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IMPLEMENTING A DISCIPLESHIP MENTORING  
PROGRAM AT CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH,  
BOISE, IDAHO

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A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

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by  
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May 2015

**APPROVAL SHEET**

IMPLEMENTING A DISCIPLESHIP MENTORING  
PROGRAM AT CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH,  
BOISE, IDAHO

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## PREFACE

A few years ago the questions arose “What’s the next challenge?” and, “How do I get there?” God used the “how” question to direct me to biblical counseling and The Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. The “what’s next” question is still a journey (Gen 12:1).

I am indebted to the Biblical Counseling program at Southern and Stuart Scott for helping me rediscover the centrality and power of God’s Word in changing lives (2 Tim 3:16, 17). I am grateful to Robert Burrelli for his encouragement, mentoring, and precision (2 Tim 2:15) during the design and writing of the project. His insights continually challenged me.

I could not have finished this project without the help of the good people of Calvary Baptist Church in Boise, Idaho, the participants in the mentoring project, and the guidance of my pastor, Steve Oswalt. All were patient and encouraging.

Last, but certainly not least, I had the encouragement and counsel of Betsy Fredrick who helped refine, edit, and shape this work.

Naturally, there was a group of people who lived this process with me—with great patience and understanding! I am indebted to my wife, Kim, for encouraging me to apply to SBTS, reminding me of Joshua 1:9 and James 1:5 (repeatedly), and exhorting me to work, pray, and stop panicking. I am thankful to our children, Cally, Maycee, and Hudson; and our sons-in-law, Jay, and Kendall; for prayers, encouragement, and not



letting me give up. It is my hope and prayer that there may be something in this project that will be useful to others.

Mark Bekkedahl

Boise, Idaho

May 2015

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

It would appear, based upon a number of measures, that the institutional church is losing ground. Southern Baptist Churches, in particular, are losing previous gains in membership and attendance; and baptisms in 2010 fell to their lowest numbers in 60 years.<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly, there are many and complex reasons for this shift, but one practical explanation is that fewer and fewer people are motivated or constrained by past traditions and choosing to attend church if they have other options. Busy families with multiple schedules have too many competing interests that keep them from the activities of the local church. With dwindling interest and attendance, the old formulas which contained many opportunities for worship and Bible study have been compressed or eliminated.

Discipleship training, which used to be a fixture on Sunday and Wednesday evenings, is now largely ignored. Though we study the Bible together (and well) in Sunday school and small groups, the intentional and practical application of this knowledge is often missing for lack of time and focus. Add to this, the aggressive foray of media into the realms of values and behavior and the people of most churches are unfairly assaulted and unbalanced by the prevailing “wisdoms” of our day (Eph 4:14). As a result, many Christians need a return to a deeper faith and the practical application of God’s Word into everyday living. David Platt says,

I often ask members of our church if they are receivers or reproducers of God’s Word. Let me illustrate the difference.

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<sup>1</sup>Bob Smietana, “Signs of Decline Mount for Southern Baptists,” *The Tennessean*, June 11, 2011, accessed June 13, 2011, <http://www.tennessean.com/article/20110611/NEWS/306110025/Signs-decline-mount-Southern-Baptists>.

Imagine being in the Sudan. You walk into a thatched hut with a small group of Sudanese church leaders, and you sit down to teach them God's Word. As soon as you start, you lose eye contact with all of them. No one is looking at you, and you can hardly see their eyes the rest of the time. The reason is because they're writing down every word you say. They come up to you afterward and say, 'Teacher, we are going to take everything we have learned from God's Word, translate it into our languages, and teach it in our tribes.' They were not listening to receive but to reproduce.<sup>2</sup>

By contrast, many of our members have trouble listening to and understanding the sermon. Many American believers need to become more accountable to God's Word, and to their role in carrying it to others—and they may need the investment of another's time and experience to do so.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to implement a discipleship mentoring program at Calvary Baptist Church in Boise, Idaho.

### **Goals**

This project had four goals. The first goal was for project participants to gain an understanding of the mentoring process and the biblical model of mentoring that would prepare them to invest in the lives of others. Mentors learned a model of mentoring, reviewed study outlines for the program, and prayerfully considered who they might mentor. The training also prepared them to apply Bible study lessons to personal experience, and where applicable, craft opportunities to put the information they gained into practice with their mentee. Once the mentoring project began, the weekly meetings with other mentors consisted of prayer, a review of lesson materials and activities, and sharing feedback and support regarding their mentoring progress. Mentors worked on mastering study materials for the project prior to sharing it with a mentee, and were responsible to initiate a time and place for their weekly meetings together.

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<sup>2</sup>David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2010), 101, 102.

Second, project participants committed to mentoring relationships. Mentor volunteers committed to meet faithfully and regularly with a new or young believer for the purpose of helping him or her become a growing and active disciple of Jesus Christ.

Third, through the mentoring experience, and as a consequence of it, project participants attempted to forge relationships and create opportunities for nouthetic teaching and counseling to occur. The informal design of the project, and activities associated with it, lent themselves to the kind of environment where relationships could deepen, trust might be built, and difficult issues discussed.

The last goal was that I become an effective mentor and a resource for training other mentors for the discipleship ministry at Calvary Baptist Church. As a new project, the process was a practicum for me to test ideas and concepts, as well as practice teaching and leading in this context. Throughout the course of the project I solicited feedback from participants and met with a select group of church members who also provided feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of the project.

### **Ministry Context**

Calvary Baptist Church (CBC) is located near the crossroads of a busy commercial area on the western edge of Boise, Idaho. Boise is the capital and largest city in Idaho and the main attraction within a metropolitan continuum that transects Idaho's two most populous counties (Ada and Canyon County), and includes six contiguous cities. Beginning in the East with Boise and stretching West are the communities of Meridian, Eagle, Kuna, Nampa, and Caldwell. The two counties boast a population of approximately 560,000 people, and Boise proper records nearly 212,000 citizens.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>CityofBoise.org, "Demographics," accessed June 3, 2011, <http://www.cityofboise.org/CityGovernment/AboutBoise/GeneralInformation/Demographics/>.

Ada County was established December 22, 1864 with its county seat in Boise. The county was named for Ada Riggs, the first non-Native American child born in the area and the daughter of H. C. Riggs, one of the founders of Boise and a member of the Idaho Territorial Legislature. Boise became the capital of Idaho in 1865.<sup>4</sup>

Located within what is called the Treasure Valley of Idaho, Boise was little more than a scenic afterthought for the thousands of pioneers using the Oregon Trail after the publication of the Lewis and Clark journals in 1814. The trickle of settlers, missionaries, gold miners, and Latter Day Saints (LDS) moving west became a torrent from 1841 to 1869.<sup>5</sup> From 1843 on, Old Fort Boise, a Hudson Bay Company Trading Post forty miles to the East of the present site, was the locus for a few settlers who wished to try their hand at trapping, trading, and farming in the area.<sup>6</sup>

The history of Boise is the tale of transforming the high desert into farmland. Many early pioneers by-passed the area because they saw poor soil, miles of sagebrush, and a hot and dry growing season. A few, though, saw the value of a climate with limited rain, but abundant mountain snows as a natural place to try various irrigation methods.<sup>7</sup>

The discovery of gold in the Boise Valley in the early 1860s encouraged development of agriculture to feed the growing mining community. The first right to divert water from the Boise River for irrigation purposes was granted in 1864. The water was used for irrigation at the Boise town site and to supply Fort Boise. By 1870, farming in the Boise Valley was well established, but most farming was limited to lands along the river and the development of new lands was hindered by lack of reliable irrigation facilities. In the early 1880s, A. D. Foote proposed construction of the New York Canal to irrigate thousands of acres on the south side of the Boise River. Foote

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<sup>4</sup>Official Website of the State of Idaho, "Ada County: Background," accessed June 4, 2011, <http://www.idaho.gov/aboutidaho/county/ada.html>.

<sup>5</sup>University of Nebraska-Lincoln Center for Digital Research in the Humanities, "The Oregon Trail," accessed June 3, 2011, <http://cdrh.unl.edu/diggingin/trailsummaries/di.sum.0008.html>.

<sup>6</sup>Idaho State Historical Society, "Early Irrigation Canals Pre-Project Ventures," accessed June 3, 2011, <http://history.idaho.gov/Reference%20Series/0171.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup>F. Ross Peterson, *Idaho: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1976), 10.

began construction of his canal, but numerous problems persisted, and after 16 years of work, only a small trickle of water flowed through Foote's canal.<sup>8</sup>

With the Bureau of Reclamation's assistance in 1902, a series of dams and waterways were planned and established covering six counties, including Ada and Canyon, in Southern Idaho, and thereby establishing the greater Treasure Valley as an incredibly productive area for food and seed production.<sup>9</sup> Owing to Boise's proximity to abundant forestlands, paper and lumber products company Boise-Payette, better known later as Boise-Cascade, began their empire in Boise after World War II, as did an internationally known construction company, Morrison-Knudsen.<sup>10</sup>

Still, Boise and the Treasure Valley remained a vibrant but primarily agricultural area until the 1970s when companies like Hewlett Packard and another emerging international semi-conductor manufacturing giant, Micron Technologies, chose Boise as their home base. With their successes, spin-off companies and new hi-tech companies were created, or moved to the Treasure Valley.<sup>11</sup> In the last eleven years, residents have witnessed a tremendous population surge—spurring incredible opportunity for those within the housing industry and commercial construction. A great deal of new retail shopping has followed in its wake. Like everywhere else, though, eventually Boise and Ada County saw its economic bubble starting to shrink four years ago, in (2007).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>William Joe Simonds, "The Boise Project," accessed June 3, 2011, [http://www.usbr.gov/projects/ImageServer?imgName=Doc\\_1261497242949.pdf](http://www.usbr.gov/projects/ImageServer?imgName=Doc_1261497242949.pdf).

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Merle Wells, *Boise: An Illustrated History* (Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor, 1982), 110-11.

<sup>11</sup>Amy Atkins, "High-Tech Still Thrives in Low-Key Boise," *Boise Weekly*, September 2, 2009, accessed June 3, 2011, <http://www.boiseweekly.com/boise/high-tech-low-key/Content?oid=1159698>.

<sup>12</sup>Idaho Business Review, "Foreclosures Rise in Ada Canyon," April 8, 2008, accessed June 4, 2011, <http://idahobusinessreview.com/2008/04/08/foreclosures-rise-in-ada-canyon/>.

Despite the downturn, Boise is the central cog to the most prosperous county in the state. Results from the 2009 Community Survey indicated there are 144, 847 households in Ada County, with 67.6 percent considered “family households.”<sup>13</sup> Data suggests that Ada county residents are more highly educated than the rest of the state, with 92.7 percent graduating from high school and 70.2 percent attending college for at least a time.<sup>14</sup> Almost 41 percent of those employed hold management, professional, or related occupations; another 27.2 percent hold sales and office occupations.<sup>15</sup> Fifty three percent of the total households make more than \$50,000 annually, and the median household income is \$53,651.<sup>16</sup> Only 7.9 percent of families in Ada County had incomes below the poverty level in 2009.<sup>17</sup>

Boise is a young community, too. Seventy-nine percent of the population of Ada County is under 54 years of age.<sup>18</sup> Although the area boasts of diversity throughout its history—beginning with Native Americans, and later including Chinese miners and railroad workers, Japanese farmers, and Basque sheep ranchers—the city of Boise and Ada County are now very homogenous. Hispanics or Latinos comprise only 7.1 percent

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<sup>13</sup>US Census Bureau, “Ada County, Idaho: Selected Social Characteristics in the United States, 2009,” accessed June 4, 2011, [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?\\_bm=y&-geo\\_id=05000US16001&-context=adp&-ds\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_1YR\\_G00\\_&-tree\\_id=309&-\\_lang=en&-\\_caller=geoselect&-format=](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=05000US16001&-context=adp&-ds_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G00_&-tree_id=309&-_lang=en&-_caller=geoselect&-format=).

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>US Census Bureau, “Ada County, Idaho: Selected Economic Characteristics, 2009,” accessed June 4, 2011, [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?\\_bm=y&-geo\\_id=05000US16001&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_1YR\\_G00\\_DP3&-context=adp&-ds\\_name=&-tree\\_id=309&-\\_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-format=](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=05000US16001&-qr_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G00_DP3&-context=adp&-ds_name=&-tree_id=309&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-format=).

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>US Census Bureau, “Ada County, Idaho: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates, 2009,” accessed June 4, 2011, [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?\\_bm=y&-geo\\_id=05000US16001&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_1YR\\_G00\\_DP5&-context=adp&-ds\\_name=&-tree\\_id=309&-\\_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-format=](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=05000US16001&-qr_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G00_DP5&-context=adp&-ds_name=&-tree_id=309&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-format=).

of the population; whereas Caucasians predominate with 86.8 percent; and Black or African Americans are just 1.8 percent of the population.<sup>19</sup> Notably, Russian, Somali, and Bosnian refugees are new but small groups beginning to emerge in the valley due in part to an aggressive local ministry devoted to relocating refugees.

The religious environment of Boise, though, is quite diverse. Calvary Baptist is located immediately north of the state's first LDS Temple. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has 54 "congregations"<sup>20</sup> in Ada County, comprising 19.6 percent of all the congregations here.<sup>21</sup> The LDS Church has seen explosive growth in Idaho. Currently plans are underway to build a second Temple in Ada County in neighboring Meridian, within eight miles of the first one.<sup>22</sup> Evangelical Protestants have some of the largest churches across the valley and a record 103 congregations in Ada County or 37.5 percent of the total.<sup>23</sup> There are 29 Baptist churches (all groups) in the county, or 10.6 percent of the congregations.<sup>24</sup> Mainline Protestants have 37 churches or 13.5 percent; and Roman Catholics have 10 churches or 3.6 percent of the total number of congregations.<sup>25</sup> As good as the numbers sound for Evangelicals and Baptists, one must remember that the

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Large congregations (approximately 300 or more members) are called wards. Smaller congregations are called branches. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, "How the Church Is Organized," accessed October 27, 2014, <https://www.lds.org/topics/church-organization/how-the-church-is-organized?lang=eng>.

<sup>21</sup>Social Explorer, "Religion 2009 (InfoGroup): Ada County, Idaho," accessed June 3, 2011, <http://www.socialexplorer.com/pub/ReportData/htmlresults.aspx?ReportId=R10069421&TablesPerPage=50>.

<sup>22</sup>Associated Press, "Latter-day Saints Will Build Meridian Temple," *Idaho Press Tribune*, April 2, 2011, accessed 3 June 2011, [http://www.idahopress.com/news/article\\_6910fce4-5d60-11e0-9bc0-001cc4c03286.html](http://www.idahopress.com/news/article_6910fce4-5d60-11e0-9bc0-001cc4c03286.html).

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Social Explorer, "Religion 2009 (InfoGroup): Ada County, Idaho."

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.



membership of all 275 congregations within the county still only comprise 26.7 percent of the population,<sup>26</sup> demonstrating that there are a lot of un-churched in the area and the Treasure Valley as a whole.

With its start in as a mission in 1960, Calvary Baptist is one of the older churches within the Treasure Valley Southern Baptist Association and has sponsored two missions of its own which are now highly successful churches: Central Valley and University Baptist. CBC has great facilities for education and worship, an excellent location right off the interstate, and ample room for building expansion and parking. Calvary Baptist Church has seen steady, incremental growth since its inception. CBC currently reports 280 resident members and has an average weekly attendance of 85 in Sunday school, and 150 in worship.<sup>27</sup>The membership is middle class Caucasian, and conservative. It has a mix of ages within its membership, and the church is quite friendly. The pastor, Steve Oswalt, has been there since 2005. He is a very talented and creative preacher and able administrator. In addition, CBC has an energetic youth minister, Jason Reddy, who is engaging and outstanding in relating to young people—especially those who live near the church building. In addition to a talented staff, there are several men within the congregation with seminary training or pastoral experience. Some are retired, some bi-vocational, and some, like me, gravitated toward chaplaincy ministries.

CBC is forward-thinking and updated their strategic plan in 2008. They identified three sets of five distinct target groups for outreach that come under three headings: (1) People who need Christ and we could reach with little adjustment other than renewed commitment to Christ and concern for them; (2) People who need Christ and we could reach if we were to make intentional efforts to do so, efforts that would require some degree of change in the life and ministry of our church; and (3) People who

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Southern Baptist Directory Services, “2010 Annual Church Profile Survey,” hard Copy from Calvary Baptist Church, 9111 S. Cole Road, Boise, ID 83709.

need Christ, and we could reach if we were to make deliberate, intentional efforts to do so, efforts that require significant changes in the life and ministry of our church. The three groups included target audiences from “married couples in their 30s and 40s with children” to “people with emotional recovery needs” to “people with substance abuse issues,” and others. In addition the church crafted 5 initiatives: Initiative 1: Develop a clear and positive identity of our church in our community; Initiative 2: Begin ministries addressing real-needs of people in the Treasure Valley; Initiative 3: Formulate a comprehensive outreach ministry that is purposeful and fun; Initiative 4: Implement an intentional process of discipleship and ministry training and; Initiative 5: Construct a cohesive Sunday School /Small Group Ministry.<sup>28</sup>

### **Student’s Role**

I was a layperson at Calvary Baptist Church before and during the project implementation. My family joined CBC in 2009, having transferred our membership from a larger Southern Baptist church in Meridian, one of Calvary’s former missions. After arriving at CBC, I met with the pastor several times about developing a biblical counseling and discipleship ministry, and he was very helpful and supportive of the idea and provided very useful advice in the design of the project.

### **Rationale**

Like a frog in water warming to a boil, many Christians are unaware of the worldview they are creating, how they make decisions, or what authority guides their lives. When following the examples of peers, ego affirming self-help books, or Christian-sounding sentiments in the media, one can easily land in “hot water.” This discipleship training program sought to emphasize that believers have both an opportunity and obligation to live a Christ-centered life, where all decisions and actions come under

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<sup>28</sup>Calvary Baptist Church, “Refocusing Status Update,” January 2011, Internal Document, Hard Copy from Calvary Baptist Church 9111 S. Cole Road, Boise, ID 83709.

Christ's authority. The need for such a focus is universal among Evangelicals, and Calvary Baptist Church is no exception. If the ministry is to grow, we need to strengthen existing leaders and raise up new ones that are equipped to lead effective ministries. To accomplish this, the church could use a focused effort on discipling their members, and such training has been identified by a recent strategic plan as an important goal to pursue.<sup>29</sup>

In addition, like many Southern Baptist Churches (SBC), Calvary Baptist needs to work on building and expanding their pool of strong leaders. The current leadership needs to reengage the membership to a missional vision, be equipped to lead the church to personal and numerical growth, and to maintain its Baptist and Evangelical identity in the midst of it. It is also true that some of the greatest tests of leadership occur among friends and family.

Further, many Christians lack the training, awareness, or conviction that it is their opportunity and responsibility to equip others for the work of ministry, especially those within their own home. In all of our contexts, believers are called to build up the body of Christ, so that the church acknowledges God's authority, celebrates its standing in Christ, lives in obedience to Scripture, and gives God glory (Eph 4:11-14; Col 1:28; 2 Tim 2:2; 2 Tim 3:16). This lack of awareness is especially telling among families with teenagers. An article from the *New York Times* expands,

'I'm looking at the data,' said Ron Luce, who organized the meetings and founded Teen Mania, a 20-year-old youth ministry, 'and we've become post-Christian America, like post-Christian Europe. We've been working as hard as we know how to work—everyone in youth ministry is working hard—but we're losing.'<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Laurie Goodstein, "Evangelicals Fear the Loss of Their Teenagers," *New York Times*, October 6, 2006, accessed June 4, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/06/us/06evangelical.html>.

Mark D. Roberts adds,

Factors that might explain the lack of participation by teens include: lack of parental commitment, the over-commitment of teens in the rest of life, and greater use of technology by teens. Barna president, David Kinnaman says, ‘Talking to God may be losing out to Facebook.’<sup>31</sup>

But, the news is not much better for older students:

Seven in 10 Protestants ages 18 to 30—both evangelical and mainline—who went to church regularly in high school said they quit attending by age 23, according to the survey by LifeWay Research. And 34% of those said they had not returned, even sporadically, by age 30. That means about one in four Protestant young people have left the church.<sup>32</sup>

Calvary Baptist has invested in their youth and young adults by the staff they have chosen, the activities provided, and by maintaining good relationships with those who have grown up in the church. But if national trends are any indication, there are a number of teens and young adults that need targeted focus to keep them involved in the ministry and life of the church during the next few critical years.

As good as Southern Baptist Sunday school programs are, there is also a growing gap among young people in regard to Bible knowledge. The Barna Group would suggest that gap extends across age groups and reveals the cracks in the church’s foundation:

Different segments of the faith community address morality in divergent ways. For instance, six out of ten evangelicals (60%) rely on the principles contained in the Bible as their main source of moral counsel. In contrast, only two out of every ten non-evangelical born again adults (20%) do the same, while only one out of every sixteen national Christians (6%) and one out of every fifty people aligned with non-Christian faiths (2%) do so. Protestants were three times as likely as Catholics to base their morals on Biblical teaching (23% versus 7%, respectively).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Mark D. Roberts, “USA Today: Teens Losing Interest in Church and Church Camp,” accessed June 4, 2011, <http://blog.beliefnet.com/markdroberts/2010/08/usa-today-teens-losing-interest-in-church-and-church-camp.html>.

<sup>32</sup>Cathy Lynn Grossman, “Young Adults Aren’t Sticking with Church,” *USA Today*, August 6, 2007, accessed June 4, 2011, [http://www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2007-08-06-church-dropouts\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2007-08-06-church-dropouts_N.htm).

<sup>33</sup>Barna Group, “Most Adults Feel Accepted by God, But Lack a Biblical Worldview,” August 9, 2005, accessed June 6, 2011, <http://www.barna.org/barna->

People within Evangelical churches are making important decisions every day and many, up to forty percent, are doing so without taking the useful counsel of the Scriptures. Further, another Barna study demonstrates that the younger a person is, within a range of 18 years to 64 plus years, the more likely he or she will view the Bible as “less sacred,” and “less accurate.” In addition, younger people are also more likely to believe in universalism, are skeptical of the Bible’s origins, are less engaged in reading the Bible, and have “less interest in gaining additional Bible knowledge.”<sup>34</sup>

David Kinnaman, who directed the analysis of the research, explained that the ‘central theme of young people’s approach to the Bible is skepticism. They question the Bible’s history as well as its relevance to their lives, leading many young people to reject the Bible as containing everything one needs to live a meaningful life.’ This mindset certainly has its challenges but it also raises the possibility of using their skepticism as an entry point to teaching and exploring the content of the Bible in new ways.<sup>35</sup>

Kinnaman suggests there is an opportunity to be creative and to engage young adults in new ways. I believe one of those ways is through mentoring—a practice that is becoming a lost art in the pace, distraction, and disconnectedness of the twenty-first century. Why does the concept of mentoring lend itself so well to the teaching of the Scriptures? A useful definition explains, “A mentor is an experienced person who provides information, advice, support, and encouragement to a less experienced person, often leading and guiding by example of his/her success in an area.”<sup>36</sup>

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update/article/5-barna-update/174-most-adults-feel-accepted-by-god-but-lack-a-biblical-worldview?q=bible.

<sup>34</sup>Barna Group, “New Research Explores How Different Generations View and Use the Bible,” October 19, 2009, accessed June 6, 2011, <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/317-new-research-explores-how-different-generations-view-and-use-the-bible?q=bible>.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>City College of San Francisco: Office of Mentoring and Service Learning, “What is Mentoring?” accessed June 7, 2011, [http://www.ccsf.edu/Services/Mentoring\\_and\\_Service\\_Learning/HTML\\_Pages/PeerMentoring.html](http://www.ccsf.edu/Services/Mentoring_and_Service_Learning/HTML_Pages/PeerMentoring.html).

Mentoring is, by definition, a relationship between someone who is experienced, practiced, and has had some success in a given body of knowledge and one who is willing to learn and practice that same body of knowledge. It is similar to the “master” and “apprentice” model. Mentoring is relational, practical, interactive, and hands on.

### **Definitions, Limitations and Delimitations**

*Discipleship/discipling.*<sup>37</sup> *Discipleship* or *discipling* can be understood broadly as training to help another grow in his or her commitment to Christ and the practical application of God’s Word in their life. Jim Putman has a more precise definition that guided the project:

Putting it all together, a disciple is one who is:

**Following Christ (head).** A disciple has surrendered to Jesus as Savior and Lord of his or her life. A disciple is one who says, “I know He is Lord and Savior and I accept Him as my authority.”

**Being Changed by Christ (heart).** Jesus said we would know a tree by its fruit (see Matt 7:17-20). . . As we spend time following Jesus, He changes us internally—He changes who we are.

**Committed to Jesus’ mission to save people from their sin (hands).** Jesus saved us for a purpose. . . God’s mission is now our mission, and we recognize that we are responsible for our own slice of history. Our hands are for His service.<sup>38</sup>

By that definition, the project was an ambitious one. A training program of twelve to fifteen weeks is just a beginning, but getting to the practical application of one’s faith was the vision that drove this effort. It is hoped that the project spurs further development of a discipleship ministry at Calvary Baptist Church.

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<sup>37</sup>John MacArthur, “What is a Disciple of Christ?” accessed November 29, 2014, <http://www.crosswalk.com/who-is-jesus/following-jesus-christ/what-is-a-disciple-of-jesus-christ-11550794.html>. There is not a tiered system in Christian faith. MacArthur makes it clear that “Every believer is a disciple and vice versa. A careful reading of Acts shows that the word disciple has been a synonym for Christian from the earliest days of the church (cf. 6:1-2, 7; 11:26; 14:20, 22; 15:10).”

<sup>38</sup>Jim Putman, *Real-Life Discipleship: Building Churches that Make Disciples* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2010), 32, 33.

A further word on “disciple,” borrowing from Adsit, “A disciple is a person-in-process who is eager to learn and apply the truths that Jesus Christ teaches him, which will result in ever-deepening commitments to a Christ-like lifestyle.”<sup>39</sup> In addition, W. E. Vine explains: “A ‘disciple’ was not only a pupil, but an adherent; hence they are spoken of as imitators of their teacher; cf. John 8:31; 15:8.”<sup>40</sup>

Following, then, the task of discipleship implies that the trainees are first disciples and therefore justified believers; Matthew was comfortable with this assumption (28:19). Still it would be ill-advised to assume that any given individual was a believer based upon church attendance, baptismal record, or how animatedly he or she might sing on Sundays, so the beginning of the “discipleship” programming in this study was evangelistic.

*Mentoring.* *Mentoring* is the process where someone who has experience, knowledge, and expertise in a given area shares it with someone who does not. The mentors selected for this program were church members, or at least Southern Baptists who had some relationship with Calvary Baptist Church.

My rationale for opening the program to non-members was simply that there were people regularly visiting the church from other SBC churches, and our people have friends in other SBC churches who expressed interest in participating as mentors. A practical reason, however, for allowing participants from outside the church into the first program was to ensure that the program involved a sufficient number of people to be statistically relevant for the needs of the project.

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<sup>39</sup>Christopher Adsit, *Personal Disciplemaking; A Step-by-step Guide for Leading a Christian from New Birth to Maturity* (Orlando: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1996), 35.

<sup>40</sup>W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White, Jr., *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996), s.v. “disciple.”

To give the project its greatest chance for success and limit some misunderstanding, mentors were recruited on the basis of the following criteria: they were born-again believers and members of a Southern Baptist Church; men and women of good reputation; people who demonstrated a willingness to be obedient to the commands of Scripture, and had hands-on ministry experience—able to study and share the Word of God and share their witness with others. In addition, mentors had to be willing to commit fifteen weeks to this project. Likewise, mentees were born-again believers who evidenced a desire to grow in their understanding and practice of the Christian faith; willing to come under the authority of the project and a mentor and able to dedicate twelve weeks to the project.

Ideally, such a project, because it is highly relational, would require a longer duration to demonstrate the kind of results desired. Twelve to fifteen weeks is probably not enough time for some mentors and mentees to gain a significant level of trust and rapport with one another, reducing the amount of change that might reasonably be expected in a longer program.

Conversely, another factor that affected the research value of the project was that some mentors had previous relationships with the people they choose to mentor, while others had only limited or brief acquaintance with their chosen mentee. These were wide variables for research, but I saw value in both kinds of relationships.

The topics of study included sin, salvation, Christ as Lord of one's life, sufficiency of Scripture, obedience, prayer, witnessing, fellowship, biblical counseling, and biblical decision-making.

*Biblical counseling.* *Biblical counseling* may be properly defined as the process where the Bible, God's Word, is related individually to a person or persons who are struggling under the weight of personal sin and/or the difficulties



with suffering, so that he or she might genuinely change in the inner person to be pleasing to God.<sup>41</sup>

*Biblical counseling*, in a broader sense, includes a commitment to making Christ our authority (1 Cor 4:1; Matt 7:24-27), a commitment to the sufficiency of God's Word (2 Tim 3:16), and an understanding that believers have the resources needed for becoming mature, grounded, effective, fruitful, spiritually healthy believers (2 Cor 12:9,10), an understanding that the Holy Spirit is the agent for the needed change (2 Cor 3:17, 18; 2 Peter 1:3-7).

*Nouthetic*. *Nouthetic* was coined by Jay Adams and it is a transliteration of a Greek word that includes English equivalents like "admonish," "exhort," and "teach." Adams explains the term as "giving direction from the Word of God,"<sup>42</sup> and there are three sides of the nouthetic task: "(1) Discernment of wrongdoing in another that God wants changed. (2) Verbal confrontation of another with the Word of God in order to change his attitudes or behavior. (3) Confrontation of another for his benefit."<sup>43</sup> "He writes, "to put it simply, nouthetic counseling consists of lovingly confronting people out of deep concern in order to help them make those changes that God requires."<sup>44</sup>

### **Research Methodology**

Fifteen people associated with the ministry of CBC were recruited as mentors. Participants in the mentor group completed a pre-project survey to determine their base knowledge regarding the key concepts of discipleship and the practice of mentoring. They also completed a post-project survey fifteen weeks later to measure the same things

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<sup>41</sup>Faith Ministries, "What is Biblical Counseling?" accessed October 26, 2014, [http://www.faithlafayette.org/counseling/about/what\\_is\\_biblical\\_counseling](http://www.faithlafayette.org/counseling/about/what_is_biblical_counseling).

<sup>42</sup>Jay E. Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 157.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>44</sup>Jay Adams, "What is Biblical Counseling?" accessed June 25, 2011, <http://www.gatewaybiblicalcounseling.org/whatisbiblicalcounseling.htm>.

to determine their gains after learning about and deploying a mentoring approach to discipleship.

The project was designed to accomplish the four goals outlined earlier: (1) participants would learn and understand mentoring and the biblical model of mentoring as a means of discipleship training; (2) project participants would commit to mentoring relationships; (3) through the mentoring experience, the volunteers would create relationships and opportunities for nouthetic teaching and counseling to occur; and (4) through the project, I would learn to be an effective mentor and a resource for training other mentors for the discipleship ministry at Calvary Baptist Church.

A remarkable and challenging journey unfolded as we launched the project, and it was a fruitful time. We soon discovered that achieving these broad and ambitious goals would not be easy; but they represented tactics that had merit and promise for making a difference in the lives of the participants and the people and ministry of Calvary Baptist Church. Despite the project's imperfections, the goals proved worthy and hold merit for future consideration.

CHAPTER 2  
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT  
FOR DISCIPLING ONE ANOTHER

**Confronting the Obstacles of Modernity**

The world has changed dramatically in the last fifty years, and some of the methods of the modern church have changed with it, and not always for the better. Jim Petersen asserts,

Modernity is a way of thinking that cuts people adrift from truth, from community, and from a sense of personal responsibility for their behavior. Modernity fragments. It breaks up society and leaves the individual broken as well. Those of us who are serious about being fruitful in helping people know Christ and grow into His likeness will have to deal with this fragmentation.<sup>1</sup>

The modern church certainly has resources, but whether it has anything worthwhile for the believer's sanctification is another matter. Most of what is available is doctrinally deficient, while the smattering of resources that do have sufficient doctrine are largely content-oriented only—providing excellent study materials for students to learn about the expressions and demands of discipleship. What may be missing from many of these programs are the focus, hands-on activities, community, and accountability that only a mentoring relationship inside the local church can provide. Keith Meyer, executive pastor of Church of the Open Door in Maple Grove, Minnesota, recounts his own experiences with discipling:

One size fits all programming has not worked for us; it has produced information and techniques without life change. Instead we've recognized that church leaders need to be designers of formational systems of change. This means developing experiences and relationships that take people out of their habitual patterns and open

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<sup>1</sup>Jim Petersen, *Lifestyle Discipleship: Encouraging Others to Spiritual Maturity* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2007), 37.

them to new ways of thinking and living. Change rarely takes place without disturbing a person's comfort and messing with their routines.<sup>2</sup>

Addressing popular programmatic approaches, Greg Ogden concurs:

All these programs can contribute to discipleship development, but they miss the central ingredient in discipleship. Each disciple is a unique individual who grows at a rate peculiar to him or her. Unless disciples receive personal attention so that their particular growth needs are addressed in a way that calls them to die to self and live fully to Christ, a disciple will not be made.<sup>3</sup>

Many churches confuse merely learning about Christ and Christianity with discipleship, providing lots of classes and studies that do little to change anyone. For many church members, this academic approach to discipleship is anemic and not very compelling. Rather than producing needed change, such programs foster incorrect or incomplete notions about the nature of a disciple within congregations. Further, many people within modern evangelical churches (or coming into them) may have syncretistic ideas about faith and God that require careful weeding. Christian leaders would do well to develop comprehensive and scripturally-focused approaches for their churches to ensure that their people build upon a solid foundation. This idea is not new, but in this culture it may be challenging.

