

MENTORING GUIDE

We believe mentoring to be an effective way of 'moving people in following Christ'. We can read God's Word together, have deeper conversations, address individual issues, answer lingering questions, and pray for each other in meaningful ways.

Here are a couple quotes from the book, *Faith for Exiles*. In the book, they have a section on mentoring which we've included below. We love how they combine 'mentoring' with 'wisdom' and believe it is a helpful way forward for us when it comes to our approach on mentoring.

*"Intergenerational relationships have to be more than 'Oh, it's so nice when the young people and the old folks get together.' **Mentoring is not about being cute. It's about getting wise...** We've got to wade beyond shallow, heart-warming intergenerational fellowship into a deep well of intentional mentoring."*

*"One of our definitions of wisdom is 'pattern recognition.' Someone who's been working for fifteen, twenty, thirty-five years simply has a deeper well of patterns to reference and recognise... **In mentoring, wisdom – pattern recognition – is passed on and provoked through meaningful intergenerational relationships.**"*

Before you get going, a couple practical tips to consider:

- Firstly, **set a time** when you will meet together. We've found a setting a regular time where you meet each week, fortnight or month, is best. This includes setting a **length of time**, which doesn't need to be strictly adhered to, but it helps gives permission to finish if the conversation is going long.
- It is important to **set expectations** and to actually verbalise these. Ask what the other person is hoping to get out of it. Define what your time is going to look like.
- This includes deciding if you want to approach it **formally** or **informally**. A more formal approach may include having a fixed set of questions or working through the Bible or set material together. A more informal approach may be a more relaxed and casual conversation but has the danger of remaining at surface-level and not achieving the desired results. Most likely it will be a combination of both, but it is important to put forth the 'formal' element so it's less awkward to initiate in your time together.
- Ask two key questions
 1. **How can I help this person become who they are meant to be?**
What are their unique gifts or character traits that I can encourage to grow or be used?
 2. **What do I have to give?**
What are the gifts, experiences, or strong character traits that I can share and help nurture in the other?

This will help give shape to how you could spend your time together. If you have strong knowledge of the Bible and believe the person you're mentoring should know how to read the Bible, then read the Bible together. Maybe you're a good listener and encourager, and you're able to help set some goals and keep the young person accountable to those goals.

Mentoring involves some practice on your end to find out how you best operate in that environment. It is also something that takes time and it can be months, sometimes years, until you see the fruit. And sometimes then, you may not see it. This isn't always about successfully changing people. This is about us being faithful to Jesus, serving and loving the people in our care, and doing our best to lead them towards Him.

We are here to help you in any way we can, so let us know how you're going, if you have any questions, and we will check-in from time to time to follow-up and see how we can be praying for you! Below are a couple resources to check out, so don't forget those!

Blessings,

Joel

Checking-In Questions

These questions were previously developed for grow groups / accountability groups. They are helpful if you want to go a more informal approach, as you can push the conversation deeper. At times you might only use one or two, as each answer will likely lead to further conversation.

UPWARDS

How is your relationship with God going? Rate it on a scale of 1-10.

What has God been speaking to you?

What have you been learning?

INWARDS

What sins have you been struggling with?

What is positively changing within you?

How can I be praying for you?

OUTWARDS

Who are you helping to following Jesus?

How are you living God's mission each day?

What are you enjoying about your ministry in church? What are you struggling with?

Structure from South Barwon

This is how South Barwon have structured their mentoring with their interns. This can obviously be adapted for whatever situation you are in but gives a helpful insight into how an hour could be spent.

- General catch up (10 minutes)
 - Include encouragement for personal time in God's Word
 - Any areas of accountability required
- Bible reading and prayer (20 minutes)
 - Reading through a book (section) of the Bible
 - I suggest beginning with a gospel, or one of the shorter NT letters
 - Preparation can be minimal, mostly a discussion on what comes out of the passage
 - Remember application
- Discussion on training material (20 minutes)
 - An important part of this meeting
 - Encourages accountability for covering the training material
 - A discussion on what is learnt and how to apply it
- Feedback on ministry involvement (10 minutes)
 - Particularly focused on what is being learnt, and any struggles

Mentoring in Digital Babylon

Chapter from *Faith for Exiles: 5 Ways for a New Generation to Follow Jesus in Digital Babylon*

By David Kinnaman & Mark Matlock (2019)

In order for us to make and to become resilient disciples in our accelerated, complex society, we're going to have to find ways of improving the outcomes of our work together.

Sometimes that means creating new models, and other times it means refreshing ancient pathways through modern life. Take mentoring, for example. It is both timeless and timely. Here are a few reflections on how to make mentoring work in our new context.

First, we have to consider what we're trying to convey through the mentoring process. More than ever, it can't just be life lessons and pithy maxims. (Young disciples can get Instagram Scripture memes without our help.) They need wisdom from God's Word.

At one point in his life, Mark wrote down every biblical proverb on an index card and sorted the cards in thematic piles. As he did so, he discovered that each proverb falls into one of seven broad categories. These are the seven marks of a wise person, according to Proverbs:

1. A wise person trusts in God.
2. A wise person walks in healthy relationships.
3. A wise person seeks good counsel.
4. A wise person uses words wisely.
5. A wise person exercises self-control.
6. A wise person manages their resources.
7. Ultimately, a wise person lives in peace.

As a mentor (or parent or young Christian), this list is a good measuring stick for your life and perhaps for that of your young mentee. Here are two big ideas for how to grow these qualities through mentoring friendships.

