INCREASING EVANGELISTIC EFFORTS THROUGH THE PRACTICE OF

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS

CHURCH OF CHRIST, CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS

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by

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APPROVAL SHEET

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PREFACE

This project is the fruit of three years of intense study at the feet of men who are wise in the Word and whose lives reflect that wisdom in their desire to see others and the Lord's church grow in spirit and in numbers. I would like to thank Dr. Timothy Beougher in the Billy Graham School for introducing me to great men such as Jonathan Edwards, Robert Coleman, and Charles Finney and for teaching me that church growth is a product of personal spiritual growth shared with others, not the product of mechanistic models. And to his insights, I have added the much appreciated thoughts, both in his lecture and in his writings, of Dr. Donald Whitney. Grasping godliness as a transformative, daily walk with God has brought new life and purpose to my preaching. I would also like to thank my supervisor, Dr. John David Trentham, who made the philosophy of education insightful and the process of preparing the doctoral project fruitful.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to those who have provided unlimited assistance in the preparation of this project. I would like to thank the men who reviewed the curriculum developed to teach the spiritual disciplines, Dr. Mark Hahlen of Dallas Christian College; Dr. Jerry Linker, retired preacher and dean; Dr. Herman Alexander of Nations University; Dr. Chauncey Lattimer, preacher; and Dr. Stan Helton, preacher and retired Dean of Students. To Dr. Helton I am especially indebted for the hours of review and wealth of comments he provided throughout the entire project. This project would

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to increase evangelistic efforts through the practice of spiritual disciplines among adult members of the Arlington Heights Church of Christ.

Goals

The first goal in this project was to assess the current knowledge and practice of spiritual disciplines and the current practice of evangelism among adult members. This goal was accomplished by asking all members of the congregation to complete a survey on spiritual disciplines and evangelistic efforts.[1] The 48 item Likert-scaled questions assessed current understanding of the twelve classic spiritual disciplines as identified by Richard Foster[2] followed by twelve questions assessing the frequency of practice of the same disciplines. Though many Christians "do" spiritual disciplines in a haphazard way, it is important to identify the level of understanding the members have of what they are doing and the level at which they are practicing them intentionally. This goal was to be considered successful if at least 50 percent of adults present during the Sunday morning Bible class on the date administered complete the survey. Based on

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[1]See Appendix 2.

[2]Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1998).

average adult attendance for Arlington Heights, this would provide a baseline of approximately thirty-five participants.

The second part of this goal was to assess the current level of evangelistic efforts by members. The aforementioned survey[3] sought to ascertain current levels of evangelistic efforts in the area of prayers for the lost ("prayer"), intentional evangelistic contact with the lost ("care"), and the number of times the gospel has been shared ("share"). This project did not consider the final outcome of the gospel presentation, but only the effort of the member—as the outcome is in God's hands. This goal would be successfully met if at least 50 percent of adults present during the Sunday morning Bible class on the date of administration, who also completed the first section of the survey, complete these three questions. The information obtained from these first two goals was used to create a baseline against which any change can be measured.

The second goal of this project was to develop a curriculum for the teaching of spiritual disciplines. Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* served as the core content for the curriculum. However, I developed a curriculum that provides an effective method for teaching the information. In particular, the curriculum emphasized a "life-based teaching"[4] model that provides a more effective context for assimilating the information into the learners' daily lives.

The curriculum was evaluated by a panel of four experts with knowledge of spiritual disciplines and Christian education. Each panelist was asked to rate each of the 13 lessons on a four-point scale: unacceptable, minimally acceptable, acceptable, or

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[3]See Appendix 2.

[4]Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, xiv.

excellent. I provided a rubric to each of the reviewers for rating each lesson.[5] The goal

would be successfully met if all lessons receive at least 90 percent acceptable or excellent

on all criteria by each evaluator.

Following the results of the initial two goals, the project moved toward its third

goal: to train members in the practice of classic spiritual disciplines. Adult members were

invited to voluntarily participate in the educational program based on Foster's

Celebration of Discipline with three concurrent phases: (1) learning about the practice of

spiritual disciplines through a 13-week curriculum, (2) journaling daily as they practice

the spiritual disciplines during the same 13 weeks, and (3) interacting weekly with an

accountability partner. This goal would be considered successful if at least twenty-three

adults voluntarily participate in the class, and the participants in aggregate (1) achieve an

average class attendance of at least 84 percent, or eleven of 13 classes, (2) achieve an

average of at least 5.25 journal entries per week, and (3) achieve an average of at least

9.75 meetings with their accountability partners during the 13 weeks of instruction.

The 84 percent attendance goal was determined by research into attendance

and academic performance. For kindergarten through eighth grade, an 8 percent absence

rate can result in academic problems.[6] Research in the secondary education field finds

that a 10 percent absence rate can have a similar negative impact.[7] In a limited study on

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[5]See Appendix 1.

[6]Gregory Hickman, Mitchell Bartholomew, and Jennifer Mathwig, "The Differential
Trajectories of Rural High School Dropouts and Graduates." Arizona State University, College of Teacher
Education and Leadership, Rodel Community Scholars, www.west.asu.edu/rodel/documents (accessed 15
March 2013).

[7]Robert Balfanz and Hedy Nai-Lin Chang, "A Focus on Attendance is Key to Success,"
National Association of Secondary School Principals, http://www.nassp.org/tabid/3788/default.aspx?
topic=A_Focus_on_Attendance_Is_Key_to_Success (accessed March 15, 2013).

sociology students published in *College Teaching*, Kwenda found that each day of absence decreases a student's odds of making an "A" by 50 percent.[8] As a result, the aggregate attendance goal for the class to have successfully learned the material was set at an average of eleven out of 13 classes, or 84 percent.

The standard for both journal entries and meetings with accountability partners was set at 75 percent of the number of opportunities. The personal and contemplative nature of the content of both the journal entries and the meetings with the accountability partner made evaluating the content difficult. Therefore, the self-reported level of participation in journaling and meetings served as the basis for evaluating this goal. Because the journaling and meetings are included as reinforcing activities and not for knowledge acquisition, the 84 percent attendance requirement appeared excessive. I chose a seventy-five percent participation goal to allow for a reasonable number of circumstances that might interfere with journaling or meeting with an accountability partner yet still provide sufficient number of entries and meetings to reinforce the learning activity.[9]

Stemming from the implementation of the new curriculum, two final goals were proposed. The fourth goal was to increase the knowledge and practice of spiritual disciplines among participants. This goal was measured by administering the pre-class

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[8]Maxwell Kwenda, "Factors Affecting Performance in an Introductory Sociology Course," *College Teaching* 59 (2011): 60-65.

[9]On determining levels of competency to meet a minimum standard of "acceptable proficiency," see Samuel Livingston and Michael Zieky, *Passing Scores: A Manual for Setting Standards of Performance on Educational and Occupational Tests* (n.c., Educational Testing Service, 1982). Though this manual deals with knowledge-based testing, the standard for "normal expectation" is applied in this research.

survey a second time at the end of the 13-week curriculum as a post-test and comparing

the results to pre-class answers. This goal would be successfully met if the participants

demonstrated (1) a statistically significant increase in their understanding of spiritual

disciplines, as measured by the application of a *t* test for dependent samples to the change

in the median score of the answers given in the first sections of the survey, and (2) a

statistically significant increase in the frequency of the practices of spiritual disciplines,

as measured by the application of a *t* test for dependent samples to the change in the

median score of the answers given in the first twelve questions of the second sections of

the survey.

The fifth goal of the project was to increase the level of evangelistic effort by

participants. I measured the change in evangelistic effort in the same way as the spiritual

disciplines, namely, by using the pre-class survey as a post-test at the end of the 13-week

curriculum and comparing the results in the three areas of "prayer," "care," and "share"

to pre-class answers. This goal would be successfully met if there was a statistically

significant increase in evangelistic effort as measured by the application of a *t* test for

dependent samples to the change in the median score of the answers given to the last

three questions of the second sections of the survey. The answers were compared for both

evangelistic effort as the sum of all three questions and individually for each area.

Ministry Context

Arlington Heights Church of Christ has a forty-nine year history of serving the

Lord in the northwest corner of Nueces County, Texas. Located about twenty miles from

downtown Corpus Christi, Texas, the congregation was established when two

congregations merged. Hillcrest Church of Christ from the northern edge of Corpus

Christi proper and Annaville Church of Christ, already in the northwest area, did not see eye-to-eye on every issue, but those differences did not prevent them from attempting to merge to serve God better. The merger, however, was unsuccessful, and the majority of members of the smaller congregation, originally located in the northwest area, separated itself from Arlington Heights after about fifteen months to re-establish their congregation a few miles away.

A desire to reach more people for the Lord did not drive the merger of the two congregations. The move was made necessary primarily by the transfer of many of Hillcrest's members to the Annaville/Northwest area. The Annaville church building was too small to accommodate a large influx of transfer members. As a result, a new building was constructed that could accommodate both Annaville and the Hillcrest members. With almost 300 members between the two congregations, the building was built to hold only about 340 attendees.

From its inception the congregation was not looking towards growth. The congregation was established to minister to its existing, homogenous membership. Its primary growth during the first few years was transfer growth as others moved into this area, but even this growth was offset by the departure of the original Annaville members. Since the "church plant" was never mission-focused, the congregation has never experienced growth. In regular Sunday morning attendance, the congregation has never had more than the morning of their dedication ceremony on August 1, 1965, declining continuously from 513 to a low point of fewer than 100 in 2010.

Can the decline be blamed on a lack of outreach? The assumption would be that a congregation with a lack of evangelistic vision would not reach out to the

community. But is this the case? Is it possible the congregation is making the necessary

efforts, but is lacking in other areas that would prevent growth? It is important, therefore,

to consider visitation data and historical outreach efforts. Further, one must consider the

church's "personality," or typology, as it relates to inward or outward focus and

perceived primary mission.

Visitation Data

Arlington Heights, until recently, has not kept records regarding numbers of

baptisms, transfers, or other data related to objective measures of growth or ministry

effectiveness. By perusing bulletins over the last five years, and with the help of the

church secretary, a few estimates can be made about baptisms. A visitors' log is

available for numbers of local and out-of-town visitors, but transfer data remains

undiscoverable.

The congregation in 2005 and 2006 had approximately 61 local visitors per

year. While this should be considered successful outreach, these visitations resulted in

only 3 baptisms per year with another 3 per year from biological growth. Membership

and attendance remained the same during this time.

In 2007 the congregation began a college outreach. During 2007, 60 visitors

attended, and 8 were baptized. In 2008 only 31 local residents visited, but 15 people

were baptized. In 2009, 8 people submitted to baptisms; most of those were in the seven

months prior to the minister's departure and the corresponding termination of the college

outreach.

Over the last two years, visitor attendance has increased slightly, with 44

visitors in the six months after the present minister was hired. Also, in 2011, 36 visitors

attended. In 2010 and 2011, 6 people and 9 people, respectively, were baptized. During the first four months of Fiscal Year 2012 (April to July), 14 local people had visited, and four had been baptized. Two of those baptisms were as a result of outreach, and 2 were children who had grown up in the church.

Historical Outreach Efforts

Another apparent trend in the data regarding visitors and baptisms is that both are ministry-driven. Large numbers of visitors can be seen around large-scale ministry events such as a Fall Festival, Vacation Bible School (VBS), a new college ministry, and regularly scheduled outreach events. Unfortunately, in the closing years of the first decade of 2000, the congregation was conducting only a Fall Festival, which was primarily focused on fun and not on evangelism. The campus ministry suffered because the two college campuses were located well over twenty miles away, making the commute difficult. In 2011, the congregation re-implemented VBS; however, only a small number of visitors came to church afterwards; none of them remained. The 2012 VBS, held in June, resulted in only one visiting family attending consistently.

Unfortunately, follow-up to these events has been inadequate, and contact is soon lost with attendees. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this lack of follow-up is due to the fact that, on an on-going basis, very little personal evangelism takes place. The leadership encourages "lifestyle evangelism" and other forms of "pre-evangelistic" efforts, but direct personal evangelism does not appear to be happening. Though often difficult logistically, these large-scale outreach events require little individual spiritual depth. Everyone can participate in some part, small or big, allowing each person to feel as if he or she has been evangelistic. While this sense of involvement is personally

encouraging, when the time to share the gospel one-on-one comes, most of those interviewed reported that they do not have the skills or the spiritual maturity and knowledge to win someone to Christ.

Church Typology

Utilizing the church typologies identified by Aubrey Malphurs, Arlington Heights would be categorized as a "classroom church" extraordinaire with hints of the "family-reunion" strain.[10] The church dedicates the majority of time and resources to Bible teaching and at least one monthly family activity. Knowledge gained by the individual member has become the litmus test of success of any given ministry as well as the primary determinant of a new program's desirability. Whether members are applying that knowledge gained in their daily life or striving to mature through that knowledge is secondary to the acquisition of knowledge. As a result, the members have not developed a strong walk with God nor are they able to assist others in coming to know Christ in a deeply personal way.

Current Educational Efforts

This project is a part of a three-year educational strategy for the congregation. In 2011, the congregation focused on the uniqueness and peculiarity of the people of God as taught in 1 Peter. In 2012, the church studied Ezra and Nehemiah in an effort to understand the proper context and prerequisites for "re-building" the house of God. In the closing months of 2012, the church focused on Spiritual Gifts so that everyone can

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[10]Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 107.

determine his or her part in the rebuilding process. Leadership dedicated the first six to

nine months of 2013 to the study of skills necessary for the fulfillment of the Great

Commission. These skills included Bible study skills and evangelism skills and

techniques.

By the latter part of 2013, the congregation will have an understanding of

God's plan for the building of the kingdom and possess the necessary skills to accomplish

this plan. At this point in time the congregation was introduced to and instructed in the

practice of spiritual disciplines. The purpose of this series of studies was to ensure that

each person is working in accordance with God's will and seeking God's wisdom. No

plan, if not executed with the guidance of God, will be successful.

Rationale

The Arlington Heights Church of Christ has many of the necessary pieces in

place to be a successful congregation. It has a history of strong biblical preaching and

solid educational programs for all ages. At various times the congregation employed

specialized ministers for senior adults, youth, college, and pastoral ministries. It has also

maintained a zeal for missions and benevolence, both in local and global settings. The

Arlington Heights Church, from the outside, is a church that is focused on the work of the

kingdom of God and one worthy of emulation by most mid-sized congregations.

From the inside, however, the view is a little different. Though the

congregation does not resemble "whitewashed tombs," many of its members appear to

struggle with their understanding of the Christian life. While most, if not all, would

argue that these programs and activities are "faith demonstrated by actions," it is more

likely that most believe that their actions are the substance of their faith. In short, a "works-based" salvation abounds.

This error is not like that of the Pharisees. A few may suffer from haughtiness and spiritual pride, but the majority simply believes that actions are the same as faith, not merely an outworking of that faith. As long as there are activities at the church building and monies being sent in support of the Kingdom's work, everything is considered to be fine. Unfortunately, such a view inhibits the development of a deep, personal faith in God and places that faith squarely on works.

In Powell and Chapa's book, *Sticky Faith*, the authors identify this dilemma as the primary cause of the exodus of young men and women from the church. They describe it as keeping a faith treadmill running without faith; therefore, it is doomed to fail.[11] In their assessment they identify Dallas Willard's "gospel of sin management" as a primary cause of this problem. Willard states,

> When we examine the broad spectrum of Christian proclamation and practice, we see that the only thing made essential on the right wing of theology is forgiveness of the individual's sins. On the left it is removal of social or structural evils… Transformation of life and character is *no* part of the redemptive message.[12]

In effect, evangelists teach non-Christians that "being saved" is all about getting rid of their sin or the spiritual consequences of their sins. This message leaves new Christians bereft of any expectation of a qualitatively "new life" on this earth as promised by the Apostle Paul in Romans 6:3.

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[11]Kara Powell and Dick Chapa, *Sticky Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 36.

[12]Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), 41.

While this view of the gospel message robs Christians of the joy of their salvation, I attempted to show that it also undermines the accomplishment of the Great Commission. Christians who believe that faith is substantively about works fail to pursue a deep spiritual relationship with God. While there are many works which may be accomplished with a superficial spiritual walk— serving food at a pantry, putting pamphlets on car windows, or even teaching VBS lessons to children— evangelism only occurs when a Christian is growing in their own relationship with God: a growth not necessarily facilitated by "actions-based" faith.

It is not the point of this project to question the validity of benevolence and teaching in outreach. These activities should occur and are often the avenues by which people come to know Christ. However, these actions by Christians who lack a personal walk with God will be less effective than those who are practicing and living their spirituality daily.

Does such a proposition imply that the Word of God cannot accomplish that "for which [God] sent it" (Isa 55:10-11)[13] if it is presented by a spiritually immature Christian? No. It is the rationale of this project, however, that those Christians who are not practicing and growing in their Christian faith will not make effective attempts to engage in effective forms of evangelism. This failure may result from either a lack of desire to learn how to evangelize or an anemic faith that does not motivate the Christian into action. In either situation, the practice of classical spiritual disciplines will, if it is God's desire, contribute to the personal growth of the Christian and the subsequent, universal growth of the Kingdom of God.

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[13]All quotations of Scripture are from the New American Standard Bible.

Definitions and Limitations

Evangelism. The *Holman's Bible Dictionary* begins its definition of evangelism with "the active calling of people to respond to the message of grace and commit oneself to God in Jesus Christ."[14] Later in the article two possible definitions are distinguished, one based strictly on the Greek and a second being more holistic. In the first option evangelism is "preaching the gospel, communicating God's message of mercy to sinners."[15] Seen as too rigid and truncated, a second option is presented: "Evangelism is the Spirit-led communication of the gospel of the kingdom in such a way or ways that the recipients have a valid opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and become responsible members of His church."[16] Holman's opening line presents a simple synthesis of these two definitions, emphasizing a call for a response and a commitment.

The Lausanne Covenant provides a broader definition of evangelism but, at the center, makes the statement, "But evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God."[17] For the purpose of this project, therefore, evangelism is the explicit presentation of the gospel message as contained in Scripture with a corresponding call to obey. Such a definition precludes the use of techniques of

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[14]Trent C. Butler, ed., *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1991), s.v. "Evangelism," by G. William Schweer.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid.

[17]The Lausanne Movement, "Lausanne Covenant," http://www.lausanne.org/en/documents/lausanne-covenant.html (accessed August 11, 2012).

evangelism such as "lifestyle" or "friendship" evangelism, as these would be classified as outreach, not evangelism.

Evangelistic effort. Evangelistic efforts are any actions on the part of an individual Christian to move a specific non-believer closer to the opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel. This may include praying for a lost person by name, directing his or her attention on Christ, or presenting the gospel. Evangelistic effort, as it is used in this project, may include participation in outreach when such participation includes the intentional development of a personal relationship with a non-Christian. Working a booth at a Fall Festival would not be considered an evangelistic effort unless during the festival the worker engages a participant in sufficient dialogue to pray for the lost person by name or to lay the foundation for the possibility of evangelism.

Outreach. Outreach is any activity, done individually or corporately, designed to "extend" the message of salvation to the lost. This definition is consistent with the secular use of the word. *Collins American English Dictionary* defines "Outreach" as programs, activities or processes by which organizations attempt to "extend" their services or message to a targeted audience, such as when Health and Human Services offers health fairs and immunization clinics. In the context of this project, outreach is not evangelism; it is the activity which sets the stage and creates the opportunity for evangelism.

Spiritual disciplines. Richard Foster, in *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, does not define spiritual disciplines in the usual sense of a definition. Instead he describes what spiritual disciplines are meant to accomplish in the life of a Christian. While he uses many descriptive phrases to identify several points along "the

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path," his key descriptor is that "the Disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that he can transform us."[18]

With this understanding, spiritual disciplines do not make the practitioner more spiritual; they simply place him or her in the presence of God with a heart ready to be used and transformed by God. Dallas Willard defines a discipline in a more precise way:

> The disciplines for the spiritual life, rightly understood, are time-tested activities consciously undertaken by us as new men or women to allow our spirit ever-increasing sway over our embodied selves. They help by assisting the ways of God's Kingdom to take the place of the habits of sin embedded in our bodies.[19]

This definition is consistent with the definition of "discipline" as training expected to produce a specific character or pattern of behavior. By putting into practice certain exercises (training), one begins to manifest traits needed to accomplish the calling or purpose. The exercise does not always resemble the final outcome desired, as when boxers skip rope to build speed and agility, but the outcome of the exercise benefits the desired behavior, often times by strengthening some foundational aspect of the behavior. Following Willard, the definition used for this project for spiritual disciplines is exercises that Christians can practice that facilitate the re-integration of one's faith into one's whole life.

