



MENTORING

FOR ALL SEASONS

Sharing
Life Experiences &
God's Faithfulness



JANET THOMPSON

Praise for *Mentoring for All Seasons*

“The internet has allowed us to connect to millions of people around the globe. And yet, Christian women say they are lonelier than ever. Ladies, we need each other. *Mentoring for All Seasons* provides excellent biblical insight on how to connect, encourage, motivate, and inspire each other. Janet Thompson uniquely presents practical ideas and steps on how to become, or find, a mentor. With a wide range of topics, and covering the vastly different seasons in a Christian woman’s life, *Mentoring for All Seasons* teaches how to find, or be, the mentor Jesus desires. With wisdom, joy, and experience, Janet Thompson guides Christian women through the seasons of life and offers hope and help on the much-needed subject of mentoring.”

—**Laura Petherbridge**, speaker, and author of *When “I Do” Becomes “I Don’t”*, *The Smart Stepmom, 101 Tips for the Smart Stepmom*, and *Quiet Moments for the Stepmom Soul*

“Janet Thompson’s book is informative and thorough, making it a great ‘how to’ book for those who want a spiritual mentor, those who want to mentor others, and those who direct and coordinate women’s ministries. They can find answers to their questions about how to connect and nurture in this book. What I like best, though, are the many real-life stories Janet includes. I appreciate Janet’s gathering and sharing numerous stories that illustrate and clarify her message and inspire women to take action.”

—**Brenda Poinsett**, Bible teacher, conference speaker, and author of numerous books, including *The Friendship Factor: Why Women Need Other Women* and *He Said What?!: Jesus’ Amazing Words to Women*

“*Mentoring for All Seasons* is a handbook for women in all stages of life and relationships. I am the founder of a ministry that is all about equipping women leaders who are passionate to guide teen girls on a rite of passage journey into womanhood. Thus, mentoring is a high focus in this ministry. Therefore, Janet’s reference to mentors and their value to girls in their teen years is right on. She stated it well when she wrote, ‘sometimes daughters need a mentor more than mom . . . because they think that mom’s views

aren't objective.' This is a powerful truth! Mentors often validate what mom has been saying all along. Excellent recommendations are made in the Mentor Tips. One tip at the beginning that is very key is having trustworthy, open communication with the mentee's parent(s) as well as with the mentee herself. A great resource! This will be one for my personal library."

—**Doreen Hanna**, founder and president, Treasured Celebrations, author of *Raising a Modern Day Princess*

"Janet takes the scary out of mentoring. She gives step-by-step simple ways to reach out to the next generation with godly wisdom, practical life lessons, and day-to-day applications. No matter what season of life a woman is in, from teens to twilight, Janet's book helps mentors understand typical tender places and common empty spaces. This is one of the most comprehensive books on mentoring I've ever read. Readers will turn the last page and think, *I can do this!*"

—**Sharon Jaynes**, author of 21 books, including *The Power of a Woman's Words* and *Take Hold of the Faith You Long For*

"As someone who has been mentored since adolescence by kingdom leaders and now has served as a mentor to many entering the counseling field, I appreciate *Mentoring for All Seasons* tremendously. My favorite chapter is titled 'The Stages of Mentoring.' As a professional counselor, I often find women struggle with figuring out how to go about this process, and Janet does a great job of guiding all of us in building healthy mentoring relationships."

—**Michelle Nietert, MA, LPC-S**, professional speaker, counselor, and author

"Janet Thompson powerfully and purposefully shows women of today how to put the biblical principle of mentoring into a real-life practice. Mentor and mentee practical tips and personal stories are provided to help the reader catch the vision and live it out. As Janet points out, the generation gap is not God's plan. Mentoring closes the divide and unites believers. Spiritual growth happens when we share life and focus on God's faithfulness."

—**Lori Wildenberg**, speaker, author of many books (including *Messy Journey: How Grace & Truth Offer the Prodigal a Way Home*), lead mentor mom at Moms Together Facebook Community, and co-founder of 1 Corinthians 13 Parenting—a resource page for ministry leaders and parents

“In a world where mentoring has taken a back seat to social media and remote relationships, Janet Thompson’s new book, *Mentoring for All Seasons*, reclaims the power of personal relationships and God’s call on our lives to mentor and be mentored. In *Mentoring for All Seasons*, Janet shares the *why, what, where, when, and how* of mentoring in such a practical and powerful way that readers will be equipped and emboldened to once again embrace Titus 2 personally, as well as corporately. I highly recommend it as a *must read* for all women and women’s ministry leaders alike!”

—**Stephanie Shott**, author, Bible teacher, and founder of The MOM Initiative, an in-reach and outreach missional ministry dedicated to helping the body of Christ minister to moms who know Christ and reach those who don’t

“As a fledgling women’s ministry leader almost twenty years ago, I was delighted to discover Janet Thompson’s *Woman to Woman Mentoring* resources. I read and studied her materials with relish in order to develop the core of my own mentoring ministry. At that time Janet was a lone pioneer for Titus 2 mentoring ministries. She understood the need for intentional spiritual mentoring among women of faith in a practical but also deeply personal way. This work of Janet’s will build solid, Bible-focused women’s ministry in the church. I can guarantee that! We have to do this, women of God, for the church to not just survive, but thrive.”

—**Joneal Kirby, PhD**, director, Heartfelt Ministries, author of *Heartfelt: A Woman’s Guide to Creating Meaningful Friendships*

“If you’d like to find a mentor, be a mentor, or launch a mentoring ministry, this is the book you’ve been looking for! In *Mentoring for All Seasons*, Janet Thomson skillfully addresses the questions you have while presenting a strategic, biblical, in-depth plan for effective mentoring. She includes powerful stories of women in every stage of life and shares real-life examples that reveal how you can follow through on becoming an encourager and an example to the women God places in your life. I highly recommend this resource!”

—**Carol Kent**, speaker, and author of *Becoming a Woman of Influence*

“I am pleased to write an endorsement for Janet Thompson’s new book on mentoring. God has blessed my life through precious women who have poured his truth into me in profound ways. At every stage of life, he has taught and encouraged me through wiser women: Beth in high school, Mrs. George in college, JoAnn in seminary, and Dorothy in ministry. I

have also walked through life with younger women, especially as the president's wife at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. What a joy to share what God teaches me with others! I am grateful for Janet's most recent book, which presents the mandate, mission, and methods of mentoring in a clear and convicting way. I am eager to use her book as a text in my mentoring classes as well as with younger women I mentor, and highly recommend it to you!"

