

Mentoring Matters

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A student's voice - "My heart and my understanding of God has changed. For me it was reiterated again that God loves us and wants the best for us. He gives us passions and things we enjoy so we can serve him doing those things. He doesn't want me to have to participate in activities that I hate all the time; he wants me to use the things that I love to serve him. I was given a fresh perspective on why we are here and what God wants for my life." —Erin

MQW – What activities (that you are currently involved in) are of the highest value for you? This question allows your mentee to talk about those things they really enjoy. You'll find that there will be a lift in their energy level as they share with you the things that they love to do. But this question should go deeper than just fun things to do. Analyzing the value of the activity will bring depth to the answer. This conversation may help the mentee begin to sort out how to make decisions about good and best activities.

Ministry Experiences

Students are required to engage in three ministry experiences (ME). We believe it is important for students to begin testing their skills and curiosities in real, but safe, ministry settings. We've divided these experiences into three loose categories – leadership, care ministry and service. While we recognize that most experiences do not fall into neat categories, they do, nevertheless, give us a lens through which we can plan and evaluate the experience. Students need to be supervised by a leader in the church. You may also want to participate in the debriefing of the experiences so that the student can glean as much as possible from them. One ME should be an extend experience of at least a week. Many students have already engaged in mission trips and camp leadership experiences. These are all valid ME's. Our encouragement to the students is to find their growth edges and to be intentional about what they want to learn.

Did you know that most of us focus on our weaknesses and not our strengths? Marcus Buckingham, speaking at the Willow Creek Leadership Summit in August 2007, used the following example: your child brings home her report card – English – A, Science – B, Math – F. As a parent, where will your focus be? What will you say to your child? Most of us will see the F and almost ignore the A. The reality is there are just two reasons for the F – either the teacher is poor at his or her job or your child does not have the aptitude to

understand the material. What if we focused on the A and explored the reasons for the high mark? Again, either the teacher is very good or the child has a natural gift in this area. Helping the child discover why he or she is excelling in one area will inform their experience in another area. In other words, discovering your strength helps to strengthen weaker areas. I found listening to students' reactions to their *Career Direct* and spiritual gifts inventories at the retreat very interesting. Many of them made comments about how they scored poorly in some areas and expressed their desire to improve their scores the next time. We are conditioned to look at our low scores and assume they are weaknesses we must improve upon. What if we focused on our strengths and strove each week to improve on them? I don't believe this precludes us from being self-aware of our weaknesses. But, it does make a significant difference of where our focus is placed and our energies are spent. How can you challenge your student to focus on his or her strengths? Marcus Buckingham has written a number of books. Among them are [Now Discover your Strengths](#) and [Go Put Your Strengths to Work](#). You can find more information about him and his writings on his web site www.marcusbuckingham.com.

Book Quote - *I gave up all that inferior stuff so I could know Christ personally, experience his resurrection power, be a partner in his suffering, and go all the way with him to death itself. If there was any way to get in on the resurrection from the dead, I wanted to do it.*

I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back.

So let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision—you'll see it yet! Now that we're on the right track, let's stay on it.

Stick with me, friends. Keep track of those you see running this same course, headed for this same goal. There are many out there taking other paths, choosing other goals, and trying to get you to go along with them. I've warned you of them many times; sadly, I'm having to do it again. All they want is easy street. They hate Christ's Cross. But easy street is a dead-end street. Those who live there make their bellies their gods; belches are their praise; all they can think of is their appetites.

But there's far more to life for us. We're citizens of high heaven! We're waiting the arrival of the Savior, the Master, Jesus Christ, who will transform our earthy bodies into glorious bodies like his own. He'll make us beautiful and whole with the same powerful skill by which he is putting everything as it should be, under and around him.

My dear, dear friends! I love you so much. I do want the very best for you. You make me feel such joy, fill me with such pride. Don't waver. Stay on track, steady in God.

- Paul, Philippians 3:10-4:1, The Message.