

REGI CAMPBELL

FOREWORD BY ANDY STANLEY

AFTERWORD WITH KEVIN HARRIS

# MENTOR LIKE JESUS

HIS RADICAL APPROACH  
TO BUILDING THE CHURCH

NEW  
AND  
UPDATED  
EDITION!

# PRAISE FOR *MENTOR LIKE JESUS*

Regi Campbell is a gift to leaders; especially those that want to make a real difference and leave a lasting legacy. *Mentor Like Jesus* is packed full of vision and practical helps for investing your life in others. But what makes it so different is not that it's small group friendly, but that it's small group dependent. It's a helpful mentoring strategy for any small group ministry.

BILL WILLITS  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MINISTRY ENVIRONMENTS  
NORTH POINT COMMUNITY CHURCH

Regi Campbell is a wise man of God and when he talks, I listen. I have watched him have an incredible impact on many young men in the Atlanta area through his mentoring process; and finally he has put to paper the principles that he uses that were modeled after Christ's own methods. This is the best mentoring book I have read and I highly recommend it to anyone who feels a nudge or calling to mentor others; or to those who want to be mentored.

JOEL MANBY  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
SEAWORLD PARKS & ENTERTAINMENT

What you hold in your hands is a blueprint for discipleship and leadership development. After reading *Mentor Like Jesus*, God taught me to focus on building “big people” instead of a “big church.” Over the last several years of mentoring like Jesus, our church has grown rapidly; both spiritually and numerically. As a Lead Pastor I can declare: there is no single resource that has breathed life into our church and my soul more than Radical Mentoring.

BRIAN MOORE  
LEAD PASTOR  
CROSSPOINTE CHURCH

*Mentor Like Jesus* is Regi’s best yet and a powerful reminder of God’s call to live as a discipling leader who is bearing much fruit. This is the best I’ve seen yet on how to live out the responsibility of making disciples of Jesus Christ in an intentional way. Be prepared to be challenged to pay it forward and to be motivated to get in the game in your important role as a mentoring leader.

STEVE WOOD  
LEAD PASTOR  
MOUNT PISGAH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

I was new to mentoring a year ago and now I’m sold-out. Investing in the next generation of Christian leaders is the best use of my time. They are hungry to learn from my successes, my failures and my lessons learned. Radical Mentoring provided me the tools I needed to be an effective mentor right from the start.

CHARLIE PAPARELLI  
PRESIDENT  
HIGH TECH MINISTRIES

I've never heard of a more meaningful mentoring ministry than the one Regi Campbell practices. So many young men in our church have been the direct beneficiaries of someone who seeks to mentor like Jesus. I hope this insight by Regi will challenge many – especially those in the Boomer Generation – to the really great opportunity of mentoring the next generation.

BRYANT WRIGHT  
SENIOR PASTOR  
JOHNSON FERRY BAPTIST CHURCH

One of the biggest challenges for young leaders is their inability to recognize what they don't know. Regi's relational approach to trans-generational mentoring solves this ignorance gap through the practical work of life-on-life mentoring.

GABE LYONS  
FOUNDER - Q IDEAS  
AUTHOR OF GOOD FAITH

In the manner that Jesus' mentoring ministry turned "regular" fisherman and tax collectors into apostles, so Regi Campbell's mentoring ministry has turned "regular" business people into disciples and evangelists. I have seen the results and have firsthand knowledge of people who will spend an eternity with Jesus because they were reached by the mentors developed through the program described in *Mentor Like Jesus*.

PRICE HARDING  
FOUNDING PARTNER  
CARTERBALDWIN EXECUTIVE SEARCH



REGI CAMPBELL

FOREWORD BY ANDY STANLEY

AFTERWORD BY KEVIN HARRIS

# MENTOR LIKE JESUS

HIS RADICAL APPROACH  
TO BUILDING THE CHURCH

PR*in*SS

## **Mentor Like Jesus**

His Radical Approach to Building the Church

Published by RM Press

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Foreword by Andy Stanley</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Getting Started</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Chapter One: Mentoring on Purpose</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Chapter Two: It's Not About Me</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Chapter Three: The Secret Sauce: A Group</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Chapter Four: Handpicked for History</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>Chapter Five: Starting Now, Ending Then</i>	<i>71</i>
<i>Chapter Six: Truth at the Core</i>	<i>81</i>
<i>Chapter Seven: Prayer as a Practice</i>	<i>95</i>
<i>Chapter Eight: Teaching by Doing</i>	<i>103</i>
<i>Chapter Nine: The Context of Wherever</i>	<i>111</i>
<i>Chapter Ten: A Mutual Commitment</i>	<i>123</i>
<i>Chapter Eleven: Pay It Forward</i>	<i>135</i>
<i>Afterword</i>	<i>149</i>
<i>About the Author</i>	<i>165</i>
<i>Notes</i>	<i>167</i>





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I have to give credit to my kids, Ross and Erin. If wisdom comes from experience, and experience comes from mistakes, then you guys were the victims of a lot of my learning. Thanks for hanging in there with me. I'm proud of you!

And importantly, I want to acknowledge the “guinea pigs” who have taught me what I've learned about mentoring. These are the men who have been my mentees. Most have been through one of my groups, but there are a few with whom I connected long before Radical Mentoring groups came into existence. Thanks for inviting me into your lives and for helping me learn what mentoring is all about.

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Thanks guys. Now go and do likewise.

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# FOREWORD

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**A**bout fifteen years ago a man named Regi Campbell came into my life. As with a lot of my friends, we first connected through church. Regi is several years older than me and has had much success in helping “startup” businesses and ministries. I found him to have a lot of wisdom. So as time went on and as our friendship grew, I found that he was a mentor . . . a natural born mentor.

In 2000, Regi handpicked eight young men whom he believed to have a lot of potential. He invited them to his home and told them he’d meet with them three hours each month for a year if they’d show up for every meeting and be there on time. He’d be totally open and transparent with them . . . telling them everything about his successes and his failures. His personal life . . . his business life . . . relationships . . . no-holds-barred. He would share the books he’d read with them . . . he’d have them memorize Scriptures that had helped him in his walk . . . but they’d all have to agree from the outset that at some

point in the future, when they were ready, they would “pay it forward” and invest in a group of younger men just as Regi had.

Turn the clock forward to 2016 and Regi has just “graduated” his fifteenth group and first through our church. He’s now mentored one hundred and twenty high potential men who are committed to mentoring again . . . and again.

The results have been profound. “Graduates” have become elders in the church, small group leaders, and significant givers. Their wives say they’ve become better husbands and fathers. A few men have gone into the group “foggy” about their faith and come out knowing for sure they are Christians.

Regi has distilled eleven practices Jesus used in mentoring His disciples into the book that you are now holding. As you dig into *Mentor Like Jesus*, you’re going to be stunned by the simplicity of Jesus’ model.

As Regi shares, “My goal is five generations of multiplication. If that happens, more than one million men will have been equipped to manage life better.”

But *Mentor Like Jesus* is not just about life skills. As you are about to discover, Regi Campbell is a sold-out follower of Jesus Christ. His passion for mentoring is driven by a desire to teach “up-and-coming” leaders how to integrate their personal faith into every facet of life, including the marketplace.

For this reason, Regi has found support for this unique approach to mentoring in several of America’s leading churches. Church leaders are enthusiastically embracing Regi’s model because it is clearly a more effective means of equipping next generation leaders than some of the programs we’ve tried in the past.

I’m sure you’ve seen a dozen or more curricula designed to help individuals become better at a variety of things. *Mentor Like Jesus* is not a curriculum. It’s not a program. I’m tempted to call it the beginning of a movement. However, Regi would be quick to point out that it is

actually an extension of a movement – a movement launched two thousand years ago when Jesus chose twelve men, poured His life into them, then sent them out to do the same.

I've had the opportunity to watch *Mentor Like Jesus* take shape over time. What began as an idea has now evolved into a well-thought-through, transferable, multiplication strategy. I've seen the results firsthand. Several of Regi's alumni work or volunteer on our campuses. Their lives are testimonies to the effectiveness of this approach to mentoring and to the principles Regi has poured into these young leaders.

I've been leaning on Regi Campbell's advice and counsel for ten years. I often find myself asking, "What would Regi do?" With the publication of *Mentor Like Jesus*, you too have the opportunity to lean into the wisdom and insights of a guy whose faith is big and whose commitment to personal ministry is absolutely contagious.

Well done, Regi.

—Andy Stanley



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# GETTING STARTED

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**W**hen you write a book, you're supposed to start off with some engaging story . . . some hook that will grab readers and keep them reading. That's the pressure point. I know that if I don't get your interest and attention right now, I'll have wasted all the time and effort in writing this book. And worse, you'll have missed the opportunity of a lifetime, not to mention the money you spent and the trees we'll have killed in the process (or electricity we'll have used if you're one of those eBook people).

To make it even more intense, I know I have one of the greatest secrets in the world to unveil. I know something that I've learned through my experience these last fifteen years that can change your life forever. I've discovered something that can be the answer to some



of the questions baby boomers and half-timers are asking.

Believe me, millions of people are looking for answers to these questions; questions like:

- What should I do with the rest of my life?
- I want to make a difference, but how?
- Is going into vocational ministry the only way to please God?
- How can my life count for something?
- How do I connect with God and with others like me?
- How do I leave a legacy?
- How will future generations even know I was here?

I've had those questions for years. I've read book after book, been to tons of retreats and seminars, and had hundreds of discussions with other Christians.

As is often the case, the answer came in a way I didn't expect. The answer came from within the context of my own life and experience. And it came from the life of Jesus.

It's called mentoring.

Intentionally investing in the next generation . . . for God's glory.

### **I call it Radical Mentoring.**

I have discovered a process, a model for mentoring that has given my life meaning and has had a profound effect on the guys I've invested in. It's not hard to do. It's natural and not burdensome. And it's life changing.

Here's what's really cool. I thought I had made it up, but in reality

Jesus did.

Radical Mentoring is just doing what Jesus did.

For just a minute let's think about Jesus from a totally human perspective.

Jesus is one of the most admired figures in all of human history. A majority of Americans admire Jesus, whether they believe that He was God's Son or not.

Almost no one will say anything bad about Jesus. Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists. Everyone thinks well of Jesus.

Why? Jesus didn't bring any revolutionary teaching to the world. He was Jewish. He stood by and amplified Jewish law. He didn't create some new higher consciousness or begin a sociopolitical movement. He lived a somewhat normal life as a child and then became a significant historical and religious figure in the last three years of His life.

Jesus is so admired that writers have hypothesized what He would have been like in all kinds of roles. Charles Sheldon wrote the classic *In His Steps* in 1896. It has sold more than thirty million copies and is still in print. In it, you're led to envision what Jesus would do if He faced the "day in the life" situations we face today.

A few years ago, Laurie Beth Jones hypothesized what Jesus would have done as CEO. Others have offered their version of what Jesus would have been like as a voter, a politician, a teacher, an artist, a pastor, a leader, a husband, and a friend – all good stuff but more or less hypothetical.

What Jesus did that's inarguable is mentor! Jesus mentored twelve guys for three years. It's well documented . . . by four different authors, two of which were eyewitnesses and products of His mentoring process.

If there's anything we should be able to learn from Jesus and replicate in our own lives, it's mentoring. We have a documented model with proven results.

That's why I'm writing this book, to share with you what I've

learned about mentoring the way Jesus did it.

What makes me an expert on this topic? Nothing. I'm not a theologian; I'm a business guy. And there's more that I don't know about mentoring than I do know. But almost by accident, and out of self-defense, I began mentoring younger guys over thirty years ago. Let me explain.

## AN ACCIDENTAL TOURIST

It was 1983. As relatively young but zealous Christians, my wife and I saw a need in our new church, and we volunteered to fill it . . . to work with single adults. There was no singles ministry . . . no singles Sunday school class . . . no singles anything. So we borrowed a living room from someone who lived near the church and started a singles group. It grew rapidly, and before long we had seventy single people connected to our lives and our family.

If you're over forty and want to give out advice, just let the twenty-something single guys in your church know you're available. They'll be all over you, looking for input on everything from finding the right job to finding the right mate, finding the right church to finding the right color socks. You name it.

And thus I began mentoring. I got calls all the time, and I poured myself into helping these bright, energetic single people (I worked with the guys, for obvious reasons) with whatever happened to be their I.O.D. (issue of the day).

One thing for sure . . . I was busy. I was also exhausted. I was meeting with guys all over Atlanta . . . breakfast, lunch, and dinner. I was serving up advice like Starbucks serves up lattes. I didn't know any better; I was serving the Lord by serving these folks, and God honored that with some spiritual breakthroughs for people here and there. But mostly I was just busy . . . spreading myself hopelessly thin trying to be

all things to all God's (single) people.

Then I heard a speaker (author Tim Elmore who has since become a good friend) make this statement:

**More time with fewer people equals greater kingdom impact.**

Wow.

You mean I don't have to spread my energy and influence to every single person who wants to buy me a cup of coffee?

You mean God might actually be more honored by my spending time with fewer people?

That didn't even seem American. Less rather than more?

But I started exploring this new idea.

Fewer people . . . more time . . . greater kingdom impact.

A small group . . . that's it. I'll put together a small group of guys, spend focused time with them, and that will have greater kingdom impact than my current helter-skelter approach. Before you laugh, remember this was in the year 2000, before small groups became as common and popular as they are today.

Some of the guys that I had invested so much in had begun to call me their mentor, so it was a natural for me to begin referring to them as my "mentoring group." Being raised Baptist and knowing that any group of people meeting together had to have a curriculum, I set out to find one for my not-yet-formed mentoring group.

This is where it gets interesting.

Every curriculum I saw looked like Sunday school (no disrespect intended!). I wanted to share my life with these guys . . . teach them from my own experience . . . share plays from my own playbook, to use a football analogy. But every guide I looked at seemed canned, stiff, and programmed.

Those are words that no one ever used to describe me as a person, so how could I possibly be passionate about doing it that way? Is this going to be another Sunday school class where everyone sits in rows, looks up answers, fills in blanks, and walks away unaffected? I didn't want it to be.

So I made a decision.

I'll make up a process. It'll be uniquely mine. I'll share what I've learned about the Bible, about God, about business, about family . . . about life. I'll pick some young guys I see potential in, invite them to join in, and we'll see what happens.

And that's how Radical Mentoring got started.

Little did I know, the process I made up harmonizes amazingly with how Jesus mentored His disciples.

I have tweaked the process a little each year, making some small changes and smoothing out the rough edges. But for the most part, the Radical Mentoring process I will tell you about in the pages that follow is the same as it was when I discovered it in 2000. I've seen awesome results (I guess most Christians call it "fruit") and have helped many other men and churches start their own mentoring groups. But it wasn't until 2009, that I discovered the similarities between the process I came up with and the process Jesus used.

These are the key ingredients of Radical Mentoring. You'll quickly see they are exactly the same as those Jesus used.

It's on **purpose**. It's all about the Father and Kingdom building. Jesus was on a mission, and mentoring was the key strategy to fulfill His mission.

It's a **selfless** endeavor. Jesus mentored out of obedience to the

Father. He got nothing out of it personally. He simply responded to God's call on His life and did what the Father led Him to do.

It starts in a **group** context, not one-on-one. Jesus knew the value of interaction between group members. The group became a community, inextricable from one another. Jesus also accepted and even promoted the "group within the group" that invariably develops. He had favorites, and He didn't hide it or apologize for it. Yes, there was powerful one-on-one interaction, but it started in the context of the group.

Jesus **handpicked** those He mentored after prayer. The group was made up of laypeople, not "church people" . . . diverse . . . anything but a holy huddle. The mentor-mentee relationship was acknowledged. It was not a peer-to-peer group; it was a mentor-mentee construct . . . clear and unapologetic.

It was for a short, **defined period of time**. Jesus' mentoring program began on time and ended on time. There was a graduation day when His mentees were commissioned and launched.

At the core of Jesus' teaching was **Scripture**. Jesus and His mentees knew the Scriptures by heart. The Word guided their decision-making. Jesus helped His guys understand and apply God's Word.

**Prayer** was a huge part of it, public and private . . . Jesus modeled a prayerful life; He taught the disciples how to pray and prayed with them and for them.

Jesus **modeled** His faith in a transparent way. Jesus lived out His life in front of His mentees. They became like family to Him. They

saw how He applied His faith, how He struggled, how He handled stress, and how He handled dying.

Jesus **taught along the way** of life. He was practical yet spiritual. Jesus helped His guys with practical situations . . . everything from taxes to workplace issues, from goal setting to family relations. He was far more practical than hypothetical. They discussed the law for sure, but Jesus taught from His knowledge and experience.

There was a **mutual commitment**, and it was a huge commitment. They left their businesses, families, homes . . . all to follow and learn. Jesus never gave up on them, even when they failed and ran away. And ultimately they never gave up on Him, giving their lives not for His memory or His teachings but for His Kingdom.

It had a required **multiplication** element. It produced evangelists and disciple-makers. Multiplication was a part of what everyone signed up for, and no one was excluded from that requirement.

Together, the elements yielded a group of committed Christ followers. Those guys got it. They created their own groups of mentees, and those mentees created more groups. (Somewhere along the line they started being called churches.) The result? The greatest movement of all time. From this first mentoring group, billions of people became followers of Jesus Christ. The institution of the church was created. Health care, education, and social service institutions carrying the name of Christ all trace their origins back to this first mentoring group led by Jesus.

In these pages we'll take each of these eleven elements and explore what Jesus did and how we can emulate Him today. Having led groups using this approach for the last fifteen years, I'll bring the principles

alive with stories and examples of what to do and what not to do.

If you're holding this book in your hand or reading a digital copy and you're interested in the idea of mentoring, then you're probably in one of five camps.

**Camp 1.** You appreciate mentoring and would like to do it, if only you knew how. You understand the value of being mentored. You may have even had a mentor yourself . . . but declaring yourself a mentor is beyond what you can see. And even if you could see it, you don't feel comfortable about the who, what, when, where, or how of mentoring a group. We're going to give you a plan and a track to run on.

**Camp 2.** You want a mentor but haven't been able to find one. You've seen other folks with these incredible mentors who have added so much to their lives. Yet you wonder: How in the world does that happen? Where would I ever find a mentor like that? We're going to share some practical steps you can take to find a mentor and engage them.

**Camp 3.** You've heard the term but never really given mentoring much thought. The idea of having a mentor is somewhat intriguing to you, but it's certainly not a felt need. And the idea of being a mentor to someone else is a totally new thought to you. Read on with an open mind. This is what Jesus did, and if you want to be a follower of Jesus, you have to go where He goes and do what He does. So hear me out and see where it leads.

**Camp 4.** You're a pastor and you're anxious to improve your church's system for making disciple-makers. Maybe you've heard about some of America's leading churches embracing the idea of using small group mentoring to develop lay leaders. You're not as convinced as you are curious. You'd like to know what this is all about and how it might be adapted to your church.

**Camp 5.** You're someone who's just curious about Jesus . . . what



He did, what He was like, how He interacted with people. This book will give you insight into Jesus as a mentor. You'll see Him in action as He taught, loved, challenged, forgave, and encouraged His guys. This is the first place (that I'm aware of) where Jesus has been looked at through the lens of a modern-day mentor.

The overarching motivation of this book is to inspire you to become a Radical Mentor and to use your position and influence to bring men's small group mentoring to your church.

“But why? Why should I do this?”

I'll give you seven reasons.

**Reason 1. Jesus did it, and He told you to as well.** We have visualized Jesus as CEO, Jesus as environmentalist, and even thought about what Jesus' politics might have been. But in reality . . . in history . . . regardless of your religious beliefs, Jesus was a mentor. His mentees became totally committed to His mission, worked together as an effective team, and through their efforts, arguably one-third of the world's population believes in what they taught. From eleven people to two billion people . . . Jesus was a pretty good mentor.

And His final instruction to us before He returned to His place in heaven with the Father was what? “Go and make disciples” (Matthew 28:19). He's telling us, “Go and do what I did. Go and find some people who are a little farther behind you on the path, and help them take their next steps, just as I did with my disciples!” His call is universal. It transcends gender. It certainly transcends vocations since none of Jesus' mentees were church people (nor was He).

Throughout this book we'll be looking at how He did what He did and achieved the success that He did. We'll look at the practices Jesus used to mentor His disciples. Is there a better place to look for best practices

than to Jesus? And those practices are there . . . visible . . . right there in the Scriptures . . . for all to see and apply.

**Reason 2. You'll find meaning and fulfillment.** We spend hours, days, and years of our lives at work, often mindlessly plying our skills and experience in order to do good work and to get paid. We accumulate things, we experience places and events, we build picture albums of places we've been and the people we have shared them with. Yet within thirty seconds of our last breath, those memories will be gone, just like an unsaved document on our computer screen when the power goes out.

A friend was telling me about going through his parents' things after they had both passed away. Pictures of places in the Holy Land, pictures from Italy and Greece, pictures from England and France . . . all thrown in a garbage bag and destroyed. Why? Because those pictures were only relevant to the person who took them, and when he or she passed on to the next part of their existence, the pictures became irrelevant and, thus, useless. Memories are the same way; they are only meaningful to the person who experienced the thing that created them. And when the power is unplugged on that person's brain, they disappear.

In the opulence of Western culture, we spend the majority of our time and money making memories for ourselves and our loved ones. And as we do, we are drawn farther and farther away from having meaning in our lives.

Pursuing meaning in our lives doesn't exclude having great memories, but meaning matters in a deeper and a more long-lasting way. Meaning says the activity you're involved with is really important.

**Mentoring a group of younger people gives life meaning.**

Meaning says it matters at a deep level. Meaning says the consequences of the activity will affect the people involved for a long time. Meaning says there is a multiplier effect, that future generations of people will benefit from the thing that has meaning.

Mentoring a group of younger people gives life meaning. To know that you have shown others something that will help them avoid some major mistake, which means they and those closest to them may avoid the painful consequences of that mistake . . . that is meaning. To watch a younger person choose to become a volunteer leader with Young Life instead of becoming the weekly trivia champion at the local sports bar . . . that is meaning. To watch one of your mentees become an influential leader in his church . . . that is meaning. To watch a mentee lead his family through a difficult family crisis in a godly way . . . that is meaning.

**Reason 3. It'll sharpen you and keep you sharp.** Intentionally mentoring a group of younger people is also a great opportunity for the mentor to learn and to refresh the knowledge he already has. As the saying goes, "We teach what we most need to learn." As you go through the process of reviewing what you've learned, you will rediscover things you have overlooked or forgotten . . . skills that are so much a part of your unconscious competence yet have been sitting on the shelf for years. What about that seminar you attended on listening skills? When you dust off the content and start picking the best parts to share with your group, you find yourself again practicing better listening skills. As you share the principles you've learned with your mentees, you learn them all over again yourself.

You will also find that these younger people have some things they know and can share with you and the group as well . . . it's a symbiotic process that breathes new life into the mentor as you share what you know and get your knowledge base expanded at the same time.

**Reason 4. It'll make you more grateful.** Mentoring a small

group will only be successful if it's done from the overflow of gratitude from a grateful heart. Many Christians will hear a sermon or read a book and be motivated by the desire to "be good" or do something good. Others may feel guilty for their past lives, saying, "You know, I owe God so much, I want to pay Him back." Still others may be motivated by pride. It is kind of a rush to have a group of people say they want to hang out with you for a year just to learn from you.

The only consistent, long-term motivation for the Christian to be selfless and to serve others is gratitude for what God has done for them. This deep sense of gratitude stems from one of three sources. Most of the time you'll find these "givers" (mentors will almost always be givers) have experienced significant life change. They were serious sinners, and Christ led them to do a 180. These people know what their lives were like without Him, and they have now experienced a different kind of life, one that stands for something and is pretty much free of intentional sin. A deep sense of gratitude stems from the rescue of their lives.

