



SESSION 3
Training To Be A Trainer
----STUDY GUIDE----



Key Verse

*¹⁶ Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching.
Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself
and your hearers.*

— 1 Timothy 4: 16

Opening Prayer

We give you thanks, most gracious God, for the beauty of earth and sky and sea; for the richness of mountains, plains, and rivers; for the songs of birds and the loveliness of flowers. We praise you for these good gifts and pray that we may safeguard them for our posterity. Grant that we may continue to grow in our grateful enjoyment of your abundant creation, to the honor and glory of your Name, now and for ever. Amen. BCP. 840.

Introduction

Let us begin by asking: what is a mentor? I would define a mentor as a more experienced person who comes alongside another to help them grow and flourish in their potential. The word mentor is helpful to consider as we embrace a richer New Testament word: disciple. In the previous session we defined a disciple as a follower, a learner, and one who imitates the character and conduct of their leader. But a critical need for our day is the understanding that being a disciple always has an end that points beyond ourselves. A fully activated and growing disciple of Christ becomes a disciple-maker. This is the end that Paul has in mind for him; not simply for Timothy to remember his discipleship under Paul, but for his discipleship to prepare him to disciple others.

To amend slightly the definition above of a mentor, we might say a disciple is the following: a more experienced Christian who comes alongside another to help them grow and flourish in their potential as a believer. Disciples become disciple-makers.

We want a church that is actively and unabashedly cultivating a common life wherein mature believers are investing in others such that everyone is encouraged, equipped, and employed to grow in Christ and to help others grow as well.

► **ENCOURAGED** with warm affection and clear confidence

1. As we move deeper into Paul's letters to Timothy and read his urgent words to his young mentee, are you more keenly aware of examples of mentorship and leadership around you?
2. A growing self-awareness can be overwhelmed by emotion. Discuss with your group some practices that have helped you to be still, to pay attention to your feelings and to what may lie beneath. Is prayer part of your daily practice?

 **WATCH THE VIDEO**

The video is called "Session 3: Training to Be a Trainer" and can be found on www.sjd.org/life-study and <https://teachingcenter.sjd.org>

 **VIDEO NOTES**

It Starts Closest to Home. We often think that if we are called into deeper faith, we need to look out beyond our circle of current relationships. Most often, however, the path to spiritual growth and the opportunities to disciple others begins closest to home. Spouses, children, friends, co-workers... there are people already close by.

Know Thyself! Be self-aware. Self-criticism is necessary for growth and maturity. We cannot lead anyone else well, if we're not first leading ourselves. Emotions are often a window into what is going on deeper inside us. Emotions can overwhelm reason if we are not self-aware.

Training in Godliness Comes from Perseverance not Popularity. The perceived success or popularity of others should not be our goal. Do not fall for popular ideas that contradict the gospel or be tempted by money or other creature comforts. It is enough – more than enough – to be content with pursuing godliness.

► **EQUIPPED** with his word to carry out his ministry

3. Read 1 Timothy 4: 7-16. Does Paul sound like a trainer or coach, exhorting a youthful charge to keep going, in these verses? What does it mean to train in godliness?
4. In 1 Timothy 5, Paul dwells on the concerns of pastoral ministry. How does practical advice on respecting elders and caring for the widowed and needy underline the importance of leadership?
5. Why do you think Paul cautions Timothy against being too hasty in promoting people in 5:22-24?
6. Paul's final charge to Timothy is to "fight the good fight of the faith" (6:12) and "guard the deposit entrusted to you" (6:21). Does he sound like a coach on game day? But in this fight, are we called to win or to persevere? Battles on the

gridiron are measured in trophies and medals – is achieving the Lord’s work ever measured?

► **EMPLOYED** as servant leaders to usher in the kingdom of God


7. Read Mark 1:16-17. How do we see the end of Jesus’ ministry with his disciple already in the beginning? How might these verses challenge or encourage us as the church today?

8. Do you have an imitable life – a life worthy of imitation? If so, it is only by the grace of God and only to him do we point. Who has been a mentor to you in the Christian faith? Who has helped you move deeper into the Life that Truly is Life? Might you be that one for someone else?

Closing Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, who in Christ hast revealed thy glory among the nations: Preserve the works of thy mercy, that thy Church throughout the world may persevere with steadfast faith in the confession of thy Name; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.
BCP. 183



*A fully activated and growing
disciple of Christ becomes a
disciple-maker. *



SESSION 3

Devotions

Day 11: Leadership Begins at Home

⁴ He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, ⁵ for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?

