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THE MENTOR RELATIONSHIP: AN EXPLORATION OF PAUL AS LOVING MENTOR TO TIMOTHY AND THE APPLICATION OF THIS RELATIONSHIP TO CONTEMPORARY LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

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The mentor relationship has received increasing amounts of attention from both organizational leadership researchers and leadership practitioners alike. Successful mentor relationships result in benefits to the mentor, the protégé, and the organization. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul recognized the value of developing Timothy into a more effective minister of the gospel. Paul carefully selected Timothy to work with him in the ministry, equipped him for ministerial tasks, empowered him for success, employed him in a challenging work environment, and communicated to Timothy the value of their relationship. By following similar strategies, today's leaders can develop mentor relationships that prepare tomorrow's leaders to handle the challenges of an ever-changing workplace.

Mentoring relationships have received increasing amounts of attention from organizational leadership researchers and leadership practitioners alike.¹ "Mentoring relationships, in which a more experienced mentor works to advance the personal and professional growth of a less experienced protégé, have witnessed a noteworthy increase in use as a mechanism for leadership development."² These relationships offer benefits to mentor, protégé, and organization alike.

¹ Nicole Nedd, Mary Nash, Daisy Galindo-Ciocon, and Gaye Belgrave, "Guided Growth Intervention: From Novice to Expert Through a Mentoring Program," *Journal of Nursing Care Quality* 21, no. 1 (2006): 20-24.

² John Sosik, Doris Lee, and Edward Bouquillon, "Context and Mentoring: Examining Formal and Informal Relationships in High Tech Firms and K-12 Schools," *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies* 12 (2005): 94-109.

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul exemplifies a successful mentor relationship with Timothy. Throughout the duration of this relationship, Paul ensures that Timothy is the right person for the job, equips him for ministerial tasks, empowers him for success, employs him in a challenging environment to develop effectiveness, and communicates to Timothy the value of their relationship. Paul's approach to mentoring can be applied to contemporary leadership challenges as well. By implementing Paul's mentoring strategies, leaders can develop followers who are committed, motivated, and personally satisfied by their work, and who are prepared to face the leadership challenges of the future.

I. PAUL AS LOVING MENTOR TO TIMOTHY

The mentoring relationship that existed between Paul and Timothy is clearly depicted in the New Testament. A careful examination of this relationship as it progressed reveals Paul's approach to mentoring Timothy as a minister of the gospel. This approach includes carefully selecting and training as the right person for the job, equipping him for the tasks of ministry, empowering him for success, employing him for effectiveness, and communicating the value of their relationship.

The Right Person for the Job

Paul recognized the importance of equipping a successor to carry on the gospel message after his life and ministry were over.³ Specifically, Paul believed that his life was nearing its end, stating, "I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."⁴ To leave his earthly ministry without establishing a means for its continuation would contradict his overarching message to Timothy, which was to be strong in the preaching of the Word.⁵ He also encouraged Timothy to "discharge all the duties of your ministry,"⁶ thus reminding Timothy to develop his own successor in the future.

In finding his own successor, Paul sought the right man for the job, relying on the Holy Spirit's leading. According to Acts 16:1-3, Paul met Timothy while he was traveling through Lystra. Paul discovered that Timothy was the son of a believing Jewess and a Greek father and that people spoke highly of him. A good reputation was a characteristic that Paul valued immensely.⁷ In fact, after revealing Timothy's excellent reputation, Acts 16:3 clearly states that "Paul wanted to take him along on the journey." It was at this moment that the loving mentor relationship between Paul and Timothy began.

³ 2 Tim 4:1-8.

⁴ 2 Tim 4:6-7.

⁵ 2 Tim 4:2.

⁶ 2 Tim 4:5.

⁷ 1 Tim 3:7.