A second group of givers base their gratitude on some event or crisis in their life, where God intervened and saved them or their loved ones from a catastrophe. Their motivation is pure . . . not trying to pay God back; they are deeply grateful for His mercy. Often they sense that God preserved them for a reason. That sense of being alive for some kingdom purpose provides a lasting source of motivation, and becoming a Radical Mentor could be a part of why they were protected and preserved to live another season.

A third group of highly motivated givers haven't had any significant near-death experiences, nor have they been rescued from a life of deep, dark sin. They just seem to grasp the significance of the cross and the love God has for them. Responding to God's loving call on their lives, they love, they serve, they give . . . they just seem to get it somehow. These people make great mentors because they've

known God for a long time. They are “steady Eddie” faithful followers and they can tell a confident, long-term life story to their mentees. These days we often overlook the testimonies of the good guys who have been faithful from a young age. We think it’s more compelling to highlight the cataclysmic repentance of the former drug addict, adulterer, or drunk because it more dramatically displays the power of God. God’s power is just as powerfully displayed when people are raised in Christian homes, protected from waywardness, quietly come to the Father as new believers, and take their place in their families and churches. Think about how rare that is these days. Don’t you think God has a plan to leverage their experience? Wouldn’t you like to have your son mentored by someone like that?

As I became an intentional mentor through my Radical Mentoring groups, I became a more grateful person. I was able to thank God for allowing me to make those painful mistakes because now others could benefit from them. I paid the price for my stupidity. But now I am grateful when God uses my mistakes, as life lessons for younger guys, giving them the chance to avoid the same mistakes. Who would have ever thought I’d be grateful for my screw-ups?

The other day as I was praying, I heard myself say, “Lord, thank You so much for giving me such a great life. I’m eternally grateful that the sins of my youth have been forgiven and You’ve used the pain and learning from them to encourage and equip my younger brothers. Thank You for using me to help them avoid those mistakes and their corresponding consequences.”

**Reason 5. You’ll leave a real, living legacy.** Years ago I read where a business school was offering to be named after any donor who would give a million and a half dollars. Another school took on the name of a rich donor, only to have to withdraw the name after the rich donor became no longer rich.

When some people in their nineties were surveyed, they were

asked this question: “What are the three things you wish you had done that you didn’t do?”

The answers were somewhat surprising . . . but not really.

“Take more risk.” That one was a bit of a surprise.

“Reflect more.” Again, somewhat unexpected.

“Focus more on things that will live beyond me.”

*Legacy.* We all want to leave a legacy. The word legacy gets a lot of play these days. I believe that’s because baby boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964, are beginning to slow down, retire, and reflect. They’re asking questions like, “How have I spent my life?” and, “Ten years from now, how will anyone know I was even here?”

That’s why having a building named for you sort of scratches the itch. It says, “I was somebody. I did something that mattered.” I’ll compare my legacy with anyone (excluding Billy Graham and Bill Bright of course). Here’s why:

In the past fifteen years, I’ve intentionally mentored one hundred and twenty guys. Most report that they have a deeper, more meaningful walk with Jesus than they did before the Radical Mentoring experience. They are disciples . . . learners *and* followers of Jesus. To my knowledge none have fallen away. Almost all of them are still married. All are involved in a church. All are attempting to raise their kids in the faith. And from what I can tell, they are, to varying degrees, walking with God.

All of these mentees have signed a covenant saying they’ll mentor at least one group in the future (some have already started). Most will mentor many groups, but let’s just assume they only do the minimum. And let’s assume their mentees sign a similar covenant and mentor

eight guys before they die.

If that process continues for just five generations there will be more than one million Christ followers impacted just from God using me to lead mentoring groups. Unbelievable, huh?

I wanted to call this book “How to Have a Big Funeral,” because if just 10 percent of these five generations of mentees showed up at my funeral, it’d be one of the biggest in history. But then I read what Louis Grizzard, an author and a longtime columnist for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution said, “The primary determinant of the size of a man’s funeral is the weather that day.” So I let that idea go.

But seriously, God has blessed me with an incredible legacy.

And the exact same legacy is waiting for you. All you have to do is become a Radical Mentor and let God start using you to help younger Christ followers take their next step, share with them “a piece of your map” . . . let God use you as “iron” to “sharpen iron” (Proverbs 27:17).

In the pages that follow, I’m going to show you how. And the really cool thing is that I’m just going to show you what Jesus did. It’s that simple.

**Reason 6. You love your church.** I’ve been a part of North Point Community Church since its first service. I’ve watched the church grow into one of America’s largest and most influential. As the years have passed, I’ve become more and more concerned that we didn’t have a terribly effective system for making disciple-makers. One of our core values, apprenticeship, was something everyone talked about but no one has an effective plan for. Over the last 18 months, I’ve watched the beginning of a movement as mentors and mentees have become “fully alive” in Christ. I desperately want this movement to happen in your church and it might just be that you’re going to help start it.

**Reason 7. You won’t waste your life.** I have had several moments of truth in my life, but one of the most important happened

when I heard a speaker ask this question:

**“If your life were a dollar, how are you spending it?”**

That question creates laser focus.

- What am I doing with my life?
- Am I more than just another “piece of the machine”?
- Did God put me here just to go to church and then die and go to heaven?

John Piper, in his book *Don't Waste Your Life*, gives this perspective:

I will tell you what a tragedy is. I will show you how to waste your life. Consider a story in the February 1998 edition of the Readers Digest, which tells about a couple who “took early retirement from their jobs in the Northeast when he was 59 and she was 51. Now they live in Punta Gorda, Florida, where they cruise on their 30-foot trawler, play softball, and collect shells.” At first, when I read it I thought it might be a joke. A spoof on the American dream. But it wasn't. Tragically, this was the dream: Come to the end of your life – your one and only precious, God-given life – and let the last great work of your life, before you give an account to your Creator, be this: playing softball and collecting shells. Picture them before Christ at the great day of judgment. “Look, Lord. See my shells.” That is a tragedy. And people are spending billions of dollars to persuade you to embrace that tragic dream. Over against that, I put my protest:



Don't buy it. Don't waste your life.<sup>1</sup>

As we get older, as our kids grow up and need us less and less, and as we progress in our careers, it's incredibly tempting just to enjoy life. The place at the lake beckons, the vacations get longer and more exotic, and the focus on our lives becomes increasingly selfish. That's why so many voices in the Christian community are talking about "finishing well," about resisting the temptation to withdraw from engagement with others and instead staying in the game.

I don't think God only cares about how you served Him when you were young. My Bible doesn't say, "Make disciples until you get a few bucks" or "until you retire and move to the mountains." It says to make disciples, and I believe that at least part of the reason God gives some people money, free time, and wisdom is so they can invest in those who are coming after them. I can see God smile over that investment much more than I can see Him smile over a +4 golf handicap.

Intentionally mentoring younger people in a group setting has been one of the most fulfilling things I've ever done. And those people whom I have inspired to follow suit say the same thing. "I'll do this for the rest of my life," is something I hear often.

So don't waste your life. Do what Jesus did. Pick some less experienced people and mentor them. In these pages I'll show you how. I'll unpack a model for mentoring and show you how it's the model Jesus used with His disciples.

If I'm successful, I'll inspire you to become a Radical Mentor or to take the idea to your church. There's no age limit and no price for admission. Just a willingness to share. You'll find the best friends you've ever had, feel the most useful and fulfilled, and be blessed in ways that only the Father can bless you.

Come.

Read on.

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# CHAPTER ONE

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## MENTORING ON PURPOSE

In his book *Apple Confidential*, Owen W. Linzmayer tells of the interaction between John Sculley and Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple. Sculley, then the legendary CEO of Pepsi-Cola, describes how he repeatedly turned down Jobs' offers to come head up Apple. Until one day when Jobs said something that rocked Sculley's world,

“Do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugared water, or do you want a chance to change the world?”<sup>2</sup>

That was the defining moment. Sculley changed his mind, quit one of the most lucrative, high-profile CEO positions in America, and moved to California to join the team of this small, upstart computer

company with a vision.

So, I'm putting the same question to you, "Do you want to change the world?"

Jesus did.

Jesus told us His purpose. Recorded by John, His best friend on Earth, He said, "I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10).

What did He mean by "life" and by "have it to the full"?

Jesus gave us life by rescuing us from death. Yes, that sounds vague and metaphoric, but it's not. It's real and matter of fact. We would have died, and that would have been it. Game over. We would have had no hope beyond the grave.

But because Jesus fulfilled His life purpose, we know that men will die and still live. Jesus did. He died a public, undeniable death and then miraculously and supernaturally came back to life, showing Himself to His mentees and to five hundred others. If He did that, I'm in for whatever He says I need to do that can allow me to do that too. That's not all He meant by giving us "life," but it's a huge part of it.

But more, He wanted to show us the kind of life that God intended for us to have. A life filled with meaning and wonder . . . a life of purpose.

## PURPOSE-LED LIVING

Years ago, I heard a speaker addressing the question of longevity. He said everyone needs to get up every day with something to do – some duty, task, or calling, some purpose – a reason to be.

When I think about the life Jesus lived, the life He modeled for me, I see someone who loved and served people. He was intentional about it. And when I try to understand the last part of His purpose statement . . . "and have it to the full" . . . I think I now understand

what He meant.

As Christians, when we accept the Father's offer of salvation through Jesus, we get life . . . eternal life. We get a life of peace while we finish out our days here on Earth.

But if we want the second part, "and have [life] to the full," we have to move beyond the gift of our salvation. We have to want more. To get involved in the cause Jesus started . . . the cause of redemption. We have to become others- focused. To start thinking outside our own little world and ask God: "How can I help? What would You have me

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do? I know my purpose is to bring glory to You, but how would You have me do that? Help me find my unique purpose in Your kingdom!"

Today, the "*p word*" is everywhere. Since Rick Warren wrote *The Purpose Driven Life* and sold a gazillion copies, everyone wants to talk about purpose, because it's important. And when we talk about something as vague as mentoring, purpose becomes even more important. So let's be clear on the terminology.

A mission or goal is about *what*.

It's measurable and finite. If my mission is to become a CPA, then I know *what* I have to do, and I'll know *when* I complete the mission.

Strategies and tactics are about *how*. When we strategize, we think about how we use our time, talent, and treasure to accomplish the mission. My strategy to become a CPA might include interning, going back to college, working for an accounting firm for a year, studying my

brains out at night, and then sitting for the CPA exam five years from now.

But purpose is about *why*. It's not really measurable. It's understandable yet vague. Warren's mantra is we're all created for a specific purpose . . . to glorify God. And he's right. God created everything for His glory. We are His highest and greatest, created in His image.

He created us because He wanted a family, and He sent Jesus to become His "adoption agency" for us. The paperwork is all filled out . . . the fees are paid. All we have to do to complete the adoption process is believe.

Once we're adopted, we're irrevocably in His family. We can't be "unadopted," just as an adopted child in America can't be unadopted. It's a status that isn't changed because of bad behavior or anything else. It's permanent.

Now that we are God's children, what do we do with our lives that will make our Father in heaven proud of us . . . that will make Him glad He adopted us?

We become like Him. Become like our loving, kind, wise, disciplined Father. To make Himself understandable to us, our God sent Jesus as His *embodiment* . . . to be one of us, live on the earth for a while and model what He wanted us *to be* like.

Mentoring isn't about coming to know something, that's education. Mentoring isn't about learning to do something, that's training.

Mentoring is about showing someone how *to be something*. It's about *becoming* a learner and follower of Jesus Christ because that's what makes our Father most pleased. It's also what makes Jesus most famous because millions of us are running around the world emulating Jesus. And as someone said, you only know you're a follower of Jesus when you've helped someone else become a follower of Jesus. That's what Radical Mentoring can do, and with enough men and women

becoming active followers of Jesus, we can change the world.

About 350 years after Christ, the Roman emperor Julian (AD 332-363) wanted to reinstitute faithfulness to the pagan religions of Rome but struggled because Christians were doing such good things for people, even strangers, that they rendered the Roman gods irrelevant.

Wouldn't it be cool to render the pagan gods of the twenty-first century irrelevant by having millions of Christ followers become so genuine in their faith they changed the world with their kindness, mercy, and generosity?

I believe that can happen. Not through televangelism, crusades, or megachurches . . . but through mentoring. We must emulate what Jesus did – help men and women become all-in followers of Jesus Christ with a passion and commitment to pay it forward to others.

## MENTORING IS MESSY

Modern-day church people love classes, seminars, Bible studies, and small groups. We show up, sit in circles or rows, listen, share, pray, eat, and leave. Usually we do some homework between meetings, but it's not too much (by design because we don't want fewer people involved by making it too hard). It's neat. Predictable. Noninvasive. It easily merges into our wrinkle-free lives.

Mentoring is different. There isn't a curriculum per se. There isn't a video with discussion questions. There isn't a form you fill out at the end saying, "Joe Smith has completed blankety-blank course." Mentoring is a relationship. Several relationships actually.

You can get dirty mentoring people. They bring real issues to the table. And those issues require mentors to get personal, transparent, and exposed. One of the most common phrases a mentor says is, "I don't know. But I can tell you what I did when . . . and here's how it turned out. Here's what I wish I had done. Here's what Jesus said

about it. Here's what I missed."

Many times I've left meetings with mentees and gone to my knees asking God, "Why is this happening to him? I don't get it." Many times I've prayed for one of my mentees' situations, and not only did I not get my prayer answered, but I sensed God was totally silent.

Then I realized my role . . . to help the younger ones interpret what's happening the right way, the Scriptural way . . . the God way. Through it all, I'm practicing my own faith and making it stronger.

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## MY PURPOSE

Other than my intimate relationship with the Father, nothing has given me more direction in life than my life purpose statement.

Without it I probably wouldn't be a mentor.

Earlier I mentioned *The Purpose Driven Life* and Rick Warren's assertion that we're all here to "glorify God." I agree.

But how? How do we glorify God? How can we make our lives be a praise to Him?

After a lot of thinking, praying, and editing, my life purpose statement was finally settled:

"I, Regi Campbell, glorify God by loving and serving others and by challenging them to be all they can be and to give all of themselves to Jesus Christ."

Do you see the three operative words – *love*, *serve*, and *challenge*? Let me explain.

*Love.* It's inarguable that Christ followers are to love God and love one another. *Love* is a verb, not only a noun. Love that is real is demonstrated. When Jesus told us the greatest commandment is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself," He meant do it, not just talk about it.

My second word is *serve*. Where love takes action. Rick Warren, in a Catalyst Conference talk, said, "The church has amputated its hands and its feet, and all that's left is its mouth." We talk about serving, but in large part we serve the institution of the church. We serve each other within the church . . . and that's about it.

Mentoring younger guys puts hands and feet onto loving and serving. That's why everyone who is mature in faith can do it.

The third word is where it gets dicey. Mine is *challenge*. I'm a challenger. My philosophy of life when it comes to relationships is "to bring a smile to the face and reflection to the heart of every person I meet."

When I engage with my mentees, there's a strong sense of challenge in the air. I start by challenging them to be on time, somewhat of a lost practice in our culture and particularly in church world. I challenge them by requiring their completion of the homework assignments. I challenge them to be open and transparent. I'll ask personal questions and demand honest answers. I force them to consider what God says about stuff in His Word. Because that's how I'm wired. That's the purpose God built into me.

He will use me and that challenging gift in the lives of my mentees, but only for a defined period of time. I won't be the last or only mentor these guys will have. I'm in their lives for nine to twelve months. God may bring an encourager into their lives after their year with me. Or a



coach sometime after that. I'm only responsible for being what I am, doing what the Lord asked me to do, and using the gifts, talents, and experiences He's placed in me.

Since Jesus was the only complete mentor, the only mentor who could fully challenge and encourage, then I can't possibly be all of these things for my mentees. My prayer is they will learn all they can from me but then move on to be mentored by others in the future.

## INSIDE OUT

My Radical Mentoring groups start with the inner man and his relationship with his heavenly Father. With clarity in that relationship, focus moves to the way the inner man thinks, acts, and relates . . . first with himself and then with his wife, children, and the rest of his relationships in the world.

Jesus' purpose translated into action. His choice of mentoring a small group of followers to effect His mission was a brilliant decision. Just do the math: when twelve disciples multiply themselves over and over, the number of people getting the message is overwhelming. There was no more effective way to get an important message out in the first century with no Internet, TV or direct mail. Even with all the technology, individual influence, and word of mouth, multiplication is still the most powerful way to communicate a message. Companies spend billions today to create brands, viral marketing, and buzz, all for the purpose of spreading the message quickly and effectively to millions of people.

And the message Jesus has is unique. It's not about a theology or a doctrine as much as it is about a man . . . His origin, His life, His death, His resurrection, and His purpose for the world. In the first-century world there was no more powerful communications vehicle than the account of an eyewitness who saw something. That was the

first step in God's plan to reveal the message of Jesus: to have Him "live out loud" in front of a small group of people, His disciples, and thus position them to describe firsthand what they experienced, heard and saw.

## EMBODIMENT

Having used the Radical Mentoring model for making disciple-makers for over 15 years, I now know a lot more about why it works. And one of the most important things I've discovered is that the key dynamic at play is *embodiment*. Let me explain.

When something is hard to understand, incredibly complex, high powered with high potential, it usually takes some sort of example or application or utility for it to be understood. When the guys at Bell Labs invented the *transistor*, almost nobody grasped its significance until the *transistor radio* showed up. It *embodied* the transistor, made the radio smaller, more portable, cheaper and better. In many ways, the internet was like that. Originally, it was a concept, useful only to scientists and researchers . . . until Google, Yahoo, and Facebook. They *embodied* the internet and put the reality of its power and utility into the hands of regular people. Tremendous complexity behind it . . . extreme simplicity and value delivered to billions of people who use it.

The Old Testament is the story of God trying to communicate His love and power to us. The narrative of the Jews is the narrative of mankind . . . selfish, stiff-necked, fickle in their faith, always focused on what's in it for me, forgetful and ungrateful. The narrative of God is uncompromising holiness; justice and truth always accompanied by mercy and grace. Over and over, the Jews seem to understand, connect and submit, only to turn around, reject God and rebel.

At just the right time, God decided to reveal the *embodiment* of Himself. Jesus comes into history to show us a *working model of God*. For

the first time, we see what God is like, and we see it in real time. In human terms. Stories. Pictures. Moving pictures. Decisions He made. Actions He took. How He treated people. How He prayed and followed His

**“The closer the mentor walks with Jesus, the more his life will embody Jesus and the more God will use his life to influence the mentees he invests in.**

Father. How He treated His mother. How He faced death . . . and died. Jesus didn't try to act like God. He was God. He lived, died and lives now as the embodiment of His Father in the lives of Jesus-followers around the world. His disciples weren't killed for what Jesus taught, they died because they wouldn't stop talking about *who He is* . . . about *who He embodied!*

I've struggled to explain why a mentor can have such impact on a younger man . . . why regular small groups, Bible studies, Sunday school classes pale in comparison.

Here's what I've come to see . . .

**The mentor is the *embodiment* of the Christian life, observable and accessible to the mentee.**

While anything but perfect, the life of the mentor, transparently exposed and fully committed, shows the younger man a real life example of what a fully-alive Jesus-follower is like and what it *can be for him* if he goes all-in. In a mentoring group, guys see glimpses of Jesus in all the other guys too. A composite begins to emerge . . . a way to believe, behave, and belong.

So what does that mean? In real life?

*Embodiment* starts with grace and gratitude. The mentor/Jesus-

follower has faced his sin and accepted God's forgiveness. He's not self-righteous, not a poser, but not self-deprecating. He's deeply *grateful* for his forgiveness, his adoption into God's family and his life with God. He knows the contrast between his life in Christ and his life without Christ. He has *grasped God's love* for him, which has given him peace and comfort in his own skin. He's *connected* with the Father, pursuing Him as he lives. He's reading, learning constantly. Prayer marks his life, not as ritual of practiced words, but His Presence . . . smiles, quietness and personal worship. His life projects God's love, peace, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-discipline. When mentees are invited into his life, they see and hear how he navigates marriage, fatherhood, church, money, work, relationships, health issues and all the rest. The closer the mentor walks with Jesus, the more his life will embody Jesus and the more God will use his life to influence the mentees he invests in.

Until recently, I'd have said, "The best mentors will be those who are closest to God . . . who most *embody* Jesus." But that's wrong and shortsighted . . . setting the bar someplace nobody can get to. You must start where you are. Look at Jesus' disciples . . . they walked with the man Himself, yet they started their ministries in radically different places. Peter started with the shame of having denied Jesus, Thomas with his doubts, James and John with their ambition and we don't even know about the others.

What we do know is that walking alongside the *embodiment of God* for three and a half years set them on a course to make disciple-makers and change the world. In the end, they were sought after and killed, not because of what they'd learned or what they were teaching. They were dangerous because they'd seen the *embodiment of God* in their mentor and friend, Jesus. Through the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they became the *embodiment of Jesus*

and started to build the church, one city, one ekklesia, one disciplinarian at a time. They couldn't stop being *who they were*, and they couldn't deny what they'd seen and experienced.

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# CHAPTER TWO

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## IT'S NOT ABOUT ME

**A** few times, I've kicked off my Radical Mentoring group with a pop quiz. Before we meet, each mentee writes a biographical summary of his life and sends a copy to everyone in the group. I take a few facts about each guy, his family and his history and make up a fill-in-the-blank test. Should be a cinch, right? It's not.

Problem is, they come to the first session and haven't read the other guys' bios. The scores are abysmal, sometimes in the low teens on a scale of 100. They're always highly embarrassed.

Why? Why don't they take the time to read about the guys they're going to be in a group with for a year? Self-focus, that's why. Everyone is interested in their own deal . . . not anyone else's. I ask the convicting question, "If tonight you had been coming to a meeting of big potential customers who could help you make your sales quota or a group of

senior corporate executives who could help you with your career, what would your score have been?" You bet they would have spent the effort if they thought there was something in it for them. But just focusing on the other people in the group, learning about their families, careers, accomplishments for no apparent reason . . . why bother?

Authentic mentoring, mentoring like Jesus did it, involves selflessness. It says, "I'm going to give to you . . . put you first . . . let you learn from my mistakes and get nothing in return." In a sense the mentor says, "I've paid the price (via my mistakes) to learn what I've learned. I'm going to give you the benefit of that price so you won't have to pay it." Sounds a little like Jesus' sacrifice for us, doesn't it?

That offer, that transaction, doesn't make sense in our economy. It's ludicrous. Why should you gain from my sacrifice? It's every man for himself, right?

But God's reality, the visible world merged with the invisible world, is a reality of threes, not twos.

Let me explain.

Deciding to mentor isn't just a decision between me and the person or me and the group. That's a world of twos.

It's me, the younger guy who needs a mentor and God. It's me, the potential Radical Mentoring group and God.

God is the third party in every transaction . . . every situation . . . every decision.

Our relationship with God isn't as simple and straightforward as just being between Him and us. He's always using a third party – our wives, kids, pastors, even bosses. He's always connecting us with people for His purposes. It's always "You and me, God." It's always, "Jesus, what would You have me do?" It's always three, not two.

As you consider the idea of becoming a Radical Mentor . . . of mentoring like Jesus did, remember there's a third party in the decision. He loves selflessness. He loves the servant heart. He loves for us to do

what He did. He'll answer you if you'll consult Him about what He'd have you do.

## MODELING SELFLESSNESS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

In a society of self-reliance, how does one demonstrate genuine selflessness? Do you hold open the door for people entering the mall and never go in yourself? Do you give away all your money and possessions and become a monk?

Radical Mentoring starts with selflessness on the part of the mentor. There has to be a drive or a calling to give back . . . to pay it forward. A commitment to the cause calls the mentor above selfish interest and toward selflessness.

Jesus was the only selfless human ever to walk the face of the earth. Think about it . . .

