

## **Three Relationships that Every Good Leader Has**

**Edited and posted by Bob Young**

*[theme suggested by an article by Rick Warren, edited and expanded]*

Leaders cannot do their job alone. They must be connected to other people – some who are further along on the journey, some who are following, and some who are walking alongside. Paul described these relationships in 2 Tim. 2:2 when he wrote about four generations. The same idea can be seen in 360 evaluation models. When I was working in the academic world, we required top-down, bottom-up, and peer reviews and evaluations.

Interestingly, in their years of working together, Paul and Timothy modeled three relationships all Christian leaders need in order to grow and serve effectively.

### **1. We need spiritual leaders and directors that we look up to, those who mentor us and show us the way.**

Paul calls Timothy “my true son in the faith” (1 Tim. 1:2). We meet Timothy in Acts 16 when Paul is beginning his second missionary journey. Paul stops in Lystra and picks up a young disciple who accompanies him, assists him, and serves as an apprentice under him. Paul became a spiritual director and mentor to Timothy.

Many leaders have big dreams but lack spiritual mentors to help them move forward. I have had several spiritual mentors in my life. They have helped me become the person I am today.

We can learn and receive direction from people who have died. Rick Warren recommends that at least 25% of a church leader’s reading be spent in pre-Reformation writings with another 25% drawn from the Reformation to the modern missionary age; another 25% from the generation just previous to ours, and only 25% from contemporary authors. We need to hear the voices that have gone before us. Those voices connect us to centuries of church history. We must learn from our past.

### **2. We need to be models and mentors for those who are following behind us, those who look up to us.**

We should be examples of what mature ministry looks like. Paul wrote, “You, Timothy, certainly know what I teach, and how I live, and what my purpose in life is. You know my faith, my patience, my love, and my endurance” (2 Tim. 3:10-11). Paul provided Timothy a powerful example to follow. Timothy knew Paul. He watched him and saw how Paul handled the challenges of ministry. We need a “Paul” in our lives, we need to be a “Paul” to others.

### **3. We need spiritual partners who work alongside us.**

In Rom. 16:21, Paul’s relationship with Timothy has changed: “Timothy, my fellow worker, sends you his greetings.” Timothy has gone from being a son and a student to a colleague and co-laborer. We spend time desiring and praying for more laborers, but perhaps not enough time investing in those with the potential to become our partners in the mission.

Who are your partners in the mission who cheer you on? Do you have other Christian leaders that you can lean on during tough times? Timothy became that for Paul because, for years, Paul had served as a spiritual father and a model for Timothy. Perhaps preachers feel alone in ministry because they have not spent enough time investing in younger leaders.

May we follow the examples of Timothy and Paul. We need spiritual mentors; we need to be spiritual mentors for the next generation. We also need to partner with others so that we can serve more effectively and complete the tasks God has given us.

In your life, who are the partners who cheer you on? Who are the mentors that you lean on during difficult days? Who leans on you? Timothy was able to serve as a partner for Paul because Paul had served as a spiritual mentor and model for Timothy.