Equipped for the Task

As soon as Paul and Timothy's mentoring relationship commenced, Paul began equipping Timothy for the task of spreading God's Word on earth. According to Acts 17:14, Paul's strategy for equipping Timothy actually began with an early challenge. While Paul was preaching in Berea, some of the Jews came to agitate the crowds. Immediately, Paul separated himself from Timothy and their partner Silas after giving them instructions to meet him in Athens. In the meantime, Timothy and Silas were charged with the task of nurturing the young congregation that Paul had established in Berea.⁸

Though Paul recognized Timothy's ministry potential, he saw just one area that needed improvement. As mentioned previously, Timothy was the son of a Jewess and a Greek man, and because of this heritage, he remained uncircumcised. One commentary notes:

If the Jews at this time traced Jewish descent of mixed marriages matrilineally, uncircumcised Timothy is a Jew by birth but apostate. The small Jewish community at Lystra was either too weak or too lax to enforce circumcision in a culture that determined ethnic and religious heritage patrilineally. Still, Timothy has a good spiritual heritage from his mother (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15). With his father now possibly deceased (the verb tense seems to indicate this), there is no impediment to circumcision. And there is every reason. If Paul condones Timothy's uncircumcised, apostate status, he will not have access to synagogues, his strategic point of contact in most cities. Further, the decree's underlying principle of respect for cultural identity will be compromised by the presence of a Jewish Christian who has "gentilized." So by circumcising Timothy, Paul clarifies his status for Jewish believer and unbeliever alike.⁹

Though Paul's actions in circumcising Timothy seemingly contradict his sentiment in Galatians 2:3-4 that circumcision has no value,¹⁰ Paul recognized the need for Timothy to relate to his ministerial audience. In 1 Corinthians 9:19, Paul addresses this need to relate to prospective converts by stating, "Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews." Based on this understanding of the necessity of relating to one's audience, Paul has Timothy circumcised so that he can identify with a greater portion of his audience. In preparing Timothy for ministry, Paul made sure that he was equipped for the task.

⁸ "Witness at Berea," IVP New Testament Commentaries, <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/?action=getCommentaryText&cid=5&source=1&seq=i.51.17.2>

⁹ "Mission to Asia Minor and the Macedonian Call," IVP New Testament Commentaries, <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/?action=getCommentaryText&cid=5&source=1&seq=i.51.15.7>

¹⁰ Christopher Bryan, "A Further Look at Acts 16:1-3," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107, no. 2 (1988): 292-294; Shaye Cohen, "Was Timothy Jewish (Acts 16:1-3)? Patristic Exegesis, Rabbinic Law, and Matrilineal Descent," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 105, no. 2 (1986): 251-269.

Empowered for Success

In addition to carefully selecting Timothy and equipping him for ministry, Paul mentored Timothy through empowerment. By definition, *empowerment* is a “cognitive state characterized by a sense of perceived control, competence, and goal internalization.”¹¹ Paul emphasized these components of empowerment by revealing that Timothy was called by God to be a minister, serving as an example of what it means to be one of God’s workers, and reminding Timothy of his ministerial goals.

According to Paul’s dialogue with Timothy, Timothy was called by God to serve as a minister of the gospel message on earth. For example, in 1 Thessalonians 3:2, Paul describes Timothy as “our brother and God’s fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ.” Paul is also careful to mention Timothy’s credentials as a servant of God in his letters to various congregations, as he does in Philippians 2:19-23. In these passages, Paul describes Timothy as a one-of-a-kind minister with a focus purely on Jesus Christ. Additionally, Paul states that “Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.”¹² Through this process of demonstrating to Timothy that he was called to serve God in ministry, Paul was able to increase Timothy’s level of psychological empowerment.

In addition to revealing Timothy’s call to ministry, Paul empowered Timothy by serving as an example of what it means to be a messenger of the gospel. For example, Acts 18:1-5 depicts a reunion among Paul, Timothy, and Silas after Paul had finished his independent travels to Corinth. Once these men were reunited, Acts 18:5 states that “Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.” By witnessing Paul’s devotion to the preaching of the Word and his approach to sharing the gospel, Timothy would develop a greater understanding of the nature of ministry.

