

mENTORING
AS THE PRACTICE OF DISCERNMENT

USMB CONFERENCE
2016

INTRODUCTION

Favorite Movie Mentors

INTRODUCTION

Favorite Movie Mentors

- Patience
- Taught life lessons
- Unorthodox methods
- Faith in their protégé

INTRODUCTION

What is mentoring?

- “An experienced person journeying with a less-experienced person, for a specific time, for the purpose of intentionally guiding spiritual and personal development.”
Mentoring Matters

INTRODUCTION

What is mentoring?

- The process of **paying attention** to (listening to) the life of another and teaching that person to pay attention to the presence of God. *(Peterson, Anderson)*
- Not about “telling. It’s about “listening.”
- An art form

INTRODUCTION

What is mentoring?

- **Mentoring is messy**, because life is messy, disorderly & random.

WHY BOTHER?

Biblical Mandate

- Matt 28: 19-20 An element of discipleship; "while going"
- Jesus' Ministry
 - Called [Mark 1:16-20]
 - Taught [Mark 8:27-38]
 - Sent [Luke 10:1-18]



WHY BOTHER?

Biblical Mandate

- 1 Thess 1:6-7 Imitators & models
- 2 Tim 2:2 An expectation
- Deut 6:4-6 Life-on-life



WHY BOTHER?

Cultural Distortion

- Gen 1:27 Created in God's image
- Ps 139:13-16 Uniquely designed



WHY BOTHER?

Cultural Distortion

- Deception of image
Shallow, fleeting & fragile sense of self
- Demands of success
Valued by performance & achievement
- Competing agendas
Sense of abandonment & stress
- Clutter of consumption
Identity defined as consumers
Passive, insatiable, self-centered, uncritical



OUR DIRECTION

Mentoring as Discernment

- Discernment:
 - The ability to judge well.
 - The activity of determining the value and quality of something, in particular going past mere perception and making deeper judgments about that thing.
 - The process of determining God's desire.



OUR DIRECTION

Mentoring as Discernment

- Mentoring can help young people:
 - Assess culture so they can affirm certain norms and reject others.
 - Attend to, and cultivate their gifts and use the fullness of their abilities in their faith journeys.
 - Connect to God's story over their culture's narrative.
 - Resist the influence of culture & reconnect with God's design for their lives.



DISCERNMENT

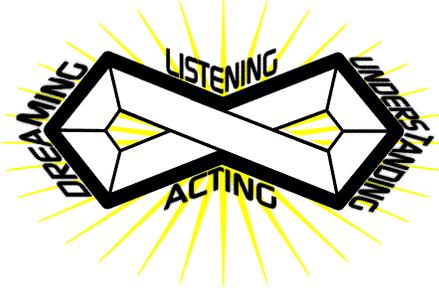
Biblical Basis

- Mark 12:30-31
Love the Lord your God with ...

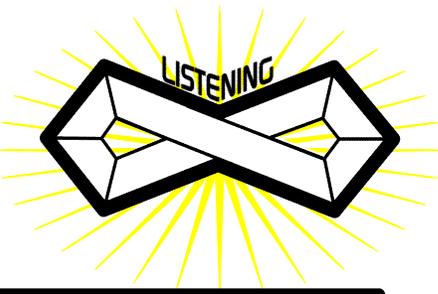
Heart Listening
Soul Dreaming
Mind Understanding
Strength Acting



DISCERNMENT




DISCERNMENT



LOVING GOD WITH YOUR HEART



DISCERNMENT

Listening Culture's Distortion

- Seduces teens toward habits of consumption & entertainment
- Distracts them from their heart's call to love & compassion



DISCERNMENT

Listening Helps young people . . .

- Listen to their heart.
- Pay attention to situations that give them life and promote love.



DISCERNMENT

Listening Scripture

- "Heart" metaphor: Emotions, passions, drives
- Guard our hearts: Prov 4:23
- Hardness of heart: Exod 7:13; Mark 6:52
- Heart follows your treasure: Matt 6:21



DISCERNMENT

Listening Aims

- Right "feeling" – *Ortho-pathos*
- Creates space to let their hearts speak
- Makes known their fears, hopes & loves
- Uncovers hidden/unhidden motives
- Cultivates right feelings to our situation(s)



DISCERNMENT

Listening Practice

Good Questions

- What are the main tensions/problems you experience at school? (Work, home, etc.)
- When do you experience joy?
- Where do you feel most alive?
- What are some of your greatest fears?
- Why did [person/situation] make you feel that way?



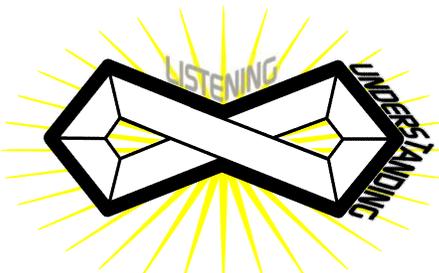
DISCERNMENT

Listening Practice

- Timed writing experience
- Silence & solitude
- Listening prayer
- Ignatian Examen
 - When did I see God at work today?
 - When did I feel most alive?



DISCERNMENT



LOVING GOD WITH YOUR MIND



DISCERNMENT

Understanding Culture's Distortion

- Identity as consumers
- Judge everything based on whether it entertains us, or gratifies our wants
- Suppresses innate curiosity and search for truth



DISCERNMENT

Understanding Helps young people . . .

- Engage the world with the reasoning, "meaning-making" mind
- Understand God's order & design – the way the world works.