—**Rhonda H. Kelley, PhD**, adjunct professor of women's ministry, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

"Janet Thompson knows mentoring. She's lived it, breathed it, taught it, and remains as passionate about it today as she was 20 years ago when I met her. In *Mentoring for All Seasons*, she will encourage, inspire, and thoroughly equip you to join her in answering God's call to impact the next generation of women."

—**Cindi McMenamin**, pastor's wife, women's ministry director, and author of several books, including *When Women Walk Alone* and *Drama Free: Finding Peace When Emotions Overwhelm You*

"Everyone needs a mentor, at every age and stage of life! Janet Thompson gives us the inspiration, encouragement, and equipping to be a mentor and find a mentor—no matter what season we are in!"

—**Pam Farrel**, author of 45 books, including *7 Simple Skills™ for Every Woman: Success in Keeping Everything Together*

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*To all the M&M's—past, current, and future—
who have shared life experiences and
God's faithfulness with each other.*

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I stand in awe that God allows me to participate in an amazing mentoring ministry to help women live out his scriptural plan for one generation to teach and train the next generation. I've learned so much from those who have gone before me, and pray I leave a mentoring legacy to those who come behind me.

With more love and gratitude than mere words can adequately express, I applaud these treasured supporters, mentors, encouragers, and prayer partners who inspired *Mentoring for All Seasons: Sharing Life Experiences and God's Faithfulness*:

- *My Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.* You called a recently rededicated prodigal daughter who knew nothing about mentoring to “Feed my sheep.”
- *My loving helpmate hubby, Dave.* You are perfectly suited for me. I could never do all the Lord has asked of me without your love, support, and willingness to step out of your comfort zone—cooking dinners! Thank you for reading, editing, gatekeeping, filling in life's gaps during deadlines, believing in me, and being part of *About His Work* Ministries with me. I love you!
- *Pastors Rick Warren, Brad Sprague, and Doug Slaybaugh.* You championed and supported me in starting Woman to Woman Mentoring Ministry at Saddleback Church—a

ministry God has blessed beyond what any of us could have ever imagined.

- *Chris Adams.* You caught the vision of the Woman to Woman Mentoring Ministry, and thousands of women have enjoyed the blessings of M&M relationships.
- *M&M's.* Many of you shared your amazing stories that made me laugh, pause, cry, and marvel at what God does when two women walk side by side with Jesus in the middle.
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PREFACE

When you get where you're going, don't forget to turn around and help the next one in line. Always stay humble and kind.

—Tim McGraw, "Humble and Kind"

I thank God for my spiritual daughters over the years. I never had a mentor, so I feel God gave me a burden to befriend and touch the lives of younger women, as it says in Titus chapter 2.

—Lillian Penner

*There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens.*

—Ecclesiastes 3:1

The phone rang. I didn't recognize the number, but it was local. I let it ring. I was busy writing this book. My husband answered the phone; it was Melanie calling for me. I knew Melanie from church and our small community but couldn't imagine why she would be calling.

When I came to the phone and Melanie started talking, I wondered if God was testing me. She said God put me on her heart as a published author and fellow sister in Christ, and would I help her with some writing projects?

As I listened to Melanie, my mind raced to the pending book deadline. I was sick with yet another cold, had a full upcoming travel and speaking schedule, had grandchildren's soccer games to attend, and was facing possible eye surgery, and the doctors were still trying to figure out a neurological problem I was having.

As she shared her heart, I prayed, *Really God, now? Maybe when I'm between books, or healthy, or have a few months at home . . . why not have her call me then, when it would be an easy yes?*

He reminded me of the Facebook message two nights prior from a young woman wanting to know how she could speak boldly and confidently without offending, as she had witnessed me do in blogs and on Facebook. Another message, from a woman I met at a speaking engagement, thanked me for mentoring her through my blogs, newsletters, and Facebook posts.

Then there was the Facebook message from Anna, who I'd met on vacation two years ago: “Janet, I'm in a place in life where I'm in desperate need of a Christian woman mentor. My faith walk has been at a standstill for a while . . . years probably. I'm struggling with family, marriage, health . . . do you do any personal mentoring? Or can you recommend where I should turn?”

And there was the email from Lisa B.—a single grandmother raising her prodigal granddaughter who had read my book, *Praying for Your Prodigal Daughter*—asking for prayer, guidance, and encouragement.

In the midst of these rapid-fire thoughts, I heard Melanie say, “I might need to meet with you several times.”

Lord, please, I can't mentor every woman. And I'm certainly not perfect, as you point out to me daily. Yet you've given me a passion to raise up mentors in the church and community. You continue putting in front of me an unending line of women who need me to share my experiences and your faithfulness through writing, speaking, and one-on-one mentoring so they can go and do the same.

I felt the Lord prompting me to say yes to Melanie. So I promised to pray and call her back when I felt better. I smiled as I hung up the phone and winked at God. I knew it was *really* God calling me. He

has used me to create a mentoring ministry founded on equipping, encouraging, and challenging women to mentor from their experiences, even in the middle of their messes. Now he was challenging *me* to do exactly that. I did! And so can you.

You may already have a heart for mentoring and want to learn more about how to mentor. Or you might be the “Melanie,” brave enough to make the phone call or approach the woman you want to mentor you. As Melanie later told me,

My parents raised me in a Southern Baptist church. The ministers and church body felt a mission calling for all ages to be fully trained and equipped to minister and witness—through Scriptures and prayer life—according to an individual’s needs. It was impressed upon the younger in Christ that seasoned Christians *always* were willing to mentor. So it seemed natural to seek your guidance as I further explore writing with specific purpose. I truly appreciate your willingness, and, yes, this will most likely be a process, as “life” will play into our time together.

Melanie preciouslly expresses the Titus 2 concept I pray *every* church adopts and promotes, because God’s plan is for one generation of women to teach and train the next generation.

Whatever season you’re in now, you just came out of a season, and you’ll soon be going into the next one. Share with another woman what you learned from the past season, and look for a woman who will help you navigate your upcoming season. I pray that *Mentoring for All Seasons* equips you to mentor and seek a mentor. As we go through the seasons of our life, we vacillate between being a mentee and being the mentor—that’s the beauty of *Sharing Life Experiences and God’s Faithfulness*.

Mentors Are Righteous Oaks

Tracy Steel's letter to her mentor describes being a mentor as a righteous oak. If you're an older woman, I don't think you'll be able to read this without feeling a tug at your heart to walk across the sanctuary and hug a younger woman. If you're the younger woman, look around the sanctuary to find your oak. "They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor" (Isa. 61:3b).

