

Who Are The Mentors In Your Life?

2 Kings 2:1-15

Who are the mentors in your life?

Why is having a mentor important?

Mentors serve as a source of knowledge

Mentors can help set goals

Mentors maintain accountability

Mentors offer encouragement

Mentors help make connections

Mentors can provide constructive feedback

What Does The Bible Say?

15 Then the Lord told him, “Go back the same way you came, and travel to the wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive there, anoint Hazael to be king of Aram. 16 Then anoint Jehu

grandson of Nimshi to be king of Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from the town of Abel-meholah to replace you as my prophet. (1 Kings 19:15–16 NLT)

Who is going to replace you?

This anointing is the only instance in the Bible of a prophet consecrating another prophet.

Have you ever felt the world is getting worse? Elijah did.

Elijah wanted to give up; however, God said no.

3 Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there. 4 Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, Lord,” he said. “Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died.” (1 Kings 19:3–4 NLT)

God wants him to equip the next generation by anointing two kings and a prophet.

How Can You Obey?

This passage is the Old Testament version of 2 Timothy 2:2.

2 You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others. (2 Timothy 2:2 NLT)

What Does The Bible Say?

19 So Elijah went and found Elisha son of Shaphat plowing a field. There were twelve teams of oxen in the field, and Elisha was plowing with the twelfth team. (1 Kings 19:19 NLT)

Elisha was probably better off than most Israelites.

God calls busy people. Moses, Gideon, David, Nehemiah, Amos, and the apostles were working when God called them.

20 Elisha left the oxen standing there, ran after Elijah, and said to him, “First let me go and kiss my father and mother good-bye, and then I will go with you!”

Elijah replied, “Go on back, but think about what I have done to you.” (1 Kings 19:20 NLT)

Elijah’s reply means, “I did not call you, but God did. Am I stopping you? Do as the Lord wants you to do.”

How Can You Obey?

21 So Elisha returned to his oxen and slaughtered them. He used the wood from the plow to build a fire to roast their flesh. He passed around the meat to the townspeople, and they all ate.

Then he went with Elijah as his assistant. (1 Kings 19:21 NLT)

In today’s terminology, Elisha was burning his bridges. He had no intention of returning to his former life.

What Does The Bible Say?

9 When they came to the other side, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me what I can do for you before I am taken away.”

And Elisha replied, “Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit and become your successor.” (2 Kings 2:9 NLT)

Elisha requested the blessing of the firstborn, a double portion.

Elisha desired a double measure of his master’s inner spirit of courage, faithfulness, faith in God, and obedience to God’s will.

16 When the man divides his inheritance, he may not give the larger inheritance to his younger son, the son of the wife he loves, as if he were the firstborn son. 17 He must recognize the rights of his oldest son, the son of the wife he does not love, by

giving him a double portion. He is the first son of his father's virility, and the rights of the firstborn belong to him.

(Deuteronomy 21:16–17 NLT)

Since I am the oldest child, I think this practice should still be in effect.

How Can You Obey?

10 “You have asked a difficult thing,” Elijah replied. “If you see me when I am taken from you, then you will get your request. But if not, then you won't.” (2 Kings 2:10 NLT)

There are always consequences to choices. Your mentor advises you; however, you still have to make good decisions.

Three times Elijah requested that Elisha remain behind in chapter two; however, Elisha would not leave Elijah's side.

11 As they were walking along and talking, suddenly a chariot of fire appeared, drawn by horses of fire. It drove between the two men, separating them, and Elijah was carried by a whirlwind into heaven. 12 Elisha saw it and cried out, “My father! My father! I see the chariots and charioteers of Israel!” And as they disappeared from sight, Elisha tore his clothes in distress. (2 Kings 2:11–12 NLT)

Scripture records at least three instances of Elijah bringing fire from heaven; therefore, it makes sense that God would send fiery horses and a chariot of fire to accompany His servant to glory.

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Explore:

Up until this point in 1 and 2 Kings, the reader has primarily heard of the ministry and service of Elijah. Chapter 2 marks a shift from his ministry to that of Elisha, the one who had faithfully served as an apprentice and assistant to the prophet for seven or eight years. In this chapter, the transition from Elijah to Elisha takes place.

Faithful Believers Determine to Serve God as Long as They Live (2 Kings 2:1-8)

As the time drew near for God to take Elijah to Heaven, both Elijah and Elisha demonstrated faithfulness to the end. Elijah, knowing the time was near, continued to follow God's direction in visiting and encouraging the young prophets he apparently mentored and taught. Elijah had trained and developed the young prophets, including Elisha, wanting God's work to continue and thrive even after he was gone. Verse 1 gives the background for this event, informing the reader of what is about to happen. This was the time when Elijah was to be taken to Heaven in a miraculous fashion—without dying and on a chariot of fire. An exit of this magnitude had not happened since the days of Enoch (Genesis 5:23-24).

