



## Ministry Sphere 4 | Mentoring Made Practical

Jesus mentored twelve. These men helped to change the world, not because of their preaching alone, nor because of the miracles that followed in their wake, but because they came alongside others who in turn would mentor others (2 Timothy 2:2). If leadership is needed to guide the church, mentoring is the way such leadership is fostered. Likewise, if the goal of the church is to win people to Christ and to help them become strong and mature in Christ so that they can reach others, mentoring is essential.

One of the common threads seen in the life of nearly every person who has overcome brokenness in life, whether emotionally, sexually, or relationally, is mentoring. Spiritual growth happens best when committed relationships of support and encouragement are mixed into the ingredients of our lives.

### **Mentoring Matters | by W.P. Campbell**

Mentoring is part of life. It is expected in families: Parents mentor children. It is necessary on the job: The experienced employee mentors new hires. It is critical in the church — the spiritually mature mentor babes in faith.

#### Mentoring in the Bible

In the Bible, mentoring relationships are shown to be the heart and soul of Christian discipleship. Jesus trained a dozen followers, who were told to continue the pattern (Matthew 28:18-20). They in turn mentored followers of Christ for the next spiritual generation. The one who wrote most of the New Testament stands out as a prime example. Throughout his missionary journeys, Paul took others with him for on-the-job training (Acts 13:1-3; 16:1-3; 17:10; 18:18; etc.).

#### Mentoring in Churches

Churches that have been successful in ministering to people experiencing sexual and relational brokenness have almost universally incorporated mentoring into their ministry approaches. One-to-one counsel, support, encouragement, guidance, accountability and friendship can occur in the formality of a counseling office or through the informal pairing of spiritually mature church members with those who are seeking to grow. Mentoring matters.

## How it Works

In nearly every church I have pastored, men have come to me and to other men (as women have for women) in private for support and guidance about their unwanted same-sex attractions. These men were not looking for in-depth understanding as much as for a male friend who would listen to them, walk along side of them, and provide encouragement and accountability as they sought to live in holiness before the Lord. Their situations were really no different than the rest of the Christian world: they wanted to grow and knew instinctively that mentoring was critical.

## Mentoring and Change

There are many theories about the causes and potential cures for homosexuality, ranging from “they are born that way and can never change,” to “they missed something developmentally and can change if they are mentored and guided toward growth.” The truth is probably somewhere in the middle, and even for people who lean toward one side or the other on this issue, mentoring must be seen as critical. A person experiencing homosexual attractions who wants to live in a way that honors God needs the support of Christian community. With trust in God and the support of people who love us, any of us can remain pure. And when we walk the pathway of obedience, God often surprises us with changes we never thought possible. God is in the business of transforming our lives.

What is change anyway? For the Christian, it is a call to become more like Jesus (Romans 8; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18). It signifies a process of spiritual growth that is meant to be ongoing the rest of our days. Mentoring relationships provide an environment for such growth. Ideally, we will make connections throughout our lives in which we are on both the giving end and on the receiving end. God has designed his body, the church in this way. We need each other.

## An Environment for Mentoring

How does this work itself out practically in the life of a given church? How does it look specifically for people experiencing sexual and relational brokenness? Simply stated, leaders and members of the church engage in the training offered through resources like those offered on this website. As individuals and eventually entire congregations engage in developing prayer ministry, leadership training, and small groups for the church, all based on biblical family values, they will find themselves ministering one-on-one to people with all kinds of needs, including those with struggle with unwanted same-sex attractions. In the context of this growing ministry, some people will naturally be referred to a counselor to provide insight for the journey of growth and healing. Many will link up with church members for needed strength and support.

Homosexuality can be described as a healthy pursuit of wholeness sought in an unhealthy manner. Part of the healing for homosexual attractions, then, involves healthy relationships with the same sex. Those who are dealing with same-sex attractions often seek out someone

of the same sex to help them fill in the missing pieces in their hearts and lives. Men come alongside men and women alongside women to offer ongoing support and friendship and strength for the journey of growth within.

### We are Each Called to be Mentors

Those who are called by God to be mentors do not need to be experts about homosexuality. However, they should be mature spiritually and confident in their walk with God. A person who is in the process of overcoming same-sex attractions should not mentor another of the same sex.

In summary, the strong are called to come alongside those who are weak and desirous of growth through committed mentoring relationships. As we are told in Romans 15:1-2:

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

### **Considerations for Counseling**

Many people who have come out of homosexuality and found fulfillment and happiness in their new lives have utilized the services of a good counselor. Such a counselor is almost always a Christian who embraces a biblical worldview and who has in-depth knowledge about same-sex attraction issues. If you are looking for a counselor to whom you can refer people, it is good to ask that counselor if he or she:

- Takes a Christian approach to counseling. If so, ask them to clarify what they mean by that;
- Respects a client's religious convictions;
- Is affiliated with a network, agency, or church;
- Is licensed, accredited, or certified (Clarify whether or not licensure is required by your state);
- Has counseled people experiencing same-sex attractions before, and if so, what approach does he or she take in treating it? What does the counselor believe are the causes of homosexuality?
- Allows the client to be involved in determining treatment. (Ask also, how does the counselor decide on when to end therapy?);
- Is willing to handle fees on a sliding scale. Inquire about their fee structure and how they handle insurance.

