

# Three Ways to Glorify God: Spiritual Father

1 Thessalonians 2:10–12

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My dad taught me how to use a hammer. I don't take that for granted. He taught me how to use a variety of different saws and power tools. I don't take that for granted. He taught me to drive. I don't take that for granted. He taught me to work hard and instilled in me a desire to always be better. I don't take that for granted. He taught me how to rise above my situation and not accept failure. I don't take that for granted. He taught me not to lie, but to tell the truth. I don't take that for granted. He taught me how to swear. I wish I'd missed out on that one.

Our parents teach us lots of things. Much of what they teach us we take for granted. Some of what our parents taught us we rebelled against. On the other hand we held onto some bad things they taught us. But we also held onto some good stuff. No matter how we look at our parents they were our mentors. Parents who were good or bad at parenting mentored us. Parents who were present or absent mentored us. Parents who trusted Jesus or who didn't mentored us.

Over the past few weeks I've shared how we can glorify God. There are many ways to glorify God and I've picked out what I believe are the simplest, the most important, and the most influential. I've shared that the easiest way to glorify God is to open your mouth and sing. Last week I talked about giving glory to God by how you live your life so that you are living worthy of His calling of salvation. I believe that is the most important way to glorify God.

Today, I'm going to talk about being a spiritual parent, a spiritual mentor. When I get back from vacation, we will pick up this theme of mentoring other believers. I believe that mentoring is the most influential way to glorify God.

***You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory. 1 Thessalonians 2:10–12 (NIV84)***

**To live glorifying God everyone needs a spiritual parent.** As Paul writes to the church in Thessalonica He uses terms that embrace family: children, mother, father, brothers (the Greek word includes sisters). He shares he loved the people the way a mother loves her children. He shares about a father encouraging, comforting, and urging his children. He reminds them that he came to share the gospel and not seek personal gain.

The church was growing even through persecution. It was made up of some Jews, but mostly Greeks and former pagans. Paul had only been there for three weeks, before being forced out. The believers were eager to love Jesus and live for Him. Paul saw himself as their spiritual father and they were his spiritual children. He wanted them to be more than people saved from hell, but to also be people who lived their lives worthy of God's calling.

You've had at least one spiritual encourager, comforter, and advisor. It was the person who helped you find Jesus as your Savior. That was the greatest encouragement you could have ever received.

That person helped bring into your life comfort like never before. The advice of that person has been life changing and eternity altering.

Someone came into your life and planted the gospel. This person may have been a family member, a friend, a co-worker, or even a stranger. That person could be considered your spiritual parent, a mother or father in the faith. The person that helped you become born again of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Father. It was the Holy Spirit working in your spiritual parent to help you find Jesus and experience His mercy, grace, and love. Its possible that your spiritual parent was also your spiritual mentor.

A spiritual mentor is the individual that helps you grow in your faith in Jesus. I was baptized at twelve by the pastor in my church. He wasn't my spiritual parent nor was he my spiritual mentor. He didn't really influence my life after asking me if I believed in Jesus. He taught me a few things. He wasn't the primary source of encouragement, comfort, or advice on spiritual matters.

A guy by the name of Jeff was a spiritual mentor for me. Then there was Al, followed by an old guy named Edgar, along with Jay, and Dan. I've been mentored by Jeff, Dwight, Rex, Kevin, and Kevin. Each person encouraged, comforted, and advised me through spiritual decisions. I have had several spiritual mentors. But, I would say that my mom is my spiritual father.

My mother was the one who influenced me to choose Jesus. She was intentional about glorifying God in her own life. She was a spiritual mentor by offering praise to God. She was a spiritual mentor by how she lived her life. She was a spiritual mentor as she encouraged, comforted, and urged me to live my life glorifying Jesus.

***You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. 1 Thessalonians 2:10 (NIV84)***

**Without a spiritual parent we fail to live worthy of our calling.** We have been saved from our sins to live a new life. Many Christian gave their lives to Jesus in order to avoid hell and get into heaven. I'm grateful for their decision to trust in Jesus for their eternal salvation. Jesus has become their Savior. They have received His mercy, they experienced His love, they are forgiven. This is a reason to rejoice.

Even Christians when left alone go their own way. It's so easy for us to slide back into our human nature, old ways, and old self. We can't always see what's happening to us. We pick up our ways of thinking that rely on fear or anger or selfishness. We fall back into habits of revenge or prejudice. We do know the sensation of having walked away from God and needing Him again. Without our spiritual parent we are tossed around on the waves. Without a spiritual shepherd we are blown around by gusts of wind. We may not even realize that we're being tossed around or blown. We may think that it's the new normal. That's why believe that we are supposed to be tossed and blown around. But, that's not true.

We're to be living a life with purpose and direction. Our purpose and direction is to glorify God. Oh, it's such a vicious circle of trying and failing. It's a life of isolation and defeat. Christians are not meant to live in the world isolating themselves. We aren't called by God to go through our daily lives by ourselves. We aren't set apart by God to be set apart from one another. This is the life that we choose too often.