Paul also empowered Timothy by directing his attention toward the goals of ministry. According to “Timothy: Man of God,” Paul focused on five main goals of ministry that were designed to motivate Timothy to endure any hardships he might encounter.¹³ These five concepts include eternal reward, past promises, present promises, future promises, and the sovereign God. First, at his ministry’s end in 1 Timothy 6:12, Paul emphasized the eternal rewards that awaited Timothy reminding Timothy to “fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called.” By persevering through the earthly challenges of ministry, Timothy would be rewarded with the blessings of eternal life. Second, in terms of past promises, Paul’s strategy was to remind Timothy of the commitment he made to Christ and to serving the gospel “when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses;”¹⁴ such a confession likely referred to Timothy’s commissioning or ordination.¹⁵ Third, in reminding Timothy of his present promises, Paul renews the charge that Timothy is to

¹¹ Sanjay Menon, “Psychological Empowerment: Definition, Measurement, and Validation,” *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science* 31, no. 3 (1999): 162.

¹² Phil 2:22.

¹³ “Timothy: Man of God,” IVP New Testament Commentaries, <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/1Tim/Timothy-Man-God>

¹⁴ 1 Tim 6.12b.

¹⁵ “Timothy: Man of God.”

undertake in sharing the gospel message.¹⁶ According to “Timothy: Man of God,” Paul’s purpose in renewing this charge was so that “Timothy is reminded of his fellowship with Christ. He is our ever-present Lord (compare Mt 28:20). This comforting promise of continual fellowship, however, ought to compel us to the heights of faithfulness, for our Lord is also our judge (2 Tim 4:8; Rev 3:15-16).”¹⁷ Through a renewal of his present charge, Timothy would be motivated to “the heights of faithfulness.”¹⁸ Fourth, Paul reminded Timothy of the future promise of Christ’s second coming in 1 Timothy 6:14. Paul knew that the promise of Christ’s return was a motivator for the Christian living described in the remaining verses of the chapter.¹⁹ Paul also reminds Timothy of the unique role he must carry out until the end, as he tells Timothy to “guard what has been entrusted to your care.”²⁰ Finally, Paul points Timothy to the ultimate reason for zealously preaching the gospel: the sovereign God, “the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.”²¹

As discussed above, Paul’s process of empowering Timothy involves revealing that Timothy was called by God to be a minister, serving as an example of what it means to be one of God’s workers, and reminding Timothy of his ministerial goals. Now empowered, Timothy was prepared to test his competencies amidst the challenges of ministry.

Employed for Effectiveness

As Paul gained confidence in Timothy’s competence as a minister, he employed Timothy in one of the most challenging ministerial environments: the church in Ephesus. Paul had spent a great deal of time developing the church in Ephesus, and was now concerned about the spread of false doctrines and heresy among its members.²² The city of Ephesus, located along the western coast of modern-day Turkey, “was famed for its cult and temple dedicated to the worship of Artemis, around which a good deal of the city’s commercial interests revolved . . . Ephesus presented the gospel with a formidable challenge in that it was a center of pagan worship.”²³ Paul learned that certain men in this congregation, likely men in positions of leadership, were spreading false doctrine concerning the resurrection.²⁴ In addition, “the heretics’ false teaching (the myths and wives’ tales) supported a system of asceticism (the abstinence from certain

¹⁶ 1 Tim 6:13.

¹⁷ “Timothy: Man of God.”

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ 1 Tim 6:17-21.

²⁰ 1 Tim 6:20.

²¹ 1 Tim 6:15-16.

²² “Opposing False Teachers,” IVP New Testament Commentaries,

<http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/index.php?action=getCommentaryText&cid=10&source=1&seq=i.61.1.3>

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

foods and disparagement of marriage).”²⁵ After hearing of the worsening condition of the church at Ephesus, Paul commissioned Timothy to oppose the errors, correct the congregation’s methods of interpretation, and return the church to the true doctrines of the gospel.