—1 Timothy 3:4–5

Parenting is perhaps the most demanding calling for emerging kingdom leaders. It is also humbling because there is no pay, no status, and no accolades for sleepless nights and thankless service. Parenting also requires tremendous physical, emotional, and spiritual energy. Who has more calloused knees than a faithful parent? Yet, such dedication combined with appropriate, consistent discipline usually results in respectful, productive, and joyful children who trust the Lord. Godly parenting pays off and can build leadership potential.

However, Paul's instructions are not a black-and-white mandate that our families must be perfect. Not at all. Rather, we must recognize that our homes are where we have the greatest influence in discipleship. What if you have a teenager acting out or questioning their faith? While others may comment on your family and parenting, be less concerned with outsiders' opinions, and be more invested in your family's souls. Trying to force your family to conform to an image will only cause more rifts and even rebellion. You are also not obligated to share all that goes on at home, as your family's privacy should be protected.

Your children are your primary investment in the kingdom and should never be overlooked for more "important" endeavors. So is your marriage. In Ephesians 5, Paul eloquently compares a husband and wife to Christ and his bride, the church. Your marriage *is* ministry, and the intimacy you share will impact everything else you do, including your children's well-being. Furthermore, we need our inner circle to be a supportive, safe haven that we can return to when leadership responsibilities start to take a toll. Home should be a refuge, even if it is not always idyllic. Servant leadership begins at home.

Respond: *Heavenly Father, please give me the strength, wisdom, and courage to focus on my family first. I pray for the well-being of every member, for their protection, and for physical provision. May your unconditional love for each of us be reflected in our love for one another and, in turn, for this broken and hurting world that desperately needs your Son.*

Day 12: Teach with Your Life

¹¹ Command and teach these things. ¹² Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. ¹³ Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. ¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.

— 1 Timothy 4:11–14

Two themes that come up again and again in 1 and 2 Timothy are leading by example and teaching others how to live in and for Christ. Regardless of your age, place, or position, this is your responsibility as a believer. Whether you have gone to seminary or graduated high school, you can inspire and educate others to know Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Pause for a moment and consider the men and women of faith who introduced you to Jesus. What about them caught your attention? What did they possess that captured your heart with hope? What conversations with them awakened something in your soul? I can think of several people God used to lead me to faith, some of whom I never met.

One was a Young Life leader, probably no older than Timothy, who was always filled with energy, joy, and love for wayward kids. His passion for having fun sparked something in my introverted, serious self that I didn't know existed. Another was an assistant pastor at a church I attended in my twenties following a painful, disorienting divorce. She invited me to study a book with her over coffee every week. Because she called out something in me

that I couldn't see in myself, I began to believe that I, too, could become a ministry leader.

These two individuals were quite different, but both sparked something in me that pointed me to Jesus and my place in the kingdom. I also love books and have been deeply challenged and changed by numerous writers, to whom I am eternally grateful. What about you? Spend time contemplating your role models in the faith, then consider how your life and leadership might impact others. You may never know the difference your walk makes to others whose lives look vastly different from your own.

Respond: *Lord, I confess that sometimes I fall back in my faith because I don't see the fruit of my labor. I pray that you would once again open my eyes to opportunities to teach your Word and wholeheartedly persevere on the only path worth following—life with you.*

Day 13: Know Thyself

¹⁶ *Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.*

— 1 Timothy 4:16

As humans, we are often disappointed by our own reactions and behavior. While we may blame fatigue or stress, our natural self continues to make unwanted appearances in the form of boasting, lying, perfectionism, over-functioning, defensiveness, and so on. On one hand, it's important for leaders to normalize sin so shame doesn't take root, which can lead to hiding. On the other hand, we don't want to become so conceited that we deny our sin even exists. The Pharisees were famous for self-righteousness, and Jesus would have none of it.

Paul acknowledges his own struggles in Romans 7: *"For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out."* He confesses his humanity but doesn't excuse it. In our Scripture today and throughout the Pastoral Letters, Paul charges Timothy to strive for godliness.

As servant leaders in Christ, how do we live as sinners yet hold positions of power and influence in God's church? How do we maintain a pure heart and a good conscience, so our teaching isn't influenced by our personal wants, needs, and desires?

We remember that we live under grace, train our minds to stay fixed on truth, and watch our behavior closely. It's a delicate balance between holy confidence and active repentance. Being aware of our tendencies toward self-protection, self-knowledge,

self-satisfaction, and a host of other “self-sins” requires courage, humility, confession, and a willingness to make amends as needed.

