

Christ-Centered Mentoring 101

By Dr. Margaret Olubiyi

Upon The Completion of This Course, Student will:

- Understand the concept of mentoring from a biblical perspective.
- Understand The Basics of Mentoring.
- Identify the qualities of a Mentor.
- Understand the role of a Christ-Centered Mentor.
- Understand the differences between discipleship and mentoring.
- Know the different ways to mentor

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a mentor as a trusted counselor or guide. It goes further to illustrate the role of a mentor by making mention of Homer's *The Odyssey*, where a wise man named Mentor is given the task of educating Odysseus' son, Telemachus. When Odysseus went to fight in the Trojan War, he entrusted the care of his kingdom and his son to Mentor, a wise and trusted counselor.

Mentoring is not a new concept, and sometimes it is used interchangeably with coaching and discipling, but they are all different from one another. Although the term "mentor" is not found in the bible, we can cite examples of individuals who took on the role of mentors. The concept of mentoring or mentorship is evident in the life of Paul and, most notably, the Lord Jesus Christ with His disciples. We will touch on the mentoring roles Christ and His disciples played in scripture later in this study.

The Basics of Mentoring From a Biblical Perspective

In any mentoring relationship, be it, secular or faith-based, the concept of mentoring is the same.

1. Fostering a trusting relationship with your mentees is vital in mentoring. Be aware that the mentoring relationship is personal and confidential; therefore, the trust will mostly take time to develop.
2. Clarity; during the mentoring process, it is essential to propose

relevant open-ended questions that will persuade the mentee to open up.

3. Compassion; in the mentoring relationship, genuine concern and empathy by the mentor should always be visible to the mentee. (see below under the role of Christ-centered mentor).

4. Active listening skills are crucial to the mentoring process; your mentee must be sure you comprehend what they are expressing to help them.

5. Support; your mentees must be confident knowing that you are there to direct and support them in their personal and professional endeavors. (see more about support under the role of a Christ-centered mentor).

Definition of Christ-Centered Mentoring

Christ-Centered or Biblical

Mentoring is a relationship established on trust and understanding. It is a process by which mentors offer their experience or expertise from a biblical perspective. Also, biblical mentoring can offer support to others who are less experienced than they are and who desire to grow in their walk with God. They guide the mentee into living a victorious Christian life, learning biblical principles to direct their daily living. A mentor is typically referred to as "an experienced and trusted advisor. He or she can serve as a teacher, counselor, and advocate for those looking up to them for guidance. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the perfect example of a spiritual mentor.

Mentoring From a Biblical Perspective

In the secular field, mentors are recognized to be subject matter experts (SME) within their field of learning. Mentors are professionals that can help individuals navigate both professional and personal obstacles, working with all aspects of the individual's life. The same can be said for biblical mentoring; the principal difference is that

the individual will be mentoring from a Christian perspective. Christ is placed at the center of the mentoring relationship, and the primary goal for mentoring the mentee is to bring them into a closer and more productive relationship with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

The Role of a Christ-Centered Mentor

- **Encouragement** - It is pertinent to uplift the hearts of your mentees; a listening ear and a shoulder to lean on go a long way. Mentoring also encourages spiritual growth. In 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10, Apostle referred to the character of certain brethren in Macedonia. These individuals displayed true brotherly love as they encouraged one another in Christ. We see again in 1 Thessalonians 5:11-15 how Paul encouraged the brethren to comfort, instruct, and support one another as they continue to serve together.
- **Compassion** - Showing empathy and concern in the things that matter to your mentee should always be visible in the relationship.
- **Prayer**: How often do we genuinely pray for others? As a mentor, be ready to stand in the gap for your mentee when necessary. Apostle Paul's letters/epistles often showed how he prayed for the believers (Philippians 1:3-6; 1 Corinthians 1:4, 1 Thessalonians 1:2, 3; 3:10-13; Ephesians 1:16).
- **Training**: As a Christ-centered mentor, your role is also to teach your mentees biblical principles that will help them in living a productive and victorious life for God. Other teachings should include the fundamental doctrines of the Bible: God, Jesus, man, sin, salvation, etc. The mentor does not have to be an expert on these topics, but he should be able to answer basic questions or know where to furnish the answers. It is important to note that training/teaching does not stop with the mentor. You are imparting knowledge to your mentees who are expected to share what they have learned with others.
- **Support**: Your mentees or students must be confident knowing that you are there to direct and support them in their personal and professional pursuits. In the mentoring relationship, supporting and encouraging your

mentee is essential. Some of the individuals you are going to mentor may not have a sound support system (i.e., family, friends, etc.). There will be those who might be rejected because of their Christian faith (you see this a lot in communities around the world, where other religions are dominant.). And so, the only support system they have will be you their mentor. Your genuine and ongoing support is critical to the mentoring relationship.