Richard Baxter proposed a rigorous program of discipleship training more than four hundred years ago that attempted to involve every member of his church, although not every member of his congregation responded to his methods.<sup>4</sup> The project I propose is smaller in scale and more interactive, drawn from a routine and a model of discipleship demonstrated within the New Testament that involves mentoring one person or a few persons at a time. In this process, a novice is mentored over time regarding his or her relationship with Christ and the teachings, values, and expressions of the Christian faith

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<sup>2</sup>Keith Meyer, "The Mega Church and the Monastery," *Leadership* 30 (Winter 2009): 43.

<sup>3</sup>Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 43.

<sup>4</sup>Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2007), 87-110.

with the goal of transformative change. This model seems to capture more of the accountability and relationship building that characterized the teaching methods common during Christ's time. Christ was not the first teacher to gather students and mentor them, but He serves as the best example of how one "makes disciples."

The author of the most well-known version of the Great Commission is Matthew, whose Gospel is the only one that includes "making disciples" within its commission mandate and, therefore, contributes special value for informing the process of mentoring. Eyre and Eyre suggest, "The early Church had a discipling manual . . . it was the book of Matthew. It was written to teach us how to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and how to disciple others."<sup>5</sup> Commenting on Matthew, John Nolland, in a general sense, agrees, "Calling, following, and discipleship in the post-resurrection period are in an important sense derivative from the foundational discipleship of the Twelve."<sup>6</sup>

Though there are many scriptures that relate to discipleship in both the Old and New Testaments, Matthew, for the purposes of this study, shall be the backbone or pivot point that connects the experience of Jesus and the disciples to some of the epistles for the purpose of exploring the biblical basis for discipleship mentoring. Further, this study demonstrates that biblical counseling is the foundation for the mentoring process. Disciplemaking and biblical counseling are facets of the same gem<sup>7</sup> and both disciplines

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<sup>5</sup>Stephen Eyre and Jacalyn Eyre, *Matthew: Being Discipled by Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 5.

<sup>6</sup>John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Greek New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 180.

<sup>7</sup>This is a small distinction, but I hold disciplemaking as a spectrum of activities, of which biblical counseling is a major component. Disciplemaking, in the broad sense, comes along side believers when there are no visible problems or issues to confront, while biblical counseling confronts specific, visible problems. For instance, the model prayer is given (Matt 6:8-13) as well as counsel about anxiety (6:33-34). These are concepts the disciples must understand (disciplemaking). Later, the disciples encounter the storm where Jesus reminds them to live by faith, not sight (Matt 8:23-27). Their fear prompts biblical counsel.

submit to the Word of God as the ultimate authority in guiding and mentoring new or young believers. Charles Dunahoo comments, “The primary objectives of the kingdom approach to disciple making include knowing, understanding, and applying God’s Word to all of life. It also involves living lives more obedient to God’s commands.”<sup>8</sup>The “primary objectives of the kingdom approach to discipling” that Dunahoo describes require radical change! Many believers, especially young ones, will need help. Biblical counseling, then, is a means to facilitate that change. Adams writes,

Biblical change is the goal of counseling. But change is hard. . . . Change is necessary, but change is hard. One of the major reasons Christians founder is because they are either unwilling to make changes or do not know how to make the changes that God requires of them in order to meet the vicissitudes of life.<sup>9</sup>

### **Key New Testament Words Defining Discipleship Mentoring**

The Greek word typically translated “to make disciples” is μαθητεύω (*mathéteuó*).<sup>10</sup> This is a mentoring word and is expanded by an understanding of the object of the activity—the disciple, derived from the Greek word μαθητής (*mathētēs*). In New Testament usage,

Apart from a few exceptions, μαθητής denotes the men who have attached themselves to Jesus as their Master. . . . μαθητής always implies the existence of personal attachment which shapes the whole life of the one described as μαθητής, and which in its particularity leaves no doubt as to who is deploying the formative power.<sup>11</sup>

A disciple becomes a “devotee” of Christ and not merely a student of the content of His Word. Devotion to Christ and His Word allows the Holy Spirit to build up and transform the disciple from the inside-out into a discipling. Christopher Adsit briefly

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<sup>8</sup>Charles H. Dunahoo, *Making Kingdom Disciples: A New Framework* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2005), 11.

<sup>9</sup>Jay E. Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling: More than Redemption* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 234-35.

<sup>10</sup>Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1977), s.v. “μαθητεύω”

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., s.v. “μαθητής”

outlines this concept of disciple, calling it an “attitude of commitment. . . . A disciple is a person-in-process who is eager to learn and apply the truths that Jesus Christ teaches him, which will result in ever-deepening commitments to a Christ-like lifestyle.”<sup>12</sup>

One’s commitment to a “Christ-like lifestyle” must include a commitment to discipling others. Larry Kreider comments,

The Lord is calling for thousands of spiritual fathers and mothers to prepare now for the coming harvest. I believe that mentoring is a God-designed development that is connected to the Great Commission, and that we must embrace it to realize the full potential of the harvest. I believe that mentoring is an important part of a discipleship formation strategy of Jesus, and the investment in others will pay off great dividends of a multiplied spiritual inheritance.<sup>13</sup>

Bill Hull adds insight from a historical perspective and states that there were five characteristics of discipleship in the rabbinical tradition:

1) The disciple chose to submit to his teacher. 2) The disciple would memorize his teacher’s word. 3) The disciple would learn his teacher’s way of ministry. 4) The disciple would imitate his teacher’s life. 5) The disciple would be expected to find his own disciples.<sup>14</sup>

As one makes that commitment to discipleship mentoring, he or she must realize that he or she is both disciple and disciplemaker; one’s relationship with The Master never ends. In addition to μαθητεύω and μαθητής there are several New Testament words that can inform the ministry of disciplemaking.

Regarding Matthew’s version of events (Matt 4:17-19), Jesus tells the first four disciples to “follow me.” The Greek words used for “follow” are Δεύτε ὀπίσω (*Deute opisō*) which are literally translated “come after.” D. A. Carson writes,

Greek has several expressions for ‘follow me’ . . . but they all presuppose a physical following during Jesus’ ministry. His ‘followers’ were not just ‘hearers’; they

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<sup>12</sup>Christopher B. Adsit, *Personal Disciple-Making: A Step-by-Step Guide for Leading a Christian from New Birth to Maturity* (Orlando: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1996), 35.

<sup>13</sup>Larry Kreider, *Authentic Spiritual Mentoring* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2008), 27.

<sup>14</sup>Bill Hull, *Jesus Christ Disciplemaker* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 13.

actually followed their Master around (as students then did) and became, as it were, trainees.<sup>15</sup>

The concept of “following” merits further development, however. “Following” for the disciples (as implied earlier) connotes proximity and familiarity with Jesus. The power of this association is captured in the Acts 4 when Peter and John were hauled before the high priests Annas and Caiaphas, along with numerous rulers, elders, and scribes (Acts 4:5, 6). The Sanhedrin’s conclusion was that these “unlearned men” had “been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13). The Greek version uses an unremarkable preposition *σύν* (*sun*) to describe this association. Yet the context suggests that following and being “with” Jesus had remarkable effect. The apostle Paul relates a similar experience in his letter to the churches in Galatia, declaring that he received the message of the gospel through “a revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal 1:12).<sup>16</sup> Paul is emphatic that he “consulted not with flesh and blood” about his experience (Gal 1:16), but spent three years in Arabia and Damascus (Gal 1:17, 18). The indeterminate time in Arabia is suggestive of contemplation, prayer, and study, whereas the remaining time in Damascus seems to have been spent in ministry and mentoring others (Acts 9:22-25). In Paul’s case, Scripture does not suggest a mystical experience in the desert, nor another appearance by Christ like that on the road to Damascus. But the time in Arabia still suggests time spent with Jesus. Perhaps the reason is simple. Paul’s new calling was revolutionary: Paul would be a “chosen instrument” to bring Christ’s message to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). Encountering Jesus brought such a dramatic change in personal experience, understanding, and theology that Paul needed (and benefitted from) an extended time of retreat and study to become prepared for his new mission and role. The Epistles of Paul certainly bear this out; and Paul wrote specifically of learning the “mystery of Christ” in Ephesians 3: “This

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<sup>15</sup>D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 8 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gæbelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 119.

<sup>16</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the English Standard Version (ESV).



mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (Eph 3:6). Perhaps he was grounded in this life-changing mystery while he was “with Christ” in Arabia.

The fascination over a simple preposition is simply meant to underscore that modern disciples need to be “in Christ” and spend time “with” Him. In a modern mentoring program some accountability must be built in that insures the mentee fruitful time in prayer, Bible study, and meditation on the Word personally. It is the only way that transformational change can occur. Larry Kreider emphasizes,

Jesus knew that Kingdom values are caught more than taught, so He initiated close relationships with followers who were ready to catch, and spent the majority of His time building—nurturing and preparing the Twelve to fulfill the Lord’s purpose for their lives. And when they were ready (and probably before they felt ready!), He released them to live out the Kingdom values they had caught and to continue His mission of initiating, building and releasing even more disciples who would, in turn, all do the same.<sup>17</sup>

So with “accountable relationships” as a backdrop, one sees Jesus calling an unlikely group of men as His disciples to live in community with Him, follow Him, learn from Him, and join in His ministry. Christ’s choice in disciples mirrors God’s choice of Old Testament prophets that spanned the range of religiously trained men and nobles to shepherds and fig pickers. The choices in both cases clearly communicate the truth that God enjoys choosing and using what the world would consider weak to shame the strong, and the uneducated to shame the educated (1 Cor 1:26-31). A. B. Bruce suggests that this was especially true in the disciples’ case:

At the time of their call they were exceedingly ignorant, narrow-minded, superstitious, full of Jewish prejudices, misconceptions, and animosities. They had much to unlearn of what was bad, as well as much to learn of what was good, and they were both slow to learn and unlearn.<sup>18</sup>

Jesus chose such men so that when His plans came to pass, no one would credit these human vessels for the work God accomplished through them. The weak, the unlikely, the

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<sup>17</sup>Larry Kreider, *Authentic Spiritual Mentoring* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2008), 113.

<sup>18</sup>A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1971), 14.

powerless, and in other words vessels with no honor in themselves, were mentored into vessels of honor by the Redeemer.

After choosing His disciples, Jesus cast a vision with another interesting phrase: “I will make you fishers of men” (Matt 4:19). The verb *ποιησω* (*poieso*) (“I will make”) is used: “The invitation is accompanied by the promise that Jesus will equip them (*ποιησω*, “make”) for the new work to which he calls them; their obedience is followed by the promise of provision.”<sup>19</sup> In other words, the disciples were not ready yet, but would be made ready by Christ as they followed Him and participated in His ministry. Regarding the call of the first disciples from another’s perspective (Mark 1:17, 18), Kenneth S. Wuest explains,

**Come ye after Me.** “Come” is the translation of “deute” the word the Lord used when He said, “Lazarus come forth.” It means “come here, come.” “After,” “opiso”, when used with “deute”, has the idea of “after” in the sense of joining one’s party.

**Make you become.** The addition of the words “to become,” indicates a long, slow process in making them soul winners. . .

**They forsook their nets.** “Forsook” is “aphiemi”, “to send from one’s self, to yield up, to leave.” The prefixed preposition implies a separation, here, a separation from the fishing business to the preaching of the Word of God. The participle is in the aorist tense. . . . It was a complete break from their former life, and a permanent one.<sup>20</sup>

Becoming a disciple then and now is both a radical change and a gradual process that is characterized by the disciple living as a “new creation.” Christ wields the power to make the chosen into disciples, and chooses and empowers mentors to aid in the process.

The new disciples’ introduction to ministry was quite brief. They were going to learn on the job as they followed Christ. Matthew records that after the calling of the first four followers “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching

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<sup>19</sup>Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 33 (Dallas: Word, 1993), 76

<sup>20</sup>Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 1:28-29.

the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness among the people” (Matt 4:23).<sup>21</sup>

Jesus invested in the disciples through their ministry training; in fact, it may be that the entire Galilean exercise was for the benefit of the disciples, more so than the masses:

Both from His words and His actions we can see that He attached supreme importance to that part of His work which consisted in training the twelve. In the intercessory prayer, e.g., He speaks of the training He had given these men as if it had been the principal part of His own earthly ministry. And in such, in one sense, it really was. The careful, painstaking education of the disciples secured that the Teacher’s influence on the world should be permanent; that His kingdom should be founded on the rock of deep and indestructible convictions in the minds of the few, not on the shifting sands of superficial evanescent impression on the minds of the many.<sup>22</sup>

If Christ’s investment in His disciples was primary, or at least equal to His investment in ministry to the masses (Matt 13:10, 11), then such a model is missing in many churches today, where the bulk of resources and ministry action is aimed at attracting and reaching large groups of people with few demands placed upon those who respond.

As they embarked on the tour of Galilee, Matthew’s Gospel reveals three new tasks for the disciples to learn (teaching, preaching, and healing). At the onset they were earnest seekers, but unprepared to do any of the three. Jesus nevertheless wanted these men with Him to see Him perform these specific ministries. Since these activities were the same that the disciples would soon undertake, a closer look is warranted. Matthew uses the Greek word διδάσκω (*didaskó*) to convey “teaching.” Jesus, the mentor, taught the Scriptures throughout Galilee: “The teaching referred to is probably the exposition of

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<sup>21</sup>There may have been more than the four previously identified disciples as the Galilean ministry began in Matt 4. John’s account indicates the addition of Philip and Nathanael (1:43-51); and Matthew’s narrative reveals a familiarity that intimates first-hand knowledge, although his story does not formally intersect the gospel until chap. 9. There may have been many “seekers” in Christ’s company during this time, from among whom He chose some of the disciples. Of course, some contend that all twelve were selected prior to the ministry in Galilee. William Hendriksen, *Matthew*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 259.

<sup>22</sup>Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 13.

the Torah, with particular emphasis on messianic texts and proclaiming Himself as Messiah, of which Matthew provides an example in chaps. 5-7.”<sup>23</sup> The significance of the statement “throughout Galilee” is often overlooked, however. “Galilee, the district covered, is small (approximately seventy by forty miles); but according to Josephus . . . Galilee had 204 cities and villages.”<sup>24</sup> If Josephus is correct, the disciples may have witnessed Jesus teaching familiar messages over one hundred times. Some repetition is suggested by the passage and sheer number of villages. Certainly, as the Gospels reveal, the disciples had times for reflection and discussion with Christ regarding what He may have taught as they journeyed from place to place. Though uneducated, the disciples were intelligent, and some had been following John, so it is safe to assume that they were interested in what Christ was saying and doing. But, clearly, they had much to learn. Matthew makes a point of stressing that Jesus taught as one with authority (Matt 7:29), suggesting of course that He used the Word to buttress the Word, and not traditions and quotations of past and present rabbis. One might suppose then that the first duty of the mentor in disciplinmaking is to “teach the Scriptures,” not moralisms or conventional wisdom, and lead one’s charge to learn how to do the same. One can conclude, then, that Jesus modeled the sufficiency of Scripture by His teaching, and that model bore fruit in the writings of the disciples.

The second ministry captured in the phrase *κηρύσσω τὸ εὐαγγέλιον* (*kēryssōn to euaggelion*) is rendered by “the preaching of good news.”<sup>25</sup> Kittel adds that the word “does not mean the delivery of a learned and edifying or horatory discourse in well-chosen words and a pleasant voice. It is the declaration of an event. Its true sense is ‘to

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<sup>23</sup>Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 80.

<sup>24</sup>Carson, *Matthew*, 120-21.

<sup>25</sup>Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 80.

proclaim.”<sup>26</sup> The Greeks also used *εὐαγγέλιον* to mean “news of victory,”<sup>27</sup> so the New Testament scribes were repurposing a useful term borrowed from common usage. In his exegesis of Mark 1:1, Wuest explains that *euaggelion* meant, in general,

“A message of good news.” This word was in common use in the first century for good news of any kind. The proclamation of the accession of a new Roman emperor was entitled “good news.” The evangelists appropriate the word, take it out of current secular usage, and speak of the message of salvation as good news.<sup>28</sup>

It might be instructive to draw some distinctions regarding the terms “teaching” and “preaching.” While the terms are often used interchangeably, Matthew uses separate and distinct Greek verbs. The verb for teaching, *διδάσκειν* (*didaskhein*), means “to teach, to instruct.”<sup>29</sup> But for Christ there was a little more to it: “His teaching constantly appeals to the will, calling for a practical decision either for the will of God or against it.”<sup>30</sup> In other words, it was difficult to be a spectator unmoved by what Jesus was teaching; though often parabolic, Christ’s words were never hypothetical. Grudem adds, “the gift of teaching in the New Testament is the ability to explain Scripture and apply it to people’s lives.”<sup>31</sup>

By contrast, the Greek word rendered by “preaching,” *κηρύσσειν* (*kēryssein*), refers to announcing, heralding, or proclaiming. A related word gives some insight as to what was proclaimed: *κηρύγμα* (*kerygma*) means “the good news of the Gospel message.”<sup>32</sup> In Matthew 4:23, Jesus is both proclaiming Himself as the Christ, God’s Son,

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<sup>26</sup>Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1977), s.v. “κηρύσσων.”

<sup>27</sup>Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1976), s.v. “εὐαγγέλιον.”

<sup>28</sup>Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies*, 1:11.

<sup>29</sup>Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, s.v. “διδάσκειν.”

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 1061.

<sup>32</sup>Merrill C. Tenney, *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), s.v. “kerygma.”

and teaching how the Scriptures did indeed point to Him. He announced His identity and then taught the Scriptures, helping the people connect the Law through the Prophets to Messiah. Paul also used *κηρύγμα* in the phrase “*proclamation* of Jesus Christ” (Rom 16:25). Jesus again used the same term as a description of the preaching of Jonah; indicating that preaching includes both a warning of judgment and the proclamation of the good news of God’s remedy (Matt 12:41). In *κηρύγμα*, Jesus announced man’s need, God’s plan, His own advent, God’s love and grace, and the new values of the new kingdom. He spoke of a “new” reality, designed from the beginning of time (John 1:1).

The apostle Paul also drew a distinction between the ministries of preaching and teaching. Commenting on Paul’s instructions to Timothy (2 Tim 4:3), William Hendriksen describes preaching: “It is the earnest proclamation of news initiated by God. It is not the abstract speculation on views excogitated by man.”<sup>33</sup> In the same Scripture passage, teaching is used as a modifier: “reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching” suggesting that teaching is akin to “explaining to” or “reasoning with” (even “chastising”) another regarding the words and principles of Scripture.

The last ministry identified in Matthew 4:23 is described by the Greek word *θεραπεύων* (*therapeuōn*)—found only in Matthew 4:23; 9:35—which may be translated “healing.” Kittel comments that *θεραπεύων* “is used much more often in the sense of ‘to heal,’ and always in such a way that the reference is not to medical treatment, which might fail, but to real healing. Among the full powers of the Messiah is His power to heal the sick.”<sup>34</sup> In both instances it is followed by the adjective *πάσαν* (*pasan*) which is usually translated “all,” or “every,” or “every kind of” as in “every disease and every malady.”<sup>35</sup> Perhaps one begins to grasp the depth and reach of discipling in Matthew

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<sup>33</sup>William Hendriksen and Simon Kistemaker, *Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews*, The New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 310.

<sup>34</sup>Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, s.v. “*θεραπεύων*.”

<sup>35</sup>Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 80.

4:23 by this phrase alone. Preaching to the masses in perhaps one to two hundred locales took a great deal of time; patiently devoting additional time for teaching those who required more explanation drew additional hours; finally, tending to the host of people desiring healing would surely require a staggering amount of time, as well. Each activity demanded progressively more time from Jesus and the disciples. If the disciples accompanying Jesus learned one thing during the first tour of Galilee it was that followers of Christ are indeed servants.

The disciples heard and witnessed a lot of new ideas, changed lives, and miracles in a short amount of time—and it was all revolutionary. Matthew records line upon line of instructions. It is obvious, foundational, and amazing that the disciples had the opportunity to hear the gospel at the feet of Jesus. Soon after the first disciples were called “to follow” they heard the Sermon(s) on the Mount (Matt 5:1-7:29). It may be that Matthew was concerned about capturing more the thrust of these messages than their chronology, since the other synoptics suggest that these messages were heard over time; but in any case, the disciples had the ultimate vantage point and an opportunity to discuss the lessons afterward. Christ characterized His teaching and ministry as radical, new, miraculous, and unable to be contained or understood by the thinking of the day (Matt 9:16-17; 11:4-6). In commenting on the difficult or radical nature of His teaching, Jesus offered, “He, who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt 11:15; 13:9, 43). The Greek word translated “hear” is *ἀκούετω* (*akouetō*) and is simply translated “let him hear,” or “let him listen.”<sup>36</sup> There is room in the translation for the notion of “listening for understanding,” however,<sup>37</sup> intimating that there is an earnestness required of the hearer to seek not only

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<sup>36</sup>The Greek word *ἀκούετω* “distinguishes between physical hearing and true hearing. . . . Hearing then, is always the reception both of grace and of the call to repentance” Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964), s.v. “*ἀκούετω*.”

<sup>37</sup>Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 459.

the interpretation of the teaching, but also for the gift of grace to fully understand and apply the truth.<sup>38</sup>

The crowds as well as the disciples were astounded by what they heard and saw (Matt 7:29; 13:54). Although the first recorded questions from the disciples appear after a parable in chapter 13, one can surmise that the time spent walking with Jesus and the evenings in repose were filled with many, many more. These men sought to understand. The volume of teaching, its radical nature, and the schedule of ministry, however, must have constantly overwhelmed the disciples. Jesus was breaking traditions, associating with sinners, healing Gentiles (at least their servants and children), calming storms, and confronting demons—all the while declaring new truths about His kingdom.

The process of assimilating new information often subjects the new ideas to the filter (or structure) of what one already knows and values. It may be safe to assume that assimilation was problematic for the disciples. Their old wineskins of religious tradition were stretching at the seams the more new wine of information and experiences were poured into them. In addition, it is quite clear that much of what they already knew was wrong. Jesus needed to deprogram and reprogram much of their thinking. For example, the disciples were men from various vocations who had depended upon their own knowledge, wisdom, strength, and initiative for their livelihood. Thus, through ministry together and His teaching, Jesus redirected their thinking regarding their vocation, source of wisdom, success, provision, and authority (explicitly in 4:19; 6:19-34, and 7:24-27). This is why the relationship and accountability and commitment to God's Word within mentoring relationship are so helpful. When assisting new believers to learn the story and claims of Christ and the radical nature and demands of the kingdom of God, a biblical counselor/mentor can be invaluable, facilitating the working of the Holy Spirit to redirect unscriptural thinking.

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<sup>38</sup>Hendriksen, *Matthew*, 553.



Another key word that warrants attention comes from the pen of the last apostle, who also demonstrated a skill for and commitment to mentoring. Paul uses a word in his letters to the churches in Corinth, Ephesus, and Thessalonica that is translated “imitators.” He encourages the readers to be “imitators of me” (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1), “imitators of God” (Eph 5:1), and “imitators of us and the Lord” (1 Thess 1:6; 2:14). The word used is *μιμητης* (*mimētēs*), which connotes “not just striving to live up to the example [of Jesus], but necessarily and by no means finally a willingness to take the same way of faith. . . . Not an imitation of the earthly life of Christ, but [living] by concrete obedience to the word and will of the Lord.”<sup>39</sup>

“Learning,” “imitating,” and “doing” are part of a progression of responsibility that would soon culminate in a new role. The Greek word is *ἀποστόλων* (*apostolōn*):

The term does not intend to designate an office, but rather describes a commissioning to ministry; implying the full authorization of Jesus. . . . Indissolubly bound up with the commission to preach the Word is Jesus’ empowering of His messengers to act (*supra*). Action, too, is essential, for in it the messenger has and gives proof that he is really the commissioned representative of Jesus.<sup>40</sup>

In the span of months or weeks, the men called to be “followers” and “imitators” of Him became “representatives” of Christ. This was the natural progression for the ancient teacher/mentor—to gather students who would one day replace the person and ministry of the teacher. Of course replacing the work and ministry of the teacher was of relative importance until the coming of the Messiah. As modern disciples of Christ, though, the work of multiplying one’s ministry is not only incredibly important; it is a command! This calling combined with the times and the needs of the day place a lot of responsibility on the shoulders of the mentor. Nevertheless, the task is not optional.

Paul uses an additional word that is significant in describing his relationship to those he led and nurtured: “father.” He explains in his letter to the believers at Corinth (1

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<sup>39</sup>Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, s. v. “μιμητης.”

<sup>40</sup>Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, s. v. “ἀποστόλων.”

Cor 4:15), for example, that they might have many guides or tutors, but not many “fathers;” the word used here is *πατέρας* (*pateras*), and the English translation accurately captures the point. Paul uses this word to signify a tighter bond—that he has more invested in their spiritual outcome than would a mere teacher. And the apostle was not alone in using this term to capture the intimacy of this bond: “By far the most common metaphor used in the New Testament to describe the basic relationship involved in bringing people to maturity in Christ is that of parent and child. Almost all the writers of the Epistles describe their work in these terms.”<sup>41</sup>

In commissioning others to carry on the ministry, Paul reveals the dynamic of mentoring in his relationship to Timothy. In 2 Timothy 2:2, Timothy is encouraged to commit or entrust what he has learned from Paul to other faithful men that will do the same. Implied within the concept of discipleship then is the idea of passing on what one has learned—to the extent that the new disciple begins to disciple others. The words Paul uses demonstrate that discipleship mentoring is not a casual matter. He does not use terms such as “provide” or “make available” or “encourage them to try,” and for good reason. The Greek word he uses is *παράθου* (*parathou*) which in this context means “committing something or someone into the care of another.”<sup>42</sup> Marshall continues, “The true teaching is preserved and spread by passing it to responsible people who will preserve it unchanged. The choice of appropriate people is important.”<sup>43</sup>

A valuable gift deserves respectful care. Life-giving words should be accompanied by careful reverence and obedience. The words and traditions that Paul entrusted to Timothy comprised the plan by which Jesus would change the hearts of

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<sup>41</sup>Petersen, *Lifestyle Discipleship*, 38.

<sup>42</sup>I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark, 1999), 407.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 726.

future generations and even the world! Obviously the object of this “entrusting” was also very important. One does not trust things of great value to someone who will not regard them as such. Another word that Paul uses describes the character of the men to whom this valuable gift can be entrusted. Often translated “faithful,” the Greek term is πιστοις (*pistois*) and conveys the idea of “those who act faithfully.”<sup>44</sup> Again, Paul does not use phrases like “warm body,” “average church member,” or “whomever you can find” to describe the disciplinarians of the next generation. Faithfulness is paramount. Such a word should guide modern discipleship mentoring as well. Wuest provides this helpful expanded translation of the passage: “. . . these things commit as a trust to trustworthy men who are of such a character as to be capable of teaching others also.”<sup>45</sup>

Last, since a commitment to studying, hearing, and obeying the Word of God is essential to discipleship training and biblical counseling, it is useful to explore the value and reach of that authority. Paul declares, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work”(2 Tim 3:16-17). This strong reminder to Timothy is one of the core verses buttressing the doctrine of the sufficiency of the Scriptures. It declares that “all” of the Scriptures are profitable and provide valuable instruction for the believer. Key words and phrases within these verses are “reproof,” “correction,” “training in righteousness,” and “complete.”

Regarding reproof and correction, Hendriksen and Kistemaker contend,

Warnings, based on the Word, must be issued. Errors in doctrine and in conduct must be refuted in the spirit of love. Dangers must be pointed out. False teachers must be exposed. . . . If reproof stresses the negative aspect of pastoral work, correction emphasizes the positive side. Not only must the sinner be warned to leave the wrong path, but he must also be directed to the right or straight path. . . . The Word,

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<sup>44</sup>Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979), s.v. “πιστοις.”

<sup>45</sup>Kenneth Wuest, *The New Testament: An Expanded Translation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 502.

especially when it is used by a consecrated servant of God who is diligent in the performance of his pastoral duties, is restorative in character (cf. John 21:15-17).<sup>46</sup>

“Training in righteousness” is derived from the Greek words *παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ* (*paideian tēn en dikaiosynē*), which translates “discipline which is in righteousness.”

Wuest suggests that this phrase has in mind the whole realm of instruction (commands, admonitions, chastening), “which aims at the increase of virtue.”<sup>47</sup> In effect, God’s Word (all of it) is sufficient for all the spiritual training one can imagine, need, or require. So much so, when subjected to the training that the Scriptures afford, it makes the learner “complete,” and “fully equipped.” The Greek words, respectively, are *αρτιος* (*artios*) and *ἐξηρτισμένος* (*exērtismenos*). The term *αρτιος* can be understood as “what is right, proper, and more particularly, what is becoming to a Christian.”<sup>48</sup> The Word of God prepares the believer completely to be fully effective for every work God assigns. These are quite a powerful string of words for the disciple of any age.<sup>49</sup>

The New Testament writers chose words that are helpful both in defining the roles and process of discipling as well as providing the context for a revolutionary ministry within a collection of amazing teaching. One’s grasp of the Great Commission—making disciples—is enriched as one sees the various words connecting the ministry of discipleship. Discipling involves following Christ closely, does not presuppose a prior religious upbringing, requires the faithful work of Christ in making the disciple fruitful, and demands breaking from one’s old manner of life and thinking to embrace a new manner of life and thinking. Followers are called to imitate mature believers and the Lord, and the first disciples, by virtue of their time spent with Christ, were later made

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<sup>46</sup>Hendriksen and Kistemaker, *Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews*, 303.

<sup>47</sup>Kenneth Wuest, *The Pastoral Epistles in the Greek New Testament*, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1973), 2:151.

<sup>48</sup>Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, s.v. “*αρτιος*”

<sup>49</sup>Though the instructions of 2 Tim 3:16, 17 might be most precisely aimed at the “man of God” or “preacher,” it has broader application for all believers, too.

earthly representatives or apostles. In addition, the apostle Paul was willing to ask new believers to imitate him, as he was earnestly imitating Christ. These concepts and connections are arresting and bold, reminding the mentor of both the high calling and significance of disciplinmaking.

Disciplinmaking presupposes a close relationship between two parties: mentors and mentees. The mentors, Paul and the other New Testament writers, saw themselves as disciplinmakers in obedience to Christ and as faithful “parents” committed successfully to rearing those whom they taught and led. The mentees eventually become mentors themselves, ideally, while some among them are specifically chosen on the basis of their outstanding reliability to carry this important ministry forward in a leadership role.

Finally, the Word of God is sufficient for all needs. It is powerful, God-breathed, beneficial, and specifically designed for all manner of spiritual instruction, in order to produce completely prepared Christians capable of performing any work God calls them to do.

### **The Transformational Training of the Disciples**

Paul gives a glimpse of Christ’s goal in mentoring the twelve in his letter to the church at Colossae:

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. (Col 1:9-12)

The words of Christ at the end of his earthly ministry include other dimensions too. In the synoptics, Christ’s last words (post-resurrection) are variations on the Great Commission implying that the goal of His earthly investment (and the charge for the disciples from this point forward) is evangelism and discipleship. In John’s Gospel, Jesus shares words of affirmation and encouragement and teaches about love. In addition, prior to the resurrection, there are elements within the High Priestly Prayer (John 17:1-26) that are

germane to this discussion: Jesus prays for protection for the disciples and that they might have unity, joy, sanctification by the Word of truth; that they remain in Christ; that they be allowed to see Christ's glory and be with Christ in glory; and that God's love might be in them. In other words, Jesus invested in the disciples to produce steady growth in knowledge and understanding of the Word, fruit of the Spirit, perseverance power, endurance, patience, joy, thanksgiving, evangelism, discipleship, and unity. This is transformational change!

Jesus used a variety of methods to train and mentor His disciples. He was a master of instruction; teaching clearly, expressively, and sometimes cryptically. His teaching style demonstrated in the Sermon on the Mount is straightforward and revolutionary, bearing no resemblance to the kind of teaching of Israel's great teachers. He also spoke in parables to explain spiritual truths and sometimes to confuse and harden his enemies (Matt 13:10-13; Rom 9:18). While His teachings were not discernible to all, however (1 Cor 2:14), they were invitational and redemptive. Surely Christ's teaching did more than merely impart information.

Christ trained the disciples experientially and inductively, placing them in situations where they would struggle, but eventually learn and draw conclusions from what they had seen and heard. A great example of this process is when Jesus asked the disciples, "Who do you say I am" (Matt 16:15). Another is when Jesus told his disciples, who were surrounded by hungry listeners, "You give them something to eat" (Matt 14:16).

There was much of the deductive method, too, where Christ shared truth and then challenged the disciples to understand it, expand it, and apply it. Following on a discussion of who is the greatest in the kingdom (Matt 18:1-6; 19:13-15), and the live example of a young man who seemed an ideal candidate for the kingdom (Matt 19:16-22), Christ shared, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God" (Matt 19:24). The ensuing discussion became quite pointed and personal for the disciples (Matt 19:25-30). Their initial understanding, that wealth

and position must equal some level of spiritual acceptance and blessing, was wrong. With that formula dashed by Christ's words to the rich young ruler (Luke 18:18), the disciples reached a teachable moment: "Who then can be saved?" Their minds scrambled to see how they might fit within this new paradigm. But with their revitalized attention and focus, Jesus was able to explain kingdom truths once again.

Jesus trained the disciples through both successful and adverse circumstances. Luke reveals that Jesus appointed seventy-two followers to go on ahead of Him (Luke 10:1). They were instructed to "heal the sick" and declare that "the kingdom of God has come near to you" (Luke 10:9). The Gospel records that after some time, they returned with joy, exulting "that even the demons are subject to us in your name" (Luke 10:17). Apparently, the other expectations of the mission trip were fulfilled, and they encountered no distressing resistance. Certainly, this was a successful event for those who were appointed and were obedient to strike out two by two. The experience would build their confidence in Christ and their willingness to depend upon His leading and power. No doubt there were other occasions where the disciples witnessed great miracles, even participated in them (the feeding of the five thousand and the four thousand, for example), cementing some convictions about the power of God and His constancy and provision. Their faith was likewise strengthened when they risked doing new things and saw fruit from their efforts. But those were not the only circumstances that Jesus used as training opportunities.

