

## BUILDING SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIPS

### WISDOM CALLS US TO LEARN FROM AND INVEST IN OTHERS

Merle Burkholder is a mission leader and pastor from Sioux Lookout, ON, Canada. Merle appreciates the deep impact that our relationships have in our discipleship and that of others. This article describes three important relationships that every Christian needs to contribute to the Kingdom.

When I was in high school, I spent my summers working in the concrete plant where my father was part owner. Sam was a cement salesman who came to the business every week to sell cement. He learned to know me and took an interest in me. Sam was fifty years old, and I was fifteen.

When Sam came each week, he would visit with my father about cement. Then he would come out to the plant and find me wherever I was working. He would talk with me and often would take me to the break room and buy me a Mountain Dew. Sometimes Sam would take me to sports events for an evening. I knew Sam didn't have to do these things in order to sell cement. He genuinely liked me and took an interest in my life.

One summer I was operating a front-end loader. There had been a problem with its power steering. I had talked with the mechanics in the shop but they hadn't fixed it. After some time, I was getting frustrated with the bad steering. One day, the steering wheel spun backwards and the knob on the steering wheel hit the crazy bone in my elbow.

In a moment of pain and rage I went into the shop. I found the shop foreman and told him what I thought of his ability to schedule jobs in the shop. I berated him for not paying attention to the steering on the

loader I was driving. I was angry and said a lot of harsh things.

When I turned to leave the shop, there was Sam! Sam took me by the arm and led me around the corner of the building. He backed me up against the wall and leaned in over me. He proceeded to tell me that what I had just done was wrong. He told me that if I was ever going to be the kind of man he thought I was going to be, I had a lot to learn about how to relate to people and deal with disappointments.

He told me that I needed to go back into the shop, find the shop foreman, and apologize for what I had just said. I should tell him that I will drive the loader without the steering fixed as long as I need to and that if he ever schedules it into the shop and repairs it, I will say thank you.

Sam also said he was going to go with me to do that. So, we went back into the shop, and I followed Sam's instructions. Then we went to the break room where Sam bought me a Mountain Dew, and all was well.

**Our own choices and way of life have consequences, not only for ourselves, but also for those who are following us.**

As a fifteen-year-old, I needed a man like Sam. If you have people in your life who care enough about you to help you know how to deal with life situations, do not reject them!

Scripture gives us examples of three types of spiritual relationships that are important for us to have.

#### Mentor or Coach

Timothy had the Apostle Paul as his mentor or coach. Paul disciplined him. In II Timothy 3:10-11 Paul gives Timothy a list of things he has seen in the life of Paul. This list is a good list of things we gain from having a mentor or coach.

1. **Doctrine:** What is the correct belief system? What can I know to be true?
2. **Manner of life:** How do I live out my beliefs?
3. **Purpose:** What is worth living for? What should my short-term and long-term goals and objectives be?
4. **Faith:** What can I put my trust in?
5. **Patience:** When do I wait, and when do I act?
6. **Love:** How do I show love in relationships?
7. **Perseverance:** How do I keep going and not lose hope when things are difficult? How do I cope when things go wrong?
8. **Persecutions:** How do I respond to opposition and personal attacks on me and my character?
9. **Afflictions:** How do I deal with long-term hindrances or difficulties?

Our mentors can be people we admire. They may have a character quality that we want to develop in our own lives.

They may be people who have written books that impact us and give us direction for our lives. They are often the people who we turn to for advice.

I encourage you to seek out Godly mentors. It would be nice if they sought you out. But that probably will not happen, so you can take the initiative.

Some people may feel intimidated to be thought of as mentors. Perhaps it is best to ask a prospective mentor if you can get together and ask some questions. After you have done this a few times you can see if it seems like a good fit and a helpful relationship. Then perhaps your times together can become more formal with regular input and discussions.

#### Peer or Co-laborer

It is important to have people with whom we are working toward common goals and objectives. These friends are often in our same age group and at a similar stage in life. They can empathize with us in the challenges we are going through.

Paul and Barnabas were co-laborers. They worked and traveled together to bring the Gospel to places where Christ was not known. They encouraged each other. They faced challenges together. We need these types of people in our lives.

With these people we rejoice and weep together. We share accountability for the important aspects of our lives. These people know us well and help us to fulfill our commitments and live out our faith.

