





Biblical	Mentorship
	BY DR. CARLA SUNBERG

BIBLICAL BASIS

Proverbs 9:9 "Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still; teach the righteous and they will add to their learning."

Proverbs 27:17 "As iron sharpens i ron, so one person sharpens another."

I Thessalonians 2:8 "Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well."

2 Timothy 2:2 "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."

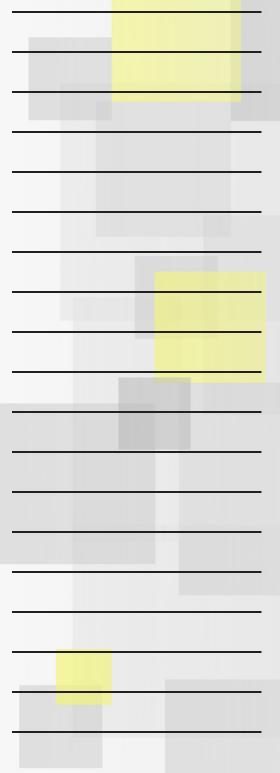
Philippians 4:9 "Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you."

Hebrews 13:7 "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith."

PURPOSE

To Identify the Biblical Basis for mentoring, putting this into practice in our own lives, and recognize how to train others to make this a reality in their lives as well.

"You've all drunk too much; you've become obsessed with the youthful spirit, and you actually imagine that youth will save the church. It is no wonder you feel like you're struggling with faith and its formation; you've given your attention to the cultural benefits of an age group over concern for the working of the Holy Spirit, who is the very giver of that which you seek." Bonhoeffer



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CONNECT

Take a few minutes to make a list of people who have been influential during different seasons of your life. Fill in a name for each of the eras, identifying who they were and what you learned from them:

- 1. Your childhood, up to age 12.
- 2. Your teen years, from 13-18.
- 3. Your young adult years, from 19-25.
- 4. Your early adult years, from 25-40.
- 5. Your middle adult years, from 40-60.
- 6. Your senior years, from 60 and up.

Now, make a list of things that you wish you would have had someone teach you.

Sometimes we learn from people we don't even know, who reach out to us from history and have something to teach us.

We will be learning from Wayne Cordiero during this time. Watch this clip of him sharing at a church in the US:



Watch from 15:30-21:23 as he tells about the importance of learning from history.

CONTENT

The goal of mentorship is to help raise up the next generation of spiritual leaders in the life of the church. We have to understand what the goal is before we embark on the journey.





Years ago, I found a quote that my father, Dr. Jerald Johnson, had used to reflect his thoughts on leadership. I've taken them and used them as my own. This came from an advertisement in the Wall Street Journal by United Technologies Corporation of Hartford, CT:

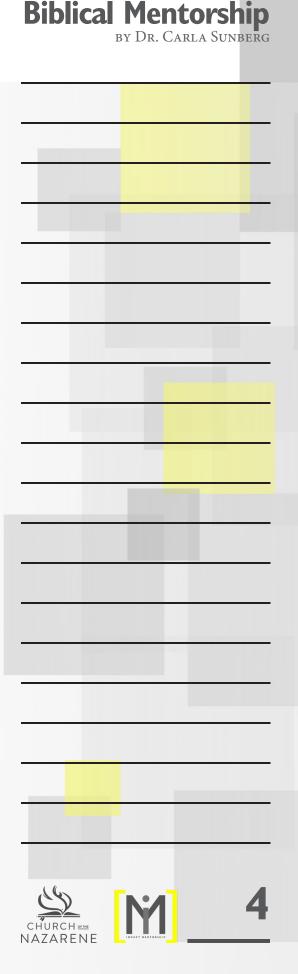
"People don't want to be managed. They want to be led. Whoever heard of a world manager? World leader, yes. Educational leader. Political leader. Religious leader. Scout leader. Community leader. Labor leader. Business leader. They lead. They don't manage. The carrot always wins over the stick. Ask your horse. You can lead your horse to water, but you can't manage him to drink. If you want to manage somebody, manage yourself. Do that well and you'll be ready to stop managing and start leading."

It's the final two sentences that grip me. The only way that leaders can lead, is to first begin by managing their own personal life. We must take this seriously because the church currently has a credibility problem. This is the gap that's created when people claim that they are followers of Christ, even proclaiming the story of God, but they fail, in their own lives to live out the ethical commands of Christ. The way in which I live my life speaks volumes about the faith which I embrace.