While it has become popular to include evangelism and journaling as spiritual disciplines, the narrow definition applied here precludes both. Journaling, though it requires self-discipline, is a record of the activities and exercises. It certainly assists in personal accountability and ensures the thorough practice of spiritual disciplines but is

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[18]Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 7.

[19]Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 86.

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not one itself. Evangelism, as well, is an essential product of spiritual disciplines, not the

means. Evangelism is the purpose to which all Christians are called and for which all

Christians should prepare. Spiritual disciplines develop the traits and character needed so

that God can use a Christian as his instruments of evangelism.[20]

Limitations and Delimitations

The length of time available limited this project. A fifteen-week timeline for

the implementation of and data collection from the project provided a narrow window.

This timeline affects both what can be accomplished, such as the number of classes and

the number of evangelistic opportunities, and the type of statistical analysis that can

reasonably be applied.

This project was the final part of a three-year plan to rebuild a congregation

that has recently experienced a church split. Prior to its implementation, the congregation

was encouraged to rebuild by studies in Ezra and Nehemiah and trained in the use of

spiritual gifts and in the skills necessary for effective evangelism. The final part of this

plan was to encourage personal spiritual development in an effort to prompt evangelism.

The influence of these previous lessons was beyond the control of the project and these

factors represented a second limitation.

This project was delimited by allowing the participants in the educational

program offered to be self-selecting. In such a process, particularly in a project that

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[20]This point will be further discussed in Chap. 3. For an in-depth treatment of evangelism and journaling, along with other possibilities, see Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991).

encouraged daily spiritual exercises and accountability, participants already demonstrated a greater commitment to Christian living by choosing to be in the program.

The statistical limitations, including the non-random selection and shortened timeframe, and the continuity of this project with previous studies, limit generalizability to the broader church. As a result, the findings of this project only apply to those directly involved. However, insights gained may be helpful to other individual churches.

Research Methodology

As set forth in the goals, I sought to accomplish significant growth in participants' understanding and practice of spiritual disciplines. I further hypothesized that this growth in spiritual disciplines would correlate positively to an increase in evangelistic efforts made by participants. This hypothesis was tested using a Nonequivalent Control Group Design with the appropriate application of a *t* test for dependent samples to determine statistically significant changes between pre-test and post-test scores.

Experimental and Control Groups

The Nonequivalent Control Group Design (NCGD) is a nonrandom, quasi-experimental research design that attempts to mitigate the sources of invalidity that are generally associated with a One Group Pre-Test/Post-Test design. The NCGD uses a control group from a "naturally assembled collective" that is similar to the experimental group.[21] For the purposes of this research, the non-equivalent control group was all

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[21]Donald Campbell and Julian Stanley, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), 47.

members of the congregation who take the pre-test and post-test survey but do not participate in the 13-week curriculum on spiritual disciplines.

The experimental group, in contrast, was a non-random, self-selecting sample of adults over the age of eighteen who are no longer in high school. The experimental group was to consist of at least twenty-three participants from among those who complete the pre-test survey and who also participate in the 13-week class. Though this survey is non-random, the sample size is based on a random sample with an 80 percent confidence level and a confidence interval of 10 percent using the six-element Likert scale to determine the probability ($p = 16.67$ percent). While not a rigorous standard, this model provides for a minimal level of statistical reliability when discussing the results.

Beginning one month before the 13-week class, an invitation was extended to the entire congregation to sign-up for a class on classic spiritual disciplines. A sign-up sheet was made available in the church's foyer or individuals registered by emailing the church office. All members who registered for and began attending the class comprised the experimental group.

I administered the pre-test survey on a Sunday morning to all adults in attendance at the morning Bible classes. While this approach limited the number of possible respondents, these respondents were likely more interested in personal spiritual growth as evidenced by their presence at Sunday morning Bible class. By beginning with a sample that potentially possesses a higher degree of the attribute one is trying to measure, it is more difficult to obtain a statistically significant increase; therefore, the research is more rigorous. This approach also increased the chance of getting more pre-tests and post-tests from the same respondents and providing fuller results for analysis.

Research Instrument

The survey began with a short identification and demographics section. The survey asked basic information about gender, age, and how long the participant had been a Christian. Each participant created an eight-digit personal identification number (PIN) to maintain anonymity. The PIN consisted of the month and day of the participant's birthday and the last four digits of his or her social security number in the form "mmddxxxx." I then recorded pre-test and post-test data in a spreadsheet corresponding to each participant's PIN.

The body of the survey included two sections. The first section was a 48 item, Likert-style questionnaire that ascertained participants' general knowledge of the twelve classical spiritual disciplines, including definitions, practice, and spiritual benefits. Respondents indicated their agreement with the 48 statements on a six-point scale, from strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, agree, to strongly agree.[22]

I developed the 48 statements from the leading literature on spiritual disciplines written by Richard Foster, Dallas Willard, and Donald S. Whitney. The statements reflect an "experiential understanding" of the spiritual disciplines. Such an understanding moves beyond academic definitions and explanations to an ability to identify the spiritual characteristic the spiritual discipline is trying to develop and how each discipline would manifest in a person's life daily. Four statements for each of the twelve disciplines were included in the survey.

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[22]See Appendix 2.

The second section was comprised of fifteen, open-ended questions. The first

twelve questions related to the practice of spiritual disciplines. Respondents identified the

number of times they have intentionally practiced each discipline in the previous thirty

days.[23]

The final three questions related to evangelistic effort. Evangelistic efforts

included praying for the lost by name, engaging the lost in Christ-centered conversation,

and sharing the gospel. The respondents identified the number of times they had made an

evangelistic effort in each of those categories. Prior to implementation of this research

project, survey instrument and supporting documents were submitted for approval to the

Research Ethics Committee at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Treatment

The proposed treatment was a 13-week study on the twelve classical spiritual

disciplines identified by Richard Foster in *Celebration of Discipline*. Participants studied

a different discipline each week during the regularly scheduled Sunday morning Bible

class time. Between class sessions, participants kept a journal reflecting on the meaning

of each discipline and the contribution each discipline made to their daily walk with God.

In addition they recorded any occurrences when they intentionally practice one of the

spiritual disciplines. These entries of three to four sentences were made in the journals

daily. As a final step in the training process, each participant selected an accountability

partner and discussed with that person the progress being made in spiritual growth during

the course of the study. Once per week, after meeting with their accountability partner,

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[23]See Appendix 2.

participants wrote a short reflection of at least one-quarter page about their own lives gleaned from the discussion.

**Data Collection and
Statistical Analysis**

As indicated, data was collected at two points during this study, once using the results of the pre-test and later using the results of the post-test. After the 13-week class was completed, the survey was administered again to all adult members of the congregation, including those who completed the 13-week curriculum in the week prior. The procedures for the post-test followed the same as the pre-test. All respondents completed both sections of the survey.

I scored the survey instrument after both the pre-test and post-test to generate three distinct sets of scores for each respondent. Using the developed scoring key a score was assigned for the first 48 items. The composite score, which is the total score of all 48 items, and each of the twelve sub-scores for each discipline were recorded for each participant. The second set of scores was the total number of occurrences of all spiritual disciplines as enumerated in the first twelve questions in the second section of the survey as well as the reported occurrences for each discipline. The third set of scores was the aggregate number of evangelistic efforts as well as the reported occurrences of each of the three types of effort. I then calculated the three sets of scores for both the pre-test and post-test surveys for all respondents and recorded the results in a spreadsheet by each respondent's PIN.

To evaluate the success of the primary goals of this research, to increase knowledge and practice of spiritual disciplines and increase evangelistic efforts, I

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employed a series of paired and unpaired t tests to determine statistically significant changes in knowledge, practice, and evangelistic efforts. The t test of dependent samples (paired) allows the researcher to compare the mean scores of a single instrument administered to a single group of subjects at two different times or under two different circumstances.[24] In this project, both the experimental group and the control group were subjected to the t test of dependent samples to determine if there is a statistically significant change in knowledge, practice, or evangelistic efforts in the experimental group.

After the administration of the t test for dependent samples, I compared the pre-test and post-test surveys of the experimental group to the control group using the unpaired t test. The unpaired t test allows for the comparison of two independent groups, in this case the experimental group and the control group, to determine how similar or dissimilar the groups are along certain characteristics.[25] Using an unpaired t test to compare the pre-tests ensures that any differences noted in the post-test did not already exist in the pre-test. In other words, using the unpaired t test on the pre-tests ensured the experimental group and the control group were not significantly different in some area before the treatment was applied.

Comparing the post-tests of the two groups using the unpaired t test ensured that the post-test scores of the experimental group and of the control group were also statistically significantly different. If the post-test scores of the experimental group and

[24]Neil J. Salkind, *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2008), 189.

[25]Rebecca Guy et al., *Social Research Methods: Puzzles and Solutions* (Newton, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1987), 341.

the control group both change to such a degree that the two scores sets were statistically

equivalent, then the change in the scores between the pre-test and post-test for the

experimental group could not be attributed to the treatment, in this case the 13-week

curriculum. This additional test for internal validity ensured that the changes could be

reasonably attributed to the effects of the 13-week curriculum and not to normal spiritual

growth experienced by other Christians in the regular educational programs of the church

(maturation)[26] or to events outside the parameters of this research (history).[27]

In a completely voluntary study in a very transient environment such a church,

one can expect experimental mortality, or drop-outs, from both the experimental group

and the control group.[28] As most members of the congregation who did not participate in

the spiritual disciplines class did not see the need to take the same survey a second time,

several did not do so, decreasing the number of post-test surveys available from the

control group.

In the event that a respondent to the pre-test did not complete the post-test, the

pre-test surveys of non-retesters were removed for the purpose of the *t* test for dependent

samples. In the same way, post-tests of new members to the congregation who did not

participate in the pre-test were not included in the *t* test for dependent samples for the

control group.

In order to limit the impact of experimental mortality, the pre-test of the non-

retesters were compared to the pre-tests of those who did complete both the pre-test and

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[26]Campbell and Stanley, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*, 5.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid.

post-test to determine whether a statistically significant difference exists in the scores of the pre-tests of the retesters and non-retesters. These comparisons were made aggregately, all retesters to all non-retesters regardless of designated group, and within each of the designated groups. Therefore, pre-test scores of non-retesters within the experimental group were compared to pre-test scores of retesters and the same for those within the control group. I analyzed the two independent groups (retesters and non-retesters) using a *t* test for two independent samples (unpaired).

At the conclusion of the data analysis, I assessed the effect of the 13-week class on the knowledge and practice of spiritual discipline and on evangelistic efforts. While it must be acknowledged that using statistical analysis of any kind on non-random samples is tenuous, this research was built on a solid quasi-experimental design with an adequate number of safeguards to apply at least the minimum statistical analysis in the form of *t* tests for a comparison of means. Such a design, with the above safeguards and ensuring rigorous validation, provided meaningful outcomes for the population from which the experimental sample was drawn and may be considered reliable for continued research.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR THE ROLE
OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH IN EVANGELISM

God made two important decisions in his plan for the growth of the kingdom.
First, he decided one must hear the good news of Christ's salvific work prior to being
saved. Second and closely related to the first, he decided to use disciples as his
instruments, or mouthpieces, for proclaiming the good news of Jesus' death, burial, and
resurrection. This writer will consider the Scriptural support for both of these premises in
the first part of this chapter. After such consideration, he will then discuss the Scriptural
support for the role of spiritual growth in Christians in the proclamation of the gospel.
The chapter concludes that spiritual growth is essential to the evangelistic efforts
Christians make.

The Necessity of Hearing

In Romans 10:9-17 the apostle Paul asserts that an authoritative word must be
heard and understood before one can be saved. This word can only be heard if
messengers of God authoritatively proclaim it.[1] John Stott supports this point in his
excellent and oft repeated sequence of salvation: "Christ sends heralds; heralds preach;

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[1]Joseph Fitzmeyer, *Romans*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 596. While
Fitzmeyer has the bishopric in mind when he speaks of "someone who is authorized," the same
authorization exists for all in the priesthood of the believers (1 Pet 2:9).

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people hear; hearers believe; believers call; and those who call are saved."[2] Thomas

Schreiner affirms this sequence, "The steps of the chain must be realized if people are

going to call on the Lord and be saved."[3] Douglass Moo concurs when he writes, "Paul

creates a connected chain of steps that must be followed if a person is to be saved (v.

13)."[4] These scholars agree that there is a definite *ordo salutis*, placing hearing the gospel

before believing it.

More precisely, Schreiner places significant emphasis on the necessity of

hearing the gospel message. Though natural revelation provides a foundation for an

understanding of the existence of God, it is insufficient; this insufficiency is evidenced by

the idolatry that often results from focusing exclusively on nature.[5] Schreiner notes,

"Romans 10:14-17 . . . excludes the idea that salvation can be obtained apart from an

external hearing of the gospel."[6] Though this statement appears to underestimate the

power of God's Word to work effectually through reading, Schreiner's point is still valid:

people cannot discover God's plan for salvation unless another exposes them to it. Moo

states, "Hearing, the kind of hearing that can lead to faith, can only happen if there is a

definitive salvific word from God that is proclaimed."[7] Moo, Schreiner, and Joseph

Fitzmeyer concur that the use of Isaiah in the course of Paul's argument in Romans 10

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[2]John Stott, *The Message of Romans* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 286.

[3]Thomas Schreiner, *Romans,* Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 567.

[4]Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New International Commentary on the New Testament, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 663.

[5]Schreiner, *Romans*, 568.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Moo, *Romans*, 666.

affirms that "hearing" has always been a part of God's plan for the proclamation of his will for his people, including his plan for saving them.[8]

The Necessity of Proclaiming

Since non-Christians must hear the gospel, it becomes incumbent upon Christians to proclaim it. In his Great Commission, Christ charges all Christians to "make disciples" (Matt 28:19-20). While some might argue that this commission only applied to the original disciples, D. A. Carson rightly concludes that the commission "is binding on all Jesus' disciples to make others what they themselves are—disciples of Jesus Christ."[9] In this text the manner by which discipleship is accomplished is teaching. Carson states, "Matthew's gospel ends with the expectation of continued mission and teaching."[10] Carson further points out that the preceding five narrative sections in Matthew (3:1-26:5) end with blocks of teaching by Jesus, "but the passion and resurrection of Jesus end with a commission to his disciples to carry on the same ministry" of teaching.[11]

R. T. France draws a similar conclusion when he notes that, in the Great Commission, "Jesus transfers the duty of teaching from himself to the disciples."[12] Along with that duty came the authority of Jesus and the content of what was to be taught—

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[8]Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 666; Schreiner, *Romans*, 569; and Fitzmeyer, *Romans*, 596.

[9]D. A. Carson, *Matthew* in vol. 8 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 596.

[10]Ibid., 599.

[11]Ibid.

[12]R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 1118.

Jesus himself.[13] Donald Hagner concurs, "It is the particular responsibility of the church to hand on that teaching and see to it that new disciples make it their way of life."[14] Jesus' authority (28:18) and his presence (28:20b) empower and ensure the church in her call and commission to teach.[15]

Ulrich Luz concludes that Matthew viewed the church as "basically and fundamentally a missionary church."[16] Particularly insightful is Luz' observation that, in Matthew, "there is no Paraclete who replaces Jesus and 'leads (the disciples) into all the truth' (John 16:13); instead, Matthew binds the proclamation of the church permanently and solely to the proclamation of Jesus."[17] If the church does not proclaim "all" that Christ has commanded, and teach Christ's followers to "obey" those things, the church has no other hope. Luz' observation is not meant to belittle the role of the Holy Spirit, but to challenge Christians to accept the critical importance of evangelism in God's plan.

Luz, however, places "teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you" at the center of the Great Commission. Though Luz appears to downplay the role of baptism and conversion in the Great Commission,[18] his important conclusion is that "according to Matthew the only witness to the risen Jesus is one's own praxis of

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[13]Ibid.

[14]Donald Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1995), 888.

[15]Ibid., 889.

[16]Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2005), 628.

[17]Ibid., 633.

[18]Ibid., 634.

discipleship in the community of disciples, the church."[19] If the church does not teach

disciples to teach new disciples to live according to the teachings of Christ, no valid

witness to the truth of the resurrection of Christ will exist. In short, Christians' behaviors

can undermine the message of the Great Commission.

Moo, in his comments on Romans 10:9-14, supports this conclusion when he

observes that Paul uses "disobedience" in place of "disbelief." Moo points out that Paul

pairs disobedience with Isaiah's "believe" in Isaiah 53:1; a substitution that continues

Paul's connection of faith and obedience begun in Romans 1:5 with "obedience of

faith."[20] One could argue that Jesus makes the same relationship between obedience and

evangelism in the Great Commission when he says "teaching them to *observe* all that I

commanded you" (Matt 28:19, emphasis added).

Though only two passages have been considered, the relationship between the

necessity of hearing and the necessity of proclamation is clear. Salvation comes to all

those who hear and call upon the name of the Lord, but hearing presupposes

proclamation. Paul's use of Isaiah's rhetorical question, "Have they not heard?" affirms

that Paul believed that people would hear—and then would have a choice. This

expectation would only seem valid if Paul had believed that the word was being

proclaimed throughout the world. Since that is the case then the only people Paul could

have expected to proclaim that message are Christians themselves.

But these two passages also introduce Christians to the idea that a relationship

exists between evangelism and an obedient lifestyle. The commentators cited above agree

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[19]Ibid,, 636.

[20]Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 665.

that the Great Commission places discipleship at the center of the church's mission. But the church must meet two conditions if it is to be a "missionary church." First, Christians must proclaim the gospel. Secondly, Christians must live an obedient life to the teachings of Christ to affirm or give witness to the truth of the gospel.

Christians should not underestimate the importance of living and proclaiming the gospel. Salvation comes only to those who "call upon the name of the Lord," and they can only call if they have heard the truth of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom 10:9-10). Christians need to accept that they are responsible for the proclamation of the gospel and the salvation of those people with whom God has brought them into contact. Taking this responsibility seriously, Christians will grow in their own walk with God so their lives and their words can be valid testimonies to the saving work of Christ.

The Necessity of Spiritual Growth in Evangelism

If both what Christians know and share and how they live their lives are foundational for evangelism, then spiritual growth becomes essential to the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Paul makes this connection between the growth of the gospel in the world and the spiritual growth of the individual clear in Colossians 1:6-12.

In Paul's estimation, the growth of the gospel in the world corresponds to growth in individual Christians. Thus Moo writes, "In v. 6, the focus was on the extension of the gospel to many people; here, however, it is the intensive growth within each believer that is the focus."[21] N. T. Wright provides a similar insight: "Just as the

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[21]Douglas Moo, *The Letter to the Colossians and to Philemon*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 97.

gospel is bearing fruit and growing, so God's people are themselves *bearing fruit in every good work*, and *growing in the knowledge of God*."[22] Wright rightly posits that the addition of "in every good work" to "bearing fruit" and "in the knowledge of God" to "growing" expands the "formula of v. 6" to include both the active and reflective aspect of Christianity.[23] Stated differently, the growth in *and* the fruit of the gospel in the world produce, and are produced by, good works and knowledge of God in and through Christians themselves.

The gospel growing throughout the world while Christians themselves are dying apart from the vine is hard to envision. F. F. Bruce makes this connection when he writes, "The fair fruit of good works would spring in greater abundance from the divine seed which has been sown in their hearts, *and at the same time* they would make ever increasing progress in the knowledge of God."[24] Growing Christians produce greater fruit when they are actively engaged in good works.

