

## LESSON 6

# How to Mentor and Be Mentored

2 Timothy 2:1–2; Acts 18:24–28

*You, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also, 2 Timothy 2:1–2.*

**Class Overview:** Spiritual growth is never meant to happen in isolation; it flourishes in relationships. From Paul’s words to Timothy (2 Timothy 2:1–2) to the quiet example of Aquila and Priscilla guiding Apollos (Acts 18:24–28), Scripture shows that mentoring is God’s method for multiplying faith. Every Christian should be both a learner and a teacher, strengthened by others while helping others grow. Mentoring is not about hierarchy but about humility and investment; it’s the passing of truth, wisdom, and encouragement from one generation to the next. This lesson challenges us to build intentional relationships that strengthen disciples, reproduce ministry, and carry the gospel forward.

### **Class Objectives:**

By the end of this class, you should be able to:

1. Explain Paul’s model of spiritual multiplication in 2 Timothy 2:1–2 and identify how it applies in the local church today.
2. Describe how Aquila and Priscilla’s relationship with Apollos (Acts 18:24–26) demonstrates wisdom, humility, and grace in guiding others.
3. Understand that every Christian should both seek guidance from mentors and invest in others to continue the chain of discipleship.
4. Commit to intentional, consistent relationships that include prayer, Scripture study, accountability, and encouragement.
5. Learn to offer correction and guidance in a spirit of gentleness and love, following the example of Aquila and Priscilla.
6. Identify one person to learn from and one person to mentor, taking an intentional step this week to begin those relationships.

## Introduction:

WHEN I FIRST STARTED PREACHING AT AGE 21, I was young, nervous, and inexperienced. I remember standing before the congregation one Sunday evening, trying to deliver a lesson on the book of Hosea that I had prepared for days. It didn't go well. My voice shook, my thoughts were scattered, and the lesson lasted about ten minutes. I felt utterly defeated. Later, one of the deacons in the congregation was standing in the back near the entryway. I can still see him walking toward me with his familiar smile, putting his arm around my shoulder, and saying, "You did well. Keep going. You're gonna be great."

That man, who recently passed away after a brief battle with a rare cancer, became a mentor and my best friend. He didn't just critique me; he invested in me. He never made me feel small; he helped me grow. To this day, I thank God for that relationship because it shaped not only my preaching but also my heart for ministry.

We all need people like that in our lives, people who help us grow in faith, character, and service. And just as importantly, others need *us* to be that person for them. Mentoring is the heartbeat of spiritual growth. It's how faith is passed from one generation to the next, not just through sermons or classes, but through relationships of trust, love, and accountability.

Paul understood this when he wrote to Timothy, *you, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also* (2 Timothy 2:1–2). In that one verse, we see four generations of faith: Paul, Timothy, faithful men, and those they would teach. This is God's blueprint for spiritual multiplication. The faith we've received is not meant to stop with us; it's intended to continue through us.

We see this same pattern in Acts 18, where Aquila and Priscilla take Apollos aside and mentor him privately. They help him understand "the way of God more accurately," and as a result, Apollos becomes a powerful teacher of the gospel. Mentoring fosters maturity; it transforms learners into leaders.

So today, as we explore this lesson, we'll ask two key questions: *Who is pouring into you?* and *Who are you pouring into?* Every Christian should be both a student and a teacher—learning from others while helping others grow. That's how the church stays strong, how the mission moves forward, and how God's grace continues from one generation to the next.

## The Pattern of Spiritual Multiplication

Paul's words to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:1–2 capture one of the clearest pictures of mentorship in all of Scripture: *you, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.* These verses describe a chain of discipleship that extends across generations: Paul to Timothy, Timothy to faithful men, and those men to others. This is not just addition; it's multiplication. Paul's goal was not merely to teach Timothy; it was to equip Timothy to teach others who would then teach others again.

Notice how this begins: *be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.* Mentoring starts with strength rooted in grace, not ego. Paul isn't telling Timothy to be strong in personality, intellect, or experience, but in grace: the divine strength that flows from a relationship with Christ. True mentoring is never about creating followers of us; it's about developing followers of Jesus.

Paul's instruction, *what you have heard from me... commit to faithful men,* shows that mentoring is intentional. The word *commit* (or *entrust*) carries the idea of depositing something valuable for safekeeping. The gospel is a treasure, and we are stewards of that treasure. Mentorship is how that treasure is carefully, personally, and purposefully passed along.

Imagine a relay race. The runners' success depends not only on speed but on how well they pass the baton. Drop the baton, and the race is lost. Paul is urging Timothy: *Don't drop the baton.* What you've received, pass on faithfully to others who can continue the race after you. Mentoring is the handoff that keeps the mission moving forward.