- He owned nothing so He could travel light and be totally focused on others.
- He gave up family to be about His mission.
- He often provided free food for people who were listening to His teaching.
- He helped fishermen catch fish.
- He healed people left and right and never asked for anything in return. Often He even asked people He healed not to tell anyone so that He didn't even get the credit publicly.

Jesus even gave up His family for His Father's business. We saw it when, at the age of twelve, He stayed behind in the synagogue to talk



with the rabbis, causing His family great distress when they found He was missing.

Then as an adult, He traveled throughout the country healing and preaching, often at risk to His life. Once when His family found Him, Jesus let them know in no uncertain terms that His ministry . . . the mentoring of His disciples . . . the teaching, healing, and miraculous casting out of demons . . . was more important than anything, even family (Luke 8:18-21).

We know Jesus loved His family. One of His last acts from the cross was to ensure that John would care for His mom.

It's just that the "work of His Father" . . . the selfless work of revealing what God is really like and of mentoring His disciples to carry the work of His Father forward after His ascension, took a priority over things He might have selfishly enjoyed.

But the "biggie" is His death on the cross. Jesus voluntarily gave His life so we could be forgiven for our sins and have eternal life.

What did Jesus get in return for this? Nothing. It was the ultimate act of selflessness . . . to give His life for the very people who were killing Him. That defines selflessness to me.

The selflessness of a good mentor is obvious. There's a willingness to invest time in others when there is no return on investment for yourself. In corporate settings, mentors are often recognized for their participation . . . a plaque, an article in the company newsletter and an awards banquet where they're applauded. And then, as mentees rise in the organization, often they come back to take care of their former mentors.

Radical Mentoring promises none of that. This is a one-way street . . . from mentor to mentee. No payback. No quid pro quo. Just selfless giving. And it's wonderful.

Our Father in heaven is watching, and selflessness makes Him smile. Of all the human endeavors He likes, mentoring younger ones

for kingdom purposes has to be one of His favorites . . . because that's what His Son did when He was here.

## GRATITUDE

I've spoken about gratitude and how mentors are givers not takers. God puts within His true followers a deep motivation, a true calling. They recognize there's more to life than this life, and they're motivated in a special way because of this understanding.

Let me explain.

When I surrendered to God in September 1983, I didn't have anything anymore. I had lost my wife and kids. My career had hit a brick wall. I had worshipped the wrong god for years and suddenly realized it wasn't real or dependable. I was broken.

God had me right where He wanted me. He didn't cause all these bad circumstances to evolve. I had brought them on myself. And now I was living with the consequences of my decisions and behavior.

But God used those tough circumstances to get my attention . . . to reach out to me and say: "I'm here. I love you. I want to help you. With me, you can get through this."

I said, "Ok then . . . it's you and me, God. I'm going with you. Whatever you want me to do, that's what I'll do."

I was thrilled to have a real connection to God. For the first time I began to listen to God instead of only talking at Him. I began to sense His urgings and feel a halt in my spirit when I was acting badly. I started living this reckless life . . . loving my wife, my kids, everyone.

**“Since God has  
in essence  
given me my  
life, what part  
of it is truly  
mine?”**

Doing what His “still small voice” led me to do.

God began to bless me. First, my marriage began to work. My kids and I started real relationships. My church life went from going through the motions to real worship. My new business (which I started after leaving the big company) began to grow. The discipleship class I signed up for became a centerpiece of my spiritual and social life. God gave me the first set of Christian friends I'd ever had. I began to tithe and almost immediately started upping the percentage.

Year by year, God added more relationships, more depth, more love to my life. And that voice, that connection, that relationship has become my center. God has moved from being a part of my life to being the center of my life. He's my magnetic north. I try not to do anything without thinking about Him and filtering my action through His will for me. When I fail to do that, I fail. Period.

## GIVING BACK

I hear wealthy people talk about “giving back” all the time. Alumni who go on from college to create fortunes, give back to their alma maters with huge donations and endowments. People who start businesses often give back to the communities that fostered their entrepreneurship, locating factories, offices, and distribution facilities in those locations. Those facilities create jobs, pay taxes, and enrich the communities that helped them get started.

Since God has in essence given me my life, what part of it is truly mine?

None.

It's His, all His!

He can take any of it away anytime He wants. So in reality it's His anyway.

How hard is it to be generous with someone else's money? Just

watch what your kids order when you take them out to dinner and they know you're picking up the tab! That's the way we should look at our lives. They're His. "Lord, how would You have me use my time for You, for Your kingdom?" Don't be surprised if part of the answer is mentoring younger people.

The other dimension to giving as a mentor relates to how you give to your group once you have one.

My most valuable gift to my group is my time and attention. Where in today's world does one go to be heard, where someone genuinely listens with no personal agenda, with nothing to gain or lose? My only motive is to point these guys to Jesus.

I can listen objectively, without the pressure of trying to impress, sound smart or always be right.

## COMMITMENT TO "THE CAUSE"

When you look at mentoring in the broadest context, it's always around a cause. When football coaches mentor their players, it's toward the cause of building a better team and, ultimately winning championships. When head coaches mentor their assistants, it's about building a stronger coaching staff and creating a winning tradition.

When corporations create mentoring programs and foster mentoring relationships, it's about the same thing . . . success for the company. We can be more successful as an organization if we leverage the talent and experience of our senior people into the performance of our younger managers. It just makes sense.

Jesus, the world's greatest mentor, did a lot of His mentoring for "the cause." He was totally about His Father's business, demonstrating the nature of God and preparing His mentees for the task of taking the story of God to the world and to future generations.

Even when He did things that seemed "earthly" like healing

Peter's mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14-15), they had a purpose beyond the moment . . . beyond the human need . . . beyond His friendship with Peter. He was always thinking, "How can my Father get glory out of this?" I can imagine that healing his wife's mother did a lot to help Peter's wife deal with her husband's continual absence while he was traveling around with Jesus. But you can also be sure Peter's wife was seeing incredible change in her husband, change for the better.

Over the years, the wives of the men I've mentored have become my biggest champions. They miss having their husbands home on the nights they're with me, but they are more than delighted with the changes they see God making in their husbands.

Even though Jesus spent most of His time with His mentees, He never put them ahead of His Father and the cause of the kingdom. He would walk away after big events to go pray. Just when you would expect to see the disciples hoisting the cooler full of Gatorade to dump it on His head, Jesus would head off to be alone with the Father.

**The selfless  
mentor is a  
good listener,  
dispensing  
his wisdom to  
meet the needs  
of his mentees,  
not his need  
to tell all he  
knows.**

My motivation in creating Radical Mentoring groups has been to encourage and equip younger men to become godlier. Taking a line from my purpose statement, I'm about helping people become all they can be and to give all of themselves to Jesus Christ.

When guys I mentor live lives of character, when they stay married, thrive in their church, point their kids to Jesus and succeed in their careers, I believe they're saying to those around them, "Hey, following Jesus may not be a bad way to go." Then hopefully God will compel those people toward

Himself, and they can understand what “the way” really is.

## THE DANGEROUS EGO

Jesus knew who He was. He didn't have anything to prove to anyone. He did miracles and wonders to establish His divinity, not to show off or say, “Hey, look at Me.” He deflected glory for everything He did to the Father, never taking credit Himself.

Mentors like Jesus love to watch their mentees go beyond themselves . . . to do greater things than they've done.

Peter Drucker was thrilled by the success of his mentee, Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great* and *Built to Last*. Drucker wrote dozens of books and greatly impacted modern business management but he never hesitated to help Collins shape his message and business philosophy. Collins wrote:

I'll never forget asking, “How can I ever pay you back?” and his saying, “You've already paid me back. I've learned so much from our conversation.” That's when I realized where Drucker's greatness lay, that unlike a lot of people, he was not driven to say something. He was driven to learn something. I feel proud that I followed the advice. It's a huge debt. I can never pay it back. The only thing I can do is give it to others. Drucker had said, “Go out and make yourself useful.” That's how you pay Peter Drucker back. To do for other people what Peter Drucker did for me.<sup>3</sup>

Great mentors know who they are. They get great joy in seeing their wisdom, knowledge, and experience live on to help others.

Collins comment about Drucker's listening and learning is huge. When a person knows who he is, he's comfortable in any situation. He doesn't spend energy wondering what the other person is thinking. He can spend all his energy listening and trying to understand.

I've heard horror stories of mentors who were motivated by their ego. Retired executives are especially experienced but often especially egocentric too. They've been looked up to . . . sometimes feared . . . for years and years. "They know because they know." But as mentors, they can be too wrapped up in their own successes . . . their own way of doing things.

They forget Jesus asked questions . . . lots of questions, and He listened. He didn't just talk. On those few occasions when He did, He was intentional about it. But many, if not most, of His parables came as answers to questions.

Jesus tailored His message . . . His answer . . . to the needs of the asker. He didn't blabber on and on about what He knew.

Thus, the selfless mentor is a good listener, dispensing his wisdom to meet the needs of his mentees, not his need to tell all he knows.

That's the selfless heart . . . the God-seeking heart of the mentor.

## A BIG SURPRISE

God, who is the perfect Father, loves to give good gifts to His children. We can debate all day what a "good gift" is. But I suspect it isn't a new car, a big hit in the stock market or a fancy vacation. He hasn't given any of those things to me as a result of my mentoring, but He has surprised me with some incredible gifts. Notes from guys who thank me for helping them have better marriages and notes describing more balanced work lives. They thank me for playing a part. They send pictures of newborn children wrought of once shaky marriages, now strong.

But most of all, *they're friends!* God has turned the guys I've mentored into my best friends. I never expected that.

Isn't that just like God to take something you give Him in a selfless way and turn them back to you as blessings beyond anything you could imagine?





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# CHAPTER THREE

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## THE SECRET SAUCE: A GROUP

**J**esus, the world's greatest mentor, worked with a group. That's right, a group. All my life, I thought of mentoring only as an individual thing . . . one-on-one, life-on-life. But Jesus started . . . and ended . . . with a group.

How could we all have missed that? I can't find a single book or article approaching mentoring from a group perspective. I guess it's like the dead-looking flower arrangement on my bookshelf. I've seen it so much that I don't see it anymore.

In Christian circles the mentoring paradigm is Paul, Barnabas, and Timothy. Paul being an older, wiser mentor. Barnabas being a peer . . . someone "on mission" with us . . . someone we can have accountability and do life with. And Timothy being a younger, less experienced, less mature person we can pour our life into.

It's a neat picture and while I'd love to have that, I've only ever met a few people who've had individuals playing those exact roles in their

lives. They're incredibly blessed, but they are very few. And when I have seen that happen, it has taken years and most of those relationships evolved slowly and haphazardly over time. There wasn't intentionality in either establishing the relationships or fulfilling the mentoring roles. God just put those people into each other's lives . . . it just happened.

The first time we tried to launch a mentoring program at North Point Community Church, we had no trouble drawing a couple of hundred guys who wanted to be mentored. And we drew a pretty good number of potential mentors as well.

The problem came in trying to connect them one-on-one. We built a database and tried to match guys by the area of town they lived or worked in. We tried matching them by their college alma mater or by the industry they worked in. We tried everything. Even with the blessing and active participation of Andy Stanley, our Senior Pastor, it failed to take off.

Why?

Because you can't orchestrate friendship. You can't *make* one-on-one mentoring relationships happen. Sort of like marriage . . . no one can explain or predict how God puts certain people into each other's lives, but He does.

When I look at Jesus, I see intentionality. He didn't have time for His mentees, His "Timothy's" to just show up. He had to go and get them.

He already had His mentor, His "Paul" . . . God the Father Himself! And there was (and is) no peer to Jesus, so the "Barnabas" thing was a nonstarter.

**I believe the group context is the "secret sauce" of intentional mentoring.**

I realize all relationships are individual . . . you can't have a relationship with a group. It's ultimately one-on-one, both between mentor and mentee and between mentees. Just as God doesn't have a relationship with a church; He has individual relationships with each person within the church. But I believe the group context is the "secret sauce" of intentional mentoring. It can set the individual relationships in motion and speed up the process of developing trust.

## EFFICIENCY

When I was fourteen years old, I landed my first job working in a grocery store, bagging groceries, stocking shelves and cleaning up.

Each night after closing, someone had to clean the aisles using a large dust mop. The mops were heavy, bulky and a little moist with some sort of pre-applied wax.

One Friday night, I was off with my dust mop, scampering up one side of the aisle and back down the other.

Mr. Cantrell, the store manager, was quite a feared figure to everyone in the store. He was white haired, red faced and didn't smile much . . . not the guy you wanted to cross or disappoint. In my first few weeks on the job, he spoke to me maybe once or twice.

As I came to the end of the dog food aisle, Mr. Cantrell spotted me. He stopped, turned, and walked directly toward me. I remember the blood rushing out of my legs . . . the way it does when you top a hill going a little too fast and see a police car with a radar gun pointing directly at you. I hardly noticed he had a dust mop in his hand.

When he got to me, he reached out and took the dust mop from my hand without saying a word. He then took his dust mop and mine, put one in each hand, and proceeded up the aisle, mopping the entire aisle in one pass. When he reached the end of the aisle, he turned to the next aisle, out of my sight. I quickly turned and rounded the

corner just in time to see Mr. Cantrell walking directly toward me with both mops, cleaning the entire aisle in one pass. When he got to me, he stopped . . . handed both dust mops to me and said, “Work smart, son, and not so hard.” I’ve never forgotten that.

Mentoring in a group is “working smart and not so hard.”

Why tell your story eight times to eight people when you can tell it once to all eight at the same time? Why share your successes and failures over and over again when you can share them once for multiple listeners to hear?

Jesus worked smart. Time after time He was speaking, teaching and answering questions in front of His group . . . for all to hear and consume. Sure, the group had different levels of understanding, but those who wanted it would come back and ask questions to get clarification. “Explain this parable to us,” the disciples asked on multiple occasions. Then Jesus would explain it. Once. For all to hear and understand.

One of the biggest reasons men and women don’t mentor today is the amount of time they perceive it takes. With busy schedules, the idea of meeting one-on-one with someone . . . again and again seems too much. You never know when the need to get together is going to arise. You never know what the issue is going to be, and you wonder if this open-ended commitment has any rational end or if it is doing any good. In a group, it’s totally different.

As a mentor, I feel it’s worth the investment of time to benefit eight people, much more than if it’s just for one. I have the time scheduled a year in advance . . . one night a month, three hours . . . highly efficient. With texting and email, follow-up conversations, questions and explanations are incredibly efficient.

As I said earlier, my venture into Radical Mentoring groups was out of self-defense. I couldn’t do the number of individual meetings needed and keep a job, a family, and a brain. So I put the first group

together to leverage my time. Since then, the time required has been less, the number of people affected has been more, the time I spend is organized and planned, and the fruit has been far beyond anything I could have ever imagined.

## SIMPLER STRUCTURE

When I think about the one-on-one mentoring I've done, I'm reminded of how helter-skelter it felt. Usually, the conversation was driven by the "issue of the day" and didn't go much further. Over the course of a year or two, I'm sure the mentee received some help and grew in his faith. But did they get my best? Did he get what he wanted but miss out on what he *needed*?

Everything we do in life is either goal-achieving or tension-relieving. Issue-driven mentoring isn't intentional from the mentor's perspective. It isn't proactive, it's reactive. It's not directly goal-achieving . . . it's tension-relieving for the mentee since he gets help with a pressing issue. He either gets some helpful advice, or he gets courage to act on his decision. Misery loves company, and it's comforting to have a respected adviser agree with your plan of action, even if it is *your* plan of action.

And I'm not saying mentors shouldn't be available for and responsive to the pressing issues of their mentees. We can't love them and not come to their aid when they're in trouble.

But if all health care were delivered from an ambulance, we certainly wouldn't ever see lives saved through open-heart surgery. No one would ever get a physical . . . there would be no prevention of disease. And if all mentors do is help people in crisis times, real growth will be slow, and mentors will wear out.

I've found mentoring a group of guys by meeting once a month for a year gives me a simple structure and a measured pace,

allowing me to achieve my goals and make the most of our time spent together.

## REDUCED PRESSURE ON THE MENTOR

Mentoring in a group environment puts less pressure on the mentor than one-on-one mentoring. The mentor gets to lay out (and control) the agenda. He gets to talk about what he wants to talk about, understanding that a good mentor is responsive to his group and relevant to their issues and needs.

**“The beauty of a mentoring group is it has a defined end.”**

Whenever he’s stumped or doesn’t have an answer, he can turn to the rest of the group and say: “What do you guys think? What would you say to this question?” Not only does he get himself off the hook for knowing

everything, but he allows the mentees to exercise their ability to give advice in a nonthreatening, non-preachy way.

This dynamic has been one of the biggest surprises for me as a mentor.

When a guy has an issue, someone in the group usually has experience on that issue. Often they will speak up and say, “I’ve been there. Let me tell you what happened.”

The most vivid example came when one of my groups “went deep” on marital expectations.

“I work hard . . . I provide well . . . why shouldn’t I expect certain things from my wife?” asked Rick. It was late in the evening on our retreat. A couple of the other guys chimed in with agreement. I explained we’re to love our wives as Christ loved the church . . . unconditionally. I reminded them how we don’t meet Jesus’ expectations . . . but He gave Himself up for us anyway. Here’s Rick’s recollection of that night . . .

*It was Friday night. We had eaten a great meal and were sitting down for the last session of the night. Two of us had yet to give our testimony. I was one of them. Boy, was I nervous. I was going to have to share what I had masked so well for so long. But as I look back now, God was preparing my heart for a night I would never forget.*

*My story started with a dysfunctional family life and a broken home, a dad who was never around and a mom who was always at work. I had mastered this self-pity party all my life and didn't expect this night would be any different. But after my attempt to explain my life, my mentor had one question that rocked my world: How is your marriage now? I loaded up and started firing out. I have done all these things. I work hard. I provide. I clean. I help with the kids. Why can't my wife just do something? Why can't she just cut me some slack?*

*What I didn't realize was that everything coming out of my mouth was what I needed, what I was doing right, what she was doing wrong. All of my expectations of her were selfish demands by me. As I looked across the room, I could see several of my peers agreeing with me. So I felt pretty good. But I was sadly mistaken.*

*I was told in so many words from my mentor – I was the one who had it wrong! I was the one screwing things up by putting expectations on my wife that she could never live up to, and at the end of the day I would be divorced just like my parents . . . if I didn't change.*

*About that time, J.D. spoke up. He was the other guy who hadn't yet shared his faith story.*

*"Regi's right," he said, with his voice breaking. "I know because my constant expectations led my first wife to divorce me."*

*The room got dead quiet. No one knew J.D. had been married before. He went on to tell his story. He had such credibility because he was speaking from his heart . . . and his painful personal experience.*

*In that moment, I told myself and the group that was not going to happen. I had been through that, and I was going to do everything in my power*



*not to let that happen. You see those words again: my power. Regi reminded me that Jesus puts no expectations on me, on any of us. He loves us unconditionally. I sat with my face in my hands and realized he was right. By this time, I was mentally exhausted. My mind and heart ached. I asked myself what was I going to do. I'm either going to continue to live this way, or I'm going to change now with God's help. So I called my wife; it was 2:30am I broke down in tears and told her how wrong I had been . . . how I wanted to change. She forgave me, and we started over.*

## NO END IN SIGHT

It's hard to visualize how a mentoring relationship ends. I believe that's why it's so hard to motivate more mature people to mentor. They've achieved some success. They enjoy having control of their time and often become selfish with it. They want to know what they're getting into, how much time it's going to take, and when it will be over. I'm not being judgmental . . . I'm being honest. This is not just assessment . . . this is confession. I ask those questions every time I'm asked to get involved in something.

Before I began to lead Radical Mentoring groups, young men would ask me to mentor them, and I would think: *I wonder how much time this is going to take? How often is this guy going to call me? When will it be over? Is this mentoring or adult adoption?*

One of my mentors, who was also my pastor for ten years, had the courage to tell me once, "Regi, I think you've learned all you're going to learn from me." It's rare that someone would be honest enough to promote you on to be mentored by someone else.

The beauty of a mentoring group is it has a defined end.

Most mentoring relationships just peter out over time. Guys stay friends and occasionally communicate, but there isn't a time when it's understood, "Ok, you're on your own now. I've given you my best. Go

and do your best.” Having a defined end is cool, and it’s a lot easier to nail down with a group.

## TWO-WAY STREET

Another surprise for me as I started mentoring in groups was what I was able to learn. I had envisioned teaching them but never counted on learning myself.

By mentoring sharp young men, I’m getting access to the best and brightest minds of the future. Men who will lead our businesses, our schools, and our churches. They’ve read and learned on their own, and their perspectives often stretch mine.

I also learn how their generation sees the world. I’m able to stay abreast of cultural trends and issues through my firsthand involvement in the lives of men who are living it out. They listen to different music, watch different TV shows and movies, and use different language at times. I’m able to keep up and stay relevant by my involvement with them.

So mentoring isn’t just a one-way street from me to them. It’s a two-way street, with me gaining valuable insight and useful knowledge from them as well.

## HEALTHY PEER PRESSURE

Another dimension to mentoring in a group is the peer pressure the guys in the group put on one another.

Because I make a big deal about being on time, there’s an uproar when someone shows up a few minutes late. The guys chastise the late guy big time . . . I don’t have to say a thing.

In one group, a mentee named Jonathan moved during the

middle of the year . . . back to his hometown nine hours away. But he lived up to the covenant and drove back each month to attend our sessions . . . eighteen hours round-trip!

On his first trip back for our meeting, one of the other guys, Bryan, was asked by his boss to stay late and attend an important long-range planning session. Staying would mean missing our mentoring group. He prayed, he pondered, he even called me with his boss standing by the phone, looking for any possible way out . . . from his boss or me! Neither of us gave in. He had to decide.

**Radical  
Mentoring is  
a facilitation  
model . . . not  
a teaching  
model.**

He chose to stay at work and miss our mentoring group.

Can you imagine the grief he took at the next meeting? Jonathan, who drove eighteen hours to live up to his covenant put it to him big time. “Where are your priorities?” he asked. And he earned the right to challenge Bryan by paying such a heavy price to be at the meeting. I sat silently and watched as these two guys mentored each other. That could only happen in a group context.

## FACILITATION VERSUS TEACHING

Let’s face it. Few teachers can hold our attention for half an hour, much less a full hour. Research has proven that we retain only a small percentage of what we hear with slightly higher retention when we write stuff down.

Radical Mentoring is a facilitation model . . . not a teaching model. In fifteen years of group mentoring, I’ve *never* spoken to any group for as long as ten straight minutes. Never!

I’ve talked about all the advantages of mentoring a group versus

an individual, but many of us think in a group there has to be a teacher. Our “Sunday school” DNA kicks in and we start visualizing mentoring as a Sunday school class.

But that doesn’t work.

A great mentor is one who can listen, ask good questions, bring others into the conversation, and tell a relevant story to make a point. He lets the conversation run when it’s going in a good direction but cuts it off as soon as it loses its point.

George Pratt, one of my mentees, put it this way:

A mentor is much different from a teacher. Teachers have specific points to share while mentors guide. Our mentor invested his time to find out where we were coming from and then gave practical guidance on areas of growth. Our Radical Mentoring group was never about abstract ideas but about putting things into practice. Whether it was developing a mission statement, listening to God, being intentional with our time in reaching out to others, loving our wives, or raising our children, everything we learned had practical application, which was key to making change.

That’s a facilitator, not a teacher.

## THE GROUP WITHIN THE GROUP

Almost from the outset, I noticed something happening in my Radical Mentoring groups that was unexpected and troubling. I found myself liking a couple of guys a little more than the others. They seemed to “get it” in a special way. When they shared what they’d

learned from the book assigned that month, they seemed to have gone a little deeper, thought about it a little more, and presented a more powerful application of what they learned.

These guys would ask the best questions, and when I'd answer, I'd watch them write stuff down in their notebooks. They always had their homework. They were always on time. They could quote the assigned Scriptures without a hiccup.