Dear older woman, you are an Oak:

I remember when you came and stood next to me during the Sunday worship service, leaving the pew you'd occupied for years. . . . Perhaps you were scared to venture across the sanctuary, but the Holy Spirit prompted, and you obeyed. You knew I was single and it hurt attending church service alone.

I noticed your tears as you prayed for me. Yes, I was supposed to bow my head like yours, but I wanted to see your expression as you poured out your heart and petitions before the Lord on my behalf. . . . Some answers were "Yes" and some "No." If you were disappointed in God's "No," you didn't show it. You praised Him regardless and kept on praying.

You are an oak.

I'll never understand the courage it took to admit your mistakes. I'm sure you wrestled with the desire to be perfect, but know the examples of God's forgiveness in your life will stick with me forever. . . . Thank you for trying *not* to be all things to me. I have everything I need in Jesus (as you faithfully reminded me). You patiently invested in me because you rightly understood our relationship was never about you, but about you showing me Jesus.

You are an oak.

I remember when we discussed God's calling on my life. You affirmed my spiritual gifts, helped me write my first Bible Study, and purchased one of the first copies. You pushed me out of my comfort zone, because you knew it would be for my good and, ultimately, God's glory.

I know you probably thought I was crazy leaving the corporate world for youth ministry, since women didn't attend seminary when you were my age. Yet, you realized things are different. You trusted God would open the right doors to accomplish His perfect will for me.

Over the years, you lovingly listened to my anxieties about spending the rest of my life alone. You held me as I cried through countless failed relationships. You kept me accountable for purity. You were one of the first people I called after my Air Force pilot proposed. You hand tied hundreds of white bows around chairs for my wedding reception and watched me say my wedding vows before God in His perfect timing. You believed my Chad would come. I know you were sad when I moved away to be with him. But when you call now, over four years later, I still hear your love for me.

You are an oak.

Thank you for walking through my mother's final weeks with me. My mother was grateful for you. She knew God placed you in my life to help me go forward without her. . . . I appreciate you letting me process and grieve as I watched my mother suffer. We both know you'll never replace her, but I hope you know how thankful I am God placed you in my life so I'll never feel alone as a wife and mother.

You are an oak.

Older woman, I'm writing this letter to you because young women need an oak. My prayer is you'll heed Psalm 78:1-8 and Titus 2:3-5. Don't allow fear, busyness, or inferiority to stop you from letting me . . . a younger woman . . . learn from you. Nourish us simply with your presence and prayers. You aren't here to warm a pew, precious oak, but to warm our hearts towards Jesus. The future of the church needs you. All my love,

Tracy¹

*For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.*

—Psalm 100:5

INTRODUCTION

Seeking advice from others is commonplace. Some today employ the service of a personal trainer to encourage better health and physical fitness. Why not a trainer of the soul from whom we can receive help in discerning the experience of God in our lives?

—Klaus Issler¹

Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

—Ephesians 3:20–21 NLT

I wrote *Mentoring for All Seasons* to awaken women to the value and blessings of participating in mentoring relationships during all stages and seasons of life.

Women often don't think they know enough to mentor, or they fear rejection if they ask someone to mentor them. Others don't understand the need for mentoring. Quite simply, many women feel *inadequate* or *indifferent*. However, throughout the Bible, specifically Titus 2:3–5, God calls spiritually younger women to learn from spiritually older women, and spiritually older women to train the younger women.

It's something so easy, and we've made it too hard. God just wants us sharing our life experiences and his faithfulness with each other. That's a concept I hope to convey to all Christian women, starting with you, the woman reading this book: *You* are the woman God wants to use as either a mentor or mentee—or the ultimate goal, both.

During the various seasons of our life, we're either the mentee needing a mentor or the mentor sharing what we've learned with a mentee going through a similar season, while looking for a mentor to help us with our next season, and so the mentoring cycle flows.

When God first put the call on my heart to start the Woman to Woman Mentoring Ministry, I had no idea what *mentoring* meant or how God would turn it into my life's ministry, passion, and purpose.

My Story: "Feed My Sheep"

In April 1995, I attended the Women in Ministry Conference in Portland, Oregon. Three years earlier, I had rededicated my life to the Lord and married my godly husband Dave. We blended our family of four children. I was attending Fuller Theological Seminary to get a Master of Arts in Christian Leadership while also managing an insurance agency. I prayerfully attended the conference, hoping the Lord would reveal where he wanted to use me when I completed seminary.

The Lord did speak to me at the conference, but not in the way I expected or in a way I had ever experienced. I was enjoying a cup of after-dinner coffee, waiting for the evening's worship and teaching to begin, when I heard a voice: "Go and feed my sheep." I looked around, but no one at the table was speaking to me. I thought, *What sheep? Where? And what would I feed them if I found them?* I heard it again: "Feed my sheep." I muttered, "Okay," and spent the rest of the evening wondering what I had just agreed to do and who was talking to me.

I couldn't wait for the evening's session to end so I could go to my room and call my husband. As I excitedly told him I thought the Lord had spoken to me, my godly husband suggested we pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal the meaning of "Feed my sheep."

The next morning, the workshop instructor said she was teaching from John 21:15–17, in which Jesus tells Peter, "Feed my sheep." As I glanced at the agenda for the day, I let out a startled "Wow!" The title

of the morning's topic was "Shepherding Women in Your Church." I realized the Holy Spirit was answering our prayer.

Returning home, I asked my family and small group to pray for me to find my sheep and for direction as to what to feed them when I found them. The first sheep bleat came as a message on my business voicemail from a woman who worked in sales for the insurance company where I was a manager. Emmie lived in Northern California; I lived in Southern California.

Emmie said she was in a rehab program, and one of the assignments was to find a mentor. She saw me in a company training video wearing a necklace with a cross charm, and she wanted a Christian mentor who was successful in our business. Would I mentor her?

I was flattered and flabbergasted. I didn't have a clue what "mentoring" meant. I went to the Christian bookstore and bought *Women Encouraging Women* by the late Lucibel Van Atta, where she explains mentoring and discipleship. After reading the book, I called Emmie back and told her yes, I would mentor her. Our mentoring relationship began long distance. Emmie was chronologically my age, but spiritually younger. I wondered if perhaps "Feed my sheep" might mean *mentoring women*.

