



Wendy: Keith, you in VantagePoint3 hold that mentoring way of life in such high regard. Like it's just how you do life. My question, I'm just curious—how does an ordinary conversation just with anyone over a cup of coffee become holy ground? How does that happen?

Keith: Mentoring for me is not something that I stumbled into. It's been a language that God has used all of my life. And this is also very important: mentoring is not about prescriptions, it's about presence. It's not about someone telling you what to do. It's someone listening with you for the whisper from the Holy Spirit for what's next in your life. Or for what needs to change in your life. Or for where you can move ahead in your story.

My life has just been richly blessed by people along the way who came alongside. And then I would have just called them spiritual friends. Now I would call them mentors.

So here's my response to your question. When two people sit together in trust—very important, in trust—listening for the heartbeat of God in one's story, then the table

becomes an altar. Becomes a place of worship. Only this is not about liturgy. This is about the narrative of someone's life.

I have heard it. I've seen it. I've experienced. I have been part of it. A mentor's single question asked at the right moment can open a journey into someone's story.

James Houston, who was the founder of Regent College, Vancouver, calls this a *sacramental way of living*. And in the language of the new *Journey* manuals process, that VantagePoint3 has, it would be those three. Those three elements: an attentive life, an examined life, and a shared life.

In the mentoring space, we aren't talking about God; we are inviting someone to pay attention to God's movement in real time, in the story of the mentee. And that's where it aligns so well between this book, *On Holy Ground*, and VantagePoint3.

Wendy: Absolutely.

Keith: Both prioritize processes, not programming. Both create space for God to work at God's speed. Both recognize that mentoring is sacred companionship.

It's about presence, attentiveness, and then formational listening. Not about information, not about someone's structuring a pathway for you. You listen together in order to find your story.

So as a mentee, you show up, you pay attention you walk alongside.

As a mentor, you show up—and then the part that's hardest for a lot of us as mentors—you shut up in order to listen well and to walk alongside. Your two people probing together, attentive to what your story is telling.

Part of what makes it holy ground is that it is a shared life—this is not a solo. The New Testament calls this the body of Christ.

Wendy: Keith, just unpack this a little bit further. Can you tell us about a moment when a conversation of connection in your life turned holy, like right before your eyes? Just give us an example of that in real time in Keith's life.

Keith: You may laugh at the outcome of this story, but one minute I was talking and the next minute I was hearing God speak into my story, my heart, through my first spiritual director. Her name was Gloria McClannon. I had met her at Church of the Savior in Washington, DC. We spent a year on a phone call once a month. And I remember very early one morning, time for the call, she got on the call, and she said, “Keith, this is going to be our last session together.” And I said, “Oh, well, what's happened?” I thought something was going on on her end. And she paused, and then she said these words—she said, “You are not ready for this.”

Wendy: Oh, wow.

Keith: Well, you can imagine my, my response.

Wendy: I'm curious about it.

Keith: What do you mean, I'm not ready for this? I'm a pastor. Of course, I'm ready for this. This is what I do. And she said, “You are not ready to go deep into your own story in the way that is needed.” In that moment, the Holy Spirit stepped into the circle and suddenly every word that she said was charged. Because there was so much truth in it. And there was so much love for her to fire me.

Wendy: Love and fired in the same sentence. I love it.

Keith: Absolutely in the same sentence.

Wendy: Wow.

Keith: Mentoring at its best is this: two people listening together for a voice that is already present, already speaking, already loving us into transformation.

Randy [Reese] loved to use a term, he called it *the already present action of God*. *The already present action of God*. It means that the right question may unlock—or the right comment—may unlock a story that someone has never told anyone else before.

Wendy: Yeah, absolutely.

Keith: The ground is here. It's—it's right where your feet touch the ground this morning, the floor. In your bedroom, then your kitchen, your car, your workplace. Mentoring becomes holy or soul work—S-O-U-L, soul work—when presence meets openness. And that's...

Wendy: I love that.

Keith: That's what has to happen. My colleague, my brother, Derek McNeil, says that mentoring is *when someone loves your heart*. Powerful picture. And here's the point—I don't want to oversell this, but this is the dramatic insight for me in all of this—that every moment, every moment, every place can be sacred if we are present to it. If we're paying attention to it.