

Encourage

Inspiration for IPHC Leaders

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Take Time to Ponder the Power of the RISEN CHRIST



We are often in a hurry to put Easter aside. Let's remember what Jesus did between Easter and Pentecost.



BY DOUG
BEACHAM

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Often we are too quick to jump from Easter to Pentecost. In fact, in many Pentecostal theological traditions, we have lost much by ignoring the historic Christian calendar. For many pastors, there are only three major church Sundays: Christmas, Easter, and Homecoming.

As Chris Maxwell's excellent series of *Pause* books teaches, we need to pause after Easter and give attention to the importance of the forty days that Jesus ministered on earth, before His Ascension, as we renew the rightful place of emphasizing Pentecost.

That's why we need to remember that Pentecost Sunday this year is June 4th, with the Ascension ten days prior on May 25. Jesus' ascension is described in Mark 16:19, 20; Luke 24:51–53; and Acts 1:4–11. The Apostle Paul alluded to the Ascension in Ephesians 4:8–16 in referring to Christ's gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

The connection with Pentecost and the IPHC's focus on Christ's Kingdom becomes clearer when we recognize the emphasis that St. Luke gave to the period between the resurrection and Pentecost. We first see this in the Gospel of Luke, as Luke focused on what and why Jesus taught (Luke 24:25–32, 44–49). During these forty days, Jesus instructed His disciples: "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you..." (Luke 24:44 NKJV).

This means that Jesus repeated much of what He said during His three years of ministry. Jesus named the aspects of His miracles and teachings that needed to be emphasized. He told His followers "... that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me" (Luke 24:44 NKJV).

Jesus taught His Jewish disciples that His ministry was foretold in their Law, prophets and writings. He showed how He fulfilled these witnesses of God's divine purpose in the world.

In Luke's second volume, the Acts of the Apostles, he began with what Jesus did and taught during these forty days "...until the day in which He was taken up..." (Acts 1:1-2). Jesus "presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs..." (Acts 1:3).

The reality of Jesus' physical presence with them during these forty days was clearly affirmed (see Luke 24:36-43). The physically present Jesus, present in the uniqueness of His resurrected body which transcended normal physical laws, taught the disciples on a specific topic: "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." (Acts 1:3). Jesus' further teaching on the kingdom of God completed His teaching here on earth.

We know from Jesus' kingdom parables in Matthew 13 and the parallel in Mark 4 that His teaching about the kingdom of God was often expressed in parables. Some of the parables were explained by Jesus when He first gave them, such as the parable of the sower and the parable of the wheat and tares (see Matthew 13:18-23; 36-43). But other parables remained mysteries for the disciples to ponder and discuss.

While the Bible does not specifically say, it seems reasonable that during these forty days Jesus further explained these parables as He talked about the kingdom of God. As I've pondered these forty days before the Ascension, I've found myself imagining Jesus speaking to Matthew, Mark (who though not one of the Twelve, was a disciple), and John, informing them of the emphasis they should take in telling His story for the future.

We know that the Apostle Peter was spiritually restored during these forty days (Luke 22:31, 32; John 21:15-18). No doubt the following days with Jesus were times of refreshing, insight and affirmation, so that Peter went forward without crippling guilt—with the strength that comes from gratitude and humility. The same can be said for Thomas, whose doubt was directly challenged by Jesus (John 20:24-29). No doubt Thomas found a confident faith that enabled him to later move further eastward into India as a missionary of the risen Lord.

These forty days were essential—days we shouldn't be quick to skip over. During this time, the disciples were in the presence of the risen Lord and the presence of the Holy Spirit. John 20:19-23 described how in the earliest days of His resurrection, Jesus met with the fearful disciples and brought His peace that transformed their fear. He commissioned them to be sent just as He had been sent. He "breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"

The presence of the Holy Spirit during these forty days enabled them to learn and discern in an atmosphere charged with divine life. Jesus taught that His power—to bring release from the power of sin—was being transferred to them, His disciples.

The importance of Jesus breathing on them the Holy Spirit in John 20:22 gives further impetus to the meaning of Pentecost in Acts 2. In both instances, the Spirit is present, showing the way of forming the new creation which manifests what it means to be a new community in the world. It is a community in continuity with the promises of Abraham and the covenant community of Israel.

"During those days between Easter and Pentecost, the disciples took an intense post-graduate course in the reality of the risen Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit."

