

The Lost Art of Mentoring **Lessons from the Life of John Mark**

The Biblical Necessity of Mentoring

Matthew 28:18-20

The Story of John Mark

Acts 12:12-17 (before A.D. 36)

Acts 12:25 (~48)

Acts 13:13 (early-mid July 48)

Acts 15:36-41 (spring 50)

Colossians 4:10 (fall 61)

Philemon 24 (fall 61)

1 Peter 5:13 (spring 65)

2 Timothy 4:11 (fall 67)

Lessons for Mentors

1. You don't have to do it all yourself.

John Mark was not mentored by just one man. He had Paul, Barnabas, Peter, and the churches in Jerusalem and Antioch. You don't have to be everything to the people you mentor; God has given you the resources of the Body of Christ to assist you—and them—in the task.

2. Use your strengths.

Paul was a hard-charging, fast-moving evangelist and church planter.

Barnabas was an encourager willing to take as long as necessary. It's possible that Paul was wrong not to take John Mark with him, but it's also possible that *both men were right*. In any case, Barnabas saw the opportunity to swing into action as an encourager, and he took it. Use your gifts in your mentoring.

3. Forgive failure. Never give up.

No matter whether Paul was right or wrong in Acts 15, he encouraged the churches to receive the wounded brother. Later on, Paul also recognized John Mark's value as a fellow-worker and was happy to use him in the ministry. Never cut your protégé off from the help and healing of the church—in fact, encourage him to go to the church, and the church to help him—and never give up on him developing into a valuable fellow-worker.

4. Do the next thing.

There is a grand plan for your protégé's life, but God knows it and you don't. There's nothing wrong with strategic planning, but don't forget that it's really not up to you. The most important question is simple: "What do I do *today*?" Just keep doing the next thing.

Actually Doing It: 3 Ps

1. Point of Contact

You can't mentor without a point of contact. Find an area where you work together, or where you can invite your protégé into your life, or where he can invite you into his.

With John Mark, the point of contact was doing the work of the ministry. As you seek to mentor up-and-coming leaders, you can find an easy point of contact in the same way. With clubbers, start with something simple: what are you about? My AWANA mentor, Johnny McQuaig, was about building bikes and doing jail ministry. We fixed my bike together, fixed my brother's bike together, and talked about the Lord, and then we'd go out for ice cream. Later, when I was old enough, he took me with him on Sunday to the church services at the jail. I am about reading and writing, hiking, and martial arts, so I often use those pursuits as vehicles to invest in those I mentor. What are you about? Make a list, and consider how you can use what you already have to develop your relationships.

Don't neglect the chance to meet your protégé on his turf. If a clubber wants you to hear a song or watch a YouTube video, that's an opportunity. It may be a really awful song, but listen to it, all the way through. Find the lyrics. Talk about it. Ask what Jesus would think of the song....

2. Payload

Much of what you deliver in a mentoring relationship is more about your character than any agenda you might bring to the table. That said, it often helps to consider what specific things you want to deliver in the mentoring relationship. For example, you might have a leader who excels at building friendships with the clubbers but is terrible at maintaining discipline, so you choose to focus on helping with that deficiency. Or you might have a clubber who lies habitually, or dresses immodestly, or bullies the other clubbers. Sometimes it pays to just be there, and let the issues arise naturally. Other times, it's a good idea to be proactive. Ask God for wisdom, and if it seems wise to develop an agenda, do it.

3. Person

Even if you have an agenda, the entire mentoring relationship is still driven, most of all, by your character. You can't give what you don't have; you must *be* the sort of person that you want your protégé to become. To that end, you should be on your knees before the Lord every day, asking Him to shape you into that person, so that you can be an example to others.