As mentors, we bring Jesus into the relationship by living out the gospel in our daily lives and following the Holy Spirit's leading in sharing our faith in Christ.

Qualities a Christ-Centered Mentor Should Possess

What are the traits or qualities we should see in a Christ-centered or biblical mentor?

Let us take a look at the following:

1. A Genuine & Matured Christian
2. Effective Communicator (both Verbal & Written)
3. Motivator
4. Good Listener (both Active & Reflective)
5. Nonjudgmental
6. Empathetic & Compassionate
7. Encourager
8. Able to offer constructive feedback
9. Knowledgeable
10. Student of The Bible
11. An Intercessor (praying for others)
12. Flexible
13. Supportive
14. Shows Humility
15. Involved in the Community (outreach, Charities, Church activities, etc.)
16. Godly Man/Woman who takes care of His or Her home and family
17. Being Self-disciplined
18. A lifetime learner (Ongoing bible training via virtual and traditional settings, reads christian and inspirational articles, blogs, books, etc.).
19. Interested in networking and proactively finding resources to help support their mentees.
20. Hospitable: Always ready to receive people into their homes.

21. Being an exceptional example to your mentees (practice what you preach or teach).

Is Christ-Centered Mentoring and Discipleship the Same?

No! They, however, do have similarities that make the two terms often used interchangeably within the church. Mentoring brings to the table advice, expertise, and guidance, and discipleship promotes spiritual investment into the lives of those being discipled.

With Christ-Centered Mentors, the goal is to make their mentees more like them, acquiring the knowledge and understanding of the things of God, but the focus of the discipler is to compel the individual to be more like the Lord Jesus. The goal of discipleship is to help others become the most genuine reflections of God they can be and to become like Jesus in every way. The discipler is not an expertise or subject matter expert in the things of God; he or she is just a follower of Jesus who wants to see others experience the power and love of Christ firsthand. The discipler enters a one-on-one relationship with a recent convert from the new believer's class in church, to guide the new member via the word of God and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

"Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."-Ephesians 5:1-2

The website ralphmayhew.com states, "Discipleship is specific, in that it focuses on one's faith development and spiritual maturity. Discipling starts with the core of things, the worldview, the inside of a person, which influences the outer workings. Mentoring almost occurs the other way around. It starts with the observation of behavior, the discussions about life in general. It then seeks to offer something to that mix, which might help a person move forward in a specific spiritual area but also perhaps in areas of relationships, work, money, health, etc.

Who is Mentoring For?

You may be asking yourself. "is mentoring for me?" I would say at some point in our lives, we all need it. People in general (Christian or non-Christian) do need some type of mentoring to point us in the right direction, aiding us also to live productive and joyful lives. As believers, we need it even more because we live in a world that is evil, very challenging, and a world that is not willingly ready to embrace our Christian faith. So it is crucial to have others of the same faith, with more experience whom we can turn to when we need direction and motivation to help us stay on the right path.

To give you an idea, below are a few examples of groups that mentors work with within a church or para-church ministry:

- ⊗ New believers
- ⊗ Children
- ⊗ Youths
- ⊗ Women
- ⊗ Men
- ⊗ Married Couples
- ⊗ Prisoners
- ⊗ Single Parents
- ⊗ The Elderly/Senior Citizens
- ⊗ Military Spouses

Aside from church and faith-based organizations, you can also find Christ-centered mentors serving in nursing homes, hospitals, community centers, and homeless shelters.

Diverse Mentoring Ways

There are several ways you can provide Christ-centered mentoring services to your mentees.

1. Individual mentoring – This is typically the most standard way of mentoring. It is a one on one session with your mentee. It can be a short or long-term relationship, depending on what is being addressed.
2. Group mentoring - This style of mentoring involves a small or large number of individuals (like a study group) addressing specific issues like tithes and offering, raising godly children, evangelism and leadership skills, etc. This type of mentoring is usually short term.

3. A Predetermined schedule to address specific topics or curriculum - This is typically a formal scheduled relationship and can be either a long term or short-term relationship.

4. Unscheduled or Informal meetings that occur on an as-needed basis. In this mentoring style, it is usually the mentee who initiates when to meet, depending on what's going on in his or her life. This type of mentoring can be either limited, but most of the time, it tends to be a long-term relationship.

5. Coaching style relationship - This type of mentoring is now becoming more familiar with the rapid growth of the coaching field. Here, the mentor coach provides practical help for the development of specific skills. It is a relationship that has a specified end period, typically, after the mentee has accomplished the desired goals.