## **Please Hear What I'm Not Saying**

Don't be fooled by me.  
Don't be fooled by the face I wear  
for I wear a mask, a thousand masks,  
masks that I'm afraid to take off,  
and none of them is me.

Pretending is an art that's second nature with me,  
but don't be fooled,  
for God's sake don't be fooled.  
I give you the impression that I'm secure,  
that all is sunny and unruffled with me, within as well as without,  
that confidence is my name and coolness my game,  
that the water's calm and I'm in command  
and that I need no one,  
but don't believe me.  
My surface may seem smooth but my surface is my mask,  
ever-varying and ever-concealing.  
Beneath lies no complacency.  
Beneath lies confusion, and fear, and aloneness.  
But I hide this. I don't want anybody to know it.  
I panic at the thought of my weakness exposed.  
That's why I frantically create a mask to hide behind,  
a nonchalant sophisticated facade,  
to help me pretend,  
to shield me from the glance that knows...

I don't like hiding.  
I don't like playing superficial phony games.  
I want to stop playing them.  
I want to be genuine and spontaneous and me  
but you've got to help me.  
You've got to hold out your hand  
even when that's the last thing I seem to want.  
Only you can wipe away from my eyes  
the blank stare of the breathing dead.  
Only you can call me into aliveness.  
Each time you're kind, and gentle, and encouraging,  
each time you try to understand because you really care,  
my heart begins to grow wings--  
very small wings,  
very feeble wings,  
but wings!

With your power to touch me into feeling  
you can breathe life into me.  
I want you to know that.  
I want you to know how important you are to me,  
how you can be a creator--an honest-to-God creator--  
of the person that is me  
if you choose to.  
You alone can break down the wall behind which I tremble,  
you alone can remove my mask,  
you alone can release me from my shadow-world of panic,  
from my lonely prison,  
if you choose to.  
Please choose to.

Do not pass me by.  
It will not be easy for you.  
A long conviction of worthlessness builds strong walls.  
The nearer you approach to me  
the blinder I may strike back.  
It's irrational, but despite what the books say about man  
often I am irrational.  
I fight against the very thing I cry out for.  
But I am told that love is stronger than strong walls  
and in this lies my hope.  
Please try to beat down those walls  
with firm hands but with gentle hands  
for a child is very sensitive.

Who am I, you may wonder?  
I am someone you know very well.  
For I am every man you meet  
and I am every woman you meet.

Charles C. Finn, September 1966

## **Resources for Mentoring Related People Experiencing Sexual and Relational Brokenness**

Chambers, Alan. *Leaving Homosexuality: A Practical Guide for Men and Women Looking for a Way Out*. Eugene: Harvest House, 2009.

Konrad, Jeff. *You Don't Have to be Gay: Hope and Freedom for Males Struggling with Homosexuality or For Those Who Know of Someone Who Is*. Newport Beach, CA: Pacific Publishing House, 1987.

Laaser, Mark R. *Healing Wounds of Sexual Addiction*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004.

Nicolosi, Joseph. *Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality: A New Clinical Approach*. Jason Aronson, Inc., 1991.

Paulk, Anne. *Restoring Sexual Identity: Hope for Women Who Struggle with Same-Sex Attraction*. Eugene: Harvest House, 2003.

Worthen, Anita & Davies, Bob. *Someone I Love is Gay: How Family & Friends Can Respond*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1996.

## **General Books and Studies on Mentoring**

Becker, James. *Mentoring High-Risk Kids*. Minneapolis: Johnson Institute, 1984.

Brendtro, Larry and Scott Larson. *Reclaiming Our Prodigal Sons and Daughters*. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service, 1999.

David, R.L. *Mentoring: The Strategy of the Master*. Nashville: Nelson, 1991.

Larson, Scott. *At-Risk: Bringing Hope to Hurting Teenagers*. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 1999.

Matthaei, S.H. *Faith-Mentoring in the Faith Community*. Valley Forge: Trinity, 1996.

Parrott, Les. *Helping the Struggling Adolescent*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.

Rhodes, Jean. *Stand By Me: The Risks and Rewards of Mentoring Today's Youth*. Harvard University Press, 2002.

Stanley, P.D., and Clinton, J.R. *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed for Life*. Colorado: Nav Press, 1992.

Wright, H. Norman. *Crisis and Trauma Counseling*. Gospel light, 2003.

## **Internet Links**

Ethics for Christian Counselors – 50 Great Resources

<http://www.christiancounselingdegree.org/ethics#top>

Exodus International: Prevention and Recovery

<http://www.exodusinternational.org/content/blogcategory/18/55/>