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EQUIPPING MARRIED COUPLES TO MENTOR OTHER
MARRIED COUPLES AT OAKLAND BAPTIST
CHURCH IN CORINTH, MISSISSIPPI

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EQUIPPING MARRIED COUPLES TO MENTOR OTHER
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CHURCH IN CORINTH, MISSISSIPPI

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PREFACE

The journey to complete this project has been both an enjoyable and a trying process. It has helped me grow in my faith, academics, and knowledge. First, I would like to thank my professors at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Dr. Stuart Scott gave me the foundation for biblical counseling. Thanks to Dr. Robert Burrelli, my advisor, for all of his hard work, input, patience, and encouragement to have the diligence to complete this project.

Second, I would like to thank my church family at Oakland Baptist for their prayers, reassurance, and support throughout this project. I want to thank my pastor, Dr. Randy Bostick, for his prayers and advice and for allowing me to finish my studies. Also, to those that participated in this project, their feedback was extremely helpful.

Third, the Lord has blessed me with the greatest family. Kelley, you truly are an “excellent wife,” who has prayed for me, loved me, and helped me to press toward the end during this time. Our children, Lexi, Lauren, Liv, Lainey, Noah, and Gage, thank you for your endurance and love throughout all of my seminary training.

Finally, and most importantly, thanks to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ for saving me and using me in his kingdom. I pray that I always honor him in everything I do.

Christopher Dwight Aday

Corinth, Mississippi

December 2013

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop and train designated married couples at Oakland Baptist Church, so they would mentor other married couples through biblical counseling. I selected married couples, which showed evidence of having godly marriages themselves, to perform biblical counseling and to act as a mentor couples for troubled marriages.

Goals

Four goals served to evaluate the effectiveness of this project. The first goal was to equip a group of married couples in the area of discipleship, so they might be able to apply the principles of biblical counseling to both married couples and families. A group of well-equipped married couples allows the church staff to help more troubled marriages and families through lay people and assures a more effective counseling ministry: as other couples are discipled and trained, they in return can counsel others.

The second goal was to convince these trained mentor couples of the need and importance for mentoring as married couples, for once they are adequately trained, they could then mentor other couples and hopefully pass on their conviction and training from couple to couple.

The third goal was to develop a biblical mentoring program in which to train the mentor married couples on how to approach and solve marital problems biblically. The program surveyed the mentor couples initially, in order to assess their ability to solve problems biblically. From that point onward, the program tried to increase their knowledge regarding how to solve problems biblically both for themselves as well as for those couples needing counseling.

The fourth and final goal was a personal goal. Through this project I had hoped to become a better teacher and mentor for married couples. I have a desire to help marriages become stronger and fundamentally sound on the basis of God's Word. I pray that God has helped me be a more efficient in this area and that this project has assisted me in reaching this goal.

Ministry Context

The context for this project was at Oakland Baptist Church in Corinth, Mississippi. In 1961, a group from Tate Baptist Church decided to start a new church on the outside of Corinth's city limits. On July 16, the group started meeting in the American Legion building and, within a few weeks, moved to a local school building. The church was constituted on September 10, 1961, with 48 members.

In September 1962, Oakland Baptist purchased land and completed a church building. Over the next forty-one years the property had many additions and expansions in the original location. The church membership grew from 48 members to almost 1,300 members by 2003, with a Sunday school average of 446. At this time, Oakland Baptist was having two Sunday school services and two worship services and was completely out of space. In May 2004, the church relocated to twenty acres inside Corinth city limits

(population 14,253). The new facility's sanctuary seats around 2,000 people with Sunday school space for approximately 900 people. The 2010 membership is 1,829 with an average in Sunday school of 625.

Oakland Baptist Church has really become a regional church. While the majority of its members and attendees live in the same county at the church, Alcorn County (population 35,822), on the boarder of Tennessee in northern Mississippi, many members and attendees drive from the three of the four surrounding counties in Mississippi:¹ Prentiss (population 25,709), Tippah (population 21,661), Tishomingo (population 19,034).² The fourth surrounding county is McNairy County (population 25,796) in Tennessee.³

The city of Corinth promotes itself as a retirement community. Senior adults, ages 60 and up, make up the largest age group in Alcorn County with 22.3 percent of the population. The second largest group is the 40-49-age bracket at 13.68 percent, and third is the 30-39 year olds making up 13.09 percent of the population. Twelve point ninety-five percent of the population is in the 50-59 age group.⁴

¹“Corinth MS Profile,” <http://www.idcide.com/citydata/ms/corinth.htm> (accessed October 10, 2010).

²U.S. Census Bureau, “State and County Quick Facts: Mississippi,” <http://www.quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/28000.html> (accessed October 10, 2010).

³U.S. Census Bureau, “State and County Quick Facts: McNairy County, Tennessee,” <http://www.quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/47/47109.html> (accessed October 10, 2010).

⁴Corinth Alliance, “Demographics,” <http://www.economicdevelopment.corinthalliance.com/demographics-data-statistics-alcorn-county-mississippi/html> (accessed October 24, 2010).

Oakland Baptist Church is a very evangelistic church. The pastor of twenty-eight years, Randy Bostick, received his Doctorate of Ministry in church growth and has made missions and evangelism the heart of his leadership. All throughout the year Oakland Baptist conducts evangelistic events and programs. Oakland believes in equipping lay people for evangelism, regularly training them in *Evangelism Explosion* and *Share Jesus without Fear*. At Easter, the church presents a Passion Play with usually 6,000 to 8,000 in attendance over four nights, during which many trust Christ.

Oakland Baptist typically has between four and five mission trips per year. Each of these trips is evangelistic in nature. During the fall a men's tailgate party is planned with approximately 300 in attendance. Along with men, the area's high school football players and Northeast Mississippi Community College football players attend. The Lord has been pleased to bring many to Christ on these trips. Oakland also uses children's sports to reach the lost. The church uses Upward Basketball, in order to expose unchurched children and families to the gospel. Like many other churches, Oakland has Vacation Bible School, Sunday school, and monthly visitation programs.

Spiritually, Oakland is a healthy church. We are constantly training and discipling members and attendees. Along with sermons and Sunday school, the church offers discipleship classes called "life institutes" on Wednesday night to single men and women and married couples. During these classes, the children are in Awana. There are typically between ten and fifteen small groups meeting for eight-to-ten-week sessions. Additionally, there are monthly baptismal services to accommodate those who have made professions.

Oakland Baptist is a theologically conservative Southern Baptist Church. Its core beliefs are condensed and stated on its website as follows:

We believe

in the verbal inspiration of the Bible by God, therefore it is infallible and inerrant

in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ

in the vicarious death of Jesus Christ on the cross for man's sin

in the victorious resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

in the visible and imminent return of Jesus Christ

in a literal Heaven where the saved soul shall live eternally and in literal Hell where the lost shall be forever separated from God

that salvation is a gift from God based upon His Grace and extended to those who will repent of sin and place their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior

Additionally, we are committed to the work of Southern Baptists all across the world and actively support the Cooperative Program and The Baptist Faith and Message of the Southern Baptist Convention.⁵

I have served at Oakland Baptist since October 2004 as the children's minister and church administrator. My administrative duties include overseeing the maintenance of church property and supervision of all non-ministerial staff and workers.

At Oakland, we have a rather large children's ministry for a small town. We average around 150-175 children on Sunday mornings and upwards of 200 children on Wednesday nights. Serving as the children's minister includes preaching in Children's Church on Sunday mornings, being the commander for the Awana clubs, planning and directing Vacation Bible School, scheduling and running summer children's camp, and

⁵Oakland Baptist Church, "What We Believe at Oakland," <http://www.oaklandbaptist.org/core-beliefs> (accessed November 28, 2010).

orchestrating events throughout the year. Additionally, Oakland Baptist sponsors a school for four- and five-year-olds. I am the principal and administrator for the school. I enjoy spending time with the children and working for the Lord in this area.

While at Oakland, I came to realize that I needed more training in the area of biblical counseling. Even as Children's Minister, I am faced with a constant flow of people who hurt and need God's Word for hope and guidance. Since I have been in the counseling program at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, our pastor has placed me in charge of biblical counseling for our church.

Rationale

According to the website DivorceStatistics.org, 10 percent of the American population is divorced. The website also reveals remarkable statistics: first-time marriages are failing at a rate of 45 to 50 percent; second marriages at 60 to 67 percent; and 70 to 73 percent for third marriages.⁶ While *USA Today* reports a decrease in the divorce rate since its peak in the 1970s,⁷ it is still considerably high.

One has only to look around to see that Christian families are doing no better than the world in the area of faithfulness to marriage. George Barna's recent 2008 survey confirms this: "When evangelicals and non-evangelical born again Christians are combined into an aggregate class of born again adults, their divorce figure is statistically

⁶Divorcestatistics.org, "Divorce Statistics," <http://www.divorcestatistics.org> (accessed November 29, 2010).

⁷USAToday.com, "Divorce Rate Drops to Lowest Since 1970," "Many experts discount the popular notion that one of two U.S. marriages end in divorce, and suggest the breakup rate, which is hard to calculate, has stabilized in recent years at between 40% and 45%". *Divorce Rate Drops to Lowest Since 1970*, http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-05-11-divorce-decline_N.htm?vm=r&vm=r (accessed June 21, 2011).

identical to that of non-born again adults: 32% versus 33%, respectively.”⁸ Barna defines the phrase *born again Christians* as “people who said they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today and who also indicated they believe that when they die they will go to Heaven because they had confessed their sins and had accepted Jesus Christ as their savior.”⁹ ¹⁰

There are good reasons to have people trained for mentoring. One reason is that it meets the need that Christian marriages have, as they are under attack and failing at an alarming rate. They need all the additional biblical help that they can find. Another reason is that many Christian couples may find that they are understood better when talking to other married couples. While some Christian couples do seek help from pastors and faith-based counselors, many do not seek formal help. However, they will go to a friend, Sunday school teacher, or the average layperson in the church. The troubled spouses might be in need of a friend to speak with about their marriage. Possibly, the couple feels more comfortable with the layperson because they know him better than they know the pastor. If the friend they turn to is trained to counsel biblically, then godly advice and help can be applied to their problem.

Another reason is that both pastors and members can be obedient to the mandate to counsel. Counseling is the responsibility of every believer, who needs to be

⁸Barna Group, “New Marriage and Divorce Statistics Released,” <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/15-familykids/42-new-marriage-and-divorce-statistics-released?q=divorce+rates> (accessed November 29, 2010).

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰It should be noted that the survey might not have taken in account that cohabitation is increasing and could affect the results.

equipped for this, and equipping members is the responsibility of shepherds. Those that the pastor trains to be mentor couples will range anywhere from Sunday school teachers, deacons, leaders, to couples who have been through marital problems of their own. Brothers and sisters in Christ would be discipling other brothers and sisters in Christ. When a married couple comes to the minister for counseling, he should counsel with them for a period of at least two to three sessions. Then, as part of the continued process he would assign the counselees to a trained mentor couple.¹¹ These couples would become a part of each other's lives and spiritual development.

Yet another reason is that the mentor/mentee relationship is essential to the spiritual growth of a believer, as seen throughout the Bible: Moses for Joshua, Elijah for Elisha, Jesus for the twelve, and Paul for Timothy. We argue that there should be husbands and wives mentoring together other hurting husbands and wives. As more husband/wife teams are trained, more of this kind of mentoring can take place. The trained married couples will also mentor in a variety of settings. There is the more formal setting of the "counseling room," where serious issues arise that need concentrated time and privacy, or the more casual environments, such as the church parking lot, a dinner table, and other informal settings where needs will surface naturally out of everyday conversations.

Corinth is a rather small town with limited resources for couples seeking marital counseling. While Oakland Baptist has a counseling ministry for the church and community, it is the only biblical counseling ministry within a forty-mile radius that does

¹¹Ideally, the mentor couple is able to sit in with the minister during the first few weeks of counseling.

not outsource counseling after more than one or two counseling sessions. Therefore these additional mentors will allow us to minister to more couples with biblical soul care.

While observing our church over the past eight years, I have seen many couples divorce. I understand that though this project will not completely solve the problem of divorce in our area or church family, it will greatly assist the church in carrying out a biblical, restoration ministry for troubled marriages. More and more couples could be trained. Some of those trouble couples that are disciplined and strengthened could then become mentors for other couples. It is a great blessing when someone who has overcome his or her own problems in life through biblical counseling can then counsel others with those same problems.

Definitions

Biblical counseling was the specific means for mentoring and the phrase used throughout this project and, therefore, needs to be defined. The terms that have been associated with this type of counseling number at least three: “nouthetic counseling,” “discipleship counseling,” and the more general, sometimes incorrect “Christian counseling.”

Biblical counseling may be defined as one believer teaching another believer how to apply God’s Word to every aspect of his or her life. This definition seems to capture the essence of biblical counseling, judging by other definitions from advocates of the biblical counseling movement. According to Jay Adams,

[Biblical, or nouthetic counseling] contains three elements: change through confrontation out of concern. It presupposes, firstly, that there are sinful patterns and activities in the life of the counselee that God wants changed. Secondly, that this change will be brought about through a verbal confrontation of the counselee with the Scriptures as the counselor ministers them in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Thirdly, that this confrontation is done in a loving, caring, familial manner for the benefit of the counselee.¹²

Richard Baxter had this to say about biblical counseling: It is “for resolving of their doubts, and for help against their sins, and for direction in duty, and for increase of knowledge and all saving grace.”¹³

Another term that must be examined is the word *mentor*. Synonyms include *discipler*, *tutor*, *life coach*, *disciple-maker*, and *teacher*. The word *mentor* is not the exact word used in the Bible, but the concept is biblical: followers or disciples of another. Herb Hodges, one of the great disciplers of our day, defines *discipler* as “a kind of assigned tutor or mentor who qualitatively triggers the process of total Christian learning/ incarnating/ living/ testifying/ soul-winning/ teaching/ disciple-building into the life of a Christian.”¹⁴

Paul Tautges does an excellent job of tying biblical counseling, discipleship, and their practices together. He states,

Biblical counseling is an intensely focused and personal aspect of the discipleship process, whereby the more mature believer (counselor) comes alongside the less mature believer (counselee) for three main purposes: first, to help that person consistently apply Scripture theology to his or her life in order to experience victory over sin through obedience to Christ; second, by warning that person, in love, of the consequences of sinful actions; and third, by leading that person to make consistent

¹²Jay E. Adams, *Ready to Restore: The Layman's Guide to Christian Counseling* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1981), 9.

¹³Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2007), 181.

¹⁴Herb Hodges, *Fox Fever: Exploring the Will and the Skill to Obey Christ's Great Commission to Turn People into Disciples* (Chelsea, England: Spiritual Life Ministries, 2006), ii.

progress in the ongoing process of biblical change in order that he or she too may become a spiritually reproductive disciple-maker.¹⁵

All Christians should be biblical counselors and mentors of fellow believers. Christ and many other biblical saints set the example for present-day believers. This project will help fellow believers at Oakland Baptist Church in Corinth, Mississippi disciple one another.

Limitations and Delimitations

The main limitation of the project was time. There was a fifteen-week limitation for the total project, therefore, only so much training and equipping could be given in a short amount of time. These fifteen weeks included the surveys, data gathering, analysis, teaching, post-training data gathering, and evaluation.

A delimitation of this project was the number of couples, only seven to ten, selected to be mentor couples. These mentor couples were picked by the church leadership and me from among the membership. Since we leaders cannot be 100% sure the biblical stability of another's household, we chose mentor couples on the basis of their Christ-likeness and godly reputations that they have maintained as members.

Another delimitation was the number of problems or issues addressed in the teaching period. There was only eight actual weeks of training with the selected couples. During that time, the leadership examined and addressed the mentor couples five marital issues that were determined from the surveys taken by the pastors and married couples.

¹⁵Paul Tautges, *Counsel One Another: A Theology of Personal Discipleship* (Leominster, England: Day One Publications, 2009), 21-22.

The third delimitation of this project was that the mentor couples were married for at least five years, an adequate length of time for most couples to experience enough problems and difficulties in their marriage. The staff and myself determined the five-year time period for the mentor couples as part of the criteria.

Research Methodology

This project attempted to establish a comprehensive marital mentoring program at Oakland Baptist Church in Corinth, Mississippi for couples who are experiencing marital problems or need maturing in their marriage. The first step of the project involved primarily data gathering from local pastors. The project needed to know what the problems or perceived problems from the perspective of local pastors in order to address them and attempt to correct the issues. Step 1 involved sending a survey to fifteen to twenty local pastors. This survey sought to determine several important facts: (1) whether or not they performed marital counseling; (2) if they did, then what type of marital counseling;¹⁶ (3) what issues from their experiences in counseling tended to be the most common causes of marital trouble and how they prioritize those causes; and (4) how helpful they believe trained mentor couples would be in their ministries.

Step 2 involved getting feedback from lay people. Fifteen to twenty couples who have been married for twenty years or longer took a marital survey. The survey included listing in order of priority what the couples believe to be the most common issues or problems that married couples face. Both the pastoral and the married-couple surveys were used to determine topics that need to be addressed in the mentor-training program.

¹⁶Such as biblical, Christian, secular, integrationist, etc.

While waiting for the surveys from the pastors and married couples, the church pastoral staff met to determine potential mentor couples. They selected from the congregation of Oakland Baptist Church those marriages that seemed to have a solid biblical foundation, which they determined after taking into consideration the couples' spiritual maturity, parenting, stewardship, perceived marital stability, history of divorce, length of marriage, and any other areas that the staff deemed essential.

