



Christian Mentoring

JOHN MALLISON MINISTRIES

ADDITIONAL CONTENT – MENTORING TO DEVELOP DISCIPLES & LEADERS

Additions & Minor Alterations to Mentoring Text –

‘Mentoring to Develop Disciples and Leaders’

(i) **ADDITIONAL CONTENT** (not included in August '04 edition)

[a. Realism & Optimism in Working with People](#) (pages 30-32 & slide 08/2)

[b. Grace, Promise, Hope & Optimism](#) (pages 30-32 & slide 08/2)

[c. A Child of God](#) (pages 30-32 & slide 08/2)

[d. Author's Prayer Base](#) (page 98 & slide 21/4)

[e. Dealing with 'The Dichotomy of Christian Existence'](#) (pages 102-3 & slides 22/11-14)

[f. Setting Boundaries](#) (pages 116-122 & slide 24/4)

[g. 247 Mentoring Questions](#) (slide 25/2)

[h. Communication – Non-verbal & vocal](#) (pages 129-135 & slide 26/9)

[i. Seven Things Good Listeners Do](#) (pages 129-135)

[j. Peer Mentoring Amongst Small Group Members](#) (page 152, Addition 8 & slide 26/9)



Christian Mentoring

JOHN MALLISON MINISTRIES

2(i)a. Realism & Optimism in Working with People

(pages 30-32 & slide 08/2)

In the section of my book dealing with “Some Biblical Foundations”, I seek to briefly give some understanding of the biblical teaching on human beings (pages 30-32). From God’s perspective, people are perceived as image bearers, flawed and wounded. Our flawed nature, our sinfulness, along with the wounds we carry because of the defectiveness of the human beings amongst whom we daily live out our lives, results in behaviour that is not always expressive of grace, of the Christ-like love, or joy and peace, etc.

Realism

If we are to be effective in helping others from a Christian frame of reference we will need to be **realistic** about the impact our sinful nature, the way we behave. We may be disappointed when our mentorees don’t conduct themselves in a way that honours Christ, but we shouldn’t be unduly surprised. **We need to be realistic.** We all have a bias towards evil. We are all sinners – yes! Through faith in Christ’s atoning work, saved sinners, but still sinners!!

In his book, “John Wesley’s Class Meetings”, D Michael Henderson (Francis Ashbury Press), shows how John Wesley had this realistic attitude himself. He sought to ensure it was present in the class meetings that were the key to ensuring the ongoing spiritual growth of those who came to a personal life-transforming faith in Christ. Indeed, Wesley sought to make certain that this attitude was present in all leaders and in the incredibly effective wide network of small and large gatherings that ensured the amazing success of the Methodist revival.

One of the remarkable features of the class meeting format was the **realism about human nature** that was built into its design. The Puritans had so dreaded human sinfulness that they failed to deal with it objectively; the deists either ignored or glossed over the seriousness of **sinful behaviour**; but **Wesley expected it** and made explicit plans for its treatment in the class meeting. He recognised that those who are seeking to overcome the downward pull of wrong habits will occasionally fall back into them, perhaps often in the beginning. So he prepared class leaders to expect spiritual “remission” and to lead those who regress back to the right way.

A delightful section in the first Methodist hymnbook is entitled “*Hymns Upon Falling into Sin*” and contains appropriate exhortations to the backslider. The next section is apparently intended for celebration of victory, for it is aptly titled “*Hymns Upon Recovering From a Fall*”.

Optimism

But we need to balance this realism with optimism. Optimism based on the grace of God...on the Christian good news of promise and hope.