DISCERNMENT

Understanding Scripture

- Proverbs: Recipe Wisdom
- Ecclesiastes: Existential Wisdom
- Jesus exposed the world's distortions: Luke 4:16-28; Matt 9:1-13
- Renewing the Mind: Rom 12:1-3



DISCERNMENT

Understanding Aims

- Right "understanding" – Ortho-doxy
- Understand God's world accurately – complex and full of potential
- Build a filter/grid for analyzing our world
- Align with God's purposes in the world



DISCERNMENT

Understanding Practice

Good Questions

- Why does this situation exist?
- What decisions were made? (Individual, corporate, societal, etc.)
- What is the role of economic pressures?
- What is the role of religious beliefs & expectations? Ethnic beliefs?
- What part do human needs, fears, hopes play?



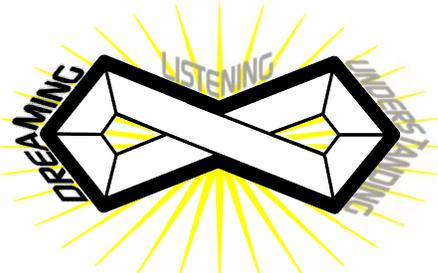
DISCERNMENT

Understanding Practice

- "But why?" Exercise
- Personal Credo: I know this to be true . . .
- Watch movies together
- Experience reality



DISCERNMENT



LOVING GOD WITH YOUR SOUL



DISCERNMENT

Dreaming Culture's Distortion

- Biased to the stories that form them
- Distorted situations have become normalized – accepted
- Absence of indignation
- Lack imagination for a different world – God's world
- "Frog in the kettle" syndrome



DISCERNMENT

Dreaming Helps young people . . .

- Embrace our highest, deepest hopes and dreams.
- Yearn for “shalom”
- Resist culture’s distorting pressures and forces
- Live into their calling



DISCERNMENT

Dreaming Scripture

- Calling of Abraham: Gen 12:1-3
- Torah: World as God’s & our role in it
- Prophets: Calling back to God’s design
- Jesus: Luke 4:18-28



DISCERNMENT

Dreaming Aims

- Right “seeing” – Orth-optomai
- See through/behind the world’s distortions
- See Christ’s Kingdom vision
- Embrace God’s call: Vocation & Occupation



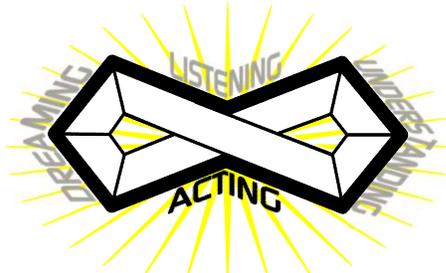
DISCERNMENT

Dreaming Practice

- Tell & Retell God’s Upper Story
- Explore Calling
- Salvation Story
- Worship together
- Tells stories against the backdrop of the Christian story
- Connect with missionaries & church planters



DISCERNMENT



LOVING GOD WITH YOUR STRENGTH



DISCERNMENT

Acting Culture’s Distortion

- Commercial culture creates slumber & domestication
- Lack of meaningful activity
- Fulfillment, identity & meaning can be purchased



DISCERNMENT

Acting Helps young people . . .

- Be awakened.
- Make their faith in Christ meaningful.
- Strengthen their sense of value.
- Feel empowered to participate in and lead the church.



DISCERNMENT

Acting Scripture

- Incarnation: John 1
- Jesus' Teaching: Matt 5:13-16; John 13
- In, but on of: John 17
- Paul: Eph 2:8-10
- Faith without works: James 2:14-20



DISCERNMENT

Acting Aims

- Right "doing" – Ortho-praxis
- God works "in" youth by working "through" them
- Become agents of God's blessing in a broken world
- Put "feet" to their calling



DISCERNMENT

Acting Practice

- "Go and do": Luke 10:25-37
- Find active opportunities
- Be strategic
 - Clarify Aims
 - Brainstorm
 - Judge (Consistent with faith & effective)
 - Plan
 - Implement
 - Evaluate



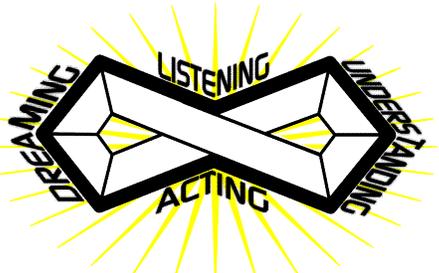
CONCLUSIONS



Supplies structure & substance



CONCLUSIONS



Provides a process



CONCLUSIONS

Works toward a whole faith

CONCLUSIONS

Various entry points

PRACTICAL ISSUES

Expectations

- Time commitment
- Investment
- Defined goals
- Clear boundaries
- Preparation
- Tracking
- Re-up

PRACTICAL ISSUES

How often?

- Depends on relationship and context

PRACTICAL ISSUES

General Tips & Ideas

- Ask, "Who is this for?"
- Tasks vs. Goals: Structure or relationship
- Find a relational metaphor (ex. Coach)
- Create space
- Faith is caught more than taught
- Growth plan/goals
- Journaling

PRACTICAL ISSUES

General Tips & Ideas

- Identify strengths & growth areas
- Use inventories
- Choice point: Push or pull
- Stories, Stories, Stories (Model truth)
- Questions, Questions, Questions
 - Enable mentee to discover learning

PRACTICAL ISSUES

General Tips & Ideas

- We're not fixers, we're lovers
- Enormous responsibility & amazing opportunity
- Let God use YOU!!!
- Mentoring is an art form