The aged prophet Elijah spoke to his young apprentice and instructed him to stay put while he continued on to Bethel. Elisha, also knowing Elijah's time was short and wanting the blessing and endorsement of his beloved mentor, determined to remain with Elijah to the end. The expression, As the Lord

lives... was an oath of sorts and revealed the heart of Elisha for the Lord and for Elijah. Consequently, the two prophets of God made one final journey together and went to Bethel.

Verse 3 indicates word had spread regarding Elijah and his impending “death.” It also relates an awareness of the relationship between the two prophets as the sons or company of the prophets (apprentice prophets) spoke of the fact that Elijah would be taken away from Elisha. The truth was that Elijah would be taken from all of Israel and he would be missed by all the young prophets; not just Elisha. Elisha instructed the young messengers to keep it quiet, possibly not wanting to be reminded of the “dreaded” event that would soon occur.

For a second time, Elijah attempted to leave Elisha behind as he continued his journey. Again Elisha refused to abandon his mentor and the two of them traveled to Jericho (verse 4). Then, for a second time, a group of the sons of the prophets asked

Elisha about his awareness of Elijah being taken away to Heaven. The prophet again requested that they keep silent regarding this news.

For a third time, the aged prophet asked his son in the faith to stay behind as he made his way to the Jordan River. Again, Elisha chose to continue with Elijah, a decision that he would not regret (verse 6). At this point, fifty of the sons of the prophets had a front row seat to an event they would not soon forget (verse 7). In what would be his final miraculous work, Elijah took his cloak, a symbol of his authority, rolled it up and struck the water. The water of the Jordan parted, and Elijah and Elisha crossed on dry ground together (verse 8).

Elisha's faithfulness was rewarded as he received the blessing of God's power to continue the work of God as Elijah had. The parting of the Jordan may remind readers of the crossing of the Red Sea or the nation crossing the Jordan at the arrival into the

Promised Land. Many commentators believe this scenario reveals similarities between Elisha's succession of Elijah and Joshua's succession of Moses (Numbers 27:18–23; 1 Kings 19:15–21). Both successors were chosen by God and endorsed by their mentors.

Explore:

Faithful Believers Seek God's Power to Accomplish God's Work (2 Kings 2:9-15)

After a strategic journey and unwavering determination when Elijah tried to discourage him from going, Elisha was given the opportunity to hear, see, and experience spiritual blessings others were not allowed to experience. When asked what he desired from Elijah, Elisha asked for extra power (a double portion of Elijah's spirit) from God to enable him to accomplish the work God had in store for him (verse 9). Elisha's response

reminds the reader of Solomon's response when God asked Solomon what he wanted God to give him (1 Kings 3:5-9).

In verse 10, the aged prophet informed his successor that this double portion was not his to give and was indeed a hard thing to confer. While Elijah was unable personally to confer this distinct honor upon Elisha, he did inform Elisha that if he witnessed Elijah's being taken away, this would be the sign or evidence that this double portion would indeed be bestowed upon him.

As the two prophets continued to walk and talk, the miraculous happened when Elijah was taken by a whirlwind up into Heaven (verse 11). The details surrounding this event are amazing in and of themselves. Placed in the grand scheme of all the Lord was doing, they become even more amazing. Present at this moment were both chariots of fire and horses of fire. Horses and chariots were the most powerful means of warfare of that day. The fire and the whirlwind were both symbolic of the presence of God.

The whirlwind was likely a storm with lightning and thunder.

The Lord was reminding Elisha of the fact that His presence and power were greater than any military might. Elisha had no reason to fear.

Upon seeing this event unfold before his eyes, Elisha cried out, My father, in verse 12. Elijah had been Elisha's spiritual father. This relationship was both unique and special. Elisha's reference to the chariots of Israel and its horsemen could have been his recognizing that God's power through Elijah had been the true strength of Israel. The same would be said at Elisha's death (2 Kings 13:14). With this cry, Elisha tore his clothes, an act of mourning over the loss of the great prophet.

In verse 13, Elisha seemed speechless. What more could be said? His action of picking up Elijah's cloak was a reminder of the work left for him to do and was symbolic of the work the Lord had given him to do. Scholars believe this cloak was the

same one used by Elijah when he appointed Elisha as his successor (1 Kings 19:19-21). In picking up and taking Elijah's cloak for himself, Elisha took up the work Elijah (and God) left for Him to do.

