

And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. . . . These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans.”

Matthew 10:1, 5

Last year, our church began a relationship with the AFLC, working with Calvary Lutheran Church of Mesa, Arizona. I was introduced to Dan Giles, who was serving as the interim pastor. He was basically charged by Home Missions to start meeting with me in order to make sure my theology aligned with AFLC doctrine. But in those meetings, a relationship began.

I was instantly fascinated with Dan’s knowledge of church history. I learned countless things every time we got together, and what made him a great mentor was how he never got upset with my questions. I could wrestle theology with him, I could challenge traditional views, and he never took it personally. Instead, the focus was on Scripture—on God’s truth. After several meetings, we came to realize our theology was almost perfectly aligned. We had to get past “churchy” words and phrases. But more importantly, we had come to a point of mutual respect and understanding.

At the 2019 Home Missions retreat, I found myself referring to Dan as my mentor. Though we never used this word in our conversations before, that is exactly what he had become to me. I found myself admiring his knowledge, respecting his patience, and loving his passion for God’s Word.

In Matthew 10, Jesus chose twelve disciples. From the masses, He called those into whom He would pour His life. He was very intentional about discipleship, mentoring these men to be His followers.

Let’s admit we don’t make discipleship and mentoring as intentional as Jesus did. We know we are called to it, but our lives get busy. And Satan does all he can to discourage it because he knows this is where spiritual growth takes place.

I have heard this challenge given to believers: In an ideal world, everyone should have someone mentoring him or her, while at the same time intentionally mentoring someone else. We can’t fathom the great impact this practice could have on the Kingdom of God.

Do you have a mentor? Are you mentoring someone? Is discipling happening in your church? It will take you and me to start up the model of discipleship and mentoring in our communities—in our churches. Pray that we will respond with the urgency that the Gospel and our calling deserve.

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AFLC Promotion for May is Home Missions