

Reflections on the Death of a Mentor

I remember a few days after first meeting him; I had recently moved into the Los Angeles Navigator home to join some other young men receiving training. He suggested we take a walk and pray together. We walked. He did most of the praying. I prayed for everybody and everything I could think of in ten minutes and was through.

He continued to pray for people he knew all over the world. I never walked that far before (I was beginning to wonder if we would ever get home again) and had never seen anybody pray with that kind of intimate knowledge of so many people in so many places.

I came downstairs very early one morning to grab a bite before heading off to work. The door to his bedroom was slightly ajar and I saw him. He was in his PJs and slippers kneeling—deep in prayer with Bible and prayer pages spread out on the bed. He didn't see me, but I saw him and took a mental snapshot.

He Modeled Prayer

Once, while living with him for those two years, he asked me if I would pray something specifically for him. "What," I inquired. "Pray I wouldn't die a bitter old man" (he was in his early 40's at the time). Strange, I thought to myself. Thirty-seven years later I still knew him and realized that his prayers had been answered. He died a gentle, loving, sensitive man of God.

He Modeled Vulnerability

He invited me to join him for a speaking engagement. Sure, why not? I shared my testimony and he taught. I then jumped quickly into the food line and lost sight of him. Then I caught him out of the corner of my eye huddled with an old friend he had not expected to see. There they were, Bibles open, nose- to- nose and knee- to- knee fully into it, sharing intently with each other.

One evening he abruptly left our dinner table before he was finished in order to respond to an urgent need a friend had. On many occasions I saw him put people before comfort, food, his schedule, his own needs. Not to an extreme, but when it was called for.

He Modeled Love for People

It was not unusual (during the 35 years after we had gone our separate ways) for him to call me from various places in the country to see how I was doing, pray with me over the phone, inquire about my family or offer to meet with me if he was in the area. He never forgot me!

He Modeled Loyalty

We were upstairs and got into a disagreement over some trivial issue. He lost his temper and then was quick to confess and offer sincere apologies; not once, but several times, over the next few days. He felt so bad about it and asked for my prayers. I was first intimidated and frightened by his display of anger and then humbled by his contriteness and sincere repentance.

He Modeled Authenticity

I had the privilege of going through the book of Romans with a handful of men he was training. He was the teacher and we were the students, yet he often prefaced an opinion with, "This is the light I currently have on it," opening it up for debate, new thoughts and the possibility that he (the perceived expert in our eyes) could be wrong. Over the years when we met here or there, he would ask me what I was learning and then proceed to take notes on my comments. This blew my mind. What, after all his years of living, could I possibly teach him?

He Modeled Teachability

I was in Colorado Springs where he lived and had an appointment with him for April 20, 2001. He was near the end of his race (suffering a great deal with cancer) and told me he would love to see me again and thought he might be strong enough to spend an hour with me. He never made it. We never met again.

He passed into the presence of the Lord on April 17, 2001 at the age of 78. I was at his memorial service and was amazed to hear the stories of how many lives he had touched and how many people he was praying for. Why was I one of the fortunate ones to be on the receiving end?

His name is Warren Frederick Myers. He is my friend. He is still my friend even though he is no longer here. I have a page in my prayer book with his picture. On that page is a verse.

"Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith." Hebrews 13:7

Under the verse I noted four things that he modeled and taught (modeled more than taught) that I am praying for my life.

1. Love for God's Word
2. Love for prayer
3. Love for people
4. Teachability

He's gone, but he's not gone. He's there, but he's here. We haven't lost him. We know where he is! He touched my life when he was here, and he continues to touch my life

when he's not here. I love him and am forever grateful that God brought him into my life. I am motivated to touch the lives of others as Warren Frederick Myers touched mine.