## RELATIONSHIPS IN MY LIFE

### MY UNCLE'S LIVING ROOM

The Christian home within the context of Christian community is one of the most powerful avenues for mentoring.

Years ago I worked with a small group to create a mentoring program for our church. We developed a system for matching up mentors and mentees. It was a great idea that never got off the ground. I soon discovered that mentoring is more than a program.

As I reflect on my adolescent and teenage years, I am increasingly grateful for the mentoring I received. It wasn't a program. Rather, it was an outflow of community. A number of older men in my church community took a personal interest in me. Families spent a lot of time in each other's homes. One of those homes was the home of my uncle. There were always lively theological discussions happening

These are the people who are our intimate friends and associates. They help us carry our burdens. They know when to wound us so that we can heal. They know our secrets and show us the love of God despite our weaknesses and failures. They celebrate our successes.

#### Follower or Disciple

These are people in whom we are investing time and energy to help them be all that God wants them to be. We see the potential that God sees in them. We encourage them and guide them through their challenging seasons.

In 1 Timothy 4:12-16 Paul gives Timothy advice and direction for his life. He tells Timothy not to allow anyone to despise him because he is young but to be an example to the believers.

The list of things he is to exemplify resemble the earlier list of things Paul told Timothy about Paul's own life. Timothy was to take the things he had learned from observing Paul's life and demonstrate them to others. He was a disciple, but he was also to be a mentor to others.

I encourage you to look for those who want your influence. Be intentional in connecting with them. Pay attention to those who are younger than you but still get close to you and follow your conversations with others. Who are the younger people who like to talk with you? Who watches you or listens to you when you are in a group setting?

there. My uncle often started it off with a stimulating question. Adults, young people, and children alike were invited into the discussion. Everyone's questions and contributions were welcomed.

That was mentoring. Even though we didn't have that name for it, I have been profoundly shaped by it. Probably one of the most powerful things about that environment was the level of authentic conversation. We were real people with deeply held convictions, passionately engaging around things we cared deeply about, all in an environment of warmth and acceptance. I think young people call it "legit" conversation! The Bible calls it discipleship.

I have also observed the opposite. A young person asks a sincere question. An older more knowledgeable person proceeds with several minutes of monologue until the topic is covered and the correct answer given. Unanswered questions remain, but no one voices

Intentionally do things with these people. Start conversations with them. Ask them questions about their lives. Take them with you when you are going to do things. If you are traveling for ministry, take a younger person with you. Go out of your way to talk with these individuals. Ask how you can pray for them. See if they would like to meet with you.

I believe that the value of having people we are discipling is that it keeps us challenged to be worthy of being followed. It helps us to be serious about the type of example we give to others. Mentoring reminds us that our own choices and way of life have consequences, not only for ourselves, but also for those who are following us.

I believe that these three types of relationships are important for each of us. Learn from others. Find mentors for your life. Be accountable and have co-laborers. Invest in the lives of others.

The book of Proverbs is based on the assumption that wisdom can be passed on from one generation to another. Be part of that wisdom chain! Gain wisdom and pass it on to others.

*Merle Burkholder*



them. That young person will go somewhere safer for answers to their questions. It is a missed opportunity for life changing mentoring to happen.

I believe in intentional mentoring programs. I have participated in them and have benefited from them. But I have also discovered that an important piece of discipleship is what happens in our homes. We have tried to make our home a safe place for young and old to gather, play games, discuss theology, debate apologetics, and share good food: a place where everyone's contribution is welcome. I hope that young people will be impacted in our home the way I was in my uncle's.

*Henry Blank  
pastor, DNI president*



## RESPONDING TO COVID-19

Since schools were some of the first places to be shut down with the looming COVID-19 situation, each aspect of Faith Builders has been deeply impacted.

#### Gerald Miller, Faith Builders Christian School administrator

FBCS made the early decision to hope for a brief closure but plan for a longer term closure. Several email communications each week through the office became important, as well as packet pick-up and drop-off every Wednesday. A number of online tools enabled us to continue high school that satisfied the credit requirements for classes.

Our patron families did a tremendous job of working with the school to allow us to continue children's schooling at home, and teachers worked hard to create learning experiences.