My little flock expanded when my stepdaughter asked me to sub for her in leading the young adult women's Bible study that she led in our home. I told her I would, but she should call the group members and let them know I would be leading. Everyone attended, and to my surprise, the group asked if I would continue meeting with them as a mentor. This was my first window into the younger generation's hunger for input from, and interaction with, the *older* generation. So after praying, I gladly accepted their invitation.

Several weeks later, one of the girls brought a guest. When Kristen introduced herself to the group, she said she was home for summer break from a Christian college, and her summer assignment was to find a mentor. At the end of the evening, Kristen asked if I would

mentor her! I sensed Kristen was another “sheep” God wanted me to “feed,” so I agreed to mentor her over the summer. My experience mentoring Kristen helped launch the Woman to Woman Mentoring Ministry at Saddleback Church.

Kristen was at a crossroads in her Christian life, trying to balance a boyfriend, school, ministry, work, friends, and family. She wanted to feel safe and secure in working through issues with a woman who would give her a godly perspective without having a personal stake in the outcome. We decided what my role in her life would be:

- A guide to and through the Scriptures
- A listening ear
- A prayer partner
- An accountability partner
- Most importantly, a role model of the Christian woman she wanted to become

Kristen asked me to mentor her because she recognized we had many things in common, and I had a life she admired and desired to achieve. She wanted to go into ministry; I was in ministry. She wanted a Christian marriage and to be a godly wife and mother; I was living out those roles. She wanted to further her Christian education; I was in seminary. She saw I had some “been there, done that” life experiences and could use what God had taught me in those situations to guide and advise her.

Kristen had loving parents, but sometimes it was difficult discussing her spiritual questions and life challenges with them. While I provided a motherly perspective, I was her spiritual mom, *not* her mom. Establishing this boundary allowed me to remain objective, and Kristen was receptive to my advice and suggestions.

When Kristen asked me to mentor her, one of my first questions was whether her mother was supportive of her having a mentor. Kristen agreed to talk with her mother and even arranged for us to

meet. We had mom's blessing, but we didn't have her boyfriend's blessing. He was uncomfortable with things Kristen and I talked about because often our topic was regarding her desire to stay sexually pure under great temptation.

I also was sensitive to my own daughters' feelings about extending attention and time to another young woman. To alleviate their concerns, I had my family meet Kristen and planned a few activities for everyone to do together. I made sure my time with Kristen didn't interfere with our family's plans and activities, and I didn't talk about Kristen's issues with my family. What transpired between Kristen and me remained private.

When I first met Kristen, I was just learning about mentoring from what I read in books. But I was willing to share with her whatever insight, wisdom, and knowledge I had gleaned from life experiences and from surrendering fully to the Lord when I rededicated my life to serving him. Kristen was bold and courageous asking me to mentor her. She set herself up for possible rejection if I said no, but she determined it was worth the risk.

Kristen was honest about her struggles to stay pure and the issues she encountered at home, school, and in relationships. She asked me to keep her accountable, and I agreed. I didn't always agree with her choices and decisions, but I was there to pray with her, lead her to the Bible for answers, and make time in my schedule to meet.

I felt like a proud member of the family as I attended her wedding and got together with her periodically as her little family began to grow. Recently, I received an email with the subject line "Your First Mentee."

Woman to Woman Mentoring Ministry Birthed

Several months after accepting the call to "Feed my sheep" and starting to mentor Emmie and Kristen, the Lord divinely placed me and the young adults' pastor from Saddleback Church at the gym on the same day, at the same time. I worked out at the gym almost daily, but

this was the *only* time I *ever* saw Pastor Brad there. As he asked about my four young adult children, he mentioned that many women in his young adults group were asking where they could find a mentor.

As if God were sitting on my shoulder, I suddenly poured out my “Feed my sheep” conference story. Pastor Brad said he thought I should start a mentoring ministry at Saddleback Church, not just mentor two mentees! What? I didn’t feel equipped to start a mentoring ministry at my church. After all, I had to read a book to mentor Emmie and Kristen. I did finally agree to meet with Pastor Doug, the pastor to new ministries at Saddleback at the time.

When I attended the conference in Oregon, I had specifically told the Lord I would work anywhere, *except* with women. I didn’t like the way women treated each other in the business world. I was a single, career, divorced mom for seventeen years before marrying my husband Dave, and I’d never felt welcome at women’s ministry events. Since I was in management and had an MBA, surely God would use me best in the business world. But was he confirming that the sheep were women and feeding was spiritual mentoring? I still didn’t know how (or where) to do what I was being called to do, but I had said “Okay” to the Lord, and I would be obedient.

When I met with Pastor Doug, he agreed with Pastor Brad and handed me a guide titled “A Twelve-Step Planning Guide to Developing a Ministry at Saddleback.” With both pastors’ encouragement, I began going through the process of starting the Woman to Woman Mentoring Ministry at Saddleback Church and had our first Orientation Coffee at my house in January 1996.

The Lord has continued to bless this ministry. Today, God has taken the Woman to Woman Mentoring Ministry into churches around the world through a DVD leader’s kit I wrote, *Woman to Woman Mentoring: How to Start, Grow, and Maintain a Mentoring Ministry*. I continue to have the opportunity to share the Woman to Woman Mentoring Ministry with churches through my speaking and writing

ministry, *About His Work Ministries*. I had no idea “Feed my sheep” would go beyond Saddleback Church—even to international sheep.

Woman to Woman Mentoring is the Lord’s ministry following his mandate in Titus 2:1–8: one generation of Christian men and women must teach and train the next generations. When I stepped out of my comfort zone and let God guide me in mentoring and starting a ministry, he allowed me to participate in something much bigger than I ever imagined. When I went where he called—not where I thought I should go—he molded me and made me into the mentor, ministry leader, author, speaker, wife, mother, and Grammie he wanted me to be. Along the way, he changed my heart and gave me a passion for the issues women deal with and wisdom in helping them turn to the Lord, and to each other, to navigate life’s seasons. He gave me a heart for women.

I was the least likely candidate to start a women’s ministry, since I had never been to a women’s retreat, Bible study, small group, or special event. But I did have a willing, obedient spirit and said “Okay” to the Lord’s call. I’m praying that wherever God leads you—feeding or being fed—you’ll follow his call on your life too.

Mentoring for All Seasons—For Both Mentors and Mentees (M&M’s)

I didn’t know about mentoring when I first started Woman to Woman Mentoring, because I wasn’t mentored through the challenges and crises in my own life, some of which I’ll share with you in *Mentoring for All Seasons*. Where were the mentors to provide me with godly wisdom during crucial decision-making life seasons: marrying an unbeliever, divorcing, backsliding, dating, working, single parenting, remarrying, blending a family, starting a ministry?

