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TRAINING THE FATHERS AT CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH IN
EASTON, PENNSYLVANIA, TO LEAD IN FAMILY WORSHIP

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TRAINING THE FATHERS AT CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH IN
EASTON, PENNSYLVANIA, TO LEAD IN FAMILY WORSHIP

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Dedicated to my Beautiful Laura—

I am grateful for God's grace that opened my heart to worship Him,
and for God's goodness that opened our hearts to each other with love.

May the family God allows us to have

be a family full of worship and אֱשֶׁר

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to train the fathers of Calvary Baptist Church in Easton, Pennsylvania, to lead in family worship.

Goals

This project used four goals to accomplish its purpose. The first goal was to develop a training curriculum for fathers in how to lead in family worship. The curriculum covered the biblical, theological, and practical aspects of family worship. Though the focus was on family worship, it also included training in subsidiary practices and themes that embellished the training, such as personal spiritual disciplines, the biblical role of fathers, and masculine spirituality. This goal was measured by a peer review of the curriculum by three pastors in a written survey collected before the training, and a post-survey from the participants after the training (see appendices 1 and 3). This goal was determined to be successful if all the surveyed pastors and participants indicated by the last question in their respective surveys (see appendices 1 and 3) that they “agree” or “strongly agree” that the curriculum should be used.

The second goal was to train twenty fathers in leading family worship using the developed curriculum. Some fathers did not feel comfortable reading the Bible with others, or rarely prayed out loud with others. They needed to be taught the fundamental

skills of reading the Bible, explaining basic doctrine, and praying with their families. But even more than skills, they needed the attitude and mindset of becoming the pastor of their families. This goal was measured by a pre- and post-project survey by the participants on their habits and attitudes related to leading daily family worship (see appendices 2 and 3). This goal was determined to be successfully met if 15 of the 20 fathers completed the entire training, and if the t-test for dependent samples displayed a positive statistically significant difference in the pre/post survey scores.

The third goal was for the fathers who went through the training to lead family worship at least five times a week over a period of three months. To encourage accountability in the practice, every father had monthly accountability with another father on how he was doing in this practice. In addition, there was weekly reporting through email that included questions related to the frequency, content, and difficulties in the leading of family worship (see appendix 4). This goal was measured by a pre- and post-survey of the participants to determine the frequency of their practicing family worship, a survey of 75 percent of the accountability partners, and a survey of 75 percent of the wives of the participants (see appendices 3 and 5). This goal was determined by comparing the surveys from the participants, the accountability partners, and the wives. The specific questions of the survey covered the quantity of practice and the participant's growth in his attitude and habits. The goal was considered successful if the t-test for dependant samples displayed a positive statistically significant difference in the pre/post survey scores.

The fourth goal was to develop, through the church's men's ministry, an ongoing strategy for the training and accountability of fathers to lead in family worship.

Any semblance of men's ministry in the church should make this one of its priorities and values. This goal was measured by a written strategy, accepted by all the leaders of the men's ministry, and peer reviewed by three pastors through a written survey collected at the end of the training (see appendix 6). This goal was determined to be successfully met if all the surveyed pastors indicate in the last question of the survey that they "agree" or "strongly agree" with the strategy.

Ministry Context

Six important factors help paint the picture of Calvary's ministry setting. The first four deal with present conditions: personal schedules, a consumeristic mentality, a robust ministry schedule, and the expectation that pastoral staff are hired to do the work of the ministry, and not to train believers in the work of the ministry.

The schedules of many of Calvary's families are typical to other middle-class American families. They are full with long commutes, a multitude of activities such as sports and the arts for kids, and the general expectation that not to be busy means one is not important. Technology allows for work never to cease even when away from the office. The list of what must be done never stops, and so people never stop. There is little to no margin. This gives the impression of no time for family worship.

A second influencing cultural factor is the consumeristic mentality that pervades the society in which Calvary lives. People have high expectations to receive certain services, and much attention is devoted to marketing and catering to this consumer mindset. This mindset can easily leak into the thinking of the devoted Christian. Marketing values and strategies are embraced and eagerly applied to the church's ministries. People come to church expecting that they get what they want. And if they

give to a church with their time and money, they expect the church to provide the appropriate services for them and their family. For example, families rightly expect a quality, safe ministry for children that will both keep the attention of their kids, and teach their kids what they need to learn. However, this expectation may cause a father to expect the church's programs to take full responsibility for the family's discipleship and habits of worship, rather than seeing himself as central to his family's discipleship by leading in family worship.