Timothy’s employment among the members of the church in Ephesus was no easy task, but Paul trusted and even expected Timothy’s effectiveness. Paul gave Timothy clear instructions concerning the management of the heresy and the preaching of the true gospel of Christ. In 1 Timothy 1:18, Paul reminds Timothy of his obligation to the gospel because of his call to serve Christ by stating, “Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight.” In addition to these instructions, Paul is careful to safeguard Timothy’s faith, recognizing that the hardships involved in confronting false doctrine can challenge and even destroy one’s faith. Paul reminds Timothy that his instructions are to be carried out while “holding on to faith and a good conscience.”²⁶ Such advice points to maintaining sound doctrine and heeding one’s conscience, rooted in the truths of the gospel.

By offering Timothy the challenging position of handling the heresies in Ephesus, Paul gave him the opportunity to maximize his ministerial competencies and increase his effectiveness as a servant of God. As mentioned above, Paul did not leave Timothy empty-handed to face the task, but gave him instructions for the proper management of the situation in Ephesus. In addition to instructing Timothy, Paul made sure to give Timothy plenty of encouragement for his new role. According to “The Good Minister of Christ Jesus,” Paul spends a considerable amount of time in 1 Timothy encouraging Timothy in his personal spirituality and in his perseverance through hardships in Ephesus.²⁷ Paul encouraged Timothy to focus on three spiritual priorities of the ministry, including nourishment from God’s Word, training in godliness, and a mission-minded approach to ministry. In terms of receiving nourishment from God’s Word, Paul mentions to Timothy that such a process is a life-long event. Paul states in 1 Timothy 4:6 that a minister of the gospel is “brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.” Paul was encouraging Timothy to continue following the good teachings of the gospel, as they would provide the nourishment he needed to sustain his strength in confronting the false teachers. Paul also urged Timothy to focus on training in godliness in order to serve as an example to the false teachers. According to “The Good Minister of Christ Jesus,” “Genuine *godliness* is the life of faith strengthened by training in the Word of God.”²⁸ Finally, Paul believed that a mission-minded approach to ministry would serve Timothy well as he addressed the heresies in the church at Ephesus. Both nourishment from God’s Word and training in godliness find their source in the hope-filled message of the gospel. They also instill a desire to give all people on earth the opportunity to know the God who saves.

²⁵ “The Good Minister of Christ Jesus,” IVP New Testament Commentaries, <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/index.php?action=getCommentaryText&cid=10&source=1&seq=i.61.4.3>

²⁶ 1 Tim 1:19.

²⁷ “The Good Minister of Christ Jesus.”

²⁸ Ibid.

As evidenced above, Paul tested Timothy's ministerial competencies by employing him in a challenging environment, providing him with instructions for managing the false teachers in Ephesus, and offering extensive encouragement to Timothy's faith and ministry.

A Treasured Relationship

The final aspect of Paul's mentorship with Timothy involves the personal relationship that developed between them. Throughout his communications with Timothy and other congregations, Paul's relationship with Timothy is consistently described as one of a father and son or two brothers and one that elicits Paul's gratitude.

Paul's primary reference to Timothy from a family perspective is in the father-son sense. For example, in Philippians 2:22, Paul describes Timothy by commenting, "I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel." The clear depiction of a father-son relationship demonstrates Paul's loving frame of reference throughout his time as mentor to Timothy. In the opening of Paul's first letter to Timothy, he refers to Timothy as his "true son in the faith."²⁹ The purpose of Paul's greeting was because "Paul wanted his hearers/readers to know that his teaching is authoritative, and the delegate who administered it to the community, Timothy, was to be regarded as an extension of the apostle himself. In view of the difficult task that faced him, this may have been an encouraging reminder for Timothy as well."³⁰ Paul continues his father-son references in 1 Corinthians 4:17 by telling the congregation, "For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church." Additional father-son relationship descriptors can be found in 1 Timothy 1:18 and 2 Timothy 1:2-4. Paul's continued use of these references points to his view that his relationship with Timothy is one of instruction, guidance, and care.