Everyday we face challenges and we want to be alone. When do gather with other people we don't seek spiritual renewal, but holy whining. We get caught up in the habit of complaining and listening to others belly ache. Almost all of us are guilty in some way or another. We know this true, because we've lived this way. We know that this isn't the life Jesus wants for us. This isn't living worthy of Jesus' salvation. This isn't why we've been saved. This isn't glorifying to God.

It happened in the early church. It happens in the church today. Everyone needs a spiritual mentor.

***For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory. 1 Thessalonians 2:11–12 (NIV)***

**As a spiritual mentor you impact how others think, talk, and act.** I've given my life to proclaim the Good News of Jesus by preaching, teaching, and counseling. I am a spiritual parent to the people I've lead to Jesus. I am a spiritual shepherd to this congregation. I am a spiritual mentor to many. I do this to bring glory to Jesus. I open my mouth and praise Him. I live my life to glorify Him.

But, I'm not the only spiritual mentor. If the easiest way to glorify God is to open your mouth, then every Christian can do that. If the most important way to glorify God is to live your life worthy of His salvation, then every Christian can do that through the power of the Holy Spirit. If the most influential way to glorify God is to be a spiritual parent, a mentor, then every Christian can do that with the guidance and wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

We want our brothers and sisters in Christ to become more like Jesus. Even though life is hard, challenging, and discouraging we can help one another.

What if I encouraged you to find two other believers and meet with them once a week? Your meeting would be sometime other than Sunday morning. When you get together in a living room, a man cave, a coffee shop, a picnic table you did three things: you listen to one another, you give one another a scripture and you pray with one another. You would become spiritual mentors to one another.

I've been part of this ministry many times. We mentored one another because we needed one another. Hold that thought for right now. When I get back from vacation we'll talk about it more.

What if you identified a Christian who was seeking to live for Jesus, but they weren't coming to church? You would make time to see them every week. You would have your Bible in your hand, not just on your phone. You would ask this one question, how can I pray for you this week? Talk and listen to their story. Give them a hand written card with a Bible verse and a prayer. Then pray a simple prayer with them. Hold that thought for right now. When I get back from vacation we'll talk about it more.

There is a blessing as we help another Christian mature in their faith. Spiritual parents, spiritual mentors are blessed with listening ears, with the words that are needed, and with the scriptures that empower. Spiritual mentors are blessed by giving away their faith. They are enriched and empowered as they give themselves to one another.

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**Live your life encouraging, comforting, and urging others to glorify Jesus.** You may not be an evangelist, but you can be a mentor. The day you choose Jesus as your Savior and Lord was the most important day in your life. The person who helped you is your spiritual parent. If it was someone you know they may have also become your spiritual mentor. They have prayed with you and for you. They have shared their life's ups and downs, showing you how they trusted Jesus. They have given you scriptures and explained the mysteries of God's Word. They have proclaimed to you how to overcome temptations away from sin.

But, did you pay attention? Did you choose to follow their guidance? Did you follow their advice? Now, you find yourself wondering why? You know in your heart that God's promises are true. You believe God can work in your life. You want to be more than just saved. You've got muscles you want to us. You see opportunities for God to work through your life.

Jesus is calling you to more than you were yesterday. Jesus is calling you to be more than you are today. Whatever you are doing in your life to make money or pass your time you can be a spiritual mentor. You will find God's blessings. You will be a blessing to others. We are surrounded by people who need more of Jesus.

We might think that people who are school teachers are good mentors. I would agree. We might think that people who are pastors are good mentors. I would agree. But people who change tires, or who work with electric circuits, or keep track of money, or bake cookies, or work in their gardens, or walk on the golf course, or who are retired make good mentors.

You are where you are because that's where Jesus wants you. The people who are wondering in and out of your life encounter you because that's what Jesus wants. There are no accidents, and there are no coincidences. God is working all the time. His Holy Spirit is speaking all the time. Jesus is saving people all the time.

You and I can be encouragers. We can offer comfort. We can advise. As we do this we will have an influence on people for Jesus. He will be glorified.

Jesus lives in glory today. He has been honored forever. When Jesus left heaven and became a baby in a manger He was glorifying God. When Jesus healed people He was glorifying God. As Jesus spoke, His words glorified God. When they nailed His hands and feet to the cross God was glorified. While He carried our sin God was glorified. When His body was put into a tomb and a stone covered the entrance God was glorified. Oh yeah, when He walked out of that grave God was glorified. Now He is in heaven at the right hand of the Father who is glorified. Every time a sinner turns from their sins to call upon the name of Jesus, God is glorified.

Do you want to glorify Jesus? Call upon His name. Jesus wants to be in your life. Jesus will change you from a sinner to a saint. Jesus will give you a new life. Jesus will empower you every day to glorify His name. Will you give Jesus your life?