

[Unedited]

Mentoring Will Change Your Life

1 Samuel 3:1-11, 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12, Titus 2:1-2, 6-8

Good morning, men. A new friend I met at our field conference this year is involved with NASCAR and has been involved for a few decades. He's 47 and he started a janitorial company and provided supplies to teams. He started a side company and made a product to spray on the windshield of the NASCAR racecars. The old formula the other company provided got rid of all the tire tracks and rubber and so forth, but then you had to go back and Windex a film off of it. It was a two-step process.

My friend invented a one-step process. Well, time is money and, boom, there you go. Lowe's picked it up, it's going to be in 700 stores and now they have picked up a second product. Now he's off to the races (pun intended). He asked me if I wanted to go to Speedweek, and I said sure, if we could build it into a relationship building time.

We went over Saturday morning and I didn't know what to expect. He was involved with NASCAR, and I didn't know how much he knew, or how much clout he had.

At NASCAR the regular fans go to the racetrack to get in and the special fans go to a building that's a couple of blocks off the main street and not highly visible. When we went over to this special place, there was a building with a door for one kind of special fan, another door for the next level of special fan, and over on the side is a trailer that says "registration" on it. That's where the VIPs and the celebrities register to get their all access pass. When we got there, he took us over to the VIP/Celebrity registration trailer and there were about 200 people – celebrities and VIPs – lined up as far as the eye could see, waiting to get into the registration – I thought, *Boy, this is going to be a long day.*

Joey and I walked to a side door of the registration trailer and walked us to the beginning of the line and said, "Marvin, this is the guy I was telling you about." All of a sudden, I felt like a pretty cool guy and I thought, *This is going to be a good day* – and it was.

We took the *Becoming a Man Alive* booklets and started talking to people. Joey was a driver in the Busch series like John Barber was, which is now nationwide. Joey's been a crew chief and he knows everybody and knows how the system works. He knew where to be standing and when so we could see people such as Joe Gibbs, or Kasey Kahne. It was a fantastic morning.

It was an opportunity to mentor him on how to share his faith and how to let people know that he is a believer. He's only been a believer for three years. All of these racing people know him as this hell-raiser guy, and so it's a chance for him to be repositioned in the NASCAR community as a believer. Not only was it was a chance for me to talk to about 20-25 people, pray for them, give them a booklet, and ask them how they are doing on their journey—it was an opportunity to take a guy along with me and mentor him so now he knows how to do that, too.

We'll start a new series this morning. It will run for about four weeks. The title of the series is, "What Happens When Men Mentor Men?" The first message is an overview.

WHAT'S WRONG AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Mentoring will change your life. The first thing we will talk about is what's wrong and why it really matters.

I am mentoring a young guy who is 28 years old. The third or fourth time we got together he walks in to the breakfast and is barely seated when he blurts out, "I have a mediocre marriage, a mediocre business, and a mediocre relationship with God."

Isn't that interesting? He took three or four weeks before he told me what was really troubling him and why he really wanted a mentor. Why? Because he knows from previous experience (and you do, too) that trust is the main foundation on which there is an exchange of value between two people. He wanted to know if he could trust me, so he was checking me out before he told me what was really on his mind.

By the way, he's given me permission to tell you that statement about his mediocre marriage, business and relationship with God. Now we're talking about that. He's asking questions or telling me about his situation. In mentoring, one of the key things I've learned is perhaps, the most valuable ministry that I have is the ministry of listening.

There are always a handful of men who are deeply troubled. Something is going on deep in their hearts and they just need someone to talk to. They want someone to listen. They need someone who feels safe. When I meet these men I rarely say anything in these encounters; I just ask questions. For those of you who have met me, or met me for lunch, you know how I operate. I never tell you what you need to do. I only ask you questions. Then you tell yourself what you need to do. To me, that is the foundation of mentoring. It's the ministry of listening. It's the ministry of asking questions. If someone actually needs a piece of concrete advice and they ask for it, then I give it.

Every one of you in here is a mentor whether you've ever even thought of yourself in that category or not. You are a mentor. Now, here is the problem and why it really matters.

Men today, and especially younger men, are in chaos. They don't know how to live their lives; they don't know what their lives are about; they don't know how to handle their most difficult situations. This is especially true of younger men, but I didn't say only younger men—it's true for men in general. The world is complex and a great is going on.

Younger men have a deer-caught-in-the-headlights look, but older and more mature men just feel awkward. Most men I talk to about mentoring feel very awkward about the idea that they would be a mentor. They feel inadequate, unqualified and unprepared, because frankly, they know too much about themselves.

