

Week 4

PROVIDENTIAL Relationships

Westside Church of Christ

Pastor Darryl Seip

Sunday 1st March 2020



5 Things God uses to Grow Your Faith

- Private Disciplines
- Practical Teaching
- Personal Ministry
- Providential Relationships
- Pivotal Circumstances

Providence is the means by which God directs all things — both animate and inanimate, seen and unseen, good and evil — toward a worthy purpose, which means His will must finally prevail.

Every person should seek to have three individuals in their life: a Paul, a Timothy and a Barnabas.

A Paul is an older person who is willing to mentor you, to build into your life. Not someone who's smarter or more gifted than you, but somebody who's been down the road. Somebody willing to share their strengths and weaknesses — everything they have learned in the laboratory of life. Somebody whose faith you'll want to imitate.

A Timothy is a younger person into whose life you are building. For a model, read 1st and 2nd Timothy. Here was Paul, the quintessential mentor, building into the life of his protégé — affirming, encouraging, teaching, correcting, directing, praying.

Howard Hendricks

PAUL AND TIMOTHY

That's why I have sent Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord. He will remind you of how I follow Christ Jesus, just as I teach in all the churches wherever I go.

1 Corinthians 4:17 (New Living Translation)

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:1 (New International Version)

Students are not greater than their teacher. But the student who is fully trained will become like the teacher.

Luke 6:40 (NLT)

2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

2 Timothy 2:2 (NLT)

BARNABAS

A Barnabas is a soul friend, somebody who loves you but is not impressed by you. Somebody to whom you can be accountable. Somebody who's willing to keep you honest, who's willing to say, "Hey, shouldn't be doing that, and don't give me any guff!"

Howard Hendricks

[26] When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. [27] But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus.

Acts 9:26-27 (NIV)

**DON'T JUST LOOK FOR A PAUL or a TIMOTHY or a BARNABAS.
BE A PAUL or a TIMOTHY or a BARNABAS FOR SOMEONE ELSE**



Bible Study Booklet
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



five things
God uses to
GROW
your faith

MARCH
2020
WEEK FOUR
Providential Relationships

Overview Week 4

Is there anything from the Sermon on Sunday that you would like to comment on? How are your SOAP readings?

INTRODUCTION

If you are like most people, you can't tell your life story without making reference to people who played significant roles along the way. The same is true of your faith story. God uses the people he puts in our path to do his work of growing our faith.

Sometimes these people are unaware of their influence on you. The people that affect you positively may have no idea that they did. Sometimes it was a single conversation or it can be many discussions over a long period. Sometimes it is not so much their words but the example of their life of faith that was so powerful. Perhaps an invitation to church or a group was the thing that made all the difference.

Whatever the method and how they influenced you, you know that your life would not be where it is today if you hadn't met them.

OPENER DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Looking back, who are there people you feel God providentially brought into your life at crucial times? How did you meet them? How did God use them? What did they do? What did they say? Do they know they had such influence?

Have you had a Paul, a Timothy or a Barnabus in your life?

BIBLE STUDY AND QUESTIONS

Read Ruth 1:1-19 Do you know the story of Ruth and Naomi?

What did Orpah and Ruth have in common?

What was the difference between Orpah and Ruth?

What did Ruth see in Naomi that caused her to want to embrace her God?

Ruth eventually remarried again when they went back to Bethlehem. Their child would turn out to be David's Grandfather!

Read 1 Samuel 23:15-18 King Saul was on the prowl trying to kill David. But Saul's son Jonathan was close friends with David.

What did Jonathan do that helped David so much? (vs 17)

What did he say that caused him to find strength again?

THE 5 Things Again...

Have you had any further thoughts on any of the 5 things?

How did you go this week on thinking about Personal Ministry?

Week 1	Private Disciplines (Privately I took the time to...)
Week 2	Practical Teaching (I heard the Bible applied..)
Week 3	Personal Ministry (I got involved in...)
Week 4	Providential Relationships (I met someone..)
Week 5	Pivotal Circumstances (This happened..)

Providential Relationships

Providence is the means by which God directs all things towards His purpose.

The providence of God is what we understand of God's control and God's directing of events, circumstances and people. It is He who puts people in our path, allows us to be born into certain families and sets up certain meetings so that through those relationships we can grow in faith.

One of our responsibilities is to be wise and discerning with who we hang out with. Relationships have the capacity to strengthen our faith but they also have the potential to destroy it.

Read the following. **Proverbs 16:27-29 Proverbs 18:24**

Proverbs 13:20

What are the points being made in each of these verses?

Our choice of friends can make or break us spiritually. The desire for friends is a big one in people's lives. But sometimes that desire to fit in, have fun and be accepted overrides some deeper morals and values operating in us.

The issue in these friendships is who is influencing whom?

What is happening to our faith in God as these relationships with people grow? Are we just trying to keep up with the "jones"?

MORE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

If we are dependent on the Providence of God to bring people into our path then what else are we responsible for? We can't force people to be our friends. Sometimes there is just not that relational connection. One of our responsibilities is to learn how to be open to new friends and be teachable.

While we are reliant on God another responsibility is to be in places where we can meet the sort of people that God might be using to grow our faith.

Read **Hebrews 10:25** It's not like God is keeping a record of attendance and anything less than 100% is a failure. But attendance at "Church" gives an opportunity to build friendships, deepen relationships and give and receive encouragement. When you miss Church and related events you miss the opportunity to do that. That's why there is the encouragement not to give up meeting together. We want all our groups at Westside to be environments where relationships are built.

Instead of merely being the recipient of the relationship that God providentially uses to grow you faith, what about *being* that person for someone else? As well as *having* a Paul, Timothy or Barnabas, maybe we could *BE* a Paul Timothy or Barnabas for someone else. That sort of relationship will build your faith up too. The Bible just before the previous passage talks about that.

Read **Hebrews 10:22-24**. Consider the word consider...

Have you considered how to spur others along? What works for you? What are ways that others have spurred you along? Can you do the same for others?

Read **2 Timothy 2:2**. If someone has been that example and that encourager to you, why not look for someone else to pass those lessons on to? Even if you are not there yet, perhaps it is something you can aspire to. Like Jonathan did for David, help them find strength in God.

In your prayer time, thank God for the people in your past or present who have been such an influence. Pray for protection from people who would lead you down the wrong path. Pray for spiritual eyes to see people in the future who could be an influence to you. Pray also that God may use you to be a positive influence to someone else.