The third consideration of Calvary's ministry setting is the full schedule of services available for people who come. On Sunday morning, one can choose from six classes for adults. Or one can attend one of several men's or women's Bible studies during the week, one of a few classes on Wednesday nights, or a home Bible study group. In addition to Sunday morning, children also have opportunities to learn Wednesday nights, and if one is a teenager there is also a program on Sunday nights. In other words, Calvary has a full schedule of services, and for the professional with long hours of work and perhaps even a long commute, the accessibility of Calvary's services is helpful and comforting. Unfortunately, none of this time in Calvary's programs is currently devoted to the training of fathers in their role of leading in family worship.

Finally, Calvary is blessed with six dedicated staff pastors, in addition to over a dozen other part and full-time staff workers. However, with the hiring of pastoral staff, the subtle assumption can sneak into the minds of many that the staff is paid to do the work of the ministry. After all, they are the "professional ministry workers," so one would expect that they are paid to minister. They are paid to provide the church member a service, just as the member might be paid to provide a different professional service in

their respective work. This common mindset among many evangelical churches also flavors much of the perspective among the leaders and members of Calvary. Thus, expecting fathers to lead in the ministry of family worship may seem abnormal, since ministry like this is normally relegated to the “professional ministry worker.”

In addition to these four current factors, two historical factors should also be mentioned. First, men’s ministries at Calvary has historically encouraged men to pursue godliness. They have done this through periodic Saturday morning breakfasts, fellowship events, and bible studies. Over ten years ago, a very well-attended Saturday morning study called “Top Gun” involved teaching and training in many areas of discipleship. However, it did not include explicit training for fathers in leading family worship. Neither has men’s ministries made any other attempt to train fathers to lead in family worship in the last ten years.

Second, in June 2009 and May 2012 a revival ministry called Life Action Ministries came to Calvary. It was well attended by men and women. During both visits, the ministry devoted one of their many teaching times to the practice of family worship. The talks included a description of the basic elements of family worship, and an example of what family worship could look like.

With all things considered, the practice of family worship has only been minimally taught at Calvary. Moreover, many habits of both the individual father and the church as a whole have been inadvertently unhelpful in the training of fathers to lead family worship.

Rationale

Five reasons dictate the necessity for the fathers at Calvary to be trained in

leading their families in family worship. The first reason comes from what the Bible says about manhood, and how it should shape a men's ministry in a local church. When one surveys biblical texts that speak directly to what it means to be a man, many of them speak directly to a man's relationship with his family. A masculine spirituality, it would seem, can be directly seen in how he relates to and leads his family. A men's ministry in a local church, which focuses on the spirituality of its men, must make it a staple of its pattern of ministry. The men's ministry at Calvary needed to take responsibility for training fathers and holding them accountable to leading their families in family worship.

The second reason for the training came from the internal and external difficulties to the practice of family worship. Unfortunately, factors in the larger society, evangelical culture, and the culture specific to Calvary make the practice of a father leading a time of family worship difficult to initiate and maintain. In addition, the sheer thought of discussing the Bible with one's family can be intimidating for many believers. Training is needed to make this habit happen.

The third reason for the training was the effect it should have on fathers as they begin to think as theologically minded ministers. When fathers lead in family worship, they are no longer passively expecting others to do the work of the ministry. They are showing themselves to be active and responsible ministers in their own homes, joining the already established programs in the church to shepherd the hearts of their family.

The next reason for the training came from the effect it would have on the spiritual maturity of many of Calvary's men. When training and accountability for fathers leading in family worship is present, it affects other levels of formal worship. Specifically,

the practice of family worship will reinforce the practice of private worship, which would include daily habits of Bible meditation and prayer. In other words, daily habits of family worship aid daily habits of private worship by the individual father.

Finally, training was needed for fathers so that more men would be trained in the basic characteristics and skills of church leadership. Fathers who practice family worship, and thereby help shepherd their families, gain great experience in using God's Word and prayer to help others, and therefore are receiving great training in the work of an elder. Calvary needed more elders who were equipped with the knowledge and wisdom to speak God's Word in a way that is both accurate and helpful. Men who go through the rigor of leading their families in worship gain the character and skills needed to go through the rigor of leading God's family in life and worship.

The need at Calvary was not abnormal, but is present in many Bible believing churches. The need was for theologically deeper men, elders equipped to handle God's Word with wisdom and conviction, and families that grow together in the gospel. Training fathers to lead in family worship was an important catalyst to all these needs. Therefore, this project of training fathers in family worship needed to be implemented for the overall health of Calvary Baptist Church.

Definitions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Family worship. James W. Alexander provides a helpful definition: "Family-Worship, as the name imports, is the joint worship rendered to God, by all the members of one household."¹ Simply put, it is the regular gathering of a family for the purpose of

¹James W. Alexander, *Thoughts on Family Worship* (Ligonier, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1990), 9.

worshipping together. J. Ligon Duncan III and Terry L. Johnson elaborate on Alexander's definition by claiming that "the three basic components of family worship are singing, Scripture reading, and prayer, led by the father or head of household."²

The project was limited to fifteen weeks. It was during these fifteen weeks that the fathers received the training and were evaluated concerning their growth in the discipline of leading in family worship.

