

FACILITATOR MANUAL

THE MENTOR'S SPIRITUAL FORMATION

IMPACT MENTORSHIP
EQUIPPING SESSION

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CHURCH OF  THE NAZARENE



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If a pastor is going to embark on the vital task of Christian mentoring, it is important to begin with the spiritual life of the mentor.

The mission of SDMI is “to carry out the Great Commission to children, youth, and adults, in preparation for a lifetime of being and making Christlike disciples in the nations.”

Thus, discipleship and mentorship involve both “being” and “making” disciples. If we are to give our lives fully to someone else for the sake of the gospel, we must first consider our own spiritual condition.

One leader said, “We are always making disciples of ourselves. The question is, what kind of disciples are we making?”

The Board of General Superintendents of the Church of the Nazarene has adopted as the new initiative of Nazarene discipleship as “A Journey of Grace.” Discipleship is a life-long journey that begins at birth and continues through all of life. This journey is defined as humankind connecting with the story of God and being transformed by God’s amazing grace.

We might say that Nazarene discipleship is a journey from grace to grace to grace. As Wesleyan-Holiness people, we believe that God’s gracious love extends to all people, everywhere, even before we come to believe. In John 6:44, Jesus said:

“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.” John 6:44.

The Apostle Paul stated it this way in Romans 5:8

“but God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8.

God was wooing us by his grace before we even realized our need for Him.

Prevenient grace is the name given for the grace that goes before. We often refer to prevenient grace as the grace that comes before conversion awakening the pre-Christian to their need for reconciliation with God. Along the journey, where God’s prevenient grace meets the free will of the individual, there can be a crisis moment when a person repents of their sin and believes Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of the world, the way to be reconciled with the Father. In that moment, when faith is born in the heart of an individual, God’s saving grace is given freely! This is the moment of conversion, being born again, new life!

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As the new believer continues on this journey of grace, the Spirit of God begins to transform the Christian more and more into the likeness of Christ. Following conversion, we call this experience initial sanctification as the new believer begins to die to self. Along the journey, there can come a crisis moment called entire sanctification when believers fully surrender their redeemed lives to God, are set free from the chains of original sin, and enter into a relationship with God that is defined as entire devotion to Christ. In that moment, God's **sanctifying grace** is given freely!

While the entire Scripture points to this ultimate purpose of God in our lives, we have chosen one verse to accompany and to frame this denominational concept. Jesus revealed to Thomas, "I am *the Way*, the Truth, and the Life." (John 14:6) *The Way* sounds a lot like a journey, doesn't it? Jesus calls us to follow Him! It is the call of our seeking Savior, the call of prevenient grace. Along that journey, we realize the claim of Jesus to be the Truth. He is the Son of God, and we must repent and put our trust in Him alone. This is the call of saving grace. When we walk with Christ as one who believes, God's Spirit calls us to fully surrender our will to Him. When we surrender, He sanctifies and fills us with His Spirit, and we experience the full meaning of Jesus being the Life, the abundant life!

Discipleship is a journey of grace: from prevenient grace through saving grace through sanctifying grace! The journey of grace is a process with crises along the journey itself. The mentor and mentee are both on the same journey following the same Lord. For mentors to effectively bring up others to lead the church behind them, mentors must themselves be surrendered fully to the work of God in their lives and be living in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, to be an effective disciple-maker, one must first be a Christlike disciple. The process of effective mentoring is rooted in an active, passionate relationship with Christ in the mentor's own life. The "doing" of mentorship comes out of "being" a growing disciple of Christ.

Christ lived out of this principle in His own life. His actions always flowed from his character. One example of this principle from Christ's own life is found in Matthew.

"When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick." Matthew 14:14.

Christ was compassionate in His heart. Flowing from His compassion came His healing touch.

The Ten Commandments further support this idea in that a believer's primary responsibility, as shown in the first four commandments, is to love God. The final six commandments then instruct the believer in his love for people. Dr. Sandy Ardrey, a Godly mentor of many leaders over the years maintained, "The effectiveness of anyone's personal ministry flows out of his or her alone time with God."

