Glad Tidings

"And we bring you good of the promise made unto the fathers…" (Acts 13:32)

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Are You A Mentor?

(Jerry Fite)

Homer's Odyssey is where we find the origin of our word "mentor." In this epic work, Odysseus appoints "Mentor" to educate his son, Telemachus. The definition of the term "mentor" is the work "Mentor" does in Homer's epic poem. Being a mentor is therefore one who is a wise counselor, teacher, or educator of another.

While the word "mentor" is not found in the New Testament, the concept is prevalent in the life of every Christian.

First, we should be able to teach others. Paul writes to Timothy, *"And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2).* The term "men" is the Greek word, *"anthropois,"* a general term for "mankind." Therefore, both male and female should be able to teach others. While women are limited by not being allowed to teach "over a man" *(I Timothy 2:12),* they should, while constantly honoring headship, develop the ability to teach *(Titus 2:3-5).* Men and women, faithful to the revealed word of Christ, should prepare themselves to be "mentors" in the sense of being teachers.

Second, a teacher must set the proper example before those he or she teaches. Paul writes, *"The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:9).* Paul offered something for others to see as well as hear. He was not only teaching with words, but he manifested a proper example to follow. Paul exhorts brethren, *"...be ye imitators together of me and mark them that so walk even as ye have for us for an ensample" (Philippians 3:17, I Corinthians 11:1).*

The Christian provides an example of diligence and total commitment to the teachings of God. Paul exhorts Timothy to be this type of example: *"Be diligent in these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy progress may be manifest unto all (I Timothy 4:15).*

Every society needs mentors We need people worthy of respect. Therefore, people setting forth the proper example before others are essential. Is this not what every Christian provides as he or she engages the world, permeating good works throughout.

Third, the Christian invests time and energy in encouraging others to walk in the way of the Lord. Paul invested much of himself in the lives of the Thessalonians. *"As you know how we dealt with each one of you, as a father with his own children, exhorting you, and encouraging you, and testifying, to the end that you should walk worthily of God, who calleth you into His own kingdom and glory" (I Thessalonians 2:11-12).* Each individual was important to Paul. With the love of a father, he came to the side of each one exhorting and encouraging each person along the way of the Lord. Is this not what we want from a mentor: personal exhortation and encouragement coupled with good instruction and teaching?

Dear Christian, prepare yourself to teach the gospel to others. Give yourself totally to God and the Gospel with constant diligence. You will then be a proper example to imitate. Invest your time in exhorting and encouraging someone who needs a little boost in the way of righteousness. In taking the time to be the Christian, you will be a mentor in our day.