

Find a mentor, last week we talked about being a mentor, today I want to talk about finding a mentor. Whether you are 13 or 93, find a mentor, find someone who can take you to the next level. Find someone who can speak Biblical wisdom into your life. You see the first person we need to disciple is always ourselves. Find a mentor.

There are many different types of mentor, my dad was perhaps my greatest mentor, when I was at youth group Wendy Hulse was one of my mentors, as a young minister Warren Wilson was my mentor, recently Ray Blomfield has been a mentor to me.

Who has been a mentor to you? Who's been a good mentor to you (pause). I remember reading in Marion's book about how she learnt from people who were bad mentors. Who's been a bad mentor that you learnt something from? (pause)

Do you need to find a new mentor?

If we hope to see Christ to the city and the city to Christ. What's actually going to make us more effective as a church? How are we going to draw people to a life changing encounter with the living God? That's what I lose sleep over. (pause)

Of the first order, I need, we need to deepen our relationship with Christ. The more we know the love of Christ, the more we experience the power of the love of Jesus in our lives, the more we love him in return; the more we will want other people to meet him.

Finding a good mentor is a powerful way of growing our relationship with Christ.

3 types of mentor

A. Someone at a great distance, someone's whose books you read, whose messages you listen to, they might even be long dead, I was struck by how Rick Warren encourages us to read early Christian writers. Don't discount allowing yourself to be mentored at a great distance.

B. Someone a bit closer but indirectly, coming to hear our sermons, going to a workshop, going to a conference, sharing in a small group where you get mutually mentored,

C. My focus today finding one person who will invest deeply into your journey.

The last is not necessarily the best, regularly listening to Ravi Zacharias, and going to small group will do you a power of good.

Then there are different goals of mentoring:

mentoring your practices, learning to pray for someone by laying on hands, mentoring your theology, learning more about Christ – how much he loves you, and how holy and creative he is.

mentoring the heart – having someone you can confess your sins to and your jealousies and working those things through. *The bible says confess your sins to one another. James 5.16*

Find a mentor.

Some of my supervisors have been my great mentors, I have taken my practical problems to them, I've taken my Theological dilemmas and I have taken my personal challenges. Leadership is lonely and you do not suddenly become a better person because you are appointed to a role. Discipleship of the heart is very important, but sometimes we have to start by peeling back the layers to know what we actually feel; who we are jealous of, who we are angry at, who we resent; because it is only as we uncover what is going on in our hearts that we can ask God to change us.

You might be wondering, does Simon get angry, or jealous or upset? Yes, but no more than anyone else. The real question is what makes you angry or jealous or upset and what are you doing about it.

This is the last week of our Vision series, - what is the Vision?

Christ to the city, the city to Christ.

We believe *that God so loved the city, that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.* We believe that God is calling us to witness to the city, to take opportunities to engage people in conversations about spiritual matters and to be Christ carriers, to wear our cross, to wear our compassion, wear our commitments.

Do you desire to see people drawn towards Christ, to come to church and encounter the living God, to find a mentor, and come to know Jesus and to know him better?

Today I'm asking you to commit to deepening your relationship with Christ even more by finding a new mentor for a new season.

Who in scripture found a mentor?

Moses, one of the greatest Heroes of the bible, Moses was burdened by the demands of leadership, at one stage he expresses it like this. Numbers 11. 11-15 *Moses asked the LORD, "Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you that you put the burden of all these people on me? <sup>12</sup> Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land you promised on oath to their ancestors?<sup>13</sup> Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, 'Give us meat to eat!' <sup>14</sup> I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. <sup>15</sup> If this is how you are going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me.*

At another time it was the quantity of cases that the people were bringing Moses to judge and he was tired and bowed down. And so what did Moses do? He found a mentor. He welcomed his father in law to visit and listened to what his father in law thought and suggested.

I was listening to a talk by Tim Keller this week, encouraging Christian leaders to sift criticism, to separate our ministry from our self-worth, and listen when people give advice. To listen humbly. By the way I'm not asking for a thousand pieces of advice! I loved Tim's analogy because he said some people who give you advice – 80% of it is wrong. But listen to the 20%. He said his wife often reminds him of Balaam's Ass, at the end of the day the donkey was still an Ass but he was right about one thing. If you read the story in Numbers 22, you will see how God can use even a donkey.

Moses asked Jethro's advice in Exodus 18. And what Jethro said was – what you are doing is not good. My goodness here's Moses, who confronted Pharaoh, who led the people out of Egypt, who parted the red sea, Brilliant leader – on one level. Absolutely swamped on another – and he listened to Jethro, Jethro is like the HR guy, simple, straight forward advice. Appoint other leaders to manage the simple questions, get them to bring the big questions to you. Moses appointed judges and suddenly he could breathe again.

Do you need an occasional mentor who could talk with you about one aspect of your spiritual life, who could recommend a bible reading plan, recommend a silent retreat, guide you in a decision you have to make? Are you teachable?