People desiring to lead must first set out on this journey of grace themselves. Only in the process of making the journey can a pastor, leader, or mentor begin to disciple others. A mentor must allow God to daily draw him or her closer to Himself (from grace to grace to grace). Four key areas of learning are vital elements of the journey for a spiritually-healthy mentor: listening to God's Word, listening for God's voice, learning to obey, and listening to the voice of God's Church.

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

Learning to listen to God's Word is much more than studying for a sermon; it springs from a deep desire for relationship with Almighty God. Psalm 119:105 reveals,

*"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."
Psalm 119:105.*

Along the journey, or "path," the truths of His Word illuminate a believer's way. In the studying of God's Word, a believer discovers how to walk in a way that pleases God.

"How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." Psalm 119:9.

The daily practice of Bible reading is essential in the life of a mentor. While the exact time of day to have this alone time with God is not the same for everyone, most Christian leaders have found that the morning is the best.

One leader said, "I want to meet and talk with God before I meet and talk with anyone else in my day."

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Some believers have struggled, like the young fisherman in the story above, to hear God's voice. Learning to hear the voice of God is certainly something that can be learned and trained through discipleship and mentoring.

We hear God's voice in three basic ways: through His Word, through His still, small voice, and through the voices of fellow believers. Hebrews 4:12 says:

"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Hebrews 4:12.

God speaks to every open heart through His Word for His Word "will not return to [God] empty, but accomplishes what [God] desires" (Isaiah 55:11).

We also hear from God through His still, small voice. This can be a little more challenging to discern, but it is a necessary discipline in the life of a mentor. God often puts His desire, or plan, into the heart of those who follow Him (Psalm 37:4). This may come through a new thought that a believer has. I remember visiting a man in a hospital who had just had a stroke. He was the father of someone in our church. When I entered his room for the first time, I realized that he could not speak because of the effects of the stroke. I could tell that he was fully aware of his situation. He simply couldn't speak. The conversation was short because I was the only one talking. I told him that our church was praying for him, I prayed for him there, and I left his room. I returned to my car to travel back to the church. As I sat down in my car, the still, small voice of God spoke to me, "Go back and talk to Albert about me." At first, I wondered, "Is this really God speaking to me?" I determined, if this is not the voice of God, it won't hurt that I talk to Albert about his relationship with Jesus. I might as well do what I think God is telling me. When I returned to his room, he was surprised. I shared with him what I sensed God saying to me. Albert, a seventy-five year old man, began to cry. I shared Jesus with Albert and on that day, Albert repented of his sins and asked Jesus to come in his heart (a silent prayer because of the stroke, but very real).

Finally, mentors can learn to hear God's voice through other believers. Sometimes, God speaks to His disciples through a fellow Christians. It is always a good thing to share what believers think God is saying to them with someone they trust. This is what the Apostle John calls testing the spirits.

First John 4:1 says:

“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” 1 John 4:1.

Trusted Christian believers can speak the very word of God into our hearts (1 Peter 4:11).

LEARNING TO OBEY

Having one's ears opened to listen, however, has no value if it does not lead the believer to obedience. Learning to obey the Word of God and God's Voice is the completion of the action of listening. James instructs believers in chapter 1, verses 22-25:

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.” James 1:22-25.

Just as James connects listening to obeying, disciples who desire to mentor others must do the same, in their own lives and in teaching their mentees. The Great Commission specifically instructs disciple makers to teach obedience, “. . . teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20).

In the Russian language, the words for “listen” and “obey” are very closely related. The word for “obey” begins with a perfective prefix that means “to begin and continue” an action. After the prefix comes the word “listen.” So, in Russian, to “obey” is to “begin and continue to listen.”

Another example of this principle is parents and their children. Children may appear to hear or listen, but if they do not do what their parents ask, have they really listened? Jesus illustrates this principle in His parable of the two sons, “There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’ ‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go” (Matthew 21:28-30). Just as the second son in these verses appeared