You may be saying the same thing: *Where are the women who will mentor me?* The truth is, they’re probably all around you, just like they were around me if I had made an effort to look for them.

Sometimes, we need to take the initiative. Maybe women are looking at you, wondering if you would mentor them.

Over the years, as I've taught and trained on mentoring, publishers, editors, M&M's, readers, and audiences have encouraged me to write a book on mentoring—a book to help mentors *and* mentees understand the concepts and precepts of spiritual mentoring, with practical how to's that reinforce the life-altering value of spiritual-maturity as an integral part of *all* the diversity of seasons in a Christian woman's life, from tween to twilight. *Mentoring for All Seasons: Sharing Life Experiences and God's Faithfulness* is that book.

Mentoring for All Seasons encourages women to *intentionally* share their life experiences and God's faithfulness with other women. Mentors and mentees—"M&M's"—will share stories of how mentoring blessed them in a variety of life seasons. Some of the M&M's are authors and speakers you might recognize who also share their personal mentoring experiences with you. *All* the M&M's want to encourage you to participate in mentoring relationships. These mentoring testimonies, along with my own personal experiences, helpful tips, suggestions, Scriptures, and M&M's biblical examples, will guide women in how to connect and nurture each other through mentoring relationships, as a mentor *or* a mentee. And someday, the mentee becomes a mentor.

We don't always mentor in our current season: God may put in your path a woman in a season you haven't encountered. You can look in the Table of Contents to locate the season she's in and go to that section in the book to find help in mentoring her. Mentees come from all walks and seasons of life, and even if a mentor doesn't share the exact life experience of her mentee, she can provide spiritual guidance, do research, and pray about how to address the specific issues her mentee is encountering.

Mentoring for all Seasons is a reference, application, and coaching tool for M&M's as they traverse life's journey together. I pray for Holy

Spirit inspiration for some women to become mentors. I pray for courage for others to take a step of faith and become a mentee. I pray for all to enjoy the experience of trusting God and watching how he honors your obedience to becoming Titus 2 women.

PROLOGUE

Throughout our lifetime, we vacillate between being a mentor and needing a mentor, depending on the season of life. The story of Shirley, Janine, and Kim exemplifies the blessings awaiting those who participate in God’s plan for one generation mentoring the next. When they first met, Shirley was age fifty-eight and her mentees were both thirty-four. When they shared this story, Shirley was seventy-six, Janine and Kim were fifty-four, and the mentoring continues through their Friends of the Heart ministry.

Mentor *Shirley Brosius* Shares

We’ve studied with our heads together, cried on each other’s shoulders, and laughed so hard we couldn’t talk. In 1998, two women in my congregation—women young enough to be my daughters—asked me to mentor them. I had previously served on a church staff, Kim was just starting out in a staff position, and Janine was an active volunteer. I wasn’t sure what these women expected, but I agreed because Titus 2:3–5 encourages mentoring.

Sitting on the floor of my home office so as not to disturb my sleeping husband, the three of us began meeting

once a week at 5:30 A.M.—Kim and Janine wanted to meet before their husbands left for work to eliminate the need for babysitting. Now that their children are young adults, we meet at 4 P.M.

Since each of us was already involved in a Bible study group, we chose to read and discuss Christian books. Mentoring has offered many blessings. We have grown closer to God and to each other as our HEARTS have knit together:

- **Hope:** Kim and Janine say I give them hope because, by God's grace, I've survived many of life's storms—deaths, childrearing, and ministry challenges, to name a few—with my faith intact. They ask questions; I give honest answers.
- **Encouragement:** I see things from a different generation's perspective, so I encourage them to view the bigger picture.
- **Accountability:** We take turns leading our sessions and close with a challenge. The next week we compare notes on how we handled the challenge.
- **Refuge:** Through the years, our trust has grown. Without shame, we confess our failures and weaknesses and accept one another as we are.
- **Teaching:** Each of us excels in some area and teaches the others. Kim speaks in her professional life and as a leader in her church. Janine easily establishes relationships. And I offer a model of love for the Word of God since I memorize extensive portions of Scripture.
- **Service:** Our study time challenged us to serve God together. We developed a women's retreat and offered it to churches. Now we speak at women's retreats and

other events about twenty times a year as “Friends of the Heart.” We also coauthored a women’s devotional, *Turning Guilt Trips into Joy Rides*.

Outside of my family, my mentoring relationship with Kim and Janine is the most blessed relationship in my life. Just search out someone older or younger you want to get to know better and do what comes naturally—that’s mentoring.

Mentee *Kim Messinger* Shares

People ask about my mentoring journey with Shirley and Janine. To be honest, I’m not a detailed, note-taking person. Had I known on the cold, dark morning of January 5, 1998, that the start to something extraordinary was happening, even I would have scribbled a few lines on a napkin.

I’m sure our first meeting for prayer and sharing was no different than any other first meeting—except we’re still meeting eighteen years later! Over the years, I’ve told the story with tear-filled eyes to countless women of how our meetings, woven through nearly two decades, have made me the woman I am today. I love when the three of us are together! I love even more when we serve together as Friends of the Heart.

One of the greatest blessings is when we prepare for a Friends of the Heart event, which usually begins with a discussion around Shirley’s kitchen table. One year we asked, “Who would be blessed by a friendship tea?” In different seasons: “Let’s do a prayer event! People can email or Facebook us prayer requests!” Then, “Let’s visit a nursing home.” We each have roles and responsibilities. Shirley is

the event planner, Janine the “Keeper of the Books,” and I cover sound details.

Friends of the Heart ministry started from two young gals asking a more mature, very together, woman to walk beside them as a mentor. Without each other, we wouldn’t have experienced the joy of speaking for Jesus as a team, or meeting and ministering to so many women. #mentoringworks!

Mentee Janine Boyer Shares

Mentoring was something I believed every Christian should experience in his or her walk with the Lord. A “Paul” mentor who has been a Christian longer trains and encourages a “Timothy” mentee who is younger in the faith. I believe the Lord was challenging me (and Kim) to be a Timothy and ask Shirley to be our Paul. But Shirley’s mature faith intimidated me. Was I ready to accept the wisdom Shirley’s life journey could teach me? However, since Kim and I had experienced ministering together, I realized God had already placed a godly woman and friend in my life to lean on, learn from, and lunge forward with, so together we took the plunge and asked Shirley to be our mentor. I couldn’t be more grateful for these two women. I quickly learned mentoring isn’t intimidating . . . it’s full of love, grace, and the challenge to grow in my own personal journey with the Lord.

