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## **The Blessing of a Ready Heart**

*John Hawkins – Founder of Leadership Edge Inc.*

I'm often asked what type of person is a *good fit* for being mentored through Leadership Edge. Man or woman? Professional or entrepreneur? Type A or Type B? College educated or trades-trained? Old, Mid-life or Young? Mature Christian or new Christian? US-born or international? We've had folks described by each of these terms who have greatly benefited from being mentored by a Leadership Edge Mentor. And we've had folks described by each of these terms that have not fit well with Leadership Edge Mentoring.

Along with the types of people mentioned above, other factors affect the value of the mentoring relationship. These include the connection between mentor and mentee, the mentee's overall emotional/psychological well-being and the meshing of the mentor's and mentee's calendars and commitments.

These personal and relational aspects are significant but not determinative to those who benefit from a Leadership Edge Mentoring relationship. However, there is one essential attribute to those who fit well and benefit from our mentoring. The one factor is being *ready-hearted*. By *ready-hearted*, we mean a person desiring for God to be the center and source of their life. Jesus describes these people in Luke 8 as good soil. They are the ones *who hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience*. Their hearts are ready to receive the truth, correction, encouragement and guidance of God's word – to hear it, receive it, believe it and live by it.

For the *ready-hearted*, LEI Mentoring is a means and not an end. It is a means by which they grow in living out all Christ commanded (Matthew 28:20). They see the mentoring relationship as a means by which they can grow in Godly wisdom – how God and godliness work out in everyday life (Proverbs 13:20).

Mentors cannot create *ready-heartedness* in mentees. It is ultimately a work of God accompanied by the mentee's choices of trust and obedience. But as mentors see the sparks and early flames of *ready-heartedness* in mentees, they can fan the flames with sincere encouragement. They can also fan the flames by helping the mentee understand and follow Biblical truths in everyday life.

Years ago, I mentored a young man named Sam, a college sophomore. He grew up in a Christian home and had come to faith in Christ in high school. In addition, he regularly attended church and was a part of a campus ministry. All of these factors were significant – but none of them were determinative as to whether I could serve him well as his mentor. What was determinative was that Sam believed and wanted God's



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word in his heart and mind, serving as a guide for his daily life. So, as we met each week, each of us sharing things we had learned from God's word and how we were learning to put these into daily practice, we both grew. His heart was ready, as was mine, to hear, receive, believe and live by God's word, even when it was hard to do so. And thereby, we both grew further into the men God had called us to be.

If Sam had resisted God's word or wanted something other than God's word to be the basis for our time together, I wouldn't have been able to serve him well. I also would not have been able to serve him well if he had only wanted to know God's word and not put it into practice. Our times together were simple discussions between two Christian brothers about living out God's word this week in our various spheres of influence. And being honest with each other when we didn't do so.

Our mentoring relationship was a place of great encouragement to both of us. The encouragement given and received was more than *attaboy*, or *you can do it*. Instead, it was the encouragement that came from two Christian brothers seeing each other trust and follow Jesus, even when it was hard to do so. This is the kind of heart that God was building in us – that heart that longs to be a man who receives, believes and lives by God's word daily.

Those who are *ready-hearted* may be new in their faith in Christ. *Ready-heartedness* is not a function of years but instead of godly desire and choice. Every guy I've mentored is in his own place on the *ripe-hearted* scale. Those who I've served best are those who wanted it most.

Through the years I've observed the following forms of readiness in the *ready-hearted* whom I've mentored.

- Ready to grow
- Ready to be stretched and probed
- Ready to learn
- Ready to be honest
- Ready to communicate
- Ready to pursue God-centered, God-dependent sanctification

Again each is at his own place *readiness* in these areas. Having *room to grow* in these is not a problem. Being *resistant* or *unwilling* to grow in these areas is a problem for the effectiveness of a mentoring relationship.



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One of the great *Gospel* promises in the Old Testament is in Deuteronomy 30:6.

*And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.* Deuteronomy 30:6 ESV

The heart is the inner core of our thoughts, desires and feelings – it also fuels our actions. For our heart to be ready-set to love God as we ought, He must first do surgery on us. He must remove the flesh that dulls and thwarts our love for Him. And in doing so, He makes us ready-hearted to love and live for Him. It is these who God has made ready who can benefit greatly from a Leadership Edge Mentoring relationship.

May the Lord continue to build *ready hearts* in each Leadership Edge Mentor. And may He continue to bring *ready-hearted people* into Leadership Edge Mentoring relationships. All for His glory and honor and for the faith-building benefit of Leadership Edge Mentors and Mentees.