

The Value of Godly Mentors

BY PASTOR BOB CLAYCAMP



The man didn't fit our generation. He was in his 60s, a saddle maker with white hair and false teeth, and he had quite a "load" above his belt. His wife had the proverbial schoolmarm dress and hairdo. But there was something disarming about them. They didn't look down on us; they accepted my girlfriend and me as we were, with our long hair, bohemian clothing style, and the curious zeal of 18-year-olds. It was the love of Christ shining through them, reaching beyond the generational divide.

After church, they introduced themselves to us and invited us to join them for Bible study at their house in northwest Portland, Oregon. We never knew the Bible had so much to say. Our hunger for the Word grew deeper with each passing day. Week after week we met together, asking questions, praying, reading the Bible, and learning about our Lord and Savior, Jesus.

As I look back on those days, I am still impressed with what a gift of God's grace this couple was to my girlfriend, Jeanne—now my wife of more than 40 years—and me. They mentored us in our early days in Christ. Their example set the pattern for how we have come alongside so many others over the years to help them in their faith.

A mentor is an experienced and trusted advisor. Mentoring is nothing new; it has been happening in the secular world for millennia. Many professions have programs wherein newcomers are paired with experienced people who advise them and serve as role models.

But mentoring is eternally valuable when it centers on faith in our Lord Jesus. It becomes like a greenhouse where the roots of a person's seedling faith can begin to go deep into the love and truth of Christ. We see this example of mentoring all through the New Testament, especially with the apostle Paul.

When Paul came to the city of Lystra in Acts 16, he found a young man named Timothy. Paul invited Timothy to come along on his

journeys as a helper, a trainee, and one into whom he could pour his life. The only way for this to happen was to spend time—much time, concentrated time, side-by-side ministry time. In his last letter to Timothy, when they were separated after having spent many years together, Paul wrote:

Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 1:13 (emphasis added)

And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

2 Timothy 2:2 (emphasis added)

But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them.

2 Timothy 3:10-14 (emphasis added)

Not only did the apostle Paul pour his life into Timothy, he disciplined new believers in the churches he planted. To the Christians in Philippi, he wrote, "***The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace***

will be with you" (Philippians 4:9). We can discern from this that his time with them wasn't only spent giving verbal instruction from the Scriptures, but in coming alongside them and showing them how to walk with God.

Thinking back on your early Christian life, did you have experienced believers who poured their lives into you? Do you remember early Bible studies or times of prayer when seasoned believers guided you into trusting God, despite your circumstances, in a way that was well beyond your personal maturity level? These times laid the groundwork for future opportunities to mentor others.

Mentoring is crucial for an effective Christian walk. Thankfully, it is an important trademark within the Calvary Chapels around the world. Mentoring is the core of disciple-making; it is following Jesus' command to His disciples:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Matthew 28:19-20

Let's take what has been poured into us through the labor of love of others and pass it down to newer believers. We are all called to be mentors. 🙌

Pastor Bob Claycamp has led CC North Phoenix, AZ, for 29 years. His son, Jesse, has assumed the role of senior pastor while Bob and other seasoned Calvary Chapel pastors are part of Poimen Ministries, which is the Greek word for shepherd. Its goal is to come alongside senior pastors to encourage, offer counsel, and give perspective in ministry.
poimenministries.com