In addition to referring to Timothy as his son, Paul also describes Timothy as his brother. Interestingly, these brotherly references occur after Timothy's ministry has advanced and his faith and commitment have been tested through the trials of prison. In Philemon 1:1, Paul's opening greeting reads, "Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother," which points to a coauthored letter.³¹ Hebrews 13:23 contains Paul's announcement that Timothy has been released from prison, and refers to him once again as a brother. These examples demonstrate Paul's respect for both Timothy's ministry and his faithful perseverance through the trials that accompany being a committed servant of Christ.

²⁹ 1 Tim 1:2.

³⁰ "Paul's Greetings," IVP New Testament Commentaries, <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/?action=getCommentaryText&cid=12&source=1&seq=i.64.1.1>

³¹ Ibid.

Finally, Paul is depicted as being thankful to have Timothy as a fellow minister of the gospel. An example of this appreciation occurs in 2 Timothy 1:3-4 which read, "I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy." This passage clearly demonstrates the extent to which a solid bond has developed between Paul and Timothy as they have served the Lord together.

Paul's loving mentor relationship with Timothy began with choosing Timothy as the right person to accompany him in serving the gospel. From that point forward, Paul mentored Timothy by equipping him for the tasks of ministry, empowering him for success, employing him for effectiveness at the church in Ephesus, and by communicating his love, respect, and appreciation for Timothy as a son, brother, and messenger of Christ.

II. APPLYING PAUL'S MENTORING ACTIONS TO CONTEMPORARY LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

Paul's approach to mentoring Timothy was successful in developing Timothy into a ministerial leader. Though Paul practiced this mentoring approach during the time period of the Early Church, the concepts embedded in his relationship with Timothy can serve as valuable guidelines for managing contemporary leadership challenges. Modern-day leaders can prepare their followers to confidently face the challenges of the future by following Paul's mentoring protocol, including finding the right people for the job, equipping them for the task, empowering them for success, employing them for effectiveness, and communicating the value of the mentor relationship.

The Right Person for the Job

As discussed above, Paul recognized immediately that he wanted Timothy to join him on his ministerial journey to spread the gospel message of salvation. Paul was struck by Timothy's excellent reputation and presence, and asked him to join in his mission.³² Paul's awareness of both Timothy's personality and the nature of ministry gave him the assurance that Timothy was well-suited for serving as a witness to God's kingdom.

Finding the right person for the job is equally as important in today's organizations as it was for Paul's ministry efforts. The organizational leadership research field has termed the process of matching the right person to the right job as *person-job fit*.³³ Carless describes person-job fit as "the match between individual knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) and demands of the job or the needs/desires of an individual and what is provided by the job."³⁴ When an individual perceives a match

³² Acts 16:3.

³³ Sally Carless, "Person-Job Fit versus Person-Organization Fit as Predictors of Organizational Attraction and Job Acceptance Intentions: A Longitudinal Study," *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 78, no. 3 (2005): 411-430.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 412.

between him or herself and the job, he or she is more likely to experience job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment.³⁵

While person–job fit may sound like an idealist concept, Carless suggests that a careful examination of several areas of the employee and the job environment may increase the likelihood that person–job fit will occur.³⁶ These areas include providing an environment with a manageable workload, offering some degree of choice and control for workers, giving rewards for and recognizing good work, developing a sense of belonging and community among all organizational members, and ensuring that respect and justice prevail in the workplace.³⁷ If the examinations of these areas for both job environment and employee are congruent, the employee will find his or her work to be rewarding and valuable.³⁸

In establishing his mentor relationship with Timothy, Paul recognized the value of selecting the right person for the ministerial tasks at hand. The result of this person–job fit was a committed, motivated messenger of the gospel in the person of Timothy. If the same approach is applied to mentor relationships in contemporary organizations, the result will be employees who are committed to and motivated by their work.