But more than all that, I just seemed to love them, and they seemed to love me a little more than the others. They expressed a deeper sense of gratitude for what they were getting and what I was investing in them. Toward the end of the year, they would start telling their friends, "Hey, you've got to apply for this Radical Mentoring group that Regi Campbell does. It'll change your life!"

This "group within the group" has become a fixture. Every year for fifteen years (and I'm sure it'll happen again this year), one, two, or three of the mentees are special. They just get it at a deeper level, and they and I develop a deeper bond than the others in the group. Years after these groups graduate, these group within the group guys stay in touch, pray for me, and keep me involved in their lives to some degree.

At first, I felt really guilty for letting this happen. How could I end up favoring one guy over another? This is not democratic . . . heck it may not even be American! But when I realized the similarities between what I was doing and the practices of Jesus as He mentored the twelve, I knew it was ok. Jesus had His "big three" . . . Peter, James, and John. They were His group within the group.

We don't really know how they got to be so special. Luke describes how they were the first ones selected by Jesus . . . how Jesus got into Peter's boat and directed him to a boatload of fish, and then recruited Peter and his friends, James and John, to become "fishers of men." But somehow it's hard to believe they became so special to Jesus just because they were first. He kind of shot that theory down when He

said something about the first being last.

We know that their unique status wasn't necessarily based on their performance, since Peter denied he even knew Jesus multiple times. James and John, acting on their apparent need for status and power, asked Jesus if they could be His number one and number two guys. We know the other disciples were indignant over their power grab, and we can assume that Peter was in the group who resented their actions.

I believe these three . . . the group within the group . . . were different because of their love for Jesus.

We know how much Jesus loved John. John was referred to as "the one that Jesus loved," and His love was uniquely demonstrated when, from the cross, He entrusted His mother, Mary, into John's care. We know little about James. We know he had a lot of passion . . . Jesus referred to James and John as the "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17). And Scripture tells us that James was martyred, the first of the disciples to die. Moreover, he was martyred by Herod himself, telling us that he must have been creating some pretty high-profile problems with his teaching and preaching.

I also think that Jesus saw Peter, James, and John as having the highest potential.

Peter had embarrassed himself with his bold promises of loyalty only to be followed hours later with his denial of Jesus. But Peter had also gotten out of the boat to walk on the water. Somehow Jesus saw enough potential in Peter that He chose him to head up the church, changing his name from Simon to Peter, meaning "the rock."

Obviously Jesus had seen similar potential in James and John. John wrote a significant part of the New Testament, more than anyone other than Luke and the apostle Paul. John outlived the others and

**Invest  
selflessly in a  
group of high-  
potential guys.**

became the patriarch of the movement before his death.

When the disciples are listed in the book of Acts, James is listed second, just after the leader, Peter. This could have reflected James' leadership but could also have reflected his seniority to John.

James and John, the "sons of thunder," along with Peter were clearly Jesus' group within the group.

John MacArthur wrote:

He (James), Peter, and John were the only ones Jesus permitted to go with him when he raised Jairus' daughter from the dead (Mark 5:37). The same group of three witnessed Jesus' glory on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1). James was among the four disciples who questioned Jesus privately on the Mount of Olives (Mark 13:3). And he was included again with John and Peter when the Lord urged the three to pray with him privately in Gethsemane (Mark 14:33). So as a member of the small inner circle, he was privileged to witness Jesus' power in the raising of the dead, he saw his glory when Jesus was transfigured, he saw Christ's sovereignty in the way the Lord foretold the future to them on the Mount of Olives, and he saw the Savior's agony in the garden.<sup>4</sup>

MacArthur goes on to say that these three were specially prepared so their faith would be strong in light of the future suffering and the martyrdom they would face.

What's really cool is that I've never sensed any jealousy or animosity from the other guys in the group when the group within the group emerges. I guess that validates, at least for me, that it's a God thing.

## BLESSINGS BACK TO THE MENTOR

As I said in the beginning, I'm not a theologian . . . not a Bible scholar. But I do know that one of the great mysteries of Jesus was that of being fully human and at the same time fully God.

When I consider the four major events that MacArthur alludes to, I can see the human Jesus wanting some companionship. Having Peter, James, and John there with Him in His most glorious moment (when He was transfigured), one of His most amazing moments (when He raised the girl from the dead), one of His most important moments (when He revealed the future to them on the Mount of Olives), and one of His darkest moments (when He asked them to keep watch as He prayed for a way out in Gethsemane). All four of these were highly emotional times for Jesus the man. Who better to be there with Him than His closest friends?

As I look at my life today, those closest to me . . . those whose presence I most enjoy in times of joy, challenge, accomplishment, and of sorrow . . . are those guys whom I have invested in.

And God has surprised me by using these guys to bless me and my family in ways only He could have envisioned and engineered.

If you want genuine friends who will be there for life . . . guys God will use to bless you beyond belief, then lead a Radical Mentoring group. Invest selflessly in a group of high-potential guys. You'll love them, and they'll love you back. Watch what God will do through you, and then don't be surprised when He uses those guys to bless you back with love and companionship.





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# CHAPTER FOUR

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## HANDPICKED FOR HISTORY

Jesus is our model mentor. From hundreds of followers and thousands of fans, He picked twelve disciples to pour into . . . to be His living legacy . . . to create and build the church. We don't know how Jesus went about picking His mentees other than the fact that He prayed longer about these decisions than anything else. We have eyewitness reports of people who were there when He popped the question but not much more.

We know He had more than twelve to choose from, but how did He decide?

And why twelve? Why that twelve? How did He decide whom to pick?

And what can we learn about whom we pick, or how many, from what Jesus did?

Let's address the easy one first . . . the "how many" question.

## THE RIGHT NUMBER IS . . .

We're about big. More. More is always better than less . . . right?

Churches, maybe more than any other institution, are always focused on "how many." If it's not big numbers, it's not working. If the numbers aren't getting bigger, then something's wrong.

If you're a vocational Christian working in a local church, as you read this, I want you to consider a whole new way of thinking when it comes to making disciples and disciple-makers. Jesus started small. One group. Twelve guys. No matter how large your church, there's nothing wrong with starting small. The size of your mentoring effort will depend on the number of high-quality mentors you can attract as well as the number of mentees you invite to apply. Radical Mentoring shouldn't be broadcast from the stage. Instead, mentors and mentees must be prayerfully and carefully invited to engage. You and your team should review their applications, then prayerfully and carefully select those to participate for the next season. You never have to say "no" to an applicant, but you might have to say "later."

When Jesus seemed to be totally indifferent to how many people were "in the crowd," how did we get to be so focused on numbers? It could be somewhat rooted in our doubt about our faith. We think, "If more people are doing what we're doing, believing what we're believing, then the chances are greater that we're right, it's true, and we're not fools." But that's just one possibility. A more likely explanation is we want everyone to be a Christian, a disciple, and be heaven-bound! Adding to our numbers feels like success so bigger is always better, right? Not so fast there. As we've learned from the Willow Creek "Reveal" study and the experience of a number of other attractional churches, large numbers can be deceptive. People can develop a false sense of eternal security . . . knowing *about* Jesus without really *knowing* Jesus. Radical Mentoring groups build strong sustainable faith into

men so they can do the same for those they mentor, and so on.

How did Jesus decide that His group would be twelve? Why do we recommend groups no larger than eight guys? Let me explain.

The Pharisees and Sadducees consistently drew large crowds, but it was the law. You had to be there. But Jesus wasn't into that. He was working with the twelve, and if others wanted to come along or listen in, that was great. Sometimes the crowd was relatively small. At other times it swelled to thousands.

I can only guess at how Jesus landed on twelve as the number of disciples based on my own experience. In my first mentoring group, I picked ten guys. I wanted to have eight, and I had narrowed the field down to eight. I felt that in one year, I could really get to know each of the guys in a group of eight, and they could get to know one another. Unlike Jesus, where He lived and traveled with His guys 24-7, I would be seeing these guys and interacting with them only once a month. And Jesus was looking at three years of mentoring . . . I was thinking in terms of only one.

Did I mention I mentored ten guys the first year, even though I wanted to only have eight?

Why? Good question.

The answer . . . I didn't have the guts to say no to the other two. I should have. As a matter of fact, the two guys who grew the least and were least committed to the process were the two guys I added because I didn't have the courage to say no.

You see, we don't have any record of Jesus' turning down any applicants for "disciple of Jesus Christ." We know He had many followers. We know He prayed long and hard before He made His selections. We can assume any number of His followers would have said yes to the opportunity to become one of Jesus' inner circle, to heal people and do miracles, and to potentially sit at the right hand of the next king of the Jews.

## THE OPPOSITE OF REJECTION

When I pick mentees, I have to deal with the reality that I *didn't* pick others. That's tough, particularly in light of the church's penchant toward "more, more, more."

Think of one program in the church where you can't just sign up. There are few. Generally, if you want to sign up for something, you're in. It may be "first come, first served" and everyone can't get in because of space or personnel limitations, but it's rare in today's church.

Chris, who was in my third group, says about being "handpicked": "I felt like you had taken the time to pray through whether God was showing you that you could help me grow. If it was just some 'submit application – first eight received are accepted,' it would not have had the same impact."

Another of my guys, David, adds, "Without that handpicking, I might have felt like a burden. I would have struggled with acceptance by the group and by you."

J. D., yet another of my mentees, says:

As I grew up, I was active in sports. My sport of choice became soccer, and I became a decent player. Several times in my career I had to try out for traveling/select teams, and each time I was selected. The idea of being selected in a tryout was always a great feeling. However, there were two times it really felt good to make a team. Both times I was hand selected by the coach just to try out. Once you made the team, it was a feeling that is hard to describe, and I had not felt it in my adult life until Radical Mentoring.

## CONNECTED TO YOUR PURPOSE

Jesus showed us at least three purposes with who He picked.

First and foremost, I believe He picked guys for their Kingdom potential. As I said earlier, His results were astounding . . . twelve guys . . . two billion Christians.

Were they the most talented? Most spiritual? Probably not. But somehow, Jesus saw their potential. They followed Him with unwavering loyalty until the very end. They listened. They practiced what He taught them. They asked questions.

**I believe God  
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than followers.**

These mentees knew about the coming Messiah and His purpose . . . to establish the Kingdom of God with the people of Israel. When they saw Jesus perform miracles, raise people from the dead, turn water to wine, they wanted to be a part of what He was doing.

Once Jesus pointed out how blessed they were . . . to be eye-witnesses to what the Father was doing through Him, He reminded them that later generations wouldn't get to see what they were seeing. He wanted them to grasp, to comprehend, what they were experiencing – its significance and meaning.

When I pick men for my Radical Mentoring groups, I try to find guys with a vision for their lives. I'm actually happy if their vision is all messed up. That's where I can add value.

Pete was in my first group. A rough-and-tumble Russian immigrant, Pete wrote, "I see myself with a net worth of one hundred million dollars."

He was in. He's exactly the kind of guy I want to engage with.

Why? Because I spent the first twelve years of my work life mindlessly chasing a goal I hadn't really thought through. I wanted to go "as far up the ladder as fast as I can." Pete, like me, had never really thought about what that meant. What would he do with that much money? How would it help him be a better husband and father? How could it be used to further the kingdom? It was just a number.

Because I know my purpose and have had the experience of living both with and without it, I can help younger guys think through what they're living their lives for. And since my purpose is to glorify God, hopefully I can help them toward that same purpose.

When selecting mentees, we're looking for future leaders because God chose to equip us to be leaders. I believe God can leverage my investment through leaders more than followers. So I try to pick guys who are missiles, even if they aren't *guided* missiles. As they say, you can't steer a parked car. So I'm looking for guys who are *hungry* . . . in motion . . . movers . . . guys who want to grow, to do something big, to make a difference.

Now are you ready for this one? From among the "missiles," I try to eliminate the candidates who seem to have the most mature, well-balanced view of their future. They have less need to be mentored. I try to pick the least mature, neediest future leaders because they are the people I may be able to help the most.

## DON'T LET THEM PICK YOU

Jesus picked the twelve. They didn't pick Him.

This is one of the most valuable lessons we take from Jesus. And one of the most countercultural aspects of becoming a mentor like Jesus.

Over and over I hear of young people seeking out mentors. "Could you have breakfast with me? I'd like to pick your brain if I

could.” We’ve all been there.

The Scriptures don’t depict Jesus’ mentoring that way. As a matter of fact, we can visualize the rich young ruler as he approached Jesus. He might have been saying, and I’m paraphrasing, “I’m a good guy. I’ve obeyed the commandments. What would it take for me to join up, to follow you, to become one of your inner circle?”

We can imagine Jesus . . . reading the young man’s motives from his expression of interest in the kingdom, “Great, go sell all your possessions and come back to see me.”

End of conversation.

I’m not saying every young person who seeks out a mentor has wrong motives . . . or even selfish motives. But we can be sure they have *multiple* motives. Proverbs 16:2 says, “All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, but the Lord weighs the motives.” That’s with an s . . . plural.

Yes, he may want advice about how to live for God, but he may also want to access the mentor’s network of friends or financial backers. He may want to be known as “a friend of \_\_\_\_\_, who owns \_\_\_\_\_ or works with \_\_\_\_\_.” In your church, he may want to be known as being a future leader, of having been mentored by you. So status could be a motive. He may see the potential mentor as a financial backer for a business idea or as someone who can help him get ahead in his career.

I love Proverbs 16:2 because it reminds me God loves me even though I do have multiple motives. I bought an antique scale for my office to remind me that I’ll always have multiple motives for the things I do. But I desperately want my God-focused motives to be at the top . . . to win out over the other ones.

When I pick the guys for my group, they are *my* idea. Led by God, through prayer, I make those decisions.

I’ve made mistakes here, too. As I mentioned earlier, when I was



putting my first group together, I had picked eight guys and was ready to launch. But then a former employee called. “Regi,” she said, “my husband is in such need of a mentor. Please let him join your group.”

I knew I wanted an even number of mentees so I could pair them up (like Jesus did). So adding her husband meant I had to add yet another guy. So the group went from eight to ten.

Guess which guys gained the least from the group. Guess who was late. Guess who liked to talk more than listen. Good guess.

I subscribe to the axiom of “never form a principle based on your own experience.” But when I look at Jesus’ proactive approach, when I look at the success of the groups I’ve led since that first one, I’m convinced I should pick them and they shouldn’t pick me. Guys who are interested apply for the mentoring program, and then I select my guys from the applicants.

Jesus had many disciples. I believe He considered all those potential “applicants” but picked His twelve of His own volition, not theirs.

## LET GOD BE YOUR ADVISOR

When Jesus picked His mentees, He sought the advice of His Heavenly Father. We know that He prayed all night long before making His choices, which is the longest prayer time the Bible records. This was a serious decision, and Jesus gave it the time it deserved.

We don’t know how much interaction He had with each one before He picked them, but we do know He went deep with the Father about these decisions. It doesn’t seem He checked any references either. He picked the twelve His Father led Him to. Period.

It’s a daunting task to look at the applications of ten to twelve guys and decide which eight I’ll mentor. One or two always want to get together to learn more about Radical Mentoring or to differentiate themselves from the other candidates. I always turn down these

requests. I don't want to be influenced by personal chemistry, one way or the other. I want to pick the guys God leads me to . . . not those whom I might enjoy the most.

Jesus ignored the religious status of His mentees, and so do I. It makes no difference to me when a potential mentee makes reference to being a deacon in his church. I don't consider educational accomplishments, economic status, or even reputation. I'm about helping each one become a godlier man and a better leader by living the "God life." I want to meet each guy right where he is and help him move forward.

I don't check references. I don't talk to people who know these guys. If someone recommends a guy for my group, I simply have the potential mentee send an email to me. I hold on to that email and directly invite him to apply when I start the process the next year.

The principle here is to let God put the group together. By allowing Him to lead, by not letting it become a beauty contest or a personality match, I'm more dependent on Him to include and exclude the guys He wants me to mentor.

If you're overseeing this process in a church, there are a couple of ways to set up the groups. At our church, our men's groups director matched the groups up by demographics, considering marital status, age, and where they live as the primary factors. *(Never put married guys in the same group with single guys. It won't work. Single guys have completely different issues and perspectives and they're best mentored by a mature single guy who's comfortable with his present singleness or a married guy with a*

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*heart for singles.*) The men and mentors were prayed over and grouped up in an objective, somewhat impersonal way. It worked great.

The other approach is to conduct a “draft,” just like little league. The church staff compiles all the applications and send them to the mentors. They read them, pray over them and then get together and pick their guys in rounds, just like the NFL! That works great too. At the end of the day, you’ll find that God puts the groups together in ways that will truly amaze.

## COMMITMENT REQUIRED

As you read through mentee applications, try to assess the “hunger” . . . the commitment level of the potential mentees. When I invite guys to apply for my Radical Mentoring group, they sign a covenant that includes this provision:

I commit to attending every meeting and retreat, to be there on time, and to have my work done. No exceptions, unless providentially hindered. I understand and agree that I will have to say “no” to important things in order to meet this commitment, and I am willing to do so. We will layout our schedule for the year at our first meeting. I will manage my other commitments around the dates selected for meetings and retreats.

That is commitment!

When Jesus invited Peter, James, John, Matthew, and the others, He asked for commitment. The fishermen dropped their nets. The tax collector left his booth. They followed . . . with incredible commitment.

Jesus called His followers to that kind of commitment. Remember

when Jesus called the man to follow Him. But the man said, “First let me go and bury my father” (Luke 9:59). And another who said, “First let me go back and say goodbye to my family” (Luke 9:61). Jesus was unbending. When He used the word “first,” He said, “Seek *first* His kingdom, and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matthew 6:33). Jesus wants total commitment, and it may start for eight younger men in your mentoring group!

That kind of commitment has disappeared from the landscape of “church world” in our times. But it’s one of the keys to the success of Radical Mentoring.

## TEACH-ABILITY

Teach-ability is the other key dimension.

I believe Jesus handpicked His mentees because they were teachable. They weren’t brainwashed into the religious system of their day; otherwise they would have already been disciples of some other rabbi.

These were common men with common sense. They were lay people, just like Jesus. They were ready to learn, and Jesus saw that in them.

As I select my mentees each year, I confront them with this challenge, again as a part of the covenant they sign:

I understand that I will take direct, unfiltered feedback. I will do everything in my power to receive it in love and to learn from it. I will avoid defensiveness, realizing that when I defend, I lose the opportunity to learn. I commit to being open in examining myself – my personality, my past, my habits, my anger, and my responses to people. I want to learn. I want to change,

to be more like Jesus Christ in every fiber of my being.

There are James and John, walking down the road behind Jesus, arguing about who will be the greatest in the coming kingdom. Jesus confronts them about their grandiose plans and tells them that if they wish to be great they have to become servants.

In hardheaded, less teachable men, that would have set them off. They would have “exited stage left.” But James and John listened. They stayed in the game. And we know John did become a servant, taking on the responsibility of serving Jesus’ mother after the crucifixion.

## A HEART TO PAY IT FORWARD

When I got the idea for mentoring in a small group and started searching the Scriptures to see what Jesus did, the phrase “I will make you fishers of men” hit me in the face. Here was an upfront, no holds barred requirement that discipleship wasn’t to stop with them. From the get-go, they knew this was not just about making them better men, it was for them to “pay forward” to others what Jesus was pouring into them. So I put another requirement into the Radical Mentoring covenant . . .

I further covenant that, at some point, when the Lord lets me know that I am ready, I will pick some guys and lead a group like this myself.

We’ll go deeper on the covenant in chapter 10 and on paying it forward in chapter 11. But it’s important to see why the mentee I most want to invest in is one who is both committed, hungry to learn and anxious to become a disciple-maker. Self-centered, lukewarm know-it-alls need not apply.

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# CHAPTER FIVE

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## STARTING NOW, ENDING THEN

**T**he first time we tried to launch a mentoring ministry in our church was in the early 1990's. As I mentioned earlier, we pulled together a couple hundred men, intending to connect them one-on-one . . . younger to older . . . the less mature with the more mature.

As we solicited the more senior men to become mentors, the same questions kept coming up: What am I getting into? How long is this going to go on? What kind of commitment am I making here?

A lot of guys shied away because we couldn't answer those questions, and I don't blame them. "You're asking me to agree to be a mentor, which I don't know how to do. Then you're asking me to sign up to mentor someone I don't know. You can't tell me how much time it's going to take. And you can't tell me how long this is going to go on!"

That's a hard sell.

I've found there's incredible value in setting a specific beginning and ending date for mentoring.

Sure, the relationships will continue after that time, but they come naturally . . . and the mentoring happens as a natural outgrowth of that relationship.

When we look at Jesus, we see He only mentored His disciples for about three years, so there must be some value in mentoring for a defined period of time. Jesus could have left the carpenter shop any time He wanted. He could have started teaching and mentoring at

**“Maybe God is saying to you, ‘Your time has come. Get off the bench and get in the game.’”**

twenty-eight instead of thirty . . . or even at twenty-five. We know He was hanging out with the best of scholars as a twelve-year-old, so He knew what He was talking about. And if you think about it from an earthly perspective, He was an incredible mentor to be only thirty.

Jesus began His mentoring when He solicited Andrew and Simon (Peter). Then He recruited James and John from their father's fishing business. To

these four, He added Matthew and the others. We don't know how old these men were, but we know they entered an intense, focused mentoring experience when they “dropped their nets” and followed Jesus. It started with “follow Me” and ended with “it is finished” . . . or so they thought.

## WHEN DO YOU START?

I believe we overly complicate the job of mentoring. When you're thirty, you can mentor twenty-year-olds. When you're twenty-five, you

could potentially be a fabulous mentor to an eighteen-year-old. But when do you start? How do you know it's time?

Again, we look at Jesus.

He's there at a wedding, accompanied by some of His friends and followers. His mom comes to Him in a panic. "The hosts are out of wine, and the party's just started. Do something, Jesus!"

Jesus was reluctant. He told His mom, "My time has not yet come" (John 2:4).

He wasn't sure it was time to start His ministry. We don't know why He wasn't sure, and to guess about it flies right into the mystery of Jesus' being fully man and fully God at the same time.

As a human Jesus could have been afraid. He had known for a long time that He was special, that He was here for a unique purpose. But in the moment, when He's confronted publicly with *starting something He's never done*, there's a pause. Not that He would even think about backing out or backing down. Still, stepping into the role of miracle worker, Messiah, Son of God, had to be daunting.

The Father put Him in that situation, and He responded. He said yes. He acted. He said, "Bring me jars filled with water," and His ministry began.

It may be right now, reading this book, reading page 73 here in chapter 5, is your moment. Maybe God is saying to you, "Your time has come. Get off the bench and get in the game. Stop thinking of yourself, and start investing in the next generation."

You may have doubts.

**38 percent  
of American  
males read  
less than three  
books per year;  
9 percent read  
zero.**



“Am I mature enough?”

“Will anyone want me to be their mentor?”

“Can I really help anyone?”

If you wait, you'll be asking those same questions when you're eighty-five. And you'll have missed out on the opportunity of a lifetime . . . the chance to leave a living legacy of Jesus-followers.

## TIME PRESSURE BRINGS FOCUS

I've quoted Parkinson's Law for years although I'm not sure who Parkinson is. It says, “The work expands so as to fill the available time for its completion.” If we have twelve months to teach younger people what we've learned, then it'll take twelve months. If we have three years, it'll take three years. Time is an incredible taskmaster. When time is limited, we grab the essentials. We focus. We figure out what we're going to do and how to get it done.

The time pressure works for both the mentor and mentees. As a mentor and a church leader, I see this limited period of time, this small number of meetings, as a treasure. Scarcity increases value. I look at all the possible things we could talk about or discuss and choose the best, the areas where there is a “felt need” in men's lives and that I, as an older, wiser man can add value. I've heard my mentees say, “I want to get all I can get from this.” So the time pressure increases focus for the mentees as well.

Just consider the reading parts of Radical Mentoring.

