My friend Webster defines a mentor as a person who teaches or gives help and advice to a less experienced person. Mentor relationships most traditionally involve an older person teaching a younger person, but these days, with things like technology changing at such a rapid pace, there is such a practice called “reverse mentoring” where a younger person mentors an older person.

I am a firm believer in the mentor relationship, as I believe it most closely resembles what Jesus did with the disciples. He was their teacher, or mentor, in the way of the Kingdom of God, and when Jesus left He sent another teacher, or mentor, called the Holy Spirit to continue to teach us and remind us of what Jesus taught. (John 14: 26)

When I began to work as a campus chaplain at Walla Walla University, one of the first things I did was seek out a mentor relationship. I prayed that God would help me find someone who was deeply committed to Him, and who would help grow me as a pastor but also as a follower of Jesus. I was looking for someone who I felt resembled the qualities of Jesus that I most wanted and needed in my life.

My journey didn’t take long or lead me that far from my own house, for living in my community was a man who not only deeply loved Jesus and had the fruits in his life to show it, but he had given so much of his life to serving Him and telling others about Him.
In fact, he started a mission school in Thailand, taught in the School of Theology at WWU as well as the Adventist theological seminary, served as president of WWU, and even spent much of his life trying to teach others how to be a disciple of Jesus.

This man, Dr. Jon Dybdahl, has been the type of spiritual father my life had been missing. He has prayed for me and over me more often than I can count, he has listened to me share my deepest fears and concerns involving both my ministry and my personal life, and he has taught me more about the unconditional love of our heavenly Father than anyone I’ve ever known. I am so thankful that God sent this man into my life. In fact, I can safely say that I don’t know where I’d be or if I’d still be in ministry if it wasn’t for his prayers and encouragement.

So to this day, I encourage everyone of the students who work for me in spiritual leadership on our campus to be involved in a mentor relationship. I tell them that relationship can be either for professional growth, or spiritual growth, but I tell them to find someone who has journeyed the road of life longer than they have, and someone who has a quality they admire and would like to see in their own life, and then I ask them to meet with them for at least 30 minutes, no less than every other week.

My challenge to you is to do the same; to either find someone to mentor you or offer up your wisdom and your years to be a mentor to someone else. I truly believe this is the way of Jesus, who during His time on this earth mentored twelve men more than anyone else, and even more specifically three (Peter, James, and John). This was His model for discipleship, and I think that if we adopted the same type of model, more and more people would not only come to know Jesus as their personal Savior, but they might learn how to follow Him too.

Reclaibrate

What are some of the stories that involve Jesus with just Peter, James, and John, and in what ways do you see Jesus mentoring them in these stories?

If you’re currently being mentored by someone, or you are currently mentoring another, great! If not, is there someone you know that could mentor you, or someone you know that might benefit from your wisdom? Pray about these types of relationships and ask God to show you where to begin.

Send your thoughts, comments to Paddy McCoy.
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