The growth of the individual that results in the growth of the gospel is not simply an increase in knowledge. According to Wright, "this knowledge is given *through all spiritual wisdom and understanding*. Knowledge of God's will *manifests itself in* these qualities."[25] Moo, following the NASB translation, prefers "in" as better capturing the idea that wisdom and understanding should accompany knowledge. In either case,

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[22]N. T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 59.

[23]Ibid.

[24]F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 186.

[25]Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 58; emphasis original.

the knowledge cannot stand alone as the source of growth; it must be accompanied by or

produce in Christians wisdom and understanding. But this wisdom and understanding,

described as spiritual, is only visible to the world through "good works." Wright states,

> For Christians to "grow up" in every way will include the awakening of intellectual powers, the ability to think coherently and practically about God and his purposes for his people. The wisdom and understanding commended here are given the adjective 'spiritual,' and at once expounded in practical and ethical terms.[26]

In simpler terms, Bruce writes that the "right knowledge" of God leads to

"right behavior."[27] He further asserts, "For obedience to the knowledge of God which one

has already received is a necessary and certain condition for the reception of further

knowledge."[28] Christians, who do not use the knowledge they have gained through the

Holy Spirit to live wise and spiritual lives, do not need additional knowledge. Like the

fool of Old Testament Wisdom literature, they know the right thing to do but do not do it.

Spiritual Growth Contributes to Great Commission Work

Not only is spiritual growth closely associated with the spread of the gospel,

spiritual growth is necessary for the development of teachers who can share the gospel.

The writer of Hebrews, in 5:11-14, posits that the Hebrew Christians did not have the

capacity to teach because they had not grown spiritually. He makes a strong connection

between spiritual growth and teaching. As teaching is requisite to the fulfillment of the

Great Commission, spiritual growth must occur for the Christian to fulfill the Great

Commission's call, "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (Matt 28:20).

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[26]Ibid.

[27]Bruce, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians*, 186.

[28]Ibid.

Should be Teachers

The author of Hebrews asserts that the Hebrew Christians "ought to be teachers" (Heb 5:12) since they have been Christians for a long enough period to have attained to the level of "teacher." Bruce, in a footnote to his commentary, writes "It was an axiom of Stoicism that anyone who had mastered true learning was in a position to impart it to others; and it is equally a Christian axiom."[29] All true disciples grow into teachers.

This expectation that disciples become teachers serves two purposes. First, it reminds Christians, then and now, that they are being discipled to become disciple-makers. Secondly, and perhaps more relevant, is the Hebrew writer's accusation that their lack of progress in becoming teachers is attributable to their lack of spiritual maturity. They had not become teachers because they had chosen not to be students of God's word. Because they were not growing in knowledge or application of God's word, they would never attain to the role of teachers. While this revelation might not bother many Christians, the writer goes on to say that, because they are not growing, they are, in fact, becoming as babies.

Lack of Desire for Spiritual Growth

The author of Hebrews identifies an even more egregious error on the part of the Hebrew Christians, namely, their neglect "in hearing."[30] Guthrie argues that νωθρος,

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[29]F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 107.

[30]George H. Guthrie, *Hebrews,* NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 202.

usually translated as sluggish, dull, or slow, implies laziness and thus culpability; the

Hebrew Christians had chosen not to listen, not just failed to understand.[31] In this light,

the teaching on the priesthood of Melchizedek is not beyond their comprehension; it is

beyond their willingness to listen.[32]

Attridge affirms a similar assessment of the hearers' condition. While

acknowledging that verse 11 is possibly a rhetorical device designed to elicit a "not-us"

response, Attridge states the verbal challenge is based on the hearers' lack of

commitment to growing into maturity.[33] They do not listen to the teachings because they

are unwilling to do the work called for by the teachings that is necessary to grow in

spiritual understanding and maturity. Luke, in his history, commends the Bereans for

demonstrating this eagerness, lacking in the Hebrew Christians, to learn in order to grow

in understanding (Acts 17:11).

Spiritual Baby Food

In three places the Hebrews writer refers to the Hebrew Christians as children

needing "elementary principles" (v. 12), "milk and not solid food" (v. 12), and "only of

milk" (v. 13). The author indicts the Hebrew Christians of eating only baby food.

However, Attridge rightly posits that this is not by their choice, but by necessity as they

"have need again" for someone to teach them: "The community, by not progressing, has

actually regressed to the stage of babes in the faith who can only consume easily

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[31]Ibid., 201.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 157.

digestible doctrine (milk) and not what is more difficult (solid food)."[34] Not only have the Hebrew Christians not become teachers, but they have regressed in their spiritual life to where they must be spoon-fed teachings meant for small children or, less metaphorically, new converts.

Unaccustomed to the Word
of Righteousness

The result of their infantile diet is unfamiliarity with "the word of righteousness." Interpretations of λόγος δικαιοσύνης vary. Bruce argues for "principle of righteousness," and states the mature Christians are those who "have built up in the course of experience a principle or standard of righteousness by which they can pass discriminatory judgment on moral situations as they arise."[35] This interpretation, which takes into account 5:13-14, is acceptable as long as the principle built during "the course of experience" is based on rightly applying the teachings of God; otherwise, the "principle" is not informed by Scripture.

Guthrie's interpretation is much simpler. Because the Hebrew Christians have not progressed beyond the basic teachings, they are "not acquainted with the teachings about righteousness" which include "advanced theological instruction that stresses the cost and responsibilities of discipleship."[36] In short, they are not acquainted with (1) teachings that lead to righteousness, or (2) teachings that explain what righteousness looks like.

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[34]Ibid., 159.

[35]Bruce, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians*, 109.

[36]Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 203.

Attridge attempts to provide an interpretation of λόγος δικαιοσύνης that takes into consideration the underlying charge that they were not yet teachers. As such, he translates the Greek phrase as "inexperienced in speaking of righteousness."[37] With Guthrie and Bruce, Attridge connects "speaking of righteousness" to "solid food," but both Guthrie's and Bruce's translations of the entire phrase make that connection better. The interpretation by Attridge, however, does provide a distinctly different insight. Instead of λόγος δικαιοσύνης being teachings that the immature and negligent Christians failed to apply to their lives, λόγος δικαιοσύνης are teachings that the Hebrew Christians were unable to share with others.

Attridge does not desert the idea of application, however. Viewing this entire passage through the lens of philosophical and educational imagery, he asserts that the teachings are ethical and moral.[38] Therefore, the consumption of "solid food" would result first in a more principled life, so Bruce, and then a desire or an obligation to share the teachings of that life with others.[39]

Γυμνασία, Solid Food, and Maturity

Following the Hebrews writer's discussion of the Christian's regression into an infantile state, he introduces another familiar analogy to the passage, "exercise" (v. 14). It is important to prevent the context of other occurrences of this word, especially in the context of spiritual disciplines, to overshadow the use of the word here in Hebrews. In

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[37]Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 160.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Bruce, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians*, 109.

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this passage the word γυμνασἰα does not refer to self-discipline or spiritual exercises unto

godliness. Here the sense is "practice," as translated by the NASB. The coupling of

γυμνασἰα with ἕξις, translated "constant use" in the NIV and not translated at all in the

NASB, indicates that the exercise is done regularly or habitually. Guthrie posits that ἕξις

would best be understood as a "state" or "condition" in which one exists.[40] That which is

practiced is exercised as a part of one's life daily, not as a separate "exercise" conducted

in seclusion or special sessions.

Attridge, following his view that this author is "operating within a framework

of [Hellenistic] philosophical and educational imagery," believes the goal of this training

is ethical discernment.[41] Bruce's interpretation of λόγος δικαιοσὐνης, cited above, makes a

similar point. How one lives as a Christian may well be in view in this passage, but

improving one's ethical discernment is not the only point that the writer of Hebrews is

making. He also is showing the Hebrew Christians that a significant relationship exists

between their lack of desire for solid food and their lack of spiritual discernment; they do

not desire solid food because they have no use for it.

The writer states that "solid food is for the mature"; it does not make one

mature. Solid food is for the benefit of those who are regularly utilizing their knowledge

of λόγος δικαιοσὐνης to live righteous lives. They are using what they have already learned

to train their spiritual and mental "faculties" to make righteous decisions. When they

reach the limits of the teachings they understand, they desire more instruction in

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[40]Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 203.

[41]Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 161.

righteousness in order to continue living in righteousness as the challenges to their Christianity increase. Solid food is made available to mature Christians who are constantly growing through daily application of God's word. For immature babes, not putting into practice what they already know, milk is sufficient.

The Necessity of Discipline in Spiritual Growth

As spiritual growth is clearly expected and beneficial, Paul encourages Timothy to "discipline" himself "unto godliness" in 1 Timothy 4:6-8. Viewed through the lens of athletic, or perhaps military, imagery, this exercise or discipline parallels the spiritual growth that leads to "godliness." This maturation in Christ produced through discipline and exercise undergirds the desire for "solid food" and the development of teachers and, by extension, evangelists.

God's Word as Foundation

Consistent with other letters emphasizing spiritual growth, Paul begins this pericope with an admonition to remain grounded in God's Word. Ἐντρεφόμενος, most often translated as "nourished" or "nourishment," simply means "to bring up, rear, train in . . . something."[42] Mounce, without necessarily agreeing, points out the probability that this translation may be borrowing from the parallel between sound teachings and food in other parts of Paul's writings.[43] While this parallel may be the reason for the translation, using "nourishment" also accomplishes two purposes: (1) γυμναςἰα can stand alone

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[42]William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 249.

[43]Ibid.

representing the idea of exercise, and (2) a strong emphasis is placed on the fundamental preparation necessary for exercise. Just as an athlete must eat well in order to exercise well and grow strong, so a Christian must "nourish" himself to have the foundation necessary for perseverance and growth. That "something" in which a Christian must nourish himself is "words of the faith and of the sound doctrine" (v. 6).

Mounce identifies "words of the faith" as the gospel and "words . . . of the sound doctrine" as those doctrines contained in that gospel.[44] In making a distinction, "words" serves as the referent for both "of the faith" and "of the sound doctrine." Only one set of "words" exists from which both are drawn. This fact is the foundation of Paul's argument; Christians have only one source of nourishment, the Word of God. Mounce's point that the same words have both a fundamental teaching and extended teachings provides a fitting parallel to the Hebrews author's emphasis that God's Word provide both the elementary teachings necessary for babes and solid food for the mature (Heb 5:12-14). Though some might argue from the Hebrews passage that Christians must "move beyond" and "leave behind" the fundamentals of the gospel as they grow, in this passage Paul designates both for continual nourishment.

Nature of Godliness

Before discussing the purpose of exercise or discipline, it would be beneficial to discuss the goal of spiritual exercise. One cannot assess what specific exercise is needed unless one first understands the desired result. In the case of Christians, godliness is the desired result. Εὐσέβεια, or godliness, takes center stage in Paul's thoughts in

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[44]Ibid.

verses 6-10[45] and, according to Towner, "is the dominant feature of the theological-ethical portrait of authentic Christianity."[46] The link between the theological and the ethical is further evidenced by the following passage, verses 11-16, where Paul highlights specific behaviors that correspond to a correct understanding of spirituality, *contra* those that stem from the "misshapen spirituality of the heretics."[47] The new creation in Christ that takes place inwardly must have an outward manifestation in daily living in very practical ways. Towner posits the *modus operandi* of the heretics against whom Paul argues is that they drove a wedge between faith and practical living by either "magnifying the cognitive and 'spiritual' dimensions of the faith or through adherence to matters of ritual purity."[48] Paul corrects this imbalance by emphasizing the importance of godliness in Timothy's day-to-day habits.[49]

Knight suggests that the πρός that precedes godliness should be understood as that in which one is to exercise as well as that toward which one exercises.[50] This view has two implications. First, as Knight points out, a parallel can be seen between this verse and Philippians 2:12-13, where Christians are called to work out their salvation just as God is working within them.[51] Secondly, the nature of spiritual exercise is confined to

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[45]Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, New International Commentary on the New Testament, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 302.

[46]Ibid., 174.

[47]Ibid., 306.

[48]Ibid., 57.

[49]Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 249.

[50]George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 197.

[51]Ibid.

activities or disciplines that come from God's will or nature. To practice a discipline that would appear to be contrary to the nature of God, even though it might be of some "spiritual" benefit, would be counter-productive. Such recognition of truly valuable exercise is the crux of this passage.

Towner would agree, citing the LXX use of εὐσέβεια as bringing together "the core ideas of covenant loyalty and the appropriate behavioral response to the law."[52] Just as the law served as the basis for covenant loyalty and the basis for the behaviors that resulted from the covenant, so godliness demonstrates a loyalty to God's nature, having a "God-likeness," and the behaviors that result from that likeness. Just as a Jew would strive to show more loyalty to the covenant-giver by practicing the Law, a Christian can show more loyalty to the God of righteousness by practicing righteousness, or godliness.

Godliness, then, defines both the goal and the nature, or core, of the process. Christians exercise towards godliness by being godly or doing godly deeds. Such a circular definition does not assist a Christian in growing in godliness, so a closer examination of "exercise" or "discipline" becomes critical in an understanding of Paul's instructions to Timothy.

Exercise and Godliness

Having already introduced the notion of training with ἐντρεφόμενος in verse 6, Paul now advances the argument with the use of γυμνασία in verse 7. Paul is using this term in a manner that allows him to continue the athletic imagery and that contributes to the development of the comparison between bodily exercise and the exercise that leads to

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[52]Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 173.

godliness.[53] Whereas words of the faith and of the sound doctrine provide nourishment, or basic training, godliness is a product of continual effort. This continual effort is seen in several of the words used in this and surrounding passages, such as exercise, labor, and strive.

The nature of the continued effort must be exclusively in and towards godliness. Like any exercise program, certain activities are excluded by a desire to reach a particular goal as effectively as possible. Dieting excludes ice cream. Body-building excludes poly-unsaturated fats. Similarly, certain "disciplines" are deemed beneficial by Paul and others are not. Paul instructs Timothy to be nourished on, or train in, the "words of the faith and the sound doctrine." This then, in Paul's mind, excludes worldly fables that are useless. It also limits the temporal value of "bodily exercise" against the everlasting value of exercise in godliness.[54] Such exclusions again serve as a reminder that godliness is both the goal and the process.

Mounce asserts that the use of $\delta\varepsilon$ in verses 7-8 represents an intentional contrast between what is useful for achieving godliness and what is not.[55] This assertion correctly takes into consideration Paul's concern that the Ephesians might be misled into thinking that something other than God's teachings on godliness might be beneficial. As a result, Paul commands the Ephesians to reject myths and fables, which are useless, since the greater teaching of "the words of faith and of the sound doctrine" which, when exercised, lead to godliness.

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[53]Ibid., 305.

[54]Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles,* 199.

[55]Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 249.

Similar to the Hebrews passage, Paul ties together the teachings and words of faith with exercise or training in and for godliness. Learning the Word and putting it into practice become, in Paul's writings, the critical formula for the Christian life. Paul asserts as much in his statement, "bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things" (v. 8). The parallelism in the Greek construction is unmistakable and intentional. Even though "exercise" does not appear in the construction, its inclusion is clearly implied. Knight writes that the introduction of "exercise" would significantly distort the "near perfect internal parallelism,"[56] and the phrase, therefore, is abbreviated. As long as Christians exercise their godliness, which is based on sound teachings and faith, and not participate in exercises that are temporal or useless, they will increase in everything that relates to the promises of God for this life and the next.

Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with two important theological considerations. The first was the necessity of evangelism. God's plan clearly includes, and perhaps centers on, the proclamation of the good news in bringing the lost to salvation. Non-Christians must hear and understand the message in order to "call upon the name of the Lord." God has called and ordained disciples as the heralds of this message. However, not only are Christians to be heralds, they are to be living witnesses to the power of salvation. As several commentators have pointed out, Christians proclaim the gospel with both word and deed.

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[56]Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles,* 199. Knight describes the absence of "exercise" as a brachylogy, or a shortening of a phrase or term.

Hearing with understanding implies that Christians are able to do more than just regurgitate Scripture; they are to explain, enlighten, and train others from the Scriptures. The ability to teach others requires a certain depth of understanding of Scripture. Paul expects Christians to mature to that point over time and be ready to teach others about God. The mechanism for maturing Christians is the practice of spiritual disciplines. Maturing Christians gain wisdom and depth of understanding from using their knowledge to discern God's will in difficult situations; a process Paul calls "exercising unto godliness."

As a result of the consideration of these passages, a relationship between evangelism and personal spiritual growth becomes apparent. This relationship is the premise of this project. Christians who are growing and maturing through the practice of spiritual disciplines will be more evangelistic than those who are not growing. Full maturity is not a requirement for evangelism, however. Only spiritual growth is required, and this growth happens from the beginning of the Christian life for those who desire it and who are willing to commit to the necessary "exercise."

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES IN THE
UNDERSTANDING AND TEACHING OF
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Almost thirty-five years ago the world was re-introduced to the practice of

spiritual disciplines by Richard Foster in *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual*

Growth. Of course, spirituality and spiritual disciplines had been in practice for

centuries, but some had relegated them to the cloisters and closets of monks and mystics.

Since Foster's work debuted, the interest in spiritual disciplines has seen resurgence. The

writings of Dallas Willard have also contributed to this swelling interest, as have those of

Donald Whitney, Michael Haykin, and Randy Harris.

With the swelling interest in anything "practical," such as coupon-clipping or

do-it-yourself projects, comes the felt need for "how-to" articles and books. The practice

of spiritual disciplines has seen this surge of literature as well. Unlike repairing plumbing

or electrical lines, in which practices may vary but fundamentals are generally agreed

upon, writers do not necessarily agree on the fundamentals and have widely defined and

expanded the scope of spiritual disciplines. Today, any practice can be a spiritual

discipline. In *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us*, Calhoun

lists spiritual disciplines such as Sabbath, chastity, teachability, labyrinth prayer, and

conversational prayer.[1] Other authors have also identified grief, acting, and family life as spiritual disciplines.[2] The list could continue *ad infinitum*, but what Haykin says about the term spirituality can be said of spiritual disciplines: "The word seems to mean everything—and consequently means nothing."[3] In order to write about spiritual disciplines one needs to discuss such terms as spirituality, godliness, and disciplines.

In addition to defining spiritual disciplines, Christian educators seeking to teach others how to practice spiritual disciplines must arrive at a new model for doing so. Current models are built upon Catholic and mystic understandings of spiritual disciplines. Redefining spiritual disciplines would then require a new methodology to support new cognitive, affective, volitional, and behavioral goals. Therefore, I will present a model that accurately captures and conveys the biblical purpose of spiritual disciplines.

Development of Spiritual Disciplines

Catholic and mystical approaches to spirituality differ greatly from an Evangelical approach. One often finds the phrase, "means of grace," when perusing current literature on spiritual disciplines. The meaning of this phrase in regards to its use in spiritual discipline often has been overlooked. Religions with a mystical or

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[1]Adele Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 7-8.

[2]Keith Goheen, "Grieving as a Spiritual Discipline," *Chaplaincy Today* 25, no. 1 (2009), http://www.professionalchaplains.org/files/publications/chaplaincy_today_online/volume_25/number_1/25_1essaygoheen.pdf (accessed January 11, 2011); Ron Marasco and Carolyn D. Roark, "Acting as Spiritual Discipline: An Interview with Ron Marasco," *Ecumenica* 1, no.1 (2008): 61–72; and Ernest Boyer, *A Way in the World: Family Life as Spiritual Discipline* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984).

[3]Michael Haykin, *The God Who Draws Near* (Webster, NY: Evangelical Press, 2007), xviii.

sacramental heritage use this phrase to denote the purpose of the practice of spiritual

disciplines, as a means of gaining more grace in order to sustain one's righteousness.

In 1517 the Protestant Reformation challenged the Roman Catholic view that

the grace received upon conversion was insufficient for a sinner to be saved completely

and eternally. The Council of Trent countered the attack by affirming that a Christian

must continually seek to accumulate more grace to ensure his or her salvation.[4] The

Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, *we

can then merit* for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification, for

the increase of grace and charity, and for the attainment of eternal life."[5] For those who

fall short of the requisite amount of grace, purgatory awaits. Therefore, the challenge to

the Roman Catholic community was, "How can you make sure you accumulate sufficient

grace to ensure your salvation?" The answer became, "By practicing spiritual disciplines

as a 'means of [attaining more] grace.'"

