

THE INSIDE RUNNING

Young men want action. Their natural desire is to go out and conquer the world and make a difference.

Churches can harness this energy by giving young adults opportunities to lead and to take responsibility. Part of the equipping process is mentoring young men in all life issues. Men mentoring men. They especially want to know how to be successful financially, relationally and spiritually. This is a great opportunity for men who are mature in years, experience or faith as we can have a life-changing influence on the younger generation.

Rob Stacey gives an excellent overview of mentoring and the compelling reasons to do it. My friend Owen Mansill explains the impact of mentoring as he has been mentored and is now mentoring others.

The affliction of fatherlessness that is washing over our society can be changed by mentoring. Spiritual shallowness can be addressed by mentoring. Most older men have something to offer others.

How can you use your experience, talents and spiritual understanding to guide others?



John
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Reaching the Next Generation

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by Rob Stacey

In this day and age it is easy to think that all we need can be found on the internet. Just the other day for instance, I grabbed my iPad, went on to YouTube and looked up "how to change brake pads". Sure enough, up came a step-by-step video on how to change brake pads, made by none other than those people who write the old school Haines manuals for cars. Brilliant! I had those puppies done in an hour and saved myself about \$100.

Now once upon a time, guys like me would have had a father or uncle or grandfather who would have had you or me under the car, greased up, pulling these out together. And to be honest, I would have preferred that as a young guy. The problem is, like so many young guys today, my dad wasn't around. My uncles were all losers and my granddad died before I was born.

Learning how to do something with care and a skilled hand comes through relationship. Something other than expertise is passed on when a mentor shows you how to do something. You gain a respect for the finer details. You learn why, not just how. You sense a passion for the craft and you gain a generational hand-me-down which stitches you into the fabric of manhood.

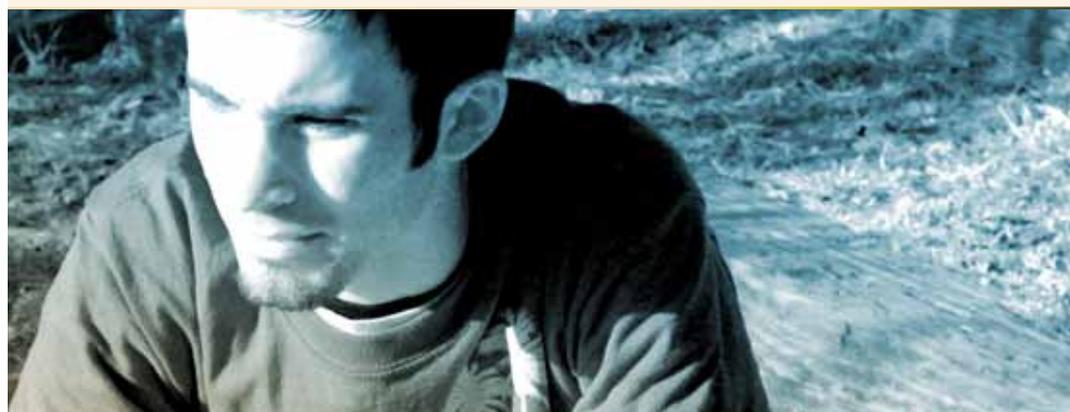
However it's one thing to pass on practical skills to young men, but what about the spiritual legacy we can pass on from one generation to the next?

In the book of Deuteronomy we have this amazing encouragement from Moses, one

of the fathers of faith, to the adults (or probably more precisely, the males) to pass on the foundations of a spiritual legacy and heritage that will form the very heart and foundation of a life lived with God.

Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Deuteronomy 6:6-9

A spiritual legacy starts in the home and is passed on through parents who live lives saturated by the Word of God and the life Jesus portrayed. Research tells us that when it comes to direction and values for life, our kids – and especially our teenagers – look first to the example and role of us as parents (and our boys, to us as fathers). If that role isn't filled by a faithful and courageous male role model in the home they will look elsewhere to fill that void. >



> I want to encourage you from my experience as a youth pastor of ten years and father of three great kids that our young men especially, long for the male figure in their life to mentor them in both word and deed.

Bo Boshers of Willow Creek Community Church offers this encouragement...

"Every place in life is a learning opportunity when character and values are the curriculum: sitting around the house, walking somewhere, working on the car, in the yard. It's as if God says, do you want your kids to share your values - the values I gave you? Then they'll have to see those values folded into your life so consistently that no matter what you do, they come pouring out of you."¹

If you don't have someone to pass on the heritage of Christian faith to, find a boy like me in your sphere of influence who lacks a strong Christian male role model in their life and walk alongside them. Your mentoring may just change a life and the future of a family line... like mine.

¹Bo Boshers & Judson Poling, *The Be With Factor*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan 2006

Rob has been involved in youth ministries since 2001. His passion is seeing young people reach their full God given potential.

Rob has been married to Deb since 1999 and they have three daughters. He is a pastor at Westgate Baptist Church in West Auckland.

A few years ago, a close friend related how a deep personal experience had resulted in him becoming a mentor. Having a well-known ministry in his own right, he was lamenting the passing of his own mentor, a man who had been a leader in the New Zealand and international Christian community. When he expressed his sorrow in prayer God spoke to him and said "Start being a father".

For six years, I was a beneficiary of this man's obedience as he mentored me through several very challenging circumstances. Circumstances then changed through my relocating to the US.

During this time, a young man came to work on our dairy farm in Texas. Grieving over the loss of his father and then the near death of his mother, James gave up his job as an advanced paramedic and travelled 1500 miles from Maryland to come and work as a farmhand.

James came and stayed at our house where he applied his outstanding culinary skills. Over a period of two weeks I was able to identify the key issues in James' life, pray with him, see Christ heal his grief and help him see that he had a remarkable gift of compassion and that he was called to a ministry with the sick and not dairy cows.

James returned to Maryland with a completely new connection with Christ and a changed life. His most recent communication has been to invite me to his wedding.

This experience stirred my heart in a deep way and like my previous mentor in New Zealand, I knew I needed to start being a father.

Since our return to New Zealand, I have established a mentoring group. We call it Young Lions. The group meets weekly but also undertakes numerous other activities such as surfing, jet-skiing, camping, ten-pin bowling and paintballing. I have been astounded at the results. Not all, but many of the young men have dysfunctional relationships with their own fathers. The response they have had to being given recognition, support and identity through Young Lions has been

remarkable. Even more surprising is that they have in turn drawn their own non-Christian friends into the group. One of the guys brought along Mark, a friend from school days. Suffering from deep parental rejection, Mark was unemployed, into drugs and suffering from mental health issues. As he has



experienced the healing power of Christ a true gem has been uncovered. He has a powerful desire to see his unsaved friends come to Christ, a dry wit and an intellectual talent that he is about to apply to tertiary studies.

A core value of Young Lions is the breaking of mindsets and personal beliefs that do not conform to the Word of God. As the old saying goes, "you are what you believe".

A number who were in the group have now moved on to their own church leadership roles. In addition, many have also had career advancements, but what has excited me most is the impact that they are having on their non-Christian colleagues and friends.

Owen operates his own investment advisory and business consultancy company. He is married to Lois and they live in Auckland. They are parents of three adult children.



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