The verse also reminds us that not everyone is ready for that responsibility. Paul tells Timothy to commit truth to "faithful men,"

those who are reliable, teachable, and committed to growth. Mentorship isn't about popularity or talent; it's about character and faithfulness. It's better to invest deeply in a few faithful people than to spread shallow influence over many.

Practically, this means we should all think in terms of spiritual multiplication. Who poured into you, and who are you pouring into? Who will carry your influence forward after you? For elders, preachers, teachers, parents, and mature Christians, the call is the same: don't let the work stop with you. Train someone to carry it further. For younger believers, the call is to seek guidance and learn from those who have walked faithfully ahead of you.

This is how the gospel has spread for two thousand years: one relationship at a time, from Paul to Timothy, from Timothy to others, and from those others to us. Mentorship isn't a program; it's God's method for multiplying faith.

## **The Power of Mentoring Relationships**

In Acts 18:24–26, we're introduced to a man named Apollos, a gifted, eloquent, and passionate teacher from Alexandria. Luke describes him as *competent in the Scriptures... instructed in the way of the Lord... and speaking and teaching accurately about Jesus, although he only knew John's baptism* (vv. 24–25). Apollos had zeal and ability, but his knowledge was incomplete. Then something beautiful happened: *after Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the way of God to him more accurately* (v. 26).

This moment illustrates the quiet, transformative power of mentoring. Aquila and Priscilla didn't embarrass Apollos or argue publicly. They didn't correct him harshly or undermine his confidence. Instead, they *took him aside*, privately, gently, and personally, and helped him grow. They combined truth with love, instruction with grace. That's the heart of mentoring.

Mentoring always involves a relationship. It's not about lectures or criticism from a distance; it's about walking alongside someone, speaking truth into their life, and helping them see what they can't yet see. Aquila and Priscilla modeled humility as well; they were tentmakers,

not apostles or scholars. But their love for God and understanding of His Word made them powerful mentors.

We often underestimate the power of quiet, personal investment. It doesn't need to be dramatic or formal. It could be an older Christian regularly meeting with a younger Christian for Bible study and prayer. It might be a godly couple mentoring a young couple on marriage and family. It could be an experienced teacher guiding someone new on how to study and lead effectively. The strongest churches are those where these kinds of relationships happen naturally, across generations, genders, and experiences.

For those who are mature in the faith, this passage challenges us to recognize *potential*. Aquila and Priscilla could have ignored Apollos or assumed someone else would correct him. Instead, they saw what he *could become* with guidance. For those who are younger in faith, this passage calls us to accept *correction*. Apollos didn't resist or take offense; he listened and learned, and as we'll see next, his growth multiplied his impact.

Mentoring relationships like this strengthen the whole body. When we take time to teach, encourage, and guide others, the truth of God's Word is preserved, and His people are equipped for greater service.

## **The Partnership of Learning and Teaching**

After Aquila and Priscilla mentored Apollos, something powerful happened. Luke writes, *when he wanted to cross over to Achaia, the brothers and sisters wrote to the disciples to welcome him. After he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating through the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah* (Acts 18:27–28).

This is the fruit of mentoring. The man who once had incomplete knowledge of the gospel became a confident and effective defender of the faith. Notice that the story didn't end with correction; it continued with *multiplication*. Aquila and Priscilla poured into Apollos; he then went out and poured into others. That's the divine pattern: those who are taught become teachers; those who are strengthened become strengtheners.

This partnership between learning and teaching is what keeps the church vibrant and healthy. The Christian life is never static. We are constantly learning from others and teaching others. There's never a point where we arrive. Even Paul, late in his ministry, told the Philippians, *not that I have already reached the goal or am already perfect, but I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus* (Philippians 3:12). The humble heart is always teachable. The grateful heart is always eager to teach.

Mentoring is not a one-way street; it's a cycle of growth. Apollos's example shows us that we can both receive and give, learning from those ahead of us and helping those behind us. Healthy churches are filled with this rhythm: older women teaching younger women (Titus 2:3–5), experienced Christians guiding new converts, parents training children in faith, and younger members bringing fresh energy and encouragement to their mentors. Each generation strengthens the next.

Reflecting on my own experience as a young preacher, there was a group of elders and an experienced preacher I worked with in Indiana who believed in me before I believed in myself. Those two elders welcomed me into their homes, stopped by my office for encouragement, took me to gospel meetings, and studied with me. The preacher worked with me tirelessly day after day. Both elders have since passed away, and the preacher is now aging, but they truly transformed my life. Whenever I have the opportunity, I mentor others in the same way: passing on the encouragement I once received. That's precisely what God intends.