Shirley never professed she was the perfect Christian. Instead, she came alongside us as our friend. She listened, encouraged, and prayed for us. As we continued meeting over the years, I welcomed Shirley’s and Kim’s honest feedback. I didn’t always hear what I wanted, but I knew I was getting the truth, rooted in God’s Word. They helped me

focus on God's purposes when I wanted to follow my own direction. When they asked tough questions, their skills and experiences challenged me to learn, grow, and develop. I trusted them with *every* part of my life.

Eighteen years later, I think of Jesus's message to his followers in John 15:15, "I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you." We all need friends who help each other live for the cause of Christ. It still amazes me, and I'm forever grateful, that Shirley said yes to two young mothers trying to find their way through life. Mentors bring out the best in you . . . you just need to be willing to let them into your life.



CHRISTIAN MENTORING 101

A mentor is willing to make a relational life-to-life investment and walk with you through her life journey and yours.

—Pat Ennis

One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.

—Psalm 145:4



MENTORING IS NOT OPTIONAL

Through supernatural provision in each major season of my life, God placed just the right women who would mentor and help me through—during my teen years, in my single adult/dating years, and as a young wife and mom. It was a process to finally soar on my own and seek him with all my heart. All the mentors God has blessed me with are still a part of my life.

—Shelly

What does it take to pour into the life of another? The mention of it overwhelms us. We think we have to have it all figured out before we dare to think we have anything to offer. All the while, there are women who hunger for the mentor/discipleship friendships that offer a safe space to grow.

—Karen Trigg¹

You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.

—2 Timothy 2:2 NLT

What Is a Christian Mentor?

The term *mentor* is familiar in the business world: a guide, counselor, teacher, and instructor. Mentors provide experience, knowledge, achievements, position, and, most importantly, willingness to share with someone else. They encourage mentees to aspire to the mentor role themselves someday. Emmie, from the Introduction, asked me to mentor her because I was successful in our insurance company, but Emmie also wanted a *Christian* mentor, who was

- Wise and knowledgeable in the Word of God
- A trusted confidant
- Willing to counsel, instruct, and guide her in how to live in a Christlike way

Wisdom comes from God speaking and working through the Christian mentor. God inspires her thoughts when she prays and allows God to teach her through her life experiences. She discovers that with Christ's help, we learn from our mistakes, as well as our good decisions, and we can share these life lessons with another woman going through something similar. "My mouth will speak words of wisdom; the meditation of my heart will give you understanding" (Ps. 49:3).

Trusted implies confidence to share our innermost feelings with someone and the assurance they will keep it confidential. We also trust their counsel because we know their wisdom is God inspired. "Listen, for I have trustworthy things to say; I open my lips to speak what is right" (Prov. 8:6).

A *counselor* and advisor is someone who helps us learn how to go to the one true Counselor: the Lord and his Word, the Bible. "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26).

Mentor Julie experienced how easy it really is to be a Christian mentor:

My pastor asked me to mentor a young woman at our church. I didn't really know what a mentor did, but this beautiful gal and I got together for tea once a week while my kids were at karate. We just sat and talked. I'd ask her questions about how life was going in various arenas of her world: spiritual, friends, work, and family. Sometimes, she'd ask me a question about how I handled things. I guess that's mentoring.

What Is a Mentee?

Since our discussion is about *Christian* mentoring, our answer to *What is a mentee?* will differ from the secular or business world's definition. Regardless of age, any woman in a new season of life—whether or not she's a Christian—needs a godly role model. She needs someone who will help her understand how to live as a woman, mother, wife, daughter, sister, single parent, divorcée, dating single, widow, grandmother, career woman, neighbor . . . maybe even new believer.

A woman could be a mentee at any stage, age, or season of life. Maybe she didn't experience a Christian home environment or didn't have healthy parenting or marriage role models. Perhaps she has no one to go to for Christian advice and wise counsel. Her original decision for Christ may have alienated her from family and friends. Perhaps, like me, she accepted Christ at an early age, later backslid, and then rededicated her life to Christ and now needs help staying on track with the Lord. Or she's having trouble relying on God during tragedies and chaos, or just the everyday challenges of her life.

Every woman experiences new seasons of life in which she needs someone who will help her live out her faith. Throughout life, we navigate between being a mentor and needing a mentor, because life is never static. We come out of one season, only to go straight into the next unknown season. We should always have a mentor and be a mentor: "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). You can do that . . . right?

What Is Intentional Mentoring?

You may have heard the buzzword "organic mentoring." Proponents champion the idea of mentoring happening naturally, as women encounter each other in daily life. They tout that spiritually older women will *organically* seek out spiritually younger women and vice versa. But I'm sure you would agree that in our fast-paced lives, even if we know we *should* mentor, how many actually *do* take a spiritually

younger woman under our wing? Or how many women are brave enough to ask another woman to mentor them? I'm thrilled to share stories in Section Two from M&M's who have enjoyed the blessings of Titus 2 mentoring relationships. Tragically, for every one of these uplifting true stories, thousands of women are alone and struggling through a season of life—depressed, discouraged, distraught, discontent, and disengaged from the church and the Lord.

If Christian women were organically mentoring other women on a regular basis, I guarantee the number of women experiencing divorces, drug overuse, alcoholism, eating disorders, addictions, depression, illnesses, and suicides would decrease . . . maybe even diminish all together. The multitudes of women struggling in daily life and floundering in their faith are evidence that *organic* mentoring isn't working. Women need *intentional* mentoring.

Every Christian is in a continual process of learning and growing in the knowledge of Christ until we meet him face-to-face. But until that day, we who are further along in our walk with the Lord, or have navigated through a life season, must be willing to *intentionally* share with another woman what we *do* know and what the Lord *has done* in our lives.