This project was delimited to the fathers, and not the mothers, of Calvary Baptist Church. The project's focus was on a promotion of a distinctly biblical masculine spirituality among the church's men, which is partly evidenced by fathers leading in family worship. Though there are certainly many families that regrettably do not have a father involved, this project focused on men and fathers.

Research Methodology

Seven parts were utilized to secure data from the project participants and others involved in this project. First, after the curriculum was written, three pastors gave a review and feedback to the written curriculum. This solicited feedback addressed the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum, including the specific changes they suggested. The reviews were gathered by a written survey collected before the training (appendix 1). The survey was developed with a view towards analyzing the content, usability, and focus of the curriculum. Every question evaluated whether the curriculum helped train the participants to lead in family worship. I evaluated the results of the survey.

²J. Ligon Duncan and Terry L. Johnson, "A Call to Family Worship," in *Give Praise to God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2003), 324.

Second, the participants of the project were enlisted. A list of 20 possible participants was compiled with input from the other pastors and elders. They were then personally contacted and invited to participate in the project. Participants were members of Calvary, fathers of children who still live at home, and willing to commit to the training and project.

Third, at the beginning of the training the fathers took a pre-project survey regarding their habits and attitudes of leading in family worship. The survey matched an identical post-project survey. It covered both the participant's understanding and practice of family worship. The survey utilized Timothy Paul Jones' *Family Perceptions and Practices Survey* (appendix 2).³ Jones granted permission for its use. The survey had been used by other researchers to evaluate the status of family discipleship in a church, and therefore was a proven, helpful research too. Though family worship is a more narrow focus than family discipleship, all the questions validated its usefulness to capture the attitudes and habits of fathers with their families.

The post-project survey also included feedback on the content of the training curriculum. I developed these questions to discern whether the curriculum was successful in teaching the needed content. This information was helpful to identify, for a father could have terrible habits of family worship, not change his habits of family worship, and yet admit that the curriculum gave him all the needed training to lead his family in worship.

I collected and evaluated the pre- and post-project surveys. Fathers identified

³Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011), 216-18.

themselves on the questionnaires by providing their last name on each survey. A t-test for dependent samples was used to determine if there was a positive, statistically significant difference gained from a comparison of the pre- and post- project surveys.

The training was a total of five sessions, each session lasting 75 minutes. They occurred on weeks 1, 2, 5, 9, and 12.

Fourth, during the time of the project, every participant was to be emailed weekly. The emails requested straightforward input on the frequency, content, and difficulties of the habit of family worship (appendix 4). I collected the three questions and their answers, and utilized them in providing subjective explanations to the data supplied by the more objective t-test surveys.

The next part to the research methodology was getting feedback from 75 percent of the accountability partners on how their partner did in the habit of leading family worship. This information was gained by a survey at the end of the project. Likewise, 75 percent of the wives of the participants were given a survey that gave feedback concerning how their husbands did in leading family worship. The same survey was used for the wives and the accountability partners. The questionnaire, composed by me, directly addressed the habits and attitudes of the father towards family worship. I collected, analyzed, and utilized the surveys to confirm the results of the pre- and post-project surveys taken by the participants.

Finally, after the strategy was written for how to continue training and accountability for fathers leading family worship, three pastors were given a peer review of the strategy (see appendix 6). This review was through a written survey collected at the end of the project. The survey was designed to question the contents of the strategy and

provide feedback in areas in which the survey was lacking, imbalanced, or unrealistic. I wrote, collected, and analyzed the survey.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR TRAINING FATHERS TO LEAD FAMILY WORSHIP

Family Worship according to Moses

Scripture instructs fathers to lead their families in family worship; pastors are to train fathers in this important task.

Genesis and the Creation of Man

The calling of fathers to lead their families is grounded in what the Bible teaches about what it means to be a man. God gives man his purpose and mission in Genesis 1:28, “And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” God commissions both man and woman to this mandate, for both were made in God’s image. As Gordon Wenham explains, “Because man is created in God’s image, he is king over nature. He rules the world on God’s behalf.”¹ Kostenberger agrees: “God at creation commissioned humanity to serve as representative rulers of the earth on his behalf.”² Thus, man functions as a royal representative of God on earth.

¹ Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1987), 33.

² Andreas J. Kostenberger and Margaret E. Kostenberger, *God’s Design for Man and Woman: A Biblical-Theological Survey* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014), 31.

