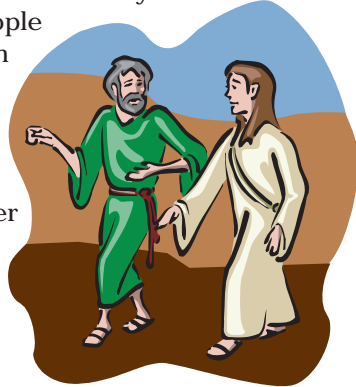




God had extraordinary plans for Timothy. So God put just the right people in Timothy's life to help teach him all the things he would need to know. Beginning with Timothy's grandmother and mother, and then Paul, God wove these lives together to prepare Timothy for the most fruitful life possible. We would all be wise to put ourselves under a mentor like Timothy did.



Day #1: First Mentors

Can you name all the people in your life who have taught you about God? Timothy had more than Paul. In fact, Timothy's learning began when he was a child, about your age! Timothy learned about God first from his mom & Grandmother. They taught him the Old Testament Scriptures since he was little (2 Timothy 3: 15).

Paul said this about Timothy:

I remember your honest and true faith. It was alive first in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice. And I am certain that it is now alive in you also. - 2 Timothy 1:5

It's amazing when a parent teaches their kids about the Lord. God says this will bless the kids and make them flourish (Deuteronomy 11: 18-21). Parents and grandparents are incredible mentors!

My son, keep your father's commands. Don't turn away from your mother's teaching. Tie them to your heart forever. Put them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you. When you sleep, they will watch over you. When you wake up, they will speak to you. Your father's commands are like a lamp. Your mother's teaching is like a light. And the training that corrects you leads to life. - Proverbs 6: 20-23

Take time to interview your parents, or if possible, your grandparent(s). Ask them to tell you about some important events in their lives and what advice they have for you. If they follow Jesus, ask them to tell you when they first believed in Him. Write down their answers or video tape them. These will be a treasure for you and your children one day.

Day #2: Strong Shoulders

Sir Isaac Newton, one of the greatest scientists of all time, once said, "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." This was a word picture. Who is taller and who can see further: a giant, or the man standing on his shoulders?

By this expression, Newton meant that he was able to make amazing discoveries because he was building on the discoveries of the men who lived before him. This was a statement of humility. Newton was sort of saying, "I couldn't have figured out all the things I figured out if other people had not taught me what they know."

This is how we are to live as followers of Jesus. Yes, we have His word, the Bible, to teach us. But people who have been reading that word, hearing God's voice, and following God's plan for longer than us can teach us a lot. They can tell you the mistakes they made so you can *not* make them. They can tell you great habits to get into, and the best ways to do things.

Jesus came and told His disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." - Matthew 28: 18-20

You can stand on the shoulders of those who have been following Jesus longer than you. Ask them questions so you can learn more about God's kingdom and do even greater things (John 14: 12).

Send a note or an email to someone who has already taught you about the Lord. Mention specifically at least one thing you have learned from them. It will be a great encouragement to them.

Day #3: Mentor Me

Paul never had a son, so God blessed him with Timothy. As far as we can tell, Timothy's dad was not a believer, so God blessed him with Paul. It's amazing how God sees our needs and meets them in ways we never imagined (Romans 8: 28). Paul taught Timothy so well that Timothy did great things for God's kingdom (1 Timothy 2: 1-15, 3: 1-3). And Timothy brought Paul great joy! (2 Timothy 1: 4)

Day #3 continued:

As we mentioned earlier in the week, parents are wonderful mentors. But it's also incredibly important to have mentors besides your parents. Mentors who don't live in your home often have fresh eyes and can offer another point of view.



There is safety in having many advisers. - Proverbs 11:14b

Listen to advice and accept what you are taught. In the end you will be wise. - Proverbs 19:20

Mentors are another source of godly wisdom. Mentors don't try to make you more like *them*; they want you to be more like Jesus! They encourage you, they see good things in you that you don't see in yourself, they pray for you, and they always point you to God's word.

(And, hey, let's face it: Sometimes we all get a little frustrated with our family members. That's okay! It's part of living together with other imperfect people who mess up sometimes. So having a mentor outside of our family can be a great thing. They can tell you when you need to change and when you need to forgive.)



Ask God to find the right person to mentor you. He knows your weak spots and your strengths. Only He knows what is in store in your future. He knows the skills and personality traits you'll need in the days ahead. So pray ahead of time. Ask God to put you in the right small group, with the right leader, and to send you the right mentor.

Day #4: Common Ground

What do an elephant and a mouse have in common? They are obviously different in size, but I bet you can find some things they have in common. (Both are animals, neither eat meat, you can find them both at the zoo, neither speak English!) It's great to look for "common ground."

At different times, Timothy and Paul traveled among the Greeks and then among the Jewish people to teach about Jesus. Timothy's dad was Greek and his mom was Jewish. This was a combination that God could use for great good. When Timothy was with the Greek people, he knew their customs and could do lots of the things they did (such eating Greek food or maybe Greek dancing). When he was with the Jews, he could talk about the things his mother's family did (like celebrating Passover and reading the Torah). It's great when we have something in common with the people we want to talk to.



Paul put it this way: *When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ... When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish*

Day #4 continued:

law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ.

When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. - 1 Corinthians 9:20-22

Neither man did anything against God's law. These are just extra things like language, food, and customs, that helped them relate to the people they were with.



Think about the way God created you. Who could you find common ground with? Maybe you are a science lover, maybe you're on a swim team, or maybe you speak two languages. Ask God to use your special qualities to help you reach out to someone.

Day #5: Pass It On

Back before we had fire trucks and water pumps, people used a system called a bucket brigade. In this method, people would line up between the fire and a body of water (like a pond or a well). The person nearest to the water would fill up a bucket and pass it to the next person, who would pass it to the next person, and so on. The last person would dump it on the fire. It often took hundreds of buckets passing through those hands, but it worked well and saved many lives.

What if someone in the middle of the line just decided to stop passing along his buckets? What a tragedy that would be!

Did you know it's the same with the wisdom and knowledge that a mentor gives to us? After we receive it, we should pass it on to someone else. It can do the most good when we teach it to the generation that comes after us. It would be a terrible shame to keep what we learn to ourselves.

Near the end of his life, Paul told Timothy:



You have heard me teach in front of many witnesses. Pass on to men you can trust the things you've heard me say. Then they will be able to teach others also. - 2 Timothy 2:1-2b



Take something that was given to you and give it to someone else. Let this be a reminder that after you have been mentored, you should turn around and mentor someone else. When you are in Middle School, you can help out someone in elementary school. When you get to High School, you can mentor a Middle Schooler. There's nothing better that you could ever pass on than the ability to live the full life God wants for you!