Jesus used adversity, when, for example, He warns them about the landscape that awaited them (Matt 10:16-42; Luke 10:3); a warning that was probably lost due to the success of those first mission journeys. Their troubles would begin within days of Jesus giving the Sermon on the Mount. One of their first encounters was a storm on the Sea of Galilee (Matt 8:23-27), followed by a frightening encounter with the demon-possessed men in the Gadarenes (Matt 8:28-34). Perhaps the most distressing event, however, came after crossing the lake in the same passage. Matthew records that Jesus

was accused of blaspheming after healing a paralytic (Matt 9:1-8). Each of these encounters was a splash of cold water after days of wonderful teaching, and the acclaim of the many sick that had been healed by Jesus. New questions surrounded the disciples. Jesus could preach and heal, but could He preserve them in a storm? Jesus could preach, heal, and calm storms, but could he restore two lives so ravaged by Satan? Could He prevail against the Pharisees? Could the disciples be successful in the face of such unconscionable opposition from the religious leadership? How would they endure persecution by those with the training, power, and position to inflict the most harm? The next phase of their training would answer these questions.

Matthew's account omits the sending of the seventy-two, but includes an extensive commissioning of the twelve. Their charter had much broader powers:

These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay." (Matt 10:5-8)

The commissioning in Matthew's Gospel accomplished a couple of things. First, it set forth a challenging mission; second, with the warning about persecution, the instructions lent an urgent though solemn tone. The disciples were to assume responsibility for a range of ministries that previously was performed by their Master. Now they would take up that role in the face of perhaps greater opposition than they had confronted before. Ministry in Christ's shadow had been relatively easy; working alone would be difficult. That this step was a decided advance in their training cannot be overstated. The significance and risk of this new step was recorded by both Matthew and Luke: "And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matt 10:38-39). The disciples eventually became leaders of the early Church, because they were obedient and willing to risk their lives in challenging and sometimes personally threatening ministry apart from Christ's physical presence. It was the essential and natural progression Christ



made clear in His commissioning message:

A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. (Matt 10:24-25)

After the Great Commission, Jesus gives encouragement by promising to be “with” them always. In the face of these overwhelming commissions, Christ reminds His disciples to “fear not” for they were not going in their own might, and their heavenly Father was acutely mindful of them. These are pretty good reminders for any who choose to follow Christ.

The lesson for modern disciplemakers is that Christ’s methods bear repeating. One should prayerfully use the different methods employed by Christ in mentoring new believers and allow them to experience new ministries and ministry situations that will test and strengthen courage and faith. Much of the world still refuses to hear the gospel and acknowledge Christ. Mentors should create opportunities for young believers that will cause them to wrestle with Scripture, prayer, and God’s promises in order to see God’s hand at work in their lives and in the people around them.

### **Key Concepts for Disciples**

Jesus used several methods and circumstances in mentoring the disciples to transform them from men consumed by the things of this world to becoming men consumed with the Kingdom of God; but He was also earnest to transfer to His disciples a handful of specific concepts that are echoed from the Prophets to the Epistles. These concepts mirror the dramatic challenge Jesus brought as an unexpected and counter-cultural Messiah. Jesus, after all, did not come to fulfill national messianic expectations or build empires, but to redeem people. To do so, He challenged their understanding especially of worship and obedience. Some of the concepts within those two overarching themes will be developed further.

## Receiving a New Heart

Worship had become an empty experience, a pretense, long before the time of Christ (Jer 3:10). Isaiah described Israel's hypocrisy in worship as mere formality: "And the Lord said: 'Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men'" (Isa 29:13). Unfortunately, the problem was so longstanding that no one seemed to notice how dry life and worship had become. Paul reminded his readers of a similar leaven of hypocrisy in his letters, describing people that "knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him" (Rom 1:21). He cautioned about leaders that did not serve "our Lord Christ, but their own appetites" (Rom 16:18). Paul also warned of people that might present the appearance of godliness, but would deny its power (2 Tim 3:5). As a solution, Jesus brought a needed but unwelcome message. Quoting Isaiah, Jesus described them as having "dull hearts" (Matt 13:13-15) and "having hearts far from me" (Matt 15:7-9). Jesus sounded like other Old Testament writers who had outlined the central problem<sup>50</sup> and solution several centuries earlier:

And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. (Ezek 11:19-20)

Some versions translate "one heart" as "another heart, or "new heart" perhaps including the intent of a "single heart" or "united heart" or "undivided heart."<sup>51</sup> The imagery suggests that there is nothing one can do to reform or improve a heart of stone; therefore, a complete change is needed. The change cannot be accomplished by the heart's owner either. A new, united, responsive heart is God's gift. Jesus is the agent of the change that Ezekiel described, and He came to perform these heart transplants.

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<sup>50</sup>Problems in worship and obedience stemmed from "stubborn hearts" or "stubbornness of heart," suggesting duplicity (Deut 29:18, 19; Ps 81:12).

<sup>51</sup>William H. Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1-19*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 28 (Dallas: Word, 1986), 156.

## **Becoming a Living Sacrifice**

Paul later echoes the theme of heart change, but sharpens his focus on that part of the heart that controls one's thinking (Rom 12:1, 2). He asserts that the believer can cooperate with God in transforming the heart by presenting one's life sacrificially to God and allowing Him, not the world, to shape one's thinking. Further, Paul's frequent use of imperatives indicates that the believer can understand godly behavior and choose to live differently (Rom 6:13; 1 Cor 6:19, 20; 1 Cor 9:24-27; 2 Cor 6:14; Eph 4:25-32).

## **The New Kingdom Favors Relationship over Rules**

By Christ's time, there was a labyrinth of rules with wide loopholes governing most of life. In Matthew 15 specifically, Jesus confronted those who were faithful to religious traditions, but were deceptively avoiding the actual demands of God's Word. He specifically warned His disciples about the destructive influence of the precepts taught by the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt 16:5-12), emphasizing that their beliefs undermined and inhibited their hearers from truly knowing God. It is instructive that those who were most obedient to "God's rules" seemed most opposed to God's Son. In effect, their behavior proved that they had indeed wrongly elevated the "commandments of men" and forgotten what God truly wanted (Hos 6:6). Even today, the most attractive cults and religions offer steps, works, or rules as the means to spiritual wholeness or maturity;<sup>52</sup> Christ, on the other hand, always insisted that salvation (healing, wholeness, sanctification) starts and ends in relationship with Him (John 15).

## **Discovering True Worship**

Jesus was also concerned with various insidious forms of idolatry and wanted to instill within His disciples a commitment to true worship. In Jesus' conversation with

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<sup>52</sup>Josh McDowell and Don Stewart, "Handbook of Today's Religions," accessed January 9, 2013, [http://www.greatcom.org/resources/handbook\\_of\\_todays\\_religions/01chap02/default.htm](http://www.greatcom.org/resources/handbook_of_todays_religions/01chap02/default.htm).

the woman of Samaria (John 4), He steered her away from the place and method of worship and insisted, “But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:23-24). Worship was never meant to be reduced to rituals, rules, or locations. Rather, it has always been a matter of relationship, honor, allegiance, and authority. Family ties and obligations should not come before one’s commitment to Christ (Matt 10:37-39). One’s ideas and plans for the kingdom of God should never replace God’s ideas and plans (Matt 16:22, 23); nor should personal plans, business ventures, or life goals replace God’s will (Matt 16:24-28). The believer should allow no entanglements whatsoever to distract him or her from placing God’s kingdom first (Matt 6:33; 2 Tim 2:3, 4). Luke records a story about two sisters that is a good reminder: even well intentioned, consuming service is no replacement for worship (Luke 10: 41, 42).

### **Discovering True Obedience**

Jeremiah railed about the disobedience of the children of Israel, reminding his hearers that obedience was always more important to God than ritual (Jer 7:22-26). Certainly when Christ appeared there were many people in Israel who had turned their backs on God. Undoubtedly in ages past, many had joined fertility cults and abandoned the worship of God altogether. But Jesus also encountered a more subtle, but perhaps more potent, disobedience: being obedient about the wrong things. It is easy to point out the sinner caught in the webs of his own vices, but much harder to see sins that masquerade as virtues. The religious leaders of Israel had exchanged God’s truth for a lie; they were not listening for God’s voice, but had substituted “their own counsels” (Ps 81:12; Jer 7:24) in its place. Their ideas missed the object of their efforts.

Jesus chastised those who gave to the poor with accompanying fanfare (Matt 6:1-4) or bragged about their devotion through public prayers (Matt 6:5). Jesus chided those who loved to criticize the faults of others while maintaining glaring faults of their

own (Matt 7:1-5). More threatening, however, were Jesus' words of warning to those who appeared to be engaged in ministry like Christ (prophesying, driving out demons, and performing miracles); many of these, too, were disobedient and awaited God's judgment! Jesus explains, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt 7:21).

The religious of Christ's time were excellent rule-keepers, but too often missed the point of the rule. Jesus characterized their actions as "straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel" (Matt 23:24). The goal of their "obedience" was personal acclaim and recognition, and that ambition blinded them to their gross disobedience to God (Matt 23:1-36). This type of teacher, operating out of selfish ambition rather than obedience, is a continuing threat to the church and is a theme revisited by several New Testament authors.<sup>53</sup> New disciples (especially) need to be students of the Word in order to recognize the often subtle errors these kinds of "ministers" and "teachers" propagate.

### **Glorifying God**

Going hand in hand with disobedience and false worship is the misappropriation of God's glory. The Gospels record multiple incidences where the religious leaders seemed to compete with Jesus (and God the Father) for the spotlight. When Jesus healed the paralytic, some of the scribes accused Him of blaspheming (Matt 9:3). On another occasion, they questioned His choice to heal on the Sabbath (Matt 12:10). Later they asked for a sign from Jesus to prove that He was from God (Matt 12:38); in other words, they pressured Jesus to prove that He was worthy of their belief and trust. On yet another occasion they came questioning why Jesus and His disciples did not follow the traditions of the elders (like they did)—insinuating, of course, that Jesus was less faithful than they (Matt 15:2). Amazingly, the miraculous restoration of Lazarus (John 11) prompted a death plot! Why? The chief priests and Pharisees concluded, "If we let him go on like this,

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<sup>53</sup>See also 2 Tim 4:3-4, 2 Pet 2:1, 1 John 4:1; Jude 3, 4, 12, 13, 16.

everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation” (John 11:48). Note the conspicuous use of “our” in the text. Finally, the chief priests, scribes, and elders mocked Jesus as He died on the cross (Matt 27:41-43), gloating in the “fact” that Jesus was apparently wrong and they were right; now they could completely dismiss His radical ideas. Humility goes a long way in discipleship (Luke 18:14). The quickest way to miss the new kingdom is to exalt self; perhaps the fastest way to gain the kingdom is to “ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness” (Ps 29:2).

### **Fellowshipping with God**

If the disciples learned nothing else, certainly Jesus intended that they experience how to have fellowship with God. In Christ’s presence, this was practically automatic. The twelve simply had to follow Jesus, spend time with Him, and listen to His words. There would come a time, however, when that daily tangible presence was gone. Jesus strove to teach them a few things about fellowship.

First, fellowship with God is only possible through the sacrifice of Jesus (Matt 1:21-23). Sin is a serious problem for the new kingdom, for it breaks fellowship with God that is restored only by the blood of Jesus (Matt 5:29, 30; 1 John 1:5-10). The believer has nothing of value to offer in this process, but can ask for forgiveness by confession and repentance.

Fellowship requires time, too. This is a particular malady of the American Church, where it is easy to mistake excessive activity as “spiritual worship.” Jesus confronted this mistaken notion of righteousness-by-activity in His friend Martha and complimented Mary for avoiding the chaos of the kitchen and choosing, instead, to spend time at His feet listening and communing with Him (Luke 10:38-42). This truth was later caught by an overwrought and wearied monk named Martin Luther as he studied the

book of Romans.<sup>54</sup>

Fellowship would be enhanced by the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught that when He left, He would send the disciples a “helper,” the Holy Spirit, who would teach them all things and bring to their remembrance the things that Christ shared with them, aiding in their growth and fellowship with God (John 14:26). The Spirit is also an aid to communion with God in prayer (Rom 8:26; Eph 6:8; Jude 20, 21); and the Spirit confirms God’s testimony (Heb 10:15, 16).

### **Building on the Word**

Two more ways in which the disciples could experience fellowship with God was through abiding in His Word and prayer. While Matthew records that Christ’s Word is a faithful and solid foundation upon which the believer can and should build (Matt 7:24-27), John used the analogy of a vine and branches to describe the relationship between Christ and the believer. John asserted that knowing and obeying the words and commandments of Jesus connote “abiding” in Him; that abiding provides guidance, fellowship, and fruitfulness (John 15:1-16).

The apostle Paul recorded more specifics about how the Word of God builds up the believer: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work”(2 Tim 3:16-17). These verses drive home the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture working in the life of the believer.

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<sup>54</sup>Martin Luther was arrested by the simplicity of Rom 1:17, concluding, “At last meditating day and night, by the mercy of God, I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that through which the righteous live by a gift of God, namely by faith. Here I felt as if I were entirely born again and had entered paradise itself through the gates that had been flung open.” *Christianity Today*, “Martin Luther,” accessed January 9, 2013, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/131christians/theologians/luther.html>.

## **Learning to Pray**

Prayer is an important part of building and maintaining fellowship with God, too. Jesus explained the nature of prayer in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 6:9-13) and provided numerous lessons about prayer through example (Matt 26; Mark 1:35, 6:46; Luke 6:12), illustration (Luke 18:9-14), and parable (Luke 18:1-8), to demonstrate that prayer is more about relationship than a litany of phrases or a long list of requests. According to His instruction in Matthew 6, prayer is most often about changing one's perspective and acknowledging God's authority—humbly placing oneself in a position to hear and respond to God's will (Matt 26:42).

Paul would emphasize that prayer is a powerful, ongoing conversation with God when he urges believers to “pray without ceasing” (Eph 6:18, 1 Thess 5:17). Further, he echoes Christ's sentiments in Matthew 6 when he offers prayer as the treatment for anxiety and means for accessing God's peace (Phil 4:6,7).

## **Turning from Self-Reliance to Humble Faith**

Practiced as a system of rules and rituals, the very core of the Jewish religion was flawed. It emphasized strict adherence to laws that no one could keep (Matt 23:1-5, 15; Rom 7:7-20). Even a diligent commitment to the commandments did not bring people closer to God as evidenced in the opposition Jesus faced and specifically in the story about the rich young man (Matt 19:16-22). The law could reform people, but could not transform them. Still, Jewish culture was built around a righteousness derived from living rightly. For those who felt they were succeeding, the message of Jesus was complete heresy and foolishness. Perhaps that is why Jesus spent most of His time with those who knew they were failing by many standards (including the law) and needed a “physician” (Matt 9:10-13).

Again, though He spoke it more clearly, Jesus did not bring a new message. Jeremiah spoke it quite forcefully in his day, too:



Thus says the LORD: “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD. He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.” (Jer 17:5-8)

Paul championed this message also. Perhaps because, like Luther, he had previously depended upon his own meager but zealous efforts to gain God’s approval. Upon meeting Christ, the difference Paul found in grace was so profound that he considered all of his previous achievements to be rubbish by comparison (Phil 3:8).

### **Counting the Cost**

Another barrier to obedience is man’s pursuit of comfort. Obeying and following Christ will take the believer far beyond what is comfortable. Such a path is often met with resistance. Jesus maintained, however, that true obedience would often propel the disciples into the midst of persecution; and followers could not expect to be called disciples if they were unwilling to take up their own crosses and continue to follow Him (Matt 10:38, 16:24; John 16:1-3, 21:18, 19). There are, of course, uncomfortable calls to obedience that do not extend to persecution. Sometimes obedience demands nothing more than a mindset and willingness to serve (Matt 20:25-28).

### **Surprised by Joy (and Other Fruits of the Spirit)**

Commenting on the character of Christ, Luke records that “all spoke well of Him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from His lips” (Luke 4:22 NIV). There was a winsome quality about Jesus that was sincere and compelling. Jesus no doubt expressed (quite completely) all the gifts of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22, 23). Joy is but one fruit of the Spirit, not greater or lesser, but in many evangelical circles it is the one most easily dismissed or overlooked. Hard-faced duty seems a more appropriate motivation for soldiers of the cross. The other fruits of the Spirit are also most noteworthy

by their very absence in some Christian communities. But the Scriptures are clear that these characteristics are to be evident in the life of Christ’s disciples. The apostle John records, “If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full” (John 15:10-11). Other passages refer to fruit of love evident in believers (John 13:34-35, 15:12-13; Rom 12:10). Still other references remind the church that peace will accompany a walk with the Lord (John 14:27, 16:33; Rom 5:1; 1 Cor 14:33; Phil 4:6-8). Of course, the Holy Spirit produces a variety of encouraging fruit in those who follow Christ (Gal 5:22, 23). These are not gifts to seek, but rather fruits that should accompany growth in grace. As such, their absence may be a telling sign that one’s fellowship with the Lord is misaligned. The church needs loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled disciples—not merely earnest ones—and mentors should carefully season their instruction accordingly.

### **Rationale for Discipleship and Biblical Counsel**

There are many reasons for believers and churches to be involved in discipling and biblical counseling in a personal and systematic way. There are both front-end imperatives and “reasons after the fact” encouraging this commitment. First and foremost, Christ commands it (Matt 28:18-20). Because of Christ’s authority (Matt 28:18), His love, and His plan, current and future disciples have the mandate (personally and corporately) to make more disciples. Carson explains,

Disciples are those who hear, understand, and obey Jesus’ teaching (12:46-50). The injunction is given at least to the Eleven, but to the Eleven in their own role as disciples (v. 16) Therefore they are paradigms for all disciples . . . it is binding on all Jesus’ disciples to make others what they themselves are—disciples of Jesus Christ.<sup>55</sup>

The imperative command to make disciples is in response to the overwhelming need of mankind. In short, people are lost and headed for destruction (Isa 53:6; John

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<sup>55</sup>Carson, *Matthew*, 596.

3:16-18). Apart from Christ, there is no remedy for their condition (Acts 4:12). Making disciples suggests a process that addresses man's condition by introducing people to Christ, His Word, and kingdom living. The imperative and starting point for all disciples is to take the Good News into the world so that the lost, readied by the Holy Spirit, may hear the invitation to Christ and respond to it (Rom 10:14). But it does not stop there.

Hendriksen asserts that discipling is just beginning:

The apostle, then, must proclaim the truth and the will of God to the world. It is necessary that sinners learn about their own lost condition, God, his plan of redemption, his love, his law, etc. This however, is not good enough. . . . The truth learned must be practiced. It must be appropriated by heart, mind, and will, so that one remains or abides in the truth. Only then is one truly Christ's disciple (John 8:31).<sup>56</sup>

Christ commands discipling; and people need to be converted, disciplined, and counseled by the Scriptures; but other motivations for being obedient is that God calls, equips, and empowers His people to do this very ministry (2 Cor 3:5-6; Eph 4:11-16). His church was designed for it. Discipling others is the calling of all believers (2 Tim 2:2, Titus 2:1-10) and discipleship is "one of the most strategic ways to have an unlimited personal ministry. It may be done at any time, by anyone, anywhere, and among any age group."<sup>57</sup>

The world desperately needs changing, and workers to facilitate change:

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matt 9:35-38)

Because discipling is such a relational ministry it can also conform to a wide variety of schedules: "Discipling is the most flexible of ministries, since it need not be done

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<sup>56</sup>Hendriksen, *Matthew*, 999-1000.

<sup>57</sup>Waylon Moore, "Why Make Disciples?" *Discipleship Journal* (November/December 1981), accessed July 1, 2011, <http://www.navpress.com/magazines/archives/article.aspx?id=10093>.

within any time frame or organizational structure.”<sup>58</sup> Once a core of leaders is established, they each may be able to meet with those they wish to disciple at any time amenable to all parties.

The believer has commands to obey, duties to discharge, and is surrounded by people that need to be reached. Further, believers are called and equipped to do this ministry, and the relational aspects of discipling allow it to conform to a variety of structures and schedules. There are other reasons for making disciples, too.

Discipling bears fruit that is difficult to achieve by other methods. Moore continues with several compelling reasons produced by godly mentoring: “Discipling is the fastest and surest way to mobilize the whole body of Christ for evangelism.”<sup>59</sup> Concerted effort and effective training with accountability would put a staggering amount of new workers into the harvest. As for the fruit of such a venture, one is reminded of the old algebra brain twister where one places one penny on the first square of a checker board and then proceeds to double the amount for each succeeding square. Amazingly, such a checkerboard would eventually hold 184 quadrillion dollars’ worth of pennies!<sup>60</sup> Exponential growth for the kingdom is truly possible by making disciples who will mentor future generations of disciples. Fewer than thirty generations of fruitful disciples could indeed reach the world! So it is easy to see that “discipling has more long-range potential for fruit than any other ministry” (Acts 6:7).<sup>61</sup>

Moore also contends that “discipling will provide the local church with mature

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Nancy Castleman, “Painless Penny Pinching Part One: How to Save without Feeling Deprived,” accessed February 20, 2012, [http://www.credit.com/credit\\_information/money\\_management/Painless-Penny-Pinching-Part-One.jsp](http://www.credit.com/credit_information/money_management/Painless-Penny-Pinching-Part-One.jsp).

<sup>61</sup>Moore, “Why Make Disciples?”

lay leaders who are Christ-centered and biblically nourished.”<sup>62</sup> The benefits of a strong core of leaders who can rightly divide the Word would provide an incredible foundation for a solid Bible ministry; producing future leaders who model a biblical counseling mindset, exhibit the fruit of the Spirit, and provide vital counsel to their church (Matt 7:20; Gal 5: 22-26; 3 John 3,4).

Lest some get caught up in the algebraic visions of grandeur, Robert Coleman’s counsel cannot be over-emphasized for the church interested in establishing a discipling ministry:

The best work is always done with a few. Better to give a year or so to one or two men who learn what it means to conquer for Christ than to spend a lifetime with a congregation just keeping the program going. Nor does it matter how small or inauspicious the beginning may be; what counts is that those to whom we do give priority in our life learn to give it away.<sup>63</sup>

Jesus chose twelve, and much of the rationale for discipling can be gleaned from reviewing their lives. Christ achieved the goal of heart-change foretold by the Old Testament prophets (Matt 14:28-29; Matt 26:6-13). The disciples did become that group characterized by love and unity that Jesus prayed for and predicted (John 13:34-35; 17:20-23; Acts 2:42-47). Ogden states that love and unity need to be at the heart of a discipling community.<sup>64</sup>

The sometimes furtive and impetuous disciples became solid leaders of the Church—a new organization and concept through which Jesus planned to change the world. The disciples became the representatives that Jesus planned for; they became passionate leaders of the movement and they exhibited wisdom, boldness and humility in proclaiming the Word (Acts 4:5-13). They astonished the religious leaders, who recognized these “unschooled, ordinary men” as “having been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13) and were no

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1993), 101.

<sup>64</sup>Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 52.

longer intimidated by religious authority: the novice followers of Christ who cowered before religious leaders matured and now fear God rather than men (Acts 5:27-29).

The twelve who seemed to need Jesus to explain everything to them became committed to and knowledgeable of the Word of God—able to proclaim it, teach it and wisely implement its principles (Acts 2:16, 2:42, 6:2-10).

The followers who struggled to answer “Who do men say that I am?” became men and women who led others to authentic praise and worship (Acts 2:46, 47). The book of Acts records that this diverse collection of followers (in contrast to the elite Pharisees and Sadducees), embraced the example of Jesus and chose to live sacrificially (Acts 2:44-45, 4:34-35) and in political jeopardy (Acts 4:23-31; Heb 10:32-35) lending legitimacy and credibility to the faith they professed before others.

Those who followed Christ and were discipled by Him gained sensitivity to the needs of others and began to see their day-to-day routines as opportunities for ministry and service (Acts 3:1-10). They gained their Master’s heart and compassion for the lost among them (Acts 1:8, 2:14-41, 3:12-26).

In Gethsemane, the disciples who could not keep awake eventually became men of prayer; asking for and receiving incredible miracles (Acts 1:14, 2:42-43, 4:23-31). The disciples, often characterized as having “little faith,” later in the power of the Holy Spirit became instruments of God, evidencing the fruit of the Spirit, and are associated with great miracles at God’s hand (Acts 2:4-12; 4:8; 5:12). As promised in John 15, those who chose to abide in Christ began to bear much fruit (Acts 2:47, 5:14). The men that Jesus discipled became radically changed, and though these paragraphs do not comprise an exhaustive list, they are at least illustrative of that dramatic change.

One remaining characteristic of the disciples that suggests proof for the value of discipling others is the change that was evident within the disciples themselves. Contrary to the description Jesus gave of the Pharisees and their disciples, describing their proselytes as burdened and “twice as much a child of hell as yourselves” (Matt

23:13-15), Jesus' disciples were characterized by joy and rejoicing—even in adversity! (Acts 5:18-41).

The present culture is increasingly predisposed to isolation, self-sufficiency, absent accountability, pride, and rejection of absolute truth.<sup>65</sup> One can see the shadow of all these negative features at the door, in the pew, and sometimes in the pulpits of many American churches. Jesus did not reform a group of reasonable men and convince them to become disciples. Instead, He transformed a group of unlikely misfits through His presence and Word (1 Cor 1:26-31). That intentional mentoring changed the world. A return to biblical discipleship is just as much in order for the churches in the post-modern world as it is for any other era. Trustworthy men and women need to take up the banner of discipling others again in a deliberate, personal, and accountable fashion; employing biblical counseling, where the mentor and the person mentored (along with the Holy Spirit) seek to effect change by applying the truths of Scripture as a primary tool. Clearly the Scriptures reflect such an intentional and personal approach to discipling.

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<sup>65</sup>Paul noted the same types of things in his prophecy included in 2 Tim 3:1-7.

## CHAPTER 3

### MENTORING IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.”<sup>1</sup>

Many years ago, my father invited me to accompany him on Thursday night visitation for our church in Williston, North Dakota. As a young teen, I joined him for moral support and to observe how to conduct a visit. My father preferred to visit prospects or canvass neighborhoods versus visiting truant church members. Over time, if we were canvassing a neighborhood, I was commissioned to cover one side of a street while he visited the other. Though I never perfected his bold and direct style, the experience gave me a comfort level in approaching a new task or activity that served me well in later years.

A key lesson learned by this method was that one learned *about* things by watching, but one learned *how*, by doing. The questions one has after trying a new activity are more practical and urgent than the questions that arise after merely watching someone else do that activity. There are also the humbling and spine-strengthening aspects of doing a task versus watching someone else that should not be underestimated.

Mentoring, at its most basic level, shares knowledge and teaches skills. For many applications, the transfer of knowledge and skills is enough. There are many models in the secular world designed to facilitate that kind of transfer. This chapter reviews three

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<sup>1</sup>Benjamin Franklin, accessed on March 11, 2013, <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/b/benjaminfr383997.html>.



secular models<sup>2</sup> and several evangelical discipleship-mentoring models to see how they resonate with Scripture and what light they may be able to shed on this project.

### **Secular Models**

The medical model<sup>3</sup> is recognized by the simplistic adage, “see (or ‘watch’) one, do one, teach one.” This model assumes sufficient academic training has been accomplished in the classroom setting independent of the practice of medicine at the bedside or operating room. The “resident,” as a consequence of his or her successful academic and practical study, enters into a more intense practical phase of training where he or she observes various therapies applied to patients. Depending upon the student’s/ resident’s level of training, surgical residents, for example, are offered opportunities to participate in those therapies and interventions. For example, “directing the pre- and post-operative management of patients, providing written histories and examinations, teaching of medical students assigned to the service, and assisting in the operating room.”<sup>4</sup> Residents also obtain practical surgical experience, “performing a variety of minor procedures including biopsies, appendectomies, hernia repair, and emergency room work.”<sup>5</sup> The second year of surgical residency is similar, but involves more responsibility and working on more complex cases.<sup>6</sup> “See one, do one, teach one” is an oversimplification as many

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<sup>2</sup>The three secular models chosen represent three industries/fields, two with which I am very familiar. Three generations of my family are educators; and I have spent more than twenty years in health care, fourteen of which was health care administration. Health care often looked to the airline industry for clues regarding quality, improvement, safety, and performance.

<sup>3</sup>A model of mentoring or instruction; not to be confused with the “Medical Model” of understanding mental health and treatment described and utilized by Integrationists.

<sup>4</sup>Stanford School of Medicine, “Core General Surgery Training Program,” accessed March 11, 2013, <http://med.stanford.edu/gensurg/education/junior.html>.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

procedures require a high level of expertise and practice. But, for accomplished surgeons learning a new technique, mentoring can be almost that simple. The criticisms of this type of mentoring training are significant. Stephen Klasko writes,

Many of us lived through the “learning curve” days of early minimally-invasive surgery. Procedures such as cholecystectomy or robotic surgery were proved “safe” by a cadre of early pioneers, but there was almost no objective way of teaching or accrediting the next wave of those who wanted to perform the procedure. We seem to accept as a given that during these “learning phases,” healthcare will be more inefficient and that patients will suffer more morbidity.<sup>7</sup>

Other research agrees with this assessment:

The current apprenticeship or ‘see one, do one, teach one’ model is insufficient because trainees learn by practising [sic] on real patients, which is particularly an issue when performing procedures. Residents have expressed that they do not feel adequately trained to perform procedures safely by themselves.<sup>8</sup>

One can infer from these discussions and many others that the problems with surgical training are at least four-fold: (1) is the mentor sufficiently qualified to teach this procedure to others? (2) Is the procedure being taught a “best-practice”? (3) Are the students sufficiently qualified by their limited training experience? And (4) what about patient safety? Is this the best model for treating patients? Surgical and medical mistakes have become a major problem.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Stephen Klasko, “‘See One, Do One, Teach One’: No More,” AthenaHealth-Leadership Forum, October 10, 2012, accessed March 11, 2013, <http://www.athenahealth.com/leadership-forum/%E2%80%9Csee-one-do-one-teach-one%E2%80%9D-no-more/>.

<sup>8</sup>J. M. Rodriguez-Paz, et. al, “Beyond ‘See One, Do One, Teach One’: Toward a Different Training Paradigm,” *BMJ Quality and Safety*, February 11, 2008, accessed March 11, 2013, <http://qualitysafety.bmj.com/content/18/1/63.abstract>.

<sup>9</sup>Betty Ann Bowser, “New Study Finds Medical Error Rates Are Underreported,” *PBS*, April 7, 2011, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/2011/04/new-study-finds-medical-error-rates-are-underreported.html>. Health Grades, “Patient Safety and Satisfaction: The State of American Hospitals,” 2012, accessed March 13, 2013, <http://hg-article-center.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/ea/ef/4ec7d1ee443fa47da64c09318157/HealthGradesPatientSafetySatisfactionReport2012.pdf>.

One prominent surgeon reveals,

Medical mistakes kill enough people each week to fill four jumbo jets. But these mistakes go largely unnoticed by the world at large, and the medical community rarely learns from them. The same preventable mistakes are made over and over again, and patients are left in the dark about which hospitals have significantly better (or worse) safety records than their peers.<sup>10</sup>

It would be a gross oversimplification to lay all of health care's mistakes at the door of physician training, however. Many critics of health care cite the appalling lack of teamwork and communication as a major cause of medical errors.<sup>11</sup> Essentially, the criticisms are that bad interventions (both surgical and medical) are being propagated; and even good procedures may be diluted by poor mentoring, and the patient care team needs to improve its teamwork and communication skills. These are training and culture issues that currently place patients in harm's way. Thus, medical schools and teaching hospitals are exploring a new model for medical training to eliminate these unwanted possibilities.

The education model informally employs the same adage, "watch one, do one, teach one." As with the medical model, this is an oversimplification of the process, but traditionally, college seniors majoring in education will spend a few weeks to an entire semester teamed with an experienced teacher in their field of study and student age group.<sup>12</sup> These education majors will watch sections of material developed, taught, and tested and then be given the opportunity to teach a section of material themselves (under their qualified teacher's supervision). One measure of the effectiveness of teacher training is

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<sup>10</sup>Marty Makary, "How to Stop Hospitals from Killing Us," *Wall Street Journal Online*, September 21, 2012, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444620104578008263334441352.html>.

<sup>11</sup>M. Leonard, S. Graham, and D. Bonacum, "The Human Factor: The Critical Importance of Effective Teamwork and Communication in Providing Safe Care," accessed March 15, 2013, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1765783/pdf/v013p00i85.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup>I have second-hand knowledge of both sides of this process as three generations of my family have endured the "student-teaching" requirements with mixed feelings about the experience.

found in the students they teach. How well do American students perform in standardized tests? Though national test scores for fourth graders and eight graders in math, science, and reading have been trending up in recent years,<sup>13</sup> the rank of American students relative to other countries in these subjects has not.<sup>14</sup> Owing (in part) to this single measure, education in general has been under fire. Public opinions about quality and efficiency are slipping due to perceptions of average performance. Clearly, by some measures, education is missing the mark in terms of assuring that children are learning what they need to in order to be successful in the future.<sup>15</sup> How teachers are trained is partly responsible for that outcome. A study of current research on teacher preparation could offer only limited support for the assertion that pedagogical coursework leads to a teacher's effectiveness.<sup>16</sup> The report continues, "[L]ess clear is how such knowledge and skills are best acquired—through coursework, field experience (especially student teaching) or on the job."<sup>17</sup> Education, with all of its challenges, is also reviewing how teacher training must progress to improve outcomes.

The third secular model comes from the airline industry. Commercial airline pilots have rigorous training programs that routinely assess one's mastery of the

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<sup>13</sup>National Assessment of Educational Progress, accessed March 15, 2013, [http://nationsreportcard.gov/math\\_2011/](http://nationsreportcard.gov/math_2011/); [http://nationsreportcard.gov/science\\_2011/](http://nationsreportcard.gov/science_2011/); and [http://nationsreportcard.gov/reading\\_2011/](http://nationsreportcard.gov/reading_2011/).

<sup>14</sup>US Department of Education, "International Education Rankings Suggest Reform Can Lift U.S.," December 8, 2010, accessed March 5, 2013, <http://www.ed.gov/blog/2010/12/international-education-rankings-suggest-reform-can-lift-u-s/>.

