



## **Session 10: Seeking Out Mentors and Mentoring Fellow Christians – Leader's Notes**

This session explores mentoring in the early church. It helps members identify ways in which mentoring may be applied to work and personal situations today.

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Sample responses to questions based on Acts

### ***1. What did mentoring in the early Christian community involve?***

Mentoring involves encouraging community members to stay true to the faith, praying and fasting for elders of the church, preaching the word, reporting what God accomplished through the apostles, sharing the good news, welcoming those who visit, and teaching people eager to know more about Jesus.

### ***2. What topics were covered during times together?***

Topics: the good news about Jesus, the baptism of the Holy Spirit and how it's different from John's baptism of repentance, the need for and benefit of enduring hardships, God's work in the world (through the apostles), God's saving of the Gentiles, and the kingdom of God.

### ***3. How did mentoring help individual Christians?***

Mentoring helps individual Christians to understand the good news about Jesus and grow in their understanding and knowledge of the kingdom of God.

### ***4. How did mentoring benefit the entire community?***

Mentoring strengthens individuals and the community. It shows them the impact of God's presence among them and helps spread the good news (the more who knew the good news, the more people could share the good news).

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Sample responses to questions based on Acts and personal experiences

### ***1. Have you ever mentored someone else or been mentored?***

I've never officially mentored another person, though I've served as a confidante and advisor. I've been mentored as a new Christian and then as a Bible study



leader. Less formally, I've had friends who have served as cycling mentors. I'm also involved in a business mastermind group, which is a form of peer mentoring.

***2. Describe experiences as a mentor and/or mentee. (see above).***

In terms of Christian mentoring, my first experience was a good one; the second, not so much. The first one was soon after becoming a Christian through a teen ministry. I spent time with an adult leader and fellow Christians in a Bible study. I learned how to study the Bible on my own and talk about the Bible with group members; looking back, this experience was one of the most impactful in my life. I felt like people understood me and that the good news is all about Jesus and not a bunch of other stuff. The time with the adult was helpful but the group work and the instruction was what really made a difference for me.

The second experience was impactful but in a different way. I was involved in a college ministry and asked to lead a Bible study in my residence hall. The study had spotty attendance and so I was assigned a student mentor. She focused on externals of holiness and purity, which I thought (and still do) were important --- but she was out of touch with how people really lived and seemed unconcerned with loving people and reaching people for Jesus.

At the time, I was a resident advisor for the university's housing department. I loved this job, my coworkers, and my residents. But the exposure to a darker side of student life, including seeing formerly devout Christians compromise their values on a regular basis, was jarring. Not only did I have no mentor to help me make sense of the disturbing activities of my residents, I also had to contend with a mentor oblivious to this aspect of the college experience.

As a result, I moved away from insulating myself from the world toward applying Biblical principles to practical living. Regretfully, though, this experience influenced me not to pursue deeper Christian friendships for fear of being trapped in a falsely righteous, graceless, and oblivious-to-what's-going-on world. Years later, I have come to understand and embrace the need to develop a supportive network, a community of Christian friends as an integral part of faith development, growth, and outreach.

I've had positive role models and mentors in cycling as well as running and triathlon. Early in my cycling career and continuing today, I've had cycling friends



and acquaintances guide me on cycling techniques. Specific, pointed, and personalized instruction helped me tremendously, especially when I first started.

Right now, I'm in a business mastermind group that meets weekly to discuss certain topics. We share struggles and successes, offer insights drawn from our experiences, and suggest possible actions to better serve customers and become more profitable. Getting feedback from peers who have similar values plus insights into areas in which I'm weak is life changing.

As far as mentoring others, I've advised friends to help them deal with messy situations, generally involving interpersonal conflicts. In these cases, I've been able to apply my life experiences to solutions. Plus, it's easy to help others when I'm not personally involved and can give a more objective point of view.

***3. Have you ever coached someone or given advice to others to help them improve? Was this advice well-received or rejected?***

I've learned to coach and or give advice only when solicited, unless there's a dangerous situation. Sometimes my advice is rejected even when it's been solicited. I've learned not to take those situations personally.

However, I should mention that instead of giving specific advice, I explain what's worked for me, what the various schools of thought on a topic are, and how my advice may (or may not) apply to them.

I've given advice on racing strategy, training strategies, interpersonal relationships, and more. My goal isn't to convince someone to do a certain thing all the time but to consider various techniques that may not have been on their radar before or to help them choose and commit to a path.

People who have benefited from my advice and coaching are very appreciative. I love to see people learn and grow, often beyond what I've accomplished. This process is inspiring to me also and pushes me to take my own advice.

***4. Did you grow from these experiences? Did your mentor/mentee grow? Why or why not?***

I've grown from these experiences. In fact, I've struggled to grow when I didn't have a mentor or someone to guide.



Those who have been my mentors and my mentees have grown – seeing how someone takes your idea and applies it in the real world leads to insights for everyone. Sometimes, just knowing you’re not the only one struggling with a problem is helpful; but it’s also nice to learn from other people’s mistakes and their successes. This process makes it easier to move forward.

### ***5. What elements make a positive, nurturing mentoring experience?***

What I’ve noticed is that informal mentoring or peer mentoring yields better results than more formal boss-employee arrangements. Characteristics of a positive approach include mutual respect along with willingness to learn from another person, try new approaches, and develop new perspectives. What’s destructive are situations in which the mentor feels that the mentee serves the mentor or believes the mentee doesn’t have anything to offer. So, realizing that mentoring someone means gaining a friend and colleague (not a servant) leads to a nurturing experience and positive results.

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