THE DAILY BREAD

The Mission of the Apostles



Mentoring Other Men in Faith

A FORMATION BOOK BY

Kendall Peterson

The Everyday Apostle

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Mentoring Other Men in Faith

A Practical Guide to Spiritual Mentorship

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INTRODUCTION

Where Do I Even Start

A man becomes convinced that he should mentor other men in the faith, that he has something worth passing on, that the younger men around him need an older man to guide them. And then he faces the practical wall that stops most would-be mentors cold: he has no idea how to actually do it. How does he find a man to mentor? How does he start the relationship without it being awkward? What do they actually do when they meet? How does he guide a younger man through his real struggles? How does he challenge and correct without driving him away? These practical questions, unanswered, leave many a man who wants to mentor doing nothing at all.

This book answers those questions. It is a practical guide to spiritual mentorship, the actual how of mentoring another man in the faith, from finding someone to mentor through building the relationship, structuring the time together, guiding through real issues, offering honest challenge, handling the hard seasons, and finally letting go as the younger man matures. It assumes the conviction that mentoring matters and supplies the practical method, the concrete skills and approaches of effective spiritual mentorship. The aim is to take a man from wanting to mentor to actually doing it, equipping him with the practical tools to take a younger man under his wing and help him grow, so that his good intention becomes a real mentoring relationship that forms another man in the faith.

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another. — Proverbs 27:17

We will begin with how to actually start, finding a man to mentor and beginning the relationship. We will take up the building of trust, the foundation on which all mentoring rests. We will consider what mentoring actually involves, the substance of what a mentor does. We will learn the central skill of drawing a man out rather than lecturing him. We will take up honest challenge and correction, the harder side of mentoring. We will address the difficult seasons, when a man one mentors struggles or fails. And we will see how good mentoring aims finally at the younger man's growth into maturity and his becoming, himself, a mentor to others.

CHAPTER ONE

How to Actually Start

Finding a Man and Beginning

The first practical hurdle in mentoring is simply starting, finding a man to mentor and beginning the relationship, and this is where most would-be mentors get stuck, unsure how to find someone or how to begin without awkwardness. The conviction to mentor remains theoretical until a man actually starts with a real person, and so overcoming the initial hurdle of finding someone and beginning is the necessary first step. Understanding how to actually start, how to find a man to mentor and initiate the relationship naturally, moves a man from wanting to mentor to actually doing it.

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. — Ecclesiastes 4:9

Look Around You

The first step in finding a man to mentor is simply to look around at the younger men already in one's life, for the man to mentor is usually not a stranger to be sought out but someone already present, in one's parish, workplace, family, or circle. A man need not launch a search for a mentee; he need only look at the younger men already around him, the one at his parish who seems hungry, the younger colleague, the nephew or family friend, the young man in his circle who lacks guidance, and recognize among them the one he might mentor. The man to mentor is usually hiding in plain sight, already present in a man's existing relationships and circles, needing only to be noticed and taken under one's wing. This looking around at the younger men already in one's life, rather than searching for a stranger, is the natural way to find a man to mentor, for mentoring grows best out of existing relationship and proximity. Look around you at the younger men already in your life, in your parish, work, family, and circle, and the man to mentor is usually found not by searching for a stranger but by noticing someone already present who is hungry for guidance and whom you might take under your wing.

Start With Relationship, Not a Program

The way to begin mentoring is usually not to propose a formal mentoring program but to simply build relationship, to spend time with a younger man, take an interest in him, and let the mentoring grow naturally out of the deepening relationship. Many would-be mentors are paralyzed by the thought of a formal arrangement, imagining they must propose a structured mentoring program and feeling awkward about it, but mentoring usually begins far more naturally, through simply building a relationship, spending time together, taking a genuine interest, and letting the guidance grow organically as the relationship deepens. A man can begin to mentor a younger man without ever formally proposing it, simply by investing in the relationship, being available, taking an interest,

and gradually offering the guidance that a trusting relationship invites. This starting with relationship rather than a program removes the awkwardness that stops many would-be mentors and allows the mentoring to grow naturally out of genuine friendship. Start with relationship, not a program, building a genuine relationship with a younger man and letting the mentoring grow naturally out of it rather than proposing a formal arrangement, and a man begins to mentor without the awkwardness that paralyzes, letting the guidance emerge organically from a deepening relationship.