<sup>15</sup>A variety of factors may have equal impact on education and test scores: parental involvement, to name but one. Space does not allow for a full discussion of all of these factors.

<sup>16</sup>Education Commission of the States, "Eight Questions on Teacher Preparation: What Does the Research Say? A Summary of the Findings," accessed March 15, 2013, <http://www.ecs.org/html/educationissues/teachingquality/tpreport/home/summary.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

knowledge and skills necessary to fly an airplane competently and safely. Like medicine and education, their training programs are both theoretical and practical in nature—and ongoing. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requires that training and certification of pilots match the type of license and airplane rating the pilot seeks.<sup>18</sup> By attending “ground schools” and amassing “flight time” with an experienced pilot (mentoring), and in “solo” or “in command” flights, pilots can progressively move to bigger and more complex airplane types or ratings.<sup>19</sup> Each of these stages is monitored closely by experienced instructors and seasoned pilots who can certify a pilot’s ability to fly a specific rating. In addition, most commercial carriers and airlines require a pilot to work a certain number of hours as a flight engineer, then co-pilot (in a given plane type) before they actually take command of a particular size or type of airplane.<sup>20</sup>

Whereas medicine and education achieve historically average outcomes, the airline industry in America has an amazing record. In 2010, there were only 28 accidents<sup>21</sup> involving commercial air transport.<sup>22</sup> The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) reports that since 2006 there have been less than two accidents for every one million revenue hours or less than four accidents per one million revenue flights per

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<sup>18</sup>US Government Printing Office, “§ 61.3 Requirement for Certificates, Ratings, and Authorizations,” Electronic Code of Federal Regulations, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=40760189a03dfea0b501608f33820a45&rgn=div5&view=text&node=14:2.0.1.1.2&idno=14#14:2.0.1.1.2.1.1.3>.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Shem Malmquist, “Becoming an Airline Pilot,” accessed March 13, 2013, <http://jetcareers.com/becoming-an-airline-pilot.html>.

<sup>21</sup>Reported in Statistics for “Part 121 Operations.” Part 121 Operations are defined as commercial air freight and commercial airline transport flights, but not general aviation, nor air tour and air taxi services.

<sup>22</sup>National Transportation Safety Board, “Review of U.S. Civil Aviation Accidents,” accessed March 12, 2013, <http://www.nts.gov/doclib/reports/2012/ARA1201.pdf>.

year.<sup>23</sup> That is quite an astounding record! Compared to medicine and education, the airline industry appears to be doing something far superior in their training programs. What are they doing differently?

Like medicine and education, the air travel and transport industries place a great deal of emphasis on safety and performance. One possible key element, then, that separates the three models is that the airline industry also places a high value on *uniformity*. Famous for checklists, there is a high degree of accountability to a prescribed method of doing each aspect of air travel. There is little room for autonomy due to the FAA's oversight of aircraft, airports, air traffic, airline operations, pilot certification, and more. And, seeing the value that safety and performance bring to their bottom line is another incentive for airlines to be extremely vigilant about these goals. Uniformity is a value that fits well for both the regulators and the airlines.

Because of the industry's obsession with uniformity of practice, both the culture of safety and the culture of performance in the air traffic industry become more than an emphasis, they become expectations—for both the industry and the public. From a secular point of view, then, many organizations would do well to imitate the rigor and culture of air travel in their training and operational programs.

Aviation insiders, however, would point to another defining practice within their industry as the main contributor to safety and success: Crew (or Cockpit) Resource Management (CRM):

CRM was developed as a response to new insights into the causes of aircraft accidents which followed from the introduction of flight recorders and cockpit voice recorders into modern jet aircraft. Information gathered from these devices has suggested that many accidents result not from a technical malfunction of the aircraft or its systems, nor from a failure of aircraft handling skills or a lack of technical knowledge on the part of the crew; it appears instead that they are caused by the

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

inability of crews to respond appropriately to the situation in which they find themselves.<sup>24</sup>

In *Beyond the Checklist*, the authors emphasize the relational principles of Crew Resource Management: “Under the new industry-wide system of CRM, pilots, flight attendants, and ground crews now communicate and cooperate in ways that have greatly reduced the hazards of commercial air travel.”<sup>25</sup> The authors stress that these principles would improve outcomes for other types of organizations—especially health care.

Airline personnel (pilots in particular) train one another with a high degree of accountability to proven methods and practices. But many would conclude that their improved teamwork and communication (through CRM), within that umbrella of uniformity, is the main spark of their incredible record of safety and growth.

As laudable as it is, the teamwork and communication inspired by CRM is but a shadow of the kind experienced by the early church (Acts 4:32-35; 6:1-7) and prayed for by Jesus (John 17:9-26). Further, not everyone enjoys uniformity. The airline industry (like the military) is one of the few businesses or organizations in which uniformity can be a prized and guiding principle.

The Pharisees valued uniformity, as have other religious groups over the centuries. Though believers are called to “one Lord, one faith, one baptism,” and “one God and Father of all” (Eph 4:4-6); they are given differing gifts of grace (Eph 4:7) and different gifts (1 Cor 12:4-7; Eph 4:11-12) to serve the body of Christ. A discipleship program that elevates uniformity at the expense of the complimentary gifting of God will not be useful to the church. Even at a higher level (denominations) there is complimentary gifting. Though most evangelical churches agree on the most important doctrines, uniformity is not the rule here, either; there are some doctrinal differences from

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<sup>24</sup>Civil Aviation Authority, United Kingdom, “Crew Resource Management (CRM) Training,” chap. 1, p. 1, accessed May 23, 2013, <http://www.caa.co.uk/docs/33/CAP737.PDF>.

<sup>25</sup>Suzanne Gordon et al., “Beyond the Checklist,” accessed March 15, 2013, <http://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/book/?GCOI=80140100761730>.

denomination to denomination that broaden the reach of the kingdom.

Though the practice of accountability is admirable within the airline industry, emphasizing accountability to uniform practices in a discipleship-mentoring model might encourage mentees to elevate the method above the Master. Again, there are many examples of this throughout history where religious groups have elevated their rules at the expense of true communion with God (Jer 7:24; Matt 15:1-11).

As to the “see one, do one, teach one” model imperfectly practiced in medicine and education, Christ used a similar but more perfect method with the disciples. Stated earlier, secular mentoring focuses on sharing knowledge and teaching skills; in so doing, the modern secular version misses a vital component. Jesus desired heart change from His disciples. Their motivation for imitating their Master was different from merely gaining knowledge and learning skills. The disciples grew into their differing roles and gifts as they served the Lord from “a pure heart, and a good conscience, and a sincere faith” (1 Tim 1:5).

### **Evangelical Models**

In 1975, I was introduced to “Basic Training” at Baylor University through their Baptist Student Union (BSU). Designed for freshmen, this curriculum was taught in the freshmen dorms by upper classmen associated with the BSU. Like the title suggests, the material included what was considered the basics for young believers and included studies on prayer, studying the Bible, as well as “Christian dating.” From that point on, I began to see discipling in terms of periodic Bible study and “essential content.” In other words, discipling was teaching someone a collection of core truths (and hoping they would respond appropriately). An over-emphasis on curriculum is still a distraction for churches today; and, although there is a growing list of resources containing “content” or materials to teach in a discipleship class, guidance about how effectively to disciple others is less prevalent. Thankfully, there are some models of discipleship programs emerging that are returning to the mentoring versus the classroom model. The following



pages review eight of those models and examines helpful ideas from each.<sup>26</sup>

In answering the question, “What is God’s strategy for making disciples?” Michael Horton offers a very thoughtful if straightforward response and then begins to explore the depth of the gospel’s clear direction. Combining the directives from Matthew’s and Mark’s Gospels (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16) and of Acts 2:42, 47, Horton contends that one disciples by preaching the gospel, baptizing, teaching, gathering together, and prayer:

Preaching the gospel, baptizing, and teaching everything—the appointed tools for making disciples—are not just things we do as the entrance to the Christian life. They’re not necessarily for conversion or planting a church. They are the perpetual means through which disciples—and disciplemakers—are made over the long haul. This is the ministry that Christ appointed for our home church as well as for our missionaries in a foreign field.<sup>27</sup>

In the rush to relevance for the present culture, Horton would debate that these ministries are becoming less than what they were designed to be. For example,

Preaching cannot be reduced to an intellectual, moral, or experiential exercise, because it is God’s work, not ours. . . . There is something intrinsic to the preached Word that makes it essential to the ministry and mission—indeed, the very existence—of the church. It is a word from God.<sup>28</sup>

That is a higher view of preaching than most church members would affirm.

Likewise, Horton explores the idea of baptism as more than a symbol, but a public identification with a church—and the joining of it—with all the privileges and responsibilities that come in the package: identity, fellowship, accountability, modeling, mentoring, discipline, and more.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Unfortunately, space allows for review of only a few of the methods or characteristics described in each of the books, and I do not do them justice. Each author challenged and significantly contributed to my understanding of disciple making.

<sup>27</sup>Michael Horton, *The Gospel Commission: Recovering God’s Strategy for Making Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 165.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 167.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 174, 175.

The ministry of teaching in churches has softened, too. Perhaps to avoid the stifling constraints of “boring doctrine,” modern churches are shallowly topical and pointed to concerns of the day. The overall effect, Horton believes, is that some churches produce disciples who are not conversant with basic Bible doctrines.<sup>30</sup> So if churches are struggling to produce disciple makers, it may just be that they are offering anemic versions of the very ministries God designed for His church to accomplish this very important (and urgent) work. In commenting on the historical references in Jude 11, John Piper concurs:

Jude assumes that the readers know these stories! Is that not amazing! This was the first century! No books in anyone's homes. No Bibles available. No story tapes. Just oral instruction. And he assumed that they would know: What is “the way of Cain” and “the error of Balaam” and “the rebellion of Korah?” Do you know? Isn't this astonishing! He expects them to know. It makes me think that our standards of Bible knowledge in the church today are too low.<sup>31</sup>

As more and more crowds into the lives of modern families, the idea and practice of church has been diluted; and members are not as engaged with one another as perhaps they should be. Larry Kreider, in *Authentic Spiritual Mentoring*, contends that relationship building, a key fundamental in discipleship-mentoring, is often missing in the local church:

Instead of deep and nurturing relationships, too often in today's Church a believer is encouraged to participate in church services, Bible studies, para-church organizations or evangelistic ministries in order to bolster his or her faith and ‘grow strong in the Lord.’ The theory is that more teaching from God's Word plus more ministry participation equals spiritual maturity.<sup>32</sup>

Instead of imitating the habits of the early church (Acts 4:32-35), many established evangelical churches mirror the aloofness of society. Church members rush from over-packed schedules to church services, take a breath, and then rush back to their schedules

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid.. 176.

<sup>31</sup>John Piper, “The Value of Learning History: A Lesson from Jude,” *Desiring God*, November 27, 2000, accessed April 15, 2013, <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/taste-see-articles/the-value-of-learning-history>.

<sup>32</sup>Larry Kreider, *Authentic Spiritual Mentoring* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2008), 14.

and private lives. The time and energy for investing in all but a few close friends is missing. Kreider believes the antidote to this selfish tendency is for believers to invest themselves in the lives of others through small group involvement and to re-claim their heritage as spiritual parents.<sup>33</sup>

The Lord is calling for thousands of spiritual fathers and mothers to prepare now for the coming harvest. I believe that mentoring is a God-designed development that is connected to the Great Commission, and that we must embrace it to realize the full potential of the great harvest. I believe that mentoring is an important part of a discipleship formation strategy of Jesus, and the investment in others will pay off great dividends of a multiplied spiritual inheritance.<sup>34</sup>

Though a book with wisdom and practical helps for mentoring others, Kreider's book falls short of defining a program or step-by-step method for establishing a ministry of this sort. His method could be summed up in the key phrase, "Mentoring involves family-type relationships as a way of life."<sup>35</sup> He indicates that many aspects of faith are more easily "caught than taught" and mature believers can make a big impact in the lives of others simply by living out their faith in a very intentional manner. Perhaps for many modern churches—and many modern believers—the decision to commit to invest in others "as a way of life" will produce dramatic results all by itself:

A spiritual father does not have to be a spiritual giant in order to train others. No one is a finished product. We are all learning to live in obedience to God and growing in grace. . . . God takes common, ordinary people who love Jesus and transforms them by His presence. . . . God can use us to mentor others at any point in our Christian walk if we allow Him free rein in our lives.<sup>36</sup>

Regi Campbell offers another angle on small group discipleship. In his book, ambitiously titled *Mentor Like Jesus*, he reveals that an early attempt at discipleship-mentoring at North Point Community Church failed because they tried to implement a

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 19-22.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 27.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 69.

“Paul-Timothy” model and had difficulty matching mentors to mentees: “[W]hy? Because you can’t orchestrate friendship. You can’t *make* one-on-one mentoring relationships happen. Sort of like marriage . . . no one can explain or predict how God puts certain people into each other’s lives, but He does.”<sup>37</sup> Though acknowledging that discipleship is ultimately one person to another, discipling process can involve more than two people, as Jesus demonstrated in calling the twelve. Campbell calls small groups the “‘secret sauce’ of mentoring on an intentional basis. It can set the individual relationships in motion and even speed up the process of developing trust.”<sup>38</sup> Campbell argues that discipleship-mentoring in a group setting is efficient, provides simpler structure and is proactive, puts less pressure on the mentor (the group members can exhort one another), it has a defined end (releasing your mentees to mentor others), and provides healthy peer pressure, among other benefits that contribute to effective mentoring.<sup>39</sup>

As to practical matters, Campbell offers a valuable guide to gaining commitment through the use of a covenant that outlines the expectations and responsibilities of the mentees.<sup>40</sup> But, before that point, he indicates that he uses discretion when inviting men to consider joining his mentoring group, and prayerfully chooses only eight from among those showing interest. Asserting that Jesus chose just twelve men from a much larger group, Campbell believes that inviting “any and all” to such an endeavor dilutes the commitment and the effect of the process.<sup>41</sup> This a fine point worth noting, too: “Jesus initiated the mentoring relationship with His disciples. He approached them. He chose

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<sup>37</sup>Regi Campbell, *Mentor Like Jesus* (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 40.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 41-47.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, 55-57.

them.”<sup>42</sup> In other words, Jesus did not accept self-referrals for His inner group (Matt 19:16-22).

Bill Hull has written a very comprehensive book on discipling. In one of his chapters, he mentions the “Ten Commandments of Coaching,”<sup>43</sup> which offers some ideas about the process. These commandments emphasize relationship building, and agreement between the mentor and mentee regarding purpose, process, accountability, communication between meetings, confidentiality, evaluation, starting and ending points, expectations, and next steps.<sup>44</sup> Yet, Hull concedes, “coaching” is an incomplete term:

At first glance, coaching and mentoring seem to be two words that describe the same process. Yet the difference is meaningful. While coaching focuses on skills and equipping, mentoring helps others make sense of their lives. More specifically, spiritual mentoring helps an individual gain awareness of his personhood as he lives under God.<sup>45</sup>

In a discussion about using small groups in discipling, Hull reminds that design and expectations matter here, too.<sup>46</sup> What kind of group is desired: covenant, support, accountability, fellowship? Where will it meet? How often? Will it be of limited duration or ongoing? Will you allow people to drop in and out at any time? When launching a discipleship mentoring program, Hull suggests beginning the process with a prototype group of apprentice leaders where they will “learn skills essential to small-group success.”<sup>47</sup> Within the prototype, the leader will “model everything from directing

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 120.

<sup>43</sup>Attributed to Paul Stanley and J. Robert Clinton in *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1992), 76.

<sup>44</sup>Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2006), 213.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 214.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 230-32.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 230.

a Bible discussion to leading prayer, from drawing out needs to building community.”<sup>48</sup> Hull provides an exceptional resource that gives guidance on everything from structure, outreach, start-up methods, communicating a case statement for discipleship groups, leader selection and training, planning for reproducing, and even how to help members honor their commitments.<sup>49</sup>

As important as plan and process may be, author Christopher Adsit wants to remind disciple makers whose plan and process it truly is: “Besides allowing the Holy Spirit to run His show, we would do well to look to His leadership in discipling. It’s the smart thing to do.”<sup>50</sup> In addition to being a work of the Holy Spirit, discipling is a work of the church:

It pains me to point it out, but the truth must be known: We all have weaknesses and blind spots. We over-emphasize some things and under-emphasize other things. We are immature in several areas. So let’s ask ourselves a question: Do we want to transfer those same deficiencies to our disciples? . . . This is one of the primary reasons Jesus Christ instituted the church.<sup>51</sup>

The minor partner in this great enterprise is the disciple maker, and Adsit indicates that he or she should diligently practice what he terms the “Three Pillars of Disciplemaking”: prayer, relationship, and content.<sup>52</sup> He writes, “If you are truly interested in seeing that disciple grow, and if you truly believe that it’s God who causes the growth, you’ll be on your knees often and long interceding for that disciple.”<sup>53</sup> Regarding relationship, Adsit indicates that disciples need a role model: “We must take our responsibility as role

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 234-50.

<sup>50</sup>Christopher Adsit, *Personal Disciple-Making: A Step-by Step Guide for Leading a Christian from New Birth to Maturity* (Orlando: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1996), 50.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 51.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 54-59.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 55.

models seriously. Paul did. He didn't hesitate to exhort his disciples to follow his example—not because he was so proud of himself, but because all the while he was conscientiously following the Lord's example."<sup>54</sup> Modeling is important, but Jesus did command that His followers (also) teach believers “to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt 28:20). Borrowing from David Bertch, Adsit explains that mentors should teach new disciples “the what to's, why to's, and how to's.” In other words, disciples should be taught the right things, in the right way, for the right reasons.<sup>55</sup>

Adsit's book is well grounded in Scripture, provides a compelling philosophy and describes a thorough and adaptable process for implementing a discipleship mentoring program in the local church. In addition, he provides a “Christian Fundamentals Self-Evaluation Questionnaire”<sup>56</sup> of twenty-five thoughtful questions that would aid in the design and evaluation of the efficacy of any serious discipleship program.

As one of the influential voices of the Navigator's ministry, LeRoy Eims has written a great deal on the topic of discipleship. Recounting the story of J. O. Fraser, a missionary to China, Eims related how Fraser noticed some of the churches he cared for were growing faster (and stronger) than others. It seemed the ones he was most concerned about (as they were the furthest physically from his influence), became the strongest churches: “From this discovery he concluded that there were four basic elements in developing disciples and churches: prayer, prayer, prayer, and the Word of God.”<sup>57</sup> With that as a foundation, Eims lists thirty training objectives “that when built into a life, make up the profile of a disciple:”

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 56.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 58.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 113-16.

<sup>57</sup>LeRoy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 70.

1) Assurance of Salvation, 2) The Quiet Time, 3) Victory over Sin, 4) Separation from Sin, 5) Christian Fellowship, 6) The Bible, 7) Hearing the Word, 8) Reading the Word, 9) Bible Study, 10) Scripture memory, 11) Meditation on the Word, 12) Application of the Word, 13) Prayer, 14) Personal Testimony, 15) Lordship of Christ, 16) Faith, 17) Love, 18) The Tongue, 19) The Use of Time, 20) The Will of God, 21) Obedience, 22) The Holy Spirit, 23) Satan—Know Your Enemy, 24) Dealing with Sin, 25) Assurance of Forgiveness, 26) Second Coming of Christ, 27) Witnessing, 28) Follow-up, 29) Giving, and 30) World Vision.<sup>58</sup>

Eims provided a long list of objectives, but one that can be adapted to the needs of the individual or group. Such a list helps disciple makers plan Bible study content with the end in mind. Since the list lends itself to a program of perhaps thirty or more weeks in duration, Eims also offers the tried and true “Wheel Illustration” that outlines five key topics of study for new believers: “Christ the Center (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 2:20)”; “Obedience to Christ (Rom. 12:1; John 14:21)”; “The Word (2 Tim. 3:16; Josh. 1:8)”; “Prayer (John 15:7; Phil. 4:6-7)”; “Fellowship (Matt. 18:20; Heb. 10:24-25)”; and “Witnessing (Matt. 4:19; Rom. 1:16).”<sup>59</sup> The smaller list of essential topics lends itself to programs of shorter duration.

Again, discipleship mentoring is more than merely teaching about prayer or dealing with sin; it is most useful when the mentee is able to see such topics lived out in the life of the mentor. Eims writes,

Think of what the apostles must have learned about their own racial prejudices when they observed Jesus with the woman of Samaria (see John 4). Think of what they must have learned about concern for the needy as they saw Jesus minister to the sinners, the blind, and the lepers. Think of what they must have learned about dedication and faithfulness as they saw Jesus “resolutely set out for Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51) to go to the cross to die for the sins of men.<sup>60</sup>

In all, Eims writes a very useful book that conveniently covers many other practical aspects of disciple making; in doing so, he is solidly faithful to the Scriptures

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<sup>58</sup>Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*. “Training Objectives” were compressed to a simple list. They are described in chap. 6 (73-82), and outlined in greater detail in appendix 1 (159-81).

Ibid., 75.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid, 79-81.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 99.



and example of Jesus.

As times change, though, sometimes methods must as well. Sometimes the philosophy behind methods must change first. Jim Peterson informs readers,

As our society abandons its foundations of biblical religion and gropes its way toward neo-paganism, certain things become obvious. For one, the distance between biblical truth and modernity's mind-set is widening. Truth of any kind, even the kind that science can offer, is being rejected. Gross contradictions are in . . . what this means in practical terms is that our basic strategy for connecting with the unbelieving world is going to have to change. Until now, our assumption has been that somehow, sooner or later, we can manage to get them to come to us. That assumption is becoming increasingly unrealistic.<sup>61</sup>

Petersen believes part of the problem is that believers have too quickly withdrawn from the world and their associations within it to the safety of the church: "Where to serve is among the first issues in our call to discipleship. We are to serve Christ as insiders in an unbelieving world."<sup>62</sup> In essence, Petersen writes, "We are called to reveal God to believers and unbelievers alike in the context of our families, friendships, and jobs."<sup>63</sup>

The great commission does indeed convey an outward direction for the process of discipleship, rather than a ministry inward to church members. The implications of this are that disciple making ministries should be encouraging ministry in the natural connections members already have outside the church and that those relationships (whenever prudent and possible) should be cultivated, not abandoned. To be what he terms a "dedicated insider," mentors must grasp the concept that the book champions called "margin."<sup>64</sup> Petersen means "the extra space between the things we must do and our capacity. . . . Chronically overloaded people lose their capacity to respond. Often

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<sup>61</sup>Jim Petersen, *Lifestyle Discipleship: Encouraging Others to Spiritual Maturity* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2007), 25.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>64</sup>Attributed to Richard Swenson, *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2004).

they are misunderstood as being weak, apathetic, or lacking in commitment.”<sup>65</sup> But, truly, how can people authentically respond to the needs around them if they are too busy to see them? Petersen adds, “[I]t will take work—deliberate, conscious effort—and it will take time to regain margin and find the space to be available in your calling as an insider. You will become a non-conformist.”<sup>66</sup> In practical terms, Petersen suggests that one can create a margin of time and energy by simplifying one’s life and/or consolidating several purposes into one activity. Could several needs be met (harmoniously) at one time? The early church met together in homes; was this by necessity or design? Becoming an insider—one who takes the time to invest in those around him or her—will require some sacrifice. Peterson relates a radical proposition,

I have a number of spiritually mature Christian friends and colleagues whom I love and enjoy very much. The most natural thing in the world would be for me to build my social life around these relationships. But we live in a world full of lost people, and my Christian friends already have what I can offer to others. So I tell them—and myself—that we’ll get caught up in heaven.<sup>67</sup>

*Simple Church* is a book about simplifying, too, on a corporate scale. Whereas many authors describe how to begin new programs, authors Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger seek simplicity. In their book, they present research from a study of four hundred Evangelical churches.<sup>68</sup> Put succinctly, “Churches with a simple process for reaching and maturing people are expanding the kingdom. Church leaders who have designed a simple

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<sup>65</sup>Petersen, *Lifestyle Discipleship*, 154.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 157.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 159.

<sup>68</sup>Rainer and Geiger present information from surveys and visits of churches that they felt were “growing and vibrant.” Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church: Returning to God’s Process for Making Disciples* (Nashville: B & H, 2011), 13. They describe trends that are exemplified in both successful secular companies and growing evangelical churches: namely, a movement toward simplicity. Normally, such research might be questionable as its origins are derived from contemporary practice and not necessarily the Bible. Still, their research depicts a church style that may be more in tune with Acts than contemporary churches stuffed with great ideas, programs, and traditions that are not directly derived from Scriptures, either.

biblical process to make disciples are effectively advancing the movement of the gospel. Simple churches are making a big impact.”<sup>69</sup>

Being “simple,” however, requires courage and intentionality:

Leaders must see the forest and not just the trees. Being simple requires seeing the whole picture. Clutter often exists because church leaders see only part. More and more things are added without an understanding of how it all affects the whole. To have a simple church, leaders must ensure that everything their church does fits together to produce life change. They must design a simple process that pulls everything together, a simple process that moves people toward spiritual maturity.<sup>70</sup>

In short, adding another program, however life-changing its design, can reduce a church’s efforts to effectively disciple others because of the weight of all the other church programs competing for time, energy, emphasis, and people. Rainer and Geiger explain that some churches need more than a new program, they (first) need to evaluate the purpose and efficacy of their existing ones. The authors explain in their definition,

A simple church is a congregation designed around a straight-forward and strategic process that moves people through the stages of spiritual growth. The leadership and the church are clear about the process (clarity) and are committed to executing it. The process flows logically (movement) and is implemented in each area of the church (alignment). The church abandons everything that is not in the process (focus).<sup>71</sup>

Church leaders must resist the urge to shuffle and keep all of their activities under a new name or banner. Instead they must ask if ministries are consonant with their vision (graciously eliminating those that are not), and determine if a particular ministry (like discipling) is an overriding purpose to which all church activities should be aligned.

A church that seems to do this well began in Post Falls, Idaho, near the Canadian border. Its pastor, Jim Putman, and others began the church very humbly:

Real Life Ministries began eleven years ago when two couples met in one of their homes and began to pray that God would work in and through them to bring a disciple-making church to a sparsely populated area in northern Idaho. The Pacific

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 14.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 25.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 67, 68.

Northwest is not an easy place to start a new church. Far away from the Bible Belt, we have a large number of people who either have never been inside a church or never want to go back.<sup>72</sup>

Echoing the ideas of *Simple Church*, Putnam writes, “At Real Life, we believe it is important to have a unified view of the goal of our church—what we are trying to accomplish—so we do everything we can to teach our people what the Bible says about discipleship.”<sup>73</sup> They define a disciple as one who is following Christ (surrendered to Him), being changed by Him; and committed to “Jesus’ mission to save people from their sin.”<sup>74</sup> That definition guides their activity. Putnam agrees with others that “an important value that needs to be supported and protected in our churches is relationship—relationship with the true God and relationships among believers.”<sup>75</sup> For discipling to flourish, that relational environment must include strong Bible teaching, “shepherding,” transparency, accountability, and guided practice (teaching skills).<sup>76</sup>

The author describes a pattern of discipleship used by the early church which Real Life named “the Share, Connect, Minister, Disciple process (SCMD).”<sup>77</sup> Of course this is a collaborative process between God, the disciple maker, and the disciple. Putnam explains,

There are three important pieces in every situation where God would use us. First, God Himself is working. He precedes us in seeing a person’s heart and knowing the need. He is the One who changes hearts. Second, we are a tool in His hands. We ask God to help us see opportunities and make the most of them by sharing, connecting,

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<sup>72</sup>Jim Putnam, *Real-Life Discipleship: Building Churches that Make Disciples* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2010), 17.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 26.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 32, 33.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 50.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 52-59.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 62.

training for ministry, and the releasing of disciples. Third, the person God is working on must respond to Him and to us.<sup>78</sup>

The *process* Real Life uses is engaging members in small groups, and commissioning “intentional” small group leaders. Real Life is careful about leadership training and they use a careful and gracious method of assessing the readiness of their leaders for ministry.<sup>79</sup> The goal of every small group and small group leader is to birth new small groups—led by disciplined and “released” members of their groups.<sup>80</sup> Theirs is not a quick process. Putnam explains,

At Real Life we do our best to make disciples. When people become believers, they are baptized and surrounded by other believers who help them go through the spiritual growth process. They get involved in a small group, which is led, in most cases, by a spiritual parent. In the small group, they see people care about one another. Their questions about Christianity and the Word are answered through dialogue and modeling. Every small group has a leader, an apprentice who is being trained by that leader, and a host family that work together to build a loving environment for the spiritual growth of their group members.<sup>81</sup>

### **Resonating with Scripture**

The three secular models of mentor training outlined at the beginning of this chapter measure knowledge, skills, and outcomes in determining their effectiveness. Each of those models largely uses external motivations to achieve the desired level of all three categories. One can become a successful physician, teacher, or airline employee by responding to the guidance of their respective training programs. In other words, the mentoring process enables the mentee to take on the role of physician, teacher, or pilot successfully.

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 71.

<sup>79</sup>Putman writes a lengthy section on assessing for ministry, training, and responsibility based on “Five Stages of a Disciples’ Growth.” Ibid., 35-46. The stages are (1) spiritually dead, (2) spiritual infant, (3) spiritual child, (4) spiritual young adult, and (5) spiritual parent.

<sup>80</sup>My daughter and her husband were members of a Real Life Church and small group ministry in Pullman, WA. While visiting one Sunday, I witnessed a new leader commissioned to start a new group.

<sup>81</sup>Putnam, *Real-Life Discipleship*, 180-81.

Discipleship mentoring, by contrast can use a variety of methods, but has one constant aim: heart change. Disciple makers rely on the power of the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit to reveal the changes needed and to empower change in the disciple's heart. The goal of this change is that the disciple no longer glorifies self, he or she glorifies God; the disciple does not serve self, he or she serves God; the disciple's interests, hopes, loves, and perspective change radically in this process. Being a disciple is not a role one wears for eight hours each day while on duty. Being a disciple involves authentic, radical, and pervasive spiritual change.

That kind of change can be accomplished with some variations in method. The resources consulted for this chapter included the following constructive ideas, listed below in approximate order of appearance:

1. Leader training is important to ensure that small group leaders are competent, dedicated, and aiming at the same goals.
2. Disciple makers must be people of prayer and committed to allowing the Word and the Holy Spirit to change them, too.
3. Disciple makers must be role models and be generous in sharing time with disciples.
4. Disciple makers must teach the right things, for the right reasons, in the right way.
5. Churches should use evaluation methods to stay on task.
6. Disciple makers should begin their ministry with the end in view: what do they want their members to know, be, and do at the end?
7. Small groups should have defined expectations and covenants with the members.
8. Disciples should be encouraged to be a missionary in their natural setting.
9. Disciple makers must have "margin" to be a "dedicated insider."
10. Disciple makers must think sacrificially and creatively to meet the needs around them.
11. Churches need to simplify their calendars and clarify their mission statement to achieve a biblical mission.
12. Churches should prune all that does not contribute to their biblical mission.
13. Churches need a unified goal (growing disciple makers) and then plan to achieve that goal.
14. Churches need to be constantly relational; seeking to bring people into relationship with God, other believers, and the lost.

15. Disciple makers must be good Bible teachers, shepherds, transparent, accountable, and able to model skills.
16. Small groups must be designed to foster additional small groups.
17. The church's goal is to produce disciples that are spiritual parents.

### **Useful for this Project**

Most of the ideas listed previously are useful for a project in any church. They reflect a fresh look and start at something that may feel very familiar: small group ministry.<sup>82</sup> But to do this well, “small group ministry” needs to be defined carefully and prayerfully, and designed (or re-designed, and possibly renamed) to make disciples who will, in turn, invest in the lives of others.

In addition, to bring on such a thoughtful and intentional ministry, some pruning needs to occur. Perhaps because of a liberal understanding of calling and gifting (1 Cor 12), churches have “varieties of ministries” within the church taking up time, space, and resources that may not belong there. A discipling ministry cannot be “one more thing.” Calvary Baptist leadership (and perhaps the church as a whole) needs to desire making disciples an essential part of their vision for reaching Boise, Idaho. In commenting on the biblical counseling ministry at Faith Church, Steve Viars states,

Biblical counseling . . . it's really part of our church's DNA. There is not a ministry in our church that is not influenced by the principles of progressive sanctification and the sufficiency of the Scriptures. Those doctrines form and frame our community-based outreach. So, we are always looking for ways to bring counseling principles to bear in the public square. It's a very important part of all that we do.<sup>83</sup>

Planning, program development, and leader training should follow so that such an important program has the ability to be credible, gain momentum, and become

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<sup>82</sup>Small group ministry can mean a variety of things (not all of them useful). I am not referring to “cell groups.” In this case, small group ministry means a faithful and mature believer investing in two or more people for the purpose of building disciple makers through Bible teaching, biblical counsel, prayer, relationship building and ministry modeling. The goal is for group members to “graduate” and lead similar ministries with others. I do not advocate using “special interest clubs” as a means of making disciples.

<sup>83</sup>Paul Tautges, “Interview with Steve Viars,” accessed November 8, 2014, <http://counselingoneanother.com/2013/09/12/interview-with-steve-viars/>.

sustainable. For a church that has dabbled with small group ministry in the past, there needs to be careful refinement of the process and goals for a new small group ministry—and a new commitment to a new and agreed-upon outcome.

Disciple making should also have an outward focus. Certainly, there will always be those within congregations that need encouragement, but new believers coming into the church may have the most opportunity to connect with unchurched family, friends, and neighbors/co-workers. In this context, disciple makers will need to be mature, people of prayer, faithful to God’s Word, patient, generous, and very loving. Jesus chose twelve from among many, and a successful program will need to be discerning in the selection of disciple makers to lead small groups. Real Life’s structure of having a leader, apprentice leader, host family, and others with various responsibilities removes some of the burden from the small group leader who may be a gifted teacher, but a poor social planner or host. Last, as fractured as relationships can be in modern churches, and even with fellowship highly prized, discipling small groups must reproduce. There must be willingness for small group members to become catalysts in other groups.