Because of this theologically unacceptable beginning, the practice of spiritual

disciplines has been met with a wide range of acceptance among non-Roman Catholic

churches, from complete rejection to legalistic requirement. Donald S. Whitney, an

evangelical scholar who has written extensively on spiritual disciplines, adds that the

traditionally monastic and mystical practices associated with spiritual disciplines make it

difficult for Protestants and Evangelicals to grasp thoroughly their benefits, especially if

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[4]J. Waterworth, ed. and trans., "The Council of Trent: The Cannons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent (London: Dolman, 1848), 48-49, http://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent/trentall.html (accessed October 21, 2013).

[5]United States Catholic Conference, *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* 2nd ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 542.

Christians do not need to "merit" additional graces.[6] But does its purpose have to be

attaining more grace? Can the practice of spiritual discipline have a different, and

perhaps, simpler purpose? Many contemporary writers have explored this possibility and

have offered a number of salient ideas.

For example, Whitney, author of *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*,

argues that the purpose of spiritual disciplines is to produce godliness, as in 1 Tim 4:7.[7]

This purpose is instructive in that it changes the focus from "earning" to "producing."

One does not practice spiritual disciplines to "get something from God," as if disciplines

are a token in a sacramental economy, but one does so to be transformed into Christ-

likeness. Richard Foster makes a similar statement when he writes, "The Disciplines are

God's way of getting us into the ground; they put us where he can work within us and

transform us. By themselves the Spiritual Disciplines can do nothing; they can only get

us to a place where something can be done."[8]

D. A. Carson warns against pushing the idea of producing too far:

> What is universally presupposed by the expression "spiritual discipline" is that such
> disciplines are intended to increase our spirituality. From a Christian perspective,
> however, it is simply not possible to increase one's spirituality without possessing
> the Holy Spirit and submitting to his transforming instruction and power.[9]

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[6]Donald S. Whitney, "Teaching Spiritual Disciplines" (class lecture, DMin 80913: Biblical Spirituality in the Local Church, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, January 11, 2013).

[7]Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991), 15.

[8]Richard Foster, *Celebration of Disciplines: The Path to Spiritual Growth,* rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper, 1998), 7.

[9]D. A. Carson, "Spiritual Disciplines," *Themelios* 36, no. 3 (2011), http://thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/ article/spiritual_disciplines, (accessed June 16, 2012).

Christians can be easily sidetracked by believing the discipline is producing an increase in their spirituality. In a similar thought, Michael Haykin states, "True spirituality is intimately bound up with the Holy Spirit and His work."[10] The partnership with God that facilitates spiritual growth is manifested in and empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Spiritual disciplines, at least as envisioned by Whitney and other evangelicals, facilitate the transformation by the Spirit of already righteous lives into Christ's likeness.

A second reason for the disavowal of spiritual disciplines by many scholars is the lack of biblical support, both in its purpose as noted above and in its procedures. Carson notes, "[T]he language of 'spiritual disciplines' has likewise extended itself into arenas that are bound to make those who love the gospel more than a little nervous."[11] Examples of such extension can be found readily. A search of the ATLA database finds a plethora of possibilities from grief to eating correctly.

If everything is a spiritual discipline, then spiritual discipline is synonymous with simply living life well. As Carson points out, spiritual disciplines "are merely a matter of technique."[12] No doctrine is necessary. No faith is necessary. One must simply live life by certain "disciplined" techniques in order to find one's "spiritual" fulfillment in this life.

Leslie Hardin, however, calls Christians to look closely at the life of Jesus to determine what he did to develop his spirituality. Hardin notes that fasting, tithing,

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[10]Haykin, *The God Who Draws Near*, xix.

[11]Carson, "Spiritual Disciplines."

[12]Ibid.

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journaling, singing, and repentance are unnecessary and unsupported by practices found in Jesus' life and ministry.[13] Though perhaps overstating the absence of fasting and singing, Hardin acknowledges that the absence of the evidence in Scripture does not mean an absence in Jesus' life. However, that which routinely and regularly appears in the life of Christ should be of first importance in our own lives.[14] To that end, Hardin includes prayer and solitude, casting down temptation, Scripture reading and memorization, corporate worship, submission, simplicity, care for the oppressed, fellowship meals, and evangelism and proclamation as those disciplines of first importance based on their regular appearance in the life of Christ.[15]

Hardin further argues that the growth which Jesus experienced, that was "in favor with God" (Luke 2:52), "suggests that there was an aspect of his development, at least during his childhood and adolescence, which required guidance, assistance, prodding, and the formation of godly habits."[16] This assertion, however, is mere speculation. Scripture does not state how Jesus grew up, but simply that his life while he was growing was favorable to God. In addition, Hardin's approach begins with two assumptions that could be questionable. First, did Jesus actually need to develop spiritually? Second, would Jesus' growth as a child and adolescent necessarily serve as a good model for adult spiritual formation?

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[13]Leslie Hardin, *Spirituality of Jesus: Nine Disciplines Christ Modeled for Us* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009), 170-75.

[14]Ibid., 176.

[15]Ibid., 7.

[16]Ibid., 16.

Over the last thirty years two books have served as anchors for the thoughts

and practices of spiritual disciplines. The first, published in 1978, is Richard Foster's

Celebration of Discipline, which has served to define what is popularly called the classic

spiritual disciplines. Grouped in three sets of four, these twelve disciplines are the inward

disciplines of study, meditation, prayer, and fasting, the outward disciplines of simplicity,

solitude, submission, and service, and the corporate disciplines of celebration, worship,

guidance, and confession.[17]

Of particular importance to the discussion of spiritual disciplines is Foster's

opening chapter subtitled, "Door to Liberation." In this chapter he sets out his

expectations and goal for the practice of spiritual disciplines. Spiritual disciplines "call

us to move beyond the surface living into the depths. They invite us to explore the inner

caverns of the spiritual realm. They urge us to be the answer to a hollow world."[18]

Foster's premise to the practice of spiritual disciplines centers on an "inner life" and the

ability to "reach beyond the physical world."[19] This language has led to a

misunderstanding of the use of spiritual disciplines. Even though Foster states clearly,

"Disciplines are best exercised in the midst of our relationships"[20] with others, most

Christians have heard instead a call to a form of "spiritual monasticism" championed by

the practices of solitude, silence, and meditation. Due to the misconceptions of starting

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[17]Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*s, Table of Contents.

[18]Ibid., 1.

[19]Ibid, 2-3.

[20]Ibid., 1.

places and goals, the well conceived and presented disciplines in Foster's book have failed to help many realize the full biblical benefits of spiritual disciplines.

Dallas Willard's *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, published in 1988, is the second book. Much of the content in Willard's book lay at the heart of what one reads in Foster's. Foster, in the twentieth anniversary edition of *Celebration of Discipline*, credits Willard's teachings for shaping much of what is contained in his book.[21] What one finds in Willard, which is substantially lacking in Foster's work, is "a theology of disciplines for the spiritual life."[22] Not that Foster lacks a theology; he simply does not express it with the same clarity of Willard.

Almost a third of Willard's book develops a theology for spiritual disciplines. Willard's thoughts center on man's fallen state and the need to regain the *imago Dei*. Within the fallen state of mankind, "humans were no longer beings with integrity or coherent wholeness. . . . The very idea of a spiritual *life* for human beings was lost. . . ."[23] Stated another way, all continuity between humans and God was lost. Not only was humanity adrift in a fallen world; he was spiritually dis-integrated. Only under the "effective direction of the Spirit" could "the reintegration of the self under God" be achieved.[24] Spiritual disciplines, in this understanding, become the mechanisms by which humans achieve the reintegration of the spiritual life and the reintegration of the spiritual life with the physical body.

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[21]Ibid., xiv-xv.

[22]Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 25.

[23]Ibid., 66.

[24]Ibid., 67.

With this understanding of spiritual disciplines, Willard wades into a lengthy,

philosophical foray that can leave readers unable to understand his goal for spiritual

disciplines. Such language as "embodied self"[25] and the complementary nature of the

"spiritual and the bodily"[26] can confuse readers and perhaps intimidate others. Willard's

expertise in philosophy, in this early writing, distorts an otherwise simple message about

the reintegration of one's spiritual life and one's daily life.

Though Foster credits Willard for directing his development of *Celebration of

Discipline*, only one particular aspect of Willard stands out in this work. Both Willard

and Foster advocate the practice of spiritual disciplines as a means of freeing our physical

lives from the "embedded" or "engrained habit of sin."[27] Foster's "Door to Liberation,"

then, is not a metaphysical quest but an encouragement to overcome the power and

enslavement of sin that robs Christians of a life in the kingdom of God. Or as Willard

describes,

> The disciplines for the spiritual life, rightly understood, are time-tested activities
> consciously undertaken by us as new men or women to allow our spirit ever-
> increasing sway over our embodied selves. They help by assisting the ways of
> God's Kingdom to take the place of the habits of sin embedded in our bodies.[28]

Much of the literature on the subject of spiritual disciplines overlooks

Willard's theology of reintegration. Compared to the simplicity and practicality of

Foster's work, Willard's exploration of the theology of spiritual disciplines appears

cumbersome and unnecessary. Unfortunately, any practices that become detached from

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[25]Ibid., 31.

[26]Ibid., 75.

[27]Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 86; Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 4-6.

[28]Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 86.

their theoretical or, in this case, theological underpinnings can soon drift far afield. To correct this oversight, I built upon the idea of reintegration of faith into daily living as the substantive goal of spiritual disciplines. After redefining a few key terms used in the discussion of spiritual disciplines, this project will produce a definition and model for the practice of spiritual disciplines that are biblical and practical.

A Few New Definitions

Before addressing spiritual disciplines, one must define spirituality. As Haykin has pointed out, the term has been abused. The fact that the word "spirituality" is not a biblical word could be to blame for much of the speculation about its meaning and apparent misuse.[29] In common usage, "spirituality" describes the private, experiential *dimension* of a person's public religious life.[30] In such a dichotomy, one can be religious without being spiritual or spiritual without being religious. Nancy Pearcy rightly warns that the type of thinking that divides the spiritual realm from the daily life destroys the influence of the spiritual upon the daily.[31]

In an effort to keep one's faith and daily walk in the same sphere, a better definition of "spirituality" might be the *integration of one's faith into one's whole life*. In other words, individuals would possess a high degree of spirituality if they interpret and respond to everything in their life according to what they believe about God. Hebrews 5:11-14, as discussed in the previous chapter, supports such an integrative view.

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[29]D. A. Carson, "When is Spirituality Spiritual? Reflections of Some Problems of Definition," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 37, no. 3 (1994): 381.

[30] Nancy Pearcy, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 117.

[31]Ibid., 34-35.

This integration must go beyond thinking about life in the right way; the Christian must be a transformed into something remarkably Christ-like. Paul, in Romans 7:14-24, states that knowing and desiring are not enough; something has to change on the inside. That change, or transformation, is our salvation in Christ (Rom 7:25-8:2). Yet even after one's conversion, God expects continued growth and transformation (Rom12:1-2). Christians, according to Paul, are to sacrifice, labor, toil, discipline ourselves, and buffet their bodies for growth.

The goal of that growth and discipline is godliness (1 Tim 4:7-8). The term "godliness" is often viewed as equivalent to "high spirituality." However, because spirituality is commonly confined to the personal, experiential dimension of one's life, godliness becomes an attitude or state of being. With this understanding, godliness is devoid of any sense of piety or devoted living. Using a definition of spirituality that reintegrates faith and daily living, godliness becomes the observable outcome of that integration. In other words, those who have a high degree of spirituality will manifest godliness, or piety, in their life.

This new definition provides a good biblical perspective of maturity as well. Spiritual maturity can now be understood as the level of *expertise* a Christian has in integrating faith into her daily life in this world. The writer of Hebrews describes maturity as Christians who have gained expertise in integrations by having "their senses trained to discern good and evil" (Heb 5:14). That the Hebrews writer describes maturity in this way is not surprising given that Old Testament Wisdom literature describes one who is mature in wisdom as possessing similar abilities.

"Spirituality" is not a biblical term, even though a principle of spirituality is certainly implied in Scripture. Τέλειος which is translated maturity, completeness, or perfection, is a biblical term. A Christian is "mature" or "complete" when he has learned to integrate his faith "completely" with the world around him.

Working with these new definitions of spirituality, godliness, and maturity, I have developed a definition of spiritual discipline that is more biblical and practical. Spiritual disciplines, therefore, are exercises or practices that help Christians integrate faith into their daily lives with the goal ($\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\iota o\varsigma$) of "taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor 10:5). This definition, consistent with the general direction of Whitney and others, focuses the practice of spiritual disciplines on "becoming" and not on "receiving."

The Need for a New Educational Paradigm

The second consideration in developing a curriculum for spiritual disciplines is the need for a biblically-sound educational model. Due to the unique nature of Christian education in general and the very specific goal of spiritual disciplines, an educational philosophy must be followed that is thoroughly God-centered. George Knight challenges Christian educators to "individually examine their own basic beliefs in terms of reality, truth, and value, and then consciously build a personal philosophy upon that platform."[32] Knight further asserts that this philosophy will share much in common with theology since, from a Christian perspective, it must be grounded in the Bible that "sheds light on

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[32]George R. Knight, *Philosophy & Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective,* 4th ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2006), 166.

the issues of metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology."[33] However, as a model for understanding and teaching spiritual disciplines, it must also be highly practical so learning and spiritual growth can occur within "the everyday events of life."[34]

Writers teach readers how to practice spiritual disciplines using an educational model based on an unbiblical definition of spiritual disciplines. This incorrect definition causes teachers to teach toward the wrong goals. If a teacher believes that spiritual disciplines are a means of grace, then he teaches his students to practice spiritual disciplines to gain grace. If this definition is wrong, then so is the goal. The methodology to arrive at that goal becomes ineffective if one changes the goal from "meriting grace" to becoming more Christlike in one's daily life. Therefore, an educational paradigm is needed that treats spiritual disciplines as uniquely spiritual, consistent with God's grand plan for Christianity, and that assists Christians in ordering and integrating their faith and their everyday lives.

Learning from Old Testament Wisdom Literature

As is often the case, the Bible provides its own best interpretation. Paul reminds Timothy, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness" (2 Tim 3:16). Minimally, Paul would have had the Old Testament in mind when he made this statement, though it certainly extends to the New Testament as well. Paul believed that the Old Testament is essential to teach and mature Christians.

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[33]Ibid., 168.

[34]Hardin, *Spirituality of Jesus*, 17.

James Wilhoit recognizes the value of the Old Testament as a model for spiritual formation as well. He reframes Dallas Willard's "Curriculum for Christlikeness"[35] in four dimensions of spiritual formation: receiving, remembering, responding, and relating.[36] These four dimensions provide a potential pedagogical framework for Christian spiritual formation, which Wilhoit defines as (1) intentional; (2) communal; (3) requiring engagement; (4) accompanied by the Holy Spirit; (5) for the glory of God and the service of others; and (6) has as its means and end the imitation of Christ.[37] These six elements provide insights into a Christian praxis of spiritual formation using an educational model Wilhoit derived from Hebrew pedagogy.[38] Though insightful in his approach, Wilhoit focuses primarily on organizational goals and practices; therefore, the book is less useful for teaching the practices of the disciplines to individuals.

Klaus Issler also approaches spiritual formation with a philosophy consistent with the Old Testament. In particular, Issler's model views spiritual formation as increasing competencies in becoming like Jesus.[39] The idea of increasing competencies parallels the Hebrew understanding of *hochmah*, or wisdom. A wise man not only understands more about life, but he puts that understanding into practice—with growing

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[35]Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering our Hidden Life in God* (San Francisco: Harper, 1997), 311-74.

[36]James Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation As If the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 50.

[37]Ibid., 23.

[38]Ibid., 105.

[39]Klaus Issler, *Living into the Life of Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Press, 2012), 27.

expertise.[40] Issler sees the bottom line as "the core of childhood formation is primarily rule keeping, but the core of adult formation is growing into the way of wisdom, with a heart formed like Jesus'."[41] The remainder of his book addresses how one can gain proficiency through wisdom by living the life of Jesus. He does not, however, spend time developing this basic premise.

For a thorough development of Issler's premise, though written before Issler's book, one must turn to the work of Daniel Estes. In *Hear, My Son: Teaching and Learning in Proverbs 1-9* Estes analyzes the educational philosophy of the Old Testament wisdom literature found in Proverbs 1-9.[42] By examining the philosophical underpinnings of wisdom and comparing them to those of spirituality and spiritual disciplines, one finds significant similarities. Starting from their shared philosophy, the practical model Estes proposes can be adapted easily to the teaching of spiritual disciplines.

Worldview

Old Testament Wisdom and New Testament spirituality share a common worldview. Worldview is often defined as "how one sees the world" or "a way of looking at the world."[43] Nancy Pearcy, referring to the works of Abraham Kuyper and Herman Dooyeweerd, provides a definitively biblical worldview as "an outlook on life that gives rise to a distinctively Christian form of culture—with the important qualification that it is

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[40]C. Hassell Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1988), 22.

[41]Issler, *Living into the Life of Jesus*, 23.

[42]Daniel Estes, *Hear, My Son: Teaching and Learning in Proverbs 1-9* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997).

[43]Pearcy, *Total Truth*, 23.

not merely the relativistic belief of a particular culture but is based on the very Word of God, true for all times and places."[44] She further states that a biblical worldview is only effective when a Christian willingly submits her mind to "the Lord of the universe—a willingness to be taught by Him."[45] Estes expresses this same commitment and outlines these elements in his study, as will be noted below.

As pointed out by Knight, the philosophical underpinnings of a worldview and its resultant educational philosophy consist of three parts, metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology. Metaphysics is the study of the nature of reality; epistemology, the study of the nature of truth and knowledge; and axiology, the study of value.[46] In Estes' analysis, one finds all three of these categories present in his educational paradigm.

Estes begins by intentionally discussing the worldview found in Proverbs 1-9. The origin of the universe and all reality (metaphysics) is God.[47] That God is creator and sustainer is foundational to the wisdom writers' understanding of how the universe—and life itself—operates. Since God is Creator, he sovereignly controls every aspect of life, again showing the importance of metaphysics.[48] Even as God is in control, he chooses to reveal himself and his world in knowable, understandable ways—while at the same time maintaining a level of mysterious that is beyond human comprehension.[49] This

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[44]Ibid., 24.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Knight, *Philosophy & Education*, 9.

[47]Estes, *Hear, My Son,* 22-25.

[48]Ibid., 26-30.

[49]Ibid., 30-35.

understanding of God's revelation is the foundation of epistemology within wisdom literature. And finally, Estes asserts that humans, recognizing God's power and sovereignty, must reverence God.[50] As a normative statement, this conclusion serves as the axiological foundation for how believers should live.

In considering the use of this worldview for understanding and teaching spiritual disciplines, beginning at the end is helpful. Spiritual disciplines are acts of submission to and reverence for God. These acts are valuable because they assist the Christian in aligning their life and will with the sovereign creator of the universe. As Estes points out, "Because every facet of life has a religious dimension, wisdom calls its hearers to a whole-life response to Yahweh. In this worldview every action and choice in life, including even the most apparently mundane, is imbued with theological significance."[51] Estes' conclusion that wisdom calls believers to a "whole-life response" parallels the view presented within this paper of spiritual disciplines as being "every action and choice in life."

Educational Values

By accepting the parallel, the metaphysical and epistemological assumptions may now be understood as valuable and relevant foundations for spiritual disciplines, and to do so is not difficult. Both wisdom and spirituality assume that God's way is always best. The foundation for that assumption is God as creator and God as sovereign. Both wisdom and spirituality assume that God's will and ways are knowable; otherwise there

[50]Ibid., 35-38.