#### Matthew Mast, Faith Builders Resource Group administrator

When the governor ordered non-essential businesses to close in-person operations, Resource Group staff began working from home. This offered both opportunities and challenges. For example, many traded a powerful desktop computer and two large monitors for a less-powerful laptop and a second monitor. The bookstore closed, though we were able to continue to ship orders that came through the webstore. The Servant Institute seminar scheduled for April was postponed to July.

Because most of the Resource Group work involves projects and events, we have been able to keep working, although we have fallen behind schedule. I am grateful for the flexibility that Resource Group staff brought during this challenging time. They made the best of the disruption and inconvenience, learning to develop new habits that fit the work-from-home experience.

#### Glendon Strickler, Faith Builders Training Institute administrator

When word came that all PA schools were to close, it sent shock waves of disappointment through the Institute student body. Our students and instructors demonstrated resilience in transitioning to online classes to keep the semester going. Google Classroom, Google Meet, and video lectures suddenly became our daily reality. Mentoring groups were also able to continue meeting via videoconference. I am so grateful for the perseverance that was shown in completing the semester.

#### Steven Brubaker, Faith Builders Educational Programs administrator

As we navigated these uncharted waters, we clarified three actionable values:

1. We will work to avoid the spread of COVID-19. We intend to operate within guidelines that protect our staff, students, and event participants.
2. We care deeply about being a good neighbor. Receiving waivers or religious exemptions does not authorize us to ignore local sensibilities.
3. We will initiate and continue communication with our local, state, and federal government leaders and seek to operate with their approval.

As we have talked with and heard from the government, we are reaching several conclusions:

1. We plan to hold Summer Term 2020 as scheduled.
2. We are planning for FBCS and FBTI to reopen in the fall of 2020.
3. In order to do our part in limiting the spread of COVID-19, we will need to operate classes, terms, and events with appropriate cleanliness, hygiene, quarantine, screening, and distancing protocols in place.
4. We may need to make substantive changes in term length, class size, and other components of our program. Our work to envision what may have to be can seed innovative ideas of what could become overall improvements.
5. Large events like Teachers Week and REACH will be much harder to operate in the current climate.
6. We are grateful for the guidance the government is giving during these times. Our interaction with government officials has been helpful and encouraging.

In the first days of a major crisis, there is often a coming together of hearts to work together. As time goes on, this unified response often begins to unravel. We are seeing that same tendency in this situation both on the national level and within our communities. May the Lord give us grace to stay engaged with each other to push through our disagreements to a wise, unified, and Christ-honoring path forward.

## VISIT FAITH BUILDERS FOR A DAY!

NOVEMBER 20  
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Do you have questions about Faith Builders?

Would you like to see what a student from your church experiences here?

We welcome young people, parents, and their church leaders to our fall open house. Guests attend classes, interact with staff and students, and tour the campus. Meals and accomodation are free.



#### REGISTER TO ATTEND

Find more information and register: [fbep.org/open-house](https://fbep.org/open-house)

## UPCOMING EVENTS & TERMS

#### SUMMER TERM | JUNE 29 - JULY 31

Full to capacity with a waiting list.

#### COLLEGE STUDENT WEEKEND | JULY 10-12

Full to capacity.  
Information at [fbep.org/csw](https://fbep.org/csw).

#### TEACHERS WEEK | AUGUST 4-7

Cancelled. Information at [fbep.org/tw](https://fbep.org/tw).

#### TWO-YEAR STUDIES BEGIN | AUGUST 24

6 spaces open. Apply now!  
[fbep.org/academics/semester](https://fbep.org/academics/semester)

#### TEACHERS CONFERENCE | OCTOBER 9-11

Registration opens mid-August.  
Register at [fbep.org/tc](https://fbep.org/tc).

#### WINTER TERM | JANUARY 5- FEBRUARY 5, 2021

Applications available late August.  
Apply at [fbep.org/wt](https://fbep.org/wt).

## PERSONNEL NEED

### OFFICE ASSISTANT

The Institute needs a man or woman to assist Lucy and Vivian with bookkeeping and secretarial work.

Proficiency with computer applications and finances is essential. This is a full-time paid staff position.

#### APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Contact Steven Brubaker with referrals or questions: [srb@fbep.org](mailto:srb@fbep.org)  
(814) 789-4518, ext. 239

## SUMMER TERM

JUNE 29 - JULY 31

Summer Term provides teachers an opportunity to invest in their capacity as teachers. We look forward to five weeks of study, instruction, and fresh insights to equip teachers to serve their communities.