Paul is open about his shortcomings so they don’t overpower or define him. He writes in Ephesians 5:13–14 that anything brought into the light of Christ becomes light as well. In other words, living transparently before God and others (as appropriate) heals our souls, and protects our relationships, which are priceless in effectively sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Reflect: *How well do you recognize your own shadow side? Are you mature enough to turn to Christ when it emerges and respond from your true self instead? Self-awareness and self-absorption are two very different attitudes. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness to uncover any blind spots that might be hindering you from leading with a kingdom mindset.*

Day 14: Rescuing versus Empowering

⁸ But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

– 1 Timothy 5:8

As servant leaders in the household of God, we are called to meet the needs of those we lead – emotionally, spiritually, and financially. Many of us enjoy solving problems and protecting people from pain. That’s a good thing. However, even if we have abundant resources in terms of skills, patience, time, or money, excellent leadership is more about pointing people to Christ than helping them feel better in the moment. It’s a fine line.

Paul makes it abundantly clear that our immediate families and our spiritual families require our love and devotion, as well as our attention and sacrifice. That said, we must use discernment in determining what helps others and what holds people back from growing into their full potential in Christ. Unless we uphold our higher calling to develop mature disciples, it’s easy to fall into “rescuing” with our resources rather than empowering with the resources available through the Holy Spirit. Rescuing looks good and feels good because we often see immediate results. But our failure to remind those we lead that they, too, are responsible for themselves robs them from realizing their potential, destroys their relationships, and thwarts their calling.

Plenty of people will try to take advantage of you and the church. Many of us know some people with a spirit of entitlement, or others who choose to be lazy. Paul isn’t referring to repeatedly saving people from the consequences of bad decisions or

behavior. Like the prodigal son in Luke, we allow others to make choices but always celebrate their return with joy and grace. Discerning the difference between real needs and felt needs is critical if our goal is to help others grow in their faith.

Where is God calling you to serve today? Whether you receive a phone call from a friend in crisis, your teenager gets fired from her part-time job, or your mentee keeps missing coffee dates – pause and pray. Before rushing in with all the answers, take a moment to ask the Lord for his perspective. What response will serve the individual’s faith and future? We don’t have all the answers, and we can’t prevent our loved ones from experiencing hardship, loss, or suffering. But we can provide the comfort of our care and seek the divine wisdom that reminds them of our all-knowing, ever-loving heavenly Father.

Reflect: *Consider a time when suffering the consequences of your own poor decisions resulted in growing closer to God. What else changed in your life as a result? Perhaps pull out a journal and thank God for how he allowed you to experience discomfort for the sake of becoming more like Jesus.*

Day 15: Godly Contentment

⁶ But godliness with contentment is great gain, ⁷ for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.

⁸ But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

– 1 Timothy 6:6–10

What is your honest reaction when you read the New Testament warnings about the danger of money? Do you dismiss them as irrelevant to you? I used to believe that material possessions weren't important, and I often said that if I had enough money to buy books and coffee, all would be well! How naive. The years have brought family medical concerns, desires for more education and life experiences, and fears that I would not be able to retire in my beloved town that has grown terribly expensive. Money has become indispensable and a consideration in many decisions.

Yet has money become an idol? I don't believe so, but when my fear starts to override my faith, and I lie awake at night wondering how much is enough, then I'm no longer trusting God and his care for my life. The Bible calls us to be good stewards of all we are given, including our choices concerning leadership opportunities, and this often involves financial consideration. But money should never be the only consideration. If our need for money causes us to make decisions or seek a position outside of God's will, then it becomes evil.

Jesus teaches us to pray, “Lead us not into temptation” (Matthew 6:13). If you believe that money will never come between you and God, then you should be particularly alert to the possibility. One thing to remember about Satan is that he is crafty. He watches for our weaknesses, then blindsides us with temptations or distractions we didn’t realize posed a danger. Money is at the top of his list. Why? Because human beings crave comfort and security. We are also prone to power and control. Money offers the illusion that we are self-sufficient, and money can easily become an idol.

How do we keep our hearts in check when it comes to financial need versus want? As Dallas Willard says, we develop a “faith of desperation—trusting faith—[that] digs in, holds on, clings tight, and says, ‘I don’t care what’s going to happen, I am holding on to God!’”³ Often God allows us to become desperate so we learn how to trust his sovereignty and provision. Job and Jacob both experienced this kind of soul transformation, and it resulted in spiritual freedom. Willard makes the life-changing observation that only in our moment of need, not before nor after, can we experience the reality of God for ourselves. This is when our reliance on anything but God, including money, fades into a secondhand faith that we can happily leave behind.

Respond: *Lord Jesus, you came that I might know there is only one way to live an abundant and free life. You are the way, the truth, and the life. I pray that in moments of desperation, I instinctively turn to you to meet every need and restore my contentment. I release my desire to understand all that happens in my life and the world around me and relocate my trust in you alone. Thank you, Jesus. Amen.*

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal lines. The top line is dashed, and the remaining 19 lines are solid.