Equipped for the Task

In addition to selecting Timothy as the right person for the job, Paul also mentored Timothy by equipping him for the tasks of ministry. In terms of contemporary leadership challenges, equipping workers for their tasks is much like the organizational practice of employee training. According to Owens, employee training is a vital component to organizational success, as it contributes to employees' increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and decreased turnover.³⁹ Successful training programs often include both job-specific education and socialization into the organization.⁴⁰ Ivancevich, Konopaske, and Matteson state that “training programs are an integral tool in providing the necessary new skills and knowledge. In fact, the most widely used methods for developing employee productivity are training programs.”⁴¹ Clearly, the benefits for training programs on employee and organizational outcomes are worth the time and effort involved in developing and implementing such programs.

Employee training programs that have been found to be the most successful include several similar components. According to Brown, training program development should begin with a needs assessment that targets employees' knowledge and skills,

³⁵ Ibid., 411-430.

³⁶ John Angerer, “Job Burnout,” *Journal of Employment Counseling* 48, no. 3 (2003): 98-107.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Patrick Owens, “One More Reason Not to Cut Your Training Budget: The Relationship Between Training and Organizational Outcomes,” *Public Personnel Management* 35, no. 2 (2006): 163.

⁴⁰ Chad Autry and Anthony Wheeler, “Post-hire Human Resource Management Practices and Person–Organization Fit: A Study of Blue-Collar Employees,” *Journal of Managerial Issues* 17, no. 1 (2005): 58-78; John Ivancevich, Robert Konopaske, R., and Michael Matteson, *Organizational Behavior Management* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2005), 595.

⁴¹ Ivancevich et al., *Organizational Behavior Management*, 595.

employee relationships, organizational change, and career development.⁴² Salomon and Schork suggest that training programs be professionally developed and focus on inclusion among employees, particularly with a diverse staff.⁴³ In terms of incorporating socialization practices into a training program, integrating employees into the organization should begin during the hiring process.⁴⁴ During recruitment, realistic job previews and descriptions offer prospective employees a clear picture of how their skills and knowledge might be utilized within the organization, a process referred to as anticipatory socialization. Following this stage, accommodation socialization involves individualized orientation programs, social skills training, extensive feedback, stimulating work assignments, and challenging leadership.⁴⁵ The accommodation socialization stage most closely resembles the training programs typically found in organizations. The final stage, role management socialization, provides professional career counseling and increased flexibility in work assignments for employees who have successfully completed earlier training programs and who are well-adjusted to the organization.⁴⁶

Overall, following Paul's mentoring example by offering training programs to employees brings about positive employee and organizational outcomes. Through both job-specific skills training and socialization into the organization, leaders can ensure that employees receive satisfaction from their jobs and improve their levels of commitment to the organization.

Empowered for Success

As Timothy developed his ministerial competencies under Paul's guidance and instruction, he became increasingly empowered to spread the gospel message. Paul reminded Timothy of his call to the gospel and renewed his commitments to the mission-minded goals of ministry. The concept of empowerment can be equally as effective when applied to contemporary organizational settings.

Organizations that have made empowerment an integral part of their best practices reap similar rewards to those of ensuring person–job fit and training employees. These rewards include increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment.⁴⁷ In addition to these benefits, empowerment has been shown to increase employees' perceptions of organizational fairness and justice, respect from both peers

⁴² Judith Brown, "Training Needs Assessment: A Must for Developing an Effective Training Program," *Public Personnel Management* 31, no. 4 (2002): 571-572.

⁴³ Mary Salomon and Joan Schork, "Turn Diversity to Your Advantage: R&D Organizations that Aspire to Recruit the Best and Brightest Cannot Afford to Ignore Any Portion of the Talent Pool," *Research–Technology Management* 46, no. 4 (2003): 41.