[51]Ibid., 36.

would be no purpose in pursuing them. However, as Estes posits, God's ways are only knowable through deep searching of his teachings, exercise of the truths gained, and toil and hard work.[52] One finds the same need for diligence, exercise, and hard work in the discussions of spirituality, spiritual disciplines, and godliness found in Paul's epistles.[53]

Based on the worldview described in Proverbs 1 – 9, Estes develops three specific ethical elements that guide the student of God's word and ways:

1. Humble willingness to accept instruction (paralleling διδαχή).

2. Commitment to righteousness (paralleling εὐσεβής).

3. Life ordered by God's boundaries (paralleling γυμνασία).54

Any student of wisdom or of spirituality and spiritual disciplines must ascribe to these three values. One can find all three of these values present in Paul's writings, particularly in the Pastorals. Paul exhorts Timothy to accept the instruction (διδαχή) of the Lord and to pass it on to others who desire to learn (2 Tim 2:2). Further, Paul's call to godliness (εὐσεβής) in the Pastorals parallels wisdom's call to righteousness. And wisdom's admonition to live an orderly life in accordance with God's will parallels Paul's exhortation to discipline (γυμνασία) oneself (1 Tim 4:7-8) and one's body (1 Cor 9:27).

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[52]Ibid., 31.

[53]For an excellent discussion on Paul's use of toil, labor, diligence, etc., see Victor Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif* (Boston: Brill Academic, 1997).

[54]Estes, *Hear, My Son,* 62.

Educational Goals

Estes continues in his analysis of educational paradigms by outlining the goals for education which he derives from wisdom literature. He identifies six goals from Proverbs that can serve as the goals for teaching the spiritual disciplines. These six goals are as follows:

1. Commitment to a way of life.

2. Development of inner character.

3. Competence in understanding and living life.

4. Protection from the results of bad choices.

5. Prosperity (defined as shalom, or completeness and wholeness).

6. Knowledge of God as both transcendent and immanent.[55]

When using a definition of spiritual discipline that seeks to integrate the spiritual disciplines into a daily walk with God, the goals for teaching them need to include changes in knowledge, attitude, behaviors, and life goals. Estes' list from Proverbs enumerates such goals. But again, these shared educational goals should not be a surprise given the worldview and values shared between wisdom and spirituality.

Roles of Teacher and Learner

While obvious differences in curriculum and instructional processes are evident, the roles of the teacher and of the learner are, again, very similar. Estes describes the teacher in Proverbs as a guide.[56] "The teacher is at times an expert, at times

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[55]Ibid., 63-86.

[56]Ibid., 134.

a facilitator, but always the guide, pointing the learners toward their own independent competence."[57]   Ultimately, the teacher's goal is to have the learner reach maturity.

The learner is a disciple of God. Beyond simply learning about God or about God's creation, or even imitating the life of the teacher, the learner is called to interact with and acquire wisdom. Specifically, Estes describes four roles of the learner that find an almost perfect parallel to Paul's call to godliness in 1 Timothy 4:6-16.   Specifically, what the learner is to do is this:

Proverbs 1—9	1 Timothy 4:6-16
Receive Wisdom	Receive Godliness
Respond to Wisdom	Respond to/in Godliness
Value Wisdom	Value Godliness
Assimilate Wisdom[58]	Assimilate Godliness

When considering how to live a life filled with godliness, which is the goal of spiritual discipline in 1 Timothy, Paul appears to draw from wisdom's paradigm: receive the instructions on godliness, respond to and in godliness through discipline, understand the value (profit) of godliness, and then "be absorbed in them so that your progress may be evident to all" (1 Tim 4:15). The process of becoming godly through the exercise of spiritual discipline is much the same as the process of becoming wise.

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[57]Ibid.

[58]Ibid., 135-49.

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Heart-Deep Curriculum

Estes' paradigm provides a solid biblical foundation for approaching the teaching of spiritual disciplines. Using Proverbs, he answers the philosophical questions often neglected in the development of any curriculum, but especially curriculum concerning spiritual disciplines. However, while Estes' work is extremely biblical, theological, and philosophical, it lacks in the area of practicality. Estes does provide a few suggestions for the approach to the curriculum, process of instruction, and educational goals, but they are limited to their specific application in Proverbs. Estes himself concludes his book by asking questions about the legitimacy and appropriateness of using the model derived from Proverbs 1 – 9, intended for a Jewish nation in ancient Israel, in contemporary pedagogy.[59]

Since Estes' premise is that the goal of wisdom literature is to produce a "whole life response"[60] then a pedagogy that supports such a response would appear to be the most appropriate. In today's educational atmosphere of pragmatism and progressivism on one side and essentialism on the other,[61] a model needs to be used that captures the heart of the learner and carries her on a journey deep into God's word and applies the discoveries along the way to every aspect of her life. Gary Newton presents such a model.

Newton states that the purpose of a comprehensive, heart-deep curriculum is to help "students design specific goals and objectives to live out their commitments in their

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[59]Estes, *Hear, My Son,* 153.

[60]Ibid., 30.

[61]For a complete discussion of educational philosophies, see Knight, *Philosophy & Education*, 41-160.

everyday lives."[62] While Newton identifies the purpose with the final steps of a curriculum, that goal must also be present throughout the development of each lesson. What makes Newton's work particularly relevant to the study of spiritual disciplines is his model uses four domains of learning, cognitive, affective, volitional, and behavioral.[63]

The majority of Bible teaching takes place in the first domain, cognition. Well-meaning teachers emphasize the importance of the Bible through Scripture memorization, Bible drills, and Bible stories. Newton states that even the cognitive level is more than just rote memorization. Citing the work of Benjamin Bloom, Newton lists six levels of learning, knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.[64] What makes Newton's approach so relevant is that he adds a final level, "wisdom," which he defines as "the highest level of thinking related to putting knowledge into practice in making decisions."[65] Newton makes the same connection between learning and wisdom and a whole life change that Estes advocates from Proverbs 1-9.

The affective domain relates to the change in attitudes and emotions.[66] As a student learns from the Bible he becomes aware of how it might impact his Christian life. Though simple, this awareness can lead the Christian to pay more attention to what he is learning and how it can be applied in his life. Ultimately, he begins to assess situations

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[62]Gary Newton, *Heart-Deep Teaching: Engaging Students for Transformed Lives* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2012), 195.

[63]Ibid., 45-54.

[64]Benjamin Bloom, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals*, 1st ed. (New York: David McKay, 1956), 18, 90-93, quoted in Newton, *Heart-Deep* Teaching, 46.

[65]James Lee, *The Content of Religious Instruction* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1985), 159, quoted in Newton, *Heart-Deep Teaching*, 46.

[66]Newton, *Heart-Deep Teaching,* 50.

and respond to them based on his growing understanding of God's word. Ultimately, as a student grows in the affective domain, a new worldview is formed.[67] This formation of a new worldview concurs with the goal in both wisdom and teachings on godliness to assimilate the teachings into a new way of viewing and evaluating life.

Changes in the volitional domain bring the individual's will into alignment with God's will.[68] For Estes, one of the values within wisdom literature is to bring one's life under the control of and live within the boundaries of the Creator.[69] The Apostle Paul's discussion of "disciplining oneself unto godliness" in 1 Timothy 4:7-8 has similar overtones where one must bring one's life under the authority of God for the benefit of salvation in this life and beyond.

Changes in the behavioral domain relate to the skills and competencies needed to accomplish the desired changes in one's life, especially as they relate to the other domains.[70] As learners advance through stages of behavioral growth, they become more adept at applying their knowledge and skills to their life circumstances. As the four domains begin to merge together in heart-deep learning, these skills find other applications in related life circumstances.[71] In other words, heart-deep learning facilitates a "whole life response" to the word of God, whether those words are in the form of wisdom literature or teachings on spirituality and spiritual disciplines.

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[67]Ibid.

[68]Ibid., 52.

[69]Estes, *Hear, My Son,* 62.

[70]Newton, *Heart-Deep Teaching,* 52.

[71]Ibid., 53.

Conclusion

Evangelical Christians must recapture the practice of spiritual disciplines. To do so, evangelical Christianity needs an understanding of spiritual disciplines that is biblical and practical. In this chapter this writer has attempted to provide that new definition. Spiritual disciplines, instead of facilitating mystical encounters, facilitate the reintegration of a Christian's faith with his daily life in this world. The practice of spiritual disciplines do not transport a Christian out of this world but brings the power and wisdom of God into the life of a Christian as she walks daily in this world. Spiritual disciplines as defined herein provided, not a "means of grace," but a means by which Christians can be in this world but not of this world.

This new understanding of the disciplines requires a new educational paradigm. Because it is based on godliness in action in the daily life of a Christian, I have constructed a model based on an educational philosophy derived from Old Testament Wisdom literature. As discussed previously, wisdom and spiritual disciplines both call the people of God to a "whole life response" to his teachings.

The reintegration of faith into the "whole life" of the Christian will drive the evangelistic efforts desired by God. The Great Commission calls Christians to make disciples of the nations by "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19). A Christian who is not observing these teaching of God in his whole life will lack the maturity and discernment to reach the lost. By providing a better definition of spiritual disciplines and a better way to teach and understand them in that context, I posit that evangelistic efforts will flow out of the maturity in Christ gained by the proper practice of spiritual disciplines.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Based on the theological and educational foundations established previously, I developed a project designed to improve evangelistic efforts among members of the Arlington Heights Church of Christ in Corpus Christi, Texas, setting forth five specific goals for this project: (1) evaluate current knowledge and practice of spiritual disciplines, (2) evaluate current evangelistic efforts, (3) develop a curriculum for teaching spiritual disciplines, (4) measure changes in knowledge and practice of spiritual disciplines after participation in the spiritual disciplines class, and (5) measure changes in evangelistic efforts among participants in the spiritual disciplines class.

The centerpiece of this project was the spiritual disciplines class. I followed the basic ideas of Dallas Willard and Richard Foster but further developed the curriculum based on the theological foundations of Christian maturation and the pedagogical foundations drawn from Old Testament Wisdom literature. The class was taught over a thirteen-week period to adult members of the congregation. Prior to the class, a survey assessed the congregation's understanding and practice of spiritual disciplines and its evangelistic efforts. The same survey was used as a post-test to determine changes in both areas among class participants.

In addition to the classroom material, I encouraged participants to select an accountability partner for encouragement and to keep a journal for reflection. These

activities were supplemental activities designed to enhance the learning experience. The participant's level of participation in these supplemental activities were measured through self-reporting at the close of the project.

I compiled the data from the pre-tests, post-tests, and self-reported supplemental activities. This data served to evaluate the effectiveness of the 13 week class in increasing participant's understanding and practice of spiritual disciplines and their evangelistic efforts. This chapter details the procedures followed during the course of this project.

Pre-Treatment Activities

Prior to the beginning of the 13 week class, I developed both the spiritual disciplines survey and the spiritual disciplines curriculum. The spiritual discipline survey sought to assess the level of understanding and practice of the twelve classic spiritual disciplines. I developed operational definitions for each of these twelve disciplines based on information from Foster's *Celebration of Discipline*[1] and Willard's *Spirit of the Disciplines*.[2] From these definitions, I selected four questions to represent the key ideas of each of the twelve disciplines.

In addition to the questions addressing cognitive understanding, I asked questions which attempted to measure the level of the practices as well. Respondents reported how many times in the last thirty days they had purposefully participated in each of the spiritual disciplines.

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[1]Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper, 1998).

[2]Dallas Willard, *Spirit of the Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper, 1988).

The last three questions on the survey addressed the number of times in the last thirty days the respondents had made evangelistic efforts. The evangelistic efforts were divided into three categories, prayer, care, and share. The survey asked how many people had the respondents prayed for so that the person might be saved. It then asked how many people the respondent had engaged in Christ-centered conversation or had otherwise developed a Christ-centered relationship with. The final question asked with how many people the respondent had shared the biblical, gospel plan of salvation. The final form of the survey[3] was submitted to the Human Subjects Research Ethics Committee at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for approval prior to its use.

In order to ensure the survey accurately assessed spiritual disciplines and the content of the material to be taught during the 13 week class, both the curriculum and the survey were developed simultaneously. I then developed an outline for each of the 13 lessons that corresponded to the operational definitions used for the survey. These outlines included the key Scriptures, the main ideas, and how the discipline contacted the real world on a daily basis.

I then submitted these 13 outlines to four qualified reviewers for evaluation and feedback. The reviewers were Mark Hahlen, Chair of Bible, Dallas Christian College, Stan Helton, preacher and former Dean of Students, Western Christian College (Canada), Jerry Linker, retired preacher and former Dean of Amberton University, and Chancey Lattimer, minister and former Southern Baptist Theological Seminary student with studies in spiritual formation. A fifth reviewer, Herman Alexander, Director of the M.Div. Program, Nations University, provided comments on the curriculum but was

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[3]See Appendix 2.

unable to participate formally in the review panel due to family illness. Each reviewer was provided with a seven-point rubric to assess the curriculum.[4] The criteria included clarity, Scriptural foundation, flow from lesson to lesson, adherence to Foster's general ideas, and practicality. Reviewers rated each lesson in each of the seven areas on a four-point scale: unacceptable, minimally acceptable, acceptable, and excellent. To meet minimum standards set by the seminary, each lesson had to receive an average of 90 percent acceptable or exemplary. All 13 lessons met or exceeded this standard after recommended revisions by reviewers.

In the month prior to the class, after the curriculum was reviewed and the survey was being approved by the Research Ethics committee, I began advertising the class through the church bulletin, announcements, and emails. In addition to the class, it was also announced that all adults would meet together on the last Sunday of the month to participate in a congregational survey. The announcement did not specify the type or nature of the survey.

I administered the survey on August 25, 2013, during the Sunday morning Sunday School time at 9:00 a.m. Fifty-four members of the congregation, all over the age of eighteen, participated in the survey. A sign-up sheet for the class on spiritual disciplines was also made available after the survey to those present. All pre-test data was collected and entered into a statistical package for analysis upon completion of the class and post-test evaluation.

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[4]See Appendix 1.

Application of Treatment

Treatment in this quasi-experimental design was a thirteen-week class on spiritual disciplines. I measured the effects of the treatment by applying paired *t* tests to the pre-test and post-test data collected for each participant to determine the significance of any measured change by exposure to the treatment. In addition, unpaired *t* tests assessed any significant differences between the experimental group and the control group to control for threats to validity.

Class Participants

All participants in the class were over the age of eighteen. While specific demographic data were not collected, the class participants represented a broad range of ages from young married couples to widows and widowers. Participation in the class was completely voluntary, and participants were self-selecting. Anyone interested in learning more about spiritual disciplines was invited to participate and gave no criteria for participation.

Class Format

The classes offered during the 13 weeks of the project followed a similar format. Classes were held each Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m. during the regularly scheduled Bible class time. Due to a special event on October 6, 2013, that occupied the regular class time, the class met immediately after a luncheon on the same day. Each class consisted of fifty minutes, approximately 35 minutes of instruction, 5 to 10 minutes of application, and 5 to 10 minutes of discussion. Scriptures were pre-boarded and assigned to students to increase class participation. I allowed and encouraged students to

ask questions or interject comments throughout the class period. If not accomplished during the course of discussion, I made specific applications of the topic to daily life in the final few minutes of each class.

Class Content

The class content consisted of 13 lessons on spiritual disciplines and their relationship to life in this world.[5] The first lesson was an introduction to a new paradigm for understanding and practicing spiritual disciplines. Each of the following twelve lessons addressed one of the twelve classic spiritual disciplines as identified by Foster.[6]

Lesson 1: Introduction to spiritual disciplines. The first lesson introduced students to spirituality and spiritual disciplines in general, gave a brief synopsis of the paradigms of Willard and Foster, and then offered a new paradigm that combined the works of Willard and Foster with an educational paradigm suggested by Daniel Estes that he drew from Old Testament Wisdom literature.[7] Building on Willard's disembodiment model[8] and the idea of maturity taught in Hebrews 5:11-14, I defined spirituality as the integration of a Christian's faith into his whole life. In effect, spirituality parallels spiritual maturation and becomes the transformative process by which Christians become more like Christ.

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[5]See Appendix 3 for a list of educational goals for each lesson.

[6]Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, table of contents.

[7]Daniel Estes, *Hear, My Son: Teaching and Learning in Proverbs 1—9* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997).

[8]Willard, *Spirit of the Disciplines,* 56-68.

This definition of spirituality provides a more concrete framework for understanding spiritual disciplines and their role in the transformation process. Spiritual disciplines are any exercises or practices that assist Christians in integrating their faith into their daily lives. With such a definition spiritual disciplines can and should be practiced, not just in closets and cloisters, but in cubicles, courtrooms, classrooms, and coffeehouses.

The scriptural foundation for this view is built on two verses. Paul writes, "And we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor 10:5) and "But he who is spiritual appraises all things" (1 Cor 2:15). Christians are to evaluate everything in their life as spiritual, not worldly, beings. Upon evaluation, Christians must then act accordingly. The decision must be made in accordance with the will of God in obedience to Christ. Spiritual disciplines are the practices that assist Christians in the appraisal and decision processes. As one practices spiritual disciplines in this context, one matures in wisdom and discernment, just as Hebrews 5:11-14 implies.

Lesson 2: Prayer. Though Foster begins with meditation, this curriculum begins with prayer as it is the foundation for all actions undertaken by Christians. Meditation and fasting serve as supplements to prayer, not the other way.

This curriculum follows the ideas of Foster and Daniel Henderson[9] who suggest that prayer is not about getting from God but going to God. In Psalm 63 David describes the satisfaction that comes from being in God's presence. Jesus himself sought

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[9]Daniel Henderson, *Fresh Encounters: Experiencing Transformation through United Worship-Based Prayer* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2008), 31-44.

the presence of his father many times through prayer (Mark 1:29-35, Matt 26:36-46). God is not a Santa Claus; he is a Great Shepherd.

Foster makes several points about the nature of prayer that are brought out in this lesson: (1) prayer is to be learned, (2) prayer is to be imaginative, (3) prayer is to be fine-tuned, and (4) prayer is to be continual.[10] Prayer, then, becomes the essence of "abiding" that Jesus calls for in John 15:5. It also becomes the framework for every thought of every Christian every day.

Prayer allows the thoughts of God to become the thoughts of every Christian. Abiding in the presence of God surely impacts the way a Christian thinks. Through prayer and Bible study Christians learn the thoughts of God in order to "take every thought captive for obedience to Christ." This transformation of the thought process parallels the "renewing of your mind" in Romans 12:2. By renewing the thought process, Christians can learn to assess every situation as the spiritual being they are in Christ.

Lesson 3: Study. The Bible is not a solution manual; it is a textbook. Many Christians try to go to the Bible to find a specific answer to a specific question or dilemma. Sometimes they find a specific answer, sometimes they do not. The Bible was not meant to be treated like a college Algebra solution manual. It is the textbook for life. In it Christians find the broad principles to solve problems and to live life. One can find answers to specific problems, but these are examples of a lesson, not the lesson itself.

Christians must study the Bible with three key assumptions in place: (1) the Bible is sufficient, (2) the Bible is light, and (3) the Bible is not enough. While the last

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[10]Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 33-46.

to contradict the first, it does not. The third assumption implies that simply learning, memorizing, and quoting Scripture is not enough. Christians must put what is learned into action in their lives.

Foster suggests a four-step process for Bible study that can help Christians use the Bible for the light that it is meant to be. He writes that Bible study involves repetition, concentration, comprehension, and reflection.[11] This process is important for the attainment of spiritual maturity. In order to transform and renew the mind, old patterns of thought must be replaced with a new way of thinking, one that encourages spiritual appraisal and leads to the obedience to Christ.

Lesson 4: Meditation. While Foster writes that meditation is "the ability to hear God's voice and obey his word,"[12] it may better be to think of meditation as "enabling" better hearing and obeying of God's voice. Meditation that does not facilitate communion with God through prayer and Bible study is more similar to an Eastern model than a Christian one.

Peter's experience in Acts 10:9-10, when he "fell into a trance," may be similar to meditation. The Greek word ἔκστασις literally means "out of proper place or state" and is used to describe divine revelation or an out-of-body experience.[13] But is modern, Christian meditation to be like this? Yes, it is.

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[11]Ibid., 64-66.

[12]Ibid., 17.

[13]Joseph Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), s.v. "ἔκστασις."