A recent Harris poll showed that 38 percent of American males read less than three books per year; 9 percent read zero. In today's digital world, fewer and fewer people read. And those who do read are

reading the flavor of the day.

Then consider that people who participate in Radical Mentoring groups read nine to twelve books in one year. And in Radical Mentoring, each book read has a clear purpose. It's connected with the goal of helping the mentees become godly men. When they read *Ordering Your Private World* by Gordon MacDonald, they're learning how to manage themselves from a God-centric perspective. And when they read Andy Stanley's *Louder Than Words*, they're learning how your character impacts every other area of your life. The books build on one another, starting with how we see God, moving to how we see ourselves and finishing with how we relate to our wives, kids, and others. It's "on purpose" reading.

A huge piece of the program is focused on *how* mentees read. We want them to read for application. Forcing them to write a one-page net-out of the book means they have to focus, to consider what the author has to say to *them*. What's the takeaway? How can this help me?

In a sense, this approach to reading is an extension of "starts now, ends then." We almost never read a book twice. Not really. We need to get what we're going to get the first time through, and being asked to net out the book brings focus.

But how do you "require" someone to write a net-out of a book? Come on, these are grownups! They can tell you to "pack sand" and never write down a word.

The answer is peer pressure. When a group of eight guys is gathered around with a mentor at the head of the table, you do not want to be the one without a net-out! And by requiring each guy to bring a copy of his net-out for each person in the group, visual verification happens. If you don't have copies of your net-out for everyone, then the silent assumption is you didn't do the net-out. And if you didn't do the net-out, then the silent assumption is you didn't read the book. That hits us where we all have a twinge of self-righteousness . . . or . . . call it

fairness. “If I read the book, then by George, you have to read it too. It’s not fair for me to have read it and for you not to.”

Peer pressure.

In fifteen years of leading groups this way, about 1,320 books have been assigned for reading. I can recall less than 10 instances when a mentee didn’t read the book and present a net-out. That’s pretty good compliance. And I give peer pressure a lot of the credit.

## **Discipleship is a lifelong learning endeavor.**

The reading dimension to mentoring has one more element: the group discussion. When my group discusses a book, we share what we took away from the book . . . what we learned . . . what we plan to apply. We’re not a book club. We don’t banter around our criticism of the book or the author. It’s not about that. We’re about application. We’re looking for

principles! What did this author say that can help me become the man God wants me to be?

As we go around the table and each mentee shares his takeaways, each person “pluses up” what the last person says. Obviously, different readers “hear” different things from the same pages. So it’s always fascinating to see the diversity of applications from the same book.

Through the purposeful assignment of books, the requirement for a written net-out, the discipline of having to read a book a month and being faced with the peer pressure of presenting your takeaways from each book, a reading habit forms.

“Reading became a habit,” says Mike. “When the group ended, I immediately went looking for another good book to read and kept up with the same process of netting it out for use in the future. Reading and learning the things we did brought me closer to God, and I have kept up that discipline since.”

People are stimulated by learning. Mentees are stimulated during

the mentoring season and most continue to learn long after the intensive period of mentoring is over. Remember, disciples are learners and followers. Discipleship is a lifelong learning endeavor.

Of course, we see Jesus doing the same thing. He used the time He had for maximum learning and impact for His disciples. We don't have any record of His going deep into theology. The disciples clearly knew the Scriptures and seemed to know the prophecies Jesus alluded to and fulfilled. He talked most about the things He knew they most needed to hear . . . money, marriage, forgiveness, relationships.

## THE END (THE BEGINNING)

At the end of their mentoring year, I always feel a sense of completion even though I also feel a sadness that the time is over. Leaders and learners are always asking, "What's next?" After twelve months we've completed the course . . . we've finished the race.

But have we?

The biggest personal surprise stemming from mentoring has been the depth of love and friendship that's developed with and between my mentees. It was never my intent to get anything back from this. I wasn't looking for new friends, but God has blessed me with a plethora of incredible young friends from the guys I've mentored. And while the formal part of Radical Mentoring is over, some of the guys continue to stay in touch. It's usually those from the group within the group, those who got it and connected both with me and with God in a new and special way.

So what does that look like? What really happens after it ends? Here's my list:

- You get tons of Christmas cards . . . all with pictures of their families. (And you'll read, keep, and treasure every

- one – which was new for me!)
- You get calls when wives get pregnant . . . when babies are born.
  - You get calls when you're sick, and guys genuinely pray for you.
  - You get included in their lives. They call you when they get promoted or get a big raise. They call you when they become deacons and elders in their churches.
  - You get called on when they need help. When there's a big decision in their work or when they're considering a job change, they'll call for advice.
  - God uses the guys that you invest in to *love you back*.

Maybe this last one is the biggest and one I never expected. But *I know* these guys love me. They stay in touch, take me to lunch, invite me to go to sporting events. They love me, and they let me know it.

If you're a guy, stop right now and make a list of guy friends *who really love you*.

If I left off the names of the guys I've mentored, mine would be a really short list. And I'm betting yours would be too.

This is clearly a God thing. What better gift can God give us than to put godly young people in our lives who love and care about us? Other than our wives and families, I can't think of anything.

While the intensive part of Radical Mentoring starts and ends, the love of God, lived out in the lives of the people you invest in, goes on through this life and into the next. Which is pretty incredible if you ask me.

## A FOOTNOTE FROM A MENTOR

I'd be less than honest if I left this out. A little bit of joy comes

when graduation happens . . . joy from having some time off.

Even though Radical Mentoring takes only one night a month, I find myself enjoying the freedom of a few weeks when I don't even think about my group. Even the best schoolteachers enjoy their summers. Having a little time between groups is cool.



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# CHAPTER SIX

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## TRUTH AT THE CORE

**T**here are many famous mentors we all recognize.

- Socrates mentored Plato.
- Aristotle mentored Alexander the Great.
- Peter Drucker mentored Jim Collins, author of *Built to Last and Good to Great*
- Andrew Carnegie mentored Charles Schwab, the famous executive and financier.
- Colonel Harland Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken mentored Dave Thomas, the founder of Wendy's restaurants.
- Former NBA player Dell Curry mentored his son, current NBA player, Steph Curry.



Each of these mentors had a body of knowledge . . . *truth*, if you will that they had learned: philosophy, management theory, business leadership, how to create huge restaurant chains, how to play basketball at the highest level. All of these mentoring relationships were based on truth. This truth was understood by the mentor at a higher, more experienced level than the mentee. And for whatever reason, the mentor decided to share his truth with someone less experienced than himself.

A huge part of mentoring involves the effective transfer of truth from one generation to the next. Leadership is caught, not taught. Men who spend tons of time with other men who embody

Jesus, who embody the kind of person they want to become . . . these are the mentees who “get it” and experience growth.

Jesus was (and is) the ultimate mentor. And it’s clear the foundation of His life and His message was transferring truth to the next generation and all the generations who followed. Let’s look at that truth and how it played out in His life and work.

**Each of us has  
truth that’s  
been handed  
down to us  
from the past.**

## REINFORCING HISTORICAL TRUTH

When Jesus entered recorded history about two thousand years ago, a lot of truth was already recorded. The Old Testament law *was* the law. The Jewish people lived by it and under it. Roman occupation created huge problems for the Jews, in many ways bringing them together as they tried to keep their religion as pure as possible in spite of living under the oppression of Rome.

Jesus was Jewish. He never tried to be un-Jewish. When questioned about some of the things He and His disciples did, He was always

respectful. When He was challenged because His disciples picked grain and ate it on the Sabbath, He referenced a precedent in Jewish history when David ate the sacred bread from the temple.

When Jesus heals a leper in Luke 5:13-14, He instructs him to “go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded, for a testimony to them,” quoting from the law in Leviticus 14:2-4.

In John 3:5, Jesus is describing being born again to Nicodemus. He says, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” In that moment, he’s referring to Ezekiel 36:25-27 which says, “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols . . . I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes.”

Another time, when Jesus warns about the sinfulness that will precede His second coming, He simply says, “Remember Lot’s wife” (Luke 17:32).

He and everyone there knew what He meant. Don’t sin . . . and don’t even look at it.

Jesus obviously learned from His forbearers, but He didn’t negate the truth God brought to mankind through them. He tried to be clear about this in Matthew 5:17, when He said: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” A whole lot of Jewish leaders with a whole lot to lose never believed this, and succeeded in having Him killed.

Each of us has truth that’s been handed down to us from the past. My dad was a teenager when the Great Depression hit. He dropped out of school and went to work to help support his family. He never went back.

As a kid, I saw him work . . . and work . . . and work. He never thought he could take chances on better jobs because of his lack of

education. So he was trapped. His boss knew he couldn't quit, so he gave him more and more work with no regard for his pay.

When he died, we found a little piece of paper in his wallet with the date each of his children was baptized and the date each graduated from college.

The truth I took from that? If you don't have an education, you'll always be afraid of losing your job. And you'll always doubt you can get another one.

Later, as a dad, having seen the value that my dad had placed on getting an education, I was committed to mentoring my kids to the best education their abilities could take them to.

I gained this truth . . . not from my own experience but from the experience of someone who came before me.

## THEN THERE'S WHAT I'VE LEARNED

I've met some fathers and sons who seemed interchangeable . . . if you've seen one, you've seen the other. And that would be cool if you were Jesus, since His Dad was and is perfect.

But for the rest of us, while we learned some things from our parents and from history, most of our real learning has come from our own experience. We've had the benefit of those who've come before us, but the majority of what we know – what we live by, what guides us – comes from our own learning and experience. We're not just oracles repeating the lessons of past generations, we're experiencing life in our own unique way. We're adding to what we inherited, making it real in our generation.

Now we're not Jesus . . . not even close. But we see how He built on the truth He inherited. Look at how Jesus took the truth to a new level regarding forgiveness.

In an exchange with Peter, recorded in Matthew 18:21-22, Jesus

is asked about forgiveness. Peter asks, “How often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” (He’s making reference to Genesis 4:24 where Cain was to be avenged sevenfold.) Peter was catching on. He recognized that Jesus was teaching us to replace the concept of revenge with forgiveness, but he was shocked when Jesus said, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.” Extreme forgiveness.

He did it again in Luke 20:34-38. The Sadducees confronted Jesus with the Old Testament provision regarding widows being remarried. Deuteronomy 25:5 had been the truth, and it had created all kinds of complicated scenarios. Who would be married to whom in heaven was one of them.

Jesus knew what the writer of Deuteronomy didn’t . . . “the sons of the resurrection” (those who go to heaven) will not be married at all. They will be so enthralled with the glory of God that marriage won’t even hold a candle.

And maybe the most memorable place where Jesus added new truth to the old law was when He gave us this verse: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:27-28).

There He is again, taking the old law, reinforcing it, and then raising the bar . . . moving the standard from an outward one to an inward one. Jesus is all about our hearts. He doesn’t want us to live an outwardly clean life and be filthy inside. He wants purity throughout.

Over and over Jesus would share new truth. It was built on the truth of the old law, but it went further. Jesus brought new truth and new insight.

Jesus came to communicate even more of God’s truth. Principles like giving, forgiveness, and compassion were concepts not always easily connected with how the Old Testament law was interpreted.

What does this mean to us as mentors? It means that you have learned a lot of truth in your life up to now. You learned from your parents, your grandparents, your teachers, your bosses, and your mentors.

You learned from the books you've read . . . and from the Bible.

You have a unique collection of truth. Over the years you've seen and heard a lot. You've discarded a lot of stuff you once thought was truth. More than any other source, you've learned from your mistakes . . . from the "school of hard knocks."

God has preserved you through those experiences . . . given you that truth so you could leverage it for the benefit of others. How else can He get maximum glory from it?

**A big part of who Jesus was came from His knowledge of Scripture. He quoted Scripture constantly, particularly when He was in trouble.**

## I AM THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

One time, we received a thank-you note for a baby gift . . . not something I would typically focus on. Inside the envelope was the typical card with a nice note from the friend.

But it hit me. The message, the truth of this, is in the envelope itself . . . not the card or even the message written on it. It was the fact that someone loved us enough, was grateful enough, to go out, buy a card, write something personal on it, find our address, write it on the front, buy and affix a stamp, and launch it through their mailbox to ours. The envelope was the real message . . . as much as or more than the contents.

And that's what Jesus was and is.

"I am the way." "I am the truth." "I am the life."

Bold but true statements. Important statements when you read the rest of that quote:

"No man comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

Jesus Himself is the truth . . . not just His teaching . . . and not just His confirmation of others' teachings.

Jesus knew who He was from Scripture. In Luke 4:18-19, He quotes from Isaiah 61:1-2:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to preach good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to release the oppressed,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

## SCRIPTURE APPLIED IN THE MOMENT

A big part of who Jesus was came from His knowledge of Scripture. He quoted Scripture constantly, particularly when He was in trouble.

Remember when Jesus had been in the desert for forty days? He was starving, and there wasn't a McDonalds nearby. It would be a long time before Jesus could get food, no matter how badly He wanted it.

The devil came to Jesus with an offer. "The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread'" (Luke 4:3). Jesus answered the devil's tempting offer by reminding Himself (and the devil), "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone'" (v. 4).

He was quoting Deuteronomy 8:3 which says:

He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that *man does not live on bread alone* but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Scripture wasn't just what Jesus knew . . . it was what Jesus was. He was able to recall specific Scriptures in the moment that reminded Him of God's truth and His faithfulness.

Another example, from the cross: "Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' When he had said this, he breathed his last" (Luke 23:46). He was quoting the first part of Psalm 31:5: "Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O Lord, the God of truth." His last words echoed David's.

Radical Mentoring is about the transfer of truth . . . God's truth . . . to the next generation of leaders. And a big part of that is the memorization of Scripture by topic and keyword so it can be recalled and acknowledged in the moment of need.

## COMMUNICATE THE TRUTH LEARNED ON YOUR OWN

Like Jesus, the mentor has learned some truth on his own. Jesus got His from the Father, as they had been together since the beginning of time. We don't know but we can guess Jesus also learned a few things on His own working in Joseph's carpenter shop between age twelve and age thirty. (There's that "fully human-fully God" mystery again!)

Truth comes from the mentor's life . . . just his life. Each of us is a unique creation of God, uniquely experienced, uniquely

talented and gifted by God.

No one else is you.

Walt Disney once said, “The more I am like myself, the less I am like anyone else, and thus I realize my uniqueness.”

One of the best parts of Radical Mentoring occurs when you let your mentees see “under the hood.” Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “What you are thunders so loudly that I cannot hear what you say to the contrary.” And when you transparently let them know “what you are,” how you think, how you became the person you are, truth gets transferred in an inexplicable way. It’s that concept of embodiment at work. To hold that back would be to cheat them of the best part. Just as Jesus would have cheated us had He not let us see who He really was . . . a compassionate, tender, loving, smart God-man who gave everything up for us.

Once, when conversing with a 13-year-old (a very bright, mature one I might add), I asked, “If you could ask one question of an older person and get an answer that you knew was absolutely right, what would that question be?” His reply? “How do you do it?” “Do what?” I asked. “Life . . . how do you do life?” Young people need to spend extended, intentional time with authentic, committed Christians who live their faith . . . not just talk about it. Then they’ll know how to “do life” and even more importantly, how to help others know how to do it too.

## A CRITICAL NEED

Our twenty-first-century churches are just now awakening to the need for mentoring. Willow Creek Community Church, often listed among the most influential churches in America, released a study



called “Reveal.” The project was designed to assess just how the new church, the “seeker church” is doing. One of the study’s resounding findings was the “need for someone to interpret” the truth of God to less mature believers.

In my Radical Mentoring groups, I have my guys memorize the twenty-four Scriptures that have had the most impact and utility in my life.

I assign these verses two at a time, along with a one-word “keyword” for each verse so the mentees can call up each verse by subject.

For example, take fear. We all face fear from time to time. Some of us battle fear daily. Others less often. My wife says that I avoid fear by living in denial (which she explains is *not* a river in Egypt!).

**They don’t  
always have  
to know it by  
heart, but they  
must have  
God’s Word in  
their hearts.**

Many years ago, I memorized 2 Timothy 1:7 and labeled it as my “fear” verse. It says, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

I can deal with something better if I know where it’s coming from. Once I realized God was not giving me the spirit of fear, then I have a pretty good hunch who is. Who other than Satan would want me to be afraid . . . to be paralyzed with fear?

So God *has not* given me the spirit of fear. The verse goes on to say “but” . . . a big word meaning “on the other hand” or “just the opposite” . . . God has given me the spirit of love, power, and a sound mind.

I can deal with fear when I recognize it comes from a source other than God . . . a source that wants to hurt me, not help me.

## MENTORS MUST BE GROUNDED IN THE TRUTH, THE WORD OF GOD

They don't always have to know it by heart, but they must have God's Word in their hearts. Believe it, know where to find it, trust it, never dispute it, and know how to defend it.

That's the kind of personal interpretation of Scripture mentors can give their mentees. I don't have a seminary degree, and I'll confess that some of my interpretations might not pass muster with some theologians. But what can't be argued is what God has shown me through His Word and its application in my life. That's what I have to give to these next-generation leaders.

## NOT A COMPLETE LIST

Jesus didn't teach on every verse He knew, and neither should you. Jesus amplified the verses He knew the Father wanted Him to talk about. On much of the Old Testament, Jesus was silent.

Radical Mentoring isn't a Bible study. So don't try to make it into one or feel guilty because it isn't. Teach them Scriptures that God has used to teach you.

## SCRIPTURE APPLIED IN RETROSPECT

I'm going to tell you one of those "most embarrassing moment" stories about myself. This is a true story that I tell my mentees each year to show them how memorizing Scripture by topic can be helpful if you apply it.

One of my favorite verses is Proverbs 24:3-4: "By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; and by knowledge the

rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.” When I assign it to my mentoring group, I explain it this way . . .

- Knowledge is data, information, facts, observation.
- Understanding is taking that information and putting it into context. This context may be the person you’re talking about, a certain situation or circumstance; it’s the background of the information you are dealing with.
- Wisdom is knowing what to do with the information once you’ve considered the context.

When my son was a teenager, I was looking for something in his car and accidentally came across a pack of cigarettes. I exploded. I decided I would use the surprise tactic to get to the bottom of this smoking deal.

I dashed to his room (it was ten o’clock at night, and he was already fast asleep). I swung open the door, ran to his bedside, stuck the cigarette pack right in his face, and said, “Ok, buddy, what’s the story here?”

He roused up, looked at me with disbelief and anger in his eyes, and said, “Those are my friend Brant’s. He left them in my car. I can’t believe you were going through my car, and worse, I can’t believe you would think I’ve been smoking. Have you forgotten who I am?”

I was humbled, stunned, and embarrassed.

I had taken knowledge (the cigarettes in my son’s car) and jumped to a conclusion. Then I acted without thinking about whether my action was wise. I just wanted the truth so I could make sure he wasn’t smoking.

If I had remembered Proverbs 24:3-4 and applied it, I’d have thought, “knowledge says that I’ve found cigarettes in my son’s car.” Understanding says, “Wait a minute. My son hates smoke. He’s

an athlete. I need to get the full story from him before I jump to a conclusion.” And then wisdom would have asked, “In what environment is he most likely to tell the truth about this?” I certainly would have come up with something more effective than my embarrassing “storm trooper/Gestapo” tactic.

That’s the beauty of applied Scripture. God uses it to help you think, to respond differently . . . effectively. But it has to be in your heart, easily accessible in the moment of need.

We see Jesus using Scripture this way . . . for wisdom and guidance . . . never to attack people. Jesus used Scripture as a defense, not an attack.

Go and do likewise. Jesus taught us to open our mouth, and to trust the Holy Spirit to give us the words to say.

*Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit (Mark 13:11).*



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# CHAPTER SEVEN

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## PRAYER AS PRACTICE

**P**icture a typical small group environment . . . eight guys and a leader gathered around the dining room table . . . talking about God, life, and the Bible. The leader asks each guy to share his biggest need . . . his number one prayer request. He writes them down as they're spoken. Then he says, "Let's pray."

But then he disappears from sight, dropping not just to his knees but to a facedown position, completely prostrate before the Lord.

The guys don't know exactly what to do . . . how to respond. One by one they drop from their chairs and to their knees. A couple try to emulate what they see their mentor doing.

Then the mentor starts to pray. "Good evening, Father."

It's like he's hit a number on his cell phone and his dad is on the line. "Thank You for adopting me into your family. You didn't have to do that, but I'm so grateful you did," he continues.

It's not like any prayer they've ever heard in church . . . not even like the "blessings" they heard around the dinner table growing up. It's like an authentic conversation between a father and a son. It's shockingly different.

Now I'm not telling you how to pray. That's just the way I try to pray. I try to remove as many church words as I can, to talk to God in authentic language about authentic stuff and in the context of our authentic relationship. In my group, I'm just letting my guys listen in to my conversation with God. I want to model authenticity in a big way because often we are too much like the Pharisees when it comes to prayer. So when I pray, I do it in a way that both verbally and physically gives my mentees a model, a road map . . . permission . . . to go and do the same.

Mentoring involves modeling . . . doing what you do so others can see you do it and learn. Again, Jesus shows us how.

## TEACH US TO PRAY

Jesus must have been a fantastic pray-er. Imagine the intimacy, the love, the shared experiences, the common ground with the Father. He often prayed by Himself . . . away from His mentees.

On one key occasion, documented in Luke 11:1, Jesus had been praying. It seems that this time He had been praying with the disciples nearby because "when He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray.'"

I believe this disciple heard something . . . maybe saw something, that he wanted in on. Hearing Jesus pray . . . talking with His Dad . . . something

**It's good for  
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incredibly compelling was going on.

Jesus responded by praying what we call the Lord's Prayer, giving us a model for how to approach the Father . . . with gratitude and humility.

We don't know if Jesus was kneeling, sitting, or facedown. But because He was a devoted God follower and a student of the law, we can guess that He was in a position of reverence and submission.

Peter walked with Jesus throughout His ministry. He saw Jesus pray many times, and when he wrote his contributions to the Bible, he reflected the attitude he must have seen in Jesus: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time" (1 Peter 5:6).

He saw Jesus humbled and bowed down. But then he saw Him lifted up . . . first on the cross and then as He ascended into heaven. What a picture! What a contrast!

It's good for me to kneel when I pray. It reminds me that He's God and I'm not. It reminds me that I'm lower than God . . . that this isn't a conversation between buddies . . . or equals. This is humbling myself . . . acknowledging His superiority . . . putting myself below Him spiritually but also physically.

Many of the guys I've mentored have never knelt to pray in a small group. Most have done the "kneeling bench" drill in a church sometime, but few have actually gotten down on their knees and prayed out loud with other guys.

That's what I'm trying to do . . . to break the ice . . . to use my influence as a mentor, and to use the peer pressure (and safety) of a group context to open them up to new dimensions of their faith.

One other key point: much has been written about the importance of how we see God. Do we see Him as King, as Judge, as Healer . . . that kind of thing? But there really isn't a question. 2 Corinthians 6:18 is clear: "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons."



God is my heavenly Father. That's the way I address Him, that's the way I view Him, that's the framework of our relationship, and that's the way Scripture describes Him to me. Underlying my entire approach to mentoring younger people is this truth . . . He's your Father . . . a perfect Father. Talk to Him that way. Think of Him that way.

## JESUS WAS A PRAYING MAN

You would think that a God-man wouldn't need to pray. After all, He's been with the Father from the beginning . . . participated in the creation . . . seen and experienced it all. But Jesus prayed often and for extended periods of time.

Scripture tells us one of His longest prayer times came when He was picking His mentees . . . His disciples. We know He would go off by Himself to pray . . . and often. As was His practice, He would go to remote places early in the morning to be with the Father and pray.

A mentor can't mentor like Jesus without prayer. Here's a short list of the things that praying does for me as a mentor:

- Praying for my mentees keeps me focused on them and their needs, not just my own.
- Praying for their needs gives me insight into their hearts . . . what they care about and are focused on.
- Praying for them is a way of actively loving them.

