

MENTORING OTHERS

“So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.”—1 CORINTHIANS 3:7

In the spiritual life of others it is bringing them into dependency upon God that is our goal. To prompt people into a dependency on us may ensure we acquire their cooperation and get our plans implemented with little fuss, but we will have created a cult. It may be founded on sound orthodox theology, but will never take them beyond spiritual babyhood to a healthy, wholesome maturity in Christ.

In the opening verse, Paul is stating that we are servants, but it is God who accomplishes His purpose through us. We may play a role in people coming to Christ, but the sooner we wean them from dependence on us and bring them to dependency on God, the sooner we will introduce them to spiritual maturity and usefulness. We should always relate to each other in mutual respect, but must always acknowledge only one Lord, Christ Himself, and only one source of strength, Christ Himself.

We should never be afraid of letting people discover their own weaknesses. To fail is almost certainly to grow, but that is something we cannot teach. Though they may understand it, it will only become a propositional fact, which they will need to learn in their own experience. Again and again, it has been when people discover their own inherent weakness that God has broken in with the revelation of His strength. This has been true, not only in Scripture but throughout

the history of the Christian church, and lies at the root of almost any great work and movement of God.

Some years ago, Dr. V. R. Edman, then president of Wheaton College in Illinois, wrote a book entitled, “They Found the Secret”. The book looks at twenty people who have made a marked impact for God. In his introduction, Edman makes an interesting observation: “The details of their experiences are usually quite different; yet as we listen to their stories and watch their lives, either in our reading or in our contact with them, we begin to see a pattern which reveals their secret. Out of discouragement and defeat they have come into victory. Out of weakness and weariness they have been made strong. Out of ineffectiveness and apparent uselessness they have become efficient and enthusiastic.”

“The pattern seems to be: self-centeredness, self-effort, increasing inner dissatisfaction and outer discouragement, a temptation to give it all up because there is no better way; and then finding the Spirit of God to be their strength, their guide, their confidence and companion – in a word, their life.” Our goal in mentoring others is always to lead them into complete dependency on Christ who, in our obedience to Him, becomes our life.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, I pray for everyone to discover how complete dependence on You is what brings them into a deeper experience of You.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I steering people to dependence on God or allowing them to rely on my words?