

CREATING A LEGACY

Creating a Legacy of Mentoring

Acts 18



LET'S BEGIN HERE

As in any relay race, the moment of passing the baton is the most critical. If you let go too soon or too late, the baton will fall. This is also true in life. Frequently, we're good learners but terrible teachers. When it comes to passing on what we have lived and learned, we sometimes drop the baton ourselves—or worse yet, we never even attempt to hand it off.

This final lesson on creating a legacy focuses on the critical element of mentoring—passing our legacy to those who will come after us. Unlike a relay, this passing of the legacy is not a moment but a lifelong attitude of mentoring others to carry on the tradition we received.

**What kind of legacy for tomorrow are you creating today?
When the next generation looks back on your life, how
will they remember you?**

**Will your children and friends remember you for having
mentored them by etching your affirmations in stone and
writing your criticisms in dust?**

Such mentoring represents a fabulous legacy to leave behind.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. People Who Molded Us: Four Major Influences

We can discern four general categories of influences from childhood, through adolescence, and into adulthood.

The first category is *parents or relatives*, including stepparents or extended family. The second category is *teachers or instructors*. This may even include coaches, tutors, or school teachers who left an impression on us. The third category is a *spouse or children*. Though spouses have a unique way of holding us accountable, nobody reflects our own weaknesses and idiosyncrasies like our own kids. The final category is *friends or mentors*. Friends are people with



Quotable

*A good mentor
believes in you
even when you're
not around. He or
she is a voice of
encouragement.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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whom we connect based on mutual interests, gifts, and life situations. Mentors, however, show us the love of a parent, the instruction of a teacher, and the companionship of a friend.



GETTING TO THE ROOT

“Mentor” in the New Testament

Webster’s defines a *mentor* as “a trusted counselor or guide,” a “tutor” or “coach.”¹ Although the word *mentor* is not found in the Bible, various synonyms are used in relation to the Christian life. The child’s tutor, or *paidagogos*, was not merely a teacher but the person responsible for leading a young boy, overseeing his conduct, and serving as custodian, much like a nanny today.² The word is used three times in the New Testament, twice to describe the temporary role of the law in leading us to Christ (Galatians 3:24–25), and once in reference to various teachers that contribute to the growth of new believers (1 Corinthians 4:15).

Another New Testament synonym for *mentor* is *didaskalos*, often translated “teacher.”³ In Hebrews 5:12 the author complained that by this point in their Christian life his readers ought to be teachers themselves, but because of their immaturity they still needed teachers. In contrast, Paul’s words to Timothy illustrate the ideal model of mentoring relationships: “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2). As these examples of *paidagogos* and *didaskalos* illustrate, mentoring means equipping others to live the Christian life in such a way that those mentored became mentors for others.

2. Marks of a Good Mentor

Acts 18 presents to us six marks of a good mentor. As we examine each of these, we’ll not only consider how our own mentor exhibited these marks but also how we can display these marks to those who will be heirs of our legacy.



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First, *because a mentor cares, he or she stays close* (Acts 18:1–4). Mentors don't operate from behind a lectern or come and go like a friend. Mentors dig in for the long haul and allow the ones being mentored to see how the mentor operates in normal daily activities. Second, *because a mentor is devoted to Scripture, he or she talks straight* (18:5–8). Mentors speak the truth without shame.

Third, *because a mentor takes the long view, he or she hangs in there* (18:9–17). Mentors know their personal needs and the needs of others, and they meet challenges with confidence in God's promises and provision. Fourth, *because a mentor believes in you, you're trusted when he or she is gone* (18:18–23). Because this is where real growth takes place, good mentors set their apprentices free to fly solo.

Fifth, *because a mentor is discerning, he or she sees weaknesses that need strengthening* (18:24–28). However, they are able to do so with a gentle spirit, speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Sixth, *because a mentor is an encourager, he or she endorses the gifts and life of the one being trained* (Acts 18:24–28). The result is that the person being mentored is *empowered* to do his or her best.



LET'S LIVE IT

The baton is in your hand now. It represents your life, including your scars, information you've been blessed to receive, training and correction from those who cared enough to put their arms around you and invest in you personally. It may have been a parent, an instructor, a pastor, or a coach. That person believed in you, built you up, and then released you to carry on by mentoring others.

Have you dropped the baton? Are you holding it close and forgetting that it was passed to you so you could hand it off to others? Are there people in your life who could one day go through this lesson and list you as the most influential person who invested in them?

Are you currently in a mentoring relationship with anyone? If so, which of the six marks of a mentor can you better develop?

ENDNOTES

1. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed. (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 2007), see "mentor."
2. Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2d. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 603.
3. Bauer and others, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 2d. ed., 191.



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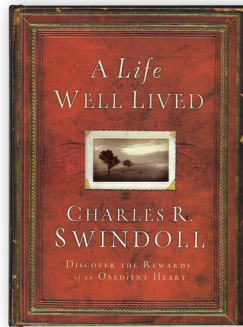
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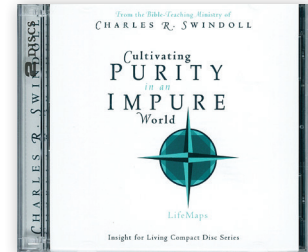
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