Next, the eight training lessons were prepared as the survey responses were returned and the staff determined possible couples. Two of the eight sessions dealt with God's plan for marriage and husband and wife roles. The remaining six sessions addressed the most common issues taken from the pastor and couple surveys. Each training session had a biblically based approach for the given issue with an outlined agenda for each week. Also, reading and homework assignments were given for further training of the mentor couples.

Step 3 was to approach the seven to ten couples, identified by the staff, to participate in the mentoring program. These couples were contacted by letter and asked to take part in the program. Then an informative meeting took place to help the couples decide whether or not they really want to take part in the mentoring program.

Additionally interviews were conducted to see if their marriage met the requirements set by the staff, in case there was something overlooked or not known. Once couples were selected, they were asked to make a commitment for training and future participation. However, when a couple did not meet the criteria, another couple was selected.

Step 4, the eight week training begins. The first two sessions consisted of foundations of a biblical marriage and mentoring, which examined God's plan for

marriage and the biblical roles of husband and wife. Also, during these three weeks the data from the surveys was analyzed. The most prevalent issues from the surveys helped to determine what the leader taught in the remaining six sessions of training. The sessions lasted for approximately one hour. Additionally, during the last three sessions the couples took turns counseling each other in front of the class, in order to practice what they had learned and also to work on any issues they might have

The fifth and final step was an evaluation. After the last training session, the mentor focus group did the homework and assignments for that week. Then on the fifteenth week, the trainees met and took a post-questionnaire that was identical to the pre-training questionnaire, in order to see if the training sessions had any positive affect on their marriages. Additionally, strengths, weaknesses, concerns, issues or suggestions for improving the training were given at this time with input for correction and improvements.

Summary

Chapter 1 gives an introduction to Oakland Baptist Church in Corinth, Mississippi, providing a brief history of the church, its growth from inception to its present conditions, and its strengths in the areas of leadership, evangelism, missions, and various programs. There is a short report on the demographics of the city, county, and surrounding counties. Additionally, this chapter provides goals and the rationale for the project, together with definitions, limitations, delimitations, and an overview of my responsibilities and ministry at Oakland Baptist.

Chapter 2 lays down specific theological and biblical foundations for marriages and mentoring. God establishes the first marriage in Genesis 2:18-25.

Ephesians 5:22-30 states biblical principles concerning the roles of wives and husbands within a marriage. First Peter 3:1-8 instructs both husbands and wives with regard to their biblical responsibilities within the marriage relationship. Titus 2:1-8 presents biblical principles for men and women to teach and train the younger generations. Colossians 1:27-29 provides a biblical mandate for helping fellow believers to mature in their walk. These Scriptures form an excellent blueprint for the God-given gift of holy matrimony. They also teach us that investing and helping others to mature in Christ is every believer's responsibility.

Chapter 3 examines the need for mentors and mentoring in various settings. Included in this study is a biblical perspective, a Christian perspective, and a secular perspective. Some of the inspection includes approaches to mentoring, benefits, and usefulness to this particular project. Also, chapter 3 discusses additional considerations of which mentors need to be aware or which they may need to address when mentoring.

Chapter 4 describes the methodology used in the implementation of this project. It also states the schedule, agenda, content, and assignments for the mentor training. Upon the completion of the project (program and training), an additional evaluation with the mentor couples was conducted to determine the effectiveness and needed changes for the project.

Chapter 5 provides a final evaluation of the project, including examining the purpose, the five goals, and the research methodology. Additionally, there are assessments of the strengths, weaknesses, and theological content. My own personal thoughts and reflections are given in this chapter as well. The analysis and evaluation of the project was to make the program more efficient for any future use.

CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLE GIVES CLEARLY DEFINED ANSWERS AND PRINCIPLES FOR A GOD-HONORING, GOD-PLEASING, JOYFUL MARRIAGE

Scripture is one of the greatest assets that God has bestowed upon man. He has provided mankind with the Word, in order for us to know how to live in a sanctified, Christ-centered way, and to experience abundant life. The Bible covers every area, guides every decision, and addresses every situation and aspect of our lives here on earth. With this being true, is it any wonder that for an authoritative and sufficient word regarding relationships, especially those between spouses, one must turn to Scripture?

Marriage is a God-ordained, God-established institution that God founded first, before government, educational systems, and even before the church existed. God began a relationship with Adam and then with Eve. At that union of their marriage God created a relationship with this family and he desired to be at the center of it. Therefore God and God's Word should be the foundation and center point of every marriage. If a marriage is not focused on living to please God and living in accordance with His Word, then the couple will not know how to handle future problems in a way that God intends.

Marriage is sure to encounter many pitfalls, difficult seasons, and decisions, so married couples need to learn how to seek and apply Scripture to them. Time and space constraints allow for a detailed examination of only a few foundational texts for marriage. The starting point is Genesis 2:18-25, which addresses the establishment of marriage; It is

important to know the origins of marriage before one can study other areas of marriage. The second passage will be Ephesians 5:22-30, which supplies biblical principles for the roles of wives and husbands. The third passage is 1 Peter 3:1-8, which provides biblical instructions for the responsibilities of wives and husbands within those roles. While Christians may know that Scripture is the foundation for solving all their problems, they nevertheless are often ill equipped for the task of discovering and applying biblical principles for problem solving. Biblical mentoring or discipleship is about mature believers equipping immature believers for this task. Therefore, Titus 2:1-8 will be the fourth passage and presents biblical principles for men and women to teach and train the younger generations. The fifth and final passage is Colossians 1:28-29, which provides biblical instruction for admonishing and helping fellow believers to mature in their walk. The following exposition of these five Scripture passages gives clarity as to how God's Word applies to marriage and discipleship.

God Establishes the Foundation for Marriage in Genesis

The God-inspired words in the first chapter of Genesis give sufficient revelation, in order to teach the future people of God many important truths in addition to the origin of human existence and the creation to the universe. Among them is the truth of marriage. In the second chapter God lays down the foundation for marriage. He creates the first man and woman and then performs the first marriage that makes them husband and wife. In verse 25 Moses gives an epilogue to the passage and explains that this account provides the foundation of marriage.¹

¹Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 127.

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (Gen 2:18-25)²

God is the God of relationships. He desires to have a relationship with human beings. Also, he desires for human beings to have relationships with each other. Jay Adams states it this way, “God determined to create a being that would enjoy fellowship on both the vertical and the horizontal planes.”³The most precious and fundamental relationship is between a husband and a wife. God designed woman for man and man for woman. God has a plan for the life of each and every person, and marriage is included in the plan for many: “It is not good for the man to be alone.” The phrase “not good” occurs in the creation account in connection with man’s status only, which strongly implies that God created us as social beings to fellowship with others beyond Himself.⁴ Therefore, God’s will was to create a helper for man (v. 18). D. A. Carson explains that a better

²The English Standard Version is used throughout unless otherwise noted.

³Jay E. Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling: More Than Redemption* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 126.

⁴Robert James Utley, *How It All Began: Genesis 1-11*, Study Guide Commentary Series, vol. 1A (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2001), 38.

translation than “helper” would be a “helper matching him,” and points to the fact that Eve “is his missing rib to emphasize the point that only she supplies what he lacks.”⁵

Another alternative translation for the Hebrew word (*ezer*) is “helper” or “a help answering to him.” This translation emphasizes the ideal of shared- responsibility. The appointment of a “helper” for the man demonstrates that man has tasks that he cannot complete alone. Man could not fulfill his role to rule over creation without the companionship of woman, nor could he fulfill the command to multiply and fill the earth. God intended for Eve to share man’s responsibilities, respond to him with understanding and love, and wholeheartedly cooperate with him in working out the plan of God.⁶

In verses 19 and 20, God paraded all the various kinds of animals before Adam, so that Adam could name them. But once again God declared, “But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.” The design of this scene was to show Adam, among other things, that none of the living creatures he saw was on an equal footing with himself. Each class came with its mate of the same kind, form, and habits, but he alone had no companion.⁷

God was implementing his plan and laying the groundwork for Ada, so that Adam would understand the role of his wife. The certainty is that the woman about to be created would be man’s helper. The animals are designed to be helpers for man, but none

⁵G. J. Wenham and D. A. Carson, eds., *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, 4th ed. (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 62-63.

⁶Utley, *How It All Began*, 38.

⁷Robert Jamieson and A. R. Fausset, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960), 18-19.

of them is suitable as a mate. Animals are inferior to man; the woman is his equal.⁸ Man needed a helper to accomplish God's goals for mankind. The woman, therefore, was an essential part of God's design for Adam to carry out the universal commandments, one of which is to "be fruitful and multiply." This command is fulfilled in two ways: (1) Parents like the first couple bear biological children and multiply the human race; and (2) believing parents become God's vessels through which He raises a godly people for Himself from infancy up⁹. Therefore the command "be fruitful and multiply" helps believing parents carry out the "Great Commission." God gave the believing sons of Adam the command to be witnesses to the ends of the earth, according to Acts 1:8.

In verses 21-22, Moses explains the creation of woman. Unlike everything to this point in time that had been formed out of the ground, God created woman out of another living being. Eve was the last of the recorded created beings. She made her appearance only after everything was in the state of readiness for her reception: a home, provision for her maintenance, and a husband who longed for her coming and who would appreciate her.¹⁰

The fact that the Lord took woman from man's side shows that she was of the same essence as the man.¹¹ She is a part of man, the missing rib. Matthew Henry has an interesting comment on God's choice of a rib to create Eve, "Not made out of his head to

⁸James E. Smith, *The Pentateuch*, 2nd ed. (Joplin: College Press Publishing, 1993), 60-61.

⁹It should be noted that being a godly parent does not guarantee godly children.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, The New American Commentary, vol. 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 216.

top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.”¹²

Once God had made the woman, he prepared to ordain the very first marriage. The last part of verse 22 stated: “. . . and brought her to the man.” God was the Father, and gave away his first daughter to her husband. God established this perfect union, and he still established this perfect union. Although man and woman are not perfect, God has a perfect plan for the husband and the wife. Therefore the union was perfect in God’s eyes.

Adam awakened from his deep sleep, in verse 23, and was introduced to his new bride for the first time. Adam saw her as his equal, because she is a part of his very being. Man was created in the image of God, and now woman is created in this same image. God saw them both as each other’s equal in personhood, having created them both in his image, yet distinctly different in function, having created manhood and womanhood.¹³ So, now the two could begin to fulfill the plan God has for them.

In verse 24 an important statement is made concerning the marriage relationship: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” Moses interrupted the creation story to give important truths concerning marriage (see pp. 20-21) to future people of God who will marry and need to know that such an institute is founded by God, Himself.

¹²Carson, *New Bible Commentary*, 62-63.

¹³Eve was equal to Adam; however God designated that the husband, Adam, was to be the head of the home. For further study refer to *The Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* at www.cbmw.org/core-beliefs.

K. A. Mathews makes this statement: “The significance of the language ‘leave’ is that marriage involves a new pledge to a spouse in which former familial commitments are superseded. Marriage requires a new priority by the marital partners where obligations to one’s spouse supplant a person’s parental loyalties.”¹⁴ The relationship between a husband and wife should have priority over every other human relationship.

That God intended the marriage bond to be unbreakable is clearly evident by the grammar of Genesis 2:24. The Hebrew word *dābaq* is rightly translated, “cleave,” having the idea that the husband is to “glue himself to” his wife, and is buttressed by two appositional phrases: the one before it (“a man shall leave his father and mother”) and the one after it (“they shall become one flesh”). This is the kind of oneness in marriage that Moses has in mind and demands both a forsaking of all others and a permanent joining to the future spouse. It is used often in the Old Testament of physical things sticking to each other, especially parts of the body.¹⁵ Thus two shall become one. Man and wife are to work shoulder to shoulder in their endeavors. That God emphasizes the oneness of the married couple is seen in Genesis 5:2, where it states that he created male and female and he named them “Man.” Additionally, in this verse the word for “wife” is singular, which helps to clarify that man should have only one wife.¹⁶ The man, who is called to be the head, takes the initiative to “cleave” or hold to his wife.

¹⁴Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 223.

¹⁵Earl S. Kalland, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr. and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 177-78.

¹⁶The fact that God brought only one woman to Adam proves the point all the more.

In these verses, God had a specified plan for man and woman in marriage. He founded and established the principles of marriage when He made the union between Adam and Eve and desires all marriages to follow this blueprint in Genesis 2:18-25.

God Defines the Roles of Wives and Husbands within a Marriage in Ephesians

Almost everything that God created and established, he later clarified and explained further in Scripture for man's benefit. Marriage is no different; God founded marriage in Genesis and then throughout the Bible gave more details for how to nurture it, so that godly couples could enjoy the kind of marriage that God had intended from the beginning. Ephesians 5:22-30 is one of these passages:

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, because we are members of His body.¹⁷

Verses 22-24 address the role of the wife, and verses 25-30 focus on the role of the husband. Many times believers misinterpret the phrase, "for the husband is the head of the wife," in verse 22, believing Paul to be teaching that woman is inferior to man or

¹⁷Eph 5:22-30 is not directly about the husband-wife relationship, but about the relationship of Christ to the church. Paul uses the former to illustrate the latter.

she is under man's complete control.¹⁸ Consequently, they hold to a wrong view of submission. God has established order in nations by establishing government for them, calling its citizens to submit to it (Rom 13). Therefore, one can expect to live in an ordered society only when one submits to its governing authorities. Similarly, God gave the responsibility or authority to the husband in a marriage. While the husband is not the supreme authority, he represents God's authority. If wives, then, will be obedient to God, they will respect and submit to their husbands. Wives might look to Jesus as their divine role model for submission, for he set the pattern for submission as well as authority. He submitted to his Father's authority as well as exercised authority over his bride, the church.¹⁹ As Jesus placed himself under the headship of his father, so wives should place themselves under their appointed heads in their marriage relationship.

Bratcher and Nida observe that the Greek verb is elided in verse 22 and must be supplied from the participle "to submit" in verse 21. The verb is used in military contexts of a subordinate's relationship to his superior. It is used also of a wife's relation to her husband in Colossians 3:18, Titus 2:5, and 1 Peter 3:1.²⁰ The wife should willingly accept her God-given call to place herself under her husband's authority.

Verses 23-24 give a comparison between Christ being the head of the church and the husband being the head of the wife. The wife is suppose to follow God's

¹⁸For a more complete listing of the views, see the Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood.

¹⁹Robert James Utley, *Paul Bound, the Gospel Unbound: Letters from Prison (Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon, Then Later, Philippians)*, Study Guide Commentary Series, vol. 8 (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 1997), 129.

²⁰Robert G. Bratcher and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Ephesians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 139.

command of submitting to her husband as the church submits to Christ. Verse 24 also says a wife should be subject to her husband in everything. If the church or wives do not submit to their God-given authority in everything, then they are living in sin. However, the established authority must be used for the glory of God and not contrary to Scripture. If the husband is asking or would cause his wife to sin, then she should not submit to him. Frank Thielman states, “When the situation is not complicated by ignorant or immoral behavior, the wife should voluntarily submit to the leadership of her husband.”²¹

Paul turns his focus to the husband’s role in the marriage. Husbands have used the previous verses to dominate their wives in the areas of finances, service, sex, relationship, and in short, everything. However, the verses have nothing to do with how husbands dominate their wives and everything to do with how they love their wives. Jesus demonstrated how much he loved the church by dying on the cross for her. If the husband, in like fashion, loves his wife, then she should have no problem submitting to her husband. Husbands who notice only a lack of total submission on the part of wives and therefore, emphasizes verses 22-24, should pay closer attention to the importance of their role of loving leadership from verses 25-33 and how it relates to a wife’s submission. Jesus loved his bride so much that he willingly and lovingly gave himself for her. If a husband loves his wife in the same way, she can rest assured that his intentions are for her best interest and also the good of their marriage. “Following the example of Christ, he is to give his wife not only all that he has but also all that he is. When a husband loves his wife so completely, the wife need never fear submission.”²² Just as the

²¹Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 381.

submission by the body to our Lord Jesus Christ helps ensure a vibrant, healthy body of believers, the submission by the wife to a godly husband helps ensure a vibrant, healthy marriage.

Christ loved and died for the church so that he may prepare his bride for the marriage union. Verses 26 and 27 present the reason for this self-sacrificial love found in the previous verse. One wonders if Paul had in mind when he wrote these words that part of the betrothal ceremony in Judaism called “the sanctification of the bride,” in which she was set apart for her husband.²³ She had to be washed and anointed for the wedding ceremony. After the bride’s preparation, the next stage in a Jewish wedding was the bride’s removal from her father’s house to the groom’s house, followed by the bride’s introduction into the groom’s home.²⁴ Jesus sanctified or set apart his bride, so she would be ready for the introduction to his father.

The husband’s role is compared to Christ’s role with the church. Jesus was a servant-leader. He did not lead as a dictator or an authoritarian. Jesus led by serving and setting the example for his disciples and his bride. In this way, Jesus also becomes the divine role model for husbands in the area of headship. Husbands must follow this same example. In Christ-centered marriages a Christian wife can submit with great ease to that Christian husband who himself practices servant-leadership out of submission to the Lord (1 Pet 3:7).

²²Max Anders, *Galatians-Colossians*, Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 8 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 174.

²³Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 552.