We are grateful for a strong enrollment this year.

#### COURSES OFFERED IN 2020

Foundations of Education.....	Steven Brubaker
Creative Writing.....	John Coblentz
Principles of Teaching.....	Patrick Heatwole
Chemistry for the Non-Scientist.....	John Mark Kuhns
Teaching Secondary Math.....	John Mark Kuhns
Beginning Choral Conducting.....	Brandon Mullet
Choir.....	Brandon Mullet
Class Voice.....	Brandon Mullet
Music Fundamentals.....	Brandon Mullet
Growing Into a Godly Woman.....	Marie Mullet
Anabaptist History.....	Stephen Russell
World Geography.....	Stephen Russell
Child Development.....	Jonas Sauder
Integrated Studies: Progressive Era.....	Jonas Sauder
Teaching Literature.....	Jonas Sauder

## COLLEGE STUDENT WEEKEND

### JULY 10-12

College Student Weekend explores the call to humility and faithfulness in education.

Experienced academics discuss topics such as Christian anthropology and bioethics. Attendees share their stories in small groups and pray for one another. Speakers, staff, and students mingle for food, fellowship, and recreation.

We look forward to an enriching time with full attendance!



#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit [fbep.org/csw](https://fbep.org/csw)  
Email [fbep@fbep.org](mailto:fbep@fbep.org)  
Call (814) 789-4518, ext. 220

# STUDY AT FAITH BUILDERS!

If you would like to join a robust program that teaches skills and character for life-long service, we would love to talk with you!

Spaces remain in all three programs:

- » Teacher Apprenticing
- » Christian Ministries
- » General Studies



## SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Apply [fbep.org/academics/semester](http://fbep.org/academics/semester)  
 Email [fbep@fbep.org](mailto:fbep@fbep.org)  
 Call (814) 789-4518, ext. 241



## FAITH BUILDERS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

28527 Guys Mills Road  
 Guys Mills, PA 16327

(814) 789-4518  
[fbep.org](http://fbep.org)

*Address Service Requested*

Non Profit Org  
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**PAID**  
 Erie, PA  
 Permit # 227

## SAMPLE STUDENT WORK

We value people's presence that provides the context for rich relationships and the human experience of body language, facial expression, and tone of voice. We do not plan to repeat the contingency measures of Spring Semester and its online instruction.

However, we are thankful for the online resources available and the way they provide a way to share valuable content across miles and time zones.

Our Institute students showed grit and faithfulness as they finished the semester in ways that none of us would have chosen. Their work reflects thoughtful engagement and diligence in a time of disorientation and loss.

### Research & Reflection Papers

Writing and research are a significant part of students' academic development. Read a sample of their work here!

[www.fbep.org/blog/student-samples-spring-semester-2020](http://www.fbep.org/blog/student-samples-spring-semester-2020)

### Virtual Choir

Students worked together to record one of the songs they would have sung in the spring choir tour. Listen to our virtual choir sing "Still With Thee" here!

<https://bit.ly/2B5U3xL>



**FAITH BUILDERS NEWSLETTER** The Faith Builders newsletter is published quarterly and serves to inform, inspire, and equip its readers. Subscription is free upon request.

# CONGRATULATIONS, CLASS OF 2020!

You demonstrated remarkable grace, growth, and creativity in your time at Faith Builders. As you continue being changed more and more into His image, may God prosper your service to Him and His people!



**Lucinda Bender**  
 Teacher Apprenticing



**Dawn Breneman**  
 Teacher Apprenticing



**Marshall Hess**  
 Teacher Apprenticing



**Emily Hoover**  
 Teacher Apprenticing



**Tim Kauffman**  
 Teacher Apprenticing



**Melody Landis**  
 General Studies



**James Miller**  
 Teacher Apprenticing



**Cari Nolt**  
 Christian Ministries



**Josiah Peachey**  
 General Studies



**Deborah Shank**  
 Teacher Apprenticing



**Renita Steiner**  
 Teacher Apprenticing



**Ben Stoltzfus**  
 Christian Ministries



**Denise Weaver**  
 General Studies



**Jonny Yoder**  
 General Studies



**Amberly Zimmerman**  
 Christian Ministries



**Ethan Zimmerman**  
 Teacher Apprenticing

### CLASS MOTTO

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. *II Corinthians 3:18, KJV*