As I wrote in my mentoring book (p.31):

“The vision God gives us in Christ is all about possibilities – what might be, not what is. People need not be locked into more of the same. It is about new realities that can be seen and apprehended by faith. The Good News is that life can begin again! God’s call is to actualise through the Spirit what we already are in Christ – a new creation! (2 Cor 5:17)”

John Wesley brought this optimism into all he said and did. Henderson informs us:

“Wesley recognised the tragic nature of evil and the consequences of sin upon people. Nevertheless, he was **a cheerful optimist** about the sovereignty and providence of God who could bring even the most recalcitrant sinner under the rehabilitative force of grace. He did not share the pessimism of many of his Protestant forbears, who were quite glum about the chances of human improvement. With a hopeful belief in the perfectibility of man, coupled with a serious determination to save all who could be reached, he mobilised his army of Methodists to ‘spread scriptural holiness throughout the land’ and bring back the outcasts back into the redemptive kingdom of God.



Christian Mentoring

JOHN MALLISON MINISTRIES

‘Facing sin and guilt, the Class-Meeting was saved from Pietism and Moralism. Remembering God’s forgiveness and His gracious acts, mighty to save, Methodism was kept from resignation and despair. The heart laid bare in the midst of forgiving love – thus does God bring to birth new creatures in Christ.’”

The character of the class meetings reflected this optimism. Henderson describes this using phrases like “a climate of acceptance and commitment”, “an atmosphere of trust and understanding”, “most intimate and helpful friendships”, “circles of companionship”, “deep levels of affection were engendered: an optimum environment for the cultivation of personal character”, “loving and understanding sympathy and encouragement bolstered personal failures”.

Henderson quotes from Davies & Rupp, “A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain”, (I:314):

““Nothing,” said the high churchman Alexander Knox, “was nearer to New Testament religion than that cheerful piety, habitual pleasure in devotion and consequent settled self-enjoyment which John Wesley maintained to be the inheritance of the true Christian.” In Wesley’s view religion began not so much in a sense of past misconduct as in consciousness of present want: his theology dwelt on grace far more as a remedy for corruption and unhappiness, than as a relief from guilt. This cheerful, experimental piety, this active progressive ethic, this synthesis (to use theological terms) of “the Protestant doctrine of grace and the Catholic ethic of holiness” made up Methodism’s contribution to the eighteenth century, and was to inspire its work for the new industrial society that lay ahead.’



Christian Mentoring

JOHN MALLISON MINISTRIES

2(i)b. Grace, Promise, Hope and Optimism - Gordon S. Dicker

(pages 30-32 & slide 08/2)

After the affirmation that God is, the most fundamental thing a Christian has to say is that God is love, God is compassionate, and God is gracious. In fact its teaching about the grace of God is one of the distinguishing marks of the Christian faith as a religion. By grace God sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. By grace through faith alone God accepts sinners and restores them to a right relationship with himself. By grace God begins in us the process of transformation that will eventually remake us in the pattern of his Son. By Grace God sends his Holy Spirit upon us, calls us into his kingdom and assures us that his kingdom will come.

Yet all of this is just a foretaste of what is to come. We are not yet all that God intends to make us, but we have God's promises that the work God has begun in us and in the world will be brought to completion in God's good time. St Paul speaks of Christians as heirs, and heirs are people who wait for an inheritance that has been promised and willed, but is not yet truly theirs. Even the creation is likened to a woman in labour awaiting the birth of a child. What she is going through can be endured because of the expectation she has of producing a strong and healthy baby. So the world also can endure the present calamities because of the promise of final deliverance. In many and varied ways the Scripture speaks of God's promises both for individual believers and for the world as a whole. It can truthfully be said that the life of faith that we now live is a life of promise.

Because of these promises, those who have faith in God can live in hope in spite of the terrible things they see in the world around them. In everyday language the word 'hope' often signifies little more than a wish. We say such things as 'I hope it will be fine for our picnic', or 'I hope I get the job I have applied for', but such hopes may have no foundation at all. The hope of which the Bible speaks is quite different. It is not a wish' it is a confident expectation that what God has promised, God will deliver.

For this reason Christians have an optimistic view about life. They believe that there is no limit to what God can do in and through them. They can indeed be 'the light of the world' and the 'salt of the earth'. They can turn the other cheek and they can go to the second, and indeed the third mile. Equally they believe that there are no limits to what God can do to transform the world into his kingdom. And above all, come what may, they know that God is with them.

