

Women & More

Start Where You Are

15 March 2012

Mentor is one who impacts, influences and invests in another. Let's consider Webster's definition: *a trusted counselor and guide; a tutor or coach*. Whether we know it or not, we're impacting and influencing people around us every day—sometimes for the good; sometimes for the not-so-good. **We want to intentionally invest for Christ and his kingdom in all of our mentoring!**

BACKGROUND: According to *Homer's Odyssey*, when King Odysseus went off to fight the Trojan War, he entrusted his son Telemachus to a wise old man named Mentor. Mentor was charged with teaching the young man wisdom.

More than 2000 years after Homer, a French scholar and theologian by the name of Francois Fenelon adapted the story of Telemachus in a novel titled *Telemaque*. In it he enlarged the character of Mentor. Mentor came to mean “a wise and responsible tutor”—**an experienced person, who advises, guides, teaches, inspires, challenges, corrects and serves as a model.**

So, mentoring is an ancient, ‘today’ word used to describe the actions of influencing, impacting and investing in another person. And it would certainly begin with parenting and that **intentional mentoring that God ‘calls’ us to**. Mentoring as a parent—mothering as women—is probably the single most important job in the world, and yet there's no test, schooling, training, degree or qualifier for it. From the world's view, we are simply to jump in and wing it.

Perhaps we are mothers (mentors) of a young child, pre-teen, teenager; or maybe our children are grown and we're grandmothers (mentors)...even starting over. And, of course, we all have a mother, and we all know a mother or two, so we can relate to the overwhelming ‘call’ of motherhood—that possible 80-year commitment. Has the prospect of ‘winging it’ ever appealed to any of us? Is anyone ever ready? Right now we want to stop for five minutes or so and take the *Ecnerway I.Q. Test*, to see just how ‘up-for-it’ we are—*or not!*

That test is so much like the dilemma of parenting.... Where do we start? Who has the directions? And who is going to help us do it? What do our young need from us? And how will we know when and if we succeed? Remember, again, that God never ‘calls’ us to do anything that he expects us to do without Him. Are we qualified? No, and God knows it...but what? **If we know Him, then we know the Qualifier!** Scripture says in 1 Thessalonians 5:24 that the *One* who ‘calls’ us is faithful and that he will do it! We obey the ‘call’ and he does the qualifying...and he does the work too! So, we must be absolutely sure that we know the Qualifier personally and intimately!

• **WHERE DO WE START?** We start where we are right now—tonight when we tuck our precious children into bed, and there are those several questions that just have to be asked...and answered. “Mother,” our offspring pose:

1. “Would a fly without wings be called a walk? Huh?”
2. “When it rains, why don’t sheep shrink? Cause wool shrinks...doesn’t it?”
3. “Why is the word *abbreviation* so long? Why is that?”
4. “And mom, when companies ship *Styrofoam* what do they pack it in?”
5. “What is the speed of dark? It’s gotta be slower than the speed of light?”
6. “What is a ‘free gift’? I mean aren’t all gifts free?”
7. “Why are there interstate highways in Hawaii?”
8. “Why does my nose run; and why do my feet smell? Why is that mother?”

“Okay,” we say, “here’s a *Kleenex* for that runny nose and you’re coming with me into the bathroom so we can wash those feet, so your sheets won’t get all dirty.” “But mom,” your child protests, “what about the fly with no wings?”

As mentoring mothers, we’re expected to know the answers and if we happen not to know...at least we’re expected to listen to the questions. In her book, *Mom You’re Incredible!* Linda Weber says, “If you’re a mom, you’re responsible to teach your children everything from how to chew food to how to drive a car. You are the following:

- 1) Director of Health, Education and Welfare,
- 2) Secretary of the Treasury,
- 3) Head of Public Affairs **and**
- 4) Chairman of the House Rules Committee.”

In *Blessings for a Mother’s Day*, Ruth Graham shares, “Dear Journal, this job of training five little Grahams to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ is too big for me, when I am not a good soldier myself. Feeling particularly distracted (or I should say overwhelmed and confused) this morning, I have been looking to the Lord asking, ‘Where, from here?’ **The place to begin is here, the time to begin is now**, and as I reread this passage in Exodus 33, the phrase that jumped out at me that I had never noticed before was v 13: ‘*Show me **now** thy way.*’” (KJV)

The question—the same question—for us as parents is **where** to start and **when** to start? **Scripture says to start here and now**—today! Exodus 33:13 says, “*Show me **now** thy way*” (KJV). We can’t go back and do it all over, but we can move forward and let God **redeem: restore and repay!** Joel 2:25a says, “*And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten—*” (KJV) and “*I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten—*” (NIV).

The family was God’s idea! In Genesis 2 God said that *it is not good for the man to be alone*. And we don’t understand all that God meant when he said that, but we do know that God created Eve as a result—and the same chapter says that the man and his wife became one flesh. Then he tells us why he made them one flesh in Malachi: *because he was seeking godly offspring*. Isaiah 44:3b says, “*I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendents.*”

God the Father is speaking of God the Son—who has been His Son for eternity—before the foundation of the world, and yet he says an amazing thing in Psalm 2:7b, “*You are my Son, today I have become your Father*” Acts 13:33 refers back to the Psalm saying, “*As it is written in the second Psalm: ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father.’*” And Hebrews 1:5 “*For to which of the angels did God ever say, ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father?’ Or again, ‘I will be his Father, and he will be my Son?’*” And finally in Hebrews 5:5b “*You are my Son; today I have become your Father.*”

• **WHO’S GOING TO HELP US PARENT?** Parenting—mothering for us—is a high mentoring ‘call’ from God! **Romans 8:28** “*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*” A. B. Simpson counseled, “Let us take the weights as well as the wings, and thus divinely impelled, let us press on with faith and patience in our high and heavenly calling.”

