

1 Corinthians 1:9

God is faithful, by whom you were called to the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 Corinthians 13:14

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

Philemon 1:6

... that the fellowship of your faith may operate in a full knowledge of every good thing in you in Christ Jesus.

1 John 1:1-4

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of Life, (for the Life was revealed, and we have seen it and bear witness, and show to you the everlasting Life, who was with the Father and was revealed to us), that which we have seen and heard we declare unto you, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And we write these things to you so that your joy may be full.

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A FEW THOUGHTS ON SPONSORSHIP

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To really grow in recovery, we all need to find a person of the same sex who will serve as our sponsor/mentor. It is best to find someone who has been around the program for awhile.

Mentorship is a solidly Biblical concept. The best example of it is seen in the relationship between Paul, the seasoned veteran apostle, and Timothy, the young, gifted, upstart preacher. Much can be gained in our understanding of sponsorship in the context of Christian recovery by a thoughtful examination of our relationship as depicted in the scriptures.

Look for someone who seems to be growing and is solid in his/her personal program of recovery. This must be a person you trust enough to really trust and open up to. In other words, you must believe they will keep what you share on a confidential basis. The best sponsors are people who are good listeners. They are non-judgmental encouragers who purposefully make themselves available when we need them. It works best to set up a definite time to meet with sponsors on a regular basis - for instance, I meet with my sponsor on a bi-weekly basis.

So, why do we need a sponsor/mentor? From my personal experience (almost 20 years on the journey of recovery), here's just a few reasons I've found:

ACCOUNTABILITY

Having another man in my life who knows enough about me to ask the hard questions has been a vital dimension of my personal walk of recovery. To be honest about it, there are times when I've actually walked away from temptation more because I did not want to be embarrassed by confessing it to a sponsor, than because it was the right or best thing to do.

PRIDE

Ego, grandiosity, and self-centeredness are all issues with recovering people. The Bible is full of admonitions about this - "Pride goes before a fall, and God opposes the proud, but gives

grace to the humble, etc." Ultimately, a sponsor helps me to keep from getting trapped by my own false sense of "powerfulness" and keeps me in reality (which is another word for "humility").

HONESTY

It's really easy to fool others, and even myself. I've learned how to look good outwardly, while I'm doing terribly inside, even in support groups. Here again, if I've been open with my sponsor about my personal issues, he will hold me accountable and "nail me" when I've slipped into dishonesty. It is my firm conviction that no one with a clear conscience ever relapses.

OBJECTIVITY

"Stinking thinking" is a real trap. Having a person committed to being a "sounding board" for me gives me someone who can say stuff like, "I don't think you are perceiving that correctly" or "Have you considered this might be what's really going on?" This is especially helpful in the always difficult area of relationships in which all recovering people struggle. Most others in our lives have some "vested interest" in how we behave or how well we do in our lives. It's hard for these folks to be objective. So, we need someone outside of our primary family, work, etc. We need people to help us to steer a clear course.

ENCOURAGEMENT

I find I am apt to get down on myself at times, often because of things over which I have little or no control. Having an objective, supportive person who understands the process of recovery helps me keep a healthy perspective on things. Usually, I find I'm doing better than I might think. And, even when I'm not doing so well, my sponsors have provided the hope and support I've needed to move forward and do the often difficult things that are necessary to keep growing.

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