However, Christian optimism is not unrealistic. It acknowledges that there is much evil, violence and sickness in the world in which believers may become embroiled. There is no promise that those who believe in God will be spared all pains and eventually die in their sleep at a grand old age with all their faculties still intact. That is an unrealistic expectation. What is more the world in which they live is one in which temptations abound and they will need courage, determination and the full armour of God to withstand 'the world, the flesh and the devil'.

But this realism does not cloud their optimism or the joy they have in God's grace to them, and the hope they have in God's promises. Rather, sustained by grace and hope, they view the realities as an exciting challenge.



Christian Mentoring

JOHN MALLISON MINISTRIES

2(i)c. A Child of God - Away from “Home” or at “Home” (pages 30-32 & slide 08/2)

In dealing with the biblical teaching on the nature of human beings on pages 30 to 32, I follow the reformed tradition that through faith in Christ, a person **becomes** a child of God. However, on this slide I am giving the impression that all human beings are children of God. As in Christ's parable of the Prodigal Son, the prodigal was still his father's son while in the far country.

Jesus' teachings in the gospels, more than anywhere else in Scripture, portray God as Father. He breaks with “the remote and highly formal modes of address employed by the Jews of that day”. The word he used for father (“Abba”) in the prayer he taught his disciples is expressive of an intimate but respectful relationship. But his teaching focuses on the divine fatherhood of all believers – his concern for the believer as that of a father for his child. As we mature in Christ, we need to maximise all that this intimate, loving relationship is intended to mean for us in our daily living.

In the early nineteenth century, liberal theology propagated the idea that all human beings, not only believers, were children of God. The idea of being “lost” or “away from ‘home’” was denied, along with the gospel.

However, in a sense God can be described as Father of all, in that he created all human beings. The early church fathers spoke this way, and the Apostles' Creed conveys this idea.

But we need to balance that with the idea of the “lostness” of an unbelieving sinner and the need to have a personal faith in Christ's finished work of redemption. Then God is not only our “creator Father”, but our “redemptive Father in Christ.”



Christian Mentoring

JOHN MALLISON MINISTRIES

2(i)d. Author's Prayer Base

(page 98 and slide 21/4)

This diagram illustrates the brief description of the prayer base for my life and ministry given on page 98.

The outer area, "General", refers to the many people who pray for me regularly, the commitment of most of whom I am unaware. I never cease to be greatly encouraged by the number of people who say when I meet them, "I pray for you regularly"!

One of my Council members once said, "**This ministry floats on a raft of prayer!**" How true this is!

I firmly believe **prayer changes things!** And because of this belief, I pray and I ask others to pray for me, my family and my ministry.



Christian Mentoring

JOHN MALLISON MINISTRIES

2(i)e “The Dichotomy of Christian Existence”

(pages 102-3, slides 22/11-14)

(The following expands”...take the Bible seriously” on pages 102-3)

In his forthright and fascinating book, “The Trouble With Church” (Hodder & Stoughton, UK), Helmut Thielicke addresses the lack of convincing preaching in many churches. He himself regularly filled to overflowing one of the largest churches in Europe.

To be a convincing preacher (or witness), he rightly claims we must be credible – we must be seen to be speaking out of personal experience. Lack of ability to communicate the wonder of God’s amazing grace in Christ persuasively, believably and powerfully lies deep in our own personal spiritual condition, which is all too often unconvincing.

“Anybody who wants to know whether a particular soft drink is really as good as the advertising man on the television screen says it is, cannot simply believe the phonetically amplified recommendations, but must find out whether this man actually drinks this soft drink at home when he is not in public. This means that what the preacher says in the pulpit must have a relationship to what fills the rest of his existence.

Jesus did not think of hypocrisy as conscious shamming; he never caricatured the Pharisees in this way! What he meant by hypocrisy was an objective contradiction in one’s own existence, a contradiction that the person involved may not be aware of at all. So the contradiction consists in the fact that on the one hand we are on the side of redemption, but that on the other hand there are unredeemed areas within us which are still untouched by the renewing breath of the Spirit. The heart may be beating for God, it may also be really gripped by his grace and it may be a very devout heart; but it has not yet pumped the blood to the extremities of the body. There are still some numb parts which have not yet been reached by this revived circulation of the blood.”