6. Discipleship style - This style of mentoring is focused more on specific spiritual disciplines that the mentee wants to develop in.

7. Counseling style relationship - This style of mentoring is typically performed by trained Christian or biblical counselors, professional counselors, pastors, etc., and it addresses deeper heart issues that hinder a mentee's growth. The mentoring relationship may touch on topics such as addiction of any kind, depression, sexual assault, divorce, grief, etc. Just a word of caution: If you are not trained in counseling individuals, it would be best to refer your mentee to a professional counselor (a believer), pastoral counselor, or biblical counselor.

8. Passive Mentoring - Could happen at any time during discussions with friends, family, colleagues, or church members. Someone might pass comment, and every now participates in the discussion where it can end up becoming a teaching moment.

9. One-time mentoring - This style of mentoring is prevalent with spiritual leaders, your women's ministry leader, prayer group leader, minister, etc. This is when someone calls or meets up with you regarding an issue that is needing immediate resolution or how to process what is going on in their life. The mentee is seeking guidance on how to go about the issue.

10. Distance mentoring - A bible teacher, conference speaker, author of a book or article, or the pastor who delivers empowering messages can mentor from a distance.

It is also essential to know that these different styles of mentoring will depend on certain factors. These factors include where the mentee currently is in their Christian walk, what mentee may be going through at the time of the mentoring relationship, the platform used (i.e., face to face, phone or virtual), time, and place.

Identify Individuals in Scripture Who Mentored Others.

Mentoring is a Biblical concept revealed throughout scripture. We can perceive it takes place in relationships between Jesus and the twelve apostles, Paul and Timothy, Timothy and Titus, and many others. Whether on a one-to-one basis or in a small group setting, Biblical Mentoring is a relationship built on trust and understanding that can help a person grow in their walk with God and become all He created them to be.

The most significant example of biblical mentoring was seen in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. His interaction with His disciples and others identifies Him as the perfect example. He taught His disciples to follow Him and mimic Him by living with them (John 1:38, 39). Jesus asked the disciples to give up their current jobs to walk alongside Him and learn from Him (Matthew 4:18-22). Why? Because He offered them the best job offer that they could not refuse. And willingly, they resigned from their occupations and followed Him.

Spending quality time with your mentee is crucially important in the mentoring relationship. Jesus was always present in the lives of His disciples. He imparted knowledge which they could put into practice daily, and He was there to correct them when they made mistakes. The same should be done today in our mentoring relationships. Strive to be present for your mentees; let them know that your door is always open to them whenever they need you. With the different ways of mentoring mentioned above, you have no excuse not to be often present and available for your mentees. It is a calling and ministry that the Lord has given to you, and like every other important assignment in your life, it must be taken seriously because you will give an account of it before God.

In addition, always remember that your mentees are looking up to you as an example to follow. They want to see Christ in your life, and

that is why when you are out there, you must be mindful of how you relate with others. You do not know who may be watching. Your life must reflect the life of the one you follow: Jesus Christ. Even though we are imperfect (flawed) beings, it does not restrict you as a mentor from striving to be an example for those who look up to you. Your mentees need an example to follow, and that is you, their mentor, their teacher and guide. You can see that in the lives of the Lord Jesus, Apostle Paul, and the disciples.

In conclusion, I would like to state that the role of a Christ-centered mentor is very crucial to the life of a Christian seeking to know the Lord and enjoy a victorious life. And so, as a believer who has been called by God to serve in this capacity, you must seek God always for strength, guidance, knowledge, and wisdom to be able to do this work. You must allow the Lord to direct every meeting with your mentee. Always be prepared and never go into a session/meeting without praying ahead and at the start of the meeting. You must also know when to set boundaries for your mentoring relationship.

In the Christ-Centered Mentoring 102, we will elaborate more on the importance of setting boundaries in the mentoring relationship.

End of Course

Test Questions

Email your answers in essay format via word document or paste directly in the email. Each answer carries 20 points

Please do not copy answers word for word in the course outline. Try to use your own words as much as possible. Using your own words to answers, one or more questions show that you comprehend what you have studied.

1. List 5 qualities that a Christ-Centered mentor should possess and explain in your own words why these qualities are essential to have in a mentor.
2. Define the term Christ-Centered Mentoring and explain the difference between Christ-centered mentoring and discipleship.
3. Choose a character in the bible who displayed mentoring capacities and explain why you think they can be identified as a mentor to others.

4. What are the roles of a Christ-centered mentor in the body of Christ?
5. What groups & areas can you find Christ-centered/biblical mentors working in?

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