Encourage

A place of hope. A people of promise.

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At the close of the forty days, Jesus gathered His disciples together for their closing class. They asked, "Will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

I am changing my mind about their question. I used to think that they asked this question because they still didn't get it. The more I reflect on the forty days, and the fact that Jesus didn't reject the question about Israel, only the question about time, I am convinced that Jesus had given instruction into the role of Israel and the promises to the fathers (described more fully later by Paul in Romans 9-11).

The answer to the question was an expansion and fulfillment of Israel's role to be a light to the nations. The Holy Spirit is the divine agent enabling them to be witnesses of Jesus "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

During those days between Easter and Pentecost, the disciples took an intense post-graduate course in the reality of the risen Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. May we commit ourselves to take the course ourselves through His presence in Word and Spirit. □



Why Church Leaders Need **NON-CHRISTIAN** Friends

Today's spiritual leaders must do more than preach to the choir. We must love our communities!



BY CHRIS
MAXWELL

CHRIS MAXWELL served as a lead pastor in Orlando, Florida, for 19 years. He then became Campus Pastor at Emmanuel College in Franklin Springs, Georgia, and he has served in that position for 11 years. He's also the author of eight books including his latest, *Underwater*. You can find him on Twitter @CMaxMan or visit his website at chrismaxwell.me.

Without any additional details, I asked some men to make a list of five. Two of the guys assumed I wanted a list of five prayer requests. One guessed it was a list of five new trends in today's church. One thought it was five ways to pause and become more aware of God's presence in our busy lives.

One correctly predicted it was five names, but he wrongly assumed that the names were the five leaders who influenced them the most. None of them were correct.

I slowly gave them more details, first saying this list would help them see the way we follow Jesus, how we change the world and a key step to making disciples. These are priorities, I said. Essentials. Fundamentals. But often forgotten.

I finally became more specific and asked, "Can you list five people you communicate with regularly who are not followers of Christ?"

I gave them time. I watched their faces.

Two of the men did not have any friends who were not followers of Christ. One, a bi-vocational pastor, had many friends who were not followers of Christ, but he confessed he spent very little time building deep relationships with them.

Another man admitted he knew several but rarely ate a meal with them, invited them over or communicated with them. All of these men felt the tension. The intriguing dialogue educated us. And it made us sad. We spent time discussing what Jesus would do by reviewing what Jesus did.

Today's spiritual leaders must do more than preach people to Jesus. Those humans—made in God's image, but not knowing the biblical truth—are important. They crave relationships. They want conversations. They long for authentic dialogue that reveals their importance.

This isn't about a new program, a new church trend or a new tagline. This is about Jesus. It's about following Jesus—who was known as “friend of sinners” (see Matt. 11:19). It is about His love for the people in our neighborhood, the people in the grocery store, the people we know, the people God wants us to know.

My small group began pursuing answers to important questions. What hinders us from

developing better relationships with those who do not share our faith? Are we afraid? Are we too busy?

Some pastors say it is their job to train their people how to do this work of the ministry, but aren't ministers to lead by example rather than only through sermons? Who have we recently met in our neighborhood? What obstacles keep us from building relationships with five—at least five—people who do not know what we consider the most important truth of life?

Think of what it would do for us if we would get to know those five better. Their fears. Their wounds. Their questions. We might be more understanding of individuals with deep hurts. We could possibly gain a better understanding of why they are reluctant to come to church, how they have been wounded in the church or why they understand very little of church language, sermons and songs.

I recently spoke at medical convention. A lady stood in the back to greet me when a session ended. Her attire indicated she was a person with religious beliefs of another faith. She wanted to talk.

She thanked me for my book, *Pause with Jesus*. I asked, “How did you get a copy?” She said, “A lady I work with gave me a copy. I am reading every morning and every night. This is helping me learn about your Jesus.” Her coworker cared and became a true friend. Her friend built trust before buying her a book.

Many people like this woman are waiting. Not for a book or sermon or cool church trend. They are waiting for a friend.

They might be looking for your story. They might be looking for someone like you to show interest in their story. They might be looking for someone like you or someone like me to help them gain a better understanding

about Jesus writing their story.