²⁴*Ibid.*

The final verse in chapter five explains the man's love for his wife. Paul makes it clear that a man should love his wife as much as he loves himself. A normal, healthy person will not purposely harm, disrespect, or do anything against himself. A normal healthy Christian husband should consciously commit to treating his wife in the same manner. Christ's love for the Church is the pattern for and measure of the husband's love for his wife. Jesus loved the Church not because it was holy, but in order to establish a sacred union with her. In the same way, the husband's love overcomes all of his wife's shortcomings for the sake of the unity.²⁵

A man should love his wife not because she is perfect, but because she is his helpmate, and the two have become one. Christ accepts and loves his bride, and husbands must do the same. Jesus wants to help, protect, encourage, and mature his bride, making her more like himself, and more acceptable to the Father. A husband has the same responsibilities to his wife. He should try to help her be more like Christ. The husband must be the leader in the household, especially concerning spiritual matters and preparing his wife and family to meet the Lord.

In order for a marriage to succeed, the husband and wife should know and understand their God-given role inside the marriage, for God has a purpose for each partner in the marriage. Man is suppose to be the spiritual leader, and the wife is to follow his leadership. Married couples need to study and execute passages like Ephesians 5:22-30 to help fulfill God's plan and purpose.

²⁵Brooke Foss Westcott, and John Maurice Schulhof, *Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: The Greek Text with Notes and Addenda* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1909), 85.

Biblical Instructions for Responsibilities of Wives and Husbands in the Marriage Relationship in 1 Peter

The Apostle Paul relayed many truths concerning the marriage relationship, but Peter also gave instructions for husbands and wives. While Paul's advice comes from that of a single man, Peter's comes from the perspective of a husband. Both viewpoints are profitable to a marriage and, of course, represent God's inspired truth. The husband and wife must understand their responsibilities to God and to each other. Peter provides some insight regarding these responsibilities for each spouse in 1 Peter 3:1-8:

In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any *of them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. Your adornment must not be *merely* external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. You husbands in the same way live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered. To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit.

Peter begins with “Likewise,” which is referring back to chapter 2 concerning slaves submitting to their masters. He is not teaching wives to be slaves to their husbands, but uses the slave-master relationship to illustrate submission for them. Peter addresses the concept of submission in verse 1, just as Paul does in his writings. It is apparent that God wants a complete understanding of who is the head in the marriage partnership. In both chapters 2 and 3, Peter dedicates more instruction to the one in submission rather than to the one in leadership.

God does not view wives as a second-rate creation of his. He has given them an important role in His kingdom, as these verses attest. A wife can be an instrument in the life of her husband for his salvation and sanctification, as in the many instances where the husband is lost or fails to lead. As the one who is more spiritually mature in this context, she will relate to her husband in a way that will promote God's desire for her husband to be the (spiritual) head (1 Cor 7:13-14).

Some women, however, insist on relating to their husbands in another way, specifically by concentrating on making themselves attractive and they perform tasks to be more appealing to their husbands. According to Peter, this is the wrong area of concentration. Instead, wives should concentrate not so much on adorning themselves, but more on developing a heart for God. God is concerned that the hearts of his worshippers are right, so that their behavior will then be godly – a proper way for women truly to adorn themselves (1 Timothy 2:9-10). A reminder of this is 1 Samuel 16:7: “The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”²⁶ The principle from Samuel for women is that they should be concerned that their hearts are pleasing and honoring to God, for only “a pure heart” can produce “clean hands” (Psalm 24:3-4), that is, works acceptable to God: a modest appearance that is itself “clothed” in humility, gentleness, and a quiet spirit.

In verses 5–6, Peter provides an example from holy women of the past to encourage the women in his congregations to submit to their husbands with a gentle and quiet spirit. These women are called “holy” because they lived in ways pleasing to God;

²⁶Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2007), 154.

they were set apart for His purposes.²⁷ Sarah is singled out as the example for these women. The Bible says she obeyed Abraham. The verb used here can mean “to listen to someone.”²⁸ Translated this way, it fits well with the idea of submission, in that it indicates that Sarah took an interest in her husband’s conversation and met his needs and desires.²⁹ It is not saying she obeyed him as a child, but she adhered to his words and met his needs as a man and husband.

A wife should respect her spouse. Verse 6 makes a reference to Genesis 18:12 where Sarah called Abraham “lord” or possibly translated “master,” an unthinkable way for a wife to address her husband in today’s society. However, Sarah was using it out of respect for her husband. It was a wifely courtesy to her husband and recognition of his authority over her.³⁰ Sarah had no problem addressing her husband in this manner because she submitted first to God’s authority and then to the man with whom God had knit her for life.

The last part of verse 6 states “you are now her children.” This is an idiom which cannot be translated literally without being misunderstood. An equivalent expression may be “you are now like Sarah” or “you can be like Sarah.”³¹ Peter wants his

²⁷Ibid.,155.

²⁸David Walls and Max Anders, *I & II Peter, I, II & III John, Jude*, Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 11 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 49.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 81.

³¹Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 94.

female readers to understand that they need to follow a godly woman's example in the way they respect their own husbands. Sarah placed herself under her husband's authority and did this with her whole heart. Surely there were times when she did not agree with or understand Abraham's leadership.

Peter, in verse 7, turns his attention to the husbands and their responsibility. He has just devoted six verses to wives and now only two verses to the husbands. "The apparent imbalance exists only because the situation that a believing wife found herself in during that cultural time frame was more difficult and because Peter's counsel was so transforming that a more extended discussion was needed."³²

Peter tells the husband to act in the same manner. A man should treat his wife in the same way he wants to be treated. Husbands should honor and cherish their wives. They should treat them with special affection, courtesy, respect, and kindness. The word "vessel" is the translation of a Greek word that refers to a vessel used in the services of the Temple (Mark 11:16), also as household utensils.³³ The Temple vessel would be held in special regard, and a wife should be seen in the same manner.

The husband should treat his wife with love and respect, as a fine expensive treasure that God has bestowed upon him as his helpmate. If a man treats and adores his wife in these manners, she will have no trouble gladly submitting to his authority and leadership. In so many instances, husbands want to emphasize and focus on the submission clause. On the contrary, if he would focus on being her protector, treating her

³²Walls and Anders, *I & II Peter, I, II & III John, Jude*, 50.

³³Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies*, 83.

as a treasure, and being her spiritual leader, the submission clause would take care of itself.

When a husband does not behave toward his wife in this way, the consequences are spiritually debilitating. Peter states that the husband's prayers will be hindered. In a marriage, two become one. If there is turmoil and no unity, then "feelings of resentment, growing from selfish conduct in the home, make effective prayer impossible."³⁴ The husband is to be the spiritual leader for his home. There is damage when he cannot pray with a clear conscience resulting from issues with his wife. He will suffer making the whole family susceptible to his bad leadership.

Finally in verse 8, Peter adds a summary of how husbands and wives should treat each other: "All of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit," or in other words "be nice to each other." A man and his wife are each other's companions. When both are saved they are also brothers and sisters in Christ. Peter is saying that believing spouses should treat each other as Christian brothers and sisters treat each other. When this happens their relationship will flourish.

Biblical Principles for Helping Fellow Believers to Mature Spiritually in Titus

The Bible is filled with numerous relationships in which older saints mentored or disciplined a younger saint. In the Old Testament Joshua had Moses, Elisha had Elijah, Samuel had Eli, and Ruth had Naomi to name a few. The New Testament portrays Paul and Barnabas as mentors for Timothy and John-Mark respectively. The prime example of mentoring is Jesus, who mentored his disciples. These examples will be discussed in

³⁴Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett Falconer Harrison, eds., *Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), 978.

further detail in chapter 3. At this point, it is necessary to establish mentoring as a primary, biblical means for instructing married couples from Titus 2:1-8. There, Paul commands mature generations to come along side the younger and teach them:

But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored. Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, *with* purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.

The apostle begins by saying “speak” the things, which are fitting for sound doctrine. The verb “to speak” is a present imperative that, according to this context, would support the idea of ongoing action. Their tongues should constantly speak words that are in accordance with God’s Word.

Paul was familiar with how Jesus had mentored his disciples and witnessed firsthand the fruits of this process. He understood the benefits of the “experienced” sharing wisdom and insights with the “inexperienced.” He wants the older, mature Christians to teach the younger ones in a way that would ground them in sound doctrine: the mature imparting biblical knowledge to the immature and less mature.

Paul gives a list of characteristics for the mentors (vv. 1-2). The word “temperate” refers to sobriety and clear-headedness. Men need to think clearly when making decisions and acting on them. Paul knew how easily a man can become intoxicated with pride, anger, lusts, or coveting, and other sins of the flesh and how much he needed to be sober-minded. Mentors must model and teach how to be disciplined both in thinking and behavior to their mentees.

Paul speaks to the area of being dignified. There is a certain amount of dignity that comes with age. In general, old age produces respect, and respect should be given to older saints. The mentor needs to have earned respect from those in the body and in the community. When one has earned respect, then there is a certain amount of authority and credibility for teaching and mentoring others.

The third characteristic that Paul gives is to be “sensible” or self-controlled. A Christian man must be in charge of himself. He must subject his body, mind, and will to the higher order of godliness.³⁵ Mentors cannot teach and train someone how to act and respond unless they can behave in a sensible manner themselves. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit and one of the essential foundations for the Christian walk.

Fourth, faith is a characteristic that all Christians have and will express more as they mature. If a man abides in Christ, the passing of the years and the experiences of life far from taking his faith away will make his faith even stronger.³⁶ Faith is something that cannot be taught, but it can be observed, experienced, and exercised. A mentor should be an example to his mentee of how to persevere in faith, in order to encourage his mentee to follow suit and find faith strengthened by consistent practice of it over time.

Paul wants the men to be sound in their love for one another (v. 2). Paul does not elaborate on the meaning of biblical love, but one might assume that he would teach

³⁵Knute Larson, *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 9 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 359.

³⁶William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, The Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975), 283.

nothing different from his extended word on the subject in 1 Corinthians 13, the “love chapter.” He teaches that:

love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Cor 13:4-7)

He desires for brothers and sisters in Christ to understand that they need to act out of love in everything that they say and do. Paul makes it clear that as they mature in Christ, they should demonstrate and teach love to one another.

The final attribute that should characterize the men is steadfastness or perseverance (v. 2). The Christian walk is not a short sprint but a marathon. Paul wants the older men to show Christ in all circumstances, no matter how negative and how long they last. He desires for them to be consistent throughout their life for the benefit of the younger generations. Mentors must exhibit the necessity for this perseverance in marriages.

Paul then turns his attention to the women in verse three. Men need to disciple men and women need to disciple women. It is not appropriate for opposite sexes to mentor each other in a one-on-one setting. Aside from the fact that women should not teach men (1 Tim 2:12), there are potential temptations in a context where men are counseling women alone that would be devastating. God has a purpose and plan for mature Christian women, and older women mentoring younger woman is part of this plan.

Women who mentor need to honor God with their behavior. Paul gives a list of requirements for them, starting in verse 3. The first characteristic listed of the older

women is to be “reverent” or “befitting a holy person.” As Lock puts it, “they are to carry into daily life the demeanor of priestesses in a temple.”³⁷ In order for older women to disciple younger women, the older need to be set apart or sanctified, just as older men do. The tenor of their lives was to display a consecrated holiness to God. The Christian is to exceed the ethical and moral standards of the surrounding society.³⁸

Next, they should not be slanderers. The English word translated “slanders” is *diabolos*, which is the term for “devil.” It is not known why Paul addresses the women concerning their tongue and not the men. Possibly it is because they could be come busy bodies (1 Tim 5:12-14).³⁹ Those persons who cannot control their tongues lying and malicious gossiping do the work of Satan himself.⁴⁰

Paul now gives a command to not be “slaves to much wine.” He addresses the same basic concept with men to be sober-minded in verse one. Men and women need to be in control of their thoughts and actions at all times. The world is full of temptation, and alcohol can elevate the appeal and weaken the resistance. One must be cautious, for a person’s testimony may be ruined by the consequences of drunkenness.

Also, the women are to teach and train what is good to other women. Because of 1 Timothy 2:12, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet,” Paul is making sure that the reader knows that women

³⁷George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans; Carlisle, England: Paternoster Press, 1992), 306.

³⁸Larson, *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, 360.

³⁹This was not just a woman’s sin (see 2 Thess 3:11).

⁴⁰Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *I, 2 Timothy, Titus*, New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 299.

need to mentor women. The word translated “train” is literally “to make of sound mind” and means to instruct or train someone to behave wisely and properly.⁴¹ Paul is not saying that women cannot speak in church or worship. It is more likely that Paul was banning disruptive behavior rather than enforcing complete silence on women in worship settings.⁴²

In verse 4, Paul lists seven areas in which older women must train younger women. He instructs them on their first priority, next to God, and that is “to love their husband and children.” He wants to convey the importance of love in a home. The word translated “love husbands” is *philandros*, which occurs only here in the New Testament and means “render affection.”⁴³ The wife needs to demonstrate a deep fondness for her husband. The husband and wife should be each other’s best friend, and their love should reflect it.

With regard to love for the children, it would seem that it should be natural. However, many women do not have or do not practice motherly love. Paul wants to make sure that the younger women express love for their children in every way—practical, physical, social, moral, and spiritual—with a love that has no conditions and no limits.⁴⁴

⁴¹Daniel C. Arichea and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Paul's Letters to Timothy and to Titus*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1995), 284.

⁴²Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, vol. 34, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 100.

⁴³John Phillips, *Exploring the Pastoral Epistles: An Expository Commentary*, *John Phillips Commentary Series* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2004), 271.

⁴⁴John MacArthur, *Titus*, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1996), 85.

The older women should be a model of how to love and treat both their husbands and their children.

Paul turns to the character aspect of the training. Self-control needs to be applied to all areas of the Christian walk. When applied to women, it means “modesty” and therefore indicates avoiding virtually any connotations of sexual infidelity.⁴⁵ The older women need to teach the younger ones to be true to their own husbands and not to be seductive to other men.

Wives are to be workers at home. Dibelius and Conzelmann state, “The two words οὐκ κουργούς and ἡγαθός should be taken together and translated ‘fulfill their household duties well.’”⁴⁶ In Paul’s day, it was more common for the wife to stay at home and be the homemaker, whereas in modern times it is nearly the opposite: wives work outside the home. A wife can work to bring in an income, so long as her work does not keep her from her God-given responsibility of keeping the home. Dr. Stuart Scott puts it this way, “Assisting her husband does not necessarily prohibit ‘other’ work for the wife, so long as it is helpful to the man and the wife is still seeking to fulfill her function of assistant.”⁴⁷

Paul also addresses the demeanor. Kindness toward others must characterize Christian women. Concerning their family they should exhibit a gentle benevolence and

⁴⁵Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 638.

⁴⁶Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles; A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 141.

⁴⁷Stuart Scott, *The Exemplary Husband* (Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2002), 63.

to those in the community they must act with grace and patience.⁴⁸ She is an ambassador for Christ to her neighbors and must represent Him well.

Once again the subject of submission is presented. Wives are responsible to God, and part of the responsibility is to be submissive to their husbands. Once more, the submission is not because of inferiority or obedience. Cranfield has demonstrated that this term (*hypotassō*) does not mean “obey.” Rather, he argues: “The *hypotassisthai* which Paul here and elsewhere enjoins is to be understood in terms of God’s *taxis* or ‘order.’”⁴⁹ “Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart.”⁵⁰ Through this design God desires for marriages to have order and continuity in the home.

Finally, Paul gives the reason for teaching these principles to the younger women. The purpose for possessing these qualities is so that the Word of God may not be discredited, to enable non-Christians to appreciate the Christian message, or at least to give them no reason to despise it.⁵¹ Paul desired for them to be above reproach in regards to their claim to Christ.

In verse 6, again for the third time in this passage, self-control is demanded. This imperative has the same meaning found in verses two and five. The verb can be translated literally “to keep one’s head” and refers primarily to controlling the activities

⁴⁸Larson, *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, 362.

⁴⁹Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 301.

⁵⁰The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, “Core Beliefs” <https://www.cbmw.org/core-beliefs> (accessed on December 10, 2012).

⁵¹Arichea and Hatton, *A Handbook on Paul's Letters to Timothy and to Titus*, 285.

of one's mind, resulting in sobriety and sensibleness.⁵² Self-control is essential to the Christian life and is listed as a "fruit of the spirit." When looking at the fruits in the list, it could be argued that self-control is the anchor for the rest.

According to Paul, Titus' life is to be an example to these young Christians. When someone is teaching by mentoring, he must lead with actions and not words alone. MacArthur writes, "If example does not follow advice, the one giving it will be viewed rightly as a hypocrite, and hypocrisy never promotes righteousness, no matter how sound and biblical a person's teaching and counsel may be."⁵³ Paul's command to Titus is to us by extension: we must set the example for those we mentor as well.

The instruction is to be a model in "all" respects. Paul desires that Titus and his disciples present themselves in a Christ-like manner. He wants them to be sanctify in their relationship with God, so their witness will not be ruined. Again, Paul did not want one's life to be a reason for rejecting or not considering Christ as Lord and Savior.

Biblical Mandate to Counsel Other Christians

Now that we have examined passages having to do with marriage and those having to do with mentoring we examine passage applies to both. God has a commitment to marriages and discipleship. His desire for couples and disciples is that they grow, prosper, and honor him. One of the God-ordained ways to accomplish this growth and prosperity is through biblical counsel. Colossians 1:28-29 is one of the passages that gives a mandate for helping fellow believers to mature in their walk: "We proclaim Him,

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³MacArthur, *Titus*, 92.

admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.”

This passage does not mention marriage, however the truth of the passage certainly applies to married couples, so that they may be presented complete in Christ. Christians need to encourage brothers and sisters to be more like Christ. When a brother or sister has fallen spiritually, it is an opportunity for those “who are spiritual” (Gal 6:1) lovingly to help lift him or her up again. It is time to show grace and care and lovingly to admonish them (Rom 15:1-8).