We all know our mission statement is, "To make Christlike disciples in the nations." The goal of a Christ-follower is to become as much like Christ as possible. We should be on a journey in which we are transformed into the image and likeness of Christ. This means that if we are going to be leaders, we must first ask ourselves whether we are reflecting Christ in this world.

This is where we begin to understand that we find Biblical mentorship in every story of the Bible. We go to the Scriptures and we ask God to reveal to these individuals from the past who can lead us into the future.

We are currently living in a time of great challenge, and one of the finest examples of spiritual leadership in a time of challenge comes to us from Nehemiah. Receiving news from home he is suddenly confronted with insurmountable problems. His homeland is in distress, the people have been shamed, the walls of the city of Jerusalem have been broken down and the gates burned.



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We sense his pain as he writes.

"When I heard these words I sat down and wept, and mourned for days, fasting and praying before the God of heaven." (Nehemiah I:4, NRSV) In that moment, when he received the news, a burden was placed on his heart.

He could not get away from the sense that God was asking him to respond to the situation. He went into a state of depression as he began to grieve over what had happened in his homeland. A few verses later we hear him crying out in prayer,

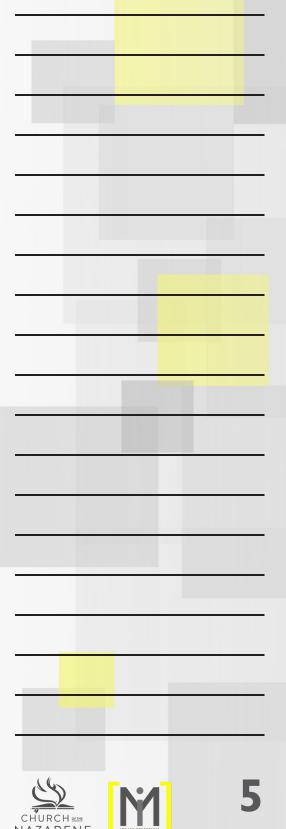
"O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man!" (Nehemiah I:II, NRSV)

For days he mourned and wept, but not only did he grieve, but he also cried out to God. He didn't wallow in the depth of his pain, but he fasted and prayed to God. He realized that God alone could help him in this circumstance.

While praying Nehemiah became acutely aware of God's plan and then he began to pray that God's plan would find success. Nehemiah recognized that the plan was not of human origin, but was God's desire that was revealed to him. Interestingly, he didn't pray for the whole plan, but just for the next step. He would have to broach the subject of helping Jerusalem with his boss. He began to wonder how this would go over. He didn't know, but he had to ask God to pave the way and for this man in authority to have compassion on him. This was the first step in the completion of God's plan.

We discover two significant leadership principles from Nehemiah in this text, and therefore he becomes a mentor for all of us.

First of all, great leaders must take time to pray. No matter the gifting or the skills, without intentional time in prayer, study of the word and spiritual formation, we will not be able to reflect Christ in this world. It is in time alone with God that we are shaped and molded into the image of Christ. When we are in Christ's presence we recognize our own weaknesses and learn greater dependence upon God. Jesus himself had to take time away, go to the mountains, and pray.



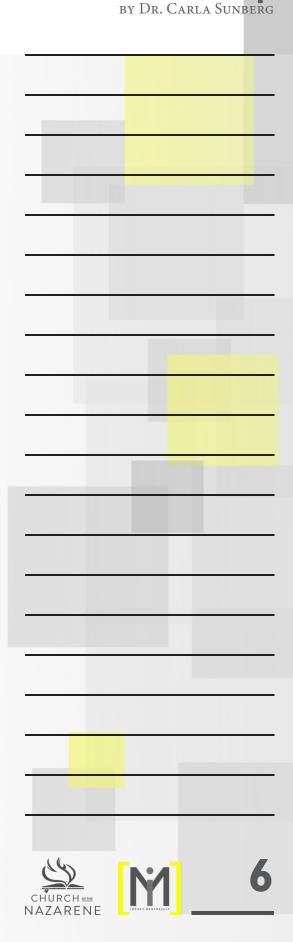
Wayne Cordeiro in his book, The Divine Mentor asks rather poignant questions; "Will we choose to spend quiet, reflective time alone with the Lord? Or will we allow life's pressures to work us into a frazzle? Will we build a sacred enclosure around our roots, or will we allow frenzied foot traffic to erode our spiritual roots and send us crashing to the earth?" The temptation is to allow the tyranny of the urgent to rule the day, but there should be nothing more urgent than spending time with God, learning from the mentors in the Bible, and becoming prepared for the journey. We don't have all the answers to the challenges that we are facing and that's why we need the Lord.

