

3 Indispensable Relationships

I love Tuesday night. And Wednesday night. And Thursday night. And Saturday morning...for nine straight months!

Those are the times that I have the extraordinary privilege to come alongside Kingdom leaders who are hungry—hungry to be [rock solid](#) on the inside and dangerous for the Kingdom on the outside.

In one of our recent gatherings, we talked about three indispensable relationships—relationships that leaders need as they seek to fulfill God’s endgame of making disciples. A Paul, a Barnabas, and a Timothy.

- **Paul.** When you find a “Paul”, you find a spiritual father. This person becomes your mentor, coach, advisor. A Paul is someone who generously welcomes you to dine at the buffet of their life’s experiences—their successes and perhaps more importantly, their failures.

A mentor is someone who generously welcomes you to dine at the buffet of their life’s experiences—their successes and perhaps more importantly, their failures.

Throughout the years, of the many things I have gained from my mentors, two stand out in particular. My mentors have provided me with reliable reference points. When uncertain about what to do in a particular situation, I didn’t have far to look for a trustworthy role model. My mentors also have consistently believed in me, particularly in those early seasons of life and leadership that were peppered with self-doubt and second-guessing.

- **Barnabas.** When you find a “Barnabas”, you find a spiritual brother. This person is your wingman, the person who covers your blindside. This person is in the battle with you. And is in the battle for you.

A spiritual brother knows you inside out. One who knows your strengths and successes, but also knows your weaknesses and defeats. He knows your dark side—the places you are most tempted to compromise. And this person routinely presses into intentional conversation with you to get a read on the below-the-waterline stuff. Not looking to judge. Not looking to condemn. Just looking to support.

- **Timothy.** When you find a “Timothy”, you find a spiritual son or daughter. In full appreciation for all those who have invested in you, your “Timothys” are the people into whom you pour. This is the person you seek to coach, mentor, encourage, believe in, call up, and call out.

There are many things that go into a relationship with a Timothy. The gift of unfiltered access to your life and learnings. The gift of time to reflect on the compulsory challenges of life and

leadership. The gift of introduction to your circles of influence. And more. But perhaps the greatest gift is to assist in tracing the activity and purposes of God in the life of your Timothy.

One final reflection. Through the years, I have found that certain chapters of life will dictate which of these relationships need to be given center stage. In a season of uncertainty, I need more time with a Paul. In a season of challenge, I need more time with a Barnabas. And in a season of solidarity, I am more deliberate in investing in a Timothy.

**What has been your most meaningful experience
with a Paul or Barnabas or Timothy?**