

How to Select a Spiritual Mentor

Are you wanting to be mentored but don't know how to get started? Here are some suggestions and steps to help you select a spiritual mentor.

What is a Spiritual Mentor?

At the basic level, a spiritual mentor is someone who helps you grow spiritually. A mentor, who is seasoned and further down the road in his or her spiritual journey, helps the mentee pursue Christlikeness. A spiritual mentor helps you to be attentive to the presence of Christ, foster a deeper knowledge of yourself and of the triune God, and practice a life of abiding faith, hope, and love.

In contrast to other areas of Christian soul care like discipleship, counseling, and coaching, spiritual mentoring specifically focuses on Christian growth and the pursuit of Christlikeness. This relationship does not just happen; it must be cultivated by prayer and intentionality.

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Start with Existing Relationships

Ideally, you would start with someone you already know and with whom you already have a spiritual friendship. Ask yourself, "Who has taken an interest in talking to me about my relationship with God? Who has encouraged me in my walk with God?" If you have a few people in mind, narrow the list to those who are further along in their journey with Christ. Typically, these persons will be older than you, but this is not always the case.

Look for Christlike Qualities

Of the people you have in mind, have they shown a genuine love for others, perhaps through sacrifice of time or other resources? Are they exemplifying the fruits of the Spirit? Additionally, can you confide in this person? You will be sharing your story and struggles with this individual, so you want to make sure he or she is trustworthy.

Ask the Right Questions

When you are ready to approach the person about mentoring, here are some suggested questions to ask:

- When have you experienced God's grace?
- What has God taught you on your spiritual journey?
- How have you learned to overcome obstacles?

As you listen, recognize that authenticity, vulnerability, and a willingness to share are foundational for spiritual growth in community.

Action Steps

Step 1: Pray

Ask God to alert you to those in your life who can help you learn and grow. There may be several who can mentor you in different areas. If you desire a mentor you should take the initiative.

Step 2: Prepare

Be clear about what you want from a mentor. What do you want to talk about? What questions do you have? What are you seeking to learn? When you have identified your mentoring need, look for a person who can help you grow in that area. It's unrealistic to expect one person to meet all your mentoring needs, but you can usually find a mentor who can meet one or more of your needs.

Step 3: Initiate

Ask the mentor of your choice to meet with you and discuss your questions or situation. It is a good idea to tell a potential mentor what you want to talk about beforehand.

Step 4: Meet

If there seems to be interest on both sides, schedule meetings according to your learning goals and the availability of your mentor.

Step 5: Come with a Teachable Heart

Be open to helpful feedback and another perspective on your situation. Mentoring is a learning relationship, so be ready to reflect and learn.