⁴⁴ Ivancevich et al., *Organizational Behavior Management*, 50.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Weichun Zhu, Douglas May, and Bruce Avolio, "The Impact of Ethical Leadership Behavior on Employee Outcomes: The Roles of Psychological Empowerment and Authenticity," *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies* 11, no.1 (2004): 16-27.

and leaders, and organizational trust.⁴⁸ Empowerment initiatives also bring benefits to an organization's leaders or managers.⁴⁹ According to Fuller, Morrison, Jones, Bridger, and Brown, employees' psychological empowerment can increase the positive outcomes associated with certain leadership styles, such as transformational leadership.⁵⁰

Organizational leaders can empower their employees through such strategies as including them in decision-making processes, allowing them to complete work assignments that are meaningful to them, providing them with opportunities to influence change in the organization, and allowing them to voice their opinions to colleagues and superiors.⁵¹ These empowerment practices fulfill the prerequisites for psychological empowerment according to Zhu et al., which they describe as "a set of four cognitions reflecting an individual's orientation to his or her work role: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact."⁵² Overall, leaders who are effective at empowering employees share their values with employees through human-centeredness, create a vision and serve as its role model, maintain both a high-task and high-people leadership style, and have excellent skills in human development and communication.⁵³ Lin assures organizational leaders of the value of empowerment by stating:

Approaching a new century that will doubtless be characterized by hypercompetition, organizations must rely on committed and competent employees, who are receptive to the concept of learning continuously to maintain competitive advantages. With a rather high percentage of failure of managerial fads, organizations should look within themselves to instill employees' zeal and to explore their potential that can be attained through empowerment.⁵⁴

As a mentor, Paul clearly recognized the potential that Timothy could attain through empowerment. If today's leaders apply empowerment concepts to their leadership challenges, they too will realize the organizational benefits and employee potential that result from effective empowerment practices.

Employed for Effectiveness

Once Paul recognized Timothy's empowered nature, he gave Timothy the opportunity to put his competencies to the test. Paul challenged Timothy's ministry skills by placing him at the head of the church in Ephesus, a congregation that had fallen ill with false teachings and heresies. Today's leaders can follow Paul's example of

⁴⁸ Heather Laschinger and Joan Finegan, "Using Empowerment to Build Trust and Respect in the Workplace: A Strategy for Addressing the Nursing Shortage," *Nursing Economics* 23, no. 1 (2005): 6-13.

⁴⁹ Bryan Fuller, Ruby Morrison, Ladon Jones, Donna Bridger, and Valerie Brown, "The Effects of Psychological Empowerment on Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction," *The Journal of Social Psychology* 139, no. 3 (1999): 389-392.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Mickey Parsons, "Capacity Building for Magnetism at Multiple Levels: A Healthy Workplace Intervention," *Topics in Emergency Medicine* 26, no. 4 (2004): 287-296.

⁵² Zhu et al., "The Impact of Ethical Leadership," 20.

⁵³ Carol Lin, "The Essence of Empowerment: A Conceptual Model and a Case Illustration," *Journal of Applied Management Studies* 7, no. 2 (1998): 223.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 223.

effective mentoring by challenging their employees to use their skills for personal and organizational effectiveness.

According to Marx, “The key to successfully retaining highly qualified employees is simply to create an environment that would encourage them to stay . . . by giving them new responsibilities and challenging work.”⁵⁵ Challenging employees in this way is beneficial to both the employee and the organization. Challenged employees gain self-confidence every time they overcome an obstacle or meet a deadline.⁵⁶ Such employees also increase their personal investment in the organization and feel more involved in its success. As a result, these employees are often more productive, innovative, and loyal.⁵⁷

Just as Paul recognized the increased value of a challenged worker, today’s leaders should recognize that employees who are consistently challenged and stimulated by their work become stronger assets for the organization.