In verse 14, he took the cloak of Elijah, struck the water, and asked Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah? This was probably a request for God to demonstrate His power just as He had for Elijah. The final miracle of Elijah involved this same cloak as he struck the water and the Jordan River parted for the two men of God to walk across together. Now, the miracle was repeated, an evidence that the power that once rested on Elijah now rested on Elisha. The young prophets who were present recognized God had empowered and endorsed Elisha for his ministry. God recognized and rewarded Elisha's faithfulness. This entire episode is reminiscent of Joshua parting the waters of the Jordan just as Moses his predecessor had done (Joshua 3:7-17). This

was done for the benefit of the prophets and for those who would be expected to follow their leadership.

The respect and honor once given to Elijah by the sons of the prophets was now given to Elisha (verse 15). They recognized not only the position he now filled but also the power and spirit with which he would do it. Out of respect for this newly appointed prophet of God and leader, they bowed to the ground in honor.

Explore:

The key characters in 2 Kings play a significant role in God's plan for Israel. For informational purposes, consider the key details regarding each.

Elijah was one of the most interesting and significant prophets in all of the Bible. In 1 Kings 17:1, he suddenly appeared on the scene challenging King Ahab, the evil, idolatrous king who reigned in the northern kingdom from 874 to 853 BC. Nothing is

known of Elijah's family or upbringing, only the fact that he was from Tishbe. While Elijah is most known for his encounter with the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18, his ministry was comprised of many other significant moments and events. In fact, Elijah was present with Moses at the Transfiguration of Jesus (Matthew 17:3) and is the prophet to whom John the Baptist was likened (Luke 1:17).

Elisha was the successor of Elijah as a prophet in Israel and served in this capacity for approximately 60 years. Elisha was called to follow Elijah in 1 Kings 19 and spent the next several years as the prophet's assistant and protégé. It was during the ministry of Elisha that Baal worship was eradicated in Israel. Elisha's ministry was characterized by humility, a love for the people of Israel, and faithfulness over the course of a lifelong ministry.

Explore:

The sons of the prophets were also known as the company of prophets or the school of prophets. The title is a technical one referring to the members of a prophetic order or guild and had no reference to physical descent from a prophet. During the days of Elijah and Elisha, there were guilds or locations of these prophets in training in Bethel, Jericho, Gilgal, and the hill country of Ephraim. These young servants appeared most often during the ministry of Elisha and served as an extension of, or agents of, the ministry of the prophet.

Explore:

The double portion requested by Elisha can seem like a selfish request if not understood in its proper context. Literally the expression meant according to two shares and is rooted in the legal realm as described in Deuteronomy 21:17. In the Jewish culture, the firstborn son was entitled to a double share of the

inheritance given by the father. Elisha desired a spiritual inheritance in which he received a double share as compared to the others such as the sons of the prophets. He was requesting the opportunity to be Elijah's successor, the one who would carry on the ministry established by the great prophet. In essence, his desire was to be as effective as Elijah had been. An apparent fulfillment of that request resulted in Elisha performing twice as many recorded miracles and prophetic utterances as Elijah.

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Explore:

Overview

Elisha was the apprentice and successor of Elijah. He too ministered in Israel, the Northern Kingdom. During Elisha's life, Ben-Hadad and then Hazael ruled Syria, building a powerful Aramean empire.

The Bible, however, focuses on Elisha and only secondarily on the political and military situation. Stories of Elisha and his

miracles have been the source of thousands of sermons as well as stories for boys and girls.

A Double Portion. When Elijah was taken into heaven alive, Elisha begged to “inherit a double portion of [Elijah’s] spirit” (2 Kings 2:9). The request reflects Old Testament inheritance law: the oldest son and successor of his father was given a double portion. Elisha was asking to succeed Elijah as leading prophet in the land.

Interestingly, the Bible also reports twice as many miracles of Elisha as Elijah (14 compared to 7). They are: (1) separating the Jordan waters, 2:14; (2) healing spring waters, 2:21; (3) cursing jeering young men, 2:24; (4) filling ditches with water and winning a battle, 3:15–26; (5) multiplying a widow’s oil, 4:1–7; (6) promising a pregnancy, 4:14–17; (7) raising a Shunammite’s son from the dead, 4:32–37; (8) making poison harmless, 4:38–41; (9) multiplying loaves, 4:42–44; (10) healing Naaman the

leper, 5:1–19; cursing Gehazi with leprosy, 5:19–27; (11) making an axhead float, 6:1–6; (12) blinding and trapping an Aramean army, 6:8–23; (13) showing his servant an angel army, 6:15–17; (14) and predicting an excess of food for besieged Samaria, 6:24–7:20.