Look at John 8:7-9 with me. This is the story of the woman caught in adultery. “When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, ‘Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.’ Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first...”

“The older ones first.” Why was that? Because for two reasons. The older guys catch on a little quicker because of more experience, but older guys are very aware of their own sins too, so if you are an older, more mature guy, over 40 you are very likely feel inadequate, unqualified and too awkward to be a mentor.

I think that is what is wrong. The men who need mentoring are living in a little chaos, and the men who should be mentoring feel awkward and inadequate.

Turn with me to Psalm 78:1. That is what is wrong and the reason why it matters is this. We live in an anti-man culture. We live in a culture where manhood is systematically being deconstructed by a feminist agenda. I’m sorry if I sound like Rush Limbaugh, but a feministic agenda is intent on portraying men as baboon-brained, sex-crazed hayseeds, and disheveled mongrels on all the television shows. Men are always the butt of the jokes, and shown as stupid slobs just because they are men. They say the only things men care about are beer and sex.

Our culture is deconstructing manhood. This is why young men are in chaos. This is why older guys are in chaos. By the way, there are a lot of men who are doing a great job mentoring, and being mentored, and there are a lot of men who are doing great jobs being dads and raising up godly children — but they are fighting against the tide.

This is why it matters. It also matters because it is biblical. Mentoring is biblical. Mentoring is God’s ordained method for creating an intergenerational transfer of spiritual wealth from one generation to another. We see it here with your own eyes in Psalm 78:1-3. “O my people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things, things from of old— what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us.” That’s fathers in both the sense of our biological fathers and our spiritual fathers. We are going to tell you the things that we were told by our spiritual fathers. That’s step one.

Where did the knowledge come from? It came from the fathers. What do you do with the knowledge? Verse 4: “We will not hide them from their children.” Notice it doesn’t say “our” children it says “their” children. This is a much broader idea, and I haven’t been able to fully get to the bottom of it, but it’s a much broader idea that it not just your own children, it’s the children of our people – the children of the kingdom. We are not just mentoring our own sons and daughters we are mentoring other people’s children as well.

The message is we have a responsibility for all of them. Verses 4: “We will not hide them from their children. We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.” What is that? That is God’s general revelation. God has revealed His glory and His power in creation and we have the responsibility as our forebears told us about the greatness and

goodness and praise. We have this same responsibility to tell the next generation. It's biblical. Mentoring is biblical.

Look at Verse 5: "He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children." What's that? That's special revelation. That's the Word of God. He's telling us here that we have a responsibility to mentor the next generation just as we were mentored ourselves, and how God revealed Himself in nature in His Word. We have the responsibility to teach the next generation.

The passage says to teach their children, so the next generation would know them. How many people in our generation, whichever generation you are in, know these things? If they don't know them, why don't they know them? They don't know them because there has been a disruption in the intergenerational transfer of spiritual wealth between generations and it is getting worse. It is not getting better. It is getting more serious.

Verse 8: "So that the next generation would know them even the children yet to be born." Not only do we have a responsibility to our children, but to our children's children, and their children after them. In other words, we have a responsibility to set up a system of mentoring, so that not only do we mentor our children and our spiritual children, but we give them the vision that they are supposed to mentor those who come after them.

When I gave up the leadership prayer breakfast, after 25 years in leadership, I recruited a man and told him, "Here's the deal. I'm going to mentor you for a couple of years on how to do this, and when it is time for you to pass on this role, you'll mentor the next person so this prayer breakfast will go on." That's part of what mentoring is all about. Look at Verse 7: "Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands." The trademark of the biblical Christian is obedience. Rooted in the love, grace and mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is obedience instead of people doing what seems right in their own eyes that we see so often.

Proverbs 29:18: "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint." In another version, "Where is no vision, the people perish." What is the verse talking about? It's talking about the Word of God. The word translated as "vision" or "revelation" in Proverbs 29:18 is always used throughout the Old Testament for the visions God gave to His prophets.

Of course, back then there was a time when the Word of God wasn't as prevalent as it is today. I'm getting ahead of myself.

Verse 8: "They would not be like their forefathers—a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him." Wow. Does anyone want to be like that? I don't think so.

The thing is that in this room, you men are the cream of the crop. You're the best there is in the kingdom of God. There are 2 million people in this town. There are probably 500,000 men that could be

here at this Bible study this morning— and a lot of them are in Bible studies. Out of 500,000 men you are here. You're it. You are the best God has.

The big idea this morning: **God has ordained that His best men invest in other men.** It's ordained by God. We just looked at it in the Word. It is decreed. It is our duty and it is our solemn responsibility to mentor as we have been mentored, or to get mentored if you haven't been mentored.