In summation, there are many varieties of secular models that teach knowledge and skills through mentoring. Mentoring is a time-tested and time-honored process for students to get practical instruction to help them assume roles in all manner of enterprises. Secular mentoring, however, (even at its highest intensity) does not need or require a change of heart. Neither does the improved communication they strive for match the unity for which the church was designed. As such, the best secular models of mentoring are poor examples for Christian ministry. Sadly, even some of the examples cited from evangelical sources sometimes hint more of the board room than the “upper room.”

Disciple making is God’s work, first and foremost, and one does well always to anchor methods scripturally whenever possible. The examples of Christ and later Paul give a clear picture of the depth of commitment required of both the mentor and the mentee to allow God to achieve the heart transformation required for believers to serve



and glorify Him.<sup>84</sup> Paul acknowledged God was at work and the Holy Spirit was teaching and empowering as he taught and spent time with those he disciplined. Paul modeled appropriate behavior and ministry skills, and gave increasing responsibility to those he led. A specific process (per se) was never recorded, so modern day disciple makers must continually discern what nuances God may desire in addition to the broad strokes of teaching, walking alongside, modeling, and delegating that are demonstrated in Scripture.

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<sup>84</sup>Jesus would frequently take his disciples aside privately for encouragement and instruction (Matt 13, Mark 8, Luke 11, John 13). One imagines, too, that John Mark, Timothy, and Titus were the fruit of this kind of small group mentoring as Paul prepared them for ministry (Acts 12, 2 Tim 4; Acts 16, Acts 19, Phil 2; 2 Cor 8, Gal 2, Titus 1:4).

## CHAPTER 4

### THE MINISTRY PROJECT

#### **Overview of Process**

To be relevant (statistically and otherwise), 12 to 15 mentors were needed for the project. Predictably, not everyone at the church found this project appealing as it was a substantial commitment and poised to initiate significant change within the participants. Enlistment efforts aimed to capture the attention of a handful of church members and challenge them with a vision and a plan for discipling through mentoring. It was hoped that the information shared about the project would also “jump start” a few other members that needed to be more involved in ministry, but had yet to take any steps to do so.

Bulletin inserts describing the project were used for a few weeks in August and September—as well as spontaneous “commercials” during Sunday school classes and worship services. In addition, key leaders were given overview materials to familiarize themselves with the aims and plan of the project. Further, individuals considered to be good candidates for the project were contacted directly and encouraged to participate. Even with all these efforts, it became clear early on that the project was not gaining traction. The church has many activities and Bible studies that often compete with one another and, as in many churches, there are groups of people who feel most comfortable with a specific group of friends. With that in mind, other SBC pastors and churches were contacted in an effort to get a significant number of people involved in the project. My goal was to net at least 10 to 15 participants; my hope was for even more participation—enough to get two groups of at least 10 each.

Week 1 was an overview of the project and requirements for participants; this

was my last and best effort at enlisting participants. The turnout was underwhelming and so was my presentation. But by week 3, a solid group was forming that understood and committed to the goals of the project. In the end, there were 12 project participants representing three area churches.

The original plan for each mentoring session had various breakouts: greeting time, Bible study, a time for accountability/encouragement (member to member); and group-sharing of needs and victories in their own mentoring experiences. As described, the project sought to catalyze heart change; in other words, to change how the participants thought, felt, and behaved and made choices. Though ambitious for a fifteen-week project, hope for those kinds of changes should be present in any ministry endeavor. Heart change is God's business (Ezek 11:19; 36:26), and He uses His living Word (Isa 55:11; Rom 10:17; Heb 4:12) to reveal insights, convince and convict, and motivate application of those insights—so biblical instruction became the key component of the project.

Mentor participants read, memorized, studied, and meditated on Scriptures, and taught Scriptures to their mentees. It was hoped that mentors would become more ardent students of God's Word and learn how to apply the truths they learned in their own lives first and foremost, so that they would then apply them in the lives of their mentees. This was an ambitious goal, as well.

Care was taken to select studies that would be useful for the participants. The studies were foundational but not exhaustive. Future iterations of this project may first assess participants to see what other Bible passages and study materials would be most effective for their growth and progress. That said, though the choosing of Scriptures for study was important, there could be a variety of Bible study selections on which to build an outstanding discipleship program; it is, after all, God's power and God's Word that guide the process, not the limited mind of the project designer.

Additionally, though the project description lent itself to the concept of a

fifteen-week “boot camp,” that was not the intent. Though the Bible encourages the believer to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil 2:12); God is the power behind the process (Phil 2:13). The project was not a self-help or self-discipline regimen, but rather an invitation to draw closer to the power and plan of the gospel. Elyse Fitzpatrick and Dennis Johnson relate,

Most of us have never really understood that Christianity is not a self-help religion meant to enable moral people to become more moral. We don’t need a self-help book; we need a Savior. We don’t need to get our collective act together; we need a death and resurrection and the life-transforming truths of the gospel. And we don’t need them just once, at the beginning of our Christian life; we need them every moment of every day.<sup>1</sup>

The hope for the project was a deeper (and transformative) communion with the Lord, not merely a more “earnest” attempt at living the Christian life. Speaking to the value of prayer in this process, E. M. Bounds writes,

Earnestness may be sincere, serious, ardent, and persevering. It goes at a thing with good will, pursues it with perseverance, and urges it with ardor; puts force in it. But all these forces do not rise higher than the mere human. The man is in it—the whole man, with all that he has of will and heart, of brain and genius, of planning and working and talking. He has set himself to some purpose which has mastered him, and he pursues to master it. There may be none of God in it. There may be little of God in it, because there is so much of the man in it.<sup>2</sup>

### **Project Description**

The Calvary Baptist Discipleship Mentoring Program was a fifteen-week exercise that commenced on September 9, 2013, and ended on December 18. At the onset, an advisory group was convened to give counsel and oversight. This group consisted of Stephen Oswalt, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church; Ray Sparkman, Director of Missions at the Treasure Valley Southern Baptist Association; and Connie Ward, CBC Stewardship Chair and International Mission Board Trustee. This group met once, though I met with Oswalt numerous other times. Mentors were enlisted from Calvary Baptist

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<sup>1</sup>Elyse Fitzpatrick and Dennis Johnson, *Counsel from the Cross: Connecting Broken People to the Love of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 30.

<sup>2</sup>E. M. Bounds, *Power through Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 91.

Church, Rock Harbor Church,<sup>3</sup> and New Covenant Baptist Church. Fifteen people showed interest, and twelve completed the program.

The schedule and content of the Bible studies was designed by me, and the mentors met with me weekly. The mentors were strongly encouraged to pray for and enlist a mentee for the project. After week 7,<sup>4</sup> the mentors were asked to lead weekly meetings with their mentees, sharing some of the content learned in previous weeks of the project (specifically, studies from week 3 forward).

### **Mentor Commitments**

Since this was a significant commitment for the mentors, they were asked to sign commitment cards that outlined the expectations: faithful attendance to all meetings; praying for and (hopefully) enlisting a mentee with whom to share their learning; daily Bible reading and prayer time; memorizing key Scripture passages weekly; and reading two books (from list) within the next year.<sup>5</sup>

### **Mentor Meetings**

The meetings with the mentors were scheduled for 60 to 75 minutes each week and followed a similar format most weeks. After a brief time of greeting and informal conversation, that week's memory verse was reviewed as a group.<sup>6</sup> I then asked how the

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<sup>3</sup>Rock Harbor is a new non-denominational Evangelical church (plant) currently meeting in a high school in neighboring Meridian, Idaho. Their statement of faith mirrors an abbreviated "Baptist Faith and Message." The participants from there were known by the project leader and enlisted by him.

<sup>4</sup>The original plan called for mentees to be chosen by week 4. The plan was amended when it became clear that some participants were struggling with this timeframe. The timeframe was later adjusted again for some participants.

<sup>5</sup>This requirement was softened significantly at the request of the participants. Originally, it was two books during the fifteen-week project period. Books were devotional or biblical counseling in nature and (in my opinion) representative of those that would be useful for the mentor and mentee. See the list of books in appendix 5.

<sup>6</sup>After a couple of weeks, discovering the Scripture memorization requirement was often forgotten, we began to use class time to memorize the verses together by

participants were doing in their Bible reading, prayer time, book reading, and in finding a mentee (and later working with their mentee). Participants were given study outlines each week, and the bulk of the meeting was centered on that week's study. Meetings were closed in prayer.

### **Schedule of Study Topics**

#### **Week 1: Monday (September 9, 2013)**

The second Monday of September was the first meeting of the project—which avoided the late summer vacations that plague church attendance. Twelve people gathered for the evening meeting and were given an overview of the project. The overview included sharing the four goals of the project, the proposed methodology, a brief introduction to each of the proposed Bible studies,<sup>7</sup> shared expectations and commitments, and a question and answer time. The purpose of this introductory meeting was to promote interest in the project while providing as much information about the project as possible.

#### **Week 2: Monday (September 16, 2013)**

Lesson 2 began with a brief theological overview of discipleship mentoring. Select scriptures were reviewed to reveal what the Bible states and teaches about the ministry of discipling. Students learned Christ's method of making disciples and how His process transformed the disciples from interested (but often confused) followers into dynamic witnesses and church leaders. Students were also engaged in thinking about the type of people Jesus chose as His disciples. Such lessons can guide modern disciplers in determining who God might lead the participants to disciple.

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writing the verse(s) on the white board and then erasing alternate words until all could say the verse. This only took a few moments and was appreciated by the project participants.

<sup>7</sup>Complete outlines of the Bible study materials are in appendix 4.

**Week 3: Monday and Wednesday  
(September 23, 25, 2013)**

*Sola Scriptura* was the cry of the Reformation, elevating the sufficiency of Scripture as described in 2 Timothy 3:16. If Scripture is sufficient, then it follows that one should invest in learning and applying it to one's life. Week 3 focused on the value and power of God's Word for guiding and transforming the believer. Just as the disciples waited on the words of Jesus, modern disciples must also set their foundations on the words of Jesus (Matt 7:24-29). What Christians believe about the Scriptures is incredibly important: the characteristics of authorship, inspiration, inerrancy, infallibility, trustworthiness, and sufficiency were emphasized in the study.

**Week 4: Monday and Wednesday  
(September 30, October 2, 2013)**

Prayer was the focus this week. Program participants looked at numerous Scriptures describing prayer and the importance of the believer's relationship with God in prompting a meaningful prayer life. Students also looked at biblical models for praying, practical aspects regarding prayer times and places, and prayer lists and journals. The goal of the study was to promote or deepen the student's commitment to and experience with prayer.

**Week 5: Monday and Wednesday  
(October 7, 9, 2013)**

One of the most challenging lessons of the program was "Fellowship, Leading, and More" in week 5. The concept of Christian fellowship was explored and within that context, the roles of leading, serving, encouraging, and sharing the Word were developed. Modern mores encourage self-sufficiency and isolation; as a consequence, modern believers may form some superficial relationships even at church. The church needs better from its leaders. This study outlined the deeper commitments (to one another) required by the brotherhood in Christ.

**Week 6: Monday and Wednesday  
(October 14, 16, 2013)**

The life of Solomon was contrasted with that of his father in this week's lesson (1 Kgs 11). In that comparison, one sees the powerful and insidious nature of sin and idolatry. Both terms were defined and illustrated from Scripture; and the progressive nature of each was also described. The stubborn rejection of Jesus and His teaching by the religious leaders demonstrates the escalating spiritual blindness that grows from sin and idolatry—even that which appears as devoutly religious (Matt 9:34; 12:14; 21:45). Much discussion followed as the participants identified modern idols. Consequences and remedies for sin and idolatry were also reviewed.

**Week 7: Monday and Wednesday  
(October 21, 23, 2013)**

David Powlison concluded that “my behavior is a strategy which expresses my motives, my trusts, my wants, my fears, my ‘felt needs.’ Such motives range along a spectrum from the consciously calculating to the blindly compulsive.”<sup>8</sup> Week 7 included a study about the source of one's motivation and the need to have one's mind, will, and emotions rehabilitated by the Holy Spirit. Along with a new heart, the believer needs to be guided by new values, thoughts, and attitudes, which will issue in new behaviors consistent with the new kingdom Jesus established. The Sermon on the Mount is a good example of new kingdom values and their expression. Their apparent revolutionary nature—as that of Christ's entire ministry—underscores the spiritual dullness that still needs changing today.

**Week 8: Monday and Wednesday  
(October 28, 30, 2013)**

The natural man with his sinful nature reacts to God's rules with rebellion. Pride will not allow him to be ruled by another's rules. Once a law or rule is spoken, the

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<sup>8</sup>David Powlison, “Idols of the Heart and ‘Vanity Fair,’” accessed October 14, 2013, <http://www.ccef.org/idols-heart-and-vanity-fair>.



natural man prefers to oppose the law or rule. That is the sin nature exercising its rejection and rebellion with God. The believer, however, has a choice. Unpacking that choice, program participants studied “Biblical Strategies for Change” this week. The change intended for believers is spiritual transformation. After a brief overview of the different actions of sanctification and justification, students were invited to learn the believer’s part in sanctification and taught several principles for participating with God in spiritual growth, including the “put off” and “put on” commands in Colossians 3, Romans 13, and Ephesians 4.

**Week 9: Monday and Wednesday  
(November 4, 6, 2013)**

Dealing with difficult circumstances was the theme of this week as participants studied “The Biblical Response to ‘Hard Things’” (Ps 60:1-3). This study included a review of six Greek words that described trials, test, persecutions, sufferings, even “siftings.” Not intended as an exhaustive study or a complete comparison and contrast of the different words, the study was designed to help students deal with a variety of difficulties in a biblical manner even when the purpose or reason for the difficulty is unclear. The inevitability of hardships was juxtaposed with man’s comfort-seeking (even one’s comfort-seeking theologies), and some of God’s purposes in using suffering were identified.

**Week 10: Monday and Wednesday  
(November 11, 13, 2013)**

Spiritual battles are the believer’s reality. Class members worked toward understanding and applying each piece of the “Full Armor of God” this week. Particular emphasis was given to the teaching in Ephesians 6:10-12 that explained why God’s armor and His power are necessary for the believer.

**Week 11: Monday and Wednesday  
(November 18, 20, 2013)**

This week's study was entitled "Speaking the Truth." This topic was added after it became clear that one study within the project should address the issue of sharing one's faith.<sup>9</sup> Rather than reloading a personal evangelism seminar of some kind (each participant had attended several), this study focused on "living our faith out loud" more naturally, consistently, and actively. Students reviewed the manner of witness that Jesus employed as well as those within the early church. The class studied the accounts of Steven and Philip to see how early "church members" spread the Good News. Those examples demonstrate that believers ought to become aware of the needs around them, build relationships with needy people, discern God's guidance, seize everyday opportunities, and prayerfully share an appropriate message.

**Week 12: Monday and Wednesday  
(November 25, 27, 2013)**

Falling naturally on the week of Thanksgiving, the topic for the week was "Thankfulness and Contentment." Emphasis was given to the importance of gaining an attitude of thanksgiving and that believers are commanded to be thankful (and content) in all circumstances. Students also learned about some potent enemies—those things that prevent or rob Christians of an ability to be thankful and content: the tares of envy, bitterness, entitlement, self-pity, and margin-less<sup>10</sup> living. Last, students learned how to recover thankfulness and contentment when not experiencing them.

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<sup>9</sup>I noted reticence or the lack of a confident approach to talking about one's faith among some members of the group.

<sup>10</sup>The concept of "margin," i.e., a pause that is not filled with obligations and responsibilities, is developed by Richard Swenson in *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2004).

**Week 13: Monday and Wednesday  
(December 2, 4, 2013)**

“Biblical Decision-making” was the theme for this week’s study. Students learned about God’s will and how God reveals or communicates His will (design, plan, goals); and, just as importantly, ways God is unlikely to communicate. Students learned that God reliably speaks through His Word and principles drawn from His Word. God’s will for specific individuals was broken down into subsets: God’s general will, His ideal will, and His permissive will.<sup>11</sup> In addition to scriptures and scriptural principals, students were taught that God can guide by godly counsel, through obedience, and when all choices are godly and equal (and not in conflict with God’s Word) even through one’s own preferences. A series of helpful questions was shared to help the seeker sift and discard inappropriate options.

**Week 14: Monday and Wednesday  
(December 9, 11, 2013)**

Students were introduced to biblical counseling in this study. Since the point of the program had been to root participants more firmly in the Word and its application to their lives, biblical counseling seemed a fitting topic toward the end of the program. Students were introduced to a definition of biblical counseling that was contrasted with modern varieties of secular counseling. The class looked at how believers can share counsel with one another and the value of timely admonitions or words of encouragement. Last, the place of biblical counsel was described by reviewing the “Discipleship River” concept.

**Week 15: Monday and Wednesday  
(December 16, 18, 2013)**

The study topic was entitled “How to Develop Future Topics for Sharing with

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<sup>11</sup>Materials for this study leaned heavily on the teaching of Stuart Scott and Garry Friesen; however the discussion was not a rigorous, definitive representation of their thoughtful positions. Garry Friesen and Robin Maxson, *Decision Making and the Will of God* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 2004).

a Mentee.” In effect, this was a “how-to” session on developing Bible studies to share with others. While a variety of tactics were reviewed, the study mainly endeavored to teach a method of Bible study that flowed from the Scriptures themselves, rather than relying on contemporary topics, commentaries, or devotional writings. Students were taught to ask “What is the passage saying?” then encouraged to consider themes, context, audience, words, or concepts for further study and corollary verses. In addition, students were encouraged to meditate on Scripture in order to determine what value a particular passage might hold for them and what application might be required from them. In essence, students were introduced to an overview of exegesis when examining and teaching Scripture.

### **Members/Participants**

Volunteers for the programs represented three churches. Three women and 9 men completed the program. There was a range of ages from 19 to 65 plus; the median age was approximately 40. Each participant had been a believer for at least 10 years.

### **Homework**

Participants were given homework in preparation for sessions 4 through 12.<sup>12</sup> Homework generally included Scripture study and/or additional readings that prepared the participants for the upcoming topic.

### **Changes/Contingencies**

The original plan for the meeting time (to include greeting time, Bible Study,

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<sup>12</sup>Despite planning on giving homework, I had to be reminded by one of the participants who told me after week 3 that homework would help him prepare better for our weekly lessons together. The homework was consistent after week 3, but was not a strength of the project.

accountability/encouragement, group sharing, etc.) was simplified almost immediately.<sup>13</sup> In addition, to better accommodate schedules, the meeting was offered twice per week (Monday and Wednesday evenings) and participants could attend whichever best fit their schedule in a given week. In addition, I offered to meet with any member that was unable to attend in a given week to review the materials they missed; several took advantage of that offer. The program became like a class instead of a group of people encouraging and holding one another accountable to agreed upon goals. Though mutual accountability was never achieved, to be fair, the expectation was never fully explained or modeled. Class sharing, however, did improve dramatically midway through the program.

In addition, the plan to have participants actively mentoring someone after week 4 had to be amended a couple of times. Four weeks was chosen simply to give participants some time to pray and thoughtfully choose someone. Most of the class had difficulty with that time frame; actually most had difficulty with finding someone by week 7. In the interest of moving ahead, the class simply continued with members who were mentoring, some trying to mentor persons who were marginal candidates, and some not mentoring at all.

### **Mentoring**

The differentiating component of this discipleship program was the practice of discipling another person. I did not wish this to be just one more academic exercise or class that members could complete in theoretical fashion. It was, however, more difficult to implement this part of the project than anticipated.

The project participants understood that part of their responsibility would be to mentor someone during the course of the project. In addition to meeting with the project group, each was to meet weekly with another person with the intention of mentoring him

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<sup>13</sup>Original plan and breakouts presupposed a group comfortable with one another and willing to thoughtfully engage one another. This proved to be an unrealistic expectation of a new group of people.

or her to become a disciple and a disciplemaker. Participants were given latitude to choose a mentee, as well as the best time to meet. Though there were no specific expectations or formula given about the contents of the mentoring sessions, participants were encouraged to begin with lesson 3, “The Word,” and move next to lesson 4, “Prayer,” and so on. It was understood that each mentoring situation would be unique, and the discipleship-mentoring component was envisioned to be something the participants would learn as they engaged the process. In effect, we would all be learning by trial and error and then sharing successes and challenges.

As the project unfolded, participants were asked weekly how their efforts to find a mentee were going, or how the mentoring itself was going. These questions produced only cursory responses. As indicated previously, the time frame for the mentoring was amended, then extended, when some were still not ready; my hope was that the participants who were still struggling to find a mentee would continue to try even after the conclusion of the project. In fairness, most participants tried to do something, but this was easily the most undeveloped part of the project.<sup>14</sup>

My own discipleship mentoring experience was pleasant and instructive (for me, at least); but the process had a rough start. I had four people in mind to mentor. Two possibilities were not ready to participate at the time; one of the remaining candidates chose to enter the mentor side of the project, but dropped out and left the church completely.<sup>15</sup> The fourth candidate was my eighteen year-old son attending college in Kansas. We met Tuesday evenings via Skype. Our sessions generally lasted one hour, with at least thirty minutes of that time being a Bible study on the given topics. Our interaction was familiar and informal. We prayed together and reviewed the high points

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<sup>14</sup>Discussion of the missed expectations and lessons learned for this component of the project are detailed in chap. 5.

<sup>15</sup>This mentee candidate was new to the community and church and proved in a matter of weeks to have many issues unrelated to attending our particular church.

of nine lessons (one lesson per week) in the remaining weeks of the program. Each week I encouraged him to pray for someone and begin thinking about building a relationship with a new Christian or becoming a mentor of one of his acquaintances. He did pray about this, but did not do any active mentoring.

### **Evaluation**

The project was evaluated by using identical surveys, one at the onset of the mentor meetings and one at the end of the program. Participants ranked 82 statements to quantify their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding foundational Christian concepts. Some specious statements were also included in the surveys. The program was evaluated based upon the percentage change in the rankings of the statements between the two surveys. To maintain confidentiality, ID numbers were given to the participants. Unfortunately, some members misplaced their commitment cards (which also included their ID number), so individual improvement could not be measured accurately.

### **Conclusion**

There were many unknowns about this project. My pastor (Oswalt) and I both shared some doubts about the mentoring requirement, but felt the experiment was a worthy one. For the most part, despite all the questions,<sup>16</sup> the program went smoothly. The experience was very instructive. The participants were a nice, but unlikely mix of people from different backgrounds, different addresses and interests. However, they were all ready for a challenging program. Though changes were made, we all adapted and our relationships deepened. People felt comfortable attending either Monday or Wednesday and the twelve participants grew to trust one another and that was evident in their

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<sup>16</sup>Nagging questions of the project included, who would participate; how many; how faithfully; what components would be most useful; were sufficient mentee candidates known to the participants; was the content useful and clear enough to pass on to others; etc.

questions and sharing. This project was challenging but enjoyable; and the participants were very faithful to attend and engage the topics each week.



## CHAPTER 5

### PROJECT EVALUATION

#### **Evaluation of Research Data**

The fifteen-week Discipleship-Mentoring Project was a very positive experience for the participants. Consistent attendance and class engagement characterized our sessions together. Despite some challenges, it seemed significant learning was occurring, too, and the data supports that assertion. In appendix 1, the pre and post-project evaluation statements and their aggregate responses are tabulated. The data reflects the evaluations of the members who completed the fifteen weeks of the project.<sup>1</sup>

Class participants were asked to evaluate statements about their personal spiritual lives and measure change in three categories: (1) knowledge; (2) attitudes; and (3) behaviors. Both the pre-program evaluation and the post-program evaluation used the same statements, but the post-evaluation offered additional opportunities for comments about the program itself. The tests were composed of 82 statements, ranked 1-9, using the scale where “1” correlated with “strongly disagree” and advancing up the scale to “disagree,” “somewhat disagree,” “narrowly disagree,” “unsure,” “narrowly agree,” “somewhat agree,” and “agree”, with “9” correlating to “strongly agree.” The nine categories were chosen over a basic 1-5 scale in order to help participants evaluate their responses more precisely. In addition, a 1-9 scale, though unorthodox, offered symmetry as opposed to 1-10 scale. Participants did not have access to their pre-project evaluation when providing their post-project evaluation.

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<sup>1</sup>One participant missed the final evening of the program and did not complete an evaluation.

Statements were inspired from and modeled after those found in the Self-Assessment Questionnaires in the *Personal Disciplemaking Kit*<sup>2</sup> and Donald Whitney's *Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health*.<sup>3</sup>

The data for the participants was measured in aggregate. I planned to track the changes by individual, however, in an attempt to maintain confidentiality identification numbers were used instead of names, and unfortunately several participants misplaced their ID numbers.

Most statements showed an improvement exceeding one point on the scale which averaged to a 14.3 percent improvement overall. Somewhat surprisingly, those statements within the "Behaviors" category improved slightly better than the other two (14.5 percent versus 14.3 percent for "Knowledge" and 14.2 percent for "Attitudes"). The improvement in "Behaviors," though not very significant statistically, was a main goal of the program.

Three statements showed the most positive changes: statement 7, "I know how to establish relationships with people for the purposes of either sharing Christ or helping them grown in their faith" (22.2 percent gain); statement 2, "I know how to choose someone to mentor" (20.0 percent gain); and statement 56, "I am trusting God (and only God) to provide something right now" (19.7 percent gain). Five additional statements were tied at 18.9 percent improvement: statement 15, "I understand how to put on the 'Full Armor of God'"; statement 21, "The Bible gives me clues as to what 'living by faith' might look like"; statement 39, "I am a dutiful Christian"; statement 63, "I pray daily"; and statement 69, "I study the Word of God daily."

The score for statement 39, "I am a dutiful Christian" was higher than I

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<sup>2</sup>Christopher B. Adsit, *Personal Disciplemaking Kit* (Eugene, OR: Disciplemakers International, 1997).

<sup>3</sup>Donald S. Whitney, *Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2001)

anticipated, revealing either a flaw in my teaching, or in the composition of the sentence (or both).<sup>4</sup> Each of the positive statements reflects scoring based on aggregates hovering over “narrowly disagree” moving to “narrowly agree,” which is more significant than improvement on the same side of the scale.

The lowest scoring improvements came from statements that were unnecessarily confusing:<sup>5</sup> statement 19, “God helps those who help themselves” (-2.2 percent); statement 46, “I think other believers should help me when I am in need” (3.3 percent); statement 18, “I tend to be ruled by my emotions” (6.7 percent); statement 40, “I am a joyful Christian (7.8 percent); and statement 3, “Mentoring means to teach someone how I do things” (7.8 percent). The concept that I hoped to measure in each instance was related to the student’s understanding and practice of serving, humility, and waiting on God (John 3:25-30).

### **Analysis of Data**

The program improved the scores of the participants in regard to spiritual beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. The improvement was not earth-shattering, but the scores did reflect movement from the negative side of the scale to the positive in most statements.<sup>6</sup> Further, the participants were motivated and growing believers, so one might not expect big swings in their scoring of these statements.

The main measurable change in behavior was that each participant disciplined

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<sup>4</sup>In discussions, “dutiful” was juxtaposed against “joyful” with the intent of measuring if participants felt that their obedience to Christ was willing or constrained. The outcome suggested the statement could have been worded better, or the concepts clarified.

<sup>5</sup>A thoughtful person could misinterpret the intent of these statements, or perhaps participants were more honest in the second evaluation. I anticipated that each statement would elicit a negative change. In retrospect, many of these statements were very poorly constructed.

<sup>6</sup>Participants’ scores, in aggregate, showed movement from “narrowly disagree” to “narrowly agree” or vice versa on most questions.

another person. In practice, more than half of the participants attempted to mentor someone, but their approaches in doing so were not uniform, consistent, or persistent. The project “moved the needle” in terms of discipling, which was gratifying, yet the small change revealed many opportunities for improvement within the project. When doing the program again, several changes will be implemented.

### **Comments from Program Evaluation**

**Evaluation statement 1: Please record one or two (or three) things that you gained/learned by participating in the class.** Participants indicated they grew in consistency in spiritual disciplines (Bible reading, prayer, thanksgiving). They also indicated gaining deeper convictions about such things like being more transparent or outspoken about their faith. Most were humbled by our time together, as they compared themselves to the Scriptures and not to one another; several indicated they gained a “deeper walk with God; and a deeper knowledge of the Bible.”<sup>7</sup>

Participants received encouragement and motivation to be better students of the Word and to be obedient to the Word. They gained a better understanding of how to relate to others and felt better equipped to disciple another person—and to relate to him or her as a servant and humble disciple of Christ. They gained resources for further study and felt encouraged and helped by the comments of fellow participants.

**Evaluation statement 2: Evaluate your motivation or commitment to invest in the lives of others now.** Participants indicated that as a result of the program, they have a stronger desire to disciple someone. One participant wrote, “Motivation seems more urgent, but less daunting. I believe I have some tools in my toolbox to invest in others.”

**Evaluation statement 3: What surprised you as you participated in the**

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<sup>7</sup>See appendix 2 for full comments.

**project?** There was some trepidation for all participants as the project began. The biggest surprise may have been how valuable and appealing the experience became. Two comments capture the biggest gains of the class: “I looked forward to each meeting. I feared it, at first, the drudgery of commitment. When focused, I gained more throughout the week than just the meetings.” “I think I always thought that I did not know enough to mentor someone else.”

**Evaluation statement 4: Would you recommend this experience to others?**

**Why?** This question was affirmed unanimously. One mentor wrote, “Yes, I now have more appreciation for my calling to make disciples instead of just planting seeds.”

Another wrote, “I would recommend it to anyone looking for solid, foundational knowledge about what it takes to be involved in independent, one-on-one discipleship because it provides a great basis for mentoring and can be built upon easily in the future.”

There was also a personal benefit that many affirmed: “I would recommend this to others, so they can develop relationships and habits that will promote a stronger relationship with God.”

**Evaluation statement 5: What things would you change for future participants?** The common theme among the responses was “more time.” Participants wanted longer class times and/or a longer project time frame. Some additional practical suggestions included “keep homework and memory verse assignments more consistent” and “add a section on stewardship” that can be easily added to the next installment of the project.

One comment was especially helpful and insightful in light of the struggle with the application of the mentoring part of the project: “Maybe adding a more practical component; like, before you share with a mentee, practice initiating that conversation—or a class on how to build a relationship that can become a mentor/mentee relationship.”

**Evaluation statement 6: Additional comments.** Additional comments might

be summed up by one word, “thanks.” It was gratifying to read that the participants were genuinely challenged and encouraged by the project.

### **Evaluation of Project Goals**

This project had four goals. The first goal was for project participants to gain an understanding of the mentoring process and the biblical model of mentoring that would prepare them to invest in the lives of others. This goal was achieved and the post-evaluation data supports that sufficient learning occurred for participants to mentor others.

Secondly, project participants were to commit to mentoring relationships. The commitment was made by all participants, but the follow-through was incomplete or inconsistent. More than half of the project participants engaged in some kind of mentoring during the course of the project, although all intended to do so. The greatest limitation suggested by the participants was their small number of choices for mentoring. Some had limited relationships outside of family and church; some did not have relationships with people receptive to mentoring; some did, but their options were not appropriate candidates.<sup>8</sup> Some participants did choose mentees that later demonstrated they were not ready for a discipleship commitment.

The third goal was that project participants would forge relationships and create opportunities for nouthetic teaching and counseling to occur through the mentoring experience. Perhaps this was the most ambitious of the goals for a project of this length. Those who had previous relationships (like family members), or who were already working with youth or young adults had the best opportunity for this kind of influential relationship. The project may have helped those who were already investing in others to be more intentional and useful in their mentoring, but the project itself did not help

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<sup>8</sup>For example, one single male participant did have a married woman friend from work interested in the Bible study, but he was advised to keep looking.

participants “forge” these kinds of deep relationships.

The last goal was that I became an effective mentor and a resource for training other mentors for the discipleship ministry at Calvary Baptist Church. I believe that a good start was made toward this goal. As the program ended in mid-December, many felt that the group was doing something meaningful. Though the program was demanding, there was a sense that we would have liked to keep going after the Christmas break—to achieve all of the goals and fully implement the learning. The participants left the program with deep appreciation for the opportunity to participate in a program that seemed to challenge and inspire them to a deeper commitment to Christ and His Word.

### **Evaluation of Project Process**

#### **Project Design**

A lot of energy was given to understanding and crafting a biblical process for discipling others. The design grew out of much Bible study and investigation of contemporary Christian discipling programs. Bible study was more helpful, as many of the modern programs were designed for specific contexts that did not readily match our own. Failing to find something easily adaptable to our needs—and not finding the practical component of mentoring—drove the design back to a more simple and biblical form: reading, studying, internalizing the Word, prayer, and sharing what was learned with others. The difference in approach might be compared to buying a brand new motor versus re-building an old engine: one option is easier, the other is more educational. The major concern of the process then became asking and answering, “what messages from the Bible are most important for new disciples?” Or perhaps more correctly, “what fourteen lessons should one develop and teach?” This is where I repeatedly heeded Scripture’s counsel (Jas 1:5-8; 1 Cor 1:4-9).

Other elements in the design incorporated daily personal disciplines like

prayer, Bible reading, Scripture memorization,<sup>9</sup> and accountability for all of these things and more. Verses chosen coincided with the lessons and were assigned weekly. Memorization was to be completed outside of class. Participants were charged to keep one another accountable to learning assigned verses, daily prayer, and Bible reading.<sup>10</sup> Participants were to check with one another informally at the beginning of each class regarding their progress with these important disciplines. In addition, another part of the accountability asked participants to share how things were going with their mentoring—struggles and successes—to encourage and help one another along in this practical aspect of the program.