Thielicke likens this dichotomy, this split in belief and behaviour to living in two different houses. He speaks of “the separate existence of the house of life and the house of doctrine” – our theological house and our everyday house.

As Christian leaders, we need to avoid any contradiction between what we teach and the way we live if we are to be credible witnesses. We must be models for our mentorees by practising our convictions.

In our mentoring, we will use the Bible as our prime mentoring resource, encouraging our mentorees to take it seriously so they too may avoid “the dichotomy of Christian existence”.

Jesus and the New Testament writers exhort us to allow what we claim to be our beliefs to make a difference to the way we live.

Jesus’ parable of the sower is about allowing the seed (God’s word) to take root and grow unencumbered in our lives. The “seed” can easily disappear or be crowded out by the distractions of this world.

A number of Jesus’ parables conclude with an exhortation to put into practice his words (Matt 7:24; Luke 11:28, etc).

In John’s gospel, the proof of our love and commitment to Christ is that we obey his teachings (John 14:15, 21, 23; 15:10).

In his epistle, James instructs us not to merely be a hearer of God’s word but a doer – to turn what we have heard into actions and deeds. The Scriptures teach us the ideal of what we ought to be to please God and live a fulfilling life. We see what is wrong and what we need to do to correct it.



Christian Mentoring

JOHN MALLISON MINISTRIES

In Christian education events we use Value Clarification exercises to help participants make what they say they believe affect their attitudes and behaviour. The process seeks to enable them to determine what they claim are their **ideal values** and then identify how these in fact govern their everyday lives – **their actual values**.

The “Depth and Encounter” Bible study method aims at helping serious readers of the Scriptures firstly to seek to understand the meaning of the text and then explore its meaning for them personally. The questions designed to be used in a small group aim to facilitate change so we may become more like Jesus Christ.

(These questions are included on page 104, item 3 of Individual Work. The full method is found on pages 124-127 of “The Small Group Leader” – John Mallison).

(See “The Purpose Driven Life” – Rick Warren, Zondervan, chapter 24, *Transformed by Truth* for some brief further reading).



Christian Mentoring

JOHN MALLISON MINISTRIES

2(i)f. Setting Boundaries

(pages 116-122, slide 24/4)

This session plan is used in seminars providing an introduction to mentoring where prior reading and personal reflection has not been possible.

“1” A brief overview of the text on pages 116-122 by the trainer using slides 1-3.
Alternatively, the participants could be asked to scan these pages.

“3” After dealing with feedback and questions from the work in pairs, a plenary discussion could focus on Personal Reflection questions 3 and 4.

“4” Groups of four or six could be assigned different Group Work questions on page 123 (eg 3, 4 6 or 7).



Christian Mentoring

JOHN MALLISON MINISTRIES

2(i)g. 247 Mentoring Questions

for use in mentoring sessions contained in “Mentoring to Develop Disciples and Leaders”
(slide 25/2)

Number of Questions

• Some experience-based learning questions (<i>page 107</i>)	19
• Case study reflection questions (<i>page 108</i>)	7
• More reflective questions (<i>page 125</i>)	7
• Questions for the first or early mentoring sessions (<i>pages 126-129</i>)	11
• Questions for ongoing mentoring sessions (<i>pages 126-129</i>)	114
• Questions to identify person's needs (<i>page 176</i>)	12
• Spiritual Director's Issues (G * M Brown) (<i>pages 187-190</i>)	52
• Renovare Self Examination questions (<i>pages 190-191</i>)	14
• Accountability questions (Life transformation Groups) (<i>Pages 191-192</i>)	11
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	<u>247</u>

(Plus the dozens of questions in the 32 Study Guides)



Christian Mentoring

JOHN MALLISON MINISTRIES

2(i)h. Communication – Non-verbal & Vocal

(page 131 & slide 26/9)

Non-Verbal Communication

Research into face-to-face communication between human beings has found that the **verbal** dimension (words spoken) provides only about 7% of the total impact of a message. The **vocal** dimension, which is the way a person speaks those words (the tone of voice, where the emphasis is placed and inflection), together with other sounds which are not actually words, contributes 38% to the message a person actually receives. However, the **non-verbal** aspect, a person's facial expressions and body language (movement and position), contributes 55%. Some researchers set this **non-verbal** figure in excess of 65%.

