



Mentoring In Christ

Discussion #6: Intentional Relationships

GOAL: To help a student identify and build on three key relationships in their lives (those who mentor you, peers who encourage you, and those you invest in).

For The Mentor

What do we mean by this this concept?

As believers we are not just saved from our sin, we're saved into a family. Within God's family we are called into three types of relationships: 1) mentors who challenge and teach you and keep you accountable, 2) peers who encourage you and share life with you regularly, and 3) those you invest in and challenge in following Christ. A healthy follower of Jesus should be pursuing healthy relationships in each category. This discussion is designed to help students identify what a healthy looks like and gives some great discussion points about how to pursue these relationships and not just live by default.

Helpful passages?

- **Acts 2:42-47** – One of the most famous but also most powerful pictures of gospel community in all of the scriptures. This passage becomes a basis for how we begin to teach about the relationships God has called us into. Upon responding to Christ, we see this group of people dedicate themselves to one another and to the leadership of the apostles. A great question to ask with this passage is simply, "What kind of relationships do you see happening here? In this passage, we see the apostles are teaching (mentors), they are meeting together (peer), and God is adding to their number daily (investing in new believers).
- **2 Timothy 2:2 & 2 Timothy 3:10-15** – These passages, especially verses 2:2 really sum up well what we're after in being mentored and investing in others. We see Paul serving as a mentor to Timothy. We also see Paul challenging Timothy to pass on to others what he has learned from Paul. He is not simply to pass those ideas onto others, but to expect them to pass these ideas onto others. There's this chain of mentoring relationships developing. In chapter 3, Paul just confirms for Timothy the confidence he has in what he's taught Timothy and how he's going to follow through in what he's been taught by the mentors in his life.
- **Hebrews 10:24-25** – The challenge of this passage is for peer relationships. We are to be an encouragement to one another, to "consider" or think ahead about how we can help each other in following Christ. This is the kind of brother and sister types of friendships we're to have.
- **Matthew 28:18-20** – A great passage for all three relationships, but especially focused on investing. Christ's challenge to his people in following him is to help others follow him. We are to be disciples who make disciples. This is a call to all who are following Jesus, not simply the pastors and leaders or those gifted in teaching. We all are to be investing.
- **Romans 15:1-7** – This is a great challenge for those who see themselves as mature and strong in Christ. Often times, 'mature' people tend to not want to lower themselves to be around those who are less mature. Paul would say that to be strong or mature IS to invest in others and serve them. This is a huge sign of maturity in Christ.

Why this matters?

The gospel message is not simply that God saves us from our sin but that God saves us into a family and for a purpose. Both of these key ideas are seen in this intentional relationships discussion. In following Christ, God's plan has never been that we are to be on our own to figure things out. He's eager to put people into our lives who will teach and challenge us. A humble person receives this teaching and seeks it out to learn and grow. A proud person says, "I don't need to learn anything, I know enough, I'll be ok."

This discussion also challenges our tendency to focus only on our friendships and not the investments God has called us to make in other people. Students tend to really value the idea of friendship and need friends. They are not always valuing the most important things in their friends (they focus on fun, or like

interests, or someone who helps their social credibility), focusing often and shallow things rather than the things God would have them focus on (being a spiritual encouragement, building each other up on Christ). Students also tend to think of their relationships in a mostly self-serving ways. They ask, “What do I get out of this friendship?” Christ would challenge us to ask, “What can I give to this friendship?” In asking this unselfish question, investing in the lives of others and opening ourselves up to friendships with those who are not ‘like us’ or even who are ‘messy’ becomes more visible and seen now as something God might be asking us to do.

An approach for discussion:

I think a great way to approach this discussion would be to hand draw a little chart to help your students think about their board of directors, their partners, and their projects (See the chart below). It is always helpful to ask them to think about people who might be in these categories and evaluate these relationships before you begin to study the Bible and talk about where God might want to grow those relationships. The table will give you the best conversation piece and help students to think about actual people in their lives. A great goal for the discussion is that your mentee can identify one or two things to work on in each relationship.

Sketch out a chart like this on a piece of paper for you to fill out with your mentee for their life. You might want to fill it out for your life and present your chart as an example.