Paul gives a goal that Christians should have for life and ministry in the last part of verse 28: “So that we may present every man complete in Christ.” The word “perfect” is *teleios*. “When this word describes believers, as it does here, it means mature,” spiritually mature and complete.⁵⁴ In order for the mentee to achieve this goal, three things must take place: proclamation of the gospel, admonishment to correctness, and teaching for sound doctrine.

Verse 28, starts with a command to proclaim him or preach the gospel. Paul is not referring necessarily to formal preaching, but a lifestyle of telling others about our Lord and Savior. Proclaiming the gospel should be a key element in every believer’s life. “How are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard” (Rom 10:14)? Proclamation is the first step in presenting someone complete in Christ which we pray leads to salvation.

⁵⁴Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies*, 195.

The second step, and the focal point for biblical counseling, is to admonish other believers. In this passage the word is a form of *nouthetéō* or nouthetic, which means “to counsel about avoidance” or “cessation of an improper course of conduct”, or “admonish, warn, instruct.”⁵⁵ In the New Testament it is used of believers exhorting each other (Acts 20:31; Rom 15:14). It often carried a negative connotation of warning about inappropriate Christian behavior (I Thess 5:14; II Thess 3:15)⁵⁶ and, in most contexts, with the positive goal of conforming a believer more to the image of Christ (Eph 4:15). It should be our desire to be attentive to and ready to help fellow Christians who need to be restored to God.

The third and final part is teaching with a view to instilling God’s counsel regarding issues relevant to real-life problems. Mature Christians should teach less mature Christians sound theology, in order to help them distinguish right from wrong and to understand God better. When instruction is working together with admonition, there is in place a balanced and comprehensive approach to counseling. While admonition, the first command, is connected to a warning aimed at repentance in reference to one’s conduct and motives of the heart, teaching is connected to faith, refers to doctrines, and is primarily directed toward the renewing of the mind (Rom 12:2; Eph 4:17,23).⁵⁷

⁵⁵William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 679.

⁵⁶Robert James Utley, *Paul Bound, the Gospel Unbound: Letters from Prison (Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon, Then Later, Philipppians)*, Study Guide Commentary Series, vol. 9 (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 1997), 24.

⁵⁷Jamieson and Fausset, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*, 370-75.

Paul not only advises others to live this way, but he practiced what he preached. He states in verse 29 that he labors and strives for the same purpose: to help “present every man complete in Christ.” The Greek word for “labor” is *kopiáō*, and means “a striking or, beating.” According to Brown, in the tragic poets it meant to strike the breast in lamentation and later came to mean the physical consequences of a stroke, weariness, and depression.⁵⁸ By Paul’s day “it denotes not only the activity of exertion and toil and the process of becoming tired, but also the consequences of fatigue and exhaustion.⁵⁹ He was dedicated to the maturing process to the point of exhaustion and He whole-heartily desired others to be complete in Christ.

An individual, whether single or married, is saved by hearing the Word of God preached and, subsequently, matures toward completeness by means of biblical counsel and instruction. One last element in this process of “making disciples” (Matt 28:19-20) is the work of the Holy Spirit, to whom Paul also gives credit, making it clear that the Holy Spirit gives believers the power to accomplish their maturity. God’s Spirit indwells, convicts, and molds believers into his image and enables them.

Conclusion

God in his infinite wisdom established marriage as seen in Genesis 2. He designed the family to be the nucleus of society. It is the foundation for all cultures around the world. Furthermore, inside that nucleus is its most essential component,

⁵⁸Collin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), s.v. “*kopos*.”

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

namely, the husband-wife relationship. If the marriage relationship is not healthy, then the family likewise is sick and the inevitable consequences on society are devastating.

Husband and wife are both sinners. When two sinners live under the same roof there will be conflict and differences in marriage. Conflict does not surprise God; God knows that the family and especially marriages are under attack from Satan and the world. He is aware that it will take place and in his goodness has given men and women guidance for marriage. To strengthen and safeguard marriage, God has provided married couples with divine counsel. He carried men along to write the inspired Scriptures, such as Ephesians 5:22-30 and 1 Peter 3:1-8, just for them.

Jesus' final word to his followers was to go and make disciples. Making disciples in this sense means to invest in another's life for the purpose of conforming he or she to Christ's image. If we are more like Christ, we are more pleasing to God and this should be our goal (2 Cor 5:9). The home, including marriage, needs to be pleasing to the Lord. Discipleship or mentoring will help accomplish this goal. Paul makes it clear in Titus 2:1-8 that older, mature Christian men and women need to come alongside the younger, less mature and grow them in the Lord. The process of mentoring should most certainly apply to husbands and wives.

Part of the process of maturity is warning others of wrongdoing or inconsistent Christian behavior. Passages like Colossians 1:28-29 explain that Christian brothers and sisters need to admonish each other in the love of Christ when sin takes place. One of the modern terms given for the warning or admonition is "biblical counseling".

God desires for the faith of Christian couples and individuals to grow and flourish and has provided everything necessary in his Word for Christians to succeed in

both areas. It is up to them to apply their God-given resources and to lift up and admonish each other. This project is intended to be another resource for believers to use to grow and strengthen their marriages and their personal walk with Christ.

CHAPTER 3

THERE IS A NEED FOR MENTORS IN A PERSON'S LIFE

The many struggles, challenges, and problems of life no doubt leave non-Christians in despair. Christians, however, receive these trials differently, believing them to be divinely tailored by a good Sovereign (1 Cor 10:13), and consequently handle them differently, depending on that which is vital for Christian living: God-given strategies. One among them that Scripture emphasizes is mentoring: one believer helping another believer facing problems to overcome and grow from them. So vital is this strategy, it behooves not only strong Christians to be on the lookout for fellow Christians in need of help (Gal 6:1-2), but needy Christians to acknowledge the value of receiving such help from others in the body and, humbling themselves, to seek it out. According to King Solomon, seeking help from other believers is the wise thing to do:

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him; a threefold cord is not quickly broken. (Ecc1 4:9-12)

Many people constantly seek advice from others. All throughout ones life one must deal with incidents and problems. Some include going to school or college, a new job, marriage, and having children. Then, he or she deals with graduating from school, succeeding in a chosen career, having a better marriage, and raising children. On many of these occasions and others, one may seek the advice and insight from someone who has been there in the past, and for the Christian that someone is a mature believer who gives

him biblical advice. This interaction of seeking and giving advice is bound up in mentoring.

Throughout history people have taken others' ideas or accomplishments and built upon and improved upon them. People learn and benefit from each other. Mentoring or discipling will sharpen the mentee's decision-making and problem solving-process. Scripture-based mentoring can help produce a more fruitful life for Christ and a joyful walk. Though it will not solve all the problems and issues that one may encounter, it is a resource to help one live a more Christ-centered and God-pleasing life.

God's mentoring model is vital for Christian maturity in individuals and married couples is demonstrated in the obvious fact that its remnants are seen in much degenerated form practicing in the world today in just about every area of public and private life and with great success. If these less than perfect mentoring approaches are producing positive results in the lives of unbelievers, how much more the perfect approach (biblical discipleship) in the lives of willing believers?

Mentoring is common and widely used in our society in the spheres of education, professional development, spiritual growth, and personal relationships. Inside these many areas are numerous ideas and techniques on how to mentor others. Many of these programs have had success, while others have not. Because of space limitations, this project will focus on the successes found in a few of the secular programs, biblical examples, and modern Christian programs. Additionally, this chapter will examine some particular considerations for mentoring.

Secular Mentors

Secular society uses the mentoring approach in many facets and venues to make humanity function better. Secular mentors or mentoring programs, such as youth programs, give direction to young people who may not have a positive influence in their lives and train inexperienced workers and apprentices in corporate America in order to

develop their skills¹. In fact, one-on-one mentoring relationships are believed to be so beneficial all aspects of life, that they have become extremely popular in certain fields. Modern psychology, for example, realizes the importance of such personal relationships. Harry Stack Sullivan, a psychiatrist in the field of personal relationships, writes,

All personal damage and regression, as well as all personal healing and growth, come through our relationships with others. There is a persistent, if uniformed, suspicion in most of us that we can solve our own problems and be the masters of our ships of life. But the fact of the matter is that by ourselves we can only be consumed by our problems and suffer shipwreck.²

Sullivan believes that while people in society want to solve their problems on their own, ignoring needed mentoring only causes more problems. He recognizes that for one to have success over these issues one must rely on relationships as part of the solution.

This section will examine some successful secular programs that use the mentor relationship approach.

Big Brothers, Big Sisters

Big Brothers, Big Sisters is a nationally known program for pairing youth with mentors. The organization was founded in 1904 and operates in 50 states and 12 countries. Big Brothers, Big Sisters targets the children with need: those living in single parent homes, growing up in poverty, and coping with parental incarceration. The organization is for children between six and eighteen years of age. Most of the children in the program come from underserved communities. More than 70 percent of the children in the program are boys.³

¹See discussion below, p. 53, for details in this specific area.

²Ted W. Engstrom and Ron Jenson, *The Making of a Mentor: 9 Essential Characteristics of Influential Christian Leaders* (Federal Way, WA: World Vision, 2005), 3.

³Big Brothers, Big Sisters, *Big Impact Big Results*, [on-line] available from http://www.bbbs.org/site/c.9iILI3NGKhK6F/b.5968193/k.5031/Our_programs_get_things_started.htm (accessed January 5, 2012).

The organization calls the mentor the “Big” and the mentee the “Little,” and match the “Bigs” with children in their area. Their strategy of mentoring is working to teach, encourage, and make these youth better members of society. Big Brothers, Big Sisters helps children achieve success in school, avoid risky behavior, and improve self-confidence. One of the main ways these goals are accomplished is during the time the Big spend with the Little: playing catch, reading books, going to a museum, tutoring, or giving advice and inspiration. The main focus in this mentoring is to provide the Little with someone who is there and dependable.⁴

Big Brothers, Big Sisters has recorded great success. According to their research, when a young person is mentored, he or she is 46 percent less likely to use illegal drugs, 27 percent less likely to begin drinking alcohol, 33 percent less likely to engage in violent behavior when compared to similar at-risk youth, and 52 percent less likely to skip school. Gary Walker, former President of Public/Private Ventures, says “These dramatic findings are very good news, particularly at a time when many people contend that ‘nothing works’ in reaching teenagers. This program suggests a strategy the country can build on to make a difference, especially for youth in single-parent families.”⁵

Community Connections Mentoring Program

Local public schools are seeing the benefits of mentoring. Mississippi’s Alcorn County School system established the Community Connections Mentoring Program in 2008. The program envisions a community in which every youth experiences nurturing one-on-one relationships and community support, which in turn allows each of them to develop into his and her full potential, capable of making informed, responsible decisions

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

as an involved member of the community.⁶ According to Janet Chism, one of the site directors:

The general purpose of the program is to impact, in a positive way, our school district and community by nurturing the youth in our schools. We believe that this can be accomplished by providing one-on-one mentoring relationship, so that each mentee has a trusted friend who will help him or her reach their full potential. Additionally, the children will learn how to make informed and responsible decisions, both now and in the future.⁷

The program is for children ages 6 to 14 who are enrolled in the county schools. School administration, teachers, parents, and friends of the child help in finding the right mentor. The mentee may be a child having problems with grades, disciplinary issues, or simply needs a positive influence in his or her life. The majority of the children come from broken homes or single parents.⁸

A one-year, one hour per week commitment is required from both the mentor and the mentee that both confirm by submitting applications and receiving training for the program. Once both meet the requirements, they may start meeting. The majority of their meetings are on school property. However, mentors are also encouraged to spend time with their mentees on special field trips and during non-school hours.⁹

Mentees receive a number of benefits from the mentor, who is trained to influence every aspect of a child's life. Tammy Ray, the program director, explains, "We want to help meet their social, emotional, academic or spiritual needs. Objectives we strive to achieve by building these healthy strong relationships are to.

⁶This information was taken from the Policies and Procedures Manual of the Community Connections Mentoring Program. No author or publishing information was stated.

⁷Janet Chism, interview by author, Corinth, MS, January 10, 2012.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

1. encourage youth to make positive life choices;
2. discourage them from being involved in unsafe activities;
3. decrease drug/alcohol use;
4. decrease inappropriate behavior;
5. increase school attendance;
6. improve academically;
7. prevent them from dropping out of school; and
8. aid in healing hurting children by listening to them and being there for them. Give insight, wisdom, and direction to children without differentiation.

It does not matter whether they are rich or poor, black or white, or what family they came from. We are going to nurture and care for them all.”¹⁰

Community Connections Mentoring Program requires adults, college and high school volunteers to commit to supporting, guiding, and being a friend to an elementary and/or middle school student for a period of at least one year. The administrators always try to match mentors with mentees of the same gender and ethnic background. The role of the mentor is to.

1. take the lead in supporting a young person through an ongoing, one-on-one relationship;
2. serve as a positive role model and friend;
3. build the relationship by planning and participating in activities together;
4. strive for mutual respect;
5. build self-esteem and motivation;
6. help set goals and work toward accomplishing them; and
7. give a written report of each week’s visit. The report includes activities for the day and any areas of concern that the administration may need to know about.¹¹

¹⁰Tammy Ray, interview by author, Corinth, MS, January 10, 2012.

¹¹Janet Chism, interview by author, Corinth, MS, January 10, 2012.

The Community Connections Mentoring Program has seen some positive results since its formation in 2008. According to Mrs. Ray, “Students that meet regularly with their mentors have had a school attendance of 96%, which is about the overall school attendance. Each of the three campuses has reported improvements in the students’ behavior. Additionally, 61.26% of their grades have been maintained or improved.”¹²

Apprenticeship

Our nation’s employers have also developed programs based on the principles of mentoring. Many professions use a mentor-type instructional program to train new employees. These include professions such as nursing, carpentry, electrical work, machinery, and other skilled labor.

The Registered Apprenticeship programs meet the skilled workforce needs of American industry, training millions of qualified individuals for lifelong careers. In 1937 Congress enacted the National Apprenticeship Act to help organize America's workforce with structured, on-the-job learning in traditional industries such as construction and manufacturing, as well as industries such as health care, information technology, energy, telecommunications, and more. Registered Apprenticeship connects job seekers looking to learn new skills with employers and sponsors looking for qualified workers, resulting in a workforce with industry-driven training.¹³

Registered Apprenticeship programs are operated by partnerships of employers, labor management organizations, and government. Sponsors provide mentors

¹²Tammy Ray, interview by author, Corinth, MS, January 10, 2012.

¹³United States Department of Labor, *Registered Apprenticeship*, [on-line] available from <http://doleta.gov/oa/employers.cfm#faq> (accessed 8 February 2012).

on-the-job learning opportunities and required technical instruction to apprentices.¹⁴ Typically, an apprentice enters the program to learn the designated skill. As part of the training he or she usually has instruction in a classroom and then works alongside a trained mentor at a job site. While at work the apprentice will earn a wage for his or her work, but at a reduced rate because of a lack of trade knowledge. Therefore, the more time spent in the program, the more knowledge gained, and the higher his or her salary, until he or she has completed the program and receives the going industry rate. The apprenticeship program typically lasts anywhere from one year to six years depending upon the program's requirements. Once the apprentice has completed the program, he or she should be adequately equipped to perform as a trained professional.

Secular society has used the mentor-mentee relationship in many aspects of life and with great success in most cases. It is apparent that when a less experienced person has a more experienced person come alongside to instruct, encourage, or discipline, then the less experienced often succeeds.

Biblical Mentors

Mentors in the secular world seem to have a more regimented approach than Christians have in the church, receiving both formal and informal training. There are times designated for classroom instruction, and then there are times for observation and hands-on work as part of the learning process. The biblical approach certainly trains and teaches, but it places more emphases on the relationship.

The Bible records some of the earliest accounts in human history of the mentor-mentee relationship that is commonly known in Christian circles as "discipleship". Jesus' "Great Commission" to go and make disciples in all the world focuses on more than mere conversion; It includes discipleship. Herb Hodges puts his

¹⁴Ibid.

finger on the significance of both: “We are to go everywhere and ‘turn men into committed, lifelong learners and followers of Christ.’” Hodges captures here what is inherent in the word “disciple”: an adherent, or an apprentice of Jesus Christ.”¹⁵

Scripture confirms that God has ordained the process of discipleship as the primary means by which one godly generation raises up another. “Once converted, followers of Christ need the care of committed, nurturing ministers who live the Christian life alongside them, helping them experience spiritual growth.”¹⁶ God desires for brothers and sisters in Christ to mature and then pass this maturity to others. In fact, one sign of a mature Christian is that her or she desires to invest in the life of another.

God’s Word is filled with accounts of men and women discipling others. The mentor relationship may be a prophet or leader preparing his successor, a biological father or mother teaching a child, or a spiritual father or mother discipling a child in the faith. Whatever the relationship, it is clear that God equips his followers at “the feet” of more mature saints¹⁷.

One of the earliest mentor-mentee relationships in the Bible is that between Moses and Joshua. Moses was a man used of the Lord. He was commissioned by God to be the deliverer of the captives, giver of the law, judge, and leader of the nation of Israel. While Moses was leading the nation of Israel, God’s plan was to prepare Joshua to succeed him. It is by no means coincidental that Joshua was Moses’ assistant for nearly forty years. During this time he learned from Moses the essentials of how to lead, guide, and instruct the Israelites. Moses invested in Joshua’s life on a daily basis, because God’s will was for Joshua to be Moses’ successor.

¹⁵Herb Hodges, *Talley Ho the Fox*, 2nd ed. (Augusta, GA: Manhattan Source, 2001), 67.