A number of well-written books are available on non-verbal communication. "Body Language" by Allan Peace (Camel) is easy to follow and well illustrated.

Here are briefly some aspects of non-verbal communication. Hopefully these will stimulate you to read more on the subject.

Always keep in mind that non-verbal communication is complex. You should be warned against taking one cue in isolation. Usually a number of cues need to be taken into account before drawing a conclusion concerning what a person is involuntarily communicating.

Walking Style

This relates to how people carry their bodies, whether they swish, amble or stamp. Observe how people arrive at the group. Their movements could convey expectancy, confidence, purpose, caution, heaviness of spirit, joy, etc.

Touching

This is probably the most powerful non-verbal communication form. We can communicate interest, trust, tenderness, warmth, anger, rejection and a variety of other emotions through touch. People differ in their willingness to touch and be touched. Some give out non-verbal signals that say they do not wish to be touched. Different cultures respond in different ways to touching. We need to be sensitive to this in groups of mixed racial backgrounds.

Eye contact

People tend to size each other up in terms of trustworthiness through reactions to each other's eye contact. Counsellors know that eye contact is an important way of creating understanding and acceptance but again we need to keep in mind that some cultures use less eye contact than others.

Posture

How people position their bodies when seated or standing constitutes a set of potential signals that may communicate how they are experiencing their environment. People who fold their arms and cross their legs are often said to be on the defensive. It is sometimes observed that a person under severe psychological threat will assume the body position of a foetus. A person slouched in a seat may be bored, feeling relaxed or showing disagreement.

Mannerisms or tics

The involuntary nervous spasms of the body can indicate when a person feels threatened, not in agreement or irritated. The continuous or even casual movement of a foot or the fingers can indicate disagreement or impatience with what another is saying. These mannerisms can be easily misinterpreted.



Christian Mentoring

JOHN MALLISON MINISTRIES

Distancing

Each person is said to have a psychological space around them. If someone invades that space they may become tense, alert, defensive. We tend to place distance between ourselves and others according to the kinds of relationship we have and what our motives are towards each other.

Some people who have had a traumatic experience with another person, especially in early life, will find it disturbing to have another person stand close to them. This needs to be kept in mind when leading a small group. Most will be very relaxed about sitting close to one another, whereas others may want to keep some space around them until they feel comfortable in the group, and for some that may require an extended period of meetings.

Gesturing

Gestures (the way we use our hands and arms) carry a great deal of meaning but do not mean the same things to all people. Again, these need to be interpreted against a person's cultural background. Gestures give emphasis to our words and often clarify our meanings. They often are expressive of deep emotions and can be either threatening or accepting.

Vocal Communication

As has already been indicated, when people speak to each other, the way in which they say the words that they speak contributes 38% to the effectiveness of the communication. Other sounds that are not strictly words also contribute to this aspect.

Vocalism has to do with the way we pronounce or emphasise what we say. The way a word or sentence is packaged vocally determines the signal it gives to another person. Where the emphasis is placed determines the meaning another is likely to infer from our message. As an example, take the sentence "I love my son". Shifting the emphasis to a different word each time it is spoken can give an entirely different message. For example, if the emphasis is on the first word, "I love my son", the implication is that others do not, or it could be defensive against an accusation that the speaker does not love his son. If the emphasis is on the second word, it could be given to deny neglect or emphasise the depth of the relationship. By emphasising "**my**" the implication is that someone else's children do not receive the same affection. Whereas to emphasise the word '**son**' could mean there are other members of the family who are not held in the same regard.