Make the First Move

Finally, starting to mentor requires a man to make the first move, to take the initiative in reaching out to a younger man, for the mentoring relationship rarely begins unless the older man initiates it. Younger men who need mentoring rarely seek it out, often not knowing they need it or not daring to ask, and so the mentoring relationship usually depends on the older man taking the initiative, reaching out, inviting the younger man to coffee, taking an interest, making the first move. The man who waits for a younger man to approach him will usually wait in vain, for the initiative belongs to the older man, and the would-be mentor must overcome his own hesitation and simply reach out, beginning the relationship by taking the first step. This making of the first move, the older man's initiative in reaching out, is essential to starting a mentoring relationship, for without it the relationship that could form will not. Make the first move, taking the initiative to reach out to a younger man rather than waiting for him to approach, and a man starts the mentoring relationship that would otherwise never begin, for the initiative belongs to the older man, and the would-be mentor must overcome his hesitation and take the first step.

CHAPTER TWO

Earning His Trust

The Foundation of All Mentoring

All mentoring rests on trust, for a younger man will open up and receive guidance only from a mentor he trusts, and so the building of trust is the foundation on which the whole mentoring relationship is built. Before a mentor can guide, challenge, or form a younger man, he must earn the trust that makes the younger man willing to be guided, and this trust is built, not assumed. Understanding how to earn a younger man's trust, the foundation of all effective mentoring, is essential to a relationship that will bear real fruit.

Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel. — Proverbs 27:9

Trust Is Built Over Time

The first thing to understand about trust is that it is built over time, through consistent presence and reliability, and cannot be rushed or assumed, so that a mentor must be patient in earning the trust on which his mentoring will rest. A younger man does not trust a mentor immediately but comes to trust him gradually, as the mentor proves himself reliable, consistent, genuinely caring, and trustworthy over time, so that trust is the fruit of a relationship patiently built rather than something a mentor can claim at the outset. The mentor must therefore be patient, investing in the relationship consistently, showing up reliably, proving himself trustworthy over time, and not expecting the younger man to open up fully before the trust has been earned. This building of trust over time, through consistent presence and proven reliability, is the patient foundational work of mentoring, and the mentor who rushes it or assumes trust he has not earned will find the younger man closed. Trust is built over time, through consistent presence and proven reliability, and cannot be rushed or assumed, so the mentor patiently earns the younger man's trust through a relationship consistently built, knowing that the trust on which all mentoring rests is the fruit of proven reliability over time rather than something claimed at the outset.

Confidentiality and Safety

A crucial element of earning trust is creating a safe and confidential relationship, in which the younger man knows that what he shares will be held in confidence and that he will not be judged, for only in such safety will he open up about his real struggles. A younger man will share his real struggles, failures, and questions only if he trusts that his mentor will hold them in confidence and receive them without judgment or condemnation, and so the mentor must create this safety, keeping absolute confidence, receiving what the younger man shares without shock or judgment, making the relationship a safe place for honesty. The violation of this confidentiality or the judgmental reception of a younger man's honesty destroys the trust and closes the relationship, while the reliable keeping of confidence and the non-judgmental reception of honesty build the safety in which real mentoring happens. The mentor must therefore be absolutely trustworthy with what the younger man shares, keeping confidence and receiving honesty with grace, creating the safe space in which the younger man can be honest. Confidentiality and safety, the keeping of absolute confidence and the non-judgmental reception of honesty, create the safe space in which a younger man will open up about his real struggles, and the mentor builds this safety by being absolutely trustworthy with what is shared, for only in such safety will the honesty that mentoring requires emerge.