And there's one more big one. I need to pray for myself.

It's so easy to pray for all those other people, but I also need to pray for me. God has given me influence with these guys. I need His protection, His wisdom, His courage to be who God created and saved me to be. If I fall, I damage all that He's built up in the people I've

influenced. So it's important for me to stay spiritually healthy . . . on the same page with the Father and focused on the right things in my life.

## GIVING GOD THE CREDIT FOR ANSWERED PRAYER

I used to keep a little whiteboard in my closet where I pray. I made two columns on it . . . one column said "Prayer Requests" and the other column said "Answers." Over time I marveled at how many of my prayers were definitively answered . . . some yes's, a lot of no's, but answered one way or the other. I mentioned this in my men's small group, and my good friend Rick asked with a smile, "Could I buy that board from you?"

I don't have the gift of intercession or anything like that. I don't even pray as often or as long as I probably should. But this little exercise taught me to keep track. I was amazed at how often God answers my prayers.

A few years later my wife and I went through the Crown Ministries course at our church and found a prayer log in the material. Just like my whiteboard, it has two columns, one for prayers and one for answers to prayers.

For my Radical Mentoring groups, I modified this log in only one significant way. I added a place to list one big prayer request . . . something with a longer term focus . . . something that a mentee would be praying for through the entire mentoring year.

Take this idea right now and start using it. You can use any sheet of paper and replicate it. Start documenting as God answers your prayers.

Answered prayer builds faith. God is answering prayers all around

us for that purpose. So let's give Him the credit He deserves. It's for our benefit as well as His glory.

## LISTENING AS WELL AS TALKING

It seems weird for us to listen to God. How do I know it's Him? Doesn't the devil counterfeit God's voice?

I confess . . . when I hear some-one say, "God told me \_\_\_\_\_," I pause big time. That's not to say God isn't still speaking. I know He is. But it's pretty hard to hear His voice and consistently identify it. And at times it's even more difficult to hear and interpret what He's saying.

In the first days after I came into a personal relationship with Jesus, a dear friend sent me a sermon series called "How to Listen to God." That series became a book by Charles Stanley, and I have never forgotten the five C's that provide a grid to help me test if what I've heard is from God. In my abbreviated fashion, here they are:

- Is the answer/instruction *consistent* with Scripture? God will never direct us to do something that conflicts with His Word.
- Will the answer *challenge* your faith? If the direction is the easy way out and doesn't require faith in God to execute, put a check on it.
- Does the answer *conflict* with human wisdom? Often God's ways are not our ways, and what He directs us to do seems really weird to our twenty-first-century culture.
- Does the direction *clash* with my fleshly nature? Sometimes God will lead me into things that require extraordinary effort . . . or self-discipline. I'll have to go against what comes naturally.
- Will obeying God require *courage*? He's often giving

assignments where we'll have to take risks . . . to trust Him. He's doing that to build our faith.<sup>5</sup>

I want my mentees to try listening to God, to discern that “still small voice” and sort it from the messages of the world. These five questions help me distinguish His voice from all the others.

## BECAUSE JESUS DID

When you look at Jesus as a mentor, nothing is more visible or well documented than His commitment to prayer. We have clear pictures of Him praying for Himself and for His disciples, and prayer is the only thing we saw the disciples ask Him to teach them to do.

As you jump into mentoring like Jesus, pray. Then pray again.

During the writing of this book, one of my mentees called and left this message: “Regi, I know you’re working on your mentoring book. I wanted to tell you about a decision I made last night. A younger guy from church has been asking me to mentor him for a while. I don’t feel competent to do it. But I prayed and asked God. Before I knew it, I got my answer, called the young man and agreed to mentor him. I had been waiting for the time to start mentoring, but God showed me that there is a time to start, and now is my time.”

Is now your time? Are you willing to become a mentor to the next generation? Will you do what Jesus did . . . and asked you to do? Will you pray about it?

**I want my mentees to try listening to God, to discern that “still small voice” and sort it from the messages of the world.**



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# CHAPTER EIGHT

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## TEACHING BY DOING

**H**ere's where mentoring is unique. A teacher can teach what he could never do himself. A coach usually coaches what he could do long ago . . . in athletics it's usually long, long ago.

But mentoring involves teaching *as* you do something. Mentoring occurs as you're doing life together . . . being "in the moment" . . . interactive . . . like a live television show. It's real time . . . not canned, not prerecorded. It's happening right now for both the mentor and the mentee.

Here's an example.

Steve was in my Radical Mentoring group back in 2007. Steve is an architect who, along with a partner, stepped out to start his own firm a couple of years before.

My cell phone rang one day, and it was Steve.

"Regi, my partner was just found dead in his apartment." Steve

was in shock but “in control” shock, if you know what I mean.

I asked enough questions to know that Steve was ok, that he was thinking clearly and not in a personal, emotional, or spiritual crisis.

Then I asked him about his partner’s family, his parents (Kit wasn’t married), brothers, and sisters. Was someone with them, attending to them personally?

Then we got to the business stuff . . . what would he tell clients who had critical projects under Kit’s care? How would he get his arms around the pending work? Who would pick it up and make sure nothing bad happened? How would he deal with the employees, who would be scared out of their wits by the loss of a key contributor and leader in the firm?

We talked through all of these questions, discussed different plans of action, and came up with some next steps for Steve to take.

I’ve never had a business partner die unexpectedly. Steve and I were making it up on the fly.

But look at what was happening here. Because of my age and having been through several death situations in a business context, I knew what to do and the order in which to do things. Steve was about to become a caregiver, and a caregiver can’t give care to others unless he’s *regained his own balance* from a shocking event. So my first reaction was to be sure Steve was ok.

Second, I took him to the personal needs of the family of his partner. As Steve reached out to Kit’s family, he was following the model Christ gave us. (Jesus’ compassion for the family stimulated Him to bring people back from the dead!) He was also modeling the love of Christ for Kit’s family and for all of his employees. In the days ahead, this compassion would be an important element because Steve would end up in negotiations with Kit’s family over his estate and his ownership interest in the firm.

Finally, we got around to the business issues needing attention.

Now here's the kicker . . . this is first and foremost why Steve called. He respects my business acumen and thought I would be a good source of advice regarding the business issues created by his partner's death. But I modeled for him a different set of priorities. I had never dealt with this exact situation before, but I was able to both help Steve think through his next steps and at the same time teach him how to respond in a situation like this.

## JESUS TAUGHT BY DOING

Prayer is the most overt example of Jesus teaching by doing. Nowhere else in the accounts of His life is Jesus directly asked to *teach* a specific thing. But be sure, as He traveled from town to town with His mentees, a lot of what He taught them, He taught by doing it.

When the disciples were casting out demons, they encountered one they couldn't cast out. Jesus cast out the demon Himself, then turned to the disciples and said, "This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:21).

Let's look at some of the less obvious things Jesus taught by doing and how a Radical Mentor can go and do the same.

**I cannot succumb to the temptation of performance-based acceptance.**

## THE PERFECTION OF ACCEPTANCE

Jesus taught acceptance by accepting people. And He did it by accepting the most unacceptable people in His world.



He would go to their homes and dine with tax collectors and other “sinners” in the eyes of the Jewish leaders.

He would then go to the home of a Pharisee and dine. One day He was with the outsider of outsiders, and the next He was sitting with the utmost insider.

Women were often looked down upon in the Jewish culture of Jesus’ time. But many of Jesus’ closest followers and supporters were women, giving us a picture of acceptance of the highest order.

Samaritans were also looked down on by the Jews. Neither Jewish nor Arab, these “half-breeds” were scum to the Jews. Yet we see Jesus interacting with the Samaritan woman at the well and even praising “the good Samaritan” in one of His most familiar parables.

Sick people, especially those afflicted with diseases like leprosy, were pushed out of society altogether. Yet Jesus reached out to them, accepted them and even healed some.

Children were persona non-grata in Jesus’ culture. Even His disciples demonstrated a “get out of the way” mentality toward kids, but not Jesus. He invited them in. His acceptance was universal.

It astounds people that I’ve never met most of the guys I choose to mentor. Typically, potential mentees hear about Radical Mentoring from someone so they email me and express an interest. They apply, I read the applications, pray over the candidates, pick my eight, invite them to “Launch Night,” all without ever meeting them in person. (And now that my church is taking the lead, they assign mentees to me . . . and they’re still guys I don’t know.)

This blind approach puts me in the position where I *must* accept each guy. I’m protected from my own biases . . . from my own judgmental spirit . . . and from the temptation to pick only guys that I naturally like. I’m investing in the guys God has led me to, giving Him the maximum glory.

And throughout the mentoring year, I focus on continually

accepting each guy, no matter how different he is, how different he thinks, or how passionate he is about growing in Christ. I cannot succumb to the temptation of performance-based acceptance. That's not how God loves me, and I want to love as I am loved.

## GREAT MENTORS ARE GREAT LISTENERS

Jesus listened. He was in the moment, totally focused on whoever was in front of Him. Sometimes He was listening when no one thought He was, like when He overheard James and John debating who would be the greatest.

When I'm with my group, I put my own life on hold. I want to use every ounce of energy I have to focus on these guys . . . to hear what they're saying . . . and to understand where they're coming from. I want to teach them to do the same because my ultimate goal is for them to become mentors . . . to become disciple-makers.

## ON TIME AND PREPARED

Years ago I hired my first consultant to recruit a vice president of sales for our company. At the end of the project, he asked me what he could have done to improve his performance or serve me better. I mentioned a couple of things, and then I asked him, "What could I have done to be a better client?"

He said, "Do you really want to know? I mean *really* want to know?"

I knew something was coming, but there was no turning back at this point. So I said, "Yes, give it to me straight!"

He said: "Regi, you were late for every meeting we had. Sometimes,

I would wait outside your office while you talked to others on the phone, not only finishing up conversations but also initiating new ones. The way you disrespected our appointment times communicated that you disrespected me.”

I was stunned. If I were in biblical times, I would have torn my clothes and covered myself in ashes. What he described was not the man or the businessperson I want to be, not to mention the way my selfishness and disrespect for him and his time reflected on me as a Christ-follower. Jesus cared for people . . . He would never diss them the way I had dissed this consultant (who was also a good friend!).

From that day I've passionately pursued being on time for everything. And when my mentees are involved, I break my neck to be on time.

I'm teaching them the importance of being on time by being on time and by holding them to the same standard.

## SERVING

Throughout the year I'm teaching my guys to serve by serving them. When they arrive for our meetings, everything is ready. Copies are made, books are bought, refreshments are out . . . whatever it takes. I try to put them and their needs ahead of my own.

During the mentoring year I go to each guy's workplace, pick him up, and take him to lunch. I buy.

On our retreats I look for every opportunity to serve. I make everything as easy as I can for them because I want them to feel what it's like when someone you look up to serves you. I know of no better way to teach service than to serve.

Remember the powerful moment when Jesus stood, removed His outer garment, wrapped a towel around His waist, and washed His disciples' feet? In that culture washing feet was the lowest, nastiest job.

But Jesus did it to model serving in a radical, emotional, physical way. Afterward He added meaning to His act, explaining how love is about serving:

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them (John 13:14-17).

We all do better when someone is watching. As you embrace this mentoring challenge, you'll realize that you're teaching by doing, that you're doing life all the time, and that your mentees are watching. I'm teaching my mentees how to love their wives by how I love my wife . . . how to love their kids by how I love mine. I'm teaching them how to love and serve the church by how I love and serve my church. And in the end I'll teach them how to transition from this life to the next . . . by how I do it myself. I hope I can be as cool as Jesus.



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# CHAPTER NINE

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## THE CONTEXT OF WHEREVER

**A** friend of mine spoke profoundly when he said mentoring is about content, community, and context. Content has always been a “biggie” because people who mentor intentionally will always want a curriculum. In the secular world, mentoring is built around a specific purpose. The curriculum would be around that purpose. In the Christian world, there’s no recognized content for mentoring beside the Bible itself.

Community is a new element to mentoring, and it becomes a meaningful element when you mentor in a group environment.

But what about context? What is it? Why is it important?

## THE WHERE OF MENTORING

When I think of mentoring, I see two guys having coffee or lunch.

It's always in a restaurant . . . always around food or drink because that makes starting conversation and keeping it going easier.

They've become friends. Conversation flows naturally, but most of it centers around the younger man's life . . . his issues, his opportunities, his future.

**Jesus talked.  
They listened.  
Jesus healed.  
They watched.  
Jesus did  
miracles. They  
marveled. And  
it was all done  
“along the  
way.”**

Traditionally the mentoring relationship is almost always initiated by the mentee. He has something he wants . . . a felt need . . . for guidance, wisdom, advice, or help. Most often these conversations get started around job stuff. The younger man needs advice or access to the older man's network of contacts. Sometimes it's a crisis at home . . . a breach with a wife or child and the less experienced person wants to confide in someone who's "been there, done that."

Since he's on his own agenda, the mentee suggests a location, convenient for the mentor . . . both

in time and place. After all, he's the one who's getting the help. Why shouldn't he make it easy on the guy who's giving it?

Now, is this a type of mentoring? Yes. Is it what Jesus did? No.

Jesus *initiated* the mentoring relationship with His disciples. He approached them. He chose them.

In Mark 3:13-14, we're told "Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach."

Everything He did was about *His agenda*, not theirs. Jesus didn't

worry about being an inconvenience to His mentees. He knew He was giving them the *chance of a lifetime* by allowing them to follow and learn from Him.

Later on, Jesus would tell them, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it” (Luke 10:23-24).

Remember when Jesus told the man he had to give up everything if he wanted to experience the kingdom of God? Peter (as usual) spoke up on behalf of the disciples and reminded Jesus, “We’ve given up everything.” These are not the words of men who are in it for their own agendas. Sure, they hoped Jesus would appoint Himself as earthly king and they’d be well-placed in the hierarchy. But the point is that Jesus invited them to follow Him, and they did. They left their businesses, their wives, and their families to take Jesus up on His offer to become “fishers of men.”

And when they said yes to His offer, they dropped their nets and hit the highway . . . literally. Unlike the rabbis who had passed them over for discipleship, Jesus was itinerant. He traveled constantly.

Jesus took His mentees into *His* context . . . for *His* purposes.

Had the disciples gone the traditional route and studied under a traditional rabbi, they’d have been in their hometowns, living in their communities, and doing life in the traditional way. They’d have learned their lessons in the synagogue and taught there as well. Their lives would have been insulated from outsiders . . . people who were sick or deformed . . . Samaritans, tax collectors, and sinners. They’d have lived in a “holy huddle.” And no one would have ever heard of them.

But instead, they followed Jesus. Miles and miles they walked. Jesus talked. They listened. Jesus healed. They watched. Jesus did miracles. They marveled. And it was all done “along the way.”



## TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

Here's a partial list of places where Jesus mentored His disciples:

- along the road
- in the garden
- at the well
- in Peter's house
- in the synagogue
- on a mountain
- on the water
- by the sea

When you mentor younger people, you'll find yourself in all kinds of places. While my monthly meetings take place at my home, I visit each guy's workplace once during the mentoring year. And yes, there are other one-on-one meetings for breakfast or lunch. I've attended church with mentees. I've gone to football games and special events, played volleyball and golf, camped out, gone boating, fly-fishing, waterskiing, you name it. One of my mentees was married in my backyard. Many times in those environments, questions come up, and teachable moments present themselves. But most of the time I spend with my mentees, I spend at my home.

## AT HOME, EXPOSED

When mentees come to my home, they get an up-close and personal look inside my life. They meet my wife. They would meet my kids if they weren't grown and gone. They see my house, my yard, my

furniture.

They see my mementos . . . my trophies if you will. And those trophies show them what's really important to me, just as yours show what's important to you.

The walls of my rec room are what some call a "heritage wall." One of my mentee's lovely wife, Rachael, designed it for me. When you walk in the door and turn left, you start our life story with pictures of my parents and Miriam's parents. Then there are our baby pictures . . . pictures of us as kids, and so forth. As you go around the room in chronological order, there are logos of all the businesses I have worked for or helped start. Then come pictures of our kids, starting as babies all the way through their wedding pictures, and then grandkids. The stories of our lives are told in those pictures. When I take my guys on the tour, they see how I've spent my time. Sure, there's a smattering of vacation pictures. But the wall is covered with two themes, and only two . . . family and work. That's not to put myself on any kind of pedestal. It's just real. If you love to travel, then your trophies may be stuff from the places you've been. Or if you're an avid golfer or fisherman, then your trophies will say so. I believe our trophies give our guys permission to have interests, to enjoy the life God has given them, and to do so guilt free.

John Piper tells how he experienced the great "coming together" as he calls it.

What was life about? What was it for? Why do I exist? Why am I here? To be happy? Or to glorify God? Unspoken for years, there was in me the feeling that these two were at odds. Either you glorify God or you pursue happiness. One seemed absolutely right, the other seemed absolutely inevitable. And that was why I was so confused and frustrated for so long.

God created me – and you – to live with a single, all-embracing, all-transforming passion – namely, a passion to glorify God by enjoying and displaying his supreme excellence in all the spheres of life.<sup>6</sup>

Enjoying and displaying. Both for God's glory.

In the context of our lives, we enjoy God and display His love and life with God for the men we mentor.

## THE STUFF OF LIFE

During every mentoring season, we have my mentees and their wives over for dinner. Both husbands and wives get to see how Miriam and I function as a team when we're entertaining sixteen guests in our home. They watch how we interact, how we care for each other and for them. Like it or not, we're role models in this context. And modeling love and respect makes a huge impression on these young couples.

Jesus used the everyday things and events of life to make His points. When He was confronted by the Jewish leaders about the oppressive Roman tax, He used the Roman coin to illustrate His answer: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's" (Matthew 22:21). How cool was that . . . to use the image of Caesar on the coin to make the point of ownership . . . Caesar owned the earthly kingdom, but if we accept *His* ownership, we can belong to God . . . become a part of His family and His kingdom – because we're made in *His* image and are owned by Him.

He did it again when confronted with paying the temple tax. He sent Peter, a fisherman, to fish . . . this time with a line instead of a net. And he caught the specific fish that God willed, enabling Jesus and Peter to pay their temple tax (Matthew 17:25-27).

Jesus used fig trees, loaves and fishes, saliva – all kinds of regular things – to make points. As modern-day mentors, we need to use the stuff of life to point our mentees toward life with Christ.

Forgiveness is a huge issue for all of us. Over and over guys come with stories about their bosses . . . how they do incredibly thoughtless and insensitive things. “What do I do? Do I just pretend it didn’t happen? What should my response be?”


And as we sit around the dining room table, the group members and I will ask questions, call up relevant Scriptures and before long a path emerges. “I have to tell him what I think . . . how I feel . . . and then forgive him and move on.” A wise course of action, charted by the guy who has the most to gain or lose, but with a little help from his friends . . . in his context.

## WHAT TO SAY (OR NOT TO SAY) AT A FUNERAL

I have a friend who lost his father after a long, debilitating illness. Chris, one of my mentees, knew the older man through a Bible study. We decided to drive to the funeral together, and as we entered the hall and took our place in the receiving line, Chris turned to me with some consternation and said, “What do you say at these things?”

Haven’t you had that uneasy feeling? We’re sad that he’s gone, but at the same time we knew it was inevitable. He had suffered for a long time . . . his family was exhausted from trying to care for him. It was his time.

“Nothing,” I replied. “Don’t say anything.”



**Life doesn’t  
happen in  
church.**

“Nothing?” he asked quizzically.

“Nothing. Look each member of the family in the eye, say, ‘I’m sorry for your loss.’ Hug them. And then just be there.”

I learned this years ago when my good friend Rick lost his wife to brain cancer. I stood at the funeral home and watched as hundreds of people came by. One by one they blabbered words and more words. It made me want to cry for Rick. He’d just lost his wife, and now he’s got to hear people say things like, “She really looks good,” after viewing her body in the casket, and, “I know you’re happy she’s in a better place.” The man just lost the love of his life. He wants her back! The better place can wait!

What Rick needed was the presence of people who cared for him and his kids. No words can express the pain and loss he was feeling, so why try to do the impossible . . . to say what can’t be said? Just stay quiet. Be gentle, caring, and concerned. But keep your mouth shut.

We can’t teach the next generation these things in a classroom. We have to go through things with them. We have to do life together and teach them along the way.

You see, life doesn’t happen in church. Church can prepare us for life, and it can provide us shelter when the storms of life start beating. But life happens at home, at work, on vacation, in our neighborhoods. If we’re going to share a “piece of our map” with the next generation, for their benefit, then we must be out on the road with them, doing life together. The lessons get taught in the context of everyday life, in everyday situations, through the wisdom of God planted and nurtured in the life of one of His more mature kids.

**No matter  
where you are  
or what you’re  
doing, you  
have a Mentor.**

## SPEAKING OF KIDS

Of all the contexts God uses to teach us, I believe children are one of His favorite tools. And it shouldn't surprise us since He explains Himself to us through the Father-Son paradigm. Our parents had a profound impact on us as we grew up . . . either by omission or commission. We inherently understand what it's like to be a child depending on his dad for approval, courage, guidance, and even discipline.

But in all my years of mentoring, I've found few of my mentees have awesome dads. Their dads have been absent, abusive, critical, and selfish (much like me before I surrendered to Jesus).

The result is men who've missed the joy of growing up feeling totally loved. In his book *The Way of the Wild Heart*, John Eldredge says it this way:

There are many, many men who never knew the happiness and security of being the Beloved Son, and therefore never really got to be a boy in fullness and freedom. They might be angry; they might be uncertain of themselves; they may have looked to the woman for love, or to another man. They may be overachievers, or dropouts. They are all around, and they still need to know. The boy within needs to be raised from the depths of the soul where he has hidden or been banished so that the man can "get on with his life." The boy inside must be raised, raised to the status of Beloved Son.<sup>7</sup>

Eldredge goes on to say that our growth as men is stunted by the absence of this "Beloved Son" stage and we have to go back and

experience it if we are to mature. We do that by learning to let God “father” us . . . by grasping the fact that God is our Father, our perfect Father. And He wants to love us . . . to “father” us all the days of our lives. We are His beloved sons!

That may be the most important part of context . . . to realize that no matter where you are or what you’re doing, you have a Mentor. He’s always available. He has the wisdom of the universe at the tip of His tongue. And He cares about you . . . and me.

I made the “father switch” many years ago. Thankfully, I released my earthly father from his job as father (and my expectations of what he was supposed to do and be) well before he died. That release, pardon, forgiveness – whatever you want to call it – allowed us to heal our relationship and be friends until the day he died.

I didn’t lose a father when I “fired” him as my dad; I gained one. Because I “hired” my heavenly Father to take his place. My heavenly Father has been awesome. He’s yet to let me down. He’s there for me, always available and always accepting and loving. He’ll give me guidance if I ask Him, but He’ll also stay out of my way and let me “have my head” if I choose.

When the next group of mentees comes parading into my dining room, it won’t be long before we’ll start digging into their relationships with their fathers. And when *they* begin to see their fathers clearly, they can begin to see where they are headed as fathers. Our natural inclination is to parent the way we were parented. So we have to make intentional choices to parent differently and to live out those choices. I made some of those choices and was able to live them out with great outcomes. In others I didn’t stick to my guns as well and don’t feel as good about what I did. And in yet others I just didn’t know what to do as a dad.

My goal is to share with my mentees what I did right and what I’d do differently. I confess both with as much clarity and transparency as

I can. As a mentor the only way good can come from the mistakes I've made is if other people get to learn from my painful errors.

As we go through the year together, kid issues come up, and they're often brought to the group with a big "I need help" tag on them. As I listen and guide the discussion, I remind the guys that they have a perfect Father. Ask Him what He would have you do. He's the role model and a far better mentor than I can ever be. If I can share what I did (or didn't do) in a similar situation, I will . . . if I'm sure it will address their issue.

