

I've been teaching my son how to drive. He's doing great. We've started with a bit of theory, and then a lot of practice. But practice on its own is not enough – what we have been finding is so helpful, is practice while being observed. William was keen to learn in the manual so we've been having a go in that recently, he understands how a clutch works mechanically much better than I do, but I've been trying to figure out how to describe what it feels like to find the right balance of pedals. We hit upon this idea where I hold my hands out and show him what I'm doing with my feet. He's doing great. Lots of encouragement. So a little bit of theory, lots of practice and then problem solving. Now the other thing that we have been practicing is that downshift from 3rd into 2nd, because that's the tricky one eh.

We're both learning as we go along. Don't worry he's getting some professional lessons as well to unlearn the things that I will teach him that are perhaps not so good! As they say you teach what you know, but you reproduce who you are!

I want to use that as an analogy for mentoring today, and I want to suggest mentoring is one of the best ways to pass on faith in one on one conversation and coaching.

This month is Vision month and we are talking about our Vision Christ to the City and the city to Christ. About our hope as a church to take the love, and influence and power of God into our city and to invite people from our city to meet Christ, to encounter Jesus. I've been really thinking this week about how do I draw people to Christ, how do I mentor people towards Jesus. It's been a really interesting challenge. Because mentoring people towards Christ, that's a big life goal. And I'm thinking about 3 types of friends, those who aren't yet believers, those who are new believers and those who are more mature believers. And I've got some examples and a scriptural model for each category.

In fact, those 3 categories reflect our Mission statement, - The Mission is how we hope to get to the Vision. **Helping people find, follow and know Jesus.** That's those 3 categories, helping people far from God come to find him, helping people who are new to faith learn how to follow and helping mature believers come to really know Christ even more fully.

So I was thinking, how might we mentor a not yet believer? The first thing I thought about is prayer, to pray for our friends to come to know Jesus. Prayer seems so simple and we often under-estimate it. I'm not talking about just a casual prayer once a year, but about something more regular and intentional. I have been so blessed to see people I have prayed for come to Christ. Asking and then listening in prayer to what God might be saying about your friend.

Conversation, talking to our friends about faith, I think this is a real key – having pre-mentoring conversations with a friend about why you believe something as a Christian or why you do something as a Christian.

And then example, living out each day in God's way and in God's sight. Not pretending to be what you aren't, but just trying to live a life consistent with what we believe.

Who in the bible could be our model for mentoring not yet believers. Well what about Daniel, Daniel was taken as a young man and set in the court of a foreign country. He was one of the young leaders in Israel when the country went into Exile in Babylon.

Daniel was a man of prayer, 3 times a day he would pray to God giving thanks (Dan 6 v 10) In Daniel 2 there is a story about King Nebuchadnezzar had and no one could interpret it. He got so angry he was planning to kill all the wise men. Daniel gets his friends to pray with him for mercy from God that he and his friends would not be killed along with the wise men of Babylon (2 v 17) He is indirectly praying for the wise men.

God answered Daniel's prayer and he was given a chance to speak to the King, and as he was speaking to the king, he was explaining his faith, v 28 'But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries'. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in the days to come. Daniel talked about his faith and did some pre-mentoring.

Thirdly example, in Chapter 1 Daniel explained to the King's servant that he didn't want to defile himself by eating the royal food, he explained and then lived out his faith.

I think this idea of pre-mentoring is a good model for outreach.

Prayer conversation example. How do you witness to a non-Christian friend? Tell them about what Christians believe and do, life is your curriculum.

Second group, how might we mentor a new believer? Here the issue of curriculum is a little more direct, it's good to give a new believer an outline of Christian faith and I've always believed the best place to start is with the life of Jesus, get to know who Jesus whose story is told in the gospels and you will help a new believer encounter the living Jesus today. There are also some basic disciplines to teach, how to pray, how to ask for forgiveness, how to read the bible, how to let God guide you.

I've written a great little resource called "[Discover Jesus](#)" and then the alpha course is the natural follow on for a new Christian to get some ideas of the Christian life. We are going to need some more mentors as we see more people being baptised.

One of the other great challenges we have in life is to mentor our children and I've got three areas I encourage you to follow with your kids. **Read the bible** with your kids, get a children bible and read the bible, read a passage over dinner, talking about what you are reading. Karen and I are both using the same bible reading app at the moment. I try to text Jono a bible verse every so often and say what it means to me. **Try to pray** together as a family, definitely pray for your kids, no matter what age they are. But it's good also to pray together over meals, get your children used to hearing your prayers, model prayer. Let your kids hear you pray about the stuff of life – XYZ is really annoying me at the moment please help me to love them! And thirdly **come to worship** as a family as much as you can. Not because of the music, not because of the message, not because of the morning tea, but because the pattern puts you in a place to hear God speak to you. Youth group is great but it doesn't not replace coming to church as a family, I know it's a big commitment – but it will set a pattern for your children that help them persevere in faith. We all go through hard times, and it is during those hard times that the patterns we have established can hold us in place. In Hebrews 10 v 25 it says 'do you give up the habit of meeting together'.