Be Real and Vulnerable Yourself

A mentor builds trust not only by receiving the younger man's honesty but by being real and appropriately vulnerable himself, sharing his own struggles and failures, for the mentor who presents himself as perfect is neither trusted nor relatable, while the one who is honest about his own weakness invites honesty in return. A younger man cannot open up to a mentor who seems perfect and invulnerable, for such a mentor is intimidating and unrelatable, and the honesty a mentor hopes to receive is invited by the honesty he himself offers, so that the mentor who appropriately shares his own struggles, failures, and ongoing weaknesses builds the trust and relatability that invite the younger man's openness. This being real and vulnerable, appropriately sharing one's own weakness rather than presenting a false perfection, is essential to building trust, for it makes the mentor relatable, models the honesty the relationship needs, and invites the younger man to be honest in return. The mentor who is real about his own struggles builds a trust and openness that the mentor who feigns perfection never will. Be real and vulnerable yourself, appropriately sharing your own struggles and failures rather than feigning perfection, and a mentor builds the trust and relatability that invite a younger man's honesty, for the mentor who is real about his own weakness models the honesty the relationship needs and invites the openness that mentoring requires.

CHAPTER THREE

What You Actually Do

The Substance of Mentoring

With the relationship started and trust being built, the practical question arises of what a mentor actually does, what the substance of mentoring consists in, what happens in the relationship that forms the younger man. Many would-be mentors are unsure what mentoring actually involves, imagining it requires expertise they lack, when in fact its substance is within the reach of any mature believer. Understanding what a mentor actually does, the concrete substance of mentoring, equips a man to do it rather than remaining paralyzed by uncertainty about what mentoring requires.

Like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God. — 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

Spend Time Together

The most basic substance of mentoring is simply spending time together, for much of what forms a younger man happens not through formal instruction but through the ordinary time spent in a mentor's company, absorbing his example and benefiting from his presence. Mentoring is not primarily a matter of structured lessons but of relationship, and much of its fruit comes simply from the time a younger man spends with his mentor, watching how he lives, absorbing his example, benefiting from his presence and friendship, so that the basic substance of mentoring is the spending of time together. This time need not be highly structured or formal; shared meals, activities done together, ordinary conversation, the simple companionship of an older and younger man, all form the younger man through the mentor's example and presence. The mentor who simply spends regular time with a younger man is already doing much of the substance of mentoring, for the relationship and the example formed in that time are where much of the real formation happens. Spend time together, for much of the substance of mentoring is simply the time a younger man spends in his mentor's company, absorbing his example and benefiting from his presence, and the mentor who spends regular time with a younger man is already doing much of the real work of mentoring, which happens through relationship and example more than through formal instruction.

Share Your Experience and Wisdom

Beyond simply spending time, a mentor shares his experience and wisdom, offering the younger man the benefit of his years, his hard-won lessons, his knowledge of the faith and of life, which the younger man needs and cannot get elsewhere. A mentor has lived longer and learned more, and a central substance of mentoring is the sharing of this experience and wisdom, the offering of what the mentor has learned about the faith, about life, about the struggles the younger man faces, so that the younger man benefits from the mentor's years rather than having to learn everything the hard way himself. This sharing of wisdom need not be a formal lecture but flows naturally in conversation, as the mentor offers his perspective, his experience, his hard-won lessons, in response to the younger man's situations and questions. The mentor who shares his experience and wisdom gives the younger man a priceless benefit, the accumulated learning of an older man, which guides and forms him. Share your experience and wisdom, offering the younger man the benefit of your years and hard-won lessons about faith and life, and a mentor gives a priceless gift, the accumulated learning that guides and forms the younger man and spares him from learning everything the hard way, shared naturally in conversation rather than as formal lecture.

Encourage and Challenge

A mentor both encourages and challenges, offering the younger man the support and affirmation he needs along with the challenge and exhortation that call him higher, for good mentoring involves both the encouragement that builds up and the challenge that stretches. Saint Paul describes mentoring as both encouraging and charging, both building up and calling higher, and effective mentoring holds these together, offering the younger man genuine encouragement and affirmation, which many younger men deeply need, along with the challenge and exhortation that call him to grow, that stretch him, that hold him to a high standard. The mentor who only encourages produces a comfortable but unstretched younger man, while the mentor who only challenges produces a discouraged one; the good mentor holds both together, encouraging and challenging, supporting and stretching, so that the younger man is both built up and called higher. This combination of encouragement and challenge is a central substance of mentoring, forming the younger man through both support and exhortation. Encourage and challenge, offering both the affirmation that builds up and the exhortation that calls higher, and a mentor forms the younger man through both support and challenge, holding together the encouragement that many younger men deeply need with the challenge that stretches them toward growth, for good mentoring both builds up and calls higher.