But how? How can we build more relationships with more people in our busy schedules? Here are a few ideas:

- View relationships as a priority—relationships with those who do not yet know Jesus.
- Begin to observe people in your neighborhood, your school, your business or your favorite restaurant. Notice them. See them as people made in God's image and loved by Him.
- Speak to people. Ask open-ended questions and listen for their answers. Talk with a kind tone. Make eye contact. Display Jesus.
- Invite these new acquaintances over to your house. Eat together. Laugh together. Learn together.
- Pray. Pray for your city. Pray for the Lord to send workers into the harvest, and pray that you will be one of them.
- Tell your story. Share how you found truth, grace and forgiveness. Share how you met Jesus.
- Welcome their stories with the love of Jesus.

I recently spent time with a dear

friend. He has been a faithful pastor in the same congregation for over twenty years. I was speaking in his town, so we went to lunch.

At the restaurant everyone knew him. They spoke to him not in a churchy language but honest, transparent conversations. They asked him questions. He listened well. He loved them.

These people could see Jesus through a true pastor loving his community. Even though they had not yet received salvation, they saw a living witness of Christ.

My pastor friend could count the people regularly attending on a Sunday morning as the number of people he pastors. But he pastors more. Many more: The workers at the daycare which meets during the week in his church facility, the people in his town who call him when they're in need, the teachers at the nearby school, and the neighbors next door.

What about you? Do men and women at your favorite restaurant know God's love through your willingness to be their true friends? Who do you know well that does not yet know Jesus? If Jesus loves them as much as we claim He does, shouldn't we? □

“What hinders us from developing better relationships with those who do not share our faith? Are we afraid? Are we too busy?”



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Uniting a Team of Churches to Plant New Churches



BY LUIS
M. AVILA

DR. LUIS M. AVILA was born in San Jose, Costa Rica, where he served for 11 years as a pastor and national leader. He also spent seven years as a missionary in Guatemala. In 1997, he relocated to Greenville, North Carolina, where he served as pastor and leader of the Hispanic community. From 2004-2013 he has served as Director of Hispanic Ministry with the IPHC's North Carolina Conference. Dr. Avila holds a Doctorate in Ministry with The Christian University. He currently lives in Oklahoma City, where he serves as National Director of Hispanic Ministry and INCaM for the IPHC. He and his wife, Lilliana, have three children and four grandchildren.

We know that every healthy church should reproduce new churches. Planting churches is in the heart of God and has always been His plan and desire. When planting a new church, we can make use of the opportunities, resources and experiences offered by other congregations, regardless of their size. If several congregations join to carry out a new church project in the same area or another city, much more could be accomplished.

To bring several churches together to start a new congregation, we need to overcome some obstacles, such as the absence of a kingdom mentality, personal desire to receive credit, and the territorial mentality. I believe that the pastors of several churches who come together to start a new congregation may well overcome these and other obstacles if they are driven by the mandate of the Great Commission.

I have seen this occur in other countries and I know it's possible. When we talked about planting a church, several of the pastors present in the training joined together to plant a new church and have agreed what each one of them will do to accomplish the vision.

In the book of Acts, we find cases in which more than one church agreed to start a new congregation. "When the apostles who were in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them ..." (Acts 8:14 NIV). "The news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem; and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch" (Acts 11:22). "Then Barnabas departed to Tarsus to seek Saul; And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch" (Acts 11:25).

We see this team strategy used by the Jerusalem church to create new churches. On occasions when a door was opened due to the preaching of the gospel in those regions, they decided to send qualified people from their church to support the movement of the Holy Spirit in the new congregations.

When a local church does this alone, it may take more time because they might want to wait for better financial conditions, time and more human resources. Fear of lack of resources and time, failure, and other challenges may well be overcome in specific cases where more than one church agrees to start a new congregation.

The Bible speaks about agreements and what can be achieved when two or more people unite themselves to achieve a goal or purpose. Matthew 18:19 says that if two agree to ask for something, it will be done to them. Can you think what would happen if two or more pastors with their congregations agree to start a new church? The potential is huge!

We have spoken about the vision to continue planting churches to reach the lost for Christ, but we must learn to practice teamwork among various congregations. A number of churches can join together and plan a church plant in a key location, receiving the support of all the participating congregations so the burden will not be left to one congregation.

The most effective way to spread the gospel is by planting new churches. If this is done in a careful and strategic way, several congregations will join in the work and combine their resources. For this to happen, we must all be willing and sensitive to the needs of other cities and be determined to become churches and people with a mentality of expansion.