¹⁶Paul Tautges, *Counsel One Another: A Theology of Personal Discipleship* (Leominster, MA: Day One, 2009), 172.

¹⁷Paul at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3)

When Moses knew that his time on earth was coming to an end, he desired to secure adequate shepherding for the children of God before his departure. So he prayed,

Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be as sheep that have no shepherd. So the LORD said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him. Make him stand before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation, and you shall commission him in their sight. You shall invest him with some of your authority that all the congregation of the people of Israel may obey.” (Num 27:15-20)

Moses asked God to appoint a man over the congregation, who would lead them out and in and preside over and direct them in all their affairs. Moses, who had been heavily involved in the lives of the people, wanted a successor that would do the same. Joshua had been sitting at his feet all these years and now was about to practice what he had learned.

God used Moses to bring Israel to the threshold of the “promised land” and would use Joshua, who was moving from apprentice to leader, to bring them into it. God commissioned Moses’ young protégée in front of the nation in the first chapter of Joshua. “Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel” (v. 2). With that Joshua’s time to be mentored ends and his time to lead begins (Joshua 1:1-9).

Another example of a mentor-mentee relationship is Elijah and Elisha. In 1 Kings 19:19-21, God commands Elijah to extend a call for Elisha to follow him. Elisha says goodbye to his family, leaves his vocation, and follows Elijah. Their relationship of mentoring lasts seven to eight years. Elijah invested his wisdom into a young apprentice. During this time Elisha saw how a godly man acts, deals with ungodly leaders, and shows himself to be a true friend. He saw, furthermore, that God rewards a faithful servant.

Elijah and Elisha had a mentor-mentee relationship that might be characterized as a spiritual father-son bond. According to 2 Kings 2:9-12 Elisha asks for a double portion of Elijah’s spirit, a request that reflects the Old Testament practice of the firstborn

receiving a double portion of the inheritance (Deut 21:17), and cries out “My father, My father” as he watches his mentor go up by a whirlwind into heaven in chariots of fire. Elisha had witnessed and been taught the ways of a prophet and now was to step into the role for which he was called and prepared. Elisha’s time to be mentored ends and his time to prophesy begins.

One of the unique discipling situations was between Naomi and her daughter-in-law, Ruth. Naomi, Ruth, and Oprah were all widows; Naomi encouraged Ruth to go with her sister-in-law, Oprah, who had gone back to her family and her gods (Ruth 1:15). However, Ruth was loyal to Naomi and to the Lord. She wanted to stay with her mother-in-law and move back to Naomi’s family in Bethlehem. Ruth considered Naomi to be her family and wanted to care of her. Apparently, Ruth had seen the true Naomi, and the reality of Naomi’s faith caused Ruth to cling to her.¹⁸ Naomi had modeled her life to the younger Ruth, and Ruth had desired to replicate what she had seen. Susan Hunt has this to say about modeling as a form of mentoring young women; “Modeling is probably the most effective way older women train younger women.”¹⁹

The two spent much time together, and it is apparent that Naomi invested in her daughter-in-law’s life. Ruth heeded to her advice and proclaimed, “All that you say I will do” (Ruth 3:5). As part of her instruction, Naomi taught Ruth how to provide for herself and how to find a husband and establish a home. As Nida and de Waard argue, “the introductory statement should read: ‘I must find a husband for you, so that you will have a home.’”²⁰ However, during this process, Naomi instructed Ruth in the proper way

¹⁸Susan Hunt, *Spiritual Mothering: The Titus 2 Model for Women Mentoring Women* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1992), 16.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 57.

²⁰Jan de Waard and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Ruth*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 46.

to preserve her reputation and honor God in her relationships. Ruth had learned from her mother-in-law how to be a wife and mother and now it was her time to become one.

The bond of Paul and Timothy is one of the greatest examples in the New Testament of a spiritual father to a spiritual son: “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, To Timothy, my true child in the faith” (1 Tim 1:2). Paul had lead young Timothy to Christ, and God saved him. This relationship demonstrates the “Great Commission” from Paul’s faithfulness to witness and then to mentor his disciple.

Paul knew that Timothy had been taught the “sacred writings” from his mother and grandmother²¹ but he knew also that Timothy was young in age and in his faith and needed mentoring. Consequently, Paul invested in Timothy’s life:

You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it. (2 Tim 3:10-14)

Paul reminds Timothy to stay true to the lessons he had been taught during their time together. The apostle saw the potential for Timothy to carry on the ministry after him. He also knew that it would take time and effort to train his young apprentice for his appointed time, so Paul disciplined him.

Of all the great biblical mentors, Jesus sets the supreme example. His Great Commission commands more than mere witnessing; It commands us to make followers of him as we go, which he modeled in his three-and-a-half-year public ministry. Jesus not only preached to the multitudes²² and witnessed one-on-one,²³ he demonstrated with

²¹2 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 3:15.

²²Luke 5:1; Matt 9:35, etc.

Mary, Martha, and others how to invest in the lives of other believers. His example shows how Christians should base their ministry and approach for making disciples on the “Great Commission.” Engstrom and Jenson make this statement about Jesus as a mentor:

To the Christian believer, there is no greater ‘mentor’ than the Lord Jesus Christ. How he fashioned his meek-spirited followers into an invincible company of over-comers is a display of divine mentoring to which we can only aspire. Unlike Christ, we cannot bring about change in other people’s lives. As God, he has the power to soften hearts and change lives. We are not the Holy Spirit but we are called to inspire, promote, and facilitate whole, authentic living.²⁴

The disciples spent time with Jesus in an on-the-job training program. For a period of roughly three years Jesus devoted his time and his life to these twelve men. He knew that pouring his time and teachings into them and setting the example for them was vitally important, because once He ascended back to the Father, these men would take over as his appointed agents for the spread of the gospel around the world. During this period he taught them how to serve the Lord, love people, and carry out ministry to others. Jesus knew when to encourage them, rebuke them, and correct them in love. A good mentor-mentee relationship should be one that allows the mentor opportunities to correct the mentee for the purpose of the mentee’s growth and enrichment. The mentee should seek and desire this correction, so that he or she may progress toward spiritual maturity. In summary, mentoring is one of the main ways in which Jesus instructed and taught people. “The commission of Jesus to his own disciples to go and disciple others was intended to provide a pattern of teaching for his people for all time and as such is to be taken seriously by the Christian church in the present age.”²⁵

²³John 4:4-42.

²⁴Ted W. Engstrom and Ron Jenson, *The Making of a Mentor: 9 Essential Characteristics of Influential Christian Leaders* (Federal Way, WA: World Vision, 2005), 8-9.

²⁵Sylvia Wilkey Collinson, *Making Disciples: The Significance of Jesus’ Educational Methods for Today’s Church* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2004), 244.

It is clear from these biblical examples that God uses spiritually mature Christian men and women to develop the less spiritually mature and, therefore, provides the church with mentoring principles that are no less applicable to Christian marriages today. Immature Christian couples should see the wisdom of learning from other Christian couples that are more mature than themselves.

Christian Mentors

There can be no question that Christian mentors must invest time in the lives of their mentees. When the discipler spends time with the disciple, he or she can discern and address areas of concern in the disciple's life. The relationship should develop to the level where the mentor can lovingly speak the truth to the mentee for the spiritual growth of the mentee and the good of the body of Christ (Eph 4:15-16). It is necessary at this point to examine a few of the present-day mentors and mentoring programs in Christian contexts that follow the pattern for mentoring set by these biblical examples, where personal involvement in another's life is a major aspect.

Navigators

One of the better-known Christian mentoring organizations is Navigators. Dawson Trotman established the ministry in 1933. The goal of the Navigators is stated as follows:

Our aim is to make a permanent difference in the lives of people around the world. Our purpose—To Know Christ and to Make Him Known[®]—describes the center and direction of the ministry. From the beginning, we have sought not only to reach people for Christ but to equip them so that they, in turn, can help fulfill Christ's commission to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19).²⁶

²⁶The Navigators, “About Us,” <http://www.navigators.org/us/aboutus/history> (accessed 19 December 2012).

Today, Navigators' staff is over 4,600, including 70 nationalities and communicating in as many as 130 languages.²⁷ The organization believes in one-on-one mentoring. They do this through Bible study, prayer, teaching, counseling, and encouraging others. Their website describes their approach this way: "We help people 'navigate' life by establishing life-on-life mentoring, or discipling, relationships with them, equipping them to make an impact on those around them for God's glory."²⁸

The Navigators organization has been successful in reaching and mentoring people for Christ. Leroy Eims, the former director of public ministry for Navigators, identifies three things a productive mentor must know when mentoring others:

1. He must have clearly in mind what he wants them to know and understand of the things of God; he must know what are the basic ingredients in a life of discipleship.
2. He must have a clear picture of what he wants these disciples to become. He must know what bedrock elements of Christian character must be theirs and what kind of people they should be.
3. He must have a vivid vision of what he wants them to learn to do and a workable plan to help them accomplish it.²⁹

These three guidelines seem to be somewhat universal for mentoring contexts, but an evaluation of Jesus' discipleship model would show them to be integral to Christian discipleship.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Leroy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 36.

Herb Hodges

Herb Hodges³⁰ is one of the strongest modern day Christian disciplers that this author has ever met. He pastored churches for twenty-seven years and then became a full-time evangelist, disciple-maker, and speaker. Hodges has written two books on discipleship and distributes monthly lessons for disciplers. As a disciple-maker and conference leader, he has made over 195 international trips and hundreds within the United States. He recognized that the Great Commission is about more than soul winning and missions; it is essentially discipleship. It is more than just making converts or someone coming to be called a “Christian;” It is actually making disciples of Christ. Hodges states that believers need to “equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Eph 4:12). He writes, “A disciple is a learner who follows and a follower who learns.” He points out that “disciple” is used 269 times in the first five books of the New Testament, and “Christian” is used only three times in the entire Bible, signifying the Holy Spirit’s desire to put the emphasis on following Christ.³¹

Hodges has patterned his discipleship methods on God’s Word and the principles found in 2 Timothy 2:2: “and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” He desires to invest in one faithful man at a time and have that man do the same, just as Christ demonstrated.³² He states that the process, as laid out in 2 Timothy 2:2, is like a widening funnel with two crucial points concerning disciple-making: (1) The importance of the individuals, and (2) the importance of positive relationships. This process, illustrated in figure 1, page 63, could be called God’s multiplication table.³³

³⁰Herb Hodges is the founder of Spiritual Life Ministries, an organization that focuses on disciple-making training and resources. He is well known in Southern Baptist churches in the southeast.

³¹Herb Hodges, interview by author, Corinth, MS, October 16, 2012.

³²Ibid.

³³Hodges, *Talley Ho The Fox*, 129.

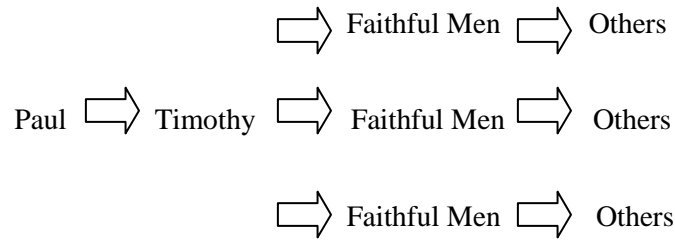


Figure 1. God’s multiplication table

Rise Up Mentoring

Rise Up Mentoring is a faith-based mentoring organization that was founded by Michael Marion in 1994. The ministry began when Marion and his wife began mentoring young men. He says, “Sherry and I felt that we had to do something to help boys become the men God intended them to be.” Through federal grants they were able to dedicate themselves to this work full-time and then add staff and a girls’ group.³⁴ Rise Up now has approximately 75 kids who come each week after school and approximately 100 total kids who are being mentored. “Our mission statement is to impact 100 kids, through life skills and mentoring, to become first generation college students.” The vision of Rise Up is to influence and impact 500 kids by 2020.³⁵

Rise Up Mentoring’s mission is to provide a safe place for kids who have unstable homes and lifestyles and most of whom do not know what a normal family is like. The staff picks up children, mostly from schools and brings them to the campus called the Refuge, where each evening they offer tutoring and classes that are designed to impact both children and their families socially, educationally, culturally, and spiritually. In addition, every child receives a hot meal each night and takes home any leftovers for their needy families.

³⁴Rise Up For Kids, “Who We Are,” <http://www.riseupforkids.com/who-we-are/our-history-and-our-future-2/> (accessed 16 March 2012).

³⁵Debbie Crum, interview by author Corinth, MS, February 7, 2012.

Mentoring is the key aspect of the program and the majority of the children are assigned to a mentor. All the mentors, volunteers, and staff must be born-again Christians and hold to the ministry's core beliefs. The mentor who meets weekly with the child often will include the child in his own family activities. Mentors are required to report monthly to the organization any updates and prayer requests for the child. The ministry has seen that mentoring with a consistent, positive role model has proven to make a difference in the life of the child and his or her family.³⁶

These are a few of the ministries that I am aware of, and they represent only a minute sample of the Christian-based mentoring programs that take place around the world. These programs set out to train mentees to become the men and women that God intended them to be, including godly husbands and wives. Christian mentoring can greatly impact today's marriages. If the husband and wife become sound disciples of Christ, then their marriage will flourish and function and be pleasing to God. Through proper biblical mentoring from mature Christian couples, these husbands and wives will know how to handle the difficulties and problems that arise in the marriage.

Other Considerations for Mentors

What follows are some general aspects that need to be addressed when mentor counseling is established in local church ministry.

Participation/Commitment

Both the mentor and the mentee couple must be willing to participate in the relationship. If either couple is hesitant about the process, then the success of the mentoring will be compromised. Both couples need to be committed to the relationship. This will include making time to spend with each other.

³⁶Ibid.

Also, the commitment needs to include an obligation to keep confidential any sensitive information disclosed as a result of the relationship. As with any relationship, there must be a strong element of trust. If the mentor or mentee does not keep strict confidentiality, then their relationship and mentoring time will be compromised.³⁷

Accountability

Accountability will help a mentored couple succeed, therefore, mentor couples must hold their mentees accountable for their Christian walk, responsibilities, and marriage commitment. Christians are responsible to God first and foremost for their actions. Brothers and sisters in Christ are also accountable to each other. If one is living in sin, then he or she needs to be confronted.³⁸ If believers are willing and eager to ask their fellow church members to help hold them accountable for how they live and act, then their sanctification will progress, for this is a biblical principle that Jesus demonstrated to his disciples, Paul demonstrated to John Mark, and that Peter practiced to Ananias and Sapphira.

Time

There should be a period of time for the mentoring process. That is to say, this time should be neither restricted to a non-negotiable set of meetings that could finish before the goal is reached, nor left so open-ended that both mentor and mentee lose sight of the goal. The idea of specified but flexible is that the time specified for completing the necessary training that the mentor has in mind is flexible enough, so that it may be extended if necessary to insure successful training without being wasted.

³⁷Concerning confidentiality, it is also assumed that if there is a known sin, the mentee has repented, then there is no need to follow the outline for church discipline that is defined in Matt 18:15-17. Also, confidentiality could also be at risk if there is any reason to believe that he or she might do harm to his self or her self, or to someone else.

³⁸Matt 18:15-17; Luke 17:1-4; 1 Cor 5:5-13.

Obviously, one never graduates from being a disciple, but Jesus gave some clear evidence of a level of maturity that can be reached. These principles may be applied to an individual as well as to a husband and wife. Below are some signs to look for concerning the appropriate time to terminate the mentoring process. The mentee(s) is finished when he or she.

1. holds to Christ's teaching and obeys his Word in daily living and decisions (John 8:31-32);
2. loves others as Christ loved his disciples (John 13:34-35);
3. bears much fruit that glorifies God and the Spirit in him and through him labors (John 15:8,16); and
4. surrenders to Christ's will and follows Him in each area of his or her life (Luke 14:27).
5. when one becomes a disciple maker, which is the fulfillment of the Great Commission.³⁹

Gender

The project is for married couples to mentor other married couples. Most of the mentoring will take place together as couples. However, if there is any individual time, then husbands should mentor husbands and wives should mentor wives. There are different reasons for this format; one is that it is the prominent way seen in God's Word (cf. 1 Tim 2:12). Additionally, the mentoring spouse needs to address the issues in which he or she has the experience and understanding from Scripture. Yet another reason is that makes it much less risky for a mentor to become attracted to or tempted by a mentee of the opposite sex.

³⁹Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton, *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationship You Need to Succeed in Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1992), 54-55.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented only a few of the many mentoring approaches and programs that occur around the world. No present-day program, process, or approach is implemented perfectly, because of man's imperfection. However, when a mentor applies God's Word correctly and the mentee receives and employs it correctly, then there is change and spiritual growth. It is evident, as seen through the biblical, Christian, and secular examples, that if the mentor and mentee are committed to the process, then there is a learning and advancement.

These same principles and truths may be applied to married mentoring couples. Marriages need all the support and help that they can receive. Married couples need the experience, wisdom, and input from other Christians. Marriages in the United States are in a sad state of affairs with approximately one out of every two ending in divorce. Husbands and wives can benefit from the investment of others in their marriage. Mentoring by more mature couples can improve a marriage. Benson has this to say about the mentoring process for couples:

Mentoring itself shares three ingredients. The act of volunteering to be a mentor shows a couple that their marriage is valued and important. The content of mentoring offers both explicit and implicit social learning and opportunities that continue along with the friendship of the mentors and their couple. The process of mentoring offers ongoing support. These ingredients—value, learning, and support—represent a rediscovery of the benefits of extended family.⁴⁰

One the most effective and efficient ways to learn anything is to be mentored by someone with experience. Their experience can be invaluable to the training of the inexperienced. Even the word "experience" implies an encountered knowledge or involvement in a particular matter. This wisdom may then be passed on to the less experienced person. "Marriage mentoring provides couples starting out with a clear sense

⁴⁰Harry Benson, *Mentoring Marriages* (Grand Rapids: Monarch, 2005), 227.

of values, an opportunity to learn alongside those who have made marriage work, and an opportunity to build the kind of close-knit friendship that allows couples to nip problems in the bud.”⁴¹

The encountered knowledge may come from two perspectives. First, when someone has completed a task successfully he or she can in return teach the correct steps. If one knows how to do something the proper way, then fewer errors will be made and victory will ensue. The second perspective is to learn from the failures of another. Some of the most valuable lessons learned are from mistakes. When one has a mishap, he or she tends to learn from it. The experience may then be passed on as a warning or caution to others.

