

The Power of a Mentor

By Sean Wegener

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, students will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: Who would be on your list of famous people you would like to study under? What subjects would you like to learn from them? What are some of the specific things each person could teach you?

Assignment Two

Often in the Bible people made special requests for certain abilities. Solomon asked for wisdom, Isaiah asked to have his mouth speak the truth, and Jesus asked for God's will to be done. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: What gifts or abilities would you like to receive to help you serve God? What is the reason behind each item on your list? (For example, you might ask for wisdom so you can know what to do in everyday situations. Or you might ask for a heart like David's so you can worship God.)

Assignment Three

Read John 13:36–38; 18:15–27; and 21:15–19. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: What are your reactions to these passages? What evidence in your life indicates you serve a God of second chances?

Scripture to Memorize

"He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm."

Proverbs 13:20

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand that a mentor is key to becoming a wise disciple of Christ.

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It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Two men lived completely different lives. Ambrose devoted his life to the Lord. Augustine devoted his life to stealing, women, and philosophy. Augustine found Christianity hypocritical, so he wanted to test Ambrose.

Augustine was astounded. Ambrose was truly a man who followed Christ, cared for people, and was intelligent. Over the course of four years, Ambrose taught Augustine how to read Scripture.

Slowly Augustine changed and began to have faith. After mentoring with Ambrose, Augustine became a Christ follower. Today many consider Augustine as the most influential Christian theologian. Without Ambrose's mentorship Augustine would have never become a believer.

Read 1 Kings 19:19–21 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 19–21

Verse 19. This story took place right after Elijah's major victory and his major fight with depression. After Elijah felt like his life was pointless and after Elijah asked God to kill him, God sent Elijah to Elisha's house. **plowing with twelve pairs of oxen.** We don't know much about Elisha, but he was on his family farm, doing regular work when Elijah appeared.

What would you do if the most famous person in your day showed up while you were at work and asked you to follow him? That is what happened to Elisha. **threw his mantle on him.** This action may sound a bit odd, but it was a symbol of Elijah asking Elisha to come study under him. This was a normal way for a teacher to obtain students at the time. No extra conversation was required because Elisha knew what was going on.

Verse 21. took the pair of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh. Elisha crossed the point of no return. Elisha not only quit his job; he destroyed it. He could not go back to work. Elisha gave up everything to be mentored by Elijah.

Verse 21. ministered to him. The term used here, *saret*, doesn't just mean "to minister." The term also carries with it a religious understanding. One is to take care of someone or something as a religious observance. Elisha had the job of caring for Elijah in return for being mentored in understanding God's Word. Therefore, God's greatest prophet, who wanted to die because he was alone, now had a student. Both mentor and student were able to obey God and follow Him better.

Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share answers to the following questions: Who would be on your list of famous people you would like to study under? What subjects would you like to learn from them? What are some of the specific things each person could teach you?

Read 2 Kings 2:1–14 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 1–10

Verse 2. the LORD has sent me as far. Elijah announced that he was leaving. He asked that his student Elisha not come with him. But Elisha refused to leave Elijah's side. This passage reveals Elisha's loyalty to Elijah. Elijah said the mentorship was over and nothing was left for

Elisha to get out of the relationship. But Elisha's purpose from God wasn't to get something from Elijah but to take care of him. Elisha wanted to see the relationship to the end.

Verse 3. Do you know that the LORD will take away . . . Yes, I know. Elisha knew his master was going to be taken away. But again Elisha was going to stick it out until the end.

Verse 6. I will not leave you. Notice how the Bible reinforces this theme. Three times the phrase is repeated. Whenever we see this kind of repetition, we know God is making an important point.

Verse 9. Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you. This part of the story is filled with emotion. Elisha's father figure told him he would do one thing for Elisha before Elijah left forever. **a double portion of your spirit.** You may find what Elisha asked for to be odd, but actually this request is touching. Elisha was asking to be like Elijah times two. He wanted to follow after Elijah's ways, to be just like him, and to have the Spirit of God resting on him.

Verse 10. if you see me when I am taken from you. Elijah's answer was even more touching. In essence, he was saying, "If you follow me until the end, God will be with you." Remember that Elijah struggled with depression and loneliness and that Elisha was God's answer to Elijah's earthly woes. And Elijah was God's answer to Elisha's purpose in life.

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share answers to the following questions: What gifts or abilities would you like to receive to help you serve God? What is the reason behind each item on your list?

Read John 21:15–19 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 15–19

Jesus and Peter had a story similar to Elisha and Elijah. Jesus called Peter while Peter was working. Peter gave up everything to follow Jesus. Jesus told everyone He was going to die, but Peter rejected the thought. Peter did not act as Elisha did. Peter left Jesus in His time of need.

Verses 15–17. do you love Me? Yet Jesus responded powerfully to His disciple's failure. Three times, just as in 2 Kings, Jesus asked Peter about his love and loyalty. **Verse 19. Follow Me!** Finally, Jesus called Peter to follow Him, or as 1 Kings 19 would put it, *saret* (minister) to Him. Jesus told Peter to stay with Him until the end of Peter's life.

These passages show us three things about mentorship.

1. Mentorship is required for spiritual depth.
2. Mentorship requires loyalty from the student and forgiveness from the leader.
3. Mentorship is a daily requirement.

Without mentorship Elisha would not have become a prophet of God. He would have managed his family farm his entire life. Without mentorship Peter would have remained a fisherman. What difference could a mentor make in your life story?

Mentorship is more than just reading the Bible together. Mentoring requires sharing everyday life situations. Jesus was eating fish with Peter when they started talking about Peter's failure. Elijah was simply walking the road with Elisha during their final days together. The last days Jesus had with Peter, and Elijah had with Elisha, were not spectacular. Average days with wise council are the days God grows us into His followers.

Assignment Three Feedback.

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share answers to the following questions: What are your reactions to John 13:36–38; 18:15–27; and 21:15–19? What evidence in your life indicates you serve a God of second chances?

On Your Own

Consider our memory verse. Do you spend more time being mentored by foolish people or by wise? Are you ready to be loyal to learning from someone? Are you willing to sacrifice to be a student?

Everyone is going to be mentored by someone—directly or indirectly, positively or negatively. Who is the Holy Spirit leading you to ask to be your mentor? In the space below, write a name and your plan for approaching that person.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below, and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Prayer

7 minutes

At Home: Nail It Down

Without mentorship we cannot grow to the depths discipleship requires. We need godly examples in the church who mentor others. Begin to think of whom you can mentor or who can mentor you. You do not need to have all the answers in order to be a mentor. No level is required where the Bible says, "Now you can mentor." What the Bible does require for mentorship is a willing heart and humility.

In our story one student succeeded and the other failed. Yet both teachers acted with grace and humility to their students. When you begin to mentor someone, make sure you do the same.

Loyalty is important for a disciple. Make your mentor an important part of your life. Look to wise council instead of peers who are struggling with the same problems. Oftentimes we ask others our own age for advice. If others are struggling with the same issue you are going through, maybe they aren't the best persons to take counsel from. Find someone who knows how to love Christ, has made sacrifices to follow Him, and is willing to talk with you. In this way we will be acting like the body of Christ by bearing with one another's burdens.

Don't forget that the mentor relationship is not all take. Mentors need their students as much as their students need them. Ask yourself what you can do to *saret* (minister to) your mentor the way Elisha did with Elijah.

Parent Questions

May I help you think of someone who can serve as your mentor? In addition, is there someone younger in the faith whom you can begin to mentor?

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