A Treasured Relationship

The final component of Paul’s mentorship with Timothy involved consistently communicating his admiration, respect, and gratitude for Timothy as a fellow worker for the kingdom of God. In contemporary leadership settings, establishing solid relationships with followers is an important part of leader–follower interaction.⁵⁸

In the organizational leadership research of the past few decades, the study of leader–follower relationship development has taken several forms. The most prevalent of these forms involves what is referred to as *leader–member exchange theory*, or LMX.⁵⁹ This line of research posits:

Leaders do not use the same style or set of behaviors uniformly across all members or subordinates; instead, unique relationships or exchanges develop with each member. High-quality LMXs (referred to as “in-group” exchanges in the early research on the model) are characterized by mutual trust and support, whereas low-quality LMXs (referred to as “out-group” exchanges) are based on simply fulfilling the employment contract.⁶⁰

Members of the in-group typically experience much better relationships with their superiors than members of the out-group, as can be seen through their increased access to information, influence, opportunities for growth, decision-making latitude, and leader support.⁶¹ Such leader–follower relationships represent an ideal state of communication and interaction between leaders and their followers. Both leaders and

⁵⁵ Mary Marx, “Keeping Your Best Employees,” *Journal of Property Management* 60, no. 6 (1995): 26.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁵⁷ Marx, “Keeping Your Best Employees,” 29.

⁵⁸ Gian Casimir, David Waldman, Timothy Bartram, and Sarah Yang, “Trust and the Relationship between Leadership and Follower Performance: Opening the Black Box in Australia and China,” *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies* 12, no. 3 (2006): 68-85.

⁵⁹ Sandy Wayne, Robert Liden, and Raymond Sparrowe, “Developing Leader–Member Exchanges: The Influence of Gender and Ingratiation,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 37, no. 5 (1994): 697.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 698.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 699.

followers should recognize the value of high-quality in-group relationships and should work to manage their relationships accordingly.⁶²

In addition to leader–follower relationship development, recognizing valuable employees is a concept that modern-day leaders should practice consistently.⁶³ Messmer notes that employee recognition serves as an excellent tool for both employee retention and motivation.⁶⁴ Luthans states that “consistently and frequently applied formal and informal recognition programs provide management with a powerful tool to influence employees to live the company’s values and implement its focused mission.”⁶⁵ Additionally, employee recognition brings about the classic organizational outcomes of increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment.⁶⁶

To practice employee recognition, Luthans suggests four characteristics that should be present in an employee recognition program.⁶⁷ First, the recognition should occur immediately after a desired behavior has occurred in order to maximize its potency. Second, the recognition should be delivered personally to increase the social reward power of the recognition and to underscore the importance of the employee’s performance. In addition to these practices, Luthans recommends that the recognition be tailored to the recipient to increase its value and meaning for that individual. Finally, employee recognition should serve as a direct, positive reinforcement of the given behavior.⁶⁸

Through solid relationship development and consistent employee recognition, today’s leaders can demonstrate to their employees that they are as valuable and treasured as Timothy was to Paul throughout the New Testament.

III. SUMMARY

The mentor relationship has received increasing amounts of attention from both organizational leadership researchers and leadership practitioners alike. Successful mentor relationships result in benefits to the mentor, the protégé, and the organization. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul recognized the value of developing Timothy into a more effective minister of the gospel. Paul carefully selected Timothy to work with him in the ministry, equipped him for ministerial tasks, empowered him for success, employed him in a challenging work environment, and communicated to Timothy the value of their relationship. By following similar strategies, today’s leaders can develop mentor relationships that prepare tomorrow’s leaders to handle the challenges of an ever-changing workplace.

⁶² Ibid., 699.

⁶³ Max Messmer, “Creating an Effective Recognition Program,” *Strategic Finance* (2004): 13-15.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 14.

⁶⁵ Kyle Luthans, “Recognition: A Powerful, but Often Overlooked, Leadership Tool to Improve Employee Performance,” *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies* 7, no. 1 (2000): 31-39.

⁶⁶ Roy Saunderson, “Survey Findings of the Effectiveness of Employee Recognition in the Public Sector,” *Public Personnel Management* 33, no. 3 (2004): 255-276.

⁶⁷ Luthans, “Recognition,” 31.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

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