Turn to 2 Timothy 2. Not everyone is qualified; not everyone deserves to be a mentor, but you do. Here is the text that supports the big idea. Verse 1 says, "You then, my son." Paul was talking to Timothy in the quintessential mentoring relationship in the Bible. There are many others, and this is the one most people gravitate to. 2 Timothy 2:1 "You then my son" and he means my spiritual son. "You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." The word "reliable" is sometimes translated as trustworthy; sometimes it's translated as faithful. Basically God ordained his best men, his faithful, trustworthy reliable men – God's best men.

A few weeks ago we talked about if you should take the lowest seat at a banquet, and the host would say, "Come up, because I have a more distinguished place for you." We made the point that all men are equal in the eyes of God, but some are more distinguished. They are these men. They are the men who are mentoring and discipling other men. The twelve disciples were the best guys He had. What did they do? They poured their lives into other men. **God has ordained that His best men invest in other men.** Not everyone is qualified. Not everyone should be selected. Are you man enough? Are you faithful? Do you want to be? You're here! You are! Stop asking if you can do this or not. You are doing it. You are here. You are His best. We are going to change our community, and those of you online are going to change your communities because we have come together. We are becoming to each other the live demonstration of the kingdom of God. We are creating a model that is so attractive that other people will want to be a part of it — and we will mentor them to do that.

A COUPLE OF BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

Here are a couple of biblical examples. Please turn to 1 Samuel 3. This is the story of Samuel as a young lad becoming a man of God and being mentored by Eli. Verse 1: "The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions." There were not many visions (*hazowns*). Proverbs says where there is no vision (*hazowns*), the people perish. Where there was no hazowns? There wasn't much going on. There was not this deep rich publishing industry. These visions have been proliferated in text and the written world throughout the entire known world.

But that was not the case back then. One night Eli was asleep and Samuel heard this voice. Verse 4:

Then the Lord called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am." And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down. Again the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

He needed to be mentored. He didn't know that. He didn't recognize God. That's one of the beautiful things about being a man of God. You have experience with God. It's that experience with God that is so powerful to share with other men who maybe don't have that same experience. Continue reading in 1 Samuel 3:8-10:

The Lord called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

What a beautiful mentoring moment. If you hear God in your heart speaking to you through His Word, or through His Spirit, stop and say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

That's one example. Turn to 1 Thessalonians 2:8. This is the ministry of Paul to the Thessalonians. This is so good. It says in Verse 8, "We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well."

"Our very lives as well." Mentoring is both proclamation and incarnation. It is giving people a chance to see how you really live your life. Again, **God had ordained that His best men invest in other men.**

A COUPLE OF PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

There are two powerful ways to mentor or be mentored – one-on-one and in small groups. Because we are out of time I will give you one practical example. I want to talk to you about being in a small group.

I remember Jim Gillean, my first discipler and my first mentor in a couples Bible study but he saw something in me that I didn't see in myself. He allowed me to be part of their small group of men in their living room. It was the way that I could see he believed in me more than I believed in myself; he saw things in me I couldn't see in myself. He said words of encouragement to me that I'd never heard before. It released something inside of me. He released inside of me the power to become the man God created me to be that I didn't even know was there. That's what mentoring is all about. Helping men become who they didn't even know they could become.

Are there 50 promising young men in this community? Are there 50 young men outstanding young men in this community that you see something in? That we could build into their lives these things we learn from the past generations? We could pass these things on to the next generation so they could pass it on to their kids as well. We can do this. You can do this. By the grace of God, I proclaim that we will change this community by reaching the next generation of men. It has happened in every generation leading up to this one. In this community there have been men of God who have seen promising young men and built into their lives. That's the history of this community and it is not going to stop on my watch. Is it going to stop on your watch? No. We are going to do this. We are going to make a difference. We are going to see this happen. Many of you are already doing this and it's well underway. Don't miss out on this opportunity. This is the ultimate opportunity. **God ordained you to be one of his**

best men and that means you invest in other men. That's the deal. That is the big idea. Let's go get them!

CLOSING PRAYER

Let's pray.

Our dearest Father, we give praises to You. Lord, give us confidence. Let us be bold. Help us to stop waiting around for someone else to take care of things. Lord, we need to be civilized, but God, we need to do something now, and we need Your Spirit to empower us to do it. Father, it will not do us any good to get all amped up and run to do things in our own strength. Lord, You have to put it in our hearts. You have to give us your Spirit and favor; You have to put the mantle of leadership on us to help us through. We know we have been ordained to do that. Help us to be the men who invest in other men for the glory of Jesus Christ. In His Name we pray. Amen.