

Musings from Pastor's Office: The Necessity of a Mentor

It is not rare in my culture that young people come to a decision not to marry their loved ones because of the objection of parents. A long time ago, it was absolutely true that a bride-to-be never knew or saw her bridegroom-to-be until the morning of marriage. In those days, the parents' decision or a family decision on their children's marriage was absolute. Nowadays, young people are not as faithful to their parents' opinion as the parents were on their own marriage, but they still consider their parents' agreement very important in their marriage. It would be really extreme that the young couples don't care about their parents' permission on their marriage. There are two factors that contributed to the formation of this marital custom: 1. Marriage is not only a personal affair but also a family affair. 2. The young listen to the elders' opinions and respect their experiences in the very first place.

We live in a society where all people are expected to be independent. We sometimes hesitate to ask for help or an opinion in a fear of being a weak person. Is asking for help or seeking other opinions really a sign of a lack of confidence?

"I stand on my own two feet" based on autonomy doesn't mean "I can do everything all by myself" We couldn't be specialists in everything. We need someone who is experienced and knowledgeable. We need advice and guidance from a person who has already been to the area where I just stepped in.

I just gave you an example of marriage on which we have to make a very critical decision to show how important a role a mentor may play in our spiritual life. We need to have mentors with which we can pour out our hearts and from which we may ask for help and guidance. We may get insight and different perspectives from those who are experienced and matured in their spiritual life. Don't you have an experience that your little child enlightened you with a simple phrase or sentence? Many pastors who are excellent spiritual leaders have their own spiritual mentors for their journey. They continuously seek out maturity, growth, support, encouragement, guidance, wisdom, discernment, and prayer from their mentors. If pastors are in such great need of spiritual mentors, how much do you need a mentor/mentors for your healthy spiritual life?

Do you have a spiritual mentor for your life? If not, why? Do you see everything or are you blind to the deep hunger of inner self?

Blessings in Christ,

Rev. Dr. Woojae Im