Often people ask, "Wouldn't it be better to call the Woman to Woman Mentoring Ministry a friendship or discipleship ministry?" God spoke clearly to me. He wanted "feeding," or mentoring, to

- Be more than a typical friendship
- Include discipling when appropriate
- Always focus on spiritual maturity
- Address the numerous mentoring needs during the multitude of seasons in a woman's life

For example, a woman may have been a Christian since childhood, but now she's in a season of life she's never been in before (perhaps

as a college student, military wife, career woman, or mother), so she doesn't need discipleship; she needs a Christian mentor who has lived through this experience and can help her navigate her new life season. A friendship might also be formed, but mentoring goes beyond a friendship. M&M's are two women—mentor and mentee—looking at God's plan for their lives in a specific season. Klaus Issler offers a good summation of spiritual mentoring:

Spiritual mentoring is different from pastoral counseling or psychological therapy in which problem solving, decision making and “fixing” the person are the major concerns. Furthermore, it is not purely a theological discussion of Christian doctrine or the nature of God. Rather, it is a dialogue about our relationship with God as evident in the experiences of our life. The mentor helps us learn how to discern God's movement within our life experiences. To what extent in this experience are we moving toward God or away from him? Where is God in this experience? What might God be saying in this experience? Or are we mostly self-absorbed about the matter? Mentoring involves a voluntary relationship of confidentiality and accountability, rather than one of authority over another.²

What Does Scripture Instruct about Mentoring?

There are numerous verses in both the Old and New Testament where God clearly says we are to mentor each other: One generation should teach and train the next generation. We will look at many in this book, but here are just a few Old Testament verses: Deut. 4:9, 6:6–9; Ps. 71:18, 78:4, 79:13, 145:4–7; Joel 1:2–3.

The most familiar verses cited for mentoring are Titus 2:1–8 from the New Testament, where Paul tells Titus, the young pastor of a new church in Crete, what the role is for spiritually older men and women.

I like *The Message* translation. Notice what Paul says is the “job” of every Christian:

Your job is to speak out on the things that make for solid doctrine. Guide older men into lives of temperance, dignity, and wisdom, into healthy faith, love, and endurance. Guide older women into lives of reverence so they end up as neither gossips nor drunks, but models of goodness. By looking at them, the younger women will know how to love their husbands and children, be virtuous and pure, keep a good house, be good wives. We don’t want anyone looking down on God’s Message because of their behavior. Also, guide the young men to live disciplined lives.

But mostly, show them all this by doing it yourself, incorruptible in your teaching, your words solid and sane. Then anyone who is dead set against us, when he finds nothing weird or misguided, might eventually come around. (Titus 2:1–8 *The Message*—emphasis added)

Each generation has a predisposition to look at God as the God of the past who doesn’t understand the current culture with its issues. That’s why I’m such a passionate proponent of mentoring and living out Titus 2:1–8, where spiritually older men and women receive the charge to teach, train, and model the Christian life to *all* generations so they won’t be deceived and dissuaded from their faith. To understand the full impact of Titus 2:1–8, we need to read the issues Paul was addressing in the previous verses. It sounds a lot like our world today:

Everything is pure to those whose hearts are pure. But nothing is pure to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, because their minds and consciences are corrupted. Such people claim they know God, but they deny him by the way they live. They are detestable and disobedient, worthless for doing anything good. (Titus 1:15–16 NLT)

Titus 2:1–8 was Paul’s antidote for guiding the next generation of believers to discern between corrupt, detestable, disobedient mis-truths of deceivers and the true teachings of obedient followers of Jesus Christ and his Word, the Bible.

Mentors aren’t always *chronologically* older, but they are always *spiritually* older. Maybe not by very much, but they should have a little more experience walking with the Lord than their mentee. God will always put someone in your path needing to hear how he worked in and through your life experiences and that he’ll be there in the same way for her too. The verses in Titus are enhanced by 1 Thessalonians 2:7–8, 12, which emphasizes the nurturing, encouraging characteristic of mentoring:

Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. . . . encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

Paul closes out Titus 2 with this admonition, which could apply to mentors: “You must teach these things *and encourage the believers to do them*. You have the authority to correct them when necessary, so don’t let anyone disregard what you say” (Titus 2:15 NLT—emphasis added).

Sixty-eight-year-old Paulette, a mother of five and grandmother of eight, and married for forty-nine years, explains why she mentors in obedience to Titus 2:

My initial motivation to be a mentor in our church mentoring ministry was a concern for today’s young women. If the church doesn’t teach them, the world will—“reality” TV offers *unreal* role models like a soft-spoken, stay-at-home mom who homeschools her many well-behaved

children and smiles adoringly at her loving husband, or the *unreal* “Real Housewives” who are outwardly beautiful but inwardly immature, petty, self-absorbed, ungrateful, and often immoral. Where are the real-life Christian role models?

I saw the mentoring ministry as an opportunity for the church to show women a better way, God’s way. Titus 2:3–5 calls the older women to teach the younger women. What I hadn’t considered, and have now learned, is each woman—regardless of age—needs at least one other woman to listen to her, pray for her, encourage her, and, when needed, speak truth to her. I encourage the mentees after their mentoring relationships to come alongside a woman the Lord puts in their paths and be there for her as their mentors were there for them.

Many churches call asking for advice on how to encourage the women of their churches to become involved in mentoring. To all, I reply, “Take your women to Titus 2:1–8, where the Lord scripturally *commands all* Christian men and women to teach the spiritually younger men and women.”

Next, I suggest there are *no qualifiers* in this passage. These verses don’t say “Older women, teach the younger women *if* you have time, feel like it, can fit it into your schedule, aren’t doing another ministry, don’t work, or feel comfortable or qualified doing it.” They simply say to just do it! This passage is the job description for women who know Christ: “Your job is to speak out on the things that make for solid doctrine” (Titus 2:1 *The Message*).

WHY WE NEED MENTORING

Life is complicated. When we're going through difficult days, we need a true friend we can turn to for help. A mentor can be the friend who puts her arms around us, comfort us, listens, and prays for us in the good and bad days.

—Rosalie

*Where there is no guidance the people fall,
But in abundance of counselors there is victory.*

—Proverbs 11:14 NASB

*Let the wise listen and add to their learning,
and let the discerning get guidance.*

—Proverbs 1:5

Every generation longs for and needs other Christ followers to learn from and experience not only the greatness of God's love and mercy, but also how to live it out in daily life. In Titus 2:5, 8, Paul emphasizes why spiritually older women and men are to teach the spiritually younger: "We don't want anyone looking down on God's Message *because of their behavior*" (Titus 2:5 *The Message*), "so that no one *will malign the word of God*" (2:5), or "have nothing bad to say about us" (2:8—emphasis added).

But we *do* see the Word of God maligned and looked down on today, and Christians are often denounced and discriminated against. Paul emphasized that Christians should reflect Christ in actions, relationships, marriages, and interactions with the culture: a living witness and mentoring testimony to encourage others to come to know Christ, not turn away. Our Christian lives should further, not hinder,

the spread of the gospel. *Knowing* what to do must transform into *living* what you know.