Mentoring is not counseling. There are people trained to do that. When a mentee is bringing an issue to the group, there is more to the story than he's telling (and more than he even knows, in all likelihood). So it's dangerous to start shoveling out advice and platitudes when you don't even have all the facts.

But as the mentor, if I can have the maturity to point them to the Father, then I've done my job. Because He'll be there to mentor them long after I've passed on.





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# CHAPTER TEN

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## A MUTUAL COMMITMENT

I have been leading Radical Mentoring groups for more than fifteen years. In all, there have been 1,440 opportunities for my mentees to be late for a meeting or not to show up at all (eight guys per group, twelve meetings per year, fifteen years equals 1,440 meeting opportunities).

In fifteen years there have been nine absences and seven tardies. That means people have shown up and shown up on time over 99 percent of the time. Isn't that amazing?

And remember, I have no authority over these mentees. We're all volunteers. They pay nothing to participate and receive no compensation for attending or being on time.

I've run companies where I had *authority* over employees . . . controlled their incomes and bonuses . . . even their job security . . . and I've never had anything close to that kind of attendance and timeliness record.

So what is it? Am I that good? Do I threaten them with knives and guns?

## YOU HAVE NOT BECAUSE YOU ASK NOT

In reality it's as simple as setting clear expectations up front and then following through on them. I make it important for everyone to attend every meeting. I sell them on the benefit of that and then reinforce it whenever I have to.

Earlier I described the situation when a mentee called at 5:00pm on the day of our meeting. "Regi, I just can't make it tonight. My boss, the CEO, has us in a planning session, and we're not going to be finished until 10:00 or 11:00 tonight. What should I do?"

Here's the moment of truth . . . for me and for Bryan. Do I do the typical, nice, Christian thing and let him off the hook? If I do, I'm communicating that attending isn't really all that important. Remember, he signed a covenant, and it said, "You will have to make some tough choices" in order to attend every meeting and be on time.

My response?

"Bryan, you made a covenant with me and this group."

"Yeah, but this could be life and death for me at work. My CEO is standing right here . . . will you talk to him?" pleads Bryan.

"No, I don't need to talk to him. You do. You need to explain the position he's put you in, and then you need to make a decision. I'll love you either way, and you won't be kicked out of the group if you don't show up. But pray about this and make a wise decision. Goodbye." And that's where I left him.

Just like Bryan, we have to make tough decisions all the time. Maybe not as visible as this one, but we're constantly deciding which

of our commitments we're going to break.

Andy Stanley nails this dilemma in his powerful book *When Work and Family Collide*. His premise is that we can never meet everyone's expectations . . . we have to "cheat" somewhere . . . disappoint someone . . . shortchange something.

This was a good field exercise for Bryan, to face his mentor and his boss and decide which commitment he would honor. And he chose to stay at work, much to the chagrin of his group. They totally ripped on him at the next meeting . . . and not in a lighthearted way. I didn't say anything. But later I had the chance to meet Bryan's boss in person. He thanked me for my investment in Bryan and gained a lot of respect for Bryan by how he handled the decision-making process.

Each year, one of the new mentees forgets that he lives in Atlanta, Georgia (where there is significant traffic every day) and shows up late. I sit quietly until that last person is seated. I then have everyone open their journal, and I instruct them to write this down: "In Atlanta, traffic is always an issue but rarely an excuse."

I then give them the speech I told you about earlier, about how devastated I was when I saw how being late communicated disrespect to the people who were waiting for me, and how their five minutes of tardiness is actually forty-five minutes of wasted time if it holds up a group (five minutes for nine people equals forty-five minutes).

That is usually the last tardy of the year.

If someone is late after that, I communicate my displeasure in nonverbal ways. I never laugh it off. I'm intentional about keeping a standard . . . an expectation . . . that everyone be on time.

## HIGH COMMITMENT IS ATTRACTIVE

The fastest growing religions in the world, in fact the only growing religions in the world, are those that demand something from their

followers. Islam, particularly radical Islam, is a vivid example, calling its young followers to complete commitment of everything up to and including death.

Mormons rigorously give, avoid sinful habits, and spend extended stints as missionaries around the world. In America the more conservative the denomination, the faster the growth rate. Where people are asked to do something, not to do something, to give up something, those are the growing faiths. It's only valuable if it costs you something.

We shouldn't be surprised by this. It's a principle Jesus taught clearly. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21).

Our freedom, our time, our money . . . whatever we treasure . . . when we give it up for something, our hearts will follow. When our involvement is optional . . . when we can go or not go, take it or leave it, then our hearts won't be in it.

So we know that watering things down, reducing the level of commitment required, and taking away accountability reduces the numbers long-term. Why do we continue to head in this direction?

## THE TYRANNY OF NUMBERS

America has become all about the numbers, measurable outcomes. Two pastors were overheard at lunch:

"How many are you running in Sunday school?"

"We're running about 350. How about you?"

"Oh, we're off a little. I guess it was that sermon

**By trying to maximize the numbers, we minimize the effectiveness.**

on sin. I think we'll bounce back up now that we're talking about grace."

If the numbers aren't headed in the right direction, something has to be wrong. We are driven by numbers throughout our society. As a former CFO I worked with used to say, "Numbers are like hostages . . . torture them long enough, and they'll tell you whatever you want to hear."

In managing case sales of Coke or production quotas at Honda, numbers are essential and can't be diminished. But in creating Christ followers, they can be dangerous.

Typically, we want to be inclusive to the max. We want as many people to attend as we can possibly get because we think that shows success. And in certain businesses, like selling tickets, that may be true. But in disciple-making it might not be.

The church in America has fallen victim to this numbers game by doing whatever it takes to get people in the seats. We think that if we give homework, fewer people will show up. If we hold people accountable for doing the homework, we might embarrass them, and they won't come back. And worse, they'll tell others, and then we have a bigger problem. Preachers get run off for such as this.

We consistently compromise the quality of the program or of the learning experience in order to appease the peripheral participant. By trying to maximize the numbers, we minimize the effectiveness.

A growing number of young believers want to make a difference for the Kingdom. They want to learn . . . to grow. They're willing to make sacrifices . . . to make commitments and live up to them. They are tired of the lukewarm, wishy-washy, show up if you feel like it, "only if the sun is shining" kind of involvement the church so often facilitates.

## BORN OF A SENSE OF FAIRNESS

When I began leading mentoring groups, I thought about this a lot. I asked, “Why would I commit to something for a year, do preparation, open up my home and my life, only to have guys show up when they feel like it? That isn’t fair! If I’m going to commit, they will too. And their commitment must *mean something*.”

So I made up a covenant.

I’m not going to bore you with a discourse about covenants and contracts. Just know that making a covenant was a big deal in Old Testament times, and people today innately sense that a covenant is a serious commitment. Let me show you the covenant that I came up with.

### RADICAL MENTORING GROUP COVENANT

We are hereby making a covenant commitment to the following:

1. It is my desire to become an all-in Jesus-follower, husband, father, son, brother, friend, disciple-maker and Christian leader.
2. I understand that I will take direct, unfiltered feedback. I will do everything in my power to receive it in love and to learn from it. I will avoid defensiveness, realizing that when I defend, I lose the opportunity to learn. I commit to being open in examining myself – my personality, my past, my habits, my anger, and my responses to people. I want to learn. I want to change, to be more like Jesus Christ in every fiber of my being.

3. I commit to attending every meeting and retreat, to be there on time, and to have my work done. No exceptions, unless *providentially* hindered. I understand and agree that I will have to say “no” to important things in order to meet this commitment, and I am willing to do so. We will layout our schedule for the year at our first meeting. I will manage my other commitments around the dates selected for meetings and retreats.

4. I will “finish the course.” I understand that my mentor and the group will make a significant investment in me. Because it would be unfair and disrespectful to them to do otherwise, I commit to the entire season and will finish well.

5. I understand that this mentoring process is based upon Jesus Christ, His message, and His plan for our lives. I will be totally vulnerable about my relationship with Christ, for the purpose of growing in my faith.

6. I recognize that my mentor pledges to give the same level of commitment, dedication and energy to me. My mentor will visit with each of us in our workplace sometime during the year; and he will attempt to teach and lead from a humble, transparent and loving heart.

7. I commit to total confidentiality. What is said in the group stays in the group.



8. I further covenant that, at some point, when the Lord lets me know that I am ready, I will pick some guys and lead a group like this myself.

9. I have discussed this commitment with my wife and she fully supports my involvement. She willingly relinquishes the time it will take to attend the sessions and retreats and to do the reading and homework, with the goal of my becoming a godlier man.

Now that's pretty serious. Each candidate for mentoring is given this covenant before he is selected for the group. And they're told, "Hey, if you can't live up to this, then don't commit. You'll be taking a spot that someone who can and will commit could use."

Radical Mentoring isn't about breadth; it's about depth. It's not about how many we can mentor; it's about taking the ones we can mentor deep into the faith. So it's fine if someone can't make this covenant.

Each of the provisions in the covenant deserve some kind of explanation.

**1. All-in.** My goal is to help these guys become all-in followers of Jesus. If they aren't interested in that, then we're both wasting our time.

**2. Feedback and Introspection.** I want each mentee to know that mentoring requires honesty. Jesus didn't mince words with His disciples. He called it just as He saw it. A good mentor has to be honest, not so he can beat on his chest, but because it's what helps the mentee the most. Nowhere else in our world can we get direct, honest, well-intentioned feedback on ourselves. In addition, I want to invest in learners . . . people who are open to examining themselves . . . who want to grow and be all that God has made them to be.

**3. Attendance and Timeliness.** You can't develop intimacy and trust in a group that never really becomes a group. When attendance is sporadic, you don't remember who's heard what. Everyone quickly ends up on a different page. It's not like a Bible study where you just catch up your homework and you're good to go. This is people sharing their hearts, telling their life stories, dealing with issues others in the group will likely deal with sooner or later. So you can't just be constantly starting over and doing it over. And as I earlier described, when eight people are waiting for that one who's late, every minute wasted is multiplied by nine. So five minutes late means forty-five minutes of wasted time. That's unacceptable.

**4. Finishing.** If I'm committing to a whole year, then why shouldn't every person in the group make the same commitment? If one or seven drop out, I won't abandon my commitment, so why not demand the same commitment from the mentees? In eight years I've had three people move during the year, and in each case they commuted back to attend the sessions and retreat without missing a single one. One year, Jonathan commuted nine hours each way from Slidel, Louisiana to Atlanta to complete the mentoring year and live up to the mentoring group covenant.

**5. Christ Centered.** I make no bones about it. Jesus Christ isn't a priority in my life; He is my life. And my purpose in mentoring these younger men is to show them what that Christ-centered life is all about. No surprises. No excuses.

**6. The Mentor's Commitment.** My covenant is with God, but I spell out some of it here for the mentees to see. I want them to hold me accountable for delivering on my promises. During the third year of leading these groups, my mother-in-law was at the point of death. My wife and I were at her bedside in another state. At 7:05pm, my cell phone rang, and the caller ID was from my home telephone in Atlanta. Could I be calling myself? No, it was my mentoring group. I

had failed to let them know of the situation, and they had come to my house, broken in, and were sitting around the table, waiting for me to show up. Needless to say, I was both embarrassed and humbled. But I was also proud that my guys took their commitment so seriously. I orchestrated the meeting by phone. I got it started, and they took it from there. Other than that, I've never missed a meeting, a commitment, or an assignment.

**7. Confidentiality.** Because guys are sharing *all* their “dark corners,” past and present, it's critical that the group be a safe place.

**8. Multiplication.** In order for me to agree to invest in a mentee, he has to agree to invest in the next generation. Call it “pay it forward” if you will. I call it multiplication. More on that in the next chapter.

**9. Wife Approved.** It's important that each of the mentees' wives are on board with the process. If they aren't supportive, then the time the mentees spend with me or working on things for the group could become a conflict.

## JESUS SET THE BAR

We don't know how Jesus created commitment within His mentees. We know that He had a large number of disciples . . . we know how He sent out seventy in one instance. Sometimes hundreds were following Him, and sometimes four or five thousand were sitting at His feet, listening to Him teach. To have been picked to be an apostle, an insider, one of the closest of the close, must have been pretty special.

The one human quality we can always depend on is selfish interest. And while we know these guys felt special to be chosen by this “rock star” rabbi, other motives were at play. At least some of the disciples probably had visions of earthly power, of status, maybe even wealth. They followed with a sense of awe as they saw this ordinary carpenter's son heal people, bring people back from the dead, and

speaking astounding wisdom. But in the back of their minds was an earthly kingdom . . . and possible freedom from Rome . . . and they stood to be important players in that deal if it happened.

This becomes obvious at the end when Jesus was arrested and ultimately crucified. His mentees scattered. The fishermen returned to their nets. They were still getting together, trying to figure out exactly what happened. Their dreams were dashed, and their mission was over as far as they knew. But when Jesus came back to life, everything changed. His teachings came alive just as He did. They saw the “temple rebuilt in three days” and knew its significance.

After He ascended forty days later, they began to tell their unabridged story of what they had seen and heard. In the end their commitment to Jesus and to telling His story cost all, except John, their lives.

Jesus wasn't there to hold them accountable . . . to call them out when they were late or when they drifted off course. But they had the Holy Spirit and maturity, just as we do today. The Holy Spirit convicts, guides, and comforts. And their maturity enabled them to know what was important . . . when to speak and when to stay quiet . . . and how to communicate Jesus' message effectively.

Attentiveness to God . . . maturity in our relationship with Him . . . that's what Radical Mentoring is all about.

You can't get there without commitment. But the growth that can come when a mentor and his mentees make a covenant and keep it is pretty amazing. God will honor that commitment and show up. He promised.



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# CHAPTER ELEVEN

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## PAY IT FORWARD

**A**ccording to its Wikipedia entry, the expression “pay it forward” is used to describe the concept of third-party beneficiary in which a creditor offers the debtor the option of paying the debt forward to a third person instead of paying it back. Debt and payments can be monetary or by good deeds.<sup>8</sup> In sociology, this concept is called “generalized reciprocity” or “generalized exchange.”

The concept was described by Benjamin Franklin, in a letter to Benjamin Webb dated April 22, 1784:

I do not pretend to give such a Sum; I only lend it to you. When you [. . .] meet with another honest Man

in similar Distress, you must pay me by lending this Sum to him; enjoining him to discharge the Debt by a like operation, when he shall be able, and shall meet with another opportunity. I hope it may thus go thro' many hands, before it meets with a Knave that will stop its Progress. This is a trick of mine for doing a deal of good with a little money.

The term “pay it forward” was popularized, by Robert A. Heinlein in his book *Between Planets*, published in 1951:

The banker reached into the folds of his gown, pulled out a single credit note. “But eat first – a full belly steadies the judgment. Do me the honor of accepting this as our welcome to the newcomer.”

His pride said no; his stomach said YES! Don took it and said, “Uh, thanks! That’s awfully kind of you. I’ll pay it back, first chance.”

“Instead, pay it forward to some other brother who needs it.”

We sometimes connect the term “pay it forward” with the 2000 film by that name starring Kevin Spacey, Helen Hunt, and Haley Joel Osment.

Osment plays a twelve-year-old boy who comes up with the idea of doing three good deeds for others in repayment of a good deed one receives. Such good deeds should be things the other person cannot accomplish on their own. In this way, the need to help one another can spread exponentially through society, creating a social movement with

the goal of making the world a better place.

Mentoring as Jesus did is the ultimate “pay it forward” challenge. Why?

## GIFTS CAN'T BE REPAID

First and foremost, we cannot repay God for what He's done for us. The gift of salvation, the gift of forgiveness, the gift of eternal life, the gift of His presence in our lives . . . these are priceless assets He gave us. We owe nothing. The debt was cancelled . . . the price paid by Jesus on the cross.

**You haven't  
created a  
disciple until  
your disciple  
has created a  
disciple.**

But what about the people who led us to Jesus? Can't we pay them back? The answer there is no for a couple of different reasons.

We have to recognize that their deal was with God, not with us. They were simply being obedient to Him . . . doing what He asked them to do. God did the leading, the loving, the saving, and even the discipling. He just allowed us to participate in the fun.

Second, the people who led you and me to Christ, if they were rightly motivated, don't want to be paid back. The way you pay them back is to pay it forward.

In *About My Father's Business* I described my relationship with Craig Callaway and how he became a Christian after twelve years of conversations. Craig is one of my best friends now, and now he's having discussions with a work colleague named Jeff. He's sharing books with him, answering his questions, and helping Jeff on his spiritual journey toward Jesus.



*Nothing* could give me more pleasure. No payback gift could be as meaningful as seeing my friend Craig trying to “pay it forward” to Jeff. He couldn’t pay me back anyway . . . I only did what God asked me to do. As I became friends with Craig, I couldn’t possibly be his true friend without caring about his spiritual direction and destination. Over time I tried to help him with his questions and move him toward a relationship with Christ. No pressure. No rush. Just love and acceptance. The same stuff he’s now expressing to Jeff.

## MENTORING IS PAYING IT FORWARD

In the movie *Pay It Forward*, each good deed is paid forward with three additional good deeds. Imagine if this were multiplied by eight instead of three. And what if the people doing the paying forward were paying forward good deeds with eternal impact?

As I said in the beginning of this book, the “pay it forward” or multiplication model that Jesus used, creates astounding numbers. When you think of mentoring eight people for seven years, you’ve impacted fifty-six people. But when each person I mentor pays it forward by mentoring eight others, and they pay it forward by mentoring eight more, before long you have a movement. That’s what Jesus created and what He intended for us to continue and expand.

I’ve heard it said, you haven’t created a disciple until your disciple has created a disciple. That seems to be a pretty high standard, at least by today’s norms. Using that principle as a guideline would raise the bar considerably. It would mean that until the person I’ve invested in is deep enough in his faith and motivated enough to infect others, my job as a disciple-maker isn’t done.

But how can I affect what someone else is or isn’t going to do? How can I affect not just the next generation but the generation after that?

I once heard Bruce Wilkinson address this question. Bruce put three chairs on the platform, and he used the examples of David, Solomon, and Rehoboam.

In chair number one, he put David. We all know David was “a man after [God’s] own heart” (Acts 13:22). He was *passionate* about God in every dimension of life. But was he intentional and passionate about passing his faith on to the next generation?

Chair number two represented Solomon. Solomon was a God-follower but not nearly as passionate as his father, David. He started out fine, but as I read Ecclesiastes, I hear the voice of a man who has lost his way. His behavior showed it as he compromised God’s instructions, marrying an Egyptian in disobedience to God and ultimately becoming corrupt and perverted. He had faith, but he was smart on his own, and his faith was in *moderation*. He seems to have grasped little of what was passed on from his father.

Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, was represented by chair number three. Rehoboam found the faith that Solomon handed down to him confusing. It sort of meant something but sort of didn’t. By the time Rehoboam assumed the kingdom, his faith was *meaningless*. His unwillingness to take counsel led to the division of Israel into two countries and ultimately to the loss of the kingdom altogether.

The point?

We’re going to hand off our faith to our children first and then to others. That faith will be what it is . . . if we’re passionate, they’ll know it. If we’re moderately committed to Jesus, what we pass on will be moderate at best and most likely meaningless. There is no faking it. People are smart. They know the difference between genuine, authentic faith and shallow, public faith. I love the clarity of C. S. Lewis’s statement: “Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.”

But just having an intense faith and intimate relationship with Christ won't ensure that it's "paid forward" to the next generation. We need intentionality.

## INTENTIONALITY – MY NEW FAVORITE WORD

We do such a small percentage of the things we think we're going to do. As the saying goes, "The road to hell is filled with good intentions." With technology I now have vivid evidence of my recalcitrance. I make my task list, pull it over to my calendar, and then watch the list of undone tasks pile higher and higher. When it comes to interactions with people, it's worse. Those interactions tend to be even more spurious and haphazard.

The mentoring approach I've described in this book is all about intentionality. It removes my excuses for not investing in future generations. By picking a small group of people, laying out a schedule of meetings, assigning books to be read and Scriptures to be memorized, I've created an intentional plan for influencing this small group of people for Christ.

Everything in the program is intentional. Each Scripture is intentionally connected to a life issue. Each book is selected to address an area of our life and walk with God . . . from decision-making, to priority setting, to spiritual warfare, to marriage and fatherhood, each read is intentional. Visiting each guy at his office is intentional.

Playing games with the guys on retreats is intentional. Paying for their food is intentional. Cooking and cleaning up after them is intentional. Serving them Communion is intentional, praying with them is intentional, and then graduating them and sending them out to pay it forward is clearly intentional. At every step, the intention is to help them become the men that God created them to be.

## MATURITY IS ESSENTIAL

The basic premise of mentoring is to show mentees not just how to do something but also how to be something. Hopefully, through the time we spend in the mentoring year, my mentees will have seen some of Jesus in me and be well down the road toward replicating it in their own lives.

Early in this book I shared what I thought were the attributes of the best mentors. But I want to bring those attributes to the fore once again.

**Maturity.** A good mentor must have maturity. It's essential. It's nonnegotiable.

Dictionary.com says *maturity* is a "state or quality of being fully grown or developed." Spiritually, none of us will ever *feel* like we're there. But being "fully grown" from a spiritual perspective is not that hard to ascertain. Thankfully, we don't have to guess about what *fully grown* means. Our God and Father has spelled it out for us clearly.

**Faith.** A mature Christ follower is connected with a body of believers and has a rock-solid faith in Jesus Christ. He uses the "body" (i.e., the church), and invests in it to build up the younger ones. And why? "To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12-13).

It's a cycle. We mentor so the body can be built up – so it can have unity, knowledge of Jesus, and spiritual maturity to the max. The mature then perform works of service, which include mentoring the next generation. And so on.

**Good-hearted.** A mature Christ follower has a good heart. As Jesus taught using the parable of the seeds, He described the mature believer. "But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and

good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop” (Luke 8:15).

**Confident.** A mature Christ follower who is ready to be a disciple-maker has confidence. He’s not cocky . . . he doesn’t know all the answers. But he knows the God who does and how to find those answers through prayer and through God’s Word. Check this out: “Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends

**“Having lived through a season of life and having dealt with the questions that arise gives us the confidence to walk through it with younger ones.**

greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured” (Colossians 4:12).

**Dependent on God.** While maturity involves confidence, it’s not self-confidence. It’s confidence in a dependable God. “All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you” (Philippians 3:15).

**Wisdom.** A wise person knows the difference between right and wrong and chooses right regardless of the consequences. Wisdom comes from gaining knowledge and applying

it, gaining experience that can be applied to the future situations. Maturity comes with evaluated experience. “But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil” (Hebrews 5:14).

**Perseverance.** To be mature, one has to have faced challenges and overcome them. You have to have lived long enough to know that things worth having are worth both working for and waiting for.

“Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” (James 1:4).

## WHEN WILL I BE READY TO MENTOR?

If you read these attributes and know in your heart that all of these words describe you, then you’re ready to mentor. Isn’t it cool how God gives us the answers to important questions?

One of the mistakes I’ve made in mentoring is in leading my guys to believe they need to wait until they’re over forty . . . “when they know something.” That was a mistake and one I’ve since fixed.

I mentored Brian a few of years ago. He was one of those in that “inner circle” I spoke about earlier . . . the “group within the group.” Brian called one day to tell me that he’s going to begin mentoring. He wasn’t yet forty, but he was ready.

“Regi,” Brian said, “I used to think there was *the* time to start mentoring. Now I think there is a time to start, and my time is now.” When I think of Brian and ask those questions, I think he’s right.

- *Does he have a rock-solid faith in Jesus?* Yes.
- *Is he connected and committed to a church . . . a body of believers?* Yes.
- *Is he good-hearted?* Absolutely . . . I’ve watched him live out his faith.
- *Is he confident?* Yes.
- *Is he dependent on God?* Yes, and in a healthy way.
- *Is he wise?* Yes.
- *Will he persevere?* Yes, he’s a “stay and play” guy . . . not a quitter.

