

Authentic Manhood: 3 Myths About Mentoring

Young men want mentors. This is a great thing. The problem is that many young men have unhealthy or just downright wrong ideas or expectations for what having a mentor means.

I am blessed to be on a team leading a church full of young men. I hear it often: “Matt, I need a mentor in my life.” I have learned that this means all kinds of things, some good and some bad. Since I love seeing men grow in their relationship with Jesus, I have given their statement a lot of thought. What I have found is that one of the keys to a great mentor relationship is to remove wrong expectations.

Here are three of the top myths young men believe about mentorship (please feel free to add to my list in the comments):

Myth No. 1: Mentors Are All Older Men

Yes, having an older man mentor you can be a good thing, but let's not limit our mentors to men of a certain age. We see the apostle Paul encouraging young Timothy to teach and lead others: “Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12, ESV). Men of all ages can contribute mightily to your development as a disciple.

Myth No. 2: One Mentor Can Help With Everything

I often get asked who my mentor is. My response usually surprises guys. I start listing off about eight men I speak with regularly. No one man is equipped to advise you on how to handle every circumstance for which you are seeking guidance. I have found it best to have a team of mentors. Each guy on the team can fulfill a role for which they are best

suited to offer guidance.

Myth No. 3: Your Mentor Is Your Therapist

What I hear most men saying is that they really want a therapist. I am not against seeing a therapist, but therapy is not mentorship. A therapist is trained to use psychological methods for the treatment of mental or emotional problems.

A mentor, in the Christian sense, uses a combination of experience, emotional intelligence and biblical knowledge to advise. A mentor doesn't serve you; they serve Jesus. That is the biggest difference between a Christian mentor and a therapist.

Having mentors and being a mentor are worthwhile endeavors. I would encourage you to pursue it, but pursue it with proper expectations.

For more information on mentorship, you can purchase a download of session 5 in Volume 2: A Man and His Story, entitled "All Alone."

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