Lawrence O. Richards, *The Teacher's Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987), 266.

Explore:

Elisha's Miracles

There are a number of miracles associated with Elisha—some of them quite different from other miracles in the Bible.

He helps a community in Jericho by curing their foul spring water with salt (2:19–22).

He curses young hooligans who insult him. They challenge him to ascend into heaven—and tease him for his baldness; but his curse results in them being mauled by bears (2:23–24)! This is not just a fit of temper on Elisha’s part. The youngsters are attacking and mocking the authority of God in him.

He advises the kings of Israel and Judah how to trap rain from a flash flood, and so provide water for their armies (3:14–20).

He helps a prophet’s widow pay off her debts by telling her to pour her small amount of oil into her neighbours’ empty jars (4:1–7).

He promises a wealthy but childless woman of Shunem that she will have a son in a year’s time—and she does (4:8–17).

Some years later, the child dies suddenly. The mother rides to Carmel to find Elisha. For immediate help, the prophet sends his servant Gehazi with his staff to lay on the boy’s face. Then he

follows, and stretches himself on the child and restores his life (4:18–37).

When a group of prophets fear their stew is poisoned, Elisha tells them how to make it safe (4:38–41).

He assures his servant that twenty loaves of barley bread and some ears of corn will be enough to feed 100 men. It is so—and there is some left over (4:42–44). This miracle is imitated and amplified by Jesus when he feeds a multitude. In John’s Gospel they call Jesus ‘the Prophet’ because of it.

All these miracles demonstrate God’s power to heal, help or judge. They are all linked with particular people or places as though they were valued and remembered by these communities for many years.

Some of Elisha’s miracles (such as curing a water supply or using a staff for power) echo the great deeds of Moses. Others (like the supply of oil for the widow or raising a child to life) are

similar to the works of Elijah. Most of all, they foreshadow some of the miracles of Jesus, who raises Jairus' daughter to life and feeds a large crowd of people from a few barley loaves.

Unlike Elisha, Jesus does not use curses and acts of revenge—except in his condemnation of the Pharisees for their hypocrisy, and the cursing of a fig tree for its lack of fruit. On both occasions he is expressing God's frustration with pretence.

When Jesus' disciples want to call down fire from heaven on a Samaritan village, he rebukes them (Luke 9:54–55). While Jesus preaches that God will certainly judge people, his own miracles are acts of mercy. As the Bible record unfolds, people get an ever-clearer concept of what God is really like.

Andrew Knowles, *The Bible Guide*, 1st Augsburg books ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 159.

Explore:

KEY TRUTHS:

1. Faithful Believers Serve God as Long as They Live.
2. Faithful Believers Seek God's Power to Accomplish God's Work.

HOW IT FITS: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the

Bible: The events of 2 Kings took place after the kingdom was divided following the reigns of David and Solomon. This section took place around 850 BC and covers the passing of the prophetic torch from Elijah to Elisha.

Explore:

Christianity is about more than going to church and living a good moral life. Being a Christian is about having a vibrant personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Every Sunday School teacher or Bible study leader should want to see each of his or her learners enter into this relationship—their eternal destiny depends on it. As you work toward this goal, keep the following in mind:

Following Christ is about more than a mere decision; it is about a lifelong relationship. Jesus called us to make disciples, not mere decision-makers. Aim for long-term faith, not momentary emotion.

Salvation is a matter of grace, not works. Our works do not save us (Ephesians 2:8-9), nor do they keep us (Galatians 3:2-6).

Good works are a product of salvation, not a prerequisite to it.

Don't confuse sanctification with salvation. Holiness follows salvation; it doesn't precede it. Don't try to impose "Christian" expectations on men and women who don't know Christ.

- Keep it simple. Being born again is not complicated. Here's a simple way to explain it:

- Acknowledge your sinfulness and your need for a Savior (Romans 3:10, 23).

- Trust in Christ's sacrifice for your sins and in His resurrection (Romans 10:9-10).

Surrender your life to God's transforming power (Romans 12:1-2).

Most of all, remember that your job is to tell the truth in a way

others can understand, answer their questions, and give them an opportunity to respond. If you do that faithfully, some will respond and join the band of Christ- followers. When they do, Heaven will rejoice!

Question 1 of 5

What three ways do evolutionists find examples that humans evolved from apes?

Question 2 of 5

Who has mentored you in your life? How have mentors helped you?

Question 3 of 5

Who are you mentoring? What are some steps you can take to mentor someone?

Question 4 of 5

What steps can you start to ensure you will not return to a pre-salvation you?

Question 5 of 5

If your mentor asked you what do you want? What would you request to receive?