

# LIFE-CHANGING COMPANIONS

Leader's Guide

The Art and Craft of  
Spiritual Mentoring

Rowland Forman

**LIFE-CHANGING COMPANIONS (Leader's Guide)**  
**Edition 1.0**

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A Training Course on Spiritual Mentoring



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# The Goal

The goal of *Life-Changing Companions*, as the title suggests, is transformation through God-given intentional spiritual companionships. Many people have acquaintances that are generally helpful but result in very little life-change. This course, presented in two books, explores the heart and craft of spiritual mentoring, and is designed to move you toward greater likeness to Christ.

# Heart & Craft

This course is presented in two parts:

## **Book One: The Heart of Spiritual Mentoring**

These four lessons present some of the heart issues that need to be addressed as you develop spiritual companionships (mentoring). They answer four questions:

1. What are my options as I pursue life-changing mentoring relationships?
2. How do I know whom to approach as a spiritual companion?

3. What should my goals be as I approach these God-given spiritual companionships?
4. How vulnerable should I be in my spiritual companionships?

## **Book Two: The Craft of Spiritual Mentoring**

The five lessons in Book Two provide some of the tools you will need as the Holy Spirit connects you with the people he wants you to invest in. These five sessions explore these skills:

1. Praying
2. Questioning
3. Listening
4. Encouraging
5. Releasing

# Educational Design

No course, however well-constructed, by itself, will transform you. That is the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God and the people of God. However, each feature of this BSL Course will nudge you in the direction of genuine life change. The course is biblical, reflective and relational.

## **Biblical**

Psalm 19: 7-8 reminds us that God's Word is one of his primary change-agents.

“The Law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul.  
The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.  
The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart.  
The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.”

Whether we need refreshment, wisdom, joy or illumination, the Scriptures have the ability to change us.

In Step 2 of each lesson, you will study biblical passages and then in Step 4, discuss them.

We need to approach this study and discussion time in an attitude of dependence on the work of God’s Spirit to shine light on the pages of Scripture.

## **Reflective**

Each of the lessons in this course has four sections:

### ***Step 1: Prepare***

This is where you will explore what some of the main questions are. You’ll read a Case Study that introduces you to the issues.

### ***Step 2: Study***

Each time there is a passage of Scripture to read and three simple approaches to Bible study:

Observation—you will look for key words and phrases,

Interpretation—you will try to capture what the passage or passages mean

Application—where you look for ways these Scriptures apply to your situation.

### ***Step 3: Read***

Every chapter has a teaching section. These are lessons Rowland Forman has learned from many years as a spiritual mentor and author of *Mutual Mentoring for Life Transformation*. Read them reflectively, with the

aim of learning then practicing how to become a spiritual companion to the individual or group that you complete this study with.

**Note:** Step 1 to 3 need to be completed by the participants in their own time. If you choose to meet weekly, encourage your group to complete these three steps during the week, not just before they come to the group discussion.

This is an important aspect of the educational design of this course.

- Personal reflection over God’s Word, reading, processing how this relates to life and ministry.
- Starting to put some things into practice
- Meeting together – either one-on-one or as a small group to share what they have learned.
- Putting the lesson into practice.

#### ***Step 4: Discuss and Apply***

You’ll see five or six questions in each session. You may choose to work your way through the questions as they are listed or go with your own order.

- Question 1 in each case takes you to the Case Study. Often that’s an easy place to start.
- Question 2 invariably looks at the Scriptures the members have been studying. Allow time for the

group members to share what they have learned from God's Word.

- The next few questions interact with the readings in Step 3.
- The last question asks what action steps they plan to take. It works well to pause and ask the group to write down what steps of obedience they plan to take. Then give people the opportunity to read out some of their commitments.
- At the start of each "Discuss and Apply" session 2-4 in Book 1 and 2-5 in Book 2 note that we are suggesting that you ask the action steps that members took since the last session. If you do this, it will encourage people to apply what they have learned rather than merely know about it.

## Relational

*Life-Changing Companions*, as the title suggests is all about relationships. While there are biblical and sound educational elements in this course, primarily it is about:

- **Your relationship with the Lord.** Lesson One in Book 2 talks about praying before, during, and after each mentoring time together, the same is true of your preparation as a leader. Spend time in prayer when you prepare for each lesson. As you get ready to lead the study, pray again. And

during the discussion time, frequently pause to pray—maybe after someone’s answer or another person’s difficulties. As you leave the study, pause again to pray. Send a text message or email to the person you are in a mentoring relationship with or to members of your group, letting them know that you are still praying for them.