Cordeiro goes on to say.

"Our shortage of wisdom keeps us seeking Him and prevents us from becoming hardhearted. It keeps us humble, malleable, correctable, changeable, and transformable, so that with each new day we might increasingly reflect His image."

What we learn from mentors is that great leaders take prayer very seriously and realize that without the leadership of God in their lives they can do nothing. In our fast-paced world some make claim that taking time to pray is a waste of time. How in the world do we measure prayer? We don't -- because it's not about 'doing' but about 'be-ing,' or, becoming. Nehemiah spent an extended period of time in God's presence before he ever took action. This is what our Biblical mentor teaches us. We, too, must learn to spend extended periods of time in God's holy presence before we jump into the business to which God has called us.

The second thing we learn from Nehemiah is that spiritual leaders take things one step at a time. Faith and dependence upon God become hallmarks of a spiritual leader. One doesn't have to see the final picture, but learn day by day, through step by step dependence upon God. While God may have given Nehemiah a vision to complete the reconstruction of the walls, Nehemiah also realized that there would need to be a plan to simply get to Jerusalem.



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He would never be able to complete the reconstruction without the approval of his boss. Therefore, he didn't spend time praying for the walls to be rebuilt, but he prayed that God would speak to his boss and that his boss would be compassionate with him. This was the immediate need!

Our mentor teaches us that we may not be doing things properly. There are times when we go to God in prayer and instead of being sensitive to what we need to do in little steps, we pray for the whole big picture. There is a place for praying for the big picture, but there is a need to also depend on God's leadership in the little steps that need to be taken to get to the big picture. Great leaders understand and follow God's leadership of the small actions which must be taken to get to the big picture. When we only focus on the big picture, we tend to get frustrated when it doesn't come to fruition. Sometimes the little things seem insignificant in the big picture -- but are they? No, we learn from Nehemiah that a great leader understands the little things and is willing to invest time, energy and prayer in these small items that become the building blocks to the big picture.

Prayer and God's guidance in the little steps -- that's where we need to begin! Neither of those two probably sound very "successful" in the world's eyes, but serving in the kingdom is not about being "successful" by human standards, and kingdom leadership begins by understanding this, and knowing that the principles which are followed are not necessarily of this world.

"The journey to a spiritually vital church must begin within your own heart. After that, you can explore and implement ... best-practice strategies you've read about and pursue insights inspired by the other research findings. But if you get that order reversed relying on strategies before working on your heart beware. You cannot reproduce in others what you are not producing in yourself. The main thing you need to do the one thing you must do is fully within your reach. You must surrender all. Everything. ""

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This is why we must turn to the Word of God to find our Divine Mentors. We do this to help us:

- Find the help we need when difficult tests come.
- Walk with both the heroes and the fools of the Bible we learn from both!
- Start thinking like God thinks, so we can respond as God responds.
- · Avoid costly errors and so avoid decades of misery.

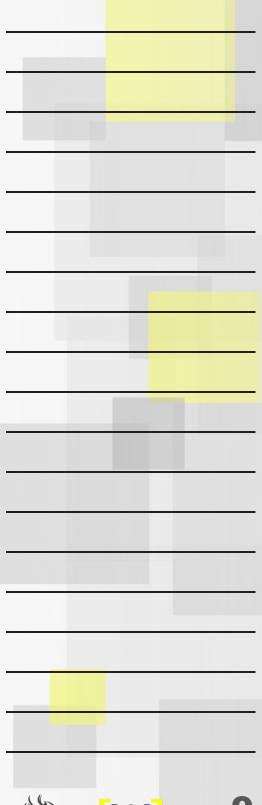
To learn from the Biblical mentors, we need to create sacrespace in our lives.

