

Acts Season 5 "DEEPER" Part 1 – Week 2

Going Deeper in Discipleship (Mentoring)

Acts 15:36-16:6

---Today our Acts "DEEPER" text takes us to a topic that has become nearer and dearer to my heart over the years. And now today I can say it has become a passion of mine...

Acts 15:36-16:6

³⁶ After some time Paul said to Barnabas, "Let's go back and visit each city where we previously preached the word of the Lord, to see how the new believers are doing." ³⁷ Barnabas agreed and wanted to take along John Mark. ³⁸ But Paul disagreed strongly, since John Mark had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in their work. ³⁹ Their disagreement was so sharp that they separated. Barnabas took John Mark with him and sailed for Cyprus. ⁴⁰ Paul chose Silas, and as he left, the believers entrusted him to the Lord's gracious care. ⁴¹ Then he traveled throughout Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches there

¹ Paul went first to Derbe and then to Lystra, where there was a young disciple named Timothy. His mother was a Jewish believer, but his father was a Greek. ² Timothy was well thought of by the believers^[a] in Lystra and Iconium, ³ so Paul wanted him to join them on their journey. In deference to the Jews of the area, he arranged for Timothy to be circumcised before they left, for everyone knew that his father was a Greek. ⁴ Then they went from town to town, instructing the believers to follow the decisions made by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. ⁵ So the churches were strengthened in their faith and grew larger every day.

-Paul was likely mentored in some way by Barnabas

-Barnabas mentored Mark

-Paul was likely mentoring Silas after Barnabas and Mark went their separate way.

-Paul then began what is likely the most famous and certainly the most written about mentorship of all...TIMOTHY (I & II Timothy)

And it doesn't stop there...Paul understood that in order to truly be a disciple...one had to mentor people who could mentor others and so on...

-**II Timothy 2:2**---Paul commands Timothy to be a disciple who makes disciples who makes disciples!

-Of course, we also know that Paul mentored Titus as well.

---THERE ARE OTHER MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGHOUT SCRIPTURE...

-Elijah and Elisha

-Jesus and the 12 Disciples (especially 3...Peter, James and John)

I)- Jesus' Model...

Matthew 4:18-22

¹⁸ One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. ¹⁹ Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" ²⁰ And they left their nets at once and followed him.

²¹ A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them to come, too. ²² They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind.

---Curiously, the Son of God did not start His ministry with a conference or in a coliseum but rather in the seemingly counter-intuitive context of one-on-one relationships.

II)- Jesus' Mandate...

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth." ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples **to obey** all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

---Likewise, we see that Jesus ends the earthly phase of His physical ministry by giving the mandate of mentorship to those who would follow Him. Unfortunately, even those who have memorized this text seem to forget that Jesus' mission was not simply to teach His commands...but to teach others to OBEY His commands. In other words, somehow...churches became focused on teaching us Jesus' commands but failed to teach HOW to obey them. Teaching to obey requires far more than a lecture, a curriculum or a revival given how most people learn. To effect behavioral change...most need more than a book on systematic theology. They need a spiritually surrendered friend who is willing to pour themselves into their life. I know I did.

---REAL LIFE EXAMPLE FROM TODAY...HERE IN THE WELL...

---Mindi...

-So, Mindi...how long have you been mentored?---By who?---How did this relationship start?

-What is the most important way that this mentorship has influenced your life? Where might you be today apart from this mentorship?

-As we have already mentioned...a truly successful mentor, mentors others. The reason I asked you to share today is because I see this wisdom being lived out in your life...who are you mentoring today?

---Mindi & Allie...

-Allie, what caused you to seek out a mentoring relationship?

-What is the most important way that this mentorship has influenced your life?

-Are you looking for someone to mentor???

CONCLUSION...

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

⁹ Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. ¹⁰ If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. ¹¹ Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? ¹² A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.

-Outside of Jesus, the wisest man who ever lived said its not smart to go it alone. He was King, had all the props and perks that such a powerful position comes with, and still he said, filled with the Holy Spirit...THERE IS A BETTER WAY to achieve success, security, stability and certainty in the midst of the challenges, the attacks that life can bring.

DIVE DEEPER--- AGAIN, our thanks to David Guzik and enduringword.com for their most excellent free commentary!!!!

2. (32-35) The work of the gospel continues in Antioch.

Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words. And after they had stayed *there* for a time, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the apostles. However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there. Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

a. The *certain men* who had come from Judea to Antioch (Acts 15:1) had the potential to ruin the work of God in Antioch and beyond. But because the situation was handled correctly, the brethren were strengthened and the word of God continued to go forth.

b. **Judas and Silas** serve well in Antioch as visiting ministers from Jerusalem. Then **Judas** returned, leaving **Silas** in Antioch for future ministry.

D. The contention over John Mark.

1. (36) Paul suggests that he and Barnabas return to all the cities where they planted churches in the first missionary trip.

Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see how they are doing.*”

a. **And see how they are doing:** This shows Paul had a real pastor’s heart. He was not content to merely plant churches without seeing them carefully nurtured and growing in the faith.

b. Paul had the heart of both an obstetrician (bringing people into the body of Christ) and a pediatrician (growing people up in the body of Christ).

2. (37-41) Paul and Barnabas divide over the issue of taking John Mark with them.

Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

a. **John called Mark:** John Mark had previously left the missionary party under less than honorable circumstances (Acts 13:13). This probably made Paul unwilling to trust him on future endeavors.

b. **Barnabas was determined . . . But Paul insisted:** Luke does not give us a clue as to who was “right” and who was “wrong” between Paul and Barnabas. But it is never good when personal disputes flare up among those serving in the ministry.

i. **Then the contention became so sharp:** Wherever there is **sharp . . . contention**, *someone* is wrong, and usually there is wrong on both sides. There can be no way *both* Paul and Barnabas were each walking in the Spirit on this issue!

ii. The relationship between Paul and Barnabas was probably also strained when Barnabas sided with the Judaizers in Antioch when Peter came to visit (Galatians 2:13).

c. Since Barnabas was John Mark’s cousin (Colossians 4:10), and because Barnabas had such an encouraging, accepting character (Acts 4:36, 9:26-27), it is easy to see why he would be more understanding towards John Mark.

d. **They parted from one another:** So, Paul (accompanied by Silas) and Barnabas (accompanied by Mark) split, each going out to different fields of ministry.

i. It is hard to know if their personal relationship was strained for a prolonged period. As Christians, we are commanded to resolve relationship problems with others before we present ministry to God (Matthew 5:23-24). It is always wrong to step over people in the name of ministry, and when it happens it must be made right.

ii. There is no doubt God used this division; but this can never be casually used as an excuse for carnal division. God can redeem good out of evil, yet we are all held accountable for the evil we do, even if God ends up bringing good out of the evil. Either Paul or Barnabas - probably both - had to get this right with God and each other.

iii. "But this example of God's providence may not be used as an excuse for Christian quarreling." (Stott)

e. Later, Paul came to minister with John Mark and to value his contributions to the work of God (Colossians 4:10; Philemon 4:24; 2 Timothy 4:11). We don't know if it was Mark who changed or Paul who changed. Probably God had a work to do in both of them!

f. **Strengthening the churches:** This was Paul's ministry, in addition to evangelism. New Christians needed strong churches to grow and mature in.

Acts 16 - The Second Missionary Journey Begins

A. From the city of Derbe to Troas.

1. (1-5) At Derbe and Lystra.

Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father *was* Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took *him* and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek. And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.

a. Paul began this missionary journey having come from Antioch. First, he did the work of *strengthening the churches* through the regions of Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:40-41).

b. **Then he came to Derbe and Lystra:** Now he arrives in **Derbe**, where he had great success on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:20-21), and in **Lystra**, where a crowd tried to honor Paul and Barnabas as pagan gods on the first missionary journey (Acts 14:8-20).

i. The first missionary journey finished about five years before the events of this chapter. Paul was anxious to see for himself how the work of the Lord continued among these churches he founded five years before.

c. **A certain disciple was there, named Timothy:** In the time since Paul had been to Lystra, a young man **named Timothy** had been serving the Lord (**He was well spoken of by the brethren**). Timothy had a believing mother with a Jewish background (**son of a certain Jewish woman who believed**), but an unbelieving **Greek** father.

i. The last time Paul was in Lystra, they first worshipped him as a god and then tried to kill him by stoning (Acts 14:11-20). Paul's courage and wisdom in the face of these obstacles built a great legacy in people like Timothy.

d. Paul was impressed enough with Timothy that **Paul wanted to have him go on with him**. This shows God's provision, because John Mark and Barnabas just left Paul (Acts 15:36-41). No single worker in God's kingdom is irreplaceable. When a Barnabas leaves (for whatever reason), God has a Timothy to **go on with him**.

e. **And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews in that region:** Paul had Timothy **circumcised**, not for the sake of his salvation (Paul would never do so) but so there would be less to hinder ministry among the Jews.

i. "By Jewish law Timothy was a Jew, because he was the son of Jewish mother, but because he was uncircumcised he was technically an apostate Jew. If Paul wished to maintain his links with the synagogue, he could not be seen to countenance apostasy." (Bruce)

ii. In Acts 15, Paul argued strongly that it was not necessary for converts to come under the Law of Moses for salvation. At the time Paul met Timothy, he was delivering the news of this decree which came out of the Acts 15 council (**as they went through the cities, the delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem**). So why is Paul telling Timothy to be circumcised? Doesn't this contradict the decree **which was determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem**? Not at all. Paul would have never told Timothy to become circumcised for the sake of legalism. But Paul would do things for the sake of love that he would not do for the sake of trying to please God through legalism.

f. **So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily:** Paul's work was successful because his first interest was in strengthening the churches. Strong churches will naturally increase in number daily, without relying on carnal and manipulative methods.