- **Your relationship with the people in your group** (or the person God has ‘given’ you). This is not a class. Certainly, there will be learning taking place, but the time together needs to be a highly relational experience. Take time at the start of the time together to get to know each other. Find out about their family and friends as well as their challenges or joys. This is important when you first get together, but make sure you inject relational elements in your time together.
- **Your relationships in between meetings.** Keep in touch by emails, or messages or Zoom calls. If you do this the experience will change from merely being a class you attend to an ongoing companionship.

# Interactive Learning

*Life-Changing Companions* is based in part, on the mutual commands of Scripture. As members of the New Community that Christ has built—The Body of Christ—we are given the privilege of engaging in the biblical one-anothers.

For example:

Encourage one another (Hebrews 3:13):

I encourage you and you encourage me.

Bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2):

I help to lift your burden and you lift mine.

Pray for one another (James 5:16):

I pray for you and you pray for me.

Accept one another (Romans 15:7):

I accept you and you accept me

Be devoted to one another (Romans 12:10):

I'm devoted to you in love and you to me.

Speak the truth to one another (Eph. 4:25):

I speak the truth in love to you and you to me.

Notice relational flow in that sample of the biblical one-anthers. There is mutuality—a common sharing in the life of Christ. We are to relate to each other as members of a family, not students in a classroom. These are things that good families do.

There is a place for authoritative teaching and preaching of God’s Word, but to grow as disciples of Christ, and to develop transforming companionships, interactive learning is a powerful tool.

### ***Group Size***

To be fully interactive, aim to have your groups not much bigger than 12. This course is designed to be used for a one-on-one get together, or for small groups. If you have group of 50+, please divide them into smaller groups, to gain the most benefit from this material.

### ***Your Leadership Role***

Try to view yourself as a “guide-on-the-side” rather than a “sage-on-the-stage.” In other words, your role is to facilitate discussion and to gently guide the group toward God’s truth. You are teaching, but in an interactive way.

This is a skill that many of us that are Bible Teachers (myself included), need to develop. The skill is primarily asking good questions. In Step 4 of each lesson, there are four or five questions that you should use to get

discussion going. Those are just starter questions. Use them as a springboard to get discussion going.

These five extender questions that journalists use should be in your mind as discussion gets underway:

**Why?**

**What?**

**Where?**

**When?**

**Who?**

**How?**

## Challenges

As you develop the skill of facilitating interactive learning, not everything will go smoothly. Here are some challenges you may face:

### ***The Answer-Giver***

This person answers every question you ask and sometimes keeps on talking too long. In one sense it's a positive thing if one person is really engaged in the discussion. Maybe they have done a great deal of preparation? And often the person is just trying to be helpful. However, you need to find a way to engage as many people in the group as possible.

After they have contributed, thank them and say, “What do others think about this?” Or “What are some other answers?” If the person is humble, they will usually take this as a gentle prompt that you want to engage as many members as possible.

### ***No Answer***

Remember that not everyone is a quick thinker. If you ask a question, sometimes no one answers straight away. Inexperienced discussion group leaders will answer their own questions. Effective leaders don't mind a pause. They wait or restate the question in a different way, then wait again.

### ***Side Issues***

One of your primary roles as a group leader is to keep the discussion on track. Even if the group is really engaged with the topic, sometimes other issues come up that are very interesting. The skill is knowing when to gently bring the discussion back to the matter on hand. If the group seems really interested in the side issue, ask someone to make a note of that topic and offer to come back to it later. Then say, “Let's come back to the thing we're discussing.”

# Preparation

One of the most important elements in leading a discussion, is personal preparation.

- Prepare for the one-on-one mentoring time, or the group discussion, by working through each lesson well in advance. Write your answers in the spaces provided. Group members will notice this.
- This course is meant to result in life-change. That means that you need to be applying each of the lessons. *Life-Changing Companions* is a call to be in mentoring relationships. You don't need to be a shining example of how to get every lesson right. If this is a weakness in your life, admit that and ask the group to pray for you.
- Heart-preparation is the key. That means staying close to Christ. The way the Lord Jesus described that in his Upper Room address is captured in John 15:7: "If you abide in me, and my word abides in you, you can ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you." Live in close contact daily with Christ and his Word, and bathe everything you do in prayer.



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