One outcome hoped for was greater consistency in the disciplines of daily prayer, personal Bible reading, and Scripture memorization for each participant. The accountability component was designed to cement those disciplines. Group Bible study was essential for introducing the participants to biblical models and biblical content necessary for disciplemaking, as was their practice of mentoring and sharing with one another. I believe the design was scriptural and practical for developing a group of willing believers to become effective disciplemakers. Even though the program in practice did not live up to the design and theory behind it, I am not ready to jettison any of the components. New Testament disciplemakers were good at these disciplines (Phil 4:9; 1 Tim 4:6-15). It remains to find a better way to employ these different components in the next trial of the project.

### **Advisory Group**

I met with the advisory group once prior to starting the project; even then, one member was unable to attend the meeting. I did meet with pastor Oswalt numerous times

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<sup>9</sup>See appendix 3 for required Scriptures.

<sup>10</sup>Daily Bible readings were not assigned, but were the responsibility of the participant.



and deeply appreciated his counsel. It would have been more useful to engage this group earlier in the process than I did. My mistake was in thinking I needed a complete project before gathering them together. Their counsel may have guided me away from some of the impractical characteristics of the plan.

I would recommend to anyone who might adopt a similar project idea to camp with those doing biblical counseling and discipling ministry, rather than simply engage the advice of excellent people doing more generalized ministry—and to involve their counsel early and often throughout the design and implementation of the project.

### **Class Time**

The class met on Monday and Wednesday evenings in order to give the participants flexibility for attendance. Participants were encouraged to attend either class and many did choose to do so depending upon their schedules week-by-week. As indicated earlier, expectations for what might occur during the weekly class time together dissipated quickly. The plan included many diverse elements that were useful but difficult to mandate or implement in a 60-90 minute session.<sup>11</sup> For example, as a new group, there was not sufficient familiarity and trust (or time) to do much accountability or sharing of experiences. As a consequence, Bible study became the main focus of the weekly sessions. Fellowship and the practice of encouraging one another grew from week to week, but one would expect to see that in most groups of believers meeting regularly together.

### **Homework**

Homework consisted of a truncated outline of the next week's study and additional Scripture readings. The homework was useful, but not well-developed. In

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<sup>11</sup>Elements included fellowship, Bible study, prayer, accountability and encouragement with one another, and sharing of victories and mistakes in mentoring week by week.

some of the studies, the homework consisted of a list of numerous verses on the particular subject and some reflection questions. The homework was sometimes put together in a hurry and not always focused to supplement the study.

### **Memory Verses**

Memory verses were chosen to mirror the Bible topic each week. For example, the study on God's Word featured 2 Timothy 3:16, 17. Verses were copied onto card stock, cut, and distributed each week prior to the session to which the Scripture applied. However, the participants were not good at remembering to memorize their verses. After three classes, the first few minutes of class time were dedicated to memorizing the verse for the week. This became a fun part of the class time, but did use time that could have been used differently.

### **Handouts**

In each session the participants were given a handout to guide their learning. The handout followed the outline of the study and often had places where the students could fill in the blank or answer a reflection question. Since these were based on the study outlines, they were consistent and helped the participants focus on the study. The plan was that the participants would use their completed handouts as the basis for the development of their own studies for their mentees.

### **Teaching/Learning**

The most effort and time was placed in this part of the project. Though developing the materials was more challenging than I had anticipated, it was easily the most fruitful part of the project and each week gave me more confidence that we were learning the right things. I was buoyed by strong discussion and thoughtful insights voiced by members of the group. Weekly feedback was always positive; the studies made the participants think more deeply and place more value and confidence in the Word. Each week good material was learned together to give participants a valuable study to

share with a mentee. This part of the project seemed to work and the survey scores support that contention.

### **Accountability**

Though participants were informed of the expectations of the class, I did not emphasize accountability. Perhaps because some weeks I rushed to prepare or maybe feared I would lose the small group that was attending, I did little more than chide them to do better. Certainly this part of the program needs more thought and emphasis. The data suggests that participants did improve their commitment to Bible reading, study, and prayer, but were not consistent in engaging the preparatory Bible study in advance of each week's session. I had a collection of very accomplished but very busy people; homework was not always among their top priorities.

### **Mentoring**

My earliest idea was to pair fathers and sons (and mothers and daughters) in this project, giving the prospects of mentoring a running start, relationally at least. However, I did not have sufficient parent and child candidates to do this. In retrospect, I am glad it did not become a parent and child project. That idea mainly served the interests of a fifteen-week project as it removed the time consuming aspects of relationship building and recruiting of someone to mentor. The ability to achieve some results in a compressed time frame was a driving factor. In other words, the model was practical (and even scriptural),<sup>12</sup> but leapt from someplace other than the gospel example I was studying. In addition, that narrowing of the field unnecessarily reduced the scope of what I hoped would become a viable model for a small local church.

Without ready-made mentees, the responsibility to find someone to mentor was overwhelming for some of the participants, and therefore not attempted. Others tried to

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<sup>12</sup>For example, see Prov 22:6.

mentor someone with limited success: they displayed a lack of confidence, held inconsistent meetings, and experienced difficulty in sharing fruitful Bible lessons with mentees. In general, a feeling of frustration characterized their efforts. Some, despairing of finding a suitable candidate, ramped up efforts to build a relationship with a non-Christian in hopes of leading him or her to Christ and then mentoring him or her. Even some of those that followed the project design wondered if their methods were accomplishing anything. Few participants saw mentoring as a strength of the project.

### **Project Modifications Needed**

More preparation time with the church and a greater group of interested individuals would be helpful: four to six weeks at the beginning of the project was not enough time to prepare candidates to begin mentoring. This conclusion would probably apply to most churches. Instead, a two-part approach might be more helpful: lead with a preliminary course about discipleship and discipling, and then follow with a second course that would include the practical application of their learning in this program—all supported by a weekly meeting cohort for sharing and encouragement. More specifically, next time I would propose two separate, sequential courses. The first would be very similar to the current project with the addition of a study or emphasis on relationship building/serving others, but would remove the mentoring requirement. The second phase or course would be more practical instruction on mentoring and include the requirement that people have someone willing to be discipled. That group could then learn and encourage one another and become practiced “experts” in discipling and future leaders of the program.

A smaller ratio of participants to leader might also be helpful. One might have a large group of people (15-20), but have co-leaders (like the experts mentioned), so that each leader might shepherd no more than 3 or 4 participants. This ratio would enhance the ministries of encouragement and accountability within the group and build the expectation that participants would become committed discipleship training leaders

within the church.

There was interest in the church for a discipleship program—in fact, we had a few programs taking place at the same time. This project may have been more intimidating in that it required action, not just learning. That difference was not hidden from potential candidates. In the rush to secure sufficient people for the program,<sup>13</sup> some valuable lessons from other very good discipleship programs were dismissed. For example, many programs recommend a careful enlistment of participants. Placing restrictions on those who might participate is a difficult proposition for many churches, but new programs would be advised to be careful in recruitment. If possible, it would work best to enlist those who are already serving people in some capacity and may have viable mentees willing to complete this kind of program.

While I recruited most of the participants, the program was open to any and all within the church. Two early participants, who dropped out, were not ready for any part of the process and posed some problems early on. However, even the participants who attended faithfully had different levels of investment in the project.

In addition to more time to pray and prepare for the program, more time to build relationships with potential mentees would be invaluable in making the program more effective. It became evident early on that many participants were insulated from interacting with unbelievers and young believers. The people struggled to come up with one or two people even to consider (and pray for) as potential mentees. Though understandable and even predictable in many churches, such isolation makes it very difficult to multiply the kingdom.

These participants were engaged, but it might deepen the experience of the participants if they were able to discuss and negotiate the things to which they are willing to be held accountable, instead of being given a list of expectations. I would also

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<sup>13</sup>During planning I was advised that 10 to 15 people would be the minimum to conduct a statistically relevant project.

brainstorm earlier with the participants about their mentoring plans, specifically how they will engage in active relationship building. A future plan for this project will also include a longer prayer, promotion, and preparation phase.

Last, the project deserves better organization, specifically in regard to homework, but also in the design of the handouts for each class. Thankfully, those things, now that the project is completed, are the easiest to fix.

### **Theological Reflection**

Some aspects of the project were difficult to quantify and even initiate. If, by way of contrast, participants are required to tell the gospel to two people per week, one could measure that easily enough. One merely needs two people who will stop and listen. Discipling someone, however, requires commitment on the part of someone else (too); in effect, the act of mentoring cedes some control to someone outside the project. One would think it would be easier to work with a believer than do evangelism, but it appears that is not the case. A profound question for this project was, “who do I know that wants to be discipled?” Most of the participants had no simple answer for that question. It is not a simple question. A discipleship mentor needs to be intentional in building relationships with others. Especially now in a commitment-phobic society, one may have to work earnestly to build trustful relationships with many people just to find one relationship that *may* lead to discipling. However, that seems to follow the gospel model. Mentoring opportunities will grow out of serving others; mentoring will not be the starting point of ministry with others. This kind of intentionality requires a change in thinking.

A pastor friend reminded me recently of a profound change in his own ministry. His people were weary of his leading and teaching and (by God’s grace and wisdom) he discerned that what was needed was more loving and serving. That change in attitude and approach opened the door for more discipling and biblical counseling than he had ever seen before. Loving and serving takes time and presence. In my new setting, I am experiencing this truth once again. Perhaps this is an echo of Paul’s experience, too,

as he takes pains to point out how the undistorted Word must be transmitted from generation to generation (2 Tim 2:2). Trustworthy people come from trusting relationships. Not everyone in a church fits the description Paul shares with Timothy. It is apparent that Paul and Timothy invested in people prior to discipling them.

One of the major lessons on trust-building and discipling comes from the book of Acts: “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. *And they recognized that they had been with Jesus*” (Acts 4:13). The phrase “with Jesus” describes the journey of the twelve and that of Paul, too (Gal 1:15-18). They grew because of their time *with* the Master. Those who would be discipled need time with Jesus. One cannot emphasize enough the value and necessity of spending time in the Word and prayer! And perhaps, in a smaller sense, mentees need sufficient time with their earthly mentors, also, which seemed to be Paul’s method (Acts 20:18-21; Phil 4:9; 1 Thess 2:7-12; 2 Tim 3:10-11).

Another key question is “When is one ready to do ministry?” Jesus gave His disciples significant responsibility early on (Matt 4:18-25). However, Matthew suggests that much teaching, observing, and helping occurred before they were commissioned to do ministry on their own (Matt 10). Jesus sent the twelve out to do His work when they were ready. Perhaps they did not know they were ready, but Jesus did. The results of this experiment are revealed in Mark’s Gospel:

So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them. King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, “John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him.” (Mark 6:12-14)

Later, the Gospels record that Jesus sent out a larger group of disciples with a similar mission (Luke 10:1-16) and accomplished significant ministry through them—with joy!

The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:17-20)

The expectation that disciples could and would do ministry is a biblical one, but the details of when (exactly) one is able and willing do so are not clear. There is a propensity for believers to learn much and do little, as James exhortation indicates Christ's followers to be "doers of the Word, and not hearers only" (Jas 1:22). For my part, motivation for ministry does not come from feelings of excitement about a particular work, rather, I am willing to do ministry when I feel compelled that it is my responsibility to do so (1 Cor 9:15-17). That sure conviction is a "gift" from the Holy Spirit (John 16:13; Acts 8:29; 13:2-4).

Though the program did not produce the fruit of discipling, the seed of the Word was surely sown in the lives of the twelve program participants regarding the biblical basis and imperative for discipling. The Holy Spirit will use His Words to prompt and move these men and women to invest in the lives of others as discipling mentors in the near future.

### **Personal Reflections**

Trust is essential for mentoring. A great plan, great process, and excellent content will not "move" another person until he or she trusts the mentor. Time, presence, and example do matter. The mentor that can establish a trusting relationship—one characterized by love, serving, faith, and God's grace—will be more successful than the person who (merely) appears eager to teach a class or establish a discipling program. The sacrifice that difference requires is not lost on me. Many interpersonal interactions are draining; ministry, though rewarding, can be doubly so. In reality, discipling is hard and demanding work for anyone, thus the need to depend upon God's grace.

Jesus was purposeful when choosing men upon which to build His church. He chose twelve of the most unlikely leaders possible and carefully installed His words and heart within them. They were transformed into leaders by His power and presence; the



transformation was miraculous, and the process required a new heart and renewed mind.<sup>14</sup>

This humble project attempted to mirror the style and intent of Jesus in creating disciplemakers. Disciplemaking remains God’s work; a person’s part—the small part—the process and programming, requires a great deal of prayer, study, and some experimentation. This is where someone like Thomas Edison can be instructive. Edison tried over 1,600 filament materials and wrote thousands of pages of notes before creating the prototype of a marketable light bulb.<sup>15</sup> Good things, new things, often take much time, study, testing and evaluating. Just as Edison’s light bulb was a work in progress, so is this project. Finding one’s place (personally) in the work of disciplemaking is a journey for most.

It has been quite a journey. As a backdrop, the classwork on The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary’s campus prior to the project was wonderful, encouraging, spiritually uplifting, and surprisingly fun. The writing and reading in preparation for the classes challenged and stretched me, and grabbed my full attention. The project, by contrast, was simply hard work; honestly, I was tempted countless times to quit. The learning has not been on my schedule—I wrestled with many different concepts and waited interminably at times for God to give the wisdom to understand. The result was not rocket science, nor fully formed, but still reflects an incredibly deep dive into God’s Word for me. My thinking and behavior have been profoundly changed by the entire process—especially the design and writing of this project. I have finally concluded that the process is yielding much good fruit (in me), so I will “boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses” (2 Cor 12:9 NIV), and the slowness of the process.

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<sup>14</sup>John MacArthur develops this idea into in *Twelve Ordinary Men* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006).

<sup>15</sup>Joyce Bedi, “Edison Invents,” accessed July 20, 2014, [http://invention.smithsonian.org/centerpieces/edison/000\\_story\\_02.asp](http://invention.smithsonian.org/centerpieces/edison/000_story_02.asp).

Fifteen weeks was not enough time to demonstrate a work as time and relationship-intensive as discipling. It seemed that it took ten weeks just to build the types of relationships necessary to appreciate, encourage, and challenge one another in our learning. One gets the impression from Matthew's Gospel that Jesus tossed the disciples into hands-on ministry quite early in their relationship, suggesting that Jesus built deep relationships faster, or invested much more time and trust-building at the onset, or both. These kinds of investments of time, sharing, and working together were lacking in this project, revealing modern preferences to indulge one's comfort zones.

I am driven to commend God's Word to others as a way of changing hearts, strengthening obedience, and deepening trust and dependence on God. I am also convicted that my part in this process needs to be more selfless and generous. I need to be more available, intentional, and proactive in spending time with program participants. I need to serve them better and pray more for them. Though the process has been demanding and humbling, my convictions about the value and necessity of discipleship mentoring have only been strengthened.

### **Insights**

Time and schedule constraints, like deadlines, can precipitate action—often imperfect actions, of course. The schedule and rush to complete the project were only part of the problem, however. The design was too optimistic and “hopeful.” It was optimistic in terms of the amount of material that could be taught and retained, and optimistic in terms of what could be accomplished in a weekly gathering of seventy to ninety minutes; and in the number of components (Scripture memorization, Bible study, prayer, instruction on discipleship mentoring, fellowship, and participant sharing) that could fit within the weekly meetings.

The program was very hopeful regarding the number of willing participants in a given church; overly hopeful, as well, regarding the number of people willing to be discipled; and of course, a bit unrealistic in what participants would be willing and able to

accomplish within the confines of the fifteen-week project. The project was very ambitious, and I saw expressions of (mild) skepticism in my advisory group when I explained what the project would try to accomplish. Their expressions mirrored my own fears. In hindsight, I understand and appreciate their skepticism. The project did not accomplish all that I had hoped or even planned, but I believe I made a good start in developing a useful and challenging disciplemaking program in a local church, and several potential leaders of such a ministry were given an introduction to this vital work. For my part, I have an improved template for the next installment of this project, which, undoubtedly, will continue to be refined.

## APPENDIX 1

### COMPARISON OF PRE-PROGRAM AND POST-PROGRAM INVENTORIES

Table A1. Comparison of pre-program and post-program knowledge statements

	Knowledge Statements	pre	post	$\Delta$	% <sup>1</sup>
1	God's Word is all anyone needs for guidance today	4.4	5.4	1	11.1
2	I know how to choose someone to mentor	4.5	6.3	1.8	20
3	Mentoring means to teach someone how I do things	2.8	3.5	0.7	7.8
4	Modern believers do best to care for people like themselves	1.6	2.6	1	11.1
5	Individual believers are called to make disciples	4.6	6.0	1.4	15.5
6	Making disciples is a responsibility of the church as a whole	4.6	6.2	1.6	17.8
7	I know how to establish relationships with people for the purposes of either sharing Christ or helping them grow in their faith	4.5	6.5	2.0	22.2
8	I understand the concept of "walking by faith"	4.7	6.2	1.5	16.7
9	The Scriptures have several clear imperative ("do __," "don't do __") commands regarding the conduct of the believer	4.6	6.0	1.4	15.6
10	Following Christ means completely submitting to Him and His plans for my life	4.8	6.4	1.6	17.8
11	The goal of reading, studying, and memorizing the Word of God is spiritual change (transformation)	4.4	5.3	0.9	10
12	"Radical Amputation" refers to confessing and ruthlessly setting aside sin and opportunities to sin in my life	3.6	4.7	1.1	12.2
13	Only God's grace keeps me obedient to Him	3.6	5.2	1.6	17.8
14	I understand God's purpose in trials	3.8	5.2	1.4	15.6
15	I understand how to put on the "Full Armor of God"	4.3	6.0	1.7	18.9
16	I understand what it means to "speak the truth in love"	4.4	5.7	1.3	14.4
17	I tend to be very practical and evidenced-based in my thinking	4.6	5.9	1.3	14.4
18	I tend to be ruled by my emotions	2.0	2.6	0.6	6.7
19	God helps those who help themselves	1.4	1.2	(0.2)	(2.2)
20	Praying affects my thinking	4.9	6.5	1.6	17.8
21	The Bible gives me clues as to what "living by faith" might look like	4.4	6.1	1.7	18.9
	<i>Knowledge Average Change</i>				<i>14.3</i>

<sup>1</sup>The pre and post columns represent the averages for each statement. The percent change is measured by converting the change from  $\Delta/9$  (from the survey scale 1-9) to  $\Delta/10$  and multiplying by a factor of 10. Similarly, if a scale of 1 to 5 were used, each full point of change would actually equal 20 percent.

Table A2. Comparison of pre-program and post-program attitude statements

	Attitude Statements	pre	post	$\Delta$	%
22	“Counter-cultural” is sometimes defined as radical living. Christ calls us to live a life that is radically different to the rules and norms of our society	5.1	6.4	1.3	14.4
23	I believe that God can use my small gifts to do big things	5.1	6.7	1.6	17.8
24	I trust God to provide all I need when I need it	4.4	5.8	1.4	15.6
25	Other believers often frustrate me	3.3	4.5	1.2	13.3
26	God has gifted me to be useful to His church	4.9	6.3	1.4	15.6
27	God directs me in amazing ways through His Word	4.8	6.3	1.5	16.7
28	I am content with the life God has given me	4.3	5.7	1.4	15.6
29	I expect God to do miracles routinely	4.4	5.5	1.1	12.2
30	I am willing to follow God outside my comfort zones	4.1	5.4	1.3	14.4
31	I often try to help God provide for my needs	3.5	4.8	1.3	14.4
32	As a believer, I live to glorify God in all that I do	4.3	5.7	1.4	15.6
33	I willingly submit to God’s plans and timing	3.4	4.9	1.5	16.7
34	I struggle to understand why God loves me	3.7	5.1	1.4	15.6
35	I live as a bond-servant (slave) of Christ	4.0	5.5	1.5	16.7
36	In adversity, my first inclination is to seek God and His will	3.5	4.7	1.2	13.3
37	I don’t appreciate criticism of any kind	2.5	3.3	0.8	8.9
38	Church unity is more important to me than my own wishes or desires	3.7	5.1	1.4	15.6
39	I am a dutiful Christian	4.2	5.9	1.7	18.9
40	I am a joyful Christian	3.0	3.7	0.7	7.8
41	It is important for me to be right	4.3	5.5	1.2	13.3
42	I am patient in adversity (frightening and difficult times)	3.3	4.6	1.3	14.4
43	I “count it all joy” when experiencing trials (difficult times)	2.7	3.8	1.1	12.2
44	I regard others more highly than myself and their needs as more important than my own	4.0	5.3	1.3	14.4
45	Others would say that I enjoy serving others	3.6	5.1	1.5	16.7
46	I think other believers should help me when I am in need	3.1	3.4	0.3	3.3
47	My main function and the purpose for which I was created is to glorify God	4.8	6.2	1.4	15.6
48	Kindness and thoughtfulness are two characteristics others would use to describe me	3.4	4.8	1.4	15.6
49	Others would describe me as a humble servant	3.6	4.9	1.3	14.4
50	Giving thanks is a continual exercise for me	3.9	5.1	1.2	13.3
51	I am defensive when someone points out my weaknesses	2.9	4.0	1.1	12.2
52	I consider that God is the owner of all my material possessions—and He can take them whenever He wants	4.3	5.6	1.3	14.4
	<i>Attitudes Average Change</i>				<i>14.2</i>

Table A3. Comparison of pre-program and post-program behavior statements

	Behavior Statements	pre	post	Δ	%
53	I live unselfishly	3.6	4.7	1.1	12.2
54	My prayers are balanced with praise, thanksgiving, intercession for others, and prayer for my own needs	4.1	5.7	1.6	17.8
55	I write down God’s answers to prayers, so I can remember them	3.6	4.6	1	11.1
56	I am trusting God (and only God) to provide something for me right now	4.2	6	1.8	19.7
57	To the best of my ability, I live at peace with others	4.7	6.1	1.4	15.6
58	My behavior is dominated by love for others	3.9	5.5	1.6	17.8
59	Others would say that I demonstrate self-control in my decisions and dealings with others	4.3	5.6	1.3	14.4
60	I admonish, teach, and mentor others	4.8	6.4	1.6	17.8
61	I use my time, resources, money, and gifts wisely	3.5	4.5	1	11.1
62	I read the Word daily	4.3	5.5	1.2	13.3
63	I pray daily	4.2	5.9	1.7	18.9
64	I look for ways to engage unbelievers in conversations about faith	4.1	5.1	1	11.1
65	I could be more disciplined in my Bible reading and prayer time	4.4	5.7	1.3	14.4
66	I am a willing servant within my church	2.8	4.2	1.4	15.6
67	I give to the poor or to organizations serving the poor, routinely	4.6	6.1	1.5	16.7
68	I am willing to lead a class, a committee, or an initiative within our church	3.9	4.8	.9	10
69	I study the Word of God daily	4.0	5.7	1.7	18.9
70	By far, the largest segment of my prayer time is spent praying for others	2.8	4	1.2	13.3
71	I memorize and meditate on the Word weekly	2.6	3.7	1.1	12.2
72	I support my pastor(s) as God’s authority and submit to their leadership	3.3	4.2	.9	10
73	I obey God’s Word	4.5	5.8	1.3	14.4
74	My decisions honor God	4.2	5.7	1.5	16.7
75	My neighbors know that I am a Christian—and a kind one	3.6	4.7	1.1	12.2
76	I routinely pray about and practice “putting off” wrong attitudes and sinful behaviors	3.8	5.4	1.6	17.8
77	I routinely pray about and practice “putting on” righteous attitudes and behaviors	4.1	5.7	1.6	17.8
78	I practice Biblical decision-making	4.3	5.7	1.4	15.6
79	I train myself to remember those things I can be thankful for and content about instead of remembering things that promote anxiety, panic, and envy	4.3	5.3	1	11.1
80	Through Christ I am bearing “fruit” for the Kingdom	4.3	5.6	1.3	14.4
81	I am faithfully obeying the Great Commission	4.4	5.7	1.3	14.4
82	I am very careful about the music I listen to, what books I read, the TV and movies I watch, and what I view on the Internet	4.3	5.2	.9	10
	<i>Behavior Average Change</i>				<i>14.5</i>

Overall average change for knowledge, attitude and behavior changes was 14.3.

## APPENDIX 2

### VERBATIM COMMENTS FROM PROGRAM EVALUATION

#### **1. Please record on or two (or three) things that you gained/learned by participating in the class:**

- “More consistency in reading Scripture daily; unfortunately it is not always studying; sometimes just getting [the reading] done.”<sup>1</sup>
- “I need to be more outspoken about my faith.”
- “I have a better understanding of how to relate to others and not ‘Lord it over them.’”
- “I enjoyed it very much; the fellowship, the talking and listen to others –it gave me motivation, encouragement, just sharing the Word.”
- “Found some great resources for future study; appreciated learning from experiences shared by class members.”
- “I feel better equipped to lead someone in a mentor/mentee relationship. I think I know how to take someone step by step towards growing their relationship [with Christ]. I also realized the importance of building the relationship [with the mentee] first, before jumping right into the teaching/instructing role.”
- “I think I am better equipped to mentor someone; I am spending more time on fewer verses and capturing more of the message.”
- “I have had fun learning to thank God in typically frustrating circumstances—ones that would destroy me in the past—seeking His plan. Looking for someone to mentor –intentionally—is harder than I thought it would be. When I settled on one, two more came to mind. Lots of work to be done.”
- “Deeper walk with God; gained a deeper knowledge of the Bible; expanded my knowledge of Biblical leaders / pastors / authors.”
- “I have a need for more consistency in my relationship with God, more dedication to study and prayer time is also needed.”

#### **2. Evaluate your motivation or commitment to invest in the lives of others now.**

- My desire is there [to disciple / mentor someone]. Regrettably, I don’t always make it a priority. There are too many missed opportunities.”
- “I have a stronger desire to give of myself for others and invest in their lives.”
- “I’m more inclined to share my love to others for the love of Jesus; time is not our time, but God’s time—when to say something and when not to say something.”
- “I’m still motivated to invest in believers who have walked away from the faith or need encouragement, in addition to those who have not yet accepted Christ.”
- “Motivation seems more urgent, but less daunting. I believe I have some tools in my toolbox to invest in others.”
- “My commitment and intent is to mentor others and I hadn’t thought about it much previously.”
- “I see my time is short and my resources as weak, but God as infinite and unlimited. As a conduit between / advocate / one who stands in the gap, I see that God wants

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<sup>1</sup>Punctuation and some words were added to clarify the responses.

me there [where I am]. I'm committed to them because of Him—much deeper than 'feel good' works.”  
“Ongoing—willingness to continued commitment of mentoring others.”  
“My motivation is to help others, look for, identify and help where opportunity is found.”

**3. What surprised you as you participated in the project?**

“I looked forward to each meeting. I feared it, at first, the drudgery of commitment. When focused, I gained more throughout the week than just the meetings.”  
“I think I always thought that I did not know enough to mentor someone else.”  
“My lack of accountability. I had to look at myself in a different way. Found myself crying over the death of Jesus and what it means.”  
“Nothing, really . . .”  
How much I learned from the ‘in-class’ discussion. Our class was very diverse and people shared from a variety of perspectives.”  
“I got to know a few folks better.”  
“The difficulty of singling one person out [for mentoring]; and the overlap of personal Bible study with the mentoring study.”  
“The level of commitment of the group and [how] sorry [I was that] it was over already.”  
“How much I am not alone and needing others to grow in my relationship with Christ.”

**4. Would you recommend this experience to others? Why?**

“Yes, I now have more appreciation for my calling to make disciples instead of just planting seeds.”  
“Yes. We need more openness in our walk with the Lord.”  
“I would recommend it to anyone looking for solid, foundational knowledge about what it takes to be involved in independent, one-on-one discipleship because it provides a great basis for mentoring and can be built upon easily in the future.”  
“I think anyone who goes through this program will benefit if they let God show them what to do with it. Yes I would recommend this class.”  
“It is a good look at what it means to be and live for Christ.”  
“Yes. For me it was an opportunity to sit back and listen to God though others. Trust the process He has provided.”  
“Yes. The study helped all of us grow not only together as a group, but to grow deeper in our walk with God.”  
“I would recommend this to others, so they can develop relationships and habits that will promote a stronger relationship with God.”

**5. What things would you change for future participants?**

“Keep homework and memory verse assignments more consistent.”  
“More time at each class. I feel people need to relate and open up to let the love come out.”  
“Make them write a brief response to the [memory] verse.”  
“Maybe adding a more practical component; Like, before you share with a mentee, practice initiating that conversation—or a class on how to build a relationship that can become a mentor/mentee relationship.”  
“Add a section on stewardship.”  
“Lessons—half one week, half the other . . . [stretch to] 26 weeks? 30 weeks? Maybe a planned ‘get together’ meeting to check our progress three months or six months later. I’d still like to see something done with the discipleship books that we are reading and will read.”



“Maybe providing some of the articles that were suggested. Nothing else comes to mind. The class was well-organized and Mark was well-prepared everywhere. We could tell that he had spent many hours preparing for the class.”

“At this point I would not know what to change.”

**6. Additional Comments:**

“Thanks.”

“Really enjoyed the whole experience!”

“This is good stuff, Mark; I’ve been jazzed about it from the first time Greg mentioned to me. I glanced over the material you sent out in the initial e-mail and was ‘sold’ instantly.

I know it was tough for multiple class sessions each week, but that was really helpful. I was convinced that I’d need to take you up on the other meeting time (in Nampa at your home) but God saw fit to keep my schedule smoothed out. I was really impressed how you were able to synthesize all the comments in class. Also when some were taking the class [instruction] the wrong way (myself included). You were gracious about returning to the true topic.”

“I really enjoyed the class. Mark is a great Bible study teacher. I hope he puts this together in a Bible Study for others. Thank you Mark!”

“When you look at my feedback, you will see lots of confusion; this is indicating my introspection and I see it as a good thing as the lessons get sorted out and applied in my life.”

## APPENDIX 3

### SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSES FOR DISCIPLESHIP MENTORING PROJECT

#### **Week 1: Introduction to Discipleship Mentoring—No Verse**

#### **Week 2: Discipleship and Multiplication**

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” Matthew 9: 36-38 ESV

#### **Week 3: The Word**

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16,17 NASB

#### **Week 4: Prayer**

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The urgent request of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect. James 5:16 HCSB

#### **Week 5: Fellowship, Leading, and More**

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Hebrews 10:24-25 ESV

#### **Week 6: Sin and Idolatry**

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, Romans 3:23 ESV

#### **Week 7: Motivation, New Kingdom Values**

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. Therefore don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Matthew 6:33, 34 HCSB

#### **Week 8: Biblical Strategies for Change**

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Colossians 3:1-3 NASB

#### **Week 9: Biblical Response to “Hard Things”**

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. James 1:2-4 NASB

**Week 10: The Full Armor of God**

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. Ephesians 6:10,11 NASB

**Week 11: Speaking the Truth**

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. Ephesians 4:15,16 ESV

**Week 12: Thankfulness and Contentment**

I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever. Psalm 86:12 ESV

**Week 13: Biblical Decision-making**

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. James 1:5, ESV

**Week 14: Discipleship Training and Biblical Counseling**

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. Colossians 1:28 ESV

**Week 15: How to Develop Future Topics**

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:11, ESV

## APPENDIX 4

### BIBLE STUDY MATERIALS

#### Session 1: Introduction to Discipleship Mentoring

- I. Exponential growth: the modern day parable of the young man and the grains of wheat. The farmer agreed to pay him one grain the first day and double it each succeeding day.<sup>1</sup>

Week	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Week 1	1 grain	2	4	8	16	32	64
Week 2	128	256	512	1024	2048	4096	8192
Week 3	16384	32768	65536	131072	262144	524288	1.05M/\$7.35
Week 4	\$14.70	\$29.40	\$58.80	\$117.60	\$235.20	\$470.40	\$940.80
Week 5	\$1882	\$3763	\$7526	\$15053	\$30106	\$60211	\$120422
Week 6	\$240845	\$481690	\$963379	\$1.93 M	\$3.85 M	\$7.71 M	\$15.4 M

- II. Inspiration for project. Included was a brief testimony of the power of God's Word to dramatically change my thinking, values and choices for the future.

III. Bible Study<sup>2</sup>

- A. Gaining a new desire and appreciation for God's Word: The Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:12-35). Their time of fellowship and study with Jesus opened their spiritual eyes and gave them a deeper understanding of Jesus and strengthened their own walk with Him.

IV. Overview of Project Week by Week

- A. Review of Project schedule  
B. Overview of Bible Study Topics

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<sup>1</sup>By the end of week 3, the young man has gathered 1.05 million grains; at current grain prices that is \$7.35. From that point on figures are in dollars only.

<sup>2</sup>Each session began with a similar format that included a time of welcome, fellowship, time to review accountability to participants' contract, a memory verse activity, prayer, Bible study, and generally some form of application for the evening's study. For brevity, I include only the Bible study outline.

1. The studies are underscored by the themes of “heart change” and “new understanding”<sup>3</sup> (Matt 5:21-48<sup>4</sup>; John 14:8, 9; 2 Cor 5:16-17; Heb 1:1-3). Following Jesus necessitated a change of heart—meaning a change in one’s entire interior—encompassing new thoughts, feelings, and motivations. Jesus took the twelve from focusing on what they could see, touch, and understand (like Thomas, in John 20:25) to seeing and accepting spiritual things by faith.
2. Being a disciple requires new thinking (Matt 15:32-38; 14:13-21; 16:8-12).

In fact, all the Gospels reprise this prophetic and familiar theme (Is 55:8, 9): specifically, that mere human<sup>5</sup> thinking is vastly inferior and often antithetical to God’s will and plan. So obviously, part of becoming a disciple (for the twelve) was learning to see the possibilities as Jesus saw them and not merely living and acting by their own limited eyesight; gaining, then, the “mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:14-16). This theme is still true for modern disciples and will spiral and surface throughout the twelve weeks of Bible study. The Bible studies for this project will attempt to link this idea of heart and mind transformation (Rom 12:1, 2) to each of a series of basic Bible topics. Each topic will challenge and re-direct participants’ thought processes requiring them to anchor it in faith.