We all need both sides of this partnership. We need mentors who challenge and shape us, and we need to invest in others intentionally. This could mean helping a new Christian develop in prayer or Bible study. It might involve guiding a younger couple through marriage challenges. It could also mean training a young teacher, deacon, or future elder. When we invest in others, we expand our ministry.

Apollos's story reminds us that when mentoring relationships thrive, the gospel advances. The church gains strength, truth spreads, and faith is reproduced. Each of us is called to take what we've received and pass it on: faithfully, humbly, and with love.

## **Practical Application:**

### **How to Mentor and Be Mentored**

Mentoring isn't a formal program or title; it's a way of life centered on discipleship. It occurs when we intentionally seek to help a brother or sister grow in faith. Every Christian can take part in this, regardless of age, experience, or church role. Here are some practical ways to get started:

#### **1. Seek Out a Mentor**

Identify someone whose faith, wisdom, or example inspires you. Ask them to meet occasionally for conversation, prayer, or Bible study. Don't wait for them to approach you; take initiative. A simple, "I'd love to learn from you. Could we meet once a month?" can begin a life-changing relationship.

#### **2. Be a Mentor to Someone Else**

Look for someone younger in faith or life experience, a new Christian, a young couple, a teen, or even a peer. Ask how you can help them grow. Mentoring doesn't mean you have all the answers; it means you're willing to walk beside someone, listen, and point them toward Christ.

#### **3. Make Mentoring Intentional**

Set aside time. Meet regularly, even if it's just once a month. Study a book of the Bible together, share prayer requests, and talk about challenges. Don't let busyness crowd it out. Mentorship thrives on consistency.

#### **4. Keep It Personal and Relational**

Notice how Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos *aside*. Mentoring works best in safe, honest, and humble spaces. Be approachable. Share your own struggles and lessons learned. Authenticity builds trust.

#### **5. Multiply the Pattern**

Encourage those you mentor to do the same for others. This is the heartbeat of 2 Timothy 2:2, passing faith forward. When you help one person grow, you strengthen generations to come.

#### **6. Let Grace Lead**

Paul told Timothy, "*Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*"

Remember, mentoring is not about control or correction alone; it's about grace. Extend patience, forgiveness, and encouragement as others grow, just as others once did for you.

## **Challenge**

This week, identify one person you can learn from and one person you can invest in. Reach out to both. Begin a conversation, schedule a meeting, or send a note of encouragement. Then, pray that God will use these relationships to strengthen faith, deepen love, and multiply the gospel for years to come.

## **Conclusion**

The story of Paul and Timothy, along with Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos, reminds us that faith was never meant to be lived alone. God designed spiritual growth to happen through relationships. We become stronger when someone invests in us, and we grow deeper when we invest in others. Mentoring is the link that connects one generation of faith to the next.

We've seen that spiritual multiplication starts with grace, as Paul told Timothy: *Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*. It progresses through intentional relationships, such as those of Aquila and Priscilla, who patiently guided Apollos toward a deeper understanding of the truth. And it produces fruit when those who are taught begin teaching others, creating a continuous chain of discipleship that advances the gospel.

Every Christian has a role in that chain. Some of us need to be humble enough to seek guidance and correction, while others need to be courageous enough to step forward and mentor those coming behind. When the church embraces both roles, learning and teaching, receiving and giving, the result is a living picture of Christ's body working together in grace and truth.

Don't let your faith end with you. Take what you've learned and pass it on. Find a mentor who will strengthen you and a disciple who will challenge you. Build intentional relationships that deepen faith, expand ministry, and honor God. When we do this, we keep the chain of grace



alive, from one believer to another, from one generation to the next, until the Lord returns.

**For Discussion**

1. Who has been a mentor or spiritual influence in your life? What specific qualities or actions made their influence meaningful?

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2. Paul instructed Timothy to pass on what he had learned to others who would teach others also. What does this passage reveal about how God intends faith to spread? How can we live out that pattern today?

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3. How did Aquila and Priscilla model wise and loving mentorship with Apollos? What lessons can we learn from their example about how to approach others who need guidance or correction?

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4. Apollos grew under mentorship, then used his growth to strengthen others. How have you seen this “learn and teach” cycle at work in your own life or in your congregation?

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5. What are some simple ways to start a mentoring relationship, whether you're a mentor or a learner? What obstacles sometimes prevent us from forming those connections, and how can we overcome them?

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6. Who is one person you could learn from, and one person you could invest in this month? What first step could you take this week to begin those relationships?

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