



## WOW: Word Of the Week

### MENTOR

July 19, 2023

I will not share a WOW for the next month or so. I will be traveling in Ecuador and Colombia on a “mentor trip.” I usually simply say “mission trip,” but mission trip has come to describe all kinds of activities—benevolence, fellowship, playing with children, medical, education, and more. In its most biblical form, a mission trip should mean being sent to participate in God’s eternal mission in this world – taking the gospel to the lost. I will preach the gospel in multiple locations, but one of my primary roles will be as a mentor – a ministry mentor, evangelism mentor, discipleship mentor, spiritual mentor.

This week’s WOW—mentor. You may know that Mentor was a character in Homer’s *Odyssey*. Mentor was a friend to Odysseus. When Odysseus went to fight in the Trojan War, he entrusted his young son Telemachus to Mentor. Mentor was entrusted with the education of Telemachus.

From that literary background, today a mentor is one who serves as a trusted counselor or teacher. Mentoring has arrived at the forefront of contemporary training models, perhaps beginning with Arthur Chickering’s research about the effectiveness of mentoring relationships between students and faculty (1969). Later studies confirmed the positive effects of mentoring. The mentoring model entered the business world, the workplace, and training programs in various applications. Mentoring usually focuses on personal growth and development. In the church world, mentoring encourages spiritual development and is also useful for developing effective skills in ministry, evangelism, and discipleship.

A mentor is one who supports, advises, and guides another. That is a primary reason for this trip—and for many of my international trips. A mentor provides help in specific situations, analyzing the situations and providing counsel, orientation, and suggestions.

One of the points I often share in leadership presentations is that everyone is a leader. A leader is a person with influence. All of us have influence over someone. One may be a good influence or a bad influence. That is why there are good leaders and bad leaders. This week, think about how and where you are a mentor. Consider your spiritual influence—as a parent, a co-worker, a leader, a mentor. I share some guiding principles for spiritual mentoring.

God’s servants are formed by the gospel of God’s grace.

God’s people are called to seek and to share the heart of God, to share the Good News.

All God’s servants are called to bless others by example and by sharing wisdom and teaching.

God’s mentors help others grow in obedience to God’s purpose and will.

I ask your prayers for my travels on this “mentor trip” and for the work to be done. I will be mentoring, sharing understanding, sharing wisdom. I will be modeling and encouraging Bible study. I will be mentoring for ministry and evangelism.

I will be back in late August with some new WOW words. Until then, be a blessing in the lives of as many as you can.