Three Paths to Wisdom

No matter how we define wisdom, experience is an essential part of acquiring it – which is why we expect people to grow in wisdom as they age (though that isn't always the case). While there is no substitute for experience, we believe a mentor can amplify and accelerate the wisdom their mentee acquires by intentionally leveraging every experience to become a pathway to greater wisdom. This transfer of wisdom between generations is more important than ever because, unless we intentional, young Christians will be raised by their devices and algorithms rather than by us.

The three main pathways for wisdom within the context of mentoring are reflection, selection, and projection. (One important aspect of wise mentoring is knowing which pathway to take.) Reflection is an opportunity to gain wisdom from what has already happened – from the past. Selection deals with the present and offers chances for a mentee to choose what is wise even as their experience is unfolding. And projection is the future path, where a young disciple can explore what might occur and acquire wisdom for what is to come.

Reflection

Reflection is the pathway of learning from the past. When Jesus asks his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” he is asking them to reflect on their past experiences among the crowds. The disciples offer their observations, and then Jesus asks, “Who do *you* say that I am?” leading them to answer the question for themselves (see Matt. 16:13-16; Mark 8:27-29; Luke 9:18-20). This is reflection at its very best – and it is a path too rarely taken.

Effective, wisdom-acquiring reflection demands that we stop what we are doing to think about what we have done. It takes time and is often uncomfortable, because we often learn more from our mistakes than our successes. A wise mentor helps their mentee to pause and ask, “What happened? What did I notice about myself and others? Where did I see God at work? Where did I work with or against him? What do these choices mean for who God is calling me to be and what he is calling me to do?”

If pattern recognition is one way to define wisdom, then reflection is the process of identifying patterns from the past so they are recognisable now and in the future.

Selection

If reflection looks back and projection looks ahead, selection is concerned with becoming wise here and now. A good mentor helps their mentee zoom out from the present choice that must be made to see it as part of a larger opportunity for growth and development. This is also when a mentor can share their own experience to advise the choice the young disciple must make – because it *is* possible, and more efficient, to learn from someone else’s experience. As Ben Franklin pithily wrote in his *Poor Richard’s Almanack*, “Experience keeps a dear school, but Fools will learn in no other.”

Don’t let your mentee be a fool, unless they insist on it. Be generous with your experiences. Share your hard-won wisdom. As you guide your mentee through selection, help them notice patterns and predict outcomes. But don’t just give them the answer as if you were the answer key in the back of a math book. Show your work. Let them in on the secret of how you got where you are. Then walk with them as they make their own selection – even if it is a bad one.

Projection

Projection is the future pathway, where a mentor helps a mentee “project” into a situation or a relationship they have not yet been in. This might be done by giving them a task, engaging with them in a simulation, role-playing, or creating a story or case study wherein they are able to react with little real-world consequence. Projection is a scrimmage game in which everyone on the field is on the same team, even if they’re wearing different jerseys. The athlete builds skills and instincts they couldn’t develop any other way, and the coach gets a glimpse, *before* the big game, of how the athlete will play under pressure.

Jesus did this with parables. He projected his listeners into a story and allowed them to interact with it – thereby showing them deeper truth about his kingdom or their own hearts. Or think about the time he fell asleep on a boat during a storm as a carefully crafted simulation to see how his disciples would respond with his physical presence – something they would need to do after his death and resurrection. The disciples panicked, still not convinced they could fully trust the power of God over all forces both natural and supernatural. Jesus’ act of calming the wind and the waves was a demonstration of that power, bolstering their trust in him and courage for what was to come.

How can you help your young disciple practice wisdom for the future?

Reciprocal Mentoring

Another critical perspective to embrace when it comes to effective mentoring in digital Babylon is that it can no longer be a top-down, older-to-younger process. Mentoring today has the potential to shape not only the young disciple but also the older Christ follower. This is especially true when the friendship is mutual rather than hierarchical. The reality is that we in the older generations need knowledge and, yes, wisdom from younger believers, just as they need these from us.

This isn’t the case just because young people know more about technology than older adults. The reason is actually much deeper than that. We believe that exiles are not just incidental; they must be *instrumental* in shaping the church (that means all of us) in digital Babylon. Daniel wasn’t just marking time in Babylon; God used him to propel his people’s faithfulness. Esther wasn’t just a sideshow; she literally saved her people. Peter called believers in the early church exiles not because doing so was clever but because God uses exiles. And if that’s true (it is), and you are not really all that comfortable with living in exile, maybe you have a thing or two to learn from people who are.

Think about today’s young people. They are smart, connected, ambitious, creative, and much more. We are absolutely amazed at how quickly our kids learn things from YouTube and other sources. They are often more informed – and wiser – than we realise. They don’t know everything, and we need to learn together to practice reflection, selection,

and projection (among other things). But we'd better be ready to admit that we need the next generation of exiles just as much as we hope they sense the need for us.

We even have a name for this kind of give-and-take: reciprocal mentoring.

Reciprocal mentoring opens a free flow of wisdom from one generation to the next and back again.

It offers older adults the chance to learn new tools and frameworks.

It projects mentors into new situations that require new or adapted patterns.

It helps older generations develop empathy and new insights into the experiences of the young.

It gives us tools to map the contours of a social landscape that is no longer "Christian."

It generates courage to have difficult conversations with people we disagree with.

It helps us to lead with love in our relationships with those inside and outside the church.

It offers a framework and a passion for engaging the world.

It shines a light on a mentor's box so they can think outside of it.

It keeps the mentor humble so they can continue their own hero's journey.

A relationship of reciprocal mentoring isn't quick and clean. Toes will be stepped on. Egos will be wounded. Crosses will be taken up. But:

"If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it." (Matt 16:24-25)