Meditation involves removing or detaching one's self from the immediate surroundings in order to gain a clearer perspective on life. This description can serve Christians well. In many circumstances Christians would benefit from mentally removing themselves from a situation to assess what action would please God instead of reacting immediately and worldly.

Meditation also requires reflection. Peter, in Acts 10:17-19, is reflecting on the vision. The vision may be over, but Peter is still learning from it by considering its many implications. Meditation, which can involve situations, prayers, and study, should continue to influence a Christian's daily life through on-going reflection. Reflection along with meditation allows Christians to assess situations spiritually and bring every thought under obedience to Christ.

Finally, meditation is a time for taking inventory. Paul writes, "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things" (Phil 4:8). "Dwell" literally means "take an account" of these things.[14] Meditation is a time of reflecting on the Christian qualities that should be present in and are beneficial to the life of a Christian.

Lesson 5: Fasting. In this fourth discipline, students learn that satisfaction can only come from God. Paul assures Christians of this truth in his letter to the Philippians: "Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am . . . . I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Phil 4:11, 13). Learning

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[14]Ibid., s.v. "λογίζομαι."

that even physical satisfaction and strength come from God reinforces our dependence on God for all things. Fasting teaches this lesson.

Fasting builds on a desire for God's presence in a Christian's daily life. Fasting begins with a need for God's presence. Jesus tells the disciples of John that the disciples of Christ will fast once Jesus has ascended, but they do not need to now (Matt 9:15). They will fast when they long for his presence, but they did not need to fast when he is present with them. Desire for God's presence may also be parallel to Christians who are to "hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matt 5:6).

Christians can glean one more lesson about fasting from the prophet Isaiah. Speaking the words of God, he writes that a fast that is pleasing to God is sincere and humble (Isa 58:5). He then tells his listeners exactly how to ensure their fasts are authentic and humble: they are to focus on the needs of others (Isa 58:6-7). Then God will satisfy their souls "like a spring of water whose waters do not fail" (Isa 58:11).

Fasting, which teaches dependence on God's presence, is enhanced and safeguarded by humble service to others. The focus of fasting should not be becoming more dependent on God; it should be becoming more dependent on God's presence and strength to accomplish his will. To become more "spiritual" through fasting misses the point. Fasting helps Christians become better servants of God and to others.

Lesson 6: Simplicity. Foster states, "The Christian Discipline of simplicity is an *inward* reality that results in an *outward* life-style."[15] For a Christian to live a simple

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[15]Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 81.

life, she must desire the life that simplicity brings. This simple life places what God provides at the center of life.

The Bible is replete with warnings about overindulgent lives. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warns Christians not to accumulate wealth on earth, but to store it up in heaven (Matt 6:21). His reason is simple: "For either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other" (Matt 6:24).

Holding to the treasures of this world will result in destruction as well. John, following a similar line of thought, writes that those who love the world and the things of the world do not love God (1 John 2:15), but he adds a further admonition. "And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:17). Those who love the world and lust after its pleasures will pass away with the world.

Finally, simplicity encourages obedience. In Luke 14:16-24 Jesus tells a parable of people more concerned about their worldly life and possessions than enjoying the banquet offered by a benevolent man. One man had purchased property. Another had bought oxen. A third had just gotten married. The point of the story and of all three of the excuses is that when Christians are entangled in the affairs and desires of this world, they will not be ready when God calls—into service or into his blessings. Paul similarly warns Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:4.

As the parable continues, who comes to the feast? The house is filled with the poor, lame, blind, and crippled. Did these people love food more than the first group? Did they love the benevolent man more than the first group? Likely, they did not even know him. The truth is that they had no reason to say, "No," and all the reason in the

world to say, "Yes." While many Christians recognize they have all the reason in the world to say, "Yes," to the calling of God, most have more reasons to say, "No."

Lesson 7: Solitude and silence. The world is a noisy place. Televisions, cell phones, radios, irate bosses, raging drivers, etc. overwhelm people every day. Identifying "outside" noises is fairly easy, even if eliminating them is not. But Christians also experience three forms of "inside" noise as well: intellectual, worldly, and religious.

Intellectual noise stems from the desire to know and understand everything—including God's plan. The Teacher in Ecclesiastes writes, "God made men plain, but they have engaged in too much reasoning" (Eccl 7:29, JPS). Mankind's desire to know and understand everything creates intellectual static. God already warned Christians that they cannot understand all his ways and thoughts (Isa 55:8), but they are determined to try anyways.

Worldly noise is a result of how Christians engage their brains. Paul warns, "But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness" (2 Tim 2:16). When one's mind is filled with worldliness, the message of God cannot penetrate.

The final "inside" noise is almost famous. In 1 Corinthians 13:1 Paul says, "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal." Even religious talk can become nothing but religious noise if it is not spoken in love. Engaging in loveless religious banter and debate, for that is what it will clearly devolve into, creates so much noise that neither Christians nor those around them can hear the voice of God.

When people think about God speaking in the Old Testament, most jump to Mt. Sinai (Exod 19:18-19). God's presence surrounds the mountain with terrifying fire

and black smoke. He speaks in the thunder. The earth quakes at his every word. And while we envision this event correctly, we forget that God *usually* preferred a more subtle approach. When God met with Elijah, he did so in the "gentle breeze" (1 Kgs 19:11-12). When God called Samuel, he did so in the stillness of the night (1 Sam 3). God met Moses in the lonely desert (Exod 3). When God walked among his people, he did so as a servant (Phil 2:5-8). If God took this approach today, most Christians would never hear him.

Solitude and silence, as spiritual disciplines, help Christians to hear and obey the word of God. Whereas meditation is the practice of clearing one's mind in order to be more receptive to the word and will of God, solitude and silence is the discipline that clears one's life. Jesus, on multiple occasions, chose to withdraw from the world around him. He did so for many reasons: preparation for ministry (Matt 4:1-2), strength and resolve (Matt 26:36-46), and even grief (Matt 14:13). The world is not going to support a Christian's decision to follow Christ, so at times we need to escape its influence.

Solitude and silence are two sides of the same coin, and the coin is called disengagement from worldly influences. While the first six disciplines are called disciplines of engagement, solitude and silence are the caveat. They help Christians engage the world with purity, holiness, clarity, and purpose by giving them the time and environment necessary to thoroughly spiritually assess everything in their lives. But after disengaging for contemplation, one must re-engage the enemy with the full measure of faith that God provides.

Lesson 8: Submission. Many people have the wrong idea of submission. It is not doing whatever anyone says to do. If this were the case, Christians would be in a state

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of constant ethical conflict. Do Christians have to do something they are told to do if they think it is wrong? Instead, submission is the practice of placing others' needs before one's own. More importantly, it is the attitude that others' needs are more important than your own (Phil 2:1-4).

Paul commands spouses to "be subject to one another in the fear of Christ" (Eph 5:21). To the wives, Paul reiterates this command by allowing the verb in verse 21 to serve as the verb in verse 22. However, to the husbands, Paul tells them to sacrificially love their wives as Christ loved the church. Why would he tell the husbands to sacrificially love their wives unless, in his understanding, sacrificial love is either the fulfillment of or the foundation for mutual submission? Given the context of the command, both are likely true.

If the heart of submission is love, the head of submission is self-denial. Self-denial is a conscious choice. No one accidentally submits to another person. Paul demonstrates this choice for believers. In 1 Corinthians 9:19, he writes, "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more." Notice, Paul says he has made himself a slave. God didn't make him a slave. No lord or master made him a slave. No one bought him or sold him. He chose to become a slave of his own free will.

This point leads clearly to the final point. The decision to submit always leads to serving others. In the famous *Carmen Christi* passage, Paul writes that Jesus "emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men" (Phil 2:7). Jesus did not take the form of a man and become a like a servant; he took the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. The conscious decision of Jesus that

led to his incarnation was to be a servant! Becoming a man was just the form he took to be able to serve.

Submission defines and sets the parameters for how one engages the world. If Christians cannot think of others as more valuable than themselves, they will always engage the world for their own glory, and God's glory will never be present in their lives. If, however, they take every thought about every person around them "captive for the obedience of Christ," they will see others as Christ sees them, love them as Christ loves them, and serve them as Christ serves them.

Lesson 9: Service. The discipline of service in the context of this study must be something that can be routinely practiced, not biennial works of greatness. These acts must also be a result of honing our skills in assessing all things spiritually and taking every thought captive for the obedience of Christ. With this understanding, service moves from acts of greatness to acts of grossness. Small, mundane, seemingly meaningless acts challenge our commitment to service much more than the grandiose accomplishments most think about.

Jesus teaches that the small acts of service count. In fact, throughout the Bible, most of what Christians are asked to do is fairly small. Christians make Jesus' command to "deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me" about huge acts of self-sacrifice. However, when Jesus teaches on Judgment Day (Matt 25:31-46), he looks for people who have given water to the thirsty or clothes to the needy or visited the sick or imprisoned. Many want to think that, unless the needy are in Cambodia or the prisoners are in Siberia, such small acts are inconsequential. According to Jesus, the smallest acts of service have eternal consequences.

Service begins with submission. One can go to the food bank and pass out food, but that doesn't make one a servant *per se*. A king can disguise himself and live in poverty for a few weeks, but he neither stops being a king nor does he stop being rich. If he gave up his throne, sold all he had and gave it to the poor, moved into the village, and served others with whatever resources he could find, he still would not be a servant. Servants have masters. Masters tell servants what to do. Servants do it without choice or expectation of gratitude, compensation, or even compassion. The king can serve, but he cannot be a servant.

This difficult truth is at the heart of Jesus' teaching in Luke 17:6-10. The master of the house has complete authority, and his needs overshadow the needs of the servant in every circumstance. Even after a long day working in the field, the servant must still come in and prepare a meal for the master. The servant cannot expect a break or even a hint of compassion. His path is determined by his status as servant.

Christians must accept whatever path God has prepared for them. They can choose to run away from that path and reject the lordship of Christ, but they cannot do so and still be a servant. Servants serve unceasingly and unconditionally. But how can service be rendered in this way? How can Christians serve with complete disregard for their own well-being? They do so because the love of Christ compels them (2 Cor 5:13-14).

The kind of service that takes every thought captive for the obedience of Christ can only exist when a Christian has learned to be fully reliant on God's provision, fully trusting in God's promises, and filled fully by God's presence and God's word. The disciplines of preparation do not help Christians serve better; they help Christians *become*

better servants. So here one sees again the value of the improved understanding of spiritual disciplines. Disciplines are not for "receiving." They are for "becoming."

Lesson 10: Confession. In Foster's presentation the discipline of Confession begins "Corporate Disciplines," the third set of four disciplines. Corporate disciplines are those that strengthen a Christian's walk by breaking down barriers between Christians and helping them integrate their lives into one body.[16] Willard did not have a specific term for these types of disciplines; however, he emphasized the role of fellowship in many of the same disciplines Foster calls corporate.[17]

"Corporate" confession is not about the need for the forgiveness of sins. Prayers of repentance and forgiveness go from the Christian through Christ our mediator to God (1 Tim 2:5). Making this confession is not necessary for forgiveness of sin.

"Corporate" confession, instead, addresses the damage caused by sin, especially to the body of Christ and interpersonal relationships. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus instructs his listeners on corporate confession. "If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering" (Matt 5:23-24). The language is not clear exactly who wronged who, but the action created animosity between two brothers. Jesus tells the Christian to go and address that wrong and be reconciled to the brother.

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[16]Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 145.

[17]Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 186-87.

God desires to extend forgiveness to everyone. He expects Christians, those reborn in his image, to do the same. The Model Prayer in Matthew 6:14-15 clearly states, "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions." God places a tremendous importance on forgiveness. He will only forgive his children in as much as they readily extend forgiveness to others. And by others he does not just mean other Christians. He says "forgive men."

So while "corporate" confession is not about our personal forgiveness of sin, it is about personally forgiving others with whom one has a God-ordained relationship. The discipline of confession is a discipline of reconciliation. And like service, confession and reconciliation must flow from an attitude of submission.

If submission is the belief that others and their needs are more important than one's own needs, how does that attitude come into play in corporate confession? The simple answer is wholeness. Christians who believe their relationships with others are more important than their own pride or their own reputation or their own feelings will readily deal with the sin that has damaged those relationships. The relationship among believers is especially important as it demonstrates the unity of the church. Paul tells the Ephesians, "Walk in a manner worthy of the calling . . . with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace . . ." (Eph 4:2-3).

The center of the discipline of confession is that the health of the church is more important than the individual. More specifically, healthy relationships within the church, or any group in which a Christian is involved, are more important than his or her

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own best interest. As Christians practice the discipline of confession within the church body, they become better at assessing the impact of their decisions on the body. They become better at acknowledging when they have acted selfishly. They become better at seeing how a decision might impact others and therefore can avoid making those decisions which hurt those relationships. In short, Christians become more loving in their relationship with others, particularly in group settings.

Lesson 11: Worship. A Christian's worship of God does not depend on God; it depends on the Christian. God is awesome, period. He is awesome regardless of what is going on in our lives, in our families, at our workplaces, and even at our churches. Worship, then, is how well one responds to this reality *in spite of* and *in the midst of* all circumstances. And this appropriate response is why it is a spiritual discipline.

As a spiritual discipline, worship involves a number of "steps." Like many physical exercise regimens, this discipline builds upon a series of smaller exercises. However, instead of working through muscle groups and cardio fitness levels, worship requires Christians to work through and build upon several spiritual truths that work together to facilitate true worship. These truths can be easily summarized.

1. Worship of God is exclusive (Exo 20:3).

2. Worship requires public confession of his name (Heb 13:15-19).

3. Without understanding grace it is impossible to worship God (1 Pet 2:9-10).

4. There is no "where" to worship, only a "how" (John 4:23).

5. Worship requires confession of Jesus as Lord (Rom 10:9).

Worship is readily and most often recognized as a "corporate" act. We attend "worship" services, or "praise and worship" services—as if the two are separate

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activities. Some refer to the church building as a "house of worship." And others talk about "going to worship" on Sundays. All of these references indicate a disturbing pattern of assigning worship to a place and a time when Christians gather. Certainly worship should occur in our assemblies, but not exclusively. In fact, if worship is not occurring in the individual lives of each Christian, there is little chance that the individual Christian will experience much in the way of worship when he assembles with the saints!

So why use "corporate" language at all? As was mentioned in the discipline of confession, "corporate" literally means body. However, instead of defining a discipline as "corporate" because it is something that we participate in together, "corporate disciplines" would be better defined as *disciplines that strengthen or are strengthened by the body of Christ*. In other words, confession is corporate because it strengthens and repairs the relationships between members of the body. We might even say that confession is holistic medicine for the spiritual body! Likewise, worship is corporate because it is strengthened by assembling together and it enhances the joy of our mutual salvation in Christ.

Lesson 12: Guidance. Willard does not call this discipline "guidance;" he calls it "submission," writing, "The highest level of fellowship—involving humility, complete honesty, transparency, and at times confession and restitution—is sustained by the discipline of submission."[18] "The highest level of fellowship" precisely captures the nature of the discipline of guidance; Christians do what is best for the body—as defined by the body—no matter what it costs them.

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[18]Ibid., 179.

Paul teaches the church to "preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all" (Eph 4:3-6). Though the New American Standard Bible, the New International Version, and other translations start a new sentence in verse 4, the verse begins with a relative pronoun in the Greek, "which." The "is" is understood from the grammar. So the verse states that "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" *is* "one body. . . ." The unity and peace experienced by the church is fully dependent upon the reality that the church is one.

The growth of the church is also dependent upon its oneness. Paul writes that the church grows into Christ "from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of the individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love" (Eph 4:16). Paul makes three important points in this passage.

1. Growth of the body is for the "building up of *itself*" (Eph 4:15, emphasis added). Individual spiritual growth contributes to the church's growth.

2. The body is held together "by that which every joint supplies" (Eph 4:16). Every Christian has a part in holding the body together.

3. Unity is only possible when everyone works properly (Eph 4:16). Proper fulfillment of God's will for and by each individual creates unity and growth.

The discipline of guidance as a corporate discipline begins with the recognition that each Christian is an integral part of God's plan for the church. It also requires everyone to value God's plan for the church above any plans one may make for oneself. In other words, Christians must have a submissive attitude towards the church.

At times the leadership is called upon to make a decision for the church, as in Acts 15:12-28. James and the others, in accordance with the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:28), decide what doctrines are best for the church. At other times, members of the congregation are involved, as in the process of church discipline described in Matthew 18:15-20.

Finally, one must note that God appointed elders to oversee the flock. Acts 20:28 records Paul's charge to the Ephesian elders: "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." Times will arise when the leaders have to make tough decisions.

Does faith in God mean faith in his church? Does submitting to God's will mean submitting to his church? When Christians ask if their life glorifies God should they also ask if their life glorifies his church? These last few questions dramatically change the focus of decision-making and the need for guidance from the church. These consideration place the Christian under the guiding hand of God's church and her leaders.

Lesson 13: Celebration. One "worships" God for who he is; one "celebrates" for what he has done. Christians learn about salvation and Christian living from the Bible, but they must continue to look for what God is doing in their lives every day. Willard writes, "We engage in celebration when we enjoy ourselves, our life, our world, *in conjunction with* our faith and confidence in God's greatness, beauty, and goodness. We concentrate on *our* life and world as God's work and as God's gift to us."[19]

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[19]Ibid.

Foundational to the discipline of celebration is the recognition that "we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28 ESV). In this translation, those who love God can be assured that everything will work out for good, whether that good is for the individual, the church, or God's universal plan. Similarly, one must recognize that Christians "are called according to His purpose" (Rom 8:28). God's plan is perfect and brings complete joy to those who follow it (John 15:10-11), and from this joy flows strength (Neh 8:10).

The practice of celebration as a discipline is four-fold. First, one must recognize the need to abide in and obey the word of God (John 15:10-11). Second, one must believe that when one is pursuing God, he is actively involved in one's life (Heb 11:6). Third, one must begin to see God working in and around one's life. Fourth, one must thank him for his provision (Rom 1:21).

This four-fold process highlights God's role in the life of a Christian and reassures him of God's presence. Christians need the joy and strength of God, not on Sunday mornings, but in every situation and every day. The discipline of celebration provides that reassurance, joy, and strength.

Supporting Activities

In addition to attendance and participation in the weekly classes, participants agreed to keep a journal and meet with an accountability partner. The journal entries were to include reflections on the week's lesson, specific applications of the lesson to life situations, and opportunities to share with others what they were learning and how God was working in the life of the participant. In addition, the participants were to select another member of the class to meet with weekly to discuss the week's lessons and their

progress in practicing the disciplines. A summary of these meetings were to be recorded in the journal as well.

Post-Treatment Activities

On the second Sunday following the last day of class, I asked all adult members of the congregation to meet for another survey during the regular Bible class time. I stated that the survey was part of the research project but did not indicate to anyone that the survey was a post-test. Everyone present completed the same survey as the one completed for the pre-test approximately three months before. I asked those who had participated in more than three of the spiritual discipline classes to indicate their participation by placing a star in the top corner of the survey. I then collected all surveys at the end of the class period.

The following Sunday the participants met again to assist me in completing the final portion of the research data. Participants brought their journals to class. I asked each person to indicate how many times a week he or she had made a journal entry and how many times during the entire 13-week class had he or she met with an accountability partner. For participants who did not bring their journals, I asked them to estimate to the best of their ability and remembrance.

After all data was collected, I entered the answers to the post-test survey and journal and accountability partner numbers into a statistical package. The data was analyzed using statistics appropriate to the proposed Non-Equivalent Control Group Design.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT EVALUATION

This project was conducted over a fifteen week period from August 25, 2013 to December 15, 2013. The project followed the proposed plan as set forth in Chapter 1 with only a few minor exceptions. As described within this chapter, not all aspects of the project went as well as had been planned, but sufficient data was collected to make a cursory assessment of all goals.