Mentoring couples and this project may be tools to help improve or strengthen marriages. But we must remember that the ultimate sources and solution is our Lord Jesus Christ. During every day of our lives we must seek to please him in all circumstances: “So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him” (2 Cor 5:9).

⁴¹Ibid., 217.

CHAPTER 4

DETERMING AND ADDRESSING THE MARRIAGE MENTORING PROGRAM

Marriages in today's society are heavily plagued by problems and divorce. Oakland Baptist Church is no exception to the blight on marriages and families. It is also apparent that these marriages need assistance and encouragement in these troubled times. With that in mind, a desire arose to establish an effective biblical marital counseling program that could help strengthen marriages at Oakland Baptist Church.

Along with aiding these distressed couples, there were other advantages. The trained mentor couples would assist the pastor and staff in biblical counseling, and it was expected that their own marriages would be encouraged and grow through the process. Prior to this project, marriage counseling at Oakland Baptist was done by one of the pastors on staff with little or no help from other believers. Many couples at the church were willing to assist the troubled marriages, but most had no understanding of how to counsel or mentor biblically.

One of the objectives of this project was to develop a biblical mentoring program for couples, in order to address problematic issues in marriages on the basis of the perceived causes that were identified by local pastors and married couples. Questionnaires were sent to local pastors and married couples at the beginning of this project to determine their opinions on the leading issues. The data from these questionnaires were used to determine some of the training sessions for the mentor couples.

Another objective of the mentor/counseling program was to make the program practical for further use. After the mentor couples completed the training sessions, it is

expected that they will have an understanding of the perceived issues facing marriages and how to counsel others using God's Word.

This chapter outlines the methodology and implementation of this ministry project at Oakland Baptist Church—the details of the pre-training instrumentation, the post-training evaluation, a schedule of the training, and topics for each session.

Data Gathering Process

The process of identifying the perceived problems in marriages in Corinth and neighboring communities began in March 2013. A meeting was held with Oakland Baptist's Pastor, Randy Bostick, who has been a pastor in the area for over 30 years and knows many of the churches, pastors, and ministries. This meeting was to determine a list of prominent pastors and churches to be used for the pastoral survey.

That same week the surveys were mailed to 15 local pastors designed to discover the issues that these pastors encounter in their counseling sessions and at their churches. Additionally, the surveys sought to gather information concerning the pastors' counseling style and if they felt mentor couples would be helpful to have in their churches (see Appendix 1 for survey questions and scales).

During week 3, a portion of the surveys were completed and returned. Of the fifteen pastors that received the survey, eleven participated in the survey. These men had been in the ministry from 11 to over 48 years (22 years was the average). The amount of sessions that they averaged for marital counseling was between 0 to 5 sessions (the average was 2.4 sessions per counseling incident). Three of the men did all the counseling in their churches, eight of them shared the responsibility with other staff members, and one received his wife's assistance.

The pastors received a list of 13 major counseling issues that they were to rank, according to their own counseling experiences, in order of prominence. There was also

space provided to list other issues or comments about the questionnaire (see Table 1, for the range of answers and ranking).

Table 1. Pastor survey results

Issue	Most Important	Least Important	Average
Communication	1	6	2.9
Spiritual	1	12	4.6
Finance	1	11	4.7
Role of Husband	1	12	5.5
Conflict Resolution	2	12	5.6
Leadership in Home	1	12	7.0
Parenting	2	13	7.2
Expectations in Marriage	1	13	7.5
Forgiveness	5	11	7.6
Role of Wife	1	13	8.0
Family	5	11	8.1
Sex	1	13	8.5
Anger	6	13	9.2
Other	N/A	N/A	N/A

Additionally, the pastors were asked to rate their counseling styles on a scale of 1 to 10, with psychology-based being 1 and Scripture-based being 10. The answers ranged from 5 to 10 with the average being a 7.7. In this same survey the pastors were asked to rate the following statement, “I feel adequately trained to perform marital counseling”. A 1 on the scale meant that they strongly disagreed with being adequate and a 10 indicated that they strongly agreed with being adequate. The results ranged from 3 to 10, with 6.4 as the average. Finally, a third question asked them to rank on a scale from 1 to 10, 1 indicating that the participant strongly disagrees and 10 indicating that he strongly agrees, how beneficial it would be for them to have trained mentors in their churches.

Also during week 1 a survey, with a list of problems and scales identical to the ones presented to the pastors, was sent to 20 couples in Oakland Baptist, who had been

married for at least twenty years. This length of marriage was deemed to be an adequate amount of time for couples to have faced different issues and problems, including those involving parenting. Both the husband and the wife were given a survey to complete, and they were instructed to complete the surveys separately. The couple's survey sought to determine marital problems based upon their own marriage. It also inquired if they had ever experienced marriage counseling and, if so, the bases for the counseling (i.e., biblical or secular-based). Additionally, the couples were asked if they believed that trained mentor couples would be beneficial to marriages at Oakland Baptist.

Of the 20 couples that were sent surveys, thirteen returned the surveys two weeks later. The couples participating in the survey had been married from 21 to 50 years (36.6 years was the average). Two of the 13 couples had gone to marriage counseling that was biblically-based. The couples were asked if they believed that trained mentor couples would be helpful to troubled marriages. The answers ranged from 1 to a 10 for the men (with an 8.6 average) and 8 to 10 for the women (an average of 8.8). The list of problems and scales were identical to the ones presented to the pastors. Table 2 gives the response range and average totals for the husbands, and Table 3 gives the wives' opinions.

Table 2. Husband survey results

Issue	Most Important	Least Important	Average
Communication	1	8	3.4
Conflict Resolution	2	8	5.1
Finance	2	13	5.3
Spiritual	1	13	5.5
Leadership in Home	3	11	6.6
Anger	4	13	7.2
Sex	2	12	7.6
Role of Husband	2	12	7.6
Parenting	4	12	7.8
Expectations in Marriage	2	12	8.0
Forgiveness	1	13	8.0
Family	2	13	8.4
Role of Wife	3	13	9.4
Other	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 3. Wife survey results

Issue	Most Important	Least Important	Average
Communication	1	9	3.1
Expectations in Marriage	1	10	5.5
Leadership in Home	2	10	5.8
Conflict Resolution	2	13	6.1
Finance	2	13	6.6
Family	1	12	6.7
Spiritual	1	13	7.0
Forgiveness	3	13	7.1
Role of Husband	1	12	8.0
Sex	2	13	8.1
Parenting	4	13	8.6
Role of Wife	2	13	8.8
Anger	2	13	9.0
Other	1 wife listed time together		

Both the pastors' survey and the two from the couples had communication as the number one problem, with finance, conflict resolution, and leadership in the top six. One wife noted that she believed married couples should spend more time together. The three surveys were then averaged together to determine which issues would be given the most attention in the mentoring classes (see Table 4).

Table 4. Average and rankings of three surveys

Communication	3.1
Finance	5.5
Conflict	5.6
Spiritual	5.7
Leadership	6.5
Expectations for Marriage	7.0
Role of Husband	7.0
Forgiveness	7.6
Family	7.7
Parenting	7.9
Sex	8.1
Anger	8.5
Role of Wife	8.7

The major topics for the six remaining sessions, then, were as follows: communication, finance, spiritual, expectations in marriage, forgiveness, and family, all of the issues were examined and addressed. Leadership was ranked fifth on the survey; it will be discussed in the role and responsibilities of the husbands and wives (session 2).

Selection of Mentoring Couples

Week 2 of the project consisted of identifying mentor couples to participate in the mentor-couple training. The ministerial staff was asked to help with the selection of these couples. An initial list of 12 couples was selected to participate in the training. These couples were selected on the basis of certain determining criteria that included, but not limited to spiritual maturity, stewardship, and leadership in ministry programs, perceived marital stability, and length of marriage.

Once the prospective list of mentor couples was chosen, each couple was contacted in person and received a commitment letter explaining the project. The couples were then asked to pray about being mentor couples and to commit to participate in the eight weeks of training for the project. The commitment letters were sent out in week 3 of the project, with a deadline for a response set for two weeks later.

During week 5, most of the participants had responded by the deadline, and 7 of the 12 couples agreed to take part in the mentor training. My wife also asked to take part in the project. She has been approached for advice or counsel from women in our church many times and believed the training would be beneficial to her and my ministry. This made a total of 15 people in the mentor group. A pre-training survey was given one week prior to training that was designed to determine the couples' abilities to face and counsel others concerning marital issues.

Training Curriculum

Weeks 4-6 began the development of the eight-week training curriculum. The marital counseling program included an outline of the specific topics that would be addressed in each session, biblically-based studies for each session and issue, reading and homework assignments for each issue, and specific questions or mentoring situations to be discussed during the sessions. Each week a scenario or case study was posed at the beginning of the session to help introduce that day's topic. Most of the cases were presented as friends or acquaintances of the mentor couples. These cases sought to help the mentors understand and recognized the importance of being prepared to give biblical counsel to a friend that might approach them with a marital problem and also to help them put into practice what they had learned during the training.

Week 7 of the project was the first week of the eight-week training sessions. Two of the training sessions were to include a biblical look at marriage, the role of the husband, and the role of the wife. These three topics were examined, in order to make sure that the mentor couples knew God's design for a marriage and the roles of husbands and wives. Understanding these principles would help them identify and address any complications in marriages that they might encounter. Spiritual issues were the fourth problem recognized by the survey averages and they were dealt with in sessions one and two. These first two sessions attempted to clarify the spiritual requirements for the husband and wife as well as their biblical roles. The remaining six weeks of training focused primarily on the top six problems from the questionnaires, but they also addressed each of the remaining issues from the pastor and couples questionnaires. The overarching goal of each session was to emphasize for the mentor couples the need for their counselees to have heart-change and to please God with their lives as their primary goal (e.g., 2 Cor 5:9; Matt 15:18-19). Another point of emphasis was to teach the mentor couples how to give and present hope for any troubled marriages or lives in general.

Session 1 was titled “What is a Biblical Marriage and Mentoring?” and began by explaining in detail the overall purpose and goals of the project and answering any initial questions the couples might have after committing to the project. Each couple was given a blank notebook during the first session that they were to fill each week with the study notes, homework assignments, and reading materials for each session. The participants were asked to develop this notebook as a resource when they mentored or counseled other couples in the future. Also, pre-training questionnaires were completed and collected before the session began (see Appendix 2 for the questionnaire).¹

A case study scenario was given to each participant to start the session. The case was about a couple facing divorce because the wife was “tired of being married.” The husband, however, was willing to do whatever he could do to save the marriage. The mentors were asked to think about how they would counsel the husband and the wife on the basis of the details from the information provided. The case helped introduce the session on biblical marriage and also emphasized the influence that they as a couple may have as mentors.

This session included the definition of a mentor, the reasons for and roles of a mentor, and the biblical foundation for mentoring others. There were two Scripture passages used to support mentoring: Matthew 28:19-20—“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age”; and 2 Timothy 2:2; “[A]nd what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able

¹This questionnaire measures the couples understanding on communication, roles of husband and wife, finances, forgiveness, conflict resolution, and physical intimacy based upon Scripture and determines their confidence in biblical counsel and mentoring. This survey differed from the pastor and married couple’s survey in that the thirteen issues fall under the area of those listed on the focus group survey.

to teach others also.” These verses were used demonstrate to God’s plan to train, disciple, and w Christians. How these principles can apply to marriages were also discussed.

The majority of the time was spent examining a biblical marriage from Genesis 2:24. The session was based on the exposition of Ephesians 5:21-33 and a study developed by Jim Newheiser on the “leave” and “cleave” principle from God’s Word.² Most of theses mentor couples had a solid biblical understanding of the “leave” and “cleave” principle defined in Scripture, which is one of the reasons that they were selected to participate in the training. However, this session sought to make sure the couples not only understood the principle but also knew how to explain it to couples they might mentor.

The couples were given homework to be completed by the following week. Each person was presented with 12 questions concerning marriage issues and then asked to evaluate himself or herself on how they would handle each issue. Also, the couples were given another homework sheet that asked both husbands and wives separately to list areas in their marriage where they needed to improve and also where they felt they had helped make the marriage better. When they finished their individual questionnaire they discussed their answers with each other.

Session 2 was titled “The Husband and Wife’s Roles and Responsibilities.” At the beginning of the class each person was given two mentoring case scenarios. The first case dealt with a wife who did not want to take advice from her husband. She was a new Christian and was concerned about waiting too long to continue her education. Her husband asked her to wait for a few months, at which time his job would allow him to spend more time with their children while she attended school. The second case presented a couple in their second marriage, where the husband did not want to show affection or

²Jim Newheiser, “Biblical Foundations: God's Directive for Marriage,” http://www.biblicalcounselingonline.org/resources/pdf/basics/God%27s_directive_for_marriage.pdf (accessed March 14, 2013).

spend time with his wife. The couples were asked how they would counsel each of the couples. The scenarios introduced the topics for the session of a wife's submission and a husband's love.

Next, the group reviewed the two homework assignments from session 1. The couples were asked to share some of their answers or questions they might have had concerning the homework. The couples were not asked to turn any of the homework in, it was simply a tool for the couples to use to benefit their own marriages and a resource for them to use in future mentoring of other couples.

The teaching portion of the training began by looking at the roles and responsibilities listed in Andreas Köstenberger's book, "God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation." He lists the positions and functions of both husband and wife that God established. He also presents three primary roles and responsibilities for each spouse. The role and responsibilities of the husband to the wife lies in the following three aspects of their relationship (1) to love and cherish his wife and to treat her with respect and dignity (Eph 5:25); (2) to bear primary responsibility for the marriage union and ultimate authority over the family (1 Cor 11:8-9); and (3) to provide food, clothing, and other necessities for his wife and family (Exod 21:10). The role and responsibilities of the wife to the husband lies in the following three aspects of their relationship (1) to present her husband with children (especially in biblical times); (2) to manage the household well (Prov 31); and (3) to provide her husband with companionship (Gen 2:18).³

Our focal passage for this session was Ephesians 5:21-33. The expositions of these verses are presented in chapter 2 of this project and were the basis for defining the roles and responsibilities for husbands and wives. We looked at how today's culture has

³Andreas J. Köstenberger, *God, Marriage, and Family* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway), 39-42.

turned submission into a “dirty word.” We then looked at a biblical explanation of God’s purpose and plan for the wife’s submission and how it is not a negative concept but directly related to Jesus’ submission to his Father.

Next, the session turned to the husbands and how they should love their wives. This love should also be patterned after Christ’s love for his bride, the church. Jesus obeyed his Father and did what was best for his bride. Husbands are to do the same by obeying God and loving their wives so much that they are willing to lay down their lives for them. Two concepts were tied together in a casual relationship: how a husband’s love for his wife encourages her willing submission to his headship⁴.

Finally, at the end of the class, the couples were given homework for the next week. The husbands and the wives were given an explanation on submission from Martha Peace’s book, “The Excellent Wife.”⁵ The wives were also given evaluations on how they should respect their husbands and the husbands were given a list of ways they could demonstrate love in concrete ways to their wives.

Session 3 was titled “Communication: A Vital Key to Cleave.” The primary focus of this session was on a biblical approach to communication within marriage. The session started with a case scenario about a husband and wife who were having marriage issues and had come to the mentor couple for advice. Both husband and wife had been married before, each with his and her own children, before marrying and having one child together. The couple admits to having major trouble in the areas of discipling each other’s children, their finances, and trust. The husband had found out that his wife had been married twice before they were married. The mentor couples were asked how they

⁴It should be noted that while the unconditional love of the husband is not the condition upon which the wife submits, it certainly makes it easier for her to submit to her husband. This point was covered in session 2. See above pp. 77-79.

⁵Martha Peace, *The Excellent Wife* (Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2002), 137-53.

would approach the situation. This case introduced the session's topic of biblical communication.

The teaching portion of the session began with a study called the "The Four Rules of Communication" based on a four-point expository look at Ephesians 4:25-32. This study was the major area of concentration for the training time. The four rules are identified as follows: (1) Be Honest: Speak, (2) Keep It Current, (3) Attack the Problem, Not the Person, and (4) Act, Don't React. Each of the four points has sub-points and a detailed explanation of the verses that coincide with the each point. Also, a problematic example from a counseling case was discussed at each point and how applying these rules would help to defuse the situation, improve communication, and solve the issues that each of the rules address.⁶

Additionally, the session included reviewing a study of communication guidelines developed by Timothy Keller. This study presents 13 basic rules for communication found throughout God's Word. Keller's paper also had a self-evaluation concerning these guidelines.⁷ The mentor class completed the self-examination and then discussed the results of their communication skills.

Finally, homework was assigned for the upcoming week, which called the participants to evaluate their communication habits and techniques and their spouse's habits and techniques by means of a series of questions concerning tone of voice, body language, language used, and listening skills. Each spouse was to complete the questionnaire separately and then to compare his and her answers with each other, so that

⁶"The Four Rules of Communication" (received at a seminar while attending The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY).