	Who are they? <i>(Write their names down)</i>	Your current relationship? <i>(Evaluate the health of your current relationship. How much do you see the person? Is it purposeful time? Etc)</i>	Ways to grow the relationship and influence? <i>(Brainstorms one or two things that the mentee could do to deepen the relationship and help it to be more productive)</i>
My Board of Directors <i>(3-4 people in my life who are more mature in their relationship with Christ and would be committed to giving me godly advice and training)</i>			
My Partners <i>(2-4 people who are at a similar place in their relationship with Christ who would be a great spiritual encouragement to my life as someone dealing with similar challenges and goals)</i>			
My Projects <i>(1-3 people who don't know Christ or who are younger in Christ who I would like to help follow Christ and be a teacher and encouragement to.)</i>			

Discussion with Mentee

Before you read

- We’re going to talk about 3 different relationships today (Mentors, partners, and projects). Before we get into the Bible, I want you to tell me about 3 kinds of relationships in your life. Draw the chart and have them fill in the first two columns (List some names for he category, have them evaluate those relationships...or simply share with you about them). **NOTE: As he/she share names and thoughts, you make notes on the chart about what is said.**

Passage(s): Read & Discuss

Read: 2 Timothy 2:2 & 3:10-15.

- From 2 Timothy 3:10-15, how would you describe Paul's relationship with Timothy? What does Paul tell us about that relationship?
- How would you describe or explain to someone what Paul is challenging Timothy to do in 2 Timothy 2:2?
- Why is having someone mentor you or teach you so important to your relationship with Christ?
- When have you experienced a relationship where someone had invested significantly in you like Paul did with Timothy?
- Have you ever tried to pass on to someone else what you have learned about following Christ? What was good about that experience? What was difficult about that experience?
- Why is investing in others so helpful in our relationship with Christ? What does this kind of investment change or grow in us?

Read: Hebrews 10:24-25

- What does the phrase, 'consider how' mean? Explain what it means to 'consider how'?
- What is the writer of Hebrews encouraging us to "consider how" to do? How would you put this challenge into your own words?
- Why are these kinds of relationships/friendships so vital to our faith in Christ?
- Have you ever had a friend that was like this with you? What did they do that really helped you want to follow Christ more?

The concept to get across

The goal of this discussion is to make sure your student understands the importance of each relationship and then can look at relationships in their own lives to pursue. I wouldn't spend too much time on the Biblical discussion unless there is push back from the student in not valuing one of these kinds of relationships. The work of this discussion is in the practice of being intentional. Students tend to have the opportunity for all of these kind of relationships, but they don't take the opportunities in the relationships God has given them or they're not intentional in any way. The focus of your time is not simply making sure he/she gets the concept but more on helping them practically think about how to pursue and deepen these relationships.

Why this matters

- Go back to the chart you filled out before you read the scriptures. How do you think God would evaluate your current mentoring relationships, partner relationships, and project relationships? Where would he celebrate health? What kind of growth do you think he wants to see?
- What are some of the barriers to helping these relationships grow? (*maybe talk about them one at a time...mentor first, then partners, then investing*).
- Do you think valuing this goal of being in mentor, partner, and project relationships could change the way we go about making friends?
- Finish filling in the chart. What would be 1-2 simple things you could focus on in the next few months to help deepen each of these relationships (pick 1-2 for mentors, 1-2 for partners, 1-2 for projects)?

Encouraged Response

A few responses that might make sense for a person:

Filling out the chart with specific, practical, and attainable steps to take would be the most helpful response to this discussion. Here's a few things you might help students consider:

- Beginning to seek out 1-2 more mentors in their lives. Most students have never really sought out a mentor. A big step would be for them to seek out more mentorship in their lives.
- Begin praying for God to provide each of these types of relationships in his/her life.
- Seeking to attend small group more consistently or do something more consistently with their Christian friends that could deepen their relationships in Christ.

- If you are working with a high school student, the mentee might want to begin mentoring on Wednesday Night to begin investing in someone else.

More Bible To Read On Your Own:

- 2 Timothy – This is a great book that focuses on the last words a mentor would give to a mentee. This is a great book to discuss the idea of legacy and being mentored to mentor others.
- Romans 15:1-7 – This is a great passage on the responsibility those who are mature to invest and serve the week. This really deals with how we even thinking about our friendships. We tend to think about friendships and relationships based on what we get out of them rather than what we give to them.

Evidence of Integration

The goal of these discussions is not to get information across as much as helping someone integrate this into their lives. A few things you could look for over time with a person as evidences of the fact that he/she is translating this topic into his/her relationship with Christ:

- They are consistently pursuing you (and others who they have as mentors) for spiritual conversation. They are starting to be the one asking you questions because they are eager to learn or receive your feedback on life decisions.
- You see a hanging out more consistently with someone who is also growing in Christ. When you see a small group of friends (2-4) who really do become dedicated to helping each other grow in Christ, you see the evidence of this in all of their lives. And they tend to want to be together a lot.
- They are starting to tell stories of people they are investing in and things God is doing as they reach out and serve others.