



This resource will walk you through a five-step process that move you from knowing about a historical figure to a deep personal connection.

It only takes three pages to outline the process, but it will take considerable time and reflection to complete.

Developing a Biblical Mentor

One of my convictions is that God filled the Scriptures with the record of men and women we would powerfully identify with. They provide more than encouragement and inspiration. I believe God intends for many of them to become personal mentors in our lives—mentors as real and as specific as any in our lives.

You will recognize potential biblical mentors because something about their wiring, the situations they faced, or even the mistakes they made resonates deeply in your spirit. The story of their lives stirs the deep longings in your life. They are your favorite people to study or teach about. And, when you study them closely, you find that their lives speak to you on multiple levels.

Just as you would learn from any historical mentor, biblical mentors can offer wisdom for decisions you need to make, model ways of living you need to learn from, and even demonstrate specific methods that would enhance the impact of your life.

So, the question is, how do you develop a mentoring relationship with a historical figure? I suggest that the key is to study them so deeply that you can begin to imagine what they would say if they faced a situation or decision that you face. Or, to say it another way, move so deeply into the story of their lives that you move beyond words on the page into a relational encounter.

Here are five steps for developing your biblical mentors.

one

Identify Every Passage that records anything about this person.

- a. Use a Bible software or internet-based program to locate all of these passages.
- b. Gather those passages into a single document and print them with large margins so that you can make notes. (I have created a notebook for each of my biblical mentors that I can refer to, add to, etc.)

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two

Develop a time-line of his or her life.

- a. **EVENTS:** Itemize every significant event, decision, circumstance, and relational encounter you can find about their life.
(How: Use the outline feature in your word processor or use post-it-notes™. Group items into logical chapters.)
- b. **TURNING POINTS:** Of all the events in their life, highlight the ones that were pivot points, moments after which things were different. Can you see any patterns among these turning points? Turning points can be positive or negative moments that marked them deeply. They are moments of divine intervention, as well as, human frailty. Incidents like these are sign posts on God’s developmental journey of a leader’s life.
*(If are familiar with *Making of a Leader*, by J. Robert Clinton, take it a step further and try to identify as many process items as you can find among those critical incidents.)*
- c. **LESSONS:** Considering these chapters and turning points of their life, try to identify and name any *significant lessons* s/he might have **learned**. (Lessons could include anything they learned about God, about leadership, about their calling, about their faults or flaws, about other people, about the message of the kingdom... anything that shaped them. Key: be specific! Avoid broad general categories, like “prayer.” What specifically was learned?)
- d. **VALUES:** Try to name the 4-6 *core values* that constantly guided the behavior, decisions, ministry, and messages of this leader’s life.
- e. **PARALLELS:** Get Personal. How many *parallels* can you find to your life? How do their lessons speak to you? Do their values challenge your own? What encouragement or invitation do hear from their life?

three

Identify their “Life-Messages”

- a. Every leader develops a few central messages over the course of their lifetime. These life-messages give shape to their influence and legacy.

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- b. To find their life messages, look for laser-like statements of purpose, about the nature of God, about their vision for the kingdom, etc. Look especially for statements or themes that are repeated. You often find them at pivotal moments.
- c. Personalize your observations. How do you respond or react to these life-messages? When could you teach or preach on them?

four

Identify their Unique Methodologies

- a. Over time, effective leaders develop a set of unique methodologies. They specific methods or approaches that result in unique fruitfulness and are usually life-giving to the leader him or herself.
- b. What unique methodologies can you identify in your biblical mentor? Log both the method and place(s) where you can see it in action. While you are at it, describe the results of those methods.
- c. Are any of these methods reproduced in the lives of their protégé(s)?
[example: Barnabas consistently identified and mentored emerging leaders. Paul is most famous. Paul went on to repeat the same approach with others like Timothy, Silas, Ephaphroditus, etc.]

five

Create Your Life Messages

- a. Try to name some of your own life messages similar to what you see in your biblical mentor. How do those messages shape your behavior on a regular basis?
- b. What teaching insights, Bible Studies, or teaching/ preaching series could you develop from your study of this leader?
- c. Don't stop learning from this leader. Continue adding to and refining your life messages as you study this leader over time.

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