God never calls us to do anything for him without providing the help and the resources for us to accomplish his ‘call’—to succeed at what he has called us to be and do. If we are wives, God has called us to that, and if we are then mothers, be sure that God has called us to that. And while he promises his help and resources, we must ask! Jeremiah 33:3 says, “*Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.*” James 1:5 says that if anyone lacks wisdom **to ask God** for it and he will freely give His wisdom.

In raising our children—mentoring our young—we don’t want to become defeated by the realization that we’ve not always done it right. Don’t be overwhelmed with the short amount of time we have to accomplish the influencing, impacting and investing in our children. Jacob’s wife **Rachel** died giving birth to her son Benjamin, and **Hannah** had only five years to train up Samuel to assist Eli in the temple of God. **Jochebed** was the mother of Moses, and at the time of his birth all the boys two years and under were being killed. Exodus 2:2 records: “*When she saw that he was a fine child, (and isn’t this every mother’s thought about their child?), she hid him for three months.*”

And God **re**warded Jochebed in Exodus 2:9 when Pharaoh's daughter found the infant Moses in the reeds and asked Jochebed—not realizing she was his very mother—*“Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you.”* O God is so good and so faithful and so amazing in the way that he works!

God gives us our children. **Psalm 127:3** *“Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a **re**ward from him.”* And God loves our children more than we do! Let us allow that knowledge to sink into our hearts and bring us great comfort. And remember that God asks us to *start* where we are right now, today, to be the godly mentoring parents that he intends, so that we can let our children go on to maturity...secure in a relationship with the Father through Christ—His Son!

Ruth Graham again: “I would get so tired taking care of the children, the house, the wear and tear of mothering and homemaking—in fact, one doctor said it is normal for young mothers to be tired. Nehemiah 9:32 was a great comfort to me: *‘Now therefore, O our God, the great, mighty and awesome God.... **Do not let all this hardship seem trifling in your eyes.**’*” Then Isaiah is speaking to God's people about the promised Messiah, and he says in Isaiah 66:13a: *“As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you.”* And Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:10 *“That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. **For when I am weak, then I am strong.**”*

• **WHAT DO OUR YOUNG NEED FROM US**—what is our investment? We cannot start a fire in another's heart until it is burning in our own, and we will not be of great use to others without cost to ourselves! Children basically need **to feel** three things and **to develop** three things—and these describe mentoring:

1. They need to feel **worthwhile** and **accepted** at any age
2. They need to feel **important**
3. They need to feel **cared for**
4. Children need to develop good **attitudes**
5. They need to develop good **responses**
6. They need to develop good **patterns**

As mentoring mothers, we must move away from **procrastination, preoccupation** and **regrets**, and move to **redeem the time**—making **today** the day we re-commit to motherhood. Make today count for eternity! God is not in such a hurry as we are. He spends years with those he expects to greatly use. Someone has said that God never thinks the days of preparation too long or too dull. Acts 7:30—referring to God's call on Moses' life: *“**After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai.**”*

Moses lived in three forty-year increments: He spent the first forty years thinking he was *somebody* and he spent the next forty years finding out he was a nobody. And as God would have it, Moses spent the last forty years of his life finding out what God could do with a *nobody*! **All credit and all glory to God!**

The story of the families of man recorded in the first book of the Bible are written by this Moses. Genesis means **to begin, start, commence, open.** **Genesis 1:1** starts “*In the beginning God...*” and chapter 50 ends with “*in a coffin in Egypt.*” It is the story of us all—our lives are but a vapor. We need the wisdom of God to live out our lives to count for him, to mentor our children in the way they should go and to stand still and see what God will do for us when we ask in faith. Near the end of his life, “*Moses answered the people, ‘Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. 14The Lord will fight for you, you need only to be still.’*” Exodus 14:13-14. Those that are after your children will fail!

• HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE SUCCEED—did we mentor well? We must leave the results of our godly efforts in the hands of our God!

Thomas Edison’s mother taught him at home after she learned that his teachers considered him to have inferior ability. Can we even imagine? “My mother was the making of me,” he said later in life. “She was so true, so sure of me; and I felt that I had someone to live for, someone I must not disappoint.”

Susanna Wesley’s heart-prayer was that God would use some of her children to impact people for God. And the Lord answered her prayers as her sons John and Charles Wesley grew up to change England and the world for Christ. One of these sons got to lead her to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Abe Lincoln once said he considered his mother to be the person chiefly responsible for all he was or ever hoped to become. She was just a poor, simple country mother. But she taught him about sacrifice. She taught him to read. And she gave him a healthy self-image that sustained him through a lifetime of challenges, disappointments and defeats. **That’s quite a legacy especially when you realize that she died when Lincoln was only 10 years old.**

Linda Weber reminds us, “You need to know, even though it may not look as if your efforts are bearing fruit, that they will pay off one day. **Everything you do has its impact.** You don’t have to be someone of note to make a noteworthy impact on someone else’s life. Just be faithful in your efforts, keep focused on the main thing, and watch what happens. Too much is at stake to set aside mothering at any point!”