The kingdom of God expands with new converts and new churches, but growth comes from intentional and proper planning. By the grace of God, today the Lord has made it possible for hundreds of IPHC churches to exist in the United States. Just imagine what we could do to establish new congregations if we form groups of churches who work together to plant new congregations?

In Oklahoma City, there is a church that has been dedicated to plant other churches in the city and state. They have implemented a strategy that involves other churches with related goals and the unity that exists allows the union of resources to go to new places and start new churches.

Three or four pastors meet, plan, and decide where to plant a church. They enter an agreement

as to the distribution of roles and responsibilities as well as the duration of the participation of the new project. And this strategy has proven successful.

So how do we implement this vision? I suggest a plan of practical steps.

1. SOMEONE MUST TAKE THE INITIATIVE.

This person should visualize the opportunity, and bring together some of the pastors to raise the idea in his/her heart and the possibility of achieving it.

2. ASK THE LORD FOR A VISION TO PLANT A NEW CHURCH.

Also, ask the Lord to guide you towards those pastors in the city or your area who might be open to this possibility. Not only pastors of the same denomination can be involved, there may be others who are interested in participating.

3. RALLY CHURCHES FOR THE VISION.

Consider the unity of three to five churches in which all participate in the distribution of functions and request that they work for at least one year. When the leaders in the Jerusalem church heard that the Word of God had entered those cities, they sent out the best of their workers.

4. GATHER THE PASTORS.

Plan a meeting with the pastors and share what is in your heart by having ideas on the start date, location, strategy, financial responsibilities and participation each person will have in the project.

When a new church is planted, there is a need for people to teach, direct, sing, play instruments and disciple new converts. Sometimes all of that cannot be carried out by only one church; you need the participation of others.

Our churches are filled with people who would like to get involved in a project like this and they are ready to collaborate under the direction of a working plan. The levels of participation can be well defined if a good agreement is reached about the participation each church contributes to the project.

5. KEEP MOVING FORWARD.

Plan a series of follow-up meetings to pray, plan, strategize, encourage and supervise the project.

Do you have the vision of planting a church in your heart? May God lead you to find support in various pastors and their congregations. Consider the possibility! □

“Can you think what would happen if two or more pastors with their congregations agree to start a new church? The potential is huge!”



Guidelines for Cultivating Healthy PROPHETIC MINISTRY

We should earnestly desire this vital gift. But we should also train people to use it properly.



BY MATT
HELLAND

MATT HELLAND and his wife, Femke, are IPHC missionaries in The Netherlands. They have a passion for church planting and training churches using prophecy, power evangelism and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Their current ministry focus is weekly reaching out to Spanish speaking prostitutes in Amsterdam's red light district. Matt also leads F.E.E.D. People (www.feedpeople.eu) which is People to People's ministry in Europe. Matt and Femke have four children.

Prophecy has to do with discerning and revealing the heart and mind of God. This vital gift should strengthen, encourage and comfort God's people (see 1 Corinthians 14:3, NLT). It involves telling others what we have seen and heard from Jesus.

Revelation 19:10c says: "...the essence of prophecy is to give a clear witness for Jesus." Prophecy is a normal part of developing a healthy prayer life as God nudges us in the directions we should pray. We talk to God and He talks to us. Hearing the voice of God and speaking His words should be normal for every believer.

Paul instructs us to eagerly desire spiritual gifts, but especially prophecy (see 1 Corinthians 14:1 NIV). The apostle desired that everyone could prophesy in order to build up the church. He described a meeting where every believer is prophesying, and unbelievers who walk in believe in God because He is obviously in their midst (see 14:24-25).

Every believer can potentially prophesy, but how do we cultivate a healthy prophetic ministry? Here are a few helpful guidelines:

1. Eagerly desire to prophesy. When the gifts of the Holy Spirit first started functioning regularly in my life, I found myself doubting whether or not it was God's will for me to prophesy.

Maybe God did not want me to prophesy? Maybe the devil wanted that, or maybe it was just my own prideful desire.

Then I read Paul's words saying that we should eagerly desire spiritual gifts. I wrote in my journal: "God, I want to prophesy! I want to heal the sick!"

The next morning, I was on Facebook chatting with someone and suddenly I asked him, "Do you have pain in your right foot?"

He responded by saying, "How did you know that?"