CHAPTER FOUR

Draw Him Out

Guiding Without Lecturing

A central skill of effective mentoring, and one that distinguishes the good mentor from the poor one, is drawing the younger man out through questions and listening rather than lecturing at him, for a man grows more through being drawn to his own insights than through being told. The instinct of many mentors is to lecture, to pour out their wisdom in monologue, but this is far less effective than the patient drawing-out that helps a younger man reach insights himself. Understanding how to guide without lecturing, drawing a younger man out rather than talking at him, is essential to mentoring that actually forms rather than merely instructs.

An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge. — Proverbs 18:15

The Mentor Who Only Talks

The common failure of mentors is to talk too much, to lecture the younger man, to pour out wisdom in monologue, which is far less effective than it feels, for the younger man learns less from being lectured than the mentor imagines. The mentor who only talks, who treats mentoring as an opportunity to dispense his wisdom in lengthy monologues, often feels he is doing a great deal of good, but the younger man, lectured at, absorbs far less than the mentor thinks and may grow bored, passive, or resistant. Monologue is a poor teacher, for the younger man is a passive recipient rather than an active participant, and much of what is poured out washes over him without taking root; the mentor who only talks mistakes his own satisfaction in sharing for the younger man's growth. Recognizing this common failure, the tendency to lecture rather than engage, is the first step to the better way of drawing the younger man out. The mentor who only talks, lecturing the younger man in monologue, is far less effective than he feels, for the younger man learns little from being lectured at, absorbing far less than the mentor imagines, and recognizing this common failure is the first step to the better way of engaging the younger man rather than talking at him.

Ask More Than You Tell

The better way is to ask more than one tells, to draw the younger man out with questions that help him think, reflect, and reach his own insights, which form him far more deeply than being told. The skilled mentor relies more on questions than on statements, asking the younger man about his situation, his thoughts, his struggles, drawing him out, helping him reflect and reach his own conclusions, rather than simply telling him what to think. This asking more than telling engages the younger man as an active participant, helps him develop his own judgment, and leads him to insights that go deeper for being his own, so that the mentor who asks forms the younger man more effectively than the mentor who tells. The skill lies in asking good questions that draw the younger man out and help him think, guiding him toward insight through his own reflection rather than handing him conclusions, which both forms his judgment and lets the insights take deeper root. Ask more than you tell, drawing the younger man out with questions that help him think and reach his own insights rather than simply telling him what to think, and a mentor forms the younger man more deeply, engaging him as an active participant and leading him to insights that go deeper for being his own, which the mentor who only tells can never achieve.

Let Him Reach the Insight

The deepest formation happens when the younger man reaches an insight himself, guided by the mentor's questions, for a truth a man discovers himself takes deeper root than one he is simply told, and the skilled mentor aims to lead the younger man to his

own discoveries. There is a great difference between a conclusion a younger man is handed and one he reaches himself under the mentor's guidance, for the self-reached insight is owned, understood, and remembered as the handed conclusion is not, and the skilled mentor therefore aims not to hand the younger man conclusions but to guide him, through questions, toward reaching the insights himself. This requires patience, the willingness to guide rather than to tell, to let the younger man work toward the insight rather than short-cutting to the answer, but it produces a far deeper formation, for the younger man owns what he has discovered. The mentor who leads the younger man to reach insights himself forms him more deeply than the mentor who hands him answers, and the skill of guiding toward self-discovery is a mark of the best mentoring. Let him reach the insight, guiding the younger man through questions toward discoveries he makes himself rather than handing him conclusions, and a mentor achieves the deepest formation, for the self-reached insight is owned and remembered as the handed answer is not, and the skilled mentor patiently leads the younger man to his own discoveries rather than short-cutting to the conclusion.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Harder Side

Honest Challenge and Correction

Good mentoring is not all encouragement and gentle drawing-out, for there comes a time when a mentor must offer honest challenge and correction, must tell a younger man a hard truth, must confront a fault or a destructive pattern, and this harder side of mentoring is both difficult and essential. The mentor who only encourages and never challenges fails the younger man, who needs the honest correction that only someone who loves him will give. Understanding how to offer honest challenge and correction well, the harder side of mentoring, equips a man to give the younger man the hard truths he needs along with the encouragement he enjoys.

Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy. — Proverbs 27:6

Love Requires Honesty

The foundation of honest challenge is the recognition that real love requires honesty, that a mentor who truly loves a younger man will tell him the hard truths he needs rather than withholding them to avoid discomfort, for the faithful wounds of a friend are better than the flattery of one who will not challenge. It is a failure of love, not a kindness, to

withhold needed correction from a younger man, to let him continue in a fault or a destructive pattern rather than risk the discomfort of confronting it, for the mentor who will not wound with honest truth fails the younger man he claims to love. Real love requires the honesty to tell hard truths, to offer needed correction, to confront destructive patterns, even at the cost of discomfort, for these faithful wounds are a gift that the flattering avoidance of challenge is not. The mentor must therefore love the younger man enough to be honest with him, to offer the challenge and correction that his growth requires, rather than withholding them out of a false kindness that is really a failure of love. Love requires honesty, and the mentor who truly loves a younger man will give him the hard truths and needed correction his growth requires rather than withholding them to avoid discomfort, for the faithful wounds of a friend are a gift of love that the flattering avoidance of challenge can never be.

Challenge From Relationship

Honest challenge works only from within a relationship of established trust and evident love, for the same hard truth that wounds and closes when it comes from a distant or harsh source heals and opens when it comes from a trusted friend who evidently loves. A younger man can receive hard challenge and correction when it comes from a mentor he trusts and whose love for him is evident, for then he knows the challenge is for his good and from one who is on his side, but the same challenge from one he does not trust, or delivered harshly, wounds and closes him. This is why the trust and love built in the relationship are the precondition of effective challenge, for challenge offered from established relationship and evident love is received and heals, while challenge offered without that foundation wounds and repels. The mentor must therefore build the trusting, loving relationship first, and offer challenge from within it, so that the younger man receives the hard truth as the loving correction of a trusted friend rather than the attack of a critic. Challenge from relationship, offering hard truths from within established trust and evident love, is how a mentor makes correction heal rather than wound, for the same challenge received from a trusted and loving mentor opens and heals where the challenge of a distant or harsh source only wounds and closes.

Challenge, Then Support

Effective challenge is followed by support, for the mentor who confronts a younger man with a hard truth must then stand with him in addressing it, not abandoning him after the correction but supporting him in the growth it calls for. Challenge without support can crush or discourage, leaving a younger man convicted of a fault but alone in facing it, while challenge followed by support convicts and then helps, confronting the fault and then standing with the younger man as he works to address it. The good mentor therefore

does not simply deliver a hard truth and withdraw but challenges and then supports, offering the correction and then the help, the confrontation and then the accompaniment, so that the younger man is both convicted of his need to change and supported in changing. This combination of challenge and support is essential to the harder side of mentoring, for challenge alone can wound without healing, while challenge joined to support both convicts and helps. Challenge, then support, following hard correction with the help and accompaniment the younger man needs to address it, and a mentor makes challenge a means of growth rather than mere wounding, standing with the younger man after confronting him so that the correction convicts and then heals, and the younger man is both called to change and supported in changing.

CHAPTER SIX

When He Struggles

Mentoring Through Failure and Setback

A man one mentors will struggle, will fail, will fall back into old patterns, will disappoint and perhaps discourage his mentor, and how a mentor responds to these struggles and setbacks largely determines whether the mentoring survives and bears fruit. The mentor who expects steady progress and is thrown by failure will abandon the younger man at the first serious setback, while the mentor who knows how to mentor through struggle can walk with the younger man through his failures toward growth. Understanding how to mentor through failure and setback, responding well when the younger man struggles, equips a man to persevere in mentoring through the difficulties that are a normal part of forming another man.

If anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. — Galatians 6:1

Expect Struggle and Failure

The first thing to settle is that the younger man will struggle and fail, that setbacks and failures are a normal part of growth rather than a sign that the mentoring has failed, so that the mentor is not thrown when they come. Growth is never a straight line of steady progress but a jagged path of advance and setback, progress and relapse, and the younger man a mentor forms will inevitably struggle, fail, fall back into old patterns, and disappoint, not because the mentoring has failed but because this is the normal shape of real growth. The mentor who expects steady, unbroken progress will be thrown and discouraged by the younger man's inevitable failures, perhaps concluding that the

mentoring is not working, while the mentor who expects struggle and failure as a normal part of growth is prepared to mentor through them without being derailed. This settled expectation of struggle and failure, as the normal shape of growth rather than a sign of failure, is the foundation of mentoring through setback, for only the mentor who expects it will not be thrown by it. Expect struggle and failure as a normal part of growth rather than a sign the mentoring has failed, and a mentor is prepared to walk through the younger man's inevitable setbacks without being thrown, knowing that growth is a jagged path of advance and relapse and that the younger man's failures are the normal shape of real formation rather than evidence of failure.

Restore in Gentleness

When a younger man fails, the mentor's response should be to restore him in a spirit of gentleness, not to condemn or abandon him but to help him up, meeting his failure with the gentle restoration that Scripture counsels rather than harsh judgment. The way a mentor responds to a younger man's failure is decisive, for harsh condemnation crushes and drives him away, while gentle restoration helps him up and keeps him growing, and Scripture is clear that the spiritual man restores the one caught in failure in a spirit of gentleness. The mentor meets the younger man's failure not with the harsh judgment that would crush him nor with the indulgence that would excuse it, but with gentle restoration, taking the failure seriously while helping the younger man up, offering both honesty about the failure and gentleness in addressing it. This restoring in gentleness is how a mentor responds to failure in a way that keeps the younger man growing rather than driving him away, and it is essential to mentoring through setback. Restore in gentleness, meeting the younger man's failure with the gentle restoration Scripture counsels rather than harsh condemnation, and a mentor helps the younger man up and keeps him growing, taking the failure seriously while addressing it gently, for harsh judgment crushes and drives away while gentle restoration helps up and keeps the younger man moving forward.

Don't Give Up on Him

Finally, mentoring through struggle requires not giving up on the younger man, persevering with him through his failures and setbacks rather than abandoning him when he disappoints, for the mentor's faithful perseverance is often exactly what the struggling younger man needs. A younger man who fails and disappoints may expect to be abandoned, as others may have abandoned him, and the mentor who does not give up on him, who perseveres with him through his failures, who remains committed despite his setbacks, gives him something powerful, the faithful presence of one who will not abandon him even when he fails. This not giving up is often decisive, for the struggling

younger man most needs, in his failure, a mentor who stays, and the mentor's perseverance through the younger man's setbacks is both a powerful witness of love and often the very thing that carries the younger man through to growth. The mentor must therefore not give up on the younger man who struggles, persevering with him through his failures, remaining faithful when he disappoints, for this faithful perseverance is often exactly what the younger man needs to keep going. Don't give up on him, persevering with the younger man through his failures and setbacks rather than abandoning him when he disappoints, and a mentor gives the struggling younger man the faithful presence he most needs, for the mentor who stays through failure offers a powerful witness of love and often provides the very perseverance that carries the younger man through to growth.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Letting Him Go

Mentoring Toward Independence and Multiplication

The goal of all mentoring is finally the younger man's growth into mature independence and his becoming, himself, a mentor to others, and so a mentor must aim from the beginning at letting the younger man go, at raising him to a maturity that no longer needs the mentoring and that reproduces itself in others. The mentor who holds a younger man in perpetual dependence has failed, however gratifying the dependence, while the mentor who raises him to independence and multiplication has succeeded. Understanding that mentoring aims finally at the younger man's independence and his becoming a mentor himself completes the practical guide by revealing its ultimate goal.

He must increase, but I must decrease. — John 3:30

The Goal Is His Independence

The aim of mentoring is the younger man's growth into mature independence, not his perpetual dependence on the mentor, so that the mentor measures his success by how fully the younger man has grown to stand on his own rather than by how needed he remains. A good mentor, like a good father, aims to raise the younger man to maturity and independence, to the point where he no longer needs the mentoring in the same way and can stand on his own as a mature man, rather than holding him in a perpetual dependence that may gratify the mentor but stunts the younger man. This means the mentor must aim from the beginning at the younger man's independence, working to make himself progressively less needed, measuring success by the younger man's growth

to maturity rather than by his continued reliance. The mentor who fosters perpetual dependence, who needs to be needed, has failed the younger man, while the mentor who raises him to independence has succeeded, for the goal of mentoring is the younger man's maturity and not the mentor's indispensability. The goal is his independence, the younger man's growth into mature self-standing rather than perpetual dependence on the mentor, and the good mentor aims from the beginning to make himself progressively less needed, measuring success by how fully the younger man has grown to stand on his own rather than by how indispensable the mentor remains.