3. Study themes (lesson titles were introduced)

C. Overview of Mentor Responsibilities and Commitments<sup>6</sup>

D. Goals of Project

1. Formal Goals of Project (see Chapter One)
2. Informal Goals: that God is glorified; people are equipped for discipleship ministry; and that people come to know Christ or come to know Him more deeply.

E. Q&A

F. Enlistment

## Session 2: Discipleship Mentoring

### I. Pre-Test and Mentor Commitment Cards

### II. Bible Study:

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<sup>3</sup>Matthew’s Gospel captures the “heart” journey of the disciples as they were awakened to (among other things) a completely new concept of “Messiah” and a completely new concept of “Kingdom of God.”

<sup>4</sup>In the latter half of Matthew 5, a familiar refrain repeats, “You have heard it said . . .” Here Jesus started with what the disciples knew and then stretched them (sometimes tipped them upside down) to demonstrate what God actually intended in His Word.

<sup>5</sup>I.e., a type of thinking in which the things of God do not factor into one’s worldview or in crafting solutions to problems.

<sup>6</sup>Material described and explained in the body of chap. 4.

#### A. Theological Overview of Discipleship Mentoring<sup>7</sup>

The primary objectives of the kingdom approach to disciple making include knowing, understanding, and applying God's Word to all of life. It also involves living more obediently to God's commands.<sup>8</sup>

1. One of the most effective practices for discipleship mentoring is to help believers read, study, and internalize God's Word (John 1:1-4)
2. Having been in Christ's presence and heard His teaching, the disciples were later characterized as "having been with Jesus (Acts 4:13)." How did Jesus teach the disciples His Word to achieve that result? Jesus was transparent and modeled to them living out the content of the Word (Matt 9: 35-38; 15, 18; 20:20-28). Jesus called the disciples to imitate His ministry (Matt 10, John 14:12-14). The disciples were held accountable to the Word and its true intentions (Matt 19).
3. How might modern disciplemakers follow the example of Jesus in transferring the content and intentions of God's Word into real life and the life of others? Christians are called to equip the saints (Ephesians 4:11-16), in relationship with other believers, through commitment and love (John 17; 1 Cor 13). So by reviewing the example of Jesus in calling, teaching, and equipping His disciples, modern believers disciple through invitation, acceptance, love, relationship-building, ministry of the Word, encouragement, commitment, prayer, accountability, ministry, and sacrificial service.

#### B. Transformation and Biblical Thinking

Discipleship is important because God thinks differently than man does. (Is 55:8-9, Prov 14:12 *and* 16:25). When people become believers, their thinking does not change automatically or completely overnight (Matt 16:21-23). God desires to use disciplemakers to help new believers become godlier in their thinking and behavior.

#### III. Choosing someone to mentor:

Some considerations: 1) Has God placed someone on your heart or mind? 2) Are you praying for someone (specifically in regard to their spiritual growth)? 3) Do you see or sense that God is at work in someone's life? 4) Has God surprised you with a new relationship with someone who needs mentoring? 5) Do you have a relationship with the person you are considering? 6) Do you have to build or repair your relationship? 7) Is this person agreeable (amenable), teachable, coachable? 8) Is this the right time? Do you have time to invest? Do they? 9) Are you the right person? 10) Are there scriptural or personal reasons for or against mentoring a particular person?

#### IV. Discussion of LeRoy Eims devotional "The Lost Sheep."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Material adapted from chap. 2 of this project.

<sup>8</sup>Charles H. Dunahoo, *Making Kingdom Disciples: A New Framework* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2005), 11.

<sup>9</sup>LeRoy Eims, "The Lost Sheep," Daily Discipleship, accessed May 15, 2014, [http://newengland.cbmc.com/WeeklyDevotional/Devo\\_Archive/5.aspx](http://newengland.cbmc.com/WeeklyDevotional/Devo_Archive/5.aspx).

## Session 3: The WORD

### I. Bible Study

#### A. Applying the NT process<sup>10</sup>

1. Review: the importance of relationship building and the type of commitment that is necessary for effective mentoring in the models of Jesus and Paul.
2. Jesus and Paul depended upon the work of the Holy Spirit and prayer as God brought about spiritual change.
3. A primary tool for disciplemaking is *the WORD of God*. (Heb 4:12, 13; 2 Tim 2:2).

Christopher Adsit explains these three components as the “Three Pillars of Disciplemaking”: prayer, relationship, and content.<sup>11</sup> He writes, “If you are truly interested in seeing that disciple grow, and if you truly believe that it’s God who causes the growth, you’ll be on your knees often and long interceding for that disciple.”<sup>12</sup>

Regarding relationship, Adsit indicates that disciples need a role model, “we must take our responsibility as role models seriously. Paul did. He didn’t hesitate to exhort his disciples to follow his example—not because he was so proud of himself, but because all the while he was conscientiously following the Lord’s example.”<sup>13</sup>

Relationship building is important. Modeling right attitudes and behaviors is important, too; but Jesus did command His followers to teach believers “to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt 28:20). Borrowing from Dr. David Bertch, Adsit explains that disciplemakers should teach new disciples “the what to’s, why to’s, and how to’s.” In other words, disciples should be taught the right things, in the right way, for the right reasons.<sup>14</sup>

#### B. Transformation by the WORD

1. When the phrase “Word of God” is used, what is being described?
  - a. Jesus; God’s decrees (“*Let there be light . . .*”).
  - b. God’s Words of personal address (“*except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.*” Acts 20:23).
  - c. God’s Words as spoken by men (Prophets, preachers), or God’s Words in written form.
  - d. The Canon: a God inspired and ordained process for compiling our Bibles, see Grudem.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Adapted from material in chap. 3.

<sup>11</sup>Christopher Adsit, *Personal Disciple-Making; A Step-by Step Guide for Leading a Christian from New Birth to Maturity* (Orlando: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1996), 54-9

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 55.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 56

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 58.

<sup>15</sup>Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 54-69.

- e. Does God’s Word include the modern Bible, just certain translations, or only the original manuscripts?<sup>16</sup>
2. What do Evangelicals believe about this Word?
- a. All Words in Scripture are God’s Words (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21)
- b. It is inerrant (without error) (Num 23:19; Ps 119:137,138; Prov 30:5; Matt 24:35)
- c. It is infallible. (1. not fallible; not liable to error; 2. not liable to failure; certain; sure: an infallible cure; 3. completely dependable or trustworthy.)<sup>17</sup>  
 Southern Baptists affirm divine authorship, inerrancy, and infallibility in the following statement:  
 The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation (Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21).<sup>18</sup>
- d. The Word of God is All Sufficient (2 Peter 1:3,4).
3. The Heart is transformed through Fellowship with God and His powerful Word
- a. “Following Christ” means one is submitting to Him. The believer no longer seeks his or her own advantage!
- i. “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever”<sup>19</sup>(Ps 86; Is 60:21; Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 6:20; 10:31; Rev 4:11; Ps 16:5-11; 144:15; Is 12:2; Luke 2:10; Phil 4:4; Rev 21:3-4)<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Discussion in this section clarified that the Word of God *in their hands* is reliable and authoritative. Though translations may vary, God preserves the message of His Word.

<sup>17</sup>World Dictionary, “Infallible,” accessed September 23, 2013, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/infallible>.

<sup>18</sup>The Southern Baptist Convention, “The Baptist Faith and Message,” accessed September 23, 2013, <http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp>.

<sup>19</sup>“Westminster Shorter Catechism,” accessed June 21, 2013, <http://www.reformed.org/documents/WSC.html>.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.



ii. “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him”<sup>21</sup>

b. Submitting to Christ means submitting to His will and Word (Matthew 7:24-29).

c. The goal of building upon or internalizing the Word is not just intellectual knowledge but dramatic spiritual change! (Ps 19:7-11, 119:11, Rom 12:1,2).

C. How does one internalize the living and active Word (Heb 4:12)?

1. By developing a reading and study plan, committing to it, being disciplined, and accountable to someone else about one’s reading and study.
2. By reading a volume of Scripture regularly
3. By reading for understanding (meditating on the Word, praying for understanding, writing notes, reviewing cross-references, reading footnotes, looking up foreign words and concepts, and more.).
4. By obeying it and living it—being “doers of the Word”
5. By buying (or borrowing) and using study tools (more than one Bible translation, a bible concordance, a bible dictionary, a bible atlas, reputable commentaries, and online resources like Bible Gateway and ESV Bible online).
6. By memorizing the Word to think about and “process” during one’s devotion or throughout the day ( meditation).
7. By drowning out the world’s media with something better: Evangelical Christian radio, podcasts, and reputable Christian books. God does not call us to just Bible knowledge but Biblical change; so be discerning with the media—even “Christian” media choices.

D. Why Know the WORD? *Because,*

1. God’s Word is *God’s* (eternal, immutable, and all-powerful, without error).
2. It is truth and reveals and displaces error. (“*Your word is truth.*” John 17:17).
3. It is alive and active (Heb 4:12, 1 Thess 2:13).
4. God’s Word is able to make one wise for salvation (2 Tim 3:15).
5. God’s Word is profitable (2 Timothy 3:16,17) for--
  - a. Teaching
  - b. Reproof
  - c. Correction
  - d. Training in Righteousness, That the Man of God may be (very) complete—very mature. Equipped (completely) for *every good work*.

Some would say that our living and praying is poor, because our “hearing” is poor . . . How does spending time in God’s Word help us hear Him better (John 10:1-6)?

E. Spiritual Disciplines (accountability to the Word) in Mentoring

1. Our lives are to reflect a godly example (1 Tim 4:11-16).
2. We are to be obedient to the Word (James 1:19-25).
3. We are accountable to the Word and to fellow believers (Col 3:16 ; Acts 2:42 ).

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<sup>21</sup>John Piper, “Quotes,” accessed June 21, 2013, <http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/25423>.

### Session 4: Prayer

#### I. Bible Study

##### A. Prayer is . . .

Prayer is either a sheer illusion or a personal contact between embryonic, incomplete persons (ourselves) and the utterly concrete Person. Prayer in the sense of petition, asking for things, is a small part of it; confession and penitence are its threshold, adoration its sanctuary, the presence and vision and enjoyment of God its bread and wine.<sup>23</sup>

1. Prayer is drawing near to God (James 4:8)
  2. Prayer is “approaching the throne of grace” (Heb 4:16)
  3. Prayer is revealing one’s needs to a loving Heavenly Father (Rom 8:15; Phil 4:6)
  4. Prayer is a desperate cry for help or protection (Ps 141, 142, 143)
  5. Prayer may involve earnest pleas for God to act on one’s behalf (1 Sam 1:9-16)
  6. Prayer is confession and asking God for forgiveness (Ps 51)
  7. Prayer is thanksgiving (Ps 138: 2; 2 Tim 1:3; 1 Thess 1:2; 5:18; Col 1:3; Luke 2:38)
  8. Prayer is adoration (1 Chron 29:10-13; Ps 34; Is 25:1)
- ##### B. More importantly, prayer changes the believer (2 Cor 12:8-10)
- ##### C. Christ’s example (Matt 6:5-16)
1. Prayer is not for public display (5,6)
  2. Prayer is not a long and eloquent speech (7,8)
  3. Prayer acknowledges who God is (9)
  4. Prayer acknowledges the priorities of God’s kingdom (10)
  5. One should pray for daily needs (11)
  6. One should pray for forgiveness (12)
  7. Believers should pray for protection (13)
  8. One should pray to forgive others and be reconciled to others (14,15, and Matt 5:23-24)
  9. One’s praying and fasting should not attract attention (16-18)
- ##### D. The believer’s experience in prayer
1. How is prayer like spending time with someone one might trust and enjoy? Is this different from your experience? Why?
  2. Consider Matthew 7:7,8:
    - a. Does this passage resonate? Why or why not?
    - b. What generally is one’s response to (apparently) unanswered prayers?
    - c. How might Matthew 7:7-11 and 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 apply to unanswered prayer?
- ##### E. It helps to Remember God’s Character ( Ps 103:8-14).
1. What can one learn about God’s character from Scripture?
  2. What does one learn about God from personal experience?
  3. Which source is more valuable?

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<sup>22</sup>Adapted from chap. 2.

<sup>23</sup>C. S. Lewis, “The Efficacy of Prayer,” accessed June 12, 2013, <http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/92507.pdf>.

- F. Praying Becomes More Natural When
  1. One is desperate! Oh, that believers would know how often that truly is!
  2. Christians come to the end of their own efforts.
  3. Believers realize that their own efforts are not that useful anyway.
  4. One comes to realize that only God can change hearts.
  5. Christians choose to be thankful.
  6. One keeps an “open” line.
- G. “The flesh doesn’t help at all . . .” (John 6:60-65)
- H. Practical Considerations
  1. When should one pray and where? (Luke 5:16; 1 Thess 5:17; 1 Tim 2:8).
  2. Routines help establish new habits.
- I. The value of using Prayer lists
- J. Using Prayer models (Like ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication).

### **Session 5: Fellowship, Leading, and More**

- I. Introduction: *Fellowship of the Ring*. Recall a time of remarkable fellowship. Does the modern church express patience, wisdom, and understanding with one another? Do believers often help others discover their gifts and celebrate and rely upon them? Why or why not?
- II. Bible Study: Fellowship, Leadership, and Service-- 3 Narratives for consideration
  - A. Acts 11:19-26. Fellowship.
    1. What does Luke’s record of the church in Antioch teach us?
    2. Why were the believers in Antioch called “Christians?”
    3. How might modern Christians be challenged by the description ascribed to the believers in Antioch?  
Within the context of Fellowship, some useful things occur: leading, serving, encouraging, and sharing the Word.
  - B. John 13:1-7,12-14. Servant Leading.
    1. Who normally did the foot-washing?
    2. What does the account of the foot washing tell us about serving and leading?  
And consider the following story that posits compassion and service versus religious responsibility.
  - C. Luke 10:30-37. Serving.
    1. What were the things the travelers had in common? What made them different?
    2. What does the story of the Good Samaritan tell us about biblical thinking, fellowship, and service?
  - D. 1 Thessalonians 5:11-18. Encouragement: Christians are in this race together.
    1. Encouragement. Has it become counter-cultural?<sup>24</sup>
    2. Paul was an evangelist, church planter and church encourager
      - a. How about the work of encouraging? How did Paul describe it?
      - b. What aspects of his list of imperatives (vss 12-18) are challenging?

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<sup>24</sup>Doug Binder, “Prep Runner Carries Foe to Finish Line,” accessed October 7, 2013, [http://espn.go.com/high-school/track-and-xc/story/\\_/id/8010251/high-school-runner-carries-fallen-opponent-finish-line](http://espn.go.com/high-school/track-and-xc/story/_/id/8010251/high-school-runner-carries-fallen-opponent-finish-line).

“Bible Thumper” is a pejorative term to describe those who figuratively beat up people with Scripture. Ever experienced this? Ever done it?

- E. 2 Timothy 4:1-5. “Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with complete patience and teaching . . .”
1. Why is this phrase important: “*with complete patience and teaching?*”
  2. How does one carefully and responsibly speak and share the Word? How is this part of fellowship? (Eph 4:15-16)
- F. Ephesians 4: 15. Speaking the truth in love.
1. What does “speaking the truth in love” look and feel like?
  2. What one or two things should one take away from this lesson and practice AND pass on?

## Session 6: Sin and Idolatry

### I. Introduction: Rust vs. paint

Some treatments of exposed metals use paint as a protectant. Note structures like the Golden Gate Bridge that employs more than forty full-time workers to maintain the bridge—constant painting occurs. In drier climates some metals are allowed to oxidize to build up a barrier (patina) against further oxidation. But while paint sits on top of a metal, oxidation actually transforms the surface of metal into a different compound—and reversing the process causes loss.

### II. Bible Study

#### A. What is Sin?

1. Sin is rebellion: “I know what God wants and I absolutely do not want to do that. . .” (Josh 7:1).
2. It is enthusiastic ignorance: “I do not know what God wants, nor am I inclined to find out . . .” (Is 30:1-3).
3. Sin is distraction: “Honestly, I rarely think about what God wants . . .” (Heb 3:7-11).
4. Sin is “lawlessness”: “I do what I want, when I want . . .” (1 John 3:4).
5. Sin is “missing the mark” (Rom 3:23).  
The word that is used most frequently is *hamartia*, “missing the mark”. It is the most comprehensive term for explaining sin. Paul used the verb *hamartano* when he wrote, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). God has a high and holy standard of what is right, and so long as man follows the Divine standard he will see himself as he truly exists in God’s eyes. The flat statement of the Almighty is that all men have fallen far short of God’s required standard. It is the popular and common practice of men to create their own standards; however, God has established His standard of perfection for entry into Heaven, and all men have “missed the mark” as an archer’s arrow would fall to the ground because it fell short of its target.<sup>25</sup>  
“Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature. Sin is here defined in relation to God and his moral law. Sin includes not only individual acts such as stealing or lying or committing murder, but also attitudes that are contrary to the attitudes God requires

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<sup>25</sup>Lehman Straus, “The Doctrine of Sin,” accessed October 7, 2013, <https://bible.org/article/doctrine-sin>.

of us . . . therefore a life that is pleasing to God is one that has moral purity not only in actions, but also in desires of heart.”<sup>26</sup>  
Sin is choosing the easy way; and / or falling away from what is known to be truth.

6. Sin is unintentional transgression (Lev 4:27-28).
7. It is also intentional omission (James 4:17).
8. Sin is also called transgression, iniquity, sin (Ps 51:1,2).  
Blot out my transgressions: The figure suggests removal from a record or a table (cf. Exod 32:33; Num 5:23; Isa. 43:25). Wash me: As a garment (Exod. 19:10). Cleanse me: Used of removing the dross from metals (Mal. 3:3), but also of making one clean and fit to appear before God (Lev. 14:11). Throughout the psalm the three words descriptive of the psalmist’s unworthiness recur: transgressions, iniquity, sin.<sup>27</sup>
9. Sin is also described as “stain” (Jer 2:22; Eph 5:27 ; Ps 51:1). Like pepperoni pizza stains on favorite shirts, or obvious carpet discoloration, or bleach stains from laundry; all mar the appearance (and sometimes the substance) of the thing stained. In addition, stains (and bullet holes) make hides and furs less valuable.

#### B. How sin works:

1. Sin as a powerful devastating event (2 Sam 6:1-7).
2. Sin as cancer; a slow erosion of fellowship with God (1 Kings 3:1-3; 11:1-13).
3. Sin as snare (Prov 5:22).
4. Sin as control (Prov 21:4).
5. Sin distorts God’s truth (Gen 3:1).

#### C. Consequences of Sin:

1. Withering (Jer 17:5,6).
2. “Lack of soundness” (Ps 38:3).
3. Spiritual blindness (Matt 15:1-20).
4. Loss of fellowship (1 John 1:5-10).
5. Hardening (Jer 5:1-6).
6. Loss (Hag 1:1-11).
7. Pruning (John 15:1-11).
8. If untreated--eternal separation from God (Matt 13:40-43).

#### D. God’s Remedy:

1. Confessing (Ps 32:3-5; 1 John 1:9).
2. Repentance (Ps 51:10; 2 Cor 7:9-11).
3. *Storing* The Word (Ps 119:11).
4. Choosing the right (Rom 6:13; Col 2:6-7; Heb 12:1-4; 1 Peter 2:24 ).
5. Praying (Ezra 9:1-15; Ps 9: 1, 7-10).
6. Fellowship / Accountability (1 John 1:7).

#### E. The Nature of Idolatry

1. Idolatry Supplants God (Ex 20:1-11).
2. Idolatry as Snare (Ex 23:31-33). Idolatry ensnares us by appealing to our desire to worship something other than the one true God (Ex 32:1-6). The Puritans looked not just at behavior but at underlying root

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<sup>26</sup>Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 490.

<sup>27</sup>George Arthur Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), 4:268.

motives and desires. Man is a worshipper; all problems grow out of 'sinful imagination' or idol manufacturing.<sup>28</sup>

3. Idolatry accelerates us in the wrong direction. According to Ezekiel 8:5-18 and Romans 1:18-25, idolatry is false worship and progressive; it pulls us farther and farther from God. Our false worship offends God and separates us from Him (Ezek 14:1-3).

#### F. Idolatry's cure

1. Repent! Put them away (Josh 24:13-15; 1 Sam 7:3-4; 1 John 2:15-17)!
2. Get a new heart (Ezek 11:19-21).
3. Guard one's (new) heart (1 John 5:19).
4. Trust the one true God, instead (Dan 3:16-18).

## Session 7: Motivation and New Kingdom Values

### I. Bible Study: Motivations and New Kingdom Values

- A. Introduction: Relentless children and relentless hunting dogs . . . Recall a relentless pursuit. What was that like? What aspects of one's being were involved?
- B. Motivations: From where do they come? David Powlison confesses, "My behavior is a strategy which expresses *my motives*: my trusts, my wants, my fears, my 'felt needs.' Such motives range along a spectrum from the consciously calculating to the blindly compulsive."<sup>29</sup>  
Ever hear the phrase, "the heart wants what it wants . . .?" That is generally the excuse people give for all kinds of bad behavior. Even as a believer, one can have all kinds of desires that are not helpful . . .
  1. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? (Jer 17:9, ES V)
  2. Behavior's motivation is seated in one's heart (1 Kings 11:1-6; Matt 13:13-15; Jer 24:4-7; Luke 6:43-45).
  3. And the "heart" is composed of what three things? All three must be rehabilitated by the Holy Spirit!  
So not only did Jesus (as well as the OT prophets) speak of "heart change" Jesus also introduced a new value system; and He spoke as someone altogether different (Matt 7:29).
- C. His Message and Approach were derived from New Kingdom Values (Matt 5-7).
  1. The true Messiah was so counter-cultural, He offended the religious of that day (Luke 17:20-21).
  2. Jesus came with redemptive purpose (Luke 1:68; Gal 3:13; 4,5; Titus 2:14; Heb 9:15; John 14:8-14). He came to redeem mankind, show us the way to the Father, die for our sins, and reveal to us the attributes, character, and plans of God--so Christ's teaching and preaching, His healings and miracles, His associations, everything He did was in concert with those objectives.
  3. Different values guided Jesus
    - a. True compassion for the needs of others (Matt 9:36; 11:1-6)
    - b. True concern for the poor . . .(Luke 4:18)

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<sup>28</sup>Tim Keller, "Puritan Resources for Biblical Counseling," accessed October 14, 2013, <http://www.ccef.org/puritan-resources-biblical-counseling>.

<sup>29</sup>David Powlison, "Idols of the Heart and 'Vanity Fair,'" accessed October 14, 2013, <http://www.ccef.org/idols-heart-and-vanity-fair>.

- c. True concern for those marginalized by their choices and behaviors (Matt 25:31-40).
  - d. True concern for the weak and ill (Matt 4:24; 8:16; 14:14).
  - e. True concern for widows and orphans (Luke 20:45-47).
  - f. Truth and integrity: He called out the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (Matt 23).
  - g. Love for His enemies (Matt 5:43-48).
  - h. Respect for God's Word (Matt 5:17; 13:10-17).
4. Consequently His actions were different, also.
- a. Called disciples from the common rabble (Matt 4:18-22; 9:9).
  - b. Did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it (Matt 5: 17-20).
  - c. Revolutionary teaching: "You have heard it said" (Matt 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 43).
  - d. Did good things quietly (Matt 6:1-4).
  - e. Prayed sincerely, privately, and formatively (Matt 6:5-14).
  - f. Fasted secretly (Matt 6:16-18).
  - g. Redefined treasure (Matt 6:19-24).
  - h. Offered an antidote for worry (Matt 6: 25-34).
  - i. Did not judge others (Matt 7:1-6).
  - j. Demonstrated God was an approachable and accessible (Matt 7:7-11).
  - k. Lived the Golden Rule (Matt 7:12).
  - l. Explained the small gate and narrow road (Matt 7:13,14)
  - m. Challenged the religious about the kingdom (Matt 7:15-23).
  - n. Healed Gentiles (Matt 8:5-13).
  - o. Controlled the weather! (Matt 8:23-27).
  - p. Violated the Pharisaical laws of the Sabbath (Matt 12:1-14).
- D. Personal Change / Revolution will (only) occur when our motivations and values are transformed by Jesus. Christ's transformation, for example, allows us to (among other things)
- 1. To trust in the LORD and do good . . . (Ps 37:3-5).
  - 2. To not worry about one's life . . . (Matt 6: 25-34).

## **Week 8: Biblical Strategies for Change**

### I. Bible Study: Biblical Strategies for Change

- A. Introduction: *"Good people will do good things, lots of them, because they are good people. They will do bad things because they are human."*<sup>30</sup> "We're only human" is an excuse for every form of weakness and stupidity. In reality, people were created in God's image for His glory and His good works. Christians are not called to legalism, like the self-righteous Pharisees; but neither are they allowed to be uninvolved in their own spiritual growth.
- B. But how?
  - 1. What is the believer's responsibility in spiritual growth?
    - a. "Straining Toward the Goal" (Phil 3:7-16)
    - b. "God Who is at Work in You" (Phil 2: 12, 13)
    - c. Is "Let go and let God" good theology? Are there some sinful behaviors people can avoid in their own strength?

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<sup>30</sup>Harold S. Kushner, "Living a Life That Matters: Resolving the Conflict between Conscience and Success," accessed October 30, 2013, <http://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/3168793-living-a-life-that-matters-resolving-the-conflict-between-conscience-an>.

2. Where is the starting point? Is spiritual maturity both a reality and an unfolding reality—like marriage? Is it similar to being *pronounced* “husband and wife”, but still learning thirty years later how to *be* “husband and wife?”

C. Two Concepts: Reviewing Justification and Sanctification

1. Justification occurs the moment one accepts Christ as his or her Savior. It is a gift! The report of one’s sinful and undeserving life gets a big stamp on it that says “Redeemed! Debts paid in full!” (Rom 8:30; Eph 2:8, 9; Gal 2:16). At that point believers are Christians by the skin of their teeth—no, better, Christians only by God’s grace! Believers are still imperfect, sinful creatures—unequipped and lacking understanding for much of ministry.
2. *Sanctification*, by contrast, is where the believer (by faith, God’s power, grace, His Word, and the Holy Spirit) over time grows to become mature and complete. (Acts 20:32; 26:18)
3. The believer is always in need of God’s grace. (1 Cor 15:10; 2 Cor 9:8)

D. Principles of Growth

1. Personal Purity and Obedience (Heb 12:1-16). There are disciplines one can adopt that when applied prayerfully and humbly, can help the believer grow. Most of the models out there emphasize Bible reading/study, prayer, fellowshiping with other believers, worship, and being involved in some kind of ministry. Regular practice of these things will help Christians grow—as long as they do not become idols or laws all by themselves. Biblical imperatives give one a clue as to those things one must prayerfully accept as a personal responsibility (at least in part).
  - a. “Let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us ” (12:1).
  - b. “In your struggle against sin you have not resisted to the point of shedding blood ” (12:4).
  - c. “Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet” (12:12).
2. “Put Off” and “Put On” (Col 3:1-17; Rom 13: 11-14; Eph 4: 1-3, 17-32). The letters to the Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians reveal more biblical imperatives in regard to one’s conduct as a believer.
  - a. “Seek the things the things that are above ” (Col 3:1).
  - b. “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you ” (Col 3:5).
  - c. “But now you must put them all away ” (Col 3:8).
  - d. “Seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self ” (Col 3:9).
  - e. “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience ” (Col 3:12).
  - f. “And above all these put on love ” (Col 3:14).
  - g. “Cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light” (Rom 13:12).
  - h. “Let us walk properly . . . ” (Rom 13:13).
  - i. “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh ” (Rom 13:14).
  - j. “Walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called” (Eph 4:1).
  - k. “You must no longer walk as the Gentiles do” (Eph 4:17).
  - l. “Put off your old self ” (Eph 4:22).



- m. “Be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self” (Eph 4:23,24).
- n. “Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth” (Eph 4:25).
- o. “Let the thief no longer steal” (Eph 4: 28).
- p. “Be kind to one another ” (Eph 4:32).

In brief, the believer’s growth is a cooperative work with the Holy Spirit, empowered by the will and grace of God (Phil 2: 12, 13; Gal 5:22-26). Growth requires both our efforts and our reliance upon God. Sometimes it requires our silence and stillness, too.

### **Week 9: The Biblical Response to “Hard Things”**

*O God, you have rejected us, broken our defenses; you have been angry; oh, restore us. You have made the land to quake; you have torn it open; repair its breaches, for it totters. You have made your people see hard things; you have given us wine to drink that made us stagger. (Ps 60:1-3, ESV)*

#### I. Bible Study: Biblical Responses to Hard Things

- A. Introduction: *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*<sup>31</sup>; two poor conclusions.
- B. Definitions: Some New Testament Words<sup>32</sup> descriptive of difficult times:
  - Trials, Tribulations, Afflictions, Sufferings, etc.
  - 1. *Peirasmos*<sup>33</sup> (“trials”, “tests”, “temptations”), James 1:2.
  - 2. *Thlipsis*<sup>34</sup> (“persecution”, “affliction”, “distress”, “tribulation”), 1 Thess 3:3. Also connotes compression, “crushing” ( as in “between a rock and a hard place”).
  - 3. *Dióko*<sup>35</sup> (“persecution”) 2 Tim 3:12.
  - 4. *Pathéma*<sup>36</sup> (“a difficult experience”, “hardship”, or “pain”) Rom 8:18.

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<sup>31</sup>Harold S Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* (New York: Anchor, 1981). He concluded that because evil persists in this world, God is either not caring or not all-powerful.

<sup>32</sup>Though distinct and different words, the differences between the experiences described by the above words may be lost on those experiencing them. Thus, the different words will be categorized together as “hard things” for this study.

<sup>33</sup>Verlyn D. Verbrugge, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, abridged ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), s.v. “πειρασμος.”

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., s.v. “θλίψις.”

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., s.v. “διώκω.”

<sup>36</sup>James Strong, *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), s.v. “πάθημα.”

5. *Sugkakopatheó*<sup>37</sup> (“suffer together”, “to bear evil treatment along with”) 2 Tim 2:3
6. *Siniazo*<sup>38</sup> (“to sift”), Luke 22:31
- C. “Hard Things” in the American experience includes grief/loss of loved one(s), health issues, legal/civil/financial issues, accidents, loss of possessions, homelessness, hunger, and waiting.
- D. “Hard Things” in the Third World experience might contain tsunamis, floods, earthquakes, poverty, sickness, terrorism, government / military oppression, homelessness, hunger, health issues, death, grief and loss.
- E. “Hard Things” in the *Persecuted* Third World experience would be all the above, plus *intentional* acts of starvation, false imprisonment, mob attacks, murder, rape, and torture.
- F. Hardships are not (Jer 12:5):
  1. A longer than usual line at the drive-up window at McDonald’s.
  2. Inconveniences that are magnified out of proportion—i.e., small irritations that cannot compare to the difficulties suffered by the worldwide community of believers.
  3. Not getting our *preferences* even as God meets our needs.
- G. Hardships are inevitable (Ps 34:17-19; 1 Thess 3:1-4; Acts 14:19-23; 2 Tim 3:10-12).
- H. Purpose of Hardships
  1. For God’s Own Glory and Purposes (Is 48:10-11; Job 1:8-12; 2:3-8; Luke 22:31-32).
  2. For Our Own Growth and Humility (1Peter 1:3-7; Deut 8:1-5).
- I. Unbiblical Responses to Hardships
  1. Abandoning one’s call (2 Tim 4:10).
  2. Fear and Doubt (Luke 7:20).
  3. Bitterness (Job 10:1; Lam 3:4-6; Heb 12:7-15).
- J. Biblical Responses to Hardships.
  1. Whatever the category of our hardship, remember, one principle still applies: God is at work (Rom 8:28).
  2. Joy (James 1:2-4)
  3. Rejoice, don’t be anxious, pray, listen to truth (Phil 4:4-9)
  4. Keep your focus (2 Tim 2:3-4)
  5. Trust God, be steadfast (Phil 4:11-13, 19; James 1:12)
  6. Be courageous (2 Sam 23:11-12)
  7. Take the *Long View*:
    - a. Don’t grow weary (Heb 12:3-13)
    - b. Check for cracks in the foundation (Ps 139:23, 24)
    - c. Submit to and Wait on God (Daniel, chapters 1, 2, 6)

*Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.* 1 Peter 5:8, ESV

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., “συγκακοπαθέω.”

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., s.v. “σινιάζω.”

## Week 10: The Full Armor of God

### I. Bible Study:

- A. Introduction: Sheep without a shepherd—what are their chances against a determined predator?
- B. There is a battle to prepare for (Eph 6:10-19)
- C. God's armor
  1. Be strong *in the LORD* and in the strength of *His might*
  2. God's armor (not ours) helps us stand firm against the devil's attacks.
  3. For you (should) know that believers are not fighting humans or their plans and ideas. They fight rulers, powers, world forces of this darkness, and spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.
  4. So, knowing this, Christians are to take up the *FULL* armor of God.
  5. *Only then* can they resist the evil coming their way AND stand firm. In this first section, Paul emphasizes that we need God's help in resisting the attacks of Satan.
  6. Stand firm, then, *by* putting on the Belt of Truth, the Breastplate of Righteousness, shoes composed of the "Preparation of the Gospel of Peace", the Shield of Faith for protection from flaming arrows, the Helmet of Salvation, the Sword of the SPIRIT—which is the WORD of GOD. AND, last but not least *Pray!*
- D. The First Arms Race  
Gunpowder had found its way to Europe by the 1300s, and by the 1500s firearms were beginning to play a decisive role in the outcome of battle. Armor was at first made heavier to withstand the bullets, but by 1600 armor was losing the arms race. Effective armor was becoming too heavy to wear, and by 1700s armor had all but disappeared from the battlefield.<sup>39</sup>

It is vitally important to have the right kind of armor—built for the demands of a given battle field. Modern soldiers would be sitting ducks in the metal suits prized by knights of the Middle Age; so should believers in a spiritual battle have the right kind of armor.

