

BIBLICAL MENTORING

Step 1: The Heart of a Mentor

*Session 4:
How do we make disciples?*

In this session, we'll see that we only make disciples when we are connected to God's always on, always available power supply. Jesus said it and scripture affirms it: Through His Holy Spirit, Jesus is the only source of life-giving power that changes us and transforms people.

Begin by sharing any insights from last week's Points to Ponder or scripture reading. What did God bring to mind as you considered how He has met you at different points in your life?

Remembering Your Power Supply: Rob Eyman's Personal Story

The 4:30am Lafayette Limo to Indy had just pulled onto I-65. After three hectic days of packing, I was finally able to relax. I was on the front end of a two-week trip to China where I would serve as the spiritual director for pastors who were coming to hone their English skills. While improving one's English was the reason we gathered, the topic was the spiritual life and the goal was to help them nurture their souls and equip them to do the same for others.

The fluid nature of this gathering required that I create specific elements of each day's experience the night before each meeting. As I mentally reviewed my teaching plan, I patted the side of my briefcase, taking comfort in the presence of my laptop and portable printer that would play a key role in providing needed handouts. Then, without warning, the peace was suddenly shattered.

I HAD FORGOTTEN MY LAPTOP'S POWER SUPPLY!

With adrenaline pumping I reviewed my options. I knew that my battery would not last for the entire trip, that Indianapolis airport stores would not yet be open, and that there was no way to know if I could find the right equipment during my layover in Los Angeles. Only one long-shot possibility remained.

I spoke to the shuttle driver who confirmed that the next shuttle coming to the airport would be allowed to make the delivery. I called my wife, Anne, who was able to get the power supply to the next shuttle driver. After checking in for my flight, I waited at the curb, retrieved the power supply, and made it to my plane 20 minutes before they closed the cabin door.

That experience has become a metaphor for many things in my life. Even now, as I leave to engage in some form of ministry, Anne will ask me, “Did you remember to bring your power supply?”

Our Spiritual Power Supply

When it comes to serving Jesus, we can run on battery for a little while but if we do not consistently “plug into” the Holy Spirit, our battery will drain and we will soon run out of power to serve Him well. In John 15:5-8, Jesus teaches that the branch must remain connected to the vine in order to bear fruit. Developing lasting fruit to the Father’s glory requires that we abide in—remain connected to—Him.

Discussion

Read John 15:5.

- What level of dependence does a branch have on the vine for both receiving life and producing fruit? How does that relate to our own lives and faith?

Read John 16:5-15 (in the New Living Translation, if possible)

- Focus on verses 7 and 12-15. Why did the Spirit come and what does He do for us, now that He is here? Which of His attributes or responsibilities stands out most to you and why?

- Use specific examples to describe what our mentoring of others would be like without the help of the Holy Spirit. What responsibilities and concerns would you then have to carry?

Read Acts 1:8

- Use specific examples to describe what our witness would be like without the Holy Spirit.

Scripture is clear, without the Holy Spirit our witnessing and mentoring will be without lasting fruit. Without Him “we can do nothing.” But what does our connection with Jesus’ Spirit look like? When it comes to the Holy Spirit’s activity in our lives Christians generally have one of two ideas about how He works.

Some liken the Spirit’s power to a “human cannonball” at a circus. The Christian puts herself into the tube, God ignites the charge and the release of power sends the Christian out to do something she could not do on her own. Whether sharing her faith, facing a trial or engaging God in worship, all the Christian has to do is put herself in the right place and the Spirit provides the power needed for each experience and moment. While an exciting ride and an apt picture for some Old Testament stories, this metaphor fails to understand the power given to us in Christ.

The other picture of the Spirit’s power in a believer’s life is seen under the wing of my China-bound airplane. There, somewhere high over the Pacific—where there is no place to stop and check the oil—that jet engine continues to hum. For 12 hours that massive machine pumps out more power than I can imagine, power that keeps me safe, power that propels me to God’s appointed goal. The question is not whether or not the power is present. **The question is whether or not I am on the plane and trust the engines.**

Read and Reflect on Scripture

Philippians 2:12-13

Galatians 4:19

1 John 3:2-3,

Colossians 1:28-29

1 Corinthians 3:6

Ephesians 4:22-24

1. Focus on the individual rather than the community or creation and describe the end result of our salvation, according to these scriptures.
2. The spiritually dead cannot will themselves back to life. God is the One who brings salvation. Knowing that we have no power to save ourselves, what is the work that God does in us and what is our role in “working out” the salvation God has provided (Philippians 2)? What further insight do the other passages provide?

3. When it comes to our spiritual growth in Christ, can we describe the process as a partnership between us and God? Why or why not? What might be a better word or phrase?

4. Read 2 Corinthians 3:18 and Philippians 1:6. While there are things we certainly do to aid our spiritual growth, God is ultimately the One who initiates, sustains and completes the transformation He began in us. What comfort or concern do these verses raise about your own growth in faith?

Our Power Supply and Biblical Mentoring

Let's put all this in the context of biblical mentoring, also described as discipleship. Jesus, the One with all authority in heaven and on earth, commissioned and commanded us to teach disciples how to obey His commands out of love for Him and others (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 12:28-31). This kind of life can only come about through a transformed heart. In His grace, God chooses to use our efforts in His work of life transformation but, in the end, the task of transforming the heart and making a loving and obedient disciple is fully in God's hands. He causes the growth; our part is to plant and water (1 Corinthians 3:6).

Discussion

- What encouragement does this truth bring to our efforts at discipleship through biblical mentoring?

- In what ways might this truth hinder us from faithfulness to Christ's Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)?

In this session we've seen that we only make disciples when we are connected to God's power supply. As with the laptop, the power is present, I just need the right cord and the discipline to plug it in. As with the airplane, the power is more than adequate to get me where I need to go but in order to benefit from it, I need to board the plane.

Typing it All Together

When it comes to discipleship, the four sessions of this First Step show how our calling is to express Christ's **love** for others through our actions, **live** in the present Kingdom of God, **look** past ourselves to the people God has placed around us, and **lean** into the Spirit, trusting in His unlimited and ever-present power to do the work of transformation. **Love, live, look, and lean** describe the heart of Jesus, the heart of a mentor, and set us on the path of meeting other Christians where they are as we help them take their next step of integrating faith more fully into their lives.

Biblical Mentoring is one-on-one discipleship. It is something Jesus calls us to and it is something everyone can do. No one needs to be an "expert" in order to walk the path of faith with another. Even so, there are tools you can learn to use that will help you grow in confidence and effectiveness in your role as a biblical mentor. These tools are explored in the next steps of our mentor training studies, and we invite you to join us as we continue to walk the disciple's path.

Closing

So, what's your next step? Going forward, consider what the Spirit is stirring in your heart.

- Ask the Lord to bring to mind or send you someone with whom you can share part of your own spiritual journey. When He sends or reveals someone, remember to trust in your Power Supply and share your story, feeling free to plant and water as the Spirit leads.
- Take time this week to pray, asking the Lord to bring to mind people who are already in your relational network who may be ready for you to meet them where they are and help them take their next step of faith. Is there someone God has prepared for you to mentor? Has He placed in your heart a hunger to be mentored? Who has He already put in your life that you can ask? When a person comes to mind, set a date to contact them and begin the journey together.

Just for fun and light-hearted encouragement, go to Right Now Media and search for the video “Not an Expert” (email Radonna, rfiorini@covenantpc.org, if you need a free account).



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