All pain in his foot disappeared the moment I called him and prayed for his foot. This experience involved both the word of knowledge and healing. But it was by stepping out in these gifts that I realized God wants us to desire the gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy.

2. Don't be weird. We prophesy by faith and not by our feelings (Romans 12:6). We do not have to work up our emotions, "feel" the anointing, speak in KJV English or fall into a trance in order to prophesy.

All gifts from God including salvation, healing, tongues, words of knowledge and prophecy are received by faith (Ephesians 2:8–9). We prophesy by faith and not by our feelings (2 Corinthians 5:7). We are to speak as if we are speaking the very words of God, but we don't need to be weird doing it (1 Peter 4:11).

3. Cultivate spiritual disciplines in your life.

God speaks to me every day primarily through reading the Bible. Using scripture is one of the best ways to prophesy, but to do this you must be a student of God's Word. Spiritual disciplines such as fasting, praying, silence, meditation and confession of sin should be cultivated in the lives of all who regularly prophesy.

4. Get and give feedback. We are not to despise prophetic ministry. Yet we don't accept everything given as a genuine word from God. Instead we are to test all prophecies, hold on to what is from God and set aside what is not from Him (see 1 Thessalonians 5:19–22).

Mike Bickle, in his book *Growing in the Prophetic*, shows the typical learning curve people may have as they mature in prophetic ministry. When a person begins growing in prophetic ministry, much of what they say may simply be coming from themselves and a small percentage comes from God. As they mature, more of what they say is from God and less is simply from themselves.

Often when a mature prophet speaks, a high percentage of what he or she says is from God's heart. However, at times, they can also be simply speaking from their own minds. This is why Paul wrote, "Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said" (1 Corinthians 14:29). Every prophetic word must be evaluated and tested.

Whenever I minister prophetically, I like to give out a questionnaire asking people who have been prayed for to give feedback. This enables me to continue learning

about when I am accurate and when I may not be 100 percent accurate.

Some of the people I have mentored in the prophetic were not very accurate when they first started. One woman would tell everything she would feel without placing a filter on what she said. I corrected and encouraged her. Now she is effectively training others in prophetic ministry. Just as pastors, teachers and evangelists can be mentored, so prophets need to be mentored.

5. Establish prophetic prayer teams.

Prayer groups are an excellent place to train people to listen to God, not only for direction in prayer but also for encouraging the members of the team. A great way to practice prophetic ministry is by using a "hot seat."

You can ask individuals to take turns sitting in the middle of a circle and have everyone else ask God for a scripture, picture or an encouraging word for them. Those with a prophetic gift can be identified and further trained. Plan and create moments when prophetic ministry can be intentionally cultivated.

6. Establish guidelines for prophetic ministry.

Healthy guidelines for prophetic ministry protect those who give and receive ministry. For example, when believers are learning how to hear God's voice and prophesy, they should only focus on strengthening, encouraging and comforting one another (see 1 Corinthians 14:3).

