 1:2; 6:12-14;
2 Timothy 1:2; 2:1-3; 4:1-2

Paul/Titus: Titus 1:4; 2:15

Am I Qualified?

In preparing for this Bible study, I asked women, who are presently involved in a discipling or mentoring ministry, what attributes should a woman possess who wants to be involved in serving this way. It was amazing to see that their answers were almost identical. First and foremost, a mentor is to be a student of the Word and a woman of prayer. In other words, she must exemplify Christ.

Using Colossians 3:12-17, list the characteristics of a woman who has “put on” Christ.

You may feel as though you do not *measure up* in all these areas. Few of us do. However, if you have a willing and open heart to allow God to work through you, you are a perfect candidate for Him to use in ministering to other women.

Discipling

When I started discipling others, I was still in college. My then pastor’s wife suggested I teach in the primary class. What a joy it was to share the Bible with them, watch their young minds begin to understand and their tender hearts accept Christ as Lord. Of course, then the work really began—helping them grow in their faith.

As the years have come and gone, God has used me to disciple several women of varying ages. I never get tired of watching God's Word take hold and "the light of understanding" begin to shine. Now some of those I disciplined many years ago are discipling others. "God calls us to be disciples who make disciples. The covenantal continuity is compelling. The result is also compelling—"that the word of God may not be reviled" (*Spiritual Mothering: The Titus 2 Model for Women Mentoring Women* by Susan Hunt).

Through the years, I have learned that in discipling there are four things vital for me to be successful. I share them with you, not because I have it all together, but because without them everything comes apart.

1. Commit. To God.

First, and foremost, commit to the Lord (2 Timothy 1:12b). If you do not nail that down, you will have a difficult time committing to the women you are discipling.

2. Equip. Be ready.

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). Read Ephesians 6:10-17. **Why would the armour of God be necessary as you disciple another individual?**

3. Study. Dig deeper in the Word.

Write 2 Timothy 2:15.

What is the benefit of studying?

4. Pray. For yourself and your student. Ask others to pray as you disciple (Ephesians 6:18).

What does 1 Thessalonians 5:17 say about prayer?

Mentoring

Me? You want me to do what? Lord, You surely have the wrong person.

That was exactly how the conversation went the first time the Lord spoke to me about mentoring. My husband had just taken his first pastorate and I was very unsure of myself. Oh, I had been raised in a pastor/evangelist's home, but my mother was the one who had mentored others. No doubt about it, she was an exemplary role model. However, I just did not see myself in that light. Nonetheless, a young teenage girl, from an unsaved home, stood before me—eager to do right, live right, dress right and ready to be involved in the church's ministry. Thus, my mentoring journey began!

Along with possessing Christ-like characteristics, there are some practical characteristics the mentor should exhibit:

Be genuine – be real; be yourself; be who God created you to be.

Be supportive – encourage the mentee in her daily Christian walk in her home, in her work, and even in her dreams.

Be flexible – allow the mentee to set the topic (Christian walk, marriage, parenting, life struggles, etc.), but you set the tone—don't allow every session to be negative.

Be non-judgmental – brace yourself for whatever she may share or reveal concerning her life.

There is satisfaction in mentoring. "You older women of Christ, there is a generation of women out there longing to walk beside you . . . Mentoring is not about cloning, but about helping women become more like Jesus" (*A Garden Path to Mentoring, Planting Your Life in Another and Releasing the Fragrance of Christ* by Esther Burroughs). As a mentor, you will be *passing the faith along*.

What Can I Offer Another Woman?

Whether discipling or mentoring, you do have something to offer other women. Prayerfully consider each of these points as you read the accompanying verse.

You can offer an **accountability** partner – James 5:16.

You can offer **encouragement** – 1Thessalonians 5:11.

You can offer an **example** – Philippians 4:9.

You can offer **honesty** – Proverbs 27:5-6.

You can offer a **sounding board** – Proverbs 27:9.

“Perhaps, most of all, we can take younger women into our arms and hold them when they feel hopeless and remind them we care about them. This example, more than anything else, will teach them to do the same for others. Being Jesus to someone else is a hands-on principle” (*Becoming a Woman of Influence* by Carol Kent).

Our goal should be developing women who live in the Word, by the Word, and with the Word. I love what the Apostle Paul said to the Ephesians about the result of equipping saints to serve the Lord (Ephesians 4:13-16). That is what you call a satisfying result!

Soul Search

What if you purposed in your heart to influence the lives of others? How might that look?

Write 1 Corinthians 11:1. What do you think Paul meant?

Do you have Paul’s confidence in your walk with Christ to say that to someone who needs an example—whether in discipleship or as a mentor?

“What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others” (Pericles).

Remember the teenage girl I mentored during our first pastorate? She is now a pastor’s wife, mentoring and discipling others—passing the faith along—generation to generation! 

About the Writer: Debe Taylor is married to David, the Executive Director of Arkansas Free Will Baptist. Debe is a former WNAC president and has a genuine love for FWB women. She is a conference and retreat speaker, and a member of Rolling Oaks Free Will Baptist Church in Maumelle, Arkansas.