⁷Timothy Keller, "Communication Guidelines" (received at a seminar while attending The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY).

both might discuss any major evaluation differences, as in the instance where a husband rates himself favorably on an item that his wife rates him unfavorably.

Session 4, “Spiritual Issues: The Heart of the Matter,” began with a discussion about the homework on communication from the prior session. The couples did discuss their findings on their communication skills and also any major differences of opinion between them. The majority of the mentor couples believed that they had good communication skills.

The introductory scenario study was presented to the mentor couples. The case was about a wife, who had committed adultery with her husband’s best friend. The husband had discovered the adultery and confronted his wife. She said she had ended the relationship, but the husband found hidden text messages between the two. The husband and wife claim to be Christians and members of the mentor’s Sunday School class, but they had not been to church in some time. As part of the scenario, this couple came to the mentor couple for help. The mentor couples were asked how they would approach the situation and share their thoughts on where to begin with the couple. After the case was discussed, the session concerning spiritual issues was introduced and the group discussed how to address the case study as a spiritual problem.

Session 4’s instruction began with a focus on 2 Corinthians 5:9: “So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.” This verse demonstrates that our goal as Christians should be to please and honor God in all of our actions. The teaching examined how our relationship with God should be the basis for all mentoring and how the starting point should be one’s salvation. The mentor couples were instructed always to ask for a testimony from people they might mentor. It should not be taken for granted that counselees are born-again believers. Next, if the testimonies of their salvation experiences seem to be genuine, then their current relationship with the Lord should be examined and any sinful behaviors admonished. With concern over how one’s

relationship with the Lord affects one's marriage,⁸ the closer one is to God, the more likely he or she will behave in a godly manner concerning other relationships. When a believing spouse focuses on pleasing God, he or she will focus less on the flaws and shortcomings of his or her mate.

The next passage that was examined was Matthew 15:18-19: "But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander." The mentor couples were instructed to concentrate on the condition of one's heart when mentoring. When one realizes that he or she is behaving in an unbiblical manner, he or she must repent, "put off" the sinful desires of his or her heart, and replace or "put on" Christ-like desires. Believers must understand that the heart is the foundation for their sinful actions and also their sanctification. The mentor couples were instructed always to take aim at mentees' hearts no matter the problem or issue.

Repentance was the next topic of study and 2 Corinthians 7:8-10 and Ephesians 4:22-24 were the focal passages. The class was asked to discuss the difference between penance and repentance. Believers are often sorry that they got caught in sin, but they do not have godly sorrow for their sin. Christians try to pay off the sin with actions or promises to God in a form of penance to him. When a child of God sees his or her sin as God sees it, then he or she will have true repentance and turn from the sin and try not to repeat that sin. A true heart change takes place and the sin is "put off." The mentors were taught that they should help the mentees use these steps as part of the sanctification process.

⁸No one can know the true salvation relationship of another individual. However, as part of this testimony one should hope to hear about a time of confession, brokenness, and repentance of sin, a placement of faith and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and then how a change was evident.

Another important element that the mentor couples were encouraged to do was to give hope to anyone that they mentor. During the mentoring process, there should be training for growth and change. When counselees sin, they should be admonished in love with the goal of repenting of the sin. In addition, the mentors should follow admonishment up with hope. Scripture is full of injunctions to encourage and help believers no matter the circumstance (e.g., 1 Cor 10:13; Ps 107:12-13; Rom 8:28-30; Rom 15:4-6).

The mentors were taught that this hope should not be a false hope, but a hope built on God's Word, his promises, and to remind the person that God says, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD" (Isa 55:8).

Homework was given for the following week and consisted of a self-evaluation to help recognize any sinful habits or desires that the mentor might have in their own personal life. They were also asked to examine their own process of repentance and how often they repented of sin. This homework was not only to help them deal with personal sin, but be a tool and resource for dealing with anyone that they mentor in the future.

Session 5 followed the same pattern as the previous sessions, beginning with a review of the previous week's homework. The couples discussed some of the results from the homework concerning possible sins in their lives or hearts. The group also discussed how to approach the process of handling sin.

Next, a mentoring case was given to help practice mentoring. The case was about a couple that had approached the mentor couple for help. The troubled couple fought constantly with foul language and verbal attacks and blamed each other for everything. The mentor couples were asked how they would approach the situation given what they had learned so far. They did well in trying to help improve communication and turn the focus on where each individual needed to change.

The example case study also introduced session 5, “Handling Conflict and Anger Resolution Biblically.” The session started with looking at ten major areas of conflict that they might encounter. Discussion followed with the couples sharing personal incidents concerning these areas of conflict and then how to attempt to address the problems.

Session 5’s teaching time was based on a study called “How We Should Resolve Conflict.”⁹ The session was not limited to one central passage, but examined many different passages dealing with how believers should behave (e.g., Gal 5:22-23; 1 Pet 1:5-8; Eph 4:1-2; Prov 15:1). The focus was again on how individuals are responsible for conforming to Christ, because only individuals can change themselves. After the examination of how to behave as a Christian, the importance of biblical thinking was explored. The mentors were encouraged to learn how to recognize unbiblical thinking and replace it with biblical thinking (e.g., 2 Cor 10:4-5; Rom 12:2; Eph 4:22-24; Jas 1:2-4; Phil 2:3). Next, the group was instructed on how to have a biblical attitude, such as humility, gentleness, patience, and forgiveness.¹⁰ Finally, they were given a list of 15 applications to focus on, in order to resolve conflict:

1. ask what I can do to correct it;
2. understanding the other person’s perspective;
3. encouraging open discussion, allowing both parties to express their feelings;
4. first admit that I am part of the problem;
5. recognize that I cannot do anything to change the other person;
6. check my thoughts about the issue and examine them biblically;
7. ask what my spouse is feeling and try to understand;
8. study the situation to understand the facts;

⁹“How We Should Resolve Conflict” (received at a seminar while attending The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky).

¹⁰Ibid.

9. change my behavior, comparing my actions against biblical principles;
10. listen to the other person describe what he or she thinks I should change about my behavior;
11. use proper words, tone of voice, and body language when I speak;
12. take time to point out in the midst of our disagreement things I appreciate;
13. appreciate the different perspective the other person has and learn from it
14. write down specific repeatable and attainable ways I can better serve the other person in the future; and
15. commit to solve the root cause of the immediate conflict permanently before moving on.¹¹

Homework was assigned concerning conflict resolution. The homework consisted of a self-evaluation of how each person handles conflict. After the evaluation, they were asked to seek biblical guidelines and use them to correct the particular conflict or sinful action in his and her own life.

Session 6 was titled “Finance, Family & Children.” Class time began with the mentoring couples role-playing a case scenario. The case was about a woman from their church that had approached them and wanted marital help. She told them that her husband had physically attacked her and then deserted her and her son. The mentor couples discussed how they would counsel and mentor this believer. Then the second part of the case was presented, which was the husband’s side of the story. The husband admitted to shoving his wife but never striking her in anyway. He told them that he had become angry when he found out that his wife had accrued over \$15,000 in miscellaneous bills and hid the bills for the past three months. The mentor couples were asked how to counsel the husband with his issues and also how to mentor this marriage after hearing both spouses. It was explained to the mentor couples that, as with any

¹¹Ibid.

dispute, both parties need to be heard in order to have a clearer understanding of what has happened (Prov 18:13).

The instruction portion of the session began with how to counsel marriages with financial problems. The class began looking at the present condition of the average debt for families in the United States. Then they discussed how to mentor other couples with financial problems. The bulk of the session was devoted to looking at heart and communication issues surrounding money. Also, a portion of the time was spent looking at how to develop a budget based on material from Crown Financial Ministries¹² and Dave Ramsey.¹³

Next, the class examined and discussed numerous issues that families face, some of which included religious and political views, in-laws, traditions, holidays, value or standards, work, recreation, rules, and up-bringing. The mentor couples were instructed to help the counselees determine if any of the problems were sinful or harmful. The main emphasis was for the mentors to advise or counsel according to the guidelines found in Scripture concerning a particular issue in this category.

Finally, the session concentrated on the area of parenting and children. This also included a broad spectrum of issues, such as discipline, up-bringing, structure of the family, blended families, adult children, and a study by Lou Priolo on how parents provoke their children to anger.¹⁴ A homework sheet was assigned to them on the biblical principles for how they should discipline their own children. The worksheet covered types of discipline, attitudes, instruction, and restoration after discipline.

¹²Crown Family Ministries is a Christian based organization for financial planning. For more information, go to www.crown.org.

¹³Davey Ramsey is a Christian financial advisor and the author of numerous books and studies dealing with finances. For more information, go to www.daveramsey.com.

¹⁴Lou Priolo, "25 Ways to Provoke a Child" (received at a seminar while attending The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY).

In session 7, “Marriage Expectations and Sexual Issues,” the case scenario was about a couple that revealed some sexual issues to the mentor couples after having received several weeks of mentoring. The husband desired sex four or five times a week from his wife, who wanted sex only two or three times a month. Also, both spouses used sex as a bargaining tool to achieve certain things from each other. The mentor couples were asked to role play during class time and demonstrate how they would counsel and mentor a couple with these issues.

Homework on disciplining children from the previous week was discussed and the strengths and weakness of their personal practices. The class continued with an analysis of many of the sexual issues that might be encountered while mentoring, including adultery, pornography, unbiblical sexual desires, and selfishness. The teaching portion of the session was centered on 1 Corinthians 7:1-7 and God’s design for sex in a marriage. After the Scripture was discussed, a presentation on the principles of marriage was given that was based on guidelines found in *The Excellent Wife*¹⁵ and *The Exemplary Husband*.¹⁶

Also, expectations about marriage and spouses were discussed, along with the possible misconception that both husbands and wives have coming into a marriage. Some of the reasons for these false expectations could be related to their family background, friends’ marriages, or the way Hollywood and romance novels portray marriage. The class then examined a biblical view of marriage expectations on the basis of prior sessions. Additionally, the class looked at how either the husband or the wife or both need to change any unbiblical notions concerning marriage.

Homework for the week was a sheet that introduced next week’s topic on forgiveness. It was a detailed listing of people that had hurt them in the past and the

¹⁵Peace, *The Excellent Wife*, 119-27.

¹⁶Stuart Scott, *The Exemplary Husband* (Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2002), 143-53.

circumstances surrounding the hurt. The mentor couples were asked to study the list and determine if there were people on the list that had not been forgiven.

The eighth and final session was titled “Forgiveness and Review.” The class began with the mentoring case scenario about a husband that had an adulterous relationship about five years ago. He had repented of the adultery and asked his wife to forgive him of it. She had said that she forgave him, but she constantly brought it up to him when a disagreement arose between them. She would also use his sin as a bargaining tool or blackmail when she wanted to buy or do something that he opposed. The mentor couples were asked what their advice would be to both the husband and the wife.

Session 8’s teaching time began with a definition of forgiveness. The homework was then reviewed with this definition as a guideline to see if true forgiveness had taken place among the list of names on the “hurt list”. The class studied at least three characteristics of the offended that will be evident when forgiveness has taken place: (1) I will not bring it up to you again to use in a hurtful way; (2) I will not bring this matter up to others; and (3) I will not choose to dwell on it myself.¹⁷ We also looked at how forgiveness is a decision and how to choose to forgive on the basis of Luke 17:3-6. Finally, we talked about consequences and issues found in God’s Word that might arise if we choose not to forgive someone (e.g., Gen 4:6-7; Heb 12:15; Matt 6:14-15; Ps 32:3-4; Luke 7:40-50; Jonah).

Additionally, a general review was given for the previous seven sessions and the importance and goals of mentoring other couples. This included emphasizing the sufficiency of Scripture, giving hope to mentees, and the necessity for repentance and a heart change in those individuals that have sinful actions or attitudes. The mentor couples

¹⁷“Forgiveness Summary Sheet” (received at a seminar while attending The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY).

were reminded that love must be at the center of their mentoring (cf. 1 Cor 13:1-3). They must first have love for Christ and then their fellow brothers and sisters.

The final homework assignment was for the mentor couples to complete a post-training questionnaire. The first ten questions were identical to those in the pre-training questionnaire and the last ten dealt with an evaluation of the effectiveness of the teacher, teaching material, case scenarios, and homework.

Conclusion

The majority of the pastors that responded to the questionnaire said that trained mentor couples would be beneficial to their ministry. These same pastors indicated that they met with hurting couples on averaged just 2.4 times, a grossly inadequate amount of time to help the serious issues that marriages face. Some of the possible reasons for this inadequacy might be that the pastors do not have enough time for more sessions or do not feel that they are properly equipped to counsel couples. If pastors and churches had mentor couples that were trained to help them minister to troubled marriages through mentoring, then more time and effort could be spent dealing with these issues.¹⁸

In addition, almost all of the husbands and wives who participated in the married couple survey stated that trained mentor couples would be helpful to troubled marriages. The two groups, pastors and married couples, helped to identify the major issues that they felt marriages face today. These findings assisted in the development of the sessions taught in this project.

Through the need at Oakland Baptist Church for mentors to assist the pastor, staff, and troubled marriages, 15 people, 7 couples, and my wife were trained as mentors.

¹⁸Of course, even a goodly amount of trained mentor couples is only part of a number of important factors that make a pastor's shepherding more effective. Others included his need to be properly training in biblical counseling, to have a solid view of the sufficiency of Scripture, and a conviction that the essence of pastoring is the ability and willingness of a shepherd to help people conform to the image of Christ.

Before the training, most marital issues were referred to the pastoral staff for counsel or help. It is hoped that the trained mentors will have the confidence and ability to mentor others to helpful degrees¹⁹ as God presents the opportunities. It is also hoped that these mentored couples will apply the principles and teachings from the training sessions in order to strengthen and grow their own marriages. These 15 people have requested that the 8 sessions be taught on a regular basis for Oakland Baptist Church's small group studies.

In closing, the desire is that other pastors, churches, and individuals may use this project to help troubled marriages in their own spheres of influence. A general overview of the teaching sessions could significantly reduce the amount of time and effort that prospective users would have to employ in preparation for such counseling.

¹⁹An 8-week course is not enough time to train couples to be ready effectively to mentor or counsel others by themselves. It is my hope that they will continue to read, study, and seek further training in order to be equipped and ready to share the workload.

CHAPTER 5

FINAL EVALUATION AND REFLECTIONS ON THE MENTOR TRAINING PROGRAM

“Let marriage be held in honor among all” (Heb 13:4). This biblical truth has been all but ignored by our society today. God’s plans and goals for marriage as well as his intentions for the roles of husbands and wives are evident throughout Scripture. Man, however, because of his sinful nature, has distorted, mishandled, and in many cases, completely failed to produce God-honoring marriages. Almost 1 out of 2 marriages end in divorce in America and in American churches. In the past Oakland Baptist members would declare the despair of marriages today, but few would take the time and effort to help or even know how to give hope to these drowning marriages. This project proposed a biblical solution to troubled marriages that was put to the test at Oakland Baptist Church; namely, God’s strategy of discipleship. Additionally, the mentoring project sought to help members at Oakland “honor” marriage, as part of the “among all” in Hebrews 13:4.

Evaluation of the Project’s Purpose

Marriages are being assaulted in our society today and couples at Oakland Baptist are susceptible to these attacks. These marriages need as many God-ordained venues for biblical counsel as possible to assist them in standing strong. The purpose of this project was to develop and train, through biblical counseling and discipleship, designated married couples at Oakland Baptist Church to mentor other married couples as a test case for the body of Christ at large. A comprehensive marriage-mentoring program was developed that 15 people attended and completed. Each couple was chosen on the basis of their evidencing a strong, biblically-based marriage and a desire to assist other

marriages in need. The purpose of this project was successfully fulfilled, leaving the 15 participants ready and willing to help mentor other couples as far as their training will allow.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

This project sought to establish four goals. The first goal was to equip a group of married couples in the area of discipleship, so they could apply the principles of biblical counseling to other married couples and families that were needy. A pre- and post-training questionnaire was used to evaluate this goal. Table 5 gives the comparison and results of the two surveys (see Appendix 4).

Table 5. Comparisons for pre- and post-questionnaire for training couples

Questionnaire Statement	Pre	Post	Percent Change ¹
1. Understanding of biblical principles of communication	6.93	7.82	13
2. Understanding of biblical role of the husband	8	8.18	2
3. Understanding of biblical role of the wife	7.73	8	3
4. Understanding of biblical principles of finance	7.47	8	7
5. Understanding of the biblical principle of forgiveness	8.13	8.64	6
6. Understanding of biblical principles of conflict resolution	7	7.55	8
7. Understanding of biblical principles of physical intimacy	7.67	8.18	7
8. Confidence in counseling someone with marital issues	6.27	7	12
9. How great is the need for mentoring in a marriage	9.13	9.27	2
10. I feel adequately trained to perform marital counseling	2.53	3.64	44

¹Percent rounded to the nearest whole percent.

The first 9 statements used a 10-point scale. A 1 indicated that the person was “not at all” familiar with the statement, and a 10 meant that he or she was “very well” acquainted with the question. The last question used a scale of 1 to 5, with a 1 indicating that they “strongly disagree” with the question and a 5 indicating that they “strongly agree” with the question.

As the table above indicates, the first 8 questions addressed one’s understanding of roles and major elements in a marriage relationship. There was an increase in each of those understandings, from as low as 2 percent increase for understanding the husband’s role to as much as 13 percent increase for a biblical understanding of communication. Throughout the 8 training sessions, the participants exemplified a strong biblical basis for their marriages and for their decision-making in marriage. This was part of the reason for selecting these particular couples for the project. For this reason, I did not expect a large increase in the biblical knowledge or understanding of the participants.