Find a mentor.

Esther is an example of WOMAN who chose to continue to seek the advice of a mentor even when she became queen. We are told that Esther had been brought up by her uncle Mordechai and when she was selected queen in the realm Esther kept her racial background a secret as her uncle had advised her and she kept listening to him for advice. Esther 2. 20. Queen Esther came into a position where she was able to save the lives of many of her people, because she kept contact with her mentor. As a young woman coming into her own, she could easily have left him behind. But she recognised wisdom and she knew that

she still needed guidance, and here's a great role Mordechai played. He told her when she needed to take one of the great risks of her life. He helped her discipline her emotions, and overcome her fear; she must have felt fear when she was weighing up whether she should try to use her position to save the Jewish people, or whether she would be just throwing her life away in vain. Hat most well known verse esther 4.14 *For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"*

Do you need a mentor who can give you sage advice, but also encourage you to have courage, to take courage and follow God's way in your life? Mentoring is sometimes about having someone who helps you to overcome your fears.

Find a mentor.

Elijah and Elisha are a great pair, Elijah calls Elisha and Elisha accepts, he accepts the offer of mentoring. 1 Kings 19. Last week I was encouraging us to offer to mentor others. Now I encourage you if someone offers to mentor you and you respect them. Take up the offer and see what they can teach you. Again, skill or theology, or heart. I love the story of Elisha; he hears Elijah & the older man invites him to follow him. He pauses just a day to go back and kiss his father and mother good bye. You see this is different than the rich young man in the gospels who tells Jesus he must *bury his father before he can follow* him. *Luke 9.59* Some of the scholars suggest that that father was probably not yet dead. The man in the gospel was meaning I'll come and follow you when I'm older. Elisha asks for only a moment to say good bye to honour his mother and father, and then he slaughters his oxen and cooks them on his plough. 1 King 19. 21. He burns his business. Here is a man who takes up the offer.

Elisha follows, he watches Elijah confront king Ahab, I'm sure that he learns a lot about who God is from Elijah and then when Elijah is taken up to heaven, God gives Elisha a double portion of the spirit that he had placed on Elijah. Mentoring can also be about passing on the work of the spirit.

Do you know there is this delightful little story about Elisha just after this? He goes up to Bethel and this gang of young fellas mock him, baldy, baldy. And Elisha cursed them, and 2 bears came down out of the woods and beat the snot out of those guys. Again perhaps some practical advice, or perhaps if his mentor was still around Elisha would not have misused his power.

Find a mentor.

I remember one of my mentors – Nicky Gumbell from the Alpha course, I've admired Nicky for years, he talked about hitching his star to another, to finding Sandy Millar as a mentor and the difference that made to him. I had the privilege of working for a hero of mine in Andrew Norton, a great leader.

Find a mentor.

The disciples said yes when Jesus called them, they didn't muck around, they realised that this chance come once in a life time. There was a rich man who was pompous in front of Jesus. He asked Jesus what should I do to inherit eternal life. Jesus described the law of Moses to him, he gave him theological teaching. The pompous boy said I've done all these things since I was a young. What arrogance. But even so, then Jesus made him an offer. Remember this guy had come looking. He had found Jesus and was starting to engage with Jesus. And Jesus made him an offer. Sell everything that you have. Give it to the poor and come and follow me. He invited him into the inner circle. But he didn't go. Mark 10.22

I had a friend once who was offered a scholarship to a specialist London school, it would have been the bomb, but he didn't go because he couldn't raise the money. Now here's the thing that sadden me, his

father offered to pay, but he wouldn't take the money. Now I don't know the full story. But on the surface – that is an example of not being willing to use all you have for God's call.

Find a mentor.

Have you ever thought about doing a bible college course? Otago, Laidlaw, Carey? Are you part of a small group? What will you do to drive your spiritual life forward? Find a spiritual director?

God might be calling you to take a year off from work and go to do a masters, or a retreat course, to go and sit under a fabulous mentor. Would you go.

Find a mentor.

Mentors help us overcome our resistance to change.

I think often in our Christian life what we need is someone to be honest with, to talk about what's not working, like a diet coach, like a physical training, an accountability partner who can help us make progress in Holiness.

I want to finish with Paul himself.

Paul made a series of trips to Jerusalem and the Apostles there after he was converted. He wanted to make sure he stayed on track.

Trips visit Acts 9 – he meets Peter and James.

Second visit Acts 11 he brings money for the poor

Third visit Acts 15 he brings a dispute about rules for Gentiles converts to the elders

Last visit Acts 21. This is the one we read today, he comes and checks out how his teaching is affecting others. Paul is a strong advocate that Gentiles don't need to become Jews before than can become Christians. But he responds to the elders concern that Jewish believers are being put off by what they hear he is saying. And he goes and purifies himself. This is a model of being teachable, accountable and respectful. I wonder whether Paul needed to swallow his pride, or whether this was just self evident to Paul.

Find a mentor.