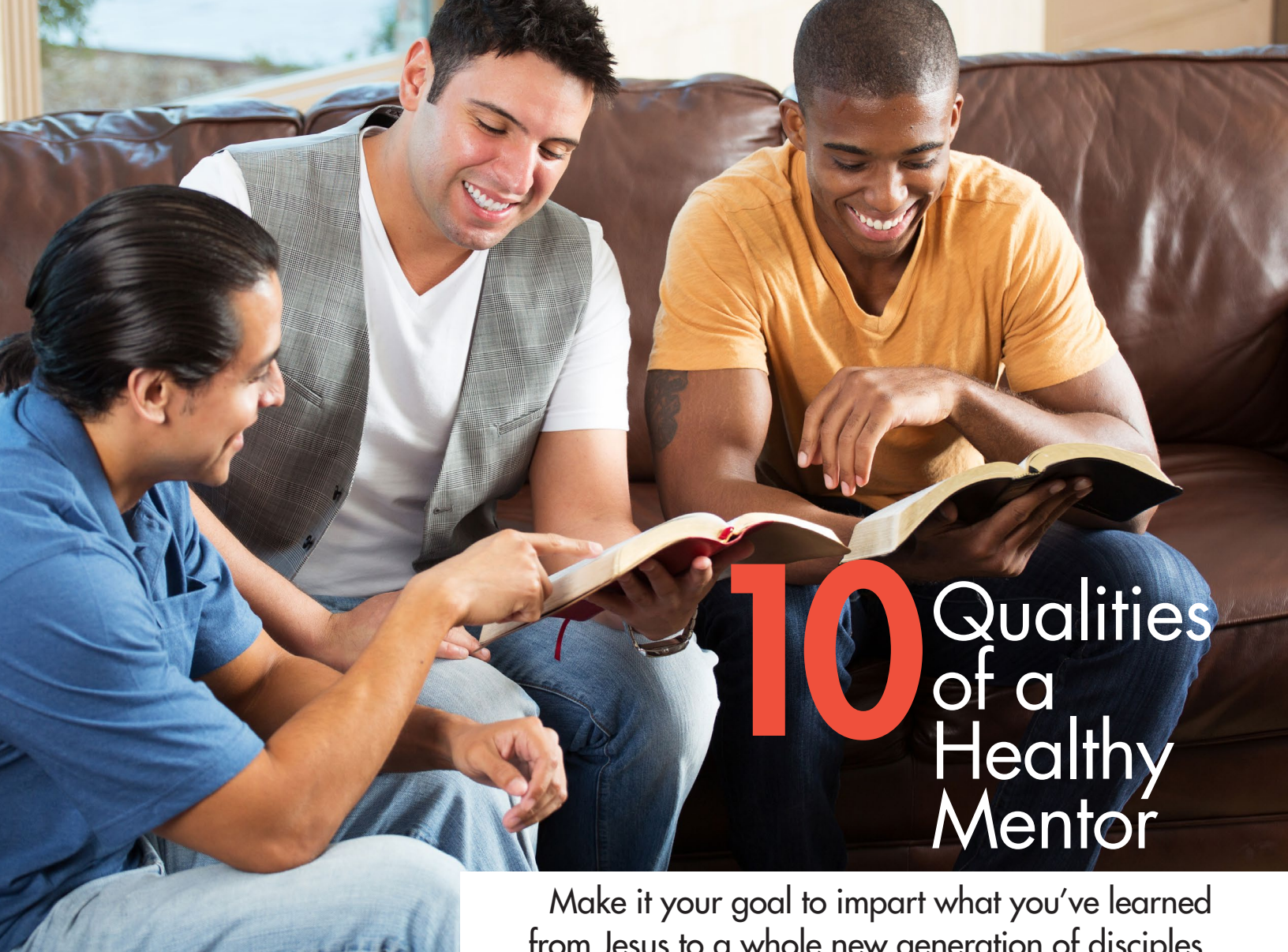
Bringing correction and foretelling the future should be reserved for responsible leaders and experienced prophets. The goal of prophecy is not foretelling the future or judging people. It is revealing God's love by speaking his words in the lives of individuals, churches, cities and nations.

The proper operation of the prophetic ministry builds up the whole body of Christ. It builds up believers and causes unbelievers to encounter God's Spirit.

Near the end of a prophetic conference, a young man grabbed a microphone and said, "God says, I love you! I love you! I love you!"

I didn't brush this off as too elemental. Instead I thought, *Yes! He caught the essence of prophetic ministry!* Prophecy reveals the loving heart of God, who longs for us to know Him as He truly is. ■

"Hearing the voice of God and speaking His words should be normal for every believer."



10 Qualities of a Healthy Mentor

Make it your goal to impart what you've learned from Jesus to a whole new generation of disciples.



By J. LEE GRADY

J. LEE GRADY is an ordained IPHC minister who directs The Mordecai Project, an international outreach focused on confronting gender-based violence. For 18 years he served as an editor with *Charisma* magazine, and he is the author of several books including the newly released *Set My Heart on Fire*, a Bible study on the Holy Spirit. He and his wife, Deborah, live in LaGrange, Georgia.

Throughout my Christian journey God sent special people to be my role models and mentors. One of those, a youth pastor named Barry, invited me to his home in suburban Atlanta for a weekly Bible study when I was just 15. He taught me how to have a private prayer time with God—and now, many decades later, he's still a close mentor and an example of how to be a man of God.

That youth Bible study at Barry's house did not look impressive. There were no smoke machines, laser lights or cool music. We sat in a circle of folding chairs in the den in the basement—near the washing machine. We hung around after the meeting and ate Fritos.

But what is impressive is the fruit of those meetings. If you search today for those kids who met with Barry, you will find that many of them are in full-time ministry. The investment he made in us has lasted a lifetime!