My wife and I most times call each other 'darling' but that word gets packaged in different ways. When we are feeling warm towards each other it expresses a closeness and deep love. If we are being inconsiderate or disagreeing with one another, the same word comes over as less than accepting and affirming!

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Sub-vocals are the sounds uttered when trying to find words, eg uh, um, er. We use a number of non-word expressions in order to carry a meaning to another person. We hum, grunt, groan and so on. These are not words, purely noise, but they do carry meaning, saying: "I agree", "I understand", "I'm impatient, get on with it", "I have something to say", "I do not agree", "Surely not", "You can't be serious!"

- Taken from "*The Small Group Leader*" – John Mallison, pages 76-79



Christian Mentoring

JOHN MALLISON MINISTRIES

2 (i). Seven Things Good Listeners Do

(pages 129-135)

"Listening is an art. We can't afford to be too rigid about the techniques for becoming better listeners because, as in all aspects of communication, our performance grows out of our experience of personal relationships and each of those relationships has its own dynamics, its own style, its own degree of intensity and its own importance to us."

Hugh Mackay goes on to introduce the seven things good listeners do to improve their performance. He says that these are 'the disciplines which good listeners impose on themselves in order to ensure that their brains – as well as their ears – are working'.

Here is a summary of what Mackay suggests:

1. They receive the message before they react to it.

They postpone judgments about the communicator and the message until they are sure they have understood.

2. They resist the distraction offered by 'trigger' words.

Certain words set off reactions in us because we don't understand them, or they don't fit into our framework of thinking or feeling, beliefs and prejudices, or they switch us off to do some private thinking so that we miss chunks of the message.

3. They ask themselves: 'What can I do about this? How can I use this?'

They seek to discover the relevance for their own needs, interests or concerns.

4. They work hard at listening.

They avoid being too comfortable. They concentrate, but realise there are limits to concentration so try to get the message in manageable amounts. They encourage the communicator to help them in this regard.

5. They harness their thought speed.

Our minds are capable of thinking much more quickly than most people speak. Good listeners discipline themselves to both listen and reflect at the same time. They try to discover the speaker's intention. They think about what is being said while the other is speaking, while still listening.

6. They try to empathise with the speaker.

They try to get into the speaker's mind and feelings to catch their mood and respond appropriately, to team their spirit with that of the speaker, to 'match their energy level'.

7. They reflect what they have heard.

Feeding back to the speaker what the listener has understood to have been communicated before making a personal response proves that the person has been acknowledged, taken seriously, listened to and understood.

- Hugh Mackay, "Why Don't People Listen?" (Pan, 1994)

- quoted in "The Small Group Leader" John Mallison (page 76)



Christian Mentoring

JOHN MALLISON MINISTRIES

2(i)j. Peer Mentoring Amongst Small Group Members

(page 152, slide 30/12)

For many, many years, I have met with a group of peers bi-weekly, where we begin by sharing generally over breakfast. In our group meeting which follows, we begin by focusing upon Scripture and responding to it. Then we each openly share some of our personal journey and issues for which we would appreciate prayer. As each in turn shares, the person on their right in the group notes their prayer requests, etc. When all have indicated their needs, we each pray for the person on our left, following our recall of what that person would value our prayers for.

My close friend and peer mentor belongs to that group. We often ring or email each other upon the items for which each of us requested prayer. We also meet about monthly to talk more openly about each other's personal and spiritual life and ministry and receive from one another wisdom, encouragement. We then conclude with prayer.

Many groups which are committed to developing real spiritual community, after the group has spent some meetings developing openness, trust and a love born of the Spirit, have the members pair themselves to support each other by listening to one another's responses to the study of the Scriptures and their expressed needs for prayer. They not only pray for each other in the group but keep in touch between meetings by phone or face to face get-togethers to support and encourage and also build in some accountability. Such bonding greatly enriches the collective life of the group.

Many of these pairs become in-depth peer mentoring relationships.