Evaluation of Process Goals

The first goal for this project was to assess current knowledge and practice of spiritual disciplines by members of the Arlington Heights Church of Christ. The goal was to be evaluated by use of a survey developed primarily by utilizing the works of Richard Foster and Dallas Willard. The survey was to be administered to at least 50 percent of the adults in attendance on the day of the assessment. Due to the generous cooperation of the congregation's elders, all adults not teaching a children's Bible class were asked to meet together to participate in the survey. As a result, 53 adults, which accounts for almost 100 percent of those available and 75.7 percent of the average adult class attendance, participated in the survey to assess their current knowledge and practice of spiritual disciplines.

The second half of this goal was to also assess current levels of evangelistic effort among the members of the congregation. As a part of the same survey, members

were asked to answer 3 questions about their efforts in 3 areas of evangelistic effort: specific prayers for specific people who needed to be saved, Christ-centered conversations with lost people, and presentations of the gospel message. Of the 53 respondents to the first part of the survey, 47 also responded to the 3 questions regarding their evangelistic effort. These 47 respondents represented approximately 67.1 percent of the average adult Bible class attendance. Both parts of this goal were successfully met by exceeding the 50 percent goal and providing a baseline for analysis that exceeded the proposed baseline of thirty-five members.

The second goal was to develop a curriculum to teach spiritual disciplines. I used 2 books as primary sources for developing this curriculum. In identifying the 12 classic disciplines and how they could be practiced, I relied heavily on *The Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster.[1] However, for a more thorough understanding of the need to reintegrate spirituality into daily life, I relied on the theological writing of Dallas Willard in *The Spirit of the Disciplines.*[2]

The curriculum was the product of approximately 8 months of research and study. For the purposes of the survey and the curriculum, I identified 4 key points from each of the 12 disciplines. The curriculum incorporated these 4 points, as well as other information, as cognitive, affective, volitional, and behavioral goals as appropriate.[3]

Once a thorough outline was created for all 13 lessons, I sent it to 5 reviewers. The reviewers also received a 7-point matrix by which to evaluate each lesson. The goal

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[1]Richard Foster, *The Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth,* rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper, 1998).

[2]Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper, 1988).

[3]See Appendix 3.

of this project was to receive an average of at least 90 percent acceptable or excellent on each lesson by all reviewers. The table below illustrates the feedback from the four reviewers who were able to assist.

Table 1: Percentage of lesson receiving acceptable or excellent by reviewer

Lesson	Hahlen	Helton	Lattimer	Linker	Average
Prayer	100	100	100	100	100
Study	100	100	86	100	96.5
Meditation	100	100	86	100	96.5
Fasting	100	100	86	100	96.5
Simplicity	100	100	86	100	96.5
Solitude	100	100	100	100	100
Submission	100	100	86	100	96.5
Service	100	100	86	100	96.5
Confession	100	100	100	100	100
Worship	100	86	100	100	96.5
Guidance	100	100	86	100	96.5
Celebration	100	86	100	100	96.5

In the original reviews, the lesson on Bible study did not receive an average of 90 percent by all reviewers. Based on the outline provided, Dr. Helton commented that parts of the lesson were difficult to understand and flowed poorly. He originally scored the lesson with only 56 percent acceptable or excellent. After I completed the final draft

of the lessons, Dr. Helton reviewed the lesson on Study and revised his score to 100 percent acceptable or excellent. This raised the average rating to 96.5 percent acceptable or excellent.

Dr. Lattimer's assessment did not rate several lessons on their consistency with Foster's material, indicating insufficient information was provided in the outlines. Dr. Helton made a similar comment about the amount of specific material in the curriculum from Foster. However, recognizing the limited time and space of each lesson, Helton, as well as the other reviewers, felt the broader thoughts of Foster were captured. Other than this one criterion, Lattimer rated all aspects of all studies as acceptable or excellent.

To addresses some of these cases, I purposefully incorporated more information from Foster. However, Dr. Latimer's comments highlighted an evolution in the curriculum itself. As the lessons developed more of the material was drawn from Willard's theological foundations rather than Foster's practice applications.

Based on the feedback provided by each of the reviewers, the curriculum was determined to be satisfactory for the topic of spiritual disciplines. As all lessons received the minimum of 90 percent acceptable or excellent by an average of all reviewers, this goal is considered successfully met.

The third goal was to train members of the Arlington Heights Church of Christ in spiritual disciplines. I used the developed curriculum for a 13 week class and supplemented the learning with student journaling and the use of accountability partners. Though this goal is the centerpiece of the project, it proved to be the most difficult to accomplish.

The first measure for this goal was to attempt to recruit at least 23 participants for the class. The measure was set based on the minimum sample size needed to achieve at least a measure of statistical significance, even if only at 80 percent. Determining who actually participated in the class became very difficult. Throughout the course of the 13 weeks 34 people attended at least 1 class session; however, of the 34, 11 people attended 2 or less times. As a result, it became necessary to define a formal participant.

To be considered an initial participant in this study, one had to attend 2 of the first 3 classes offered. With this definition, 20 people initially participated in the class. However, 4 of the initial participants dropped out of the class after the first 3 classes. Two participants were hospitalized for an extended time and did not return to the class. One drop-out was a visitor to the church. The fourth participant dropped out of church for an extended period due to overwhelming marital problems.

In addition to "initial participants," I defined a participant as any one who attended four or more of the 13 classes. None of the 4 drop-outs were considered participants due to this definition. However, 4 additional participants were added to the study. Two of the added participants attended 1 of the first 3 classes and then attended 50 percent of the remaining classes. Two other participants joined the class at Lesson Six and then attended 5 or more of the final seven classes. All 4 of the new participants received copies of the material they missed.

The fluidity of the class participation makes counting participation difficult. However, considering the information and attendance records, I identified a total of 24 participants with 4 drop-outs, putting the final number of participants at 20. At 20 participants, the goal of 23 participants was not met.

In addition to the number of participants, a goal of 84 percent was set for the average class attendance based on previously cited research. Using just the attendance data from the twenty participants, the average class attendance was 68.3 percent. The initial goal was determined by allowing 2 absences during the 13 weeks, or 11 of 13 sessions. The actual percentage of 68.3 percent puts the average attendance at just below nine sessions out of 13. As a result, this attendance goal was not successfully met.

Two additional participation measures were developed to determine the level of active learning taking place. I asked all participants to make daily journal entries and to meet weekly with an accountability partner from the class. The journaling goal was set at 5.25 entries per week and the number of meetings with accountability partners was set at 9.75 meetings over the 13 weeks. Based on the self-reporting by participants at the end of the project, neither goal was met. Most participants did not keep a journal, making the average number of entries 1.03 entries per week. Most participants did not meet with an accountability partner, making the average number of weekly meetings only 4.1 meetings.

None of the 4 measurable outcomes for this goal were met. Though the number of participants was very close to the goal, the level of participation was lacking. Attendance was clearly affected by the holiday season, but this factor was beyond my control. The most significant deficiency was in the participation in activities conducted outside of class times. Greater participation may have been possible if an informal mid-week meeting was held with participants that allowed them to spend time with their accountability partners.

While participants attended the class, most did so sporadically, and they did not participate in support activities designed to enhance the learning experience. As a result, goal three was not met.

<center>**Evaluation of Outcome Goals**</center>

Goals four and five represent the most significant outcome measures of this project. After the 13 week course was offered, the same survey was offered again to everyone in the congregation in order to collect pre-test and post-test data on as many members as possible, including class participants as well as non-participants. I administered the survey to 47 members of the congregation. Of these 47 respondents, 15 were class participants and 32 were not. Of the 15 who were class participants, only 7 completed both the pre-test and the post-test. Of the 32 non-participants, 18 completed both the pre-test and the post-test. Dependent Samples (paired) t tests were severely limited in sample size which effected degrees of freedom and possibility of statistically significant results.

Initial analysis of the data began with evaluating the equivalency of the control group and the experimental group. Because participants in the 2 groups were self-selecting instead of randomly assigned, an independent samples t test was conducted on 38 variables, including demographic information, total discipline score on the pre-test, discipline subscores on the pre-test, practices measures on the pre-test, and evangelistic efforts on the pre-test. The 2 groups were statistically equivalent with the exception of two measures. The respondents who ultimately became participants in the class scored significantly higher on (1) number of times meditated and (2) number of times studied the Bible. Class participants averaged 22.8 and 19.67 times, respectively. Those who did not

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participate in the class averaged 8.21 and 9.25, respectively. Difference in the means of both measures were statistically significant at *p*<0.05.

The key measure of the study, the total discipline score, was not significantly different. Those participating in the class averaged a total discipline score of 172.83 while those who chose not to participate averaged 169.68. Also, the measures of evangelistic effort were not significantly different, with class participants averaging 8.0 efforts and non-class participants averaging 10.21 efforts. On the 38 measures, the group that averaged higher on a specific measure appeared to be random. While these differences will be considered in the final evaluation, the equivalency of 36 out of 38 variables indicate that the groups were roughly equivalent at the beginning of the study.

After establishing the comparability of the 2 groups, I proceeded to conduct dependent samples (paired) *t* tests on pre-test and post-test data for the 35, non-demographic variables. All statistical output was grouped into 2 categories for comparison purposes: (1) participants in the spiritual disciplines class and (2) non-participants in the spiritual disciplines class.

The fourth goal of this project was to increase the knowledge and practice of spiritual disciplines through participation in a 13 week class. The primary indicator of this increase was the change in the total discipline score. For those who participated in the spiritual disciplines class, the total discipline score changed by only 0.3333 points. This change is not statistically significant, indicating that the first part of goal four was not met.

The second part of goal four was to increase the practice of spiritual disciplines. This goal was to be measured by assessing the change in the number of

practices from the pre-test to the post-test for those participating in the spiritual

disciplines class. Table A1 indicates those changes and their level of significance. In the

chart, increases are represented by a negative number in the Mean column.

Of the 18 paired samples for practices, not including the total discipline score,

those participating in the spiritual disciplines class demonstrated an increase in 15 of the

measures. Of the 15 measures showing an increase, 3 were statistically significant at

$p<0.05$. The number of times participants set aside to pray increased by 38.67 ($p=0.022$).

The number of times participants made confessions to others increase by 1.67 ($p=0.004$).

The number of times participants were able to celebrate in the midst of a bad situation

increased by 1.50 ($p=0.045$).

The breadth of the increase in practices is notable and these positive results are

reinforced by three measures achieving statistical significance, even with five degrees of

freedom. However, if one was to compare these results to those who did not participate in

the class, the results are even more solid. Table A2 contains the same nineteen measures

for non-participants as Table A1 contained for class participants.

In this table those who did not participate in the spiritual disciplines class only

increased their practice of spiritual disciplines in five areas. Only the practice of taking

time to unwind was statistically significant, and it was significant for its reduction in

practice. Overall, while statistical significance was only reached in a few changes in

practices of spiritual disciplines, the breadth of the increase and the notable difference

with the non-participants leads to the conclusion that the second part of goal four was

met. There was a notable increase in the practice of spiritual disciplines for class

participants.

The final goal was to determine an increase in evangelistic effort made by participants in the spiritual disciplines class. The dependent samples (paired) *t* test that was conducted on the four measures of evangelism, prayer, care, share, and total, proved to be inconclusive. No change in any of the variables was statistically significant.

However, like the changes in the practices of spiritual disciplines, a comparison of the non-participants with class participants is informative. Table 2 illustrates the notable decrease in evangelistic effort for non-participants and a corresponding increase in all 4 measures for class participants. While non-participants scored higher in evangelistic efforts on the pre-test, class participants matched or exceeded non-participants in every area of evangelistic effort after the class. In simple percentages, class participants increased their total evangelistic efforts by 41.63 percent, prayers for the lost by 51.27 percent, care for the lost by 5.05 percent, and share with the

Table 2: Change in evangelism measures for class
participants and non-participants

	Non-Class Participants (Control Group) N=19		Class Participants (Experimental Group) N=6	
Variable	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Total Evangelistic Effort	11.53	9.24	8.00	11.33
Number of Prayers for the Lost	6.56	6.56	4.33	6.55
Number of Christ-centered Conversations	2.56	1.67	3.17	3.33
Number of Gospel Presentations	1.88	0.65	0.50	1.5

lost by 200 percent. These increases occurred at the same time that the non-participants decreased in their overall evangelistic efforts by 19.86 percent. For this reason, goal five has also been successfully met.

Analysis of Results

In this project, I attempted to bring about an increase in the understanding and practice of spiritual disciplines through classroom instruction supported by journaling and the use of an accountability partner for students. In the curriculum, desired changes were identified in the cognitive, affective, volitional, and behavioral domains. Changes in these areas were posited to result in an increase in the evangelistic efforts of class participants.

The results indicate that there was no increase in the cognitive domain. Both in paired *t* tests and unpaired *t* tests, no significant or even notable change occurred in students' knowledge of spiritual disciplines. This lack of increase may be attributable to the age and maturity of the class participants. The mean age of class participants was 60.55, and the mean for "Number of years a Christian" was 42.11. The participants, from the beginning of the study, had a fairly strong grip on the facts of spiritual disciplines.

Even with the lack of increase in the cognitive domain, notable gains were made in the behavioral domain. The practices of spiritual disciplines increased in almost every measure for the class participants, even while non-participants' practices decreased over the same period. This change is informative as it indicates that though many Christians already possess a general knowledge of spiritual disciplines, they are not practicing them.

The key assumption that drove the development of the curriculum is that people generally understood spiritual disciplines in an "otherworldly" sense, making the

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benefits less attainable or desirable for the here and now. The curriculum may not have increased what people knew about spiritual disciplines, but it appears to have changed how they understood the purpose and benefits of practicing them. Spiritual disciplines were no longer exercises to achieve Nirvana, but exercises to live lives faithful to the calling and will of God by and in this strength. In the language of educational taxonomy, the students experience an increase in their affective and volitional understandings which lead to behavioral changes as well.

The final piece of this research project was to determine if Christians who begin to reintegrate their faith into their daily lives would also increase their evangelistic efforts. While the study is too small and heuristic to employ such statistics as linear regressions, Table 4 indicates that those participants in the class who had begun to practice spiritual disciplines as a part of their daily lives had a corresponding increase in evangelistic efforts in every category. While further, more advanced studies in this area are needed, the results of this study show great promise in helping the church to grow by helping Christians walk as they have been called.

Strengths of Project

The greatest strength of this project was the experimental design. The Nonequivalent Control Group Design allowed for data to be assessed from more than one time period, with more than one group, and by more than one statistical tool. Being able to compare what had happened within the congregation (control group) with the changes in the class participants (experimental group) provided valuable insights. However, it must be noted that the design was fully dependent on the cooperation of the congregation and her leadership. This cooperation of the congregation, both from those who

participated in the class and those who did not, would have to be considered a second strength of this project.

A third strength of this project was its development of a curriculum based on strong and diverse theological sources. I brought together ideas from D. A. Carson, Klaus Issler, Daniel Estes, Dallas Willard, Richard Foster, and Donald Whitney to develop a biblically sound model for spiritual disciplines. For far too long, disciplines had been taught with goals borrowed from their monastic and mystical heritage. This project revolved around teaching spiritual disciplines as exercises in reintegrating faith into daily living, and not trying to develop, achieve, or receive a supernatural measure of grace, faith, or *charisma*.

Weaknesses of Project

The single greatest weakness of this project was the lack of time to thoroughly complete every lesson. The class period on Sunday mornings for Arlington Heights church of Christ is only 45 minutes. Though the curriculum was developed with that length of time in mind, questions and discussion made the time inadequate. Every lesson was finished, but in many cases not with time for adequate discussion.

The second weakness was its dependence on the commitment of a people. This weakness is unavoidable in working with church members. Class participants register with the greatest of intentions and enthusiasm, but as 13 weeks wear on, their attendance—and participation in homework—becomes sporadic.

A third weakness of this project was the time of the year it ended. The final portion of the class was conducted during the Thanksgiving holiday. As a result, the 30-day period covered by the post-test survey was November 15 to December 15, 2013. This

time of the year is difficult for anyone to attend Bible classes, practice spiritual

disciplines, or otherwise be engaged in activities beyond the normal hustle and bustle of

the holidays.

Considerations for Further Research

Though the regular Sunday morning Bible class time may have made it easier

for some participants, a small group venue may have been more conducive to the study.

Certainly it would have allowed for more time and more discussion during the

instructional period. In addition, this discussion may have helped participants generate

ideas for journaling and discussion with accountability partners.

Attendance was kept for purposes of calculating percentages for goal three.

However, the attendance was not kept by PIN, therefore, I could not analyze whether

attendance was a contributing factor to the lack of increase in the cognitive domain. In

future studies, the participants should sign in using their PIN, not their names.

In the development of the survey, four key points were developed for each of

the twelve classic disciplines. Unfortunately, while educational goals were determined for

each of the four domains for each lesson, the 4 key points in the survey were not directly

linked to the domains. As the results infer that the majority of increase occurred in the

affective, volitional, and behavioral domains, research that specifically identifies and

links measures to those goals would be invaluable.

Theological Reflections

I began this project with the theological assumption that the church is not

growing because Christians are not growing. Though the Bible does not directly relate

these two ideas, it teaches that growth is expected and that growing Christians become faithful Christians who then teach others. Those that they teach can be other Christians who need guidance or they can be the lost who are in need of salvation. The outcome of this research project has supported that assumption.

In addition, I learned another important lesson. Christians appear to know what they need to do in order to grow; they just are not doing it. Two possible reasons come to mind. The first reason is that people are not sure how to put the information they have into practice. They understand the value of the teaching but cannot make it practical.

The second reason relates to the "otherworldliness" problem seen in those trying to practice spiritual disciplines. Many people may not understand the value of the teaching for this world and this time. As a result, they do not attempt to put the teachings into practice. Both or either of these reasons could be contributing people's disengagement from spiritual disciplines.

Another theological challenge to church growth is also a practical one. In both pre-tests and post-tests, the spiritual discipline of submission obtained the lowest scores in both understanding and practice. On a 20-point scale for understanding submission, the average score was just above 8 points. This score is in contract to the scores of 11 to 16 points in the other disciplines. Since submission is defined as placing the well-being of others above one's own, not understanding and practicing submission will severely hamper a Christian's ability to grow and a church's ability to overcome conflict.

Finally, spirituality and spiritual disciplines have been in need of an overhaul. Working with goals and ideas promulgated by spiritual mystics with whom modern Christians have little agreement has resulted in an ambiguity between what Christians are

taught about the work of grace and the Spirit and the goal of spiritual disciplines. By recapturing a biblical definition for spirituality and employing that to inform a Christian practice of spiritual disciplines, spiritual disciplines become practical and essential to every Christian's life—not just the life of mystics, monks, and hermits.

Personal Reflections

Though the goal of this project was to generate personal spiritual growth in the participants, I experienced personal growth as well. Thinking of education as cognitive gains has become the norm of the church; smarter Bible students make better Christians. In learning about and seeing how the different educational taxonomies work, I am now better able to plan ministries, train teachers, and prepare sermons.

This study has brought to light that many of the Christians sitting in the pews do not need more information; they need to know what to do with the information they already have. The Hebrews passage addressed in Chapter 2 of this study basically states that people cannot learn more until they put into practice the knowledge they already possess. As a minister, I have learned the importance of making certain that lessons are both biblically sound and immediately applicable. Not that the lessons must be devoid of theology, but that the theology must connect with people's decision-making process in their daily lives.

Conclusion

The growth of the church has never been dependent on the scheming and devising of men. The best planned outreach events and the most extravagant cathedrals do not lead the lost to Christ. Christians growing in their understanding of and walk with

God lead the lost to Christ. The growth experienced by Christians, in order to reach the lost, must be beyond cognitive gains. The growth must include a deep reintegration of the Christian's faith with his daily walk. Every decision must be based on her desire to be like Christ. This transformation into the likeness of Christ draws the lost sheep to the church—and to the Great Shepherd.

APPENDIX 1

CURRICULUM EVALUATION MATRIX

Curriculum Evaluation Matrix

Reviewer's Name: _____   Lesson # _____

Criteria	Unacceptable	Minimally Acceptable	Acceptable	Excellent	Comments
1. Is the lesson faithful to the biblical text selected for the lesson?					
2. Does the lesson adequately reflect Foster's thoughts on the subject matter?					
3. Are all ideas communicated clearly to the learner?					
4. Are all goals and outcomes of the lesson clearly communicated to the learner?					
5. Does the lesson provide a "point of contact" between the practice of the spiritual discipline under consideration and "real life"?					
6. Does the content within each lesson flow from point to point?					
7. Does the content of each lesson move the learner forward to the next lesson?					

