

FOLLOW YOUR MENTORS

The famous preacher and poet John Donne said nearly 500 years ago, “No man is an island; no man stands alone. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less. Any man’s death diminishes me.”

When God Almighty created the world and everything that is in it, he failed to get it just right the first time around. He who made the beasts of the field and the birds of the air discovered Adam lacked a suitable partner. The Lord said to himself, “It is not good for man to be alone; I will make a partner suitable for him.”

We are made for community. Without community, we find ourselves lonely, isolated, and limited. With apologies to Frank Sinatra, my goal in life is not to do it my way, but to do it God’s way. God’s way includes others: mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, and lots of others. So, on this Mother’s Day, I want us to think about following the mentors of our lives. I begin with this simple observation: WE NEED MENTORS. They may be counselors, consultants, teachers, friends or spouses, but everyone needs somebody to lean on.

Our parents were most likely our first mentors. Abraham Lincoln once said, “All that I am or ever hope to be, I owe to my mother.” One thing we all have in common is a mother. Mothers come in all shapes and sizes, with all sorts of possibilities and problems. Some mothers try to be all things to all people. Other mothers fail to fulfill the fundamental responsibilities of parenthood. Mothers, like the rest of us, stand in need of grace, which God alone supplies.

Yet it is a good, right and proper thing to stop once in a while and give thanks to God that: somebody fed us when we couldn’t feed ourselves; somebody clothed us when we couldn’t dress ourselves; somebody taught us how to read; somebody gave us the tools to survive, and somebody introduced us to God. In many cases that somebody was our mother.

Our mentors are significant others who cross our paths along the journey of life. In the last chapter of Romans, Paul makes a list of some 34 people who have helped him along his missionary journeys. The list is not exclusive; it is suggestive of many others. I want to point out that the list includes at least eleven women. How is it that for a man a lot of people consider a male chauvinist? I know Paul told Timothy that women ought to be quiet in church, but he never seemed to practice what he preached. Phoebe was a deaconess, which in Greek means minister. Priscilla ran the church

which met in her house at Ephesus. Junias was a female apostle. Tryphena and Tryphosa were dainty and delicate women who worked hard for the Lord. The mother of Rufus was like a mother to Paul. Who can read this list without coming up with a list of their own?

We have a spiritual mentor who supplies our every need. When I think of God, the Creator, I think of God as our Father in heaven. When I think of Jesus sticking up for me at the throne of grace, I call Jesus my brother. When I think of the Holy Spirit- the comforter, the counselor, the ever-present Third Person of the Trinity, who loves us, who teaches us and grants us peace, I think of the Holy Spirit as my Mother. We have a Spiritual Mentor of a Divine Kind. When we have the Holy Spirit as our Mentor, we have God's PRESENCE.

Listen to the teaching of Jesus in John 14, "The father will give you another comforter who will be with you forever. You will know this counselor for he lives with you and will be with you. We will not be left as orphans. God will come to us in the person of the Holy Spirit.

When it is all said and done, and I am ready to leave this world, I don't need a crowd of people or a host of saints. I would like a friend or two and my family to come in and stay awhile. Most of all, I want the Holy Spirit present, so I will not have to cross over alone. The Holy Spirit can meet my need because the Holy Spirit is all I need.

Secondly, when the Holy Spirit is our Mentor, we have God's WISDOM. John 14:26 says, "He will teach you all things, and remind you of everything I have said to you." Could we all use a little help like that? One of my all time favorite prayers goes something like this:

"Dear Lord, so far today, I have done all right. I have not gossiped, have not lost my temper, and have not been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or even over-indulgent. But in a few minutes God, I am going to get out of bed. And from then on I am going to need a lot of help." Lord, help me know the truth about myself and others, help show me guidance for the way, help me have strength for today and hope for tomorrow.

And finally, when the Holy Spirit is our Mentor, we have God's PEACE. John 14:27 says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you, not as the world gives to you, let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Some of you know the story behind one of America's best loved hymns, "It is well with my soul." Horatio Spafford was a wealthy businessman from Chicago. However, the Chicago fire of 1871 wiped Spafford out financially. A couple of years later Spafford's wife and four children were traveling to Europe when the ship they were sailing on collided with another ship. The four children

perished, while his wife Anna survived. She sent Horatio a telegram with these two words, "Saved Alone." Spafford, heartbroken caught a boat to be with his wife. It was on that voyage that he wrote:

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,

When sorrows like a sea billows roll;

Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,

It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Have you found that kind of peace? You can, with the help of the Holy Spirit. We are not alone. We live in God's world, and we are created to live in community with one another. So remember that when we have the Holy Spirit as our mentor we have God's PRESENCE, WISDOM and PEACE. All we have to do is remember he is always there and all we have to do to receive these gifts is just ask.