

Life Group Discussion Guide

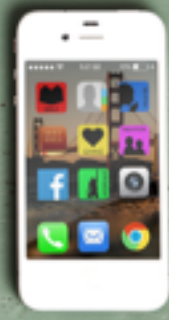
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

MENTOR

1 Timothy 4:11-16

Josiah Brock - July 24, 2016

MY
FAVORITE
THINGS



INTRODUCTION

Many of us are better because a mentor invested in our lives and thus, many will pay it forward by guiding someone else. Mentoring is at the heart of our mission of leading people closer to Jesus.

DISCUSSION STARTER

1. What one or two pieces of advice would you offer to an 18 year old leaving home for the first time?
2. Who in your life invested time and energy in you? Tell us about them. How has your life been enriched because they chose to pour into you?

EVALUATE IT

1. Read 1 Timothy 4:11-16. Why is age a nonfactor in being a strong influence for the Gospel? Regardless of age, what can every believer do?
2. What kind of example did Paul want Timothy to set? Why these particular things?
3. To what was Timothy to devote himself? What was Timothy not to neglect? How are the two connected?
4. How will watching your life and doctrine save you? How about those around you?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. Paul instructed Timothy, "Do not neglect your gift." What is your gift? How has God equipped you to be an asset in His Kingdom? Are you using it or neglecting it?
2. Joshua shared two myths. One, "Being mentored is only for youth." Two, "Only some Christians are supposed to be mentors." So, who do you think God has placed in your path for you to mentor? How can the group pray for you in this regard?

ILLUSTRATION

Jean Thompson stood in front of her fifth grade class on the very first day of school in the fall and told the children a lie. Like most teachers, she looked at her pupils and said she loved them all the same. And that was impossible, because there in the front row, slumped in his seat was a little boy named Teddy Stallard. Miss Thompson had watched Teddy the year before and noticed that he didn't play well with other children, his clothes were messy and he constantly needed a bath. And, Teddy was unpleasant.

It got to the point where Miss Thompson would actually take delight in marking his papers with a broad red pen, making bold X's and then marking the "F" at the top of the paper, biggest of all. Because Teddy was a sullen little boy, no one else seemed to enjoy him, either. At the school where Mrs. Thompson taught, she was required to review each child's records and put Teddy's off until last. When she opened his file, she was in for a surprise.

His first grade teacher wrote:

"Teddy is a bright child with a ready laugh. He does his work neatly and has good manners. He is such a joy to be around."

His second grade teacher wrote:

"Teddy is an excellent student, well liked by his classmates but he is troubled because his mother has a terminal illness and life at home must be a struggle."

His third grade teacher wrote:

"Teddy continues to work hard but his mother's death has been hard on him. He tries to do his best but his father doesn't show much interest and his home life will soon affect him if some steps aren't taken."

Teddy's fourth grade teacher wrote:

"Teddy is withdrawn and doesn't show much interest in school. He doesn't have many friends and sometimes sleeps in class. He is tardy and could become a problem."

By now Mrs. Thompson realized the problem but Christmas was coming fast. It was all she could do, with the school play and all, until the day before the holidays began and she was suddenly forced to focus on Teddy Stallard. Her children brought her presents, all in beautiful ribbon and bright paper, except for Teddy's, which was clumsily wrapped in the heavy, brown paper of a scissored grocery bag. Mrs. Thompson took pains to open it in the middle of the other presents. Some of the children started to laugh when she found a rhinestone bracelet with some of the stones missing and a bottle that was one quarter full of cologne. She stifled the children's laughter when she exclaimed how pretty the bracelet was, putting it on and dabbing some of the perfume behind the other wrist. Teddy Stallard stayed after school that day just long enough to say, "Mrs Thompson, today you smell just like my mom used to."

After the children left she cried for at least an hour. On that very day, she quit teaching reading, writing and speaking. Instead, she began to teach children. Jean Thompson paid particular attention to one they all called "Teddy." As she worked with him, his mind seemed to come alive. The more she encouraged him, the faster he responded. On days there would be an important test, Mrs. Thompson would remember that cologne. By the end of the year he had become one of the smartest children in the class and...well, he had also become the pet of the teacher who had once vowed to love all of her children exactly the same.

A year later she found a note under her door, from Teddy, telling her that of all the teachers he'd had in elementary school, she was his favorite.

Six years went by before she got another note from Teddy. He then wrote he had finished high school, third in his class and she was still his favorite teacher of all time.

Four years after that, she got another letter, saying that while things had been tough at times, he'd stayed in school, had stuck with it, and would graduate from college with the highest of honors. He assured Mrs. Thompson she was still his favorite teacher.

Then four more years passed and yet another letter came. This time he explained that after he got his bachelor's degree, he decided to go a little further. The letter explained that she was still his favorite teacher but now his name was a little longer. The letter was signed: Theodore F. Stallard, M.D.

The story doesn't end there. You see, there was yet another letter that Spring. Teddy said he'd met this girl and was to be married. He explained his father had died a couple of years ago and he was wondering...well, if Mrs. Thompson might agree to sit in the pew usually reserved for the mother of the groom. And guess what, she wore that bracelet, the one with several rhinestones missing. And I bet on that special day, Jean Thompson smelled just like...well, just like the way Teddy remembered his mother smelling on their last Christmas together.

They hugged each other and Dr. Stallard whispered in Mrs. Thompson's ear: "Thank you, Mrs Thompson, for believing in me. Thank you so much for making me feel important and showing me that I could make a difference."

Interested in joining or starting a Life Group? Contact our Life Groups Minister.

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