

In Genesis God gave all of mankind the mandate to reproduce and fill the earth. This reproduction is more than just one's physical offspring, but includes spiritual and occupational as well. Although the recent flood of books on the subject would make you think otherwise, the concept of mentoring is nothing new. In fact, the Bible has numerous examples of mentoring relationships: Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, Jesus and the disciples and Paul and Timothy to name a few. Additionally, the great commission tells us to go out and make disciples of all nations. Although this is specifically referring to passing on our understanding of God, I believe the Bible sets a residence for passing on knowledge of all sorts to the next generation; Deuteronomy 4:9 states, "Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them." This model is a means of blessing the future of your organization as you invest in the next generation who will one day take your place. But what exactly does it entail?

With all the examples of mentoring that are found in the Bible, a book could be written on its techniques and content. However, I want to focus on one passage that speaks of this topic – Hebrews 13:20-21:

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to

him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

These verses are often used as the benediction spoken by the pastor to the church at the end of the time of worship. Indeed they speak of a great blessing, which should bring us hope for the future and courage in our present struggles. They should also be cause for gratitude over God's goodness to us. Let me explain why.

We have hope for the future and courage for today because we are equipped. Jesus equips us with

God not only equips us outwardly, but He also changes us from the inside out; He works in us what is pleasing to Him.

everything good for doing His will. In other passages we learn about the armor of God, which not only protects us from the devil's attacks, but also gives us means to fight. We are also told that the God's word to us is useful for "teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God will be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Although Jesus is no longer present with us in the same way he was with the disciples, he has given us the Holy Spirit, which is our teacher, giving us understanding, sharpening our consciences, guiding us, etc. For you, a leader

in a Christian organization, think about what it means to equip those at your office to do what you desire of them. Do they have the training they need? Do they have someone they can go to with questions? Do they have someone to teach them what to value and seek after? We can bring hope for the future, and its sister, peace for today, to our staff if we equip them to face whatever tomorrow may bring.

But the truly remarkable thing about this passage is that there is even more! God not only equips us outwardly, but He also changes us from the inside out; He works *in us* what is pleasing to Him. Philippians 2:11 says it another way, "for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose." That is, not only does God help us do what He wants us to do, but He helps us to want to do it. The heart is what God requires of us; "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Likewise, leaders desire staff who not only do the work, but are engaged and passionate about their work. Unfortunately, the ability to change someone from the inside out is an incommunicable attribute of God – we just don't have that ability. But we can try to inspire our staff, letting them know why their work is important and celebrating accomplishments. In addition, our attitude serves as an example to our staff; let them see our heart for the work at hand. Also, we can pray for our staff, asking the God who can change hearts to be at work in our staff. Corporate prayer is also a powerful means of molding hearts. When we humble ourselves to pray, rather than trying to conform our immutable God to our desires, our

hearts should seek to long for God's desires; Jesus himself prayed, "not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42b). Thus praying corporately with your staff will be a powerful means of aligning all of our hearts with the King's and if your work is kingdom work, their hearts will be engaged.

We have so much to be thankful for in Christ! He equipped is in every sense to do His will, even giving us the desire. May God help us also equip those under our authority to do His will – the work of the Kingdom.