Christians believe the Bible is the inerrant, inspired Word of God, and the entire Bible applies to *every* Christian. We can't choose verses that are easy to follow and discard those we don't like or find challenging. Yet many disregard biblical directives from God, like Titus 2:1–8, as applicable for the church in Crete two thousand years ago, because they can't possibly apply to churches in today's culture. That's a big mistake. The Bible is timeless and as relevant today as it was in Paul and Titus' day: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13:8).

There are few commands in the Bible this gender specific. The Lord seldom says specifically, *Women, you do this for me*. However, in Titus 2:3–5, he did!

Many young women in the church, and in today's culture, are struggling in their roles as wives, mothers, friends, employees, singles, or new believers, and sometimes just in being a woman. Where are the spiritually older women who will selflessly reach out to the spiritually younger women or the women in new seasons of life?

How many of you relate to the sad testimony I've heard from many women who said they walked out of a crusade, revival meeting, or church service where they accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior, and then went right back into their old lifestyle? One woman said she even went to a party with her worldly friends the very night she accepted Christ! Why do so many women backslide and go years with Christ in their head but not in their heart? Their stories all say something similar:

I know I accepted Christ. I asked him into my heart but didn't know what it meant. My old familiar life and friends and unsaved family were all still there, but no one from this "new life" offered to help me learn how to live it. It just

seemed easier to go on as I had before. Only now, I had a lot of confusion, guilt, and conviction, which made me feel even worse than before accepting Jesus as my Savior.

Haven't you heard these stories yourself? Maybe it's *your* story. We would never think of sending our babies out on their own as soon as they could walk and talk. Yet we send baby Christians out the doors of our churches into the secular world without a hand to hold to keep them safe until they become spiritually mature. With such a wealth of wisdom in the women of our churches, who have so much to offer simply from living life with Christ, this is tragic. They have the knowledge and experience to help these spiritually younger Christians find the answers to their life and faith questions.

Taking the time to reach out to a spiritually younger woman is a selfless act of giving and ministry: letting your life—with all the wealth of good and bad experiences—testify to how Christ was with you through it all. There are women in your church desperately in need of a mentor who will honor the commands given to each of us in Titus 2 to teach them how to study and apply God's Word to their lives. Show them how to be godly, moral, righteous Christian women in an ungodly, immoral, unrighteous world. Who is assuming responsibility to transmit biblical values to these women in your church? Who is listening to their questions and concerns and guiding them to the one book with all the answers—the Bible—and the One who fulfills all their needs?

I commend those of you who have accepted God's call to mentor. I know you received an incredible blessing in return. God gave us the Titus 2 command as a blessing, not a burden. When we make an investment in a spiritually younger woman, it enriches our own lives, the sense of connectedness and shepherding in our church families deepens, society benefits, and we honor God's Word.

Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward” (Mark 9:41). You can’t out-give God. As we share our life with another sister in Christ, our own life and our church will receive immeasurable blessings.

Section Two has inspiring stories from M&M’s in various seasons of life. If you’ve experienced a mentoring relationship and the life-changing blessings, share your testimony with other women who may have questions or are hesitant to mentor or be a mentee. Read Titus 2:3–5 again and pray about making these verses a permanent and ongoing part of your Christian walk as a mentor. If you were a mentee, someone is right where you were just a short time ago, and she could use your encouragement and mentoring. “What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us” (2 Tim. 1:13–14).

If you’re a spiritually younger woman seeking a mentor, don’t give up looking for her. Read on and I’ll help you find her. Tina Wilson¹ overcame her fear of finding mentors and you can too!

The thought of finding a mentor left me feeling like I was in middle school again without a date to the dance. How would *I* find someone to help in all areas of my life? Maybe I would ask someone already close. Only everyone around me was at the same place in life I was.

Outside my circles, I was incredibly fearful of asking someone to mentor me because the thought of rejection was crippling. The people I would love to ask were so busy already; why would they make time for me? Those horrible “what if’s” stopped me. Surely, someone would notice the hungry-for-more look on my face.

Just as I was ready to move on and do the best I could with what information I had, I heard a message about mentoring that opened my eyes to exponential possibilities. It said, “To assume *one* person could mentor you in *all* areas of your life is saying she’s next to Jesus in perfection . . . no *one* person could possibly speak into *every* area. Look for people who are at the place you want to be in *each* area of life and ask them questions about that one place.”

So I did. I got in a room with women stronger than me in a few areas of life and just listened to them talk. It awakened my spirit to possibilities and allowed me to see new things and experience one aha moment after another. These ladies had strong marriages, and the more I listened, they were actually speaking highly of their spouses! It set a standard of respect never modeled to me before.

The more I learned, the more I craved. I noticed changes in my attitude—the way I viewed my marriage, kids, career, and choices. Every time I felt a need to change, I leaned into the Lord and His Word. My relationship grew stronger with Him, and now I understand the Lord is the root from which everything grows. He constantly leads people in and out of my life to teach, speak into, and mentor me. I have a few ladies who model

- True submission in their marriage, without feeling railroaded
- Christlike business practices, helping me understand why I don’t always have to win or come out on top
- Parenting that sometimes means denying my desires
- Being the Lord’s servant, because sacrificially giving time and resources I’ve *earned* isn’t my natural response
- Discipline in eating and exercise habits not ingrained in me

Nothing replaces a great example. I need someone to show me how to walk out the Christian life . . . even better, someone willing *to walk with me* until I figure it out. The people who I allow to influence my life walk their talk; their actions speak louder than their words.

MENTORING FOR ALL SEASONS

Women often don't think they know enough to be a mentor, or fear rejection if they ask someone to mentor them. Others don't think they need mentoring. However, throughout the Bible, God calls spiritually younger and older women to learn from and teach one another.

Through true stories from mentors and mentees in life seasons from tween to twilight, *Mentoring for All Seasons* encourages women to be intentional about sharing their life experiences and God's faithfulness with other women.

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About The Author

Author, international speaker, and freelance editor Janet Thompson is the founder of Woman to Woman Mentoring and About His Work Ministries. Sharing life experiences and God's faithfulness is the premise of Janet's writing and speaking. She's the author of nineteen books and holds an MA in Christian Leadership from Fuller Theological Seminary and an MBA from Cal Lutheran University. She and her husband, Dave, enjoy living in the rural mountains of Idaho where she enjoys walking mountain trails and spending time with their eleven grandchildren. She also writes newsletters and weekly blogs at www.womantowomanmentoring.com.



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