Yet I meet many Christians today who never had a mentor—or they had a bad experience with someone who tried to disciple them the wrong way. If you want to begin making disciples like this, you will find God's pattern for discipleship in the Bible. Here are 10 qualities of a healthy mentor:

- 1. HEALTHY MENTORS HAVE MENTORS.** The greatest leaders I know talk often about the people who helped them grow as Christians. No mature leader is “self-made.” Even the apostle Paul had Ananias and Barnabas to disciple him when he first came to faith. If a mentor claims he or she “learned everything directly from God,” you can be sure they have a spirit of pride. Never trust a loner.
- 2. HEALTHY MENTORS ARE ACCESSIBLE.** Some mentors keep an arms-length distance from people, and they make you wait until the planets align to schedule an appointment. That is not the Jesus way. The apostle Paul told the Romans: “For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift (Rom. 1:11a). Don’t be aloof or play hard-to-get. If you are called to help other disciples grow, give them your phone number, answer their texts and open your heart as well as your office door.
- 3. HEALTHY MENTORS DON’T JUST TALK—THEY LISTEN.** Jesus is the source of all wisdom, yet when He was with His disciples, He didn’t just lecture them. He often asked them questions (see Mark 8:27-30) and listened to their answers. God gave us one mouth and two ears—so we should listen twice as much as we talk. Good mentors know how to use their ears to comfort and care.
- 4. HEALTHY MENTORS ARE PATIENT AND UNDERSTANDING.** If you are called to be a mentor, you must realize that people don’t always take your advice the first time you offer it. Young Christians will make huge mistakes, ignore your counsel and frustrate you so much that you’ll be tempted to get angry, pull out your hair (or theirs) and give up on them! Be there for them when they stumble. Cry with them when necessary.
- 5. HEALTHY MENTORS HAVE THE COURAGE TO CONFRONT.** The apostle Paul told the Thessalonians that he cared for them “like a nurse caring for her own children” (1 Thess. 2:7b). But he also sternly warned his followers to avoid sin. Don’t compromise biblical standards to show compassion. Love is kind, but it is never soft. Sometimes the most loving thing you can do is rebuke a person who is acting foolishly.
- 6. HEALTHY MENTORS ARE COMMITTED TO CONFIDENTIALITY.** When your disciple bares his soul to you, cover his sins with the blood of Jesus and never tell others what he said. 1 Peter 4:8b says: “Love covers a multitude of sins.” You are betraying your disciple if you tell others about his private confession. Unless he confesses to child sexual abuse or murder (which you are required by law to report to the police)

his confession is between you and him. Give your disciple a “safe place” to heal.

- 7. HEALTHY MENTORS LIVE WHAT THEY PREACH.** Anybody can post their sermons on YouTube and attract a huge audience. But sermons alone don’t make a man or woman of God. Don’t be duped into following people just because of pulpit charm or online popularity. What you need in a mentor is tested character, not the wow factor. And true character is not formed in the spotlight but in the darkness of life’s trials.
- 8. HEALTHY MENTORS FOCUS ON A FEW.** We are all tempted to measure success by numbers. But Jesus turned this mentality upside down. He focused His time on a small, unimpressive group of followers. He taught us that quality comes before quantity. Good mentors, even if they preach to huge crowds, invest most of their time in helping a small number of disciples reach maturity.
- 9. HEALTHY MENTORS ARE ALWAYS GROWING SPIRITUALLY.** Jesus said a good steward in His kingdom “brings out of his treasure new and old things” (Matt. 13:52). Good mentors aren’t effective if they only teach what they learned 40 years ago. They must stay current. Good mentors are always reading books, learning new things and applying old truths to new challenges so they can train a new generation.
- 10. HEALTHY MENTORS KNOW THEIR LIMITS.** Jesus was the Son of God, but He got tired because He was also fully human. When the crowds drained His energy, He would often slip away to the wilderness to pray (see Luke 5:16). Good mentors know when their tanks are empty—and they withdraw from people to get refilled. Don’t make the mistake of seeing yourself as a Messiah. You can only give people what God gives you.

“Good mentors, even if they preach to huge crowds, invest most of their time in helping a small number of disciples reach maturity.”

If you need a mentor, look for a healthy one. And if you are a mature believer, make it your goal to impart what you’ve learned from Jesus to a whole new generation of Christians who need healthy role models. 