My biblical example is Ruth and Naomi. In Ruth 1, Ruth makes a decision to become a follower of the Lord. She promises Naomi that she will stay with her, and she adopts her religion. Ruth has become a new believer, now Naomi is in pain, she tells Ruth, to call me Mara (Bitter) – because of what God has done to me. She doesn't curse God, she interprets her experience through a lens that sees God being involved in her life, she takes her pain to God. And she has come back, to the place where she had known God, she's like the prodigal coming home. She teaches Ruth that God is interested in people. Chapter 2, she sends Ruth to go off harvesting, now Naomi has a good relative and in 2 v 43 it turns out that Ruth had ended up harvesting in that relative's field. Yeah right – that was no coincidence. Naomi is teaching Ruth the way of things, in that time people didn't have bibles, they learnt the ways of God by doing. And I believe that Naomi guided Ruth into the right path. Now verse 11, 'I've been told all about what you have done for your mother in law. Well who has told him that?' Naomi has spread the story about her disciple, she has put the word out there to set things up well for her mentoree, and notice THIS IS IMPORTANT Naomi has shaped the story to advantage Ruth. This is a deep level of mentoring, to

set your mentoree up for success. I remember when we heard that Rob was going to Rotorua, I made a point of telling people in Rotorua what a good guy Rob is, and how they are blessed to have him.

Then verse 20 Naomi speaks a word of blessing, showing Ruth how to pray, and then tells her of the law's teaching about widows, that's bible study. Then next Naomi tells Ruth how to approach Boaz, how to put that bible promise into practice, relationship advice. Naomi has proved to be quite the mentor.

The Third category, is how do we look for and take chances to mentor people more mature in faith? Almost a mutual mentoring. My biblical example in Paul and Timothy, Paul starts off with Timothy when he is a fairly new Christian but later he is mentoring him as a young leader, in 1st Timothy he is giving him advice about how to lead a church.

I've been thinking about this delicate but vital task of mentoring those who are more mature, but still growing, I've been thinking about how we need to be very gracious, and not arrogant, but also be intentional about offering some mentoring, formal or informal. If someone is teachable they will appreciate the offer, I'm talking about being teachable next week.

I remember when I came here Simon Cornwall was doing his internship. Simon's a few years older than me and had plenty of experience; but I was asked to be his mentoring minister. We had regular meetings, and we would discuss many topics, but one thing I remember as a mentor was observing. I remember Simon was working on his preaching and so we agreed I would sit down on Thursday afternoon and listen to Simon's message for Sunday and give feedback, that's great do more of that – I'm a bit confused with this bit. As a mentor I made time to observe and encourage.

Many of you will have mentorees at work or elsewhere; I want to encourage you to consider offering to mentor another Christian, perhaps mutually. The scripture talks about iron sharpening iron. You may well choose a peer and say, "hey let's meet once a fortnight and just talk about how life's going, and pray for each other".

Mentoring can be a chance for reflective learning, thinking back over what we have done, thinking what worked and what didn't and making a plan to change. When we are accountable to people, plans get enacted.

Let's look at Paul and Timothy, What I notice is Paul balances tasks with Character; he is developing a person as well as a set of skills. Paul starts with teaching, he commends Timothy for having learnt the scriptures and about the way God wants us to live. The truths of the faith – that's doctrine, a Christian worldview, Tim has a solid theology an understanding of who God is and what God is like. We want both to know who God is and to have an encounter with God, you have to have both. Then the good teaching – you have followed, Paul is saying Timothy has put into practice that teaching.

I love the way Paul gives practical advice, avoid godless stories and old wife's tales, don't listen to trash talk. Train yourself in godliness – Doctrine and character, these go hand in hand. Train yourself in godliness.

Paul encourages physical fitness, get fit, in 5 v 23 he is concerned about diet, drink a little wine to help your frequent illnesses. But godliness is the key. Then he talks about hope in the living God, keep your relationship with God alive, Jesus the saviour of all, especially those who believe.

Then Paul gives this great advice I want to say to all our youth, don't let anyone look down upon you because you are young; be an example in speech, life, love, faith and purity. The young can lead us if we get jaded in middle age. Then Paul gives encouragement to Tim in action, read scripture, teach it and exhort, that means apply, preaching encourages people to do something about the scripture.

Don't neglect the gift – given by prophesy, when you were ordained by the elders. This Sunday afternoon I have the privilege of ordaining Kylie Provan at Edgecombe, she has finished her training and is ready.

Finally watch your life and doctrine closely, character and beliefs these are the things that we should have in mind in mentoring, growing skills and understanding of the bible and of Christian life, but even more so knowing how to live that out. It's one thing to know how a clutch works, it's another to be able to use it.

If we are to achieve the second part of the vision God has given us, to bring the city to Christ, it's going to involve all of us stepping up to mentor others.

Let me encourage you, to look for opportunities to mentor others ...