Question 8 asked for the participants to rate their confidence in counseling others with marital problems. There was a 12 percent increase in their confidence levels. This increase is one indicator that the goal to equip married couples toward becoming proficient in the area of discipleship was achieved.

The largest and possibly the most important increase seen from the questionnaires was in question 10, which stated, “I feel adequately trained to perform marital counseling.” It was evident from the pre-training questionnaire that many of the spouses were not confident in their ability to counsel others biblically. The question’s scale was from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates strong disagreement and 5 strong agreement with having been adequately trained. A comparison between the average for the pre-training, a 2.53, that fell between “disagree” and “uncertain” on the scale, and the post-training questionnaire average, a 3.64, that fell between “uncertain” and “agree,” showed a 44 percent increase in the number of those who felt they were adequately trained.

The second goal of the project was to convince these trained mentor couples of the need and importance of mentoring other married couples. These couples all believed that the marriages at Oakland Baptist needed help, but the goal was to help them see that they were needed to help these marriages. Each session began with a case scenario about a problematic marriage that was followed by a time of discussion. These case scenarios were actual marriages that I had counseled in the past while at Oakland Baptist Church.² During many of the discussions, the class was shocked that the issues were real and happened in our church and community. The cases were presented to the mentor couples in a pretend situation in which they were being sought out by the troubled couples for help. The mentor couples were asked to give a biblical viewpoint and biblical advice for the scenario. Many times during these cases, the class would recount those times they were faced with a situation where they had to help friends with marital problems. Accordingly, the mentor couples saw the importance of being trained and ready to help friends or acquaintances when confronted. The second goal of convincing the trained mentor couples of the need and importance for mentoring as married couples, then, was accomplished.

The third goal was to develop a biblical mentoring program to train the mentored married couples how to approach and solve marital problems biblically. The couples were asked if others would benefit from the training; they all answered “Yes.” During the last session, almost every participant expressed that the training program should be included as one of Oakland Baptist’s small group classes. In addition, almost all of the couples agreed that they would be willing to mentor other couples as needed if they were approached by a staff person. Goal three was accomplished and will be strengthened further by future training classes.

²While these were real problems in real marriages, fictional names were used in each case and only enough personal details were presented in order to identify the couple or family.

The fourth and final goal was a personal goal. Throughout this project, I had hoped to become a better teacher and mentor for married couples. In light of this, as part of the post-mentor group questionnaire, nine questions were used to evaluate the effectiveness of my teaching. The participants were also provided a space for feedback, suggestions for improvement, and comments about the training program.³ I discuss the couples' comments later in this chapter.

There was no comparison between the “pre” and “post” because it was strictly related to the training sessions. A scale of 1 to 5 was used for this evaluation, a 1 indicating strong disagreement with the question or statement and 5 strong agreement with the question or statement (see Table 6).

Table 6. Teaching and teacher evaluation

Questionnaire Statement or Question	Result
11. Do you feel the class was beneficial to your marriage and others concerning marriage issues?	4.64
12. Would you recommend this training to another couple?	4.82
13. The material presented was useful and helpful	4.55
14. The material was presented clearly and understandably	4.82
15. The material covered most of the issues that marriages face	4.45
16. The presenter used the class time efficiently and effectively	4.55
17. The class time and material was interesting and held my attention	4.91
18. The homework was useful and made me think about the session during the week	4.18
19. The weekly case scenarios were useful for mentor role-playing and introducing the sessions	4.45

³The individuals were not asked to give their names on this portion of the questionnaire. I wanted mentor couples to feel free to express their true feelings about the program without fear of hurting my feelings or causing me to have hard feelings toward them for their answers.

All of the responses yielded an average between 4 and 5. A rating of 4 denoted that the person “agreed” with the question. Almost all of the participants (4.82) gave a 5 when asked if they would recommend the training to another couple. The same average was calculated in response to the question of whether the material being presented was clear and understandable. Another high score (4.91) was given in response to the question of whether the class time and material were interesting and held their attention.

As for my personal goal of becoming a better teacher and mentor for married couples, I believed I met this goal. The post-questionnaire demonstrated an increase in all of the first 10 repeated questions. Moreover, the last 9 questions resulted in positive ratings with regard to the teaching material and teacher (see Table 6).

Strengths of the Project

The project to develop and train designated married couples had four identifiable strengths. First, the most important strength is that all aspects of the project were based upon God’s Word. The premise for the project’s purpose, moreover, is based upon Scripture, namely, “to go and make disciples” (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).⁴ Also, the curriculum used to teach the eight sessions were solely based upon God’s Word. Each session was researched, developed, and presented from a biblical perspective.

Second, the project involved fifteen individuals from Oakland Baptist Church. These fifteen people are some of the strongest members at Oakland Baptist. They are believers that exemplify Jesus as Lord in their lives. They are brothers and sisters that teach, witness, serve, and follow Christ and the leadership in many different ministries of the church. They were faithful to come to class on time, and they had teachable spirits

⁴This command is not directly talking about discipling marriages, but its principles have been shown to apply to having a godly marriage and how to handle issues that arise in a marriage relationship.

and attitudes. These mentors saw the need to invest in other's marriages and lives, and they are committed to mentoring and using biblical counseling principles to counsel others when the opportunity arises.

The third strength of the project was the overall development of the program. One of the best ways to judge or evaluate this strength is to recall the feedback given by the trainees. The mentor training couples gave positive ratings to presentation, usefulness of material, effectiveness and efficiency of the sessions, and recommending the training to others.⁵ Also, as mentioned earlier when examining the pre- and post-training questionnaires, there was a significant increase in the area of feeling adequate to counsel others with marriage problems or issues.

Finally, the fourth recognizable strength of the project was the impact that this project will have at Oakland Baptist Church. These fifteen individuals can take the training they have received from this project, combined with his and her biblical knowledge, and have a positive impact on other marriages. Also, plans have been put in place for this project to continue in the form of a small group study during our discipleship training time or "Life Groups." So, along with these fifteen mentors, other mentors will be trained, who will not only strengthen their marriages but, in turn, those that they mentor as well.

Weaknesses of the Project

The most obvious weakness can be seen on Table 6, question 18, which addresses the usefulness of the homework. It had the lowest score with an average of 4.18. The weekly assignments for the mentor couples were actual homework assignments that I assign during my marriage counseling sessions. One thing to consider is possibly

⁵As important as being received well by a group of people is, the success of the presentation does not rest solely on how a person is received. There are many doctrines that must be taught that may not be received well, in which case success is defined by simple obedience to God's command to teach what is necessary.

changing the homework that I use during the training sessions. This homework had success in regular counseling settings, but maybe I should have redesigned the homework to include my rationale for these specific homework assignments. Another possibility is that the mentor couples may not have done the homework. During the training sessions, we reviewed the homework, but I never checked to see if it was actually completed. The trainees could just have been given half-hearted attention to the homework or not even looking at it until the class reviewed it. Whatever the reason, it is apparent that the homework assignments were a weakness of the project and need to be revised.

Also, of the diverse comments in the space provided for feedback in the post-questionnaires, most were encouraging and positive. The only one negative but helpful comment appeared on the three separate surveys regarding the number of sessions in the training and length of discussion of discussion time: lengthen the eight sessions to ten or twelve, assign more time to the weightier topics, and reserve more discussion time in each session. The low number of sessions was a weakness, especially since the couples felt that there were unanswered questions.⁶

What I Would Do Differently

One area that I would change is the nature of homework assignments. During the training sessions, my goal for the homework was to have it be a tool to emphasize that week's topic. Also, I had hoped that the homework would be a resource for the mentors to use with couples that they mentor in the future. The homework that I assigned was homework that I use in my own marriage counseling sessions. In the future, when teaching mentor couples, I plan to develop homework that is designed from a mentoring point of view instead of a counselee's point of view (i.e include rationales for specific assignments).

⁶This limitation was listed in chapter 2 of the project. The seminary predetermined the fifteen-week time limit.

Another area that needs change is the number of sessions. There were thirteen issues identified in the surveys. Because of the time restrictions of the project, I taught usually two issues each week and the class time was about one hour and fifteen minutes in length. As I developed the training curriculum, I used the pastor and married couple surveys to determine the most prominent issues. The issues that ranked highest were the issues that I spent the majority of time on during each session; the remaining time was used to address the lower-ranked issues from the two surveys. In order to stay within the time restriction of fifteen weeks, I would combine the data gathering weeks for the pastors and married couples along with the selection of the mentor couples to the first two weeks. Since there was some predetermined topics for the sessions, the deadlines for the pre-questionnaires would be set during this time and then there would be time for assessment. For these reasons, twelve weeks would seem a more sufficient time for the material properly to be taught and discussed. Along with the twelve weeks of training there would be one final week for an evaluation of the project.

One last area that I would change is the date, time, and probably the time of year for the training sessions. The mentor training took place on Sundays at 5:00 p.m. Although this initially seemed to be an appropriate time, about an hour and a half before the Sunday night service, there were constant scheduling conflicts. Each of the fifteen participants is heavily involved in other ministries and had prior commitments to those ministries. Also, the last few weeks of the eight-week session took place in May and June, a time when a few of the couples had vacations and family gatherings that caused them to be absent. The mentors were faithful to come as long as there were no conflicting events. Realizing that there is no perfect time for everyone, the time and date did present a problem and should be changed to the fall or winter on a Wednesday night during Oakland's small group classes.

Theological Reflections

As I have journeyed in my walk as a believer, I have always held a high view of God's Word and applied it to life's decisions. However, through the doctoral program and this project, I now have a stronger belief in the sufficiency of Scripture for counseling and admonishing believers. I have deeper understanding of the truth of 2 Timothy 3:16—"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness". I have seen this verse in action with astounding results. This project has reinforced my belief that Scripture has the answers for a walk of faith, life, or problems that may be encountered in life. Further, this project has helped me learn how to apply Scripture to any given issue.

Additionally, this project has given me a stronger desire to be actively involved in marriage counseling and helping others see the need to become involved themselves in discipling other brothers and sisters in Christ. Mark 10:9 reads, "What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate," and Malachi 2:16 reads, "'For I hate divorce,' says the LORD, the God of Israel." If one looks at these two verses carefully, one can see that God is extremely serious about the marriage bond. If God has designed an institution such as marriage, then Christians, as his children, should do all they can to preserve God's good design. Also, if God states that he "hates" something, then his children should "hate" that same thing. Indeed, Christians should do their part to maintain the institution of marriage.

Personal Reflections

When I completed my Master of Divinity degree, I knew that I had a greater knowledge of God's Word that would help me in ministry. Having served in ministry for a few years, I realized that I had a strong desire to help people through counseling. However, now that I have completed my Doctor of Ministry degree, I not only have a better understanding of the Scriptures, but a stronger understanding of how to apply what

I have learned. I believe that this project and the whole doctoral program have been very useful for my ministry and have helped me grow personally as a believer. This program, moreover, has given me a fresh understanding of how to help those that are hurting and suffering.

Also, to fulfill the requirements for a Master of Divinity degree, I had to take one class in counseling; it was psychology-based. After graduation, I was confronted with a situation in which I had to counsel a couple facing divorce. I quickly realized that this one class had not prepared me to counsel biblically. So, when I began my doctorate in biblical counseling my understanding of what nouthetic counseling was, much less how to apply it, was limited. However, through reading numerous books, taking several seminars, writing several papers, and through conversations with my professors, fellow classmates, guest speakers, and this project, I have grown as a biblical counselor. Stuart Scott helped me see how to employ Scripture to life situations, as I have never done before. He gave me a stronger appreciation for biblical counseling and a passion to counsel others using God's Word. It was a great joy to sit under his teachings in class and to see how he approached every aspect of life from a biblical perspective.

Third, this project has stretched me and matured me in ways I never expected. The writing portion of this project has been one of the greatest hurdles I have ever faced during my educational pursuits. Robert Burrelli, my advisor, has challenged me to become a better writer, communicator, and biblical counselor. He has helped me make sure that my thoughts on paper are clear, precise, and leave no room for misinterpretation. He has also been patient with me and gracious to me throughout this project and, for this, I am most grateful.

Fourth, the doctoral program has given me a newfound confidence to "admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all" (1 Thess 5:14). Before I entered the program, I was very timid and not willing to confront others when they were sinning. Through the whole process, I have discovered that God

desires us to confront fellow brothers and sisters in order to restore them. I am not to admonish others out of pride or a “holier-than-thou attitude”, but out of love for them and a desire to see the bride of Christ perfected.

Finally, this project has enabled me to become a better teacher of teachers. In the past, the majority of my teaching has been directed toward the students actually in my classes. However, during the process of preparing for this project, I had to teach mentors that would be mirroring some of my lessons. Observing the results listed on the post-questionnaires, it is apparent to me that the mentees are more confident now about mentoring and counseling others.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to develop trained mentor couples to mentor other couples at Oakland Baptist Church in Corinth, Mississippi. Throughout the training sessions, there was a sense that the mentor couples were becoming more knowledgeable about how to help fellow believers apply God’s Word to problems and circumstances and, consequently, becoming more passionate about assisting other couples in our church and the surrounding community.⁷ A comparison of the pre- and post-questionnaires confirmed this sense.

While this project, along with its scholastic requirements and favorable results, has come to an end, I believe that the positive impact it has made on the ministries at Oakland Baptist is just the beginning of something greater, the magnitude of which the staff and I will appreciate more with time. It is my hope and prayer that more mentor couples will be trained in the future and that number of marriages that they mentor and

⁷The mentor couples seemed to have caught the vision and were eager to counsel. With further training, they should be ready not only to counsel on their own but to train others as well.

ministered to will always increase. Additionally, it is my desire that other ministers will take the principles found in this project and apply them to their churches and ministries.

APPENDIX 1

PASTORAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to measure your knowledge, wisdom, and experience concerning counseling. Chris Aday is conducting this research for purposes of evaluating marital mentors for doctoral research. In this research, you will be asked to answer questions about your level of experience and knowledge of marital problems. Any information you provide will be *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this questionnaire and survey, and signing your name below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

1. How many years have you been a minister? _____

2. Do you perform marital counseling? _____

3. In your opinion, what is the major issue (s) needing to be discussed or addressed in marital counseling? _____

9. Using the scale below, please circle the number that represents your opinion to the following statement. **I feel adequately trained to perform marital counseling.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

APPENDIX 2

MARRIED COUPLES QUESTIONNAIRE

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to measure your knowledge, wisdom, and experience concerning marital problems and issues. Chris Aday is conducting this research for purposes of evaluating marital mentors for doctoral research. In this research, you will be asked to answer questions about your level of experience and knowledge of marital problems. Any information you provide will be *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this questionnaire and survey, and signing your name below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

1. How many years have you been married? _____
2. Have you ever-sought marital counseling or help? _____
3. If the answer to #2 is yes, was this biblically based counseling? _____
Also, was this counseling helpful? _____
4. In your opinion, what is the **one** major issue, which needs to be discussed or addressed in marital counseling? _____

5. What do you consider to be the most common marital issues or problems that you, or couples you know, face? Please rank in order of importance (starting with 1 as the most important) the most common causes in your opinion.

- ___ Finances
- ___ Sexual Issues (including adultery, pornography, marriage bed, etc.)
- ___ Communication
- ___ Parenting
- ___ Family Issues (including in-laws and immediate family)
- ___ Conflict resolution
- ___ Anger
- ___ Leadership (both submission by wife and headship by husband)
- ___ Expectations for marriage
- ___ Forgiveness
- ___ Role of husband
- ___ Role of wife
- ___ Spiritual issues (God's purpose for marriage, biblical differences, etc.)
- ___ Other _____

6. Using the scale below, please circle the number that represents your opinion to the following statement. **Trained couples (for marital discipleship) would be helpful to troubled marriages.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. Using the scale below, please circle the number that represents your opinion concerning the following statement. **I feel adequately trained to perform marital counseling.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

11. Do you feel that this class was beneficial to your marriage and also in assisting others with marriage issues?

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

12. Would you recommend this training to another couple?

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

13. The material presented was useful and helpful.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

14. The material was presented clearly and I understood the way it was presented.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

15. I believe the material covered most of the issues that marriages face.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

16. I believe the presenter used the class time efficiently and effectively.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly

17. The class time and material was interesting and held my attention.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly

18. The homework was useful and made me think about the session of the week.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly

19. The weekly case scenarios were useful for mentor role playing and introducing the sessions.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly

20. How could this class be improved? _____

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING MARRIED COUPLES TO MENTOR OTHER MARRIED COUPLES AT OAKLAND BAPTIST CHURCH IN CORINTH, MISSISSIPPI

Christopher Dwight Aday, D.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Robert J. Burrelli, Jr.

This project sought to equip mentor couples at Oakland Baptist Church in Corinth, Mississippi. Chapter 1 details the need for the project. The context and details of the project are also included.

Chapter 2 establishes a biblical basis for the project. The theological and biblical foundation for marriages and mentoring are examined in five passages of Scripture.

Chapter 3 examines the need for mentors and mentoring from a biblical perspective, a Christian perspective, and a secular perspective. Also, additional considerations of which mentors need to be aware or which they may need to address when mentoring.

Chapter 4 describes the methodology used in the implementation of this project. It also states the schedule, agenda, content, and assignments for the mentor training.

Chapter 5 is an evaluation of the project, including examining the purpose, the five goals, and the research methodology. The strengths and weaknesses are discussed. My own personal thoughts and reflections are given in this chapter as well.

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