

## Sample Mentoring Conversation

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### ***Paul & Timothy***

As he traveled with the gospel, the Apostle Paul was also alert for opportunities to disciple younger men in faith, doctrine, and practice. One promising young man caught his eye (Acts 16:1-3). Paul invited Timothy to accompany him and learn the way of Christ as they journeyed together.

Over time Timothy learned not only sound doctrine, but also how to teach and pastor. Some young people likewise desire an equipping mentorship. This type of relationship is focused more on the development of a set of beliefs or a ministry skill. The relationship might be more structured, but it's best if the mentor avoids a one-way teaching situation. A collaborative approach with hands-on opportunities for the mentee to apply discipleship principles creates a dynamic learning environment.

Let's listen in on a hypothetical conversation between Paul and Timothy where the focus is doctrine.

*Paul:* That was a lively exchange in the synagogue this morning, wasn't it? The Jews love God's law and defend it nobly. What do you think about their argument?

*Timothy:* Well, they make a strong case. Doesn't God want us to be obedient to his righteous Law? Isn't it the Law that sets the Jews apart as God's people?

*Paul:* Absolutely. The Jews are honored to have God's Law. However, if we Jews rely on the Law and teach others to do the same but don't keep it ourselves, do we not dishonor God? Let's look at the problems with this approach . . . (Paul and Timothy's conversation resembles 1 Tim 1:8-11 and Gal 3:10-29).

*Timothy:* You were once exceedingly zealous for the Law. How did you figure this out?

*Paul:* Good question. Let me tell you about God's grace to me, the chief of sinners . . . (Paul tells his story recorded in 1 Tim 1:12-17).

On another occasion, a hypothetical conversation might have focused on ministry skills:

*Paul:* God's called us to leave Asia and take the gospel to Macedonia, a whole new culture. I think by now you've seen the importance of godly leadership as we establish churches. We need to pray God will raise up these leaders in Macedonia.

*Timothy:* Right. I've seen that godly leadership makes all the difference. Can we talk more about this? Exactly what qualifies one to be an overseer of the church? How are these men selected?

*Paul:* You want to look for these important qualities: he must be above reproach, husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach . . . (conversation continues according to 1 Tim 3:1-13).

So, Timothy, if you are new to an area how do you think you might find men like this?

*Timothy:* I have no idea.

*Paul:* It might be helpful for you to practice discernment as we visit the next few places. See if you can pick these men out. Let me know when you've spotted one, and we'll compare notes.