Decreasing as He Grows

As the younger man grows, the mentor must be willing to decrease, to step back, to let the younger man take the lead, to release him into maturity, imitating John the Baptist's willingness to decrease that another might increase. This decreasing requires humility, the willingness to become less central as the younger man grows, to release one's role, to let the younger man surpass and move beyond the mentoring, rather than clinging to one's importance in his life. The mentor who cannot decrease, who clings to his central role, who needs the younger man to keep needing him, stunts the younger man's growth and reveals that the mentoring was partly serving the mentor's own ego; the mentor who willingly decreases, who steps back and releases the younger man as he grows, serves the younger man's maturity and imitates the humility of John the Baptist. This willingness to decrease as the younger man grows is essential to good mentoring, for the mentoring must give way to the younger man's maturity, and the mentor must be willing to become less as the younger man becomes more. Decreasing as he grows, stepping back and releasing the younger man into maturity rather than clinging to one's central role, is the humility that good mentoring requires, for the mentor must be willing to become less as the younger man becomes more, imitating John the Baptist's willingness to decrease that another might increase, and serving the younger man's maturity over the mentor's own importance.

Reproducing in Others

The final goal of mentoring is reproduction, the younger man's becoming himself a mentor to others, so that the mentoring multiplies across generations as each man mentored goes on to mentor others in turn. The deepest success of mentoring is not merely a younger man grown to maturity but a younger man who becomes himself a mentor, reproducing in others what he received, so that the mentoring does not end with him but multiplies, each mentored man mentoring others, the investment spreading across generations. The mentor therefore aims not only at the younger man's independence but at his reproduction, encouraging and equipping him to become,

himself, a mentor to others, so that the chain of mentoring continues and multiplies. This reproduction is the final fulfillment of mentoring, the point at which the younger man becomes a mentor himself and the investment multiplies, and the mentor who achieves it has not merely formed one man but set in motion a multiplication that may extend for generations. Reproducing in others, the younger man's becoming himself a mentor who reproduces in others what he received, is the final goal of mentoring, multiplying the investment across generations as each mentored man mentors others in turn, and the mentor who equips the younger man to become a mentor himself has set in motion a multiplication that extends his mentoring far beyond the one man he directly formed.

CONCLUSION

Take a Man Under Your Wing

Wanting to mentor is not enough; a man must actually do it, and this book has been the practical how of mentoring another man in the faith. We have seen how to actually start, finding a man and beginning the relationship; how to earn his trust, the foundation of all mentoring; what a mentor actually does, the substance of spending time, sharing wisdom, and encouraging and challenging; how to draw a man out rather than lecturing him; how to offer honest challenge and correction, the harder side; how to mentor through failure and setback; and how to aim finally at the younger man's independence and his becoming a mentor himself.

None of it requires special expertise or a formal program, but only a mature man willing to take a younger one under his wing and invest in him over time, through the practical means this book has described. The mentoring that younger men so desperately need is within the reach of any mature believer willing to start, to build trust, to share himself, and to persevere, and the man who takes it up will find it among the most fruitful things he ever does.

So take a man under your wing. Look around at the younger men in your life and reach out to one; build the trust that is the foundation; spend time with him, share your wisdom, encourage and challenge him; draw him out rather than lecturing him; love him enough to tell him hard truths; walk with him through his failures without giving up; and aim always at his growth into a mature man who will himself mentor others. Do this, and you will meet a desperate need, form a younger man in the faith, and set in motion a multiplication that may reach generations, discovering in the mentoring of another man one of the most fruitful and fulfilling works a man can give himself to. The younger men

are all around you, waiting for someone to take an interest. Take a man under your wing, and begin.

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