So there you have it. A mentor is launched. And God is smiling.

## BUT WHERE DO I START?

Another question that constantly surfaces is who to mentor, where to start, what age group?

As I was driving along the expressway recently, it came to me. The answer lies in one word . . . confidence. A mentor needs confidence that he will know most of the questions he'll be asked. Yep, it's knowing the questions that will be coming at him that gives him the confidence to put himself into a mentoring role. No one knows all the answers. But having lived through a season of life and having dealt with the questions that arise gives us the confidence to walk through it with younger ones.

So here's an approach: think backward.

Starting from where you are now, work back as far as you have to until you get to a season where you have confidence in your ability to mentor, to know the questions people within that age frame will have (and some of the answers). Then you've discovered your place to start.

Clay was in my eighth Radical Mentoring group when he was only 28. He had been married for four years and was pretty mature for his age. After the group he wanted to mentor . . . immediately.

As he looked back on the seasons of life he'd been through, he saw:

- Young married guy just out of college; first jobs, no kids
- College guy
- High school senior, getting ready to go off to college

Bingo!

As a 28-year-old, Clay knew the questions high school seniors face. He'd been there. He "navigated those waters" successfully ten years

before. And had those ten years to digest his experience . . . to press meaning into the decisions he made, and to see how those decisions played out in college, in marriage, and in his entry into the workplace.

He had confidence in his ability to mentor high school seniors. After handpicking his first group, he led them through a meaningful mentoring season and then he did it again with a second group.

Sure there was more to it. He prayed. He sought “the peace of Christ” about his decision. He talked with his wife. He sought the counsel of two other mentors before launching into it. But he figured out where to start by looking back.

Take a few minutes and think through your “seasons of life.” Where are you now? What season of life or age frame did you come through before the one you’re in now? What was the one before that? Keep thinking back through those seasons, one by one, until you get back to one where you think, *Hey, now I know something about that one!* The age frame where you know the questions (and some of the answers), that’s where you’re going to feel confident as a mentor. And it’s probably where you should start.

## THE COMMITMENT TO REPLICATE

Whether you buy into my eleven practices of the world’s greatest mentor or not, I hope you will at least buy into the “pay it forward” principle and make it a habit. Never agree to mentor someone unless he agrees to mentor someone else down the road. And as I’ve said, I like the numbers when one person pays it forward to a group of six to eight.

Jesus was never foggy about replicating. From His first call to His first mentees, He made clear that His kingdom was about making them “fishers of men.” It was about more than leading the disciples to faith. They obviously had demonstrated their faith by dropping their



nets and taking the first step. If Jesus was only looking for them to believe, He could have immediately said, “Ok, ok, it’s clear you guys believe in Me. You’ve shown you’re willing to stop what you’re doing and follow Me. So just go back to work and have a nice day. Your faith has saved you.”

But that wasn’t why He did it. He wanted them to experience the joy of being a part of the redemptive process . . . of becoming “fishers of men.” And they did.

The “bookend” of Jesus’ earthly mentoring relationship with His mentees ended as it began with the call to “go and make disciples.” Pretty consistent challenge I’d say.

And they did as He asked, traveling thousands of miles, telling the stories of Jesus – not so much what He taught as what they saw. Ultimately most of them were killed for telling what they saw their mentor do. That’s commitment.

My mentees covenant to mentor at least one group in the future. Some will mentor one-on-one. I believe many will become lifers and lead multiple groups (some already have). It’s hard to stop when you experience the joy of seeing your mentees gain the whole-life maturity Scripture talks about and knowing you played a role in helping them toward that maturity.

## THE REAL MENTOR

As I’ve walked you through the practices of mentoring the way Jesus mentored, it’s my hope and prayer that you’re inspired to become a mentor as well. It will be one of the most fulfilling, “on purpose,” things you will do in your lifetime. You can’t fail so long as your motives are pure and you follow the principles I’ve laid out for you.

But there is one more point to make . . . maybe the most important one of all when it comes to mentoring.

God is the mentor. Always.

He wants to be the perfect mentor to every single one of His children. As we “sit at the feet” of older, wiser people, He is loving on us, teaching us, coaching us.

When we’re doing the same for our mentees, He is doing the work, teaching the lessons, giving the guidance. It’s all about Him.

Just as we can’t “save” anyone, we can’t mentor anyone either. We love them, pray for them, give them our best advice and help, but God brings the increase, and thus God gets the credit.

After all, He is the world’s greatest mentor.



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# AFTERWORD

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**T**he following Afterword comes from Radical Mentoring's Executive Director Kevin Harris. Kevin was a mentee in Regi Campbell's second mentoring group back in 2002. It was a life-changing experience for a newly married 27-year-old. Kevin spent years working in the financial services industry before Regi asked him to join the Radical Mentoring team in early 2015. One of his main roles is connecting with churches who want to establish sustainable, intentional small group mentoring programs. Throughout Mentor Like Jesus, Regi has laid out the principles and ideas that guide Radical Mentoring's unique brand of mentoring . . . mentoring like Jesus did it. In this short afterword, Kevin will explain why small group mentoring and the local church fit together so well.

So we've sold you on the concept of mentoring in a small group. For some of you, what you've read here is an answer to prayer. "Okay, now I know a process for making disciples the way Jesus did." Congratulations! You just joined a community of men in all parts

of the U.S. and even in other countries, who are leading groups like this. Many feel they've found purpose and a personal ministry they'll continue for the rest of their lives.

But others have tried to launch into Radical Mentoring and have been unsuccessful. Biggest problem? Not being able to find mentees. Where are the hungry young Jesus-followers they are looking for? They're at church. These guys flock to programs the church does but not so much to other stuff. Yeah, they'll go to events, contribute to fundraisers and read emails, but they dedicate their primary "spiritual bandwidth" to their local church.

And this isn't just a story we've heard either. I've experienced this personally. Shortly after signing on to join Radical Mentoring, I began looking for guys to journey with me in my first group . . . but I couldn't find them. I reached out to my network but came up mostly empty. I realized that after spending the last 11 years dedicated to work, including travel most weeks, I wasn't as well connected to my church and my community as I thought. After many phone calls, emails and prayers, God finally delivered four guys to my life (shout-out to my first mentees Chris Chandler, Jonathan Hull, Jordan Kincaid, and Brandon Woods).

All four guys have fully committed to the group and I'm eternally grateful for them and for the beginning of what will be a life-long mentoring journey for me. But it shouldn't be this hard, and as I've thought about what happened to me and is happening to other potential mentors, I've realized a couple things . . .

1. When a program is offered by my local church . . . supported by the Senior Pastor, staff guys, and well-respected lay leaders, men are more apt to seriously consider it than when it's "just a good guy" trying to make disciples.
2. The church is (still) the best place to find the younger men

who want to grow in their faith. Even if they don't go to my church, all the guys in my group are connected to a local church.

And as I continue to work with churches, I'm also seeing a shift in their needs. Many churches today are feeling a stronger need to raise up and develop lay leaders for the future . . . no matter the denomination or flavor of church. Here's some of challenges many of the churches I work with are face . . .

- 1.** Busier families equal lower church attendance . . . lower church attendance leads to less connection to the vision and mission of the church . . . less connection to the church leads to less giving . . . and on and on and on. The other casualty of lower attendance is a smaller base of volunteers, leading to potential burnout of church staff . . . and a burnt out staff and small volunteer base is a formula for disaster.
- 2.** Traditional men's ministry is not producing disciple-makers. As I continue to work with churches, what I see over and over again are churches that have both well-defined and well-attended women's ministries and student ministries but struggle to gain momentum in their men's ministries.
- 3.** The next generation is leaving the traditional church. As I learned from (and fully agree with) a recent Barna study, we are seeing a shift away from experiential worship experiences toward authentic relationships. The next-generation wants value and meaning . . . and they want mentoring.

This is a definite shift in the needs of the churches and the wants of their younger members. First, it was subtle but now it's begun to gain momentum. And the local church is catching on. They face some tough challenges but they're realizing the solution is right in front of them . . . lining their seats every week.

This appears to be the right combination of external factors – stressed leaders, willing mentors, and hungry mentees – to effectively launch men's small group mentoring in the church. I don't claim to have the complete answer, but I do believe mentoring plays a significant role in shaping the future of the local church.

If you want proof, here's what we've heard from some of the men connected to churches who have launched small group mentoring . . .

“Radical Mentoring gave me the tools I needed to step up to my responsibility to demonstrate how a father loves his children, how a husband loves his wife, and how a family worships God.” –Ray Snyder, Mentor, The Church at LifePark

“This has been one of the most significant spiritual development ministries we have done at our church.”  
–Chad Stutzman, Campus Pastor, NewPointe Community Church

“Radical Mentoring is a simple, accessible, flexible means to shape men to be the people God wants them to be . . . and the mentors get changed, as well!”  
–Chuck Roberts, Pastor for Congregational Life, Peachtree Presbyterian Church

“It has kept me in contact with my members and

grown me personally to more than a pastor but a friend and mentor to many of the men of our church.” –Hale Bishop, Senior Pastor, Park Avenue United Methodist Church

“It has been amazing going deeper into my heart as a man and seeing what holds me up from being open and honest with God.” –Mentee, North Point Community Church

Imagine a church . . . your church . . . with a group of men committing their resources to building the next generation of leaders . . . with a group of men living authentically with Jesus, willing to share their stories with others . . . with a group of men more committed to their families, children and communities.

So to “tie a bow” on this book, in the next few pages, I’ve outlined the process Radical Mentoring developed to encourage and prepare churches to launch men’s small group mentoring. The goal is not to replace anything your church is doing . . . I don’t know anything about what your church does for men. But I do know that most would like to do better. Small group mentoring can become a piece of the future for you, your men’s ministry, and for your church.

## THE RADICAL MENTORING PROCESS AT YOUR CHURCH

### I. PREPARE

“You can’t start off by asking which direction you’re headed in . . . First you figure out if you’ve got all the right people on the bus,



then you figure out where to drive.” –Jim Collins, *Good to Great*

## RECRUIT YOUR TEAM

Depending on the size of your church and the complexity of its ministry, there will be two or three key players needed to get men’s small group mentoring off the ground. In larger congregations, there’s a Senior Pastor, a Staff Pastor (with a title like “Men’s” or “Discipleship” or “Community” or “Adult Education”) and the requisite lay leader . . . we call him the Lead Mentor.

In smaller congregations, it might just be the Senior Pastor and the Lead Mentor. Not one size fits all here, so don’t get caught up in having all three roles filled. It really only takes one person who has caught the vision for mentoring to step up and lead the charge.

However, while you don’t necessarily need much involvement from him, your **Senior Pastor** must support mentoring, both publicly and privately, for it to get going. He determines what’s done in your church. Over time, what he supports gets attention and resources. What he doesn’t support gets neglected.

If you’re involving a **Staff Pastor**, he will likely be the one spearheading this process from the church side. His biggest job is helping the Lead Mentor get the necessary resources and make any necessary connections. Together with the Lead Mentor, he will set the calendar for the program and monitor its progress.

Lastly, the **Lead Mentor** needs to be a lay leader who has the respect of the church staff and the other men at the church. He will serve as the spark of the program, he’ll champion it to the other potential mentors . . . engaging and inviting them to join him in this new venture.

## THE MENTORS YOU'RE LOOKING FOR

Once you've locked in your team and settled on some key details of your mentoring season (start date, season length, etc.), it's time to identify and invite your potential mentors.

No decision is as important to the sustainability of your mentoring ministry than the selection of your mentors. A good mentor sets the tone of the meetings, attracts high quality mentees, and, most importantly, is intentional about disciple-making.

So, here are what I consider some of the qualities to consider when inviting mentors to be a part of your ministry.

**1. All-in follower of Jesus.** Men who have learned that loving Jesus and following Him is the secret to life.

**2. Committed disciple-maker.** Men who take Jesus' instruction to "go make disciples" seriously.

**3. Committed to the next generation.** Men who get excited about sharing what they have learned about living life with guys who are a few steps behind them on the path.

**4. Facilitator vs. teacher.** Men who are able to ask open-ended questions and encourage dialogue not lecture.

**5. Transparent and vulnerable.** Men who are transparent and vulnerable about their life experiences . . . the good, the bad and the ugly with honest, gut-level self-disclosure.

**6. Willing to set and hold others to a higher standard.** Men who are willing to set and keep the expectations high. Growth happens because of the consistency and commitment of the group.

These qualities are best summarized in the following two questions:

- If you had a 30-year-old son, looking for a mentor,

who would you recommend?

- If you had an unlimited number of elders in your church, who would you want for those roles?

One final comment. Your potential mentors should be engaged by “invitation only.” Whether you are inviting them to a special meeting or if you are planning on individual meetings, you want to emphasize the importance of this initiative. Two simple things help make this point for you . . .

- “You have been selected” – men will sit up and pay attention when they have been *chosen* for meaningful leadership roles.
- The Senior Pastor’s signature – when the invitation is personal and comes from the pastor it communicates this endeavor is special and important.

## II. EQUIP

Once you have invited your potential mentors and given them a few days to pray over their decision, you are ready to begin training them. There is not a standard for training your mentors . . . I have seen churches train in 6 weeks, 2 weeks, even 2 hours. As you consider the men you have invited to be a part of your mentoring ministry, you will know what is needed for this group. Through your training, the goal is help your mentors discover God’s unconditional love for them and the value of living a life all-in for Him. Since you can’t export what you don’t have, a big part of mentor training is helping your mentors get clarity about their faith, their faith story and their “calling” to invest in others.

Every church is different and every group of mentors is different

but after seeing a variety of churches do this a variety of different ways, I think there are two things that should be covered in training:

## COMPONENTS EACH MONTHLY SESSION

The first is the structure and components of a typical Radical Mentoring session. To avoid this becoming a source of angst and confusion, your mentors need to know what is expected of them and their mentees. There is a great sense of relief when your mentors realize that the resources have been tested and all of the information is already prepared in advance for them.

Every mentoring session involves and is built around 5 components:

1. Book to read and net-out
2. Scripture to memorize
3. Relational and personal assignments to complete
4. Community with each other
5. Prayer with our Heavenly Father

It can be beneficial to walk through a mock session as you want your mentors to understand the pace and tone of a typical meeting. You may even want to assign them some homework to go along with it.

## FAITH STORIES

The other important thing to cover with your mentors is how to share their faith stories. Joe Erhmann, author of *Inside Out Coaching* says we can't help anyone with their lives until we have a coherent narrative of our own. Because of that, the best mentors are those who tell their

faith stories in the most open, honest and useful way.

When your mentors share their stories, they are modeling what they want their mentees to deliver. As such, the trajectory of your groups will be determined by how transparently your mentors share their stories and how much of their lives have been surrendered to Jesus. The worst mentors work hard on portraying a squeaky clean appearance at the expense of being real.

Recently, we heard from a Lead Pastor at a fast-growing church in SC. When reflecting on his Story Retreat, he was blown away by the transparency of the men in his group. In fact, he was so blown away that he went back and re-told his story to them . . . all of it. As one of Regi's friends says, "Transparency is telling someone what's going on with you. Vulnerability is giving them the bullets that can kill you." For this pastor, sharing his story with members of his congregation was risky yet he described it as "one of the most significant days in his ministry history." And after hearing about the results of his group, that day wasn't just significant to him, it was monumental for the whole group as it set the table for the rest of their mentoring season.

### III. CONNECT

After you've trained your mentors, or even while your training them, you can begin the process of identifying and inviting your mentees and forming your groups.

#### IDENTIFYING AND INVITING MENTEES

The two most important aspects of this part of the process are clearly identifying the profile of the men you want to invite to apply and when you invite them, setting very clear expectations about what

they are committing to.

You'll want to start by establishing the profile of the men you want to be mentored. Knowing that all churches are different, there is not a standard profile to adopt. Below is a sample profile that Regi has used for his groups for the last 15 years . . .

- Married guys in their late 20's to mid 30's
- If fathers, children under 10
- Objective men: guys who are willing to take direct, pervasive feedback without being defensive; a willingness to look themselves in the mirror and make changes to improve
- Humble, broken men; hungry for personal growth
- Passionate commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ
- Willingness to 'pay it forward' and mentor other guys sometime in the future

Once the ideal profile has been established, you can begin to identify the men who you want to invite to apply to be a part of Radical Mentoring. Similar to the letter you sent your mentors, when it's signed by your Senior Pastor, your Lead Mentor and/or your Staff Pastor it becomes incredibly compelling. You are not inviting them to attend something . . . you are inviting them *to be a part of something* that the church believes they are uniquely qualified for.

At the risk of sounding un-churchy, you want this to feel like an exclusive, invitation only group because . . . it is. When you invite them, you will also want to clearly lay out the requirements of the group, the covenant required, and the required support of their wife. You want to give the applicants every opportunity to opt-out and open up spots for other guys who will use them.

When you are ready, send away, wait on the applications, and

pray. Ask God to lead you to the men He wants to be a part of this.

## FORMING YOUR GROUPS

I've seen churches form their groups in different ways. Some host a draft with each mentor ranking the applicants from first to last . . . just like you'd prepare to draft little leaguers. Then they go through and pick groups. Others allow their mentors to invite handpicked mentees to apply to their groups. Some let the Lead Mentor and Staff Pastor create the groups based on location, age, job, etc. All of these can work, the only thing I absolutely recommend is to not to mix married men with single men. Also, keep in mind, similar life experiences and stage of life will accelerate the bonding and will create momentum during the sharing of stories.

## IV. LAUNCH

By this point, you are approaching the finish line. But there are few important logistical items which will help your first mentoring season be a success.

## SELECTING YOUR CONTENT

The content of each monthly Radical Mentoring meeting is centered around a topic. All the topics are based on important subjects in a man's life: Prayer, Identity, Marriage, etc. As you've already heard, along with each topic is a related book to read, 1-2 relevant Scriptures to memorize, and relational assignments.

Before you can launch your mentors out, you'll need to give them a track to run on . . . you need to pick the topics you want them to

cover as well as the accompanying books and Scriptures (our website will be a critical tool here . . . we've got a recommended track and a customizable track, as well as book and Scripture recommendations, relational assignments and all the corresponding documents you'll need, visit [radicalmentoring.com](http://radicalmentoring.com)).

Once you have made your final decisions, I suggest creating a binder for your mentors containing everything they'll need for each monthly meeting (again, see the website). The more seamless you can make this process for your mentors the better it will go.

A word of caution as you do this . . . resist the temptation to take Radical Mentoring in a theological direction. Most "churched" men have been exposed to far more theology than they'll ever apply. Mentoring is about *applied theology*. About living with and through our Living Lord.

Lastly, don't forget to pray. Let God guide you on what content to use.

## YOUR KICKOFF AND FIRST MEETING

When you are ready to launch, you'll gather all your mentor and mentees together for a Kickoff Meeting. This celebration event should be crafted to fit the way your church celebrates. If that's a worship time, a barbeque, a 'pot luck' lunch or dinner, pizza, whatever. Let your church culture and your budget guide you.

The purpose of this meeting is simple. The Staff Pastor or Lead Mentor will want to cast vision for the mentoring season and then have each group meet together for the first time. During that time each group will accomplish five things: 1) introductions, 2) coordinate calendars, 3) set expectations, 4) explain how homework assignments work and handout the first ones and 5) pray together.

After that, the next time your groups meet will be in their mentor's



homes for their First Meeting. The First Meeting will serve as the first normal session of your mentoring season. Following the typical meeting format . . . regroup, Scripture memory, homework discussion, book discussion. The only real difference tonight is that in addition to those things, the mentor will share his full faith story. That alone makes this one of the most important meetings each group will have all year.

## STORY RETREAT

After each group has met together once, they'll go on a Story Retreat together. Ideally, this is a full weekend away but it can be done as an overnight or even a "Story Sunday." It's best to leave town if possible . . . almost always, someone in the group will have access to a beach, lake or mountain home. The purpose of the retreat is to create an atmosphere where each group can "get away" and bond as each mentee shares his *full* story. Their mentors modeled transparency and vulnerability at the First Meeting, now it's the mentees turn to do the same.

## MONTHLY SESSIONS

After the Story Retreat, the groups will continue to meet once a month for the duration of the mentoring season. These meetings will take place at the mentor's home and will cover that month's specific topic as it relates to the five meeting components mentioned earlier (book, Scripture, relational assignments, community and prayer).

Between each meeting, mentees (and the mentor) will have homework to complete and a Growth Partner to meet with before the next session. It's also encouraged for the mentor to connect

one-on-one with each mentee at some point during the mentoring season . . . the earlier the better. This can be an important time for the mentor to dig a little deeper and the mentee to feel comfortable asking questions he might not in the group setting.

## COMMENCEMENT RETREAT

The final thing each group will do together is their Commencement Retreat. Like the Story Retreat, this is best done as a full weekend but can be accomplished as an overnight or a full day. This retreat serves as the capstone to the mentoring season . . . it's a final chance to get together and reflect on all that has happened over the course of the season. Three things will happen on the Commencement Retreat. 1) Each mentor will facilitate their group's last regular session. 2) Each person in the group will do the Letter from God exercise . . . which has proven to be a catalytic moment for many mentees over the years. 3) And finally, the mentor will "send his group out." We've provided a couple ideas for this but it's important for the mentor to do it in a way that is meaningful to him and to his guys.

## A FINAL THOUGHT

The commitment you and these mentors make to leading Radical Mentoring groups into the future . . . that's what will sustain mentoring/disciple-making in your church. "Send me the teacher . . . the students will appear" has some merit.

Finally, keep in mind that God is truly the mentor here. It's up to you and the other mentors to give it your best shot, but only God brings about life change. You may invest in these guys and see no immediate

fruit. But over time, God's Word and His work never returns empty. Trust Him and keep doing what He told you. "Go . . . make disciples!"

Actually one last thing. I mentioned our website earlier, everything I've talked about here and a lot of what Regi talked about in the book is available on our website for you to use . . . **for free.**

How's that possible? Radical Mentoring is funded by those who have been touched by the ministry. We are supported by a group of donors and churches who believe in small group mentoring and the impact it is having. Most of them have seen the impact firsthand in their lives and one of the ways they "pay it forward" is to support us.

But seriously. Agendas, Handouts, Timelines, How-to's, Binders, Videos, Email Templates, you name it. It's all there for you . . . to help you at every step of the way. Please take advantage of it.

Visit **radicalmentoring.com** to get started.

The logo for Radical Mentoring features a large, bold, lowercase letter 'm' in a sans-serif font. Below the 'm', the words 'radical' and 'mentoring' are stacked vertically in a smaller, lowercase, sans-serif font. The entire logo is centered on the page.

**m**  
radical  
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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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At age 33, with a brand new personal relationship with Jesus, Regi Campbell launched into the world of entrepreneurship. He's been involved in founding 15 companies, serving as CEO four times.

Along the way, his energy for mentoring leaders and starting things also took root in ministry world as Regi has been involved in the formative stages of several ministries in the Atlanta area, including North Point Community Church, where he served as an Elder and as a member on the Stewardship and Long Range Planning Teams.

Regi has written four books. His first, *About My Father's Business*, spelled out his approach to relational evangelism. His second, the first edition of the book you're holding now, *Mentor Like Jesus*, documented his process for mentoring men in small groups. His third, *What Radical Husbands Do*, outlines steps for a man to win and keep his wife's heart. And his most recent, *Radical Wisdom* is a collection of daily readings for growing leaders.

But mentoring younger men to become all-in Jesus-followers is Regi's passion and calling. He is currently leading his 16th mentoring group and has now personally invested in 128 men and indirectly, in their marriages and families. Radical Mentoring, the non-profit formed to help men and their churches launch men's small group mentoring has now infected churches all over the country with a systematic approach to making disciples and disciple-makers.

Regi has been married to Miriam for 47 years. Their two adult children are happily married (with five grandkids between them).



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# NOTES

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