APPENDIX 2

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Research Instrument

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to improve your understanding and practice of Spiritual Disciplines. This research is being conducted by David Srygley for the purpose of obtaining a Doctor of Educational Ministry. In this research, you will learn about the twelve classic Spiritual Disciplines, be encouraged to practice them, and share with an accountability partner and others your progress. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name 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 survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

8-digit PIN: _____ (Consists of the month /day of your birthday and the last four digits of your Social Security Number in the format: mmddxxxx.)

Gender: M F   **Age**:_____   **Number of years a Christian**: _____

Rate your agreement with the following statements about yourself with Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Disagree Somewhat (DS), Agree Somewhat (AS), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA).

Intentionally obeying difficult teachings of Christ brings great joy.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
It is difficult to find time to spend with God.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
God's voice can be heard over the noises of this world.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
It is frustrating when circumstances don't go your way.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Fasting teaches humility before God.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Giving others opportunities for success undermines your own success.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Security is measured by the amount of resources set aside for a rainy day.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Service to God should be rendered daily, no matter the size of the need.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Opening up to God is scary because of what He might find in our lives.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Emotions don't have a real part in prayers.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Accountability partner is someone with whom you can share struggles.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Bible study is a spiritual renewal.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Participating in church-wide prayers for guidance for the church is important.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
When you hurt someone, you should feel compelled to apologize.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
It is difficult to focus on God when fasting.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Gathering with other believers to celebrate Christ is spiritually strengthening.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
The best Christians are busy Christians.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Truth transforms our worship.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Christians should feel compelled to act when they see someone in need.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
It is easy to see the hand of God working in personal situations.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

Prayer life is foundational to obedient faith. SD D DS AS A SA

Meditation helps us discover the "purer" things in our lives. SD D DS AS A SA

The purpose of a Christian is intricately linked to the purpose of the church. SD D DS AS A SA

It is a struggle to surrender one's will to others. SD D DS AS A SA

The good of the church is always the will of God. SD D DS AS A SA

What is in your heart when you join with others in worship should honor God. SD D DS AS A SA

Quoting Scriptures, with book, chapter, verse, easily fits into conversation. SD D DS AS A SA

Confessing sins to others doesn't help in your walk with God. SD D DS AS A SA

Celebrating God's grace sustains us daily. SD D DS AS A SA

You should fast for the health benefits even if not for spiritual ones. SD D DS AS A SA

Public confession of sin strengthens my reconciliation with God and others. SD D DS AS A SA

Few things are worse than being taken advantage when you try to help others. SD D DS AS A SA

Spending a day with God in a remote spot away from a busy life is uplifting. SD D DS AS A SA

A simple life is easier to maintain within the boundaries of God's will. SD D DS AS A SA

There are opportunities in every situation to praise God. SD D DS AS A SA

You have to take charge of situations into which you are thrown. SD D DS AS A SA

It is difficult to pray when you know you're not following God's will. SD D DS AS A SA

You need a methodical approach to studying God's Word. SD D DS AS A SA

It is difficult to allow God to penetrate deeply your heart and mind. SD D DS AS A SA

Life is complicated by multiple demands on time, money, and resources. SD D DS AS A SA

Church leaders should be trusted with the leadership of the church and my life. SD D DS AS A SA

Prayer is a time of refreshing in the presence of God. SD D DS AS A SA

We should wait to speak until we know what God wants said. SD D DS AS A SA

Service to others is one of our best ways to imitate Christ. SD D DS AS A SA

Fasting focuses our desires on God. SD D DS AS A SA

We can only worship God when He is our only God. SD D DS AS A SA

Meditation helps you internalize God's will for your life. SD D DS AS A SA

Bible study is about learning to live according to God's order for life. SD D DS AS A SA

Please answer the following questions based on your activities <u>within the last 30 days</u>:

1. How many times have you purposefully set aside to meditate? _____

 On average, how many minutes would you estimate you spend in meditation each time? _____

2. How many times have you purposefully set aside time to pray? _____

 On average, how many minutes would you estimate you spend in prayer each time? _____

3. How many times have you purposefully set aside for fasting? _____

 How many minutes do you spend on the following each time you fast?

  Prayer _____ Study _____ Meditation_____

4. How many times have you purposefully set aside for personal Bible study? _____

 On average, how many minutes would you estimate you spend in study each time? _____

5. How many times have you provided sacrificial service to another person? _____

6. How many "unnecessary" items did you buy that were for status or self-satisfaction? _____

7. How many times have you taken time out of your schedule for time to unwind? _____

8. How many times have you set aside your will and did something someone else's way? _____

9. How many times have you confessed your sins to another person? _____

10. How many times have you gathered with other to worship God with all your heart? _____

11. How many times have you sought advice from a spiritual leader or mentor? _____

12. How many times have you been able to celebrate God in undesirable circumstances? _____

13. How many people have you prayed for by name that they might be saved? _____

14. How many people have you attempted to develop a relationship with for the specific purpose of sharing the gospel? (This might include phone calls, invitations to dinner or coffee, or Christ-centered conversations.) _____

15. How many people have you shared the gospel with? (This only includes biblical presentations of the plan of salvation.) _____

Thank you for your assistance in this research. Please return this form to the class leader or proctor.

APPENDIX 3

LESSON GOALS BY BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

Prayer

LEARNING PURPOSE: Students will learn to pray in order to open their hearts to God's refreshment and direction in every situation. Prayer is seeking God daily for joy, comfort, and fullness as well as for guidance, strength, and victory.

COGNITIVE: Students will describe the search for God.
      Students will describe our response or reaction to finding God.
      Students will identify the benefit(s) of following God.
AFFECTIVE: Students will become aware of the benefits of seeking God.
      Students will focus on God's will and not their own.
VOLITIONAL: Students will confess when they have not pursued God.
      Students will commit to pursuing God daily.
BEHAVIORAL: Students will pray continuously.
      Students will gain confidence in seeking God in prayer.

Study

LEARNING PURPOSE: Students will learn that applying God's Word to their own lives will transform their minds and allow them to see the world in a different light—the light of Christ.

COGNITIVE: Students will define infallibility.
      Students will describe "renewing" of the mind.
      Students will define discernment.
AFFECTIVE: Students will become aware of areas in their lives with which they don't trust God's Word to help.
      Students will focus on discerning God's will through his word.
VOLITIONAL: Students will confess their lack of faith in God's Word to guide them in every situation.
      Students will commit to reading God's Word daily and deeply.
BEHAVIORAL: Students will "hide God's Word" in their hearts.
      Students will submit decisions and life situations to the test of Scripture.

Meditation

LEARNING PURPOSE: Students will learn to use meditation to become more receptive to the will of God and more aware of their own spirituality.

COGNITIVE: Students will describe meditation.
Students will describe how God's message should be internalized.
Students will identify "pure" and "righteous" things on which to dwell.

AFFECTIVE: Students will become aware of their need to meditate.
Students will become aware of their defiance to God's will.
Students will become aware of the "pure" things in their lives.

VOLITIONAL: Students will confess their defiance to God's will.
Students will commit to taking an inventory of their lives.

BEHAVIORAL: Students will take time to meditate on God's will before making decisions.
Students will build an inventory of "pure" things in their lives.

Fasting

LEARNING PURPOSE: Students will learn to be satisfied pursuing God's will and provision.

COGNITIVE: Students will identify goals of fasting.
Students will describe "hungering and thirsting for righteousness."

AFFECTIVE: Students will confess times when they have longed for the world more than God.
Students will become aware of the satisfaction found only in God.

VOLITIONAL: Students will commit to pursuing a "fulfilling" relationship with God.

BEHAVIORAL: Students will feast on God's Word daily.
Students will choose God's will over promises of worldly satisfaction.

Simplicity

LEARNING PURPOSE: Students will learn the advantages of the simple life in the kingdom of God. They will be able to filter the encumbrances from their lives.

COGNITIVE: Students will describe the pitfalls of too many possessions.
Students will describe a simple life in the Kingdom.

AFFECTIVE: Students will become aware of benefits of simplifying their lives.
Students will focus on areas of "hoarding" in their own lives.

VOLITIONAL: Students will confess love of the things of this world.
Students will commit to simplifying their lives.
Students will prepare for instantaneous response to God.

BEHAVIORAL: Students will disencumber their lives of things they love more than God.
Students will respond quickly to God's callings.

Solitude and Silence

LEARNING PURPOSE: Students will learn to reduce "noise" from the world that interferes with the opportunity to experience God.

COGNITIVE: Students will identify sources of "noise" in their lives.
                     Students will identify people who benefitted from silence.
                     Students will identify benefits of silence and solitude.
AFFECTIVE: Students will become aware of "interference" from the world in their Christian lives.
                     Students will become aware of own wanton words.
                     Students will become aware of "religious" noise in their lives.
VOLITIONAL: Students will confess how own speech interferes with God's presence.
                     Students will commit to reducing "noise" in their lives.
                     Students will focus on hearing God's voice.
BEHAVIORAL: Students will talk less and listen more intently to others.
                     Students will allow time in prayer to hear God's response.
                     Students will remove themselves from "noisy" situations.

Submission

LEARNING PURPOSE: Students will learn the benefits of putting others first and practice doing so daily.

COGNITIVE: Students will identify driving forces behind submission.
                     Students will explain how submission builds unity.
                     Students will explain how submission demonstrates love.
AFFECTIVE: Students will become aware of own pride.
                     Students will focus on the value of other people.
VOLITIONAL: Students will confess haughtiness in their dealings with others.
                     Students will confess when their pride caused disunity.
                     Students will commit to lifting up others.
BEHAVIORAL: Students will encourage others.
                     Students will gain confidence in submitting self to others.

Service

LEARNING PURPOSE: Students will learn to experience freedom from the world by serving in the smallest ways possible.

COGNITIVE: Students will describe the magnitude of the service to which they are called.
                     Students will describe the attitude needed to be a servant.
                     Students will identify a wide variety of ways to serve others.
AFFECTIVE: Student will become aware of their attitude toward people in need.
                     Students will become aware of their attitude toward menial service.

VOLITIONAL:	Students will confess that they work harder for themselves than for others.
	Students will confess their desire to be recognized for "big" service projects.
	Students will commit to serving in "small" ways for "small" people.
BEHAVIORAL:	Students will serve without praise or recognition.
	Students will look for small ways to serve others daily.
	Students will let others delegate tasks and accept their duties joyously.

Confession

LEARNING PURPOSE: Students will learn to humbly confess their sins and ask for forgiveness from others, Christians and non-Christians alike, and extend forgiveness as appropriate.

COGNITIVE:	Students will explain how confession facilitates forgiveness.
	Students will explain how confession leads to wholeness.
AFFECTIVE:	Students will become aware of sins they need to confess to others.
	Students will become aware of divisions/strife caused by unconfessed sin.
	Students will become aware of divisions/strife caused by an unforgiving spirit.
VOLITIONAL:	Students will commit to seeking out those to whom they need to confess sin.
	Students will commit to offering forgiveness to others who've offended them.
BEHAVIORAL:	Students will confess sins to a confidante or the congregation.
	Students will extend forgiveness to others.

Worship

LEARNING PURPOSE: Students will learn that, because God is eternally awesome, we can worship him in any situation.

COGNITIVE:	Students will identify the conditions needed to worship God.
	Students will describe how these conditions are met daily.
AFFECTIVE:	Students will become aware of other gods in their lives.
	Students will become aware of dissonance between own life and the Spirit, Truth, and grace.
	Students will become aware of God's presence daily.
VOLITIONAL:	Students will confess idolatry.
	Students will commit to looking for God daily in their lives.
BEHAVIORAL:	Students will praise God for his daily presence.
	Students will thank God for his Truth, Spirit, and grace.
	Students will proclaim his name to the world.

Guidance

LEARNING PURPOSE: Students will learn to seek guidance from the church and its leaders in order to better integrate their life into the corporate will of God for his church and kingdom.

COGNITIVE: Students will explain the need for cooperation in the church.
      Students will explain how guidance protects individual Christians.
AFFECTIVE: Student will become aware of where they are straying from the church's guidance.
      Students will focus on areas in which they are focusing on their own goals without considering the church.
VOLITIONAL: Students will confess sin of arrogance ("My way is best!").
      Students will commit to bringing life into alignment with God's will for his kingdom.
BEHAVIORAL: Students will seek the guidance of the church or its leaders.
      Students will sacrifice own will for the benefit of the church.

Celebration

LEARNING PURPOSE: Students will learn to recognize and celebrate God's provision and guidance in every aspect of their lives.

COGNITIVE: Students will identify God's provision for mankind.
      Students will identify the source of joy for Christians.
AFFECTIVE: Students will become aware of the blessings of God's provision.
      Students will become aware of the need to live according to God's word to receive God's provision.
VOLITIONAL: Students will commit to seeking God's provision in their lives.
      Students will commit to celebrating what God has provided.
BEHAVIORAL: Students will pray daily for "daily bread."
      Students will thank God for his daily provision and blessings.

DEPENDENT SAMPLES *T* TEST
FOR PARTICIPANTS

Table A1: Dependent samples *t* test for changes in practices
of spiritual disciplines for class participants

Paired Samples Test[a]

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	80% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	#Times Meditation - PMED	10.6667	32.35223	13.20774	-8.8264	30.1598	.808	5	.456
Pair 2	Length of Meditation - PMEDTIME	-3.4167	15.06790	6.15145	-12.4955	5.6622	-.555	5	.603
Pair 3	#Times Prayer - PPRAY	-38.6667	29.06315	11.86498	-56.1780	-21.1553	-3.259	5	.022
Pair 4	Length of Prayers - PPRAYTIM	1.0000	2.19089	.89443	-.3201	2.3201	1.118	5	.314
Pair 5	#Times Fast - PFAST	-.1667	.40825	.16667	-.4126	.0793	-1.000	5	.363
Pair 6	Pray During Fast - PFASTPRA	-1.6667	4.08248	1.66667	-4.1265	.7931	-1.000	5	.363
Pair 7	Study During Fast - PFASTSTU	-2.5000	6.12372	2.50000	-6.1897	1.1897	-1.000	5	.363
Pair 8	Mediation During Fast - PFASTMED	-3.3333	8.16497	3.33333	-8.2529	1.5863	-1.000	5	.363
Pair 9	#Times Study - PSTUDY	-5.0000	24.18264	9.87252	-19.5707	9.5707	-.506	5	.634
Pair 10	Length of Study - PSTUDYTI	-4.6667	13.06395	5.33333	-12.5380	3.2047	-.875	5	.422
Pair 11	#Sacrifical Service - PSACSERV	-3.5000	5.31977	2.17179	-6.7053	-.2947	-1.612	5	.168
Pair 12	#Unnecessary Items - PUNNEC	-1.5000	3.93700	1.60728	-3.8722	.8722	-.933	5	.394
Pair 13	#Times Unwind - PUNWIND	3.6667	11.92756	4.86941	-3.5200	10.8533	.753	5	.485
Pair 14	#Sacrficial Will - PSACWILL	-1.3333	4.17931	1.70620	-3.8515	1.1848	-.781	5	.470
Pair 15	#Confessions - PCONF	-1.6667	.81650	.33333	-2.1586	-1.1747	-5.000	5	.004
Pair 16	#Worship - PWORSHIP	-22.5000	59.17347	24.15747	-58.1536	13.1536	-.931	5	.394
Pair 17	# Times Consulted Spiritual Leader - PSPLEAD	-.5000	2.25832	.92195	-1.8607	.8607	-.542	5	.611
Pair 18	# Times Celebrated in Bad Situation - PCELBAD	-1.5000	1.37840	.56273	-2.3305	-.6695	-2.666	5	.045
Pair 19	Total Discipline Score - PTOTDISC	-.3333	10.65207	4.34869	-6.7515	6.0848	-.077	5	.942

a. Participated in SD Class = Y

Note: SPSS version 11 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL) was used to perform the statistical analysis.

APPENDIX 5

DEPENDENT SAMPLES *T* TEST FOR
NON-PARTICIPANTS

Table A2: Dependent samples *t* test for changes in practices
of spiritual disciplines for non-participants

Paired Samples Test[a]

		Paired Differences			80% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	#Times Meditation - PMED	-3.3529	11.24134	2.72642	-6.9975	.2916	-1.230	16	.237
Pair 2	Length of Meditation - PMEDTIME	.3125	7.00446	1.75112	-2.0351	2.6601	.178	15	.861
Pair 3	#Times Prayer - PPRAY	.0000	21.69965	5.26294	-7.0353	7.0353	.000	16	1.000
Pair 4	Length of Prayers - PPRAYTIM	-1.0938	7.78293	1.94573	-3.7022	1.5147	-.562	15	.582
Pair 5	#Times Fast - PFAST	-.4118	2.23771	.54272	-1.1373	.3137	-.759	16	.459
Pair 6	Pray During Fast - PFASTPRA	2.1875	7.52080	1.88020	-.3331	4.7081	1.163	15	.263
Pair 7	Study During Fast - PFASTSTU	1.2500	3.87298	.96825	-.0480	2.5480	1.291	15	.216
Pair 8	Mediation During Fast - PFASTMED	1.2500	3.87298	.96825	-.0480	2.5480	1.291	15	.216
Pair 9	#Times Study - PSTUDY	-.8056	7.68333	1.81098	-3.2203	1.6092	-.445	17	.662
Pair 10	Length of Study - PSTUDYTI	5.6944	33.21947	7.82991	-4.7458	16.1347	.727	17	.477
Pair 11	#Sacrifical Service - PSACSERV	.0294	8.05153	1.95278	-2.5810	2.6398	.015	16	.988
Pair 12	#Unnecessary Items - PUNNEC	-1.0294	4.89410	1.18699	-2.6161	.5573	-.867	16	.399
Pair 13	#Times Unwind - PUNWIND	4.0313	7.32682	1.83171	1.5757	6.4868	2.201	15	.044
Pair 14	#Sacrfical Will - PSACWILL	4.5333	10.37075	2.67772	.9317	8.1349	1.693	14	.113
Pair 15	#Confessions - PCONF	.6250	1.85742	.46435	.0025	1.2475	1.346	15	.198
Pair 16	#Worship - PWORSHIP	2.1111	7.03678	1.65859	-.1004	4.3226	1.273	17	.220
Pair 17	# Times Consulted Spiritual Leader - PSPLEAD	.8750	2.75379	.68845	-.0479	1.7979	1.271	15	.223
Pair 18	# Times Celebrated in Bad Situation - PCELBAD	2.1765	8.45751	2.05125	-.5655	4.9185	1.061	16	.304
Pair 19	Total Discipline Score - PTOTDISC	4.5263	12.86411	2.95123	.6000	8.4526	1.534	18	.142

a. Participated in SD Class = N

Note: SPSS version 11 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL) was used to perform the statistical
analysis.

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ABSTRACT

INCREASING EVANGELISTIC EFFORTS THROUGH THE PRACTICE OF
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
CHURCH OF CHRIST, CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS

David Bruce Srygley, D. Ed. Min
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. John David Trentham

This project examines the relationship between spiritual disciplines and evangelism. Chapter 1 defines the historical, contextual and practical issues facing the Arlington Heights Church of Christ in regard to its spirituality and evangelism. Chapter 2 then presents an exegesis of five New Testament passages which show the expectation of spiritual growth and its relationship to evangelism. Chapter 3 reviews two important issues, the changing understanding of spiritual disciplines and the educational paradigm needed to teach them. Chapters 4 and 5 provide the results, analysis, and conclusions of this project.

Throughout the course of this fifteen-week project participants were taught about the twelve classical spiritual disciplines and encouraged to practice them regularly. At the conclusion of the project, an analysis of the change in their understanding and practice of spiritual disciplines was conducted. The resulting changes were compared with the change in the number and type of evangelistic efforts. As expected, the increase in the practice of spiritual disciplines resulted in an increase in evangelistic efforts.

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