"Will we choose to spend quiet, reflective time alone with the Lord? Or will we allow life's pressures to work us into a frazzle? Will we build a sacred enclosure around our roots, or will we allow frenzied foot traffic to erode our spiritual roots and send us crashing to the earth?" (Cordeiro, Loc. 257)

None of us has the wisdom that we need for life:

- •"Our shortage of wisdom keeps us seeking Him and prevents us from becoming hardhearted. It keeps us humble, malleable, correctable, changeable, and transformable, so that with each new day we might increasingly reflect His image." (Loc. 347)
- "If Consequences has a back-end price, Wisdom has a frontend price. It requires discipline, obedience, consistency, and above all else, time. Then it gladly pours on you its promised tremendous riches." (Loc 392)

One of the biggest mistakes that I find people make is expecting a mentor to be the one who does all the work. You cannot be a passive participant in the relationship. If you are looking for mentors in the Bible, you will have to do the work:







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- "Only you can keep yourself spiritually healthy by feeding yourself. No one can do it for you by proxy." (Loc 561)
- "Neglecting devotions will cause you more problems, more quickly, than just about anything you can name. Spending unrushed time alone with God in His Word releases a fountain of refreshment from the very core of your being." (Loc 739)

I have NEVER had a pastor or leader surrender their credentials who also told me that they were spending regular time in the Word and learning from the Divine Mentors.

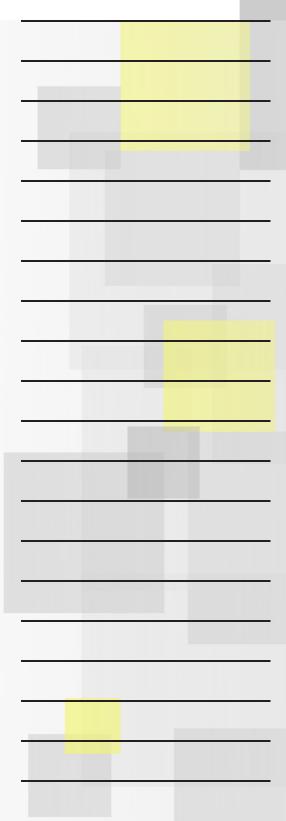
We must learn to listen to God's voice. How do we do this? Through spending time daily with the Lord. Commit to the 20/20 plan. This is 20 minutes in the Word, and 20 minutes of journaling that which God is speaking to you.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

"When you miss your devotions one day, you notice. When you miss them two days, your spouse and kids notice. And when you miss them three days, the world notices." (Loc 978)

Bring five things every day - individually, or in a group.

- The Bible, the only book in the universe that God promises to inspire.
- 2. A pen, because the Holy Spirits is going to tell you to underline
- 3. A journal, because you want to take notes on what the He says and this gives you wisdom beyond your lifetime.
- 4. A reading plan.
- 5. Your daily planner, because when you're reading the Bible things will pop into your mind.







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We are invited to delight in God's word on a daily basis.

- · The Bible Is the Only Book God Ever Promised to Inspire
- The Bible is the Only Book Where All the Divine Mentors are Present
- · God Promises Specifically to Bless the Readers of the Bible
- The Bible is the Only Book That Will Live Forever.

We are invited into the University of the Holy Spirit.

- Not a program but a process
- The Invitation is ours to accept or deny

When we journal we use the pattern of SOAP.

- Scripture
- Observation
- Application
- Prayer

When we begin to do this on a daily basis, the Divine Mentors will speak to us day after day and lead us into a deeper walk with Jesus Christ. I began doing this more than ten years ago now. I was teaching many new believers and knew that I had to be a good example for them. I began posting my journal entries on the church website, because we were all following the same reading plan.

A few years later, I became a District Superintendent and thought that I didn't have to be accountable in that way anymore. The Lord challenged me and asked me why I thought a DS didn't need to be accountable! I began a blog,

"Reflecting the Image"



where I began posting my journal entries in 2011. I have now posted over 2300 entries from what I have learned in the Word. This has changed my life. The people in the Bible have become real to me, as has the world of the Bible.





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CONSOLIDATE

Take 20 minutes and read Philippians I-3. While reading, ask God to reveal something to you from this section of Scripture.

Next, take 20 minutes to journal on this passage.

Scripture: Which portion of the scripture spoke to you? It could be one verse, or several. Write them out.

Observation: What is it that you observed in this verse or verses?

Application: What is it that you have learned from this verse or verses and how does it apply to your life today?

Prayer: What should you pray for, considering what you have learned from the Scripture.

Come back together as a group and report what it is that the Lord said to you through the passage. Give opportunity for each person to report.

CHANGE

- What do you feel that you have learned from this lesson today?
- How has what we have learned apply to your ministry situation?
- Now that you have practiced how to use the Scriptures as your Divine Mentor, I encourage you to make a commitment to try out this practice for the next 30 days.
- Ask God to help you put this into practice in your life.