- E. Let's Review the *Full Armor of God*
  1. Belt of Truth: offered a measure of protection for the abdomen and below; held sheathes and scabbards for weapons; offered a place to tuck in one's robe; helped secure the breastplate; was an essential piece of equipment.
  2. The Breastplate of Righteousness: made of thick leather; sometimes reinforced with animal hoofs, bone, or metal (officers might have metal breastplates); designed to protect vital organs, front and back.
  3. Shoes composed of the "Preparation of the Gospel of Peace." Romans had great shoe technology: more like boots, well made, protective, sturdy, and with excellent traction. They enabled the soldier to traverse difficult ground and when he had to, make a stand! Charles Stanley makes this connection,  
"Part of the preparation of the gospel of peace is a preparation to face death, which is inevitable for every person. We need to be prepared to face persecution . . . . We need to be prepared to face hard times, which happen to all people. But the gospel—the good news in all this—is that we face these times of trial and difficulty with a deep, inner peace that

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<sup>39</sup>Higgins Armory Museum, accessed November 11, 2013, <http://www.higgins.org/evolution-european-armor>.

comes only from knowing that we are grounded in our relationship with Christ Jesus and nothing can destroy that relationship.”<sup>40</sup>

John MacArthur adds,

“The gospel of peace is the marvelous truth that in Christ we are now at peace with God and are one with Him. Therefore, when our feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, we stand in the confidence of God’s love for us, His union with us, and His commitment to fight for us.”<sup>41</sup>

The three items of armor (above) were always on the soldier when on duty. He might take off his helmet and lay down his shield and sword when eating or resting, but his belt, breastplate and shoes stayed on.

4. Shield of Faith: described by Paul as the larger shield (theureos) used by Roman soldiers, which could protect the entirety of a soldier crouching behind or under it.<sup>42</sup> In the movie *300*<sup>43</sup>, Spartan soldiers used a similar shield to protect them from advancing Persian troops and a sky blackened by arrows. When made of leather, the shield could be wetted to blunt the effect of flaming arrows.
5. Helmet of Salvation: made of thick leather; later, leather lined metal, Allowed soldiers to survive blows to the head that would normally incapacitate them. Dr. Stanley explains,  
“To take the helmet of salvation means to remind ourselves that Jesus is our Savior, and that what He has done for us, He desires to do for others. It is to remind ourselves that we once were sinners and that by His grace, we are no longer in bondage to sin. It is to remind ourselves that the Holy Spirit is always with us to save us from the enemy.”<sup>44</sup>
6. The Sword of the SPIRIT—which is the WORD of GOD. Apparently Paul wants to be very clear about the analogy in this instance. The sword described here is a shorter one (machaira) used in close-quarters combat. The soldier kept it close at hand at all times.<sup>45</sup> The specific Greek word for the “word of God” in this passage is *rhema*—which usually refers to individual words and messages, not the grander proclamation of the Christian message as a whole<sup>46</sup> (2 Tim 2:15).
7. AND, last but not least Prayer!

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<sup>40</sup>Charles Stanley, *When the Enemy Strikes: The Keys to Winning Your Spiritual Battles* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 154.

<sup>41</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1986), 355.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 358

<sup>43</sup>Zack Snyder, Kurt Johnstad, and Michael Gordon, *300* (Burbank, CA: Warner Brothers, 2006)

<sup>44</sup>Charles Stanley, *When the Enemy Strikes*, 162.

<sup>45</sup>MacArthur, *Ephesians*, 367-68.

<sup>46</sup>Verbrugge, *New International Dictionary*, s.v. “*ρημα*.”

## 8. Prayer Quotes<sup>47</sup>

“It is never a waste of time to wait on God.” J. Hudson Taylor

“A praying Christian is a constant threat to the stability of Satan's government. The Christian is a holy rebel loose in the world with access to the throne of God.” - A.W. Tozer

“I desire not much; I pray against it.” - John Elliot

“Prayer is not a preparation for the battle; it is the battle!” - Leonard Ravenhill

## Week 11: Speaking the Truth

“A recent survey said that 51% of Americans don't know any evangelicals – even casually.”<sup>48</sup>

“Withhold no part of the precious truth, but speak what you know and declare what you have seen. Do not allow the toil or darkness or possible unbelief of your friends to dissuade you. Let us rise and march to the place of duty, and there declare what great things God has shown to our soul.”<sup>49</sup>

### I. Bible Study

- A. Introduction: What is Paul trying to communicate in Romans 10:9-15? Regarding verses 13, 14, to whom is he directing this message?
- B. The Divine Objective--why Christ came to earth: (Luke 5: 31,32; 12: 49-53; 19: 10)  
Christ came to earth for a specific purpose. His methods and activities served that purpose. How might His modern followers articulate and participate in His purpose?
- C. The Divine Commissioning --what Christians are to do and speak: (Mark 6:7-13). What did Jesus hope to accomplish in sending out the twelve?<sup>50</sup>
- D. The Un-Divine Participants--those whom Jesus chose to carry out His mission  
“The twelve, at the period of their first trial mission, were not fit to preach the gospel, or to do good works, either among Samaritans, or Gentiles. Their

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<sup>47</sup>“Prayer Quotes,” accessed November 11, 2013, <http://kneelingwetriumph.com/prayer/prayerquotes.htm>.

<sup>48</sup>Kevin Roose, “The Unlikely Disciple: A Sinner's Semester at America's Holiest University,” accessed November 18, 2013, <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/witness>.

<sup>49</sup>Alistair Begg. “Witnessing Quotes,” accessed November 18, 2013, <http://christian-quotes.ochristian.com/Witnessing-Quotes/>.

<sup>50</sup>For further study on the commissioning of the twelve, see Matt 10:1-39

hearts were too narrow, their prejudices too strong; there was too much of the Jew, too little of the Christian, in their character.”<sup>51</sup>

- E. The Objects of Christ’s Love--those He came to save: (Matt 11:2-6)  
“We extend a special welcome to those who are single, married, divorced, gay, straight, filthy rich, dirt poor, yo no habla Ingles, skinny as a rail, could afford to lose a few pounds, or are working off last night’s buzz . . .”<sup>52</sup>
- F. What Christians Are To Do
1. Pray (Matt 9:38; Acts 4:29; 1 Tim 2:1).
  2. Be Willing<sup>53</sup> to Speak the Truth (Eph 4:15-16). To whom is the epistle of Ephesians addressing in chapter four? If Paul intends all believers to speak the truth, what might “speaking the truth in love” require?
  3. Understand and Be Willing to Take Advantage of Opportunities (Acts 6:1-7).
  4. Be Obedient (Acts 6:8-10; 8:4-8, 26-40).
  5. Be Willing to Invest in Others (1 Cor 3:10-15; 2 Tim 2:1-2).
  6. Be Willing to Sacrifice (John 1:1-5, 11-14). God came out of His splendor and majesty and control (and comfort) to seek after a lost people. A people that He knew beforehand would largely reject Him. He came anyway. What might believers gain from that example?
  7. Be Willing to Change (1 Cor 9:22). Are there traditions (not Scriptures or Biblical principles) with which you struggle giving up?

## Week 12: Thankfulness and Contentment

*I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:10-13, ESV)*

### I. Bible Study:

- A. Introduction: We are entering the season when people traditionally give others gifts. Can you recall a time when someone received a really sad present and they acted genuinely thankful for it? Or perhaps recall a time when the “thanks” was pretty meager or fake?  
Describe the person that is genuinely thankful. Are they often that way? What makes him or her thankful people? Do any know someone who is content? What creates contentment? Paul sets the bar on contentedness in Philippians 4:10-13.
- B. Being Thankful and Content: Definitions.
1. *eucharisteō*: “When Paul exhorts his readers to thanksgiving, he normally uses the noun. This word is always used absolutely; it marks

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<sup>51</sup>A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve; Timeless Principles for Leadership Development* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1988), 101.

<sup>52</sup>Brooklake Church, bulletin welcome message, Federal Way, WA.

<sup>53</sup>“Willing” in this section does not mean “one could do something if absolutely necessary, but (hopefully) might not have to.” Rather, “willing” in this sense is to actually want to do something and hope for the opportunity!

out thanksgiving and the showing of gratitude as basic and lasting elements of the Christian life . . .”<sup>54</sup>

2. *autarkēs*: “. . . as Paul uses it in Philippians means “complete readiness to accept whatever God gives. The apostle makes no distinction between the necessary and the superfluous, but simply gives thanks for everything.”<sup>55</sup>

C. Some Enemies of Thankfulness and Contentment. Gaining this is a part of one’s spiritual battle. (2 Cor 10:3-5; Eph 4:20-28).

1. Envy, or desiring more than what one has (Psalm 73:2,3).
2. Bitterness: perpetually critical--sour, bitter--carrying a grudge; hardened, resentful, vengeful (Ps 73:21-26; Heb 12:15; Eph 4:31, 32).
3. Sense of Entitlement: believing one deserves better (Matt 20:1-16).
4. Focusing on Loss and Self-Pity; too busy grieving what has been lost, longing for the past (Gen 19:15-17; 23-26).

Albert Einstein once commented that “[t]echnological change is like an axe in the hands of a pathological criminal.”<sup>56</sup> Sometimes *any* change feels like an axe crashing into our serene lives. Depending upon one’s personality, change can be difficult or worse; but depending upon the change, it can be welcome and even celebrated – and sometimes by even the most change-averse. The effects of change are contextual and often relative. Whatever one’s personality, his or her level of thankfulness and contentment can be limited by their response to change.

Lot’s “lingering” and his wife’s decision to look back were evidence of disobedience (or at least in the first instance, a hesitation to obey). Perhaps they were reluctant to change; perhaps Lot and his family harbored some longing or mourning for the status quo. For some, as they grow older, there is a feeling of loss. Though they could name and recite countless blessings, they might just as clearly identify too many things that they miss (and mourn)—so many inescapable changes that time has brought.

So there can be a big caveat in one’s thankfulness: thankful, yet also wishing that if some of the former things could be restored—then things would be perfect! That is thankfulness with a pretty significant qualifier, and such an attitude permits a growing dissatisfaction with the work of God in our lives.

5. Busyness and Distraction (Exodus 34:21; Psalm 23: 1,2 ; Matthew 11:28-30).

“The conditions of modern-day living devour margin. . . Marginless is being thirty minutes late to the doctor’s office because you were twenty minutes late getting out of the bank because you were ten minutes late dropping the kids off at school because the car ran out of gas . . . and you forgot your wallet. Margin on the other hand, is having breath left

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<sup>54</sup>Verbrugge, *New International Dictionary*, s.v. “εὐχαριστία.”

<sup>55</sup>Ibid, s.v. “αὐτάρκης.”

<sup>56</sup>Albert Einstein, “Quotes,” accessed November 21, 2013, <http://quotations.about.com/od/changequotes/a/change4.htm>.

at the top of the staircase, money left at the end of the month, and sanity left at the end of adolescence.”<sup>57</sup>

When people are always striving to increase, improve, extend, and change, there is little time or inclination to reflect and be thankful for what is.

- D. Recovering Thankfulness and Contentment (1 Chron 16:8; Ps 73:28; Eph 5:17-21; 1 Thess 5:12-18). Thankfulness and contentment ride together; it is difficult to have one without the other. But, to recover a thankful spirit and a contented heart, believers need to work at it intentionally.
1. Recognize all one has to be thankful for—the positives and the negatives that have brought us grace and strength.
  2. Proactively be and act thankful for that which is to come. It is a common thing to fear the future and what it might bring. Just as fear and faith can't coexist, it is hard for fear and thankfulness to flourish side by side. Having an expectation of being thankful for things to come is to express faith in and praise for our God.
  3. Express confidence in God by being thankful for even those things one would rather avoid.
  4. Guard against the enemies of thankfulness, for they rob the believer of God's encouragement and blessings.

### **Week 13: Biblical Decision-Making**

#### **I. Bible Study**

- A. Introduction: Monday football meetings review the previous week's game. Coaches and players are often asked to defend decisions that “seemed like a good idea at the time . . .”
- B. What contributes to bad decisions?
1. Unforeseen Circumstances?
  2. Poor Planning?
  3. Lack of or Little Research?
  4. Bad Timing?
  5. Insufficient Resources?
  6. Emotions (wants and desires)?
  7. Choosing a path that was clearly not God's Will?  
Does the result of a decision validate whether it was a good choice or not? Can some good decisions have bad outcomes?
- C. Popular ways of making decisions<sup>58</sup> include
1. Trying to determine what is the (intrinsically) “right thing to do.”
  2. Reviewing pros and cons to determine the most beneficial course to pursue.
  3. Deciding based upon one's perception of his or her responsibilities (or character): in other words, something akin to “what would Jesus do (WWJD)?”
  4. Deriving judgments from strong feelings about the matter.

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<sup>57</sup>Richard A. Swenson, *Margin; Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2004), 13.

<sup>58</sup>Brian O'Toole, “Four Ways People Approach Ethics,” accessed December 2, 2013, <http://www.chausa.org/docs/default-source/health-progress/four-ways-people-approach-ethics-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=0>.



People routinely use all of these methods (and perhaps subconsciously) in making important decisions. Of course, there is a fifth popular method of deciding—where one chooses *not* to decide.<sup>59</sup>

D. Biblical decision-making, by contrast, is an effort to understand and make decisions within the context of God's Will; i.e., "what does God want me to do?" Or, "what is 'God's Will' (in a particular matter)?"

E. God's Will Defined<sup>60</sup>

1. God's *Sovereign Will* is that overarching, cosmic plan that God has for the universe (Gen 1; Job 38; Ps 148; Is 40:21-28; 45:7,12; John 1:1-3; Col 1:16,17; Rev 4:11).
2. God's *Revealed Will* is that part of God's Sovereign Will that He has communicated to us (Ex 31:18; Ps 19:1-11; John 1:14; 2 Tim 3:16; 1 John 5:6-13)
  - a. Through His Word (Deut 5:6-21; John 13:34).
  - b. Through His Word and the Holy Spirit<sup>61</sup> (John 14:25, 26)
  - c. Through Jesus Christ (Matt 11:27; John 1; John 5:19; 14:7-10)
  - d. Through Scriptural principals; i.e., teaching derived from multiple Scriptures that applies in a variety of general matters. (Rom 8:5-8; Eph 4:1,2)
3. God's Will *For Individuals* is that subset of God's Sovereign Will that God has uniquely designed for individual believers (Jer 29:11; 1 Cor 12:27-30; James 3:1.)
  - a. God's *General Will*; for example (1 Tim 2:4; 1 Thess 4:3-8; Matt 28:18-20; Luke 21:10-15; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 6:20; 1 Peter 4:16)
  - b. God's *Ideal*<sup>62</sup> Will (John 21:18-23; Acts 9:10-18; Acts 10; 13:1-3; Rom 12: 4-8)
  - c. God's *Permissive*<sup>63</sup> Will (Jonah 1:1-3,12; Jer 43:1-7; Acts 15:36-41)
  - d. Challenges: God's ideal may be unmet due to the believer's misunderstanding, rebellion, discouragement, or late obedience;

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<sup>59</sup>These may be popular or common methods of decision-making: I'm describing "what is" not what decision-making should be.

<sup>60</sup>Some of the material for this lesson is derived from Stuart W. Scott, "Biblical Decision Making" (classroom lecture notes, 80553—*Problems and Procedures of Biblical Counseling*, June 2010).

<sup>61</sup>I include "His Word and the Holy Spirit" to be distinct from those who have a more mystical approach to decision-making that may include ideas like "inner promptings of the Holy Spirit." Apart from the connection to the Word, some are misled by their own desires masquerading as "promptings" and "signs."

<sup>62</sup>There is some valuable and necessary debate about these levels of God's will, particularly how narrowly some define God's ideal plan for our lives. This discussion is very thoughtfully outlined in Garry Friesen and Robin Maxson, *Decision Making and the Will of God* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 2004).

<sup>63</sup>God's "permissive" will is understood as the latitude God allows us in responding to His plan for our lives. An extreme example might be that of Jonah. His late and reluctant obedience was still useful in reaching Nineveh.

or as some contend, God's ideal will may include more than one choice anyway.

#### F. Making Sound, Biblically-based Decisions

1. Is there a willingness to be obedient? It requires
  - a. A personal relationship with Jesus
  - b. A desire to honor Him in all that one does
  - c. A willingness to sacrifice for obedience
2. Pray for Wisdom and Discernment (James 1:5)
3. Do the homework and gather sufficient data about the decision.
4. Determine if any Scriptures directly apply.
5. Do any Scriptural Principles apply? Some questions to consider:
  - a. Will the decision glorify God?
  - b. Will the decision (for example) exercise good stewardship?
  - c. Will the decision respect the needs and wishes of one's family?
  - d. Will the decision affect one's witness to the lost?
  - e. Will it promote one's walk with the Lord? . . .
  - f. Will this decision open the door to more temptation? Could it become controlling?
  - g. Will it hurt my reputation?
  - h. Will this hurt people I influence?
  - i. Will this choice discredit the name of Jesus?
6. Obtain godly counsel<sup>64</sup> to evaluate one's blind spots about the choices and the process (1 Kings 12:1-15; Ps 32:8; 119:24; Rom 15:14). Take note: this is not the same as asking friends for personal advice.
7. If two or more options survive the process, then choose the course that is most appealing. Be careful not to use this "freedom" to indulge the flesh!

#### G. On the Other Hand, Be Wary of<sup>65</sup>

1. Misusing the Bible
2. Circumstances (even Fleeces)
3. Setting up Conditions
4. Basing decisions upon "opened" or "closed" "doors"
5. Feelings
6. Dreams
7. Reason
8. Signs
9. "Inner Peace"

### **Week 14: Discipleship Training and Biblical Counseling<sup>66</sup>**

The call to Disciplemaking comes from Matthew's Great Commission. It is an all-encompassing commission directed to all believers. There are different tools to use in the process, however, one of which is Biblical Counseling.

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<sup>64</sup>Godly counsel is not set above the value of the Scriptures in making decisions. The right counselors can and should direct people to passages and principles they may have overlooked.

<sup>65</sup>Stuart W. Scott, "Biblical Counseling" (classroom lecture notes, 80551—*Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, July 2011).

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

## I. Bible Study

### A. What is Biblical Counseling?

Biblical Counseling is the Spirit-empowered process of one Christian humbly and compassionately coming along side another with careful consideration of all data (personal, situational and medical), to lend words of encouragement, loving admonition and/or practical help toward . . . definite goals . . .<sup>67</sup>

The goals of Biblical Counseling include saving faith and the specific application of God's Word to their hearts and situation<sup>68</sup> (Col 1:28-29).

### B. Biblical Counsel is not

1. Secular counseling, or secular counseling approached from a Christian's perspective, or secular counseling repurposed into Christian themes and theories, or secular counseling "integrated" with sound theology. Ever hear the phrase, "God helps those who help themselves?"<sup>69</sup> Or hear other pop-psychology themes masquerading as biblical wisdom?
2. Judgmental or dispassionate Bible thumping (John 12:47; Luke 6:37)
3. Reserved for "experts" ( Rom 15:14).
4. Optional (Eph 4:11-16).

### C. The Importance of Truth and Grace (John 1: 14, 17; 8: 44;16: 13;18:37,38; Rom 1:18; Eph 4:15; 2 Tim 2:15).

### D. The Discipleship River<sup>70</sup> illustration (--utilizing the power of the Holy Spirit, Prayer, and the Word).

1. Bringing people to the river (Ministry and Service).
2. Helping them get in (Evangelism and Preaching).
3. Navigating the center of the river (Teaching, Mentoring, Equipping, Collaborating for Christian Growth).
4. Pushing people out of the eddies (Biblical Counsel).
5. Helping people off of rocks and trees (Biblical Counsel).
6. Rescuing people in the rapids (Biblical Counsel).

### E. More Training Opportunities

1. Faith Baptist Church, Lafayette, IN
2. ABCB
3. CCEF
4. Biblical Counseling Coalition
5. Journal of Biblical Counseling

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Though seemingly helpful and "Christian," the phrase is not only unbiblical and unsound theologically, but also defiantly at odds with the Gospel. See GotQuestions.org, "God Helps Those Who Help Themselves—Is It in the Bible?" accessed December 2, 2013, <http://www.gotquestions.org/God-help-themselves.html> for an interesting treatment of this topic. Similarly, there are hosts of "psychologisms" that sound biblical but are the very opposite.

<sup>70</sup>*The Discipleship River* is a concept familiar to many within the biblical counseling field and it describes the continuum of discipleship from evangelism to focused counsel and even discipline within the local church. The goal of discipleship is described (for example) in scriptures like Eph 4:11-16. The concept has been taught at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Faith Baptist Church (Lafayette, IN), and in articles at CCEF.org.

## Week 15: How to Develop Future Topics for a Mentee

### I. Bible Study:

- A. In general, Bible study topics flow from the Word: *What does the Bible say?*
1. What ideas (for further development) flow from daily reading?
  2. What ideas arise from more focused reading and study,
    - a. What did Jesus speak about or emphasize?
    - b. What themes emerge from Paul's letters?
    - c. What Old Testament accounts suggest questions or ideas for further study?
  3. One might employ a process the Navigators call *Search the Scriptures*.<sup>71</sup> If for example, when studying the Gospel of Matthew and finding Matthew 6:19-21:
    - a. Ask "what is the passage saying?"
    - b. Ask complementary questions such as "what is the theme or topic in this passage?" "What is the context? How does what I am reading fit within the greater chapter or narrative?" "How does it fit within the history, culture, and politics of its time?" "Who is the audience? "What words or concepts within the verses or context do I need to understand better?"
    - c. Ask "what other verses might help me understand these verses?" In this example, one might ask, "what do the other Gospels say about this?" "What do other NT writers say?" "What pertinent OT passages are there? And, "are there any biblical narratives that illustrate the concept?"
    - d. Upon reflection, ask "what parts of the passage seem the most valuable to me right now?" "What words or phrases catch my eye, mind, heart?" "How does my life measure up to this message?" "What might need to change?"
    - e. Ask "what do *trustworthy* pastors, teachers, and/or scholars say about this passage?" Consult reliable commentaries and reference materials, books and authors, and pastors and teachers.
    - f. Ask "how might I apply these truths to my life?" "How do I change to be obedient to this passage?" "What message might I share with others?"
- B. Other sources for study. Bible studies may also develop from secondary sources.
1. A planned study or method. Many denominational publishers provide materials in the formats below:
    - a. Bible "book by book" studies are often the preferred approach to a systematic study of the Bible.<sup>72</sup>
    - b. Spiritual Topics with study materials derived from several Scriptural sources (Topical Studies) are also useful; for example

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<sup>71</sup>An excellent resource for this activity is provided by the Navigators and is found at Navigators, "Disciples for Life," accessed December 11, 2013, <http://navigators.unl.edu/resources/DFLI.pdf>.

<sup>72</sup>John Piper, "In Honor of 'Tethered' Preaching: John Calvin & the Entertaining Pastor," September 17, 2008, accessed December 16, 2013, <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/taste-see-articles/in-honor-of-tethered-preaching>.

a series might “comb” the Scriptures for verses that help answer the question, “What does the Bible say about Prayer?”

2. Study topics might also be suggested by thoughtful books from sound Evangelical authors. While many of these books have a Scriptural basis, it is always wise to study from the Bible, not a book. Allow their book or idea to launch a vigorous Bible study, so that God’s Word remains the authority. For example, Randy Alcorn’s *The Treasure Principle*<sup>73</sup> is a description of his experience learning the messages of Matthew 6. Don’t take his word for it, rather allow his book to encourage a deeper study of Matthew’s Gospel and study the verses that inspired and shaped him.
3. Studies guided by the seasons might also be appropriate. Topics like “Grace and ‘All Things New’” might be great for the New Year or springtime. Thanksgiving and Christmas might suggest topics around “Thankfulness”, “Contentment”, and “Giving and Sharing”, for example.
4. New Bible study topics might also emerge as the mentor and mentee meet together over time. Perhaps the mentor notices an area of interest or struggle in the mentee; or the mentee suggests a topic he or she would like to study.
5. Perhaps the mentor has an area of expertise or interest-- a “life-message” learned over time. Topics like “Overcoming Adversity”, “Determining the Will of God”, or “Giving Thanks in all Things” might be topics in which the mentor has developed significant depth through study and personal experiences.<sup>74</sup>
6. Especially in long-term mentoring situations, the mature mentor might elect to share the lessons God is revealing to him or her week by week in his or her own personal Bible Study.

### C. Tips

1. Corollary Bible verses and concepts come more easily when reading a significant amount of Scripture daily. Take notes or keep a journal when reading. Those notes will allow one to connect themes and Scriptures and more deeply understand the meaning of future Scripture readings.
2. Do the *Bible Drill*—using a concordance, look for words, phrases, and similar concepts to find a large number of Scriptures from which to derive suitable lessons. Allow the Word to challenge presuppositions and shape opinions.
3. Use contemporary illustrations and try not to use too many personal ones.
4. Prepare lots of material, plan on using less. Good teaching allows for students to share. “Sharing” may sometimes resemble “thinking out loud”, and sharing allows students to process concepts while they are hearing them.
5. Pray much and let the Holy Spirit guide the teaching.
6. Press for points of application—how one can act on lessons learned.

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<sup>73</sup>Randy Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle: Unlocking the Secret of Joyful Giving* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 2005).

<sup>74</sup>One must use caution with the idea of a “life message” as (sometimes) these can be spiritual ruts.

APPENDIX 5  
READING LIST

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## APPENDIX 6

### WEEKLY HANDOUT SAMPLE

#### Sin and Idolatry, Session 6

**Welcome:**

**Memory Verse:**

*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near (Heb 10:24-25 ESV).*

**Accountability:**

**Introduction:** Rust vs. paint

What is a good definition of sin?

#### 1. What is Sin?

- a. Rebellion: “I know what God wants and I absolutely do not want to do that. . .” Joshua 7:1
- b. Enthusiastic ignorance: “I do not know what God wants, nor am I inclined to find out . . .” Isaiah 30:1-3
- c. Distraction: “Honestly, I rarely think about what God wants . . .” Hebrews 3:7-11.
- d. “lawlessness”: 1 John 3:4
- e. “missing the mark” : Romans 3:23

The word that is used most frequently is *hamartia*, missing the mark. It is the most comprehensive term for explaining sin. Paul used the verb *hamartano* when he wrote, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). God has a high and holy standard of what is right, and so long as man follows the Divine standard he will see himself as he truly exists in God’s eyes. The flat statement of the Almighty is that all men have fallen far short of God’s required standard. It is the popular and common practice of men to create their own standards; however, God has established His standard of perfection for entry into Heaven, and all men have “missed the mark” as an archer’s arrow would fall to the ground because it fell short of its target.<sup>1</sup>

- Sin is also being off by one degree. If God calls you to donate \$100 and you donate \$99 that is sin.

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<sup>1</sup>Lehman Straus, “The Doctrine of Sin,” accessed on October 7, 2013, <https://bible.org/article/doctrine-sin>

- f. “Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature. Sin is here defined in relation to God and his moral law. Sin includes not only individual acts such as stealing or lying or committing murder, but also attitudes that are contrary to the attitudes God requires of us . . . therefore a life that is pleasing to God is one that has moral purity not only in actions, but also in desires of heart.”<sup>2</sup>
- Choosing the easy way
  - Falling away from what you know to be truth
- g. Unintentional transgression: Leviticus 4:27-28
- h. Intentional omission: James 4:17
- i. Stain: Jeremiah 2:22 (ESV); Ephesians 5:27 (NIV); Psalm 51:1 (NLT)

How does the concept of “stain” apply to personal sins?

## 2. How sin works:

- a. Sin as a powerful devastating event: 2 Samuel 6:1-7
- b. Sin as cancer; a slow erosion of fellowship with God: 1 Kings 3:1-3; 11:1-13
- c. Sin as snare: Proverbs 5:22
- d. Sin as control: Proverbs 21:4
- e. Distortion of God’s truth (as water bends the light, so does sin): Genesis 3:1

## 3. Consequences of Sin:

- a. Withering, Jeremiah 17:5,6
- b. “Lack of soundness”: Psalm 38:3
- c. Spiritual blindness: Matthew 15:1-20
- d. Loss of fellowship: 1 John 1:5-10
- e. Hardening: Jeremiah 5:1-6
- f. Loss: Haggai 1:1-11
- g. Pruning: John 15:1-11
- h. If untreated--eternal separation from God: Matthew 13:40-43

## 4. God’s Remedy:

- a. Confessing:
  - Psalm 32:3-5
  - 1 John 1:9
- b. Repentance: 2 Corinthians 7:9-11
- c. *Storing* The Word: Psalm 119:11
- d. Choosing the right:
  - Romans 6:13
  - Colossians 2:6-7
  - Hebrews 12:1-4
  - 1 Peter 2:24
- e. Praying:
  - Ezra 9:1-15
  - Psalm 9: 1, 7-10
- f. Fellowship / Accountability: 1 John 1:7

How are sin and idolatry related?

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<sup>2</sup>Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 490.



## 5. The Nature of Idolatry

a. Idolatry Supplants God! Exodus 20:1-11, ESV

Why do the commandments (four of ten) place such an emphasis on our behavior regarding God?

b. Idolatry as Snare: Exodus 23:31-33 HCSB

How does idolatry ensnare us?

- Appeals to our desire to worship something: Exodus 32:1-6 HCSB

The Puritans looked not just at behavior but at underlying root motives and desires. Man is a worshipper; all problems grow out of ‘sinful imagination’ or idol manufacturing.<sup>3</sup>

Do you agree that man is a worshipper? How?

- Idolatry accelerates us in the wrong direction
  - Ezekiel 8: 5-18
    - “image of jealousy”
    - Seventy Elders of Israel meeting in an inner chamber worshipping Egyptian gods
    - Women weeping for Tamuz
    - Twenty-five elders worshipping the sun god in the inner sanctuary
  - Romans 1:18-25; Ezekiel 14:1-3

What do you notice in these two passages about the nature of idolatry?

What are modern idols? Why?

## 6. Idolatry’s cure

What is the cure for idolatry?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Joshua 24:13-15; 1 Samuel 7:3-4
- *Do not love* \_\_\_\_\_ . 1 John 2:15-17
- Get a new \_\_\_\_\_ . Ezekiel 11:19-21
- \_\_\_\_\_ your (new) hearts. 1 John 5:19
- \_\_\_\_\_ the one true God, instead: Daniel 3:16-18

What do we want to teach our mentees about sin and idolatry?

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<sup>3</sup>Tim Keller. “Puritan Resources for Biblical Counseling,” accessed October 14, 2013, <http://www.ccef.org/puritan-resources-biblical-counseling>

## APPENDIX 7

### WEEKLY HOMEWORK EXAMPLE

#### Homework for Week 7: Motivation, and New Kingdom Values

Have you ever pursued something (or someone) relentlessly? What was that like? What parts of your being were involved? Was your mind involved? Were your decisions? Were your emotions?

##### 1. Motivations

- a. From where do our motivations come from?

My behavior is a strategy which expresses *my motives*: my trusts, my wants, my fears, my “felt needs.” Such motives range along a spectrum from the consciously calculating to the blindly compulsive.<sup>1</sup>

- *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?* Jeremiah 17:9, ESV

What is Jeremiah trying to say?

- b. Behavior’s motivation is seated in one’s \_\_\_\_\_.

- i. 1 Kings 11:1-6, ESV
- ii. Jeremiah 24:4-7, ESV
- iii. Matthew 13:13-15, ESV
- iv. Luke 6:43-45, ESV

A change in heart will prompt a change in \_\_\_\_\_.

- c. New Kingdom Values

Read Chapters 5, 6, and 7 of Matthew’s Gospel. Record the ideas Jesus taught that seem revolutionary to you.

Is He teaching an entirely new value system? If so, what does that suggest for the believer?

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<sup>1</sup>David Powlison, “Idols of the Heart and “Vanity Fair,”” accessed October 14, 2013, <http://www.ccef.org/idols-heart-and-vanity-fair>.

APPENDIX 8  
PARTICIPANT COMMITMENT CARDS

DISCIPLESHIP MENTORING KEY COMMITMENTS

As a part of this project you agree to the following expectations:

- Faithful attendance to all meetings (unless providentially hindered—and commitment to make up session)
- Enlisting a Mentee with whom to share your learning
- Weekly meetings with Mentee
- Daily Bible Reading and Prayer time
- Memorize key Scripture passages weekly
- In addition, you are encouraged to read two books about discipleship or growing in Christ by May 1, 2014

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ABSTRACT

### IMPLEMENTING A DISCIPLESHIP MENTORING PROGRAM AT CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH, BOISE, IDAHO

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Chapter 1 describes the purpose, goals, and context of the project. Further, the basis for the project is discussed, along with the project's definitions, limitations, and delimitations. Last, the research methodology for the Discipleship Mentoring Project is outlined.

“Biblical and Theological Support for Discipling One Another” is the title of chapter 2. The chapter includes a discussion of modern obstacles to discipling, key New Testament words that define discipleship mentoring, a study of the transformational training of the disciples, key concepts for discipling, and the rationale for discipleship and biblical counseling.

Chapter 3 reviews “Mentoring in the Twenty-first Century.” Secular models from three different industries were reviewed and a number of evangelical models of discipleship training were also examined. Practices from secular and evangelical models were then compared to a biblical model of discipling. The chapter concludes with useful ideas for a discipleship mentoring program.

The Discipleship Mentoring project, as implemented from week 1 through 15, is the subject of chapter 4. It includes an overview of the process, project description, schedule of study topics, and a description of the program participants. Also included is a description of the homework used, changes made to the original plan, the experience of mentoring others, and the process for evaluation.

Results of the project are interpreted and discussed in chapter 5. Sections include an analysis of an eighty-two-statement pre-survey and post-survey, and an evaluation of project goals and methods, as well as theological and personal reflections, and insights gained.

Eight appendices are also included. Appendix 1 is a comparison of the pre-project and post-project surveys. Appendix 2 includes the participants closing comments about the project. Appendix 3 shows the Scripture memory verses used in the project and what week they were assigned. Appendix 4 consists of the complete outline of the Bible studies used in the project. Appendix 5 contains the suggested reading list for the project participants. Appendices 6 and 7 contain examples of weekly handouts and weekly homework, respectively. Appendix 8 includes an example of the commitment card participants signed at the beginning of the project.

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