Genesis 2 gives more specifics, especially in the unique role man has in relation to woman. Verse 15 contains instructions for the man before the woman was created: “The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.” The words “work” and “keep” were commonly used in reference to gardening and cultivating the soil, though Wenham notes they can also refer to a religious action of serving God.³ God gives man a specific leadership role in protecting and leading the development of the garden. Mathews observes, “God placed the man in the garden for the stated purpose of supervising it.”⁴ This was a unique role given to man, not woman. It is for this reason that Ray Ortlund concludes from Genesis 2, “It is God who wants men to be men and women to be women.”⁵ Kostenberger agrees: “God’s plan for humanity is one of partnership in which the man, as God-appointed leader, and his wife alongside him jointly represent the Creator by exercising dominion over the earth.”⁶ Genesis points to the essence and purpose of manhood.

This unique role God gives man in creation is validated in the unique role God gives man in the new creation. In the original creation, God gave man a unique role as leader. He led by tending the garden and shepherding his family. God communicates similar roles in the community of the new creation, the local church. For instance, the

³ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 67.

⁴ Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1:11:26*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 213.

⁵ Ray Ortlund, “Male-Female Equality and Male Headship, Genesis 1-3 in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 99.

⁶ Kostenberger, *God’s Design for Man and Woman: A Biblical-Theological Survey*, 35.

Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 2 recognizes that man, not woman, is given a unique role of teaching and shepherding in the local church. He bases this on the Genesis account: “For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor” (1 Tim 2:12-14). Douglas Moo makes the obvious observation: “For Paul, the man’s priority in the order of creation is indicative of the headship that man is to have over woman.”⁷

How is this headship characterized? In 1 Timothy 3:1-7 Paul describes what leadership in the church entails. A leader has observable attributes of godliness, the ability to teach, and the proven ability to manage his own household well. God’s representative in the church protects and leads God’s flock by his actions. The characteristics of the leaders in the church echo the characteristics of man in the garden. Whether it be Adam in the garden, or an elder in the church, man is to represent God’s character (godliness), and lead through his words (teaching) and actions (managing). This is the essence, seen originally in creation, of what it means to be a man.

Deuteronomy and Family Worship

On the plains of Moab, before Israel enters Canaan, Moses instructs fathers to lead in family worship. In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses preaches his final sermons to the people he has led for the last four decades. In these sermons he calls them to a life of covenant fidelity and love to Yahweh their God, who rescued them out of Egyptian slavery, led them in the wilderness despite their rebellion, and now prepares them to take

⁷ Douglas Moo, “What Does It Mean Not to Teach or Have Authority Over Men? 1 Timothy 2:11-15” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womenhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 190.

the land he has promised to give them. The congregation in front of Moses knows the importance of every generation being faithful to the covenant, for many of their fathers and grandfathers died under the judgment of God in the wilderness. Israel is now faced with a couple critical questions: will they trust Yahweh as they enter Canaan, and will their descendents be faithful to Yahweh once they take the land? Central to both these questions is the practice of family worship. Though the wording “family worship” is not used, Moses gives clear instructions to the fathers among God’s people to teach their children the truths of their covenant with God, and that this teaching was an act of worship with their families.

Deuteronomy 4:9

In Deuteronomy 4, Moses is pressing into the hearts of Israel the importance of their absolute allegiance and obedience to Yahweh, and the perils of idolatry. He reminds them of all that Yahweh has done for them, both in the grace of salvation and the mercy of the giving of the law. David F. Payne summarizes well what Moses is doing: “The brief summary given here [in Deut 4] emphasizes the harshness of the conditions they had endured in Egypt, and the fact that Israel, rescued from such a furnace, had exchanged it for a binding relationship with a God who was a ‘devouring fire’.”⁸

According to Daniel Block, the message of Deuteronomy 4 is built around the covenant.⁹ In the beginning of the chapter, Moses reminds Israel of her uniqueness in having Yahweh choose and reveal himself to them in this covenant. Verses 9-14 then

⁸David F. Payne, *Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985), 29.

⁹Daniel Block, *Deuteronomy*, NIV Application Commentary, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 114.

point to the “grace of covenant past: the origins of the covenant.”¹⁰ It is in the beginning of this discussion that Moses sternly commands them: “Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children’s children.” Six things should be noticed from this verse.

First, Moses frames the importance of what he is about to say with the first phrase “only take care.” In similar passages, Moses tells Israel to “take care” by not forgetting what God has done for her (cf. 6:12, 8:11). The serious tone of “only take care” increases when the palpable excitement of the prior verse is remembered in which Moses asks Israel “what other nation could claim to have such perfectly righteous standards as the Torah God gave Israel?” From Moses’ perspective, Israel is in a great position. But the greatness of her relationship with Yahweh demanded a great response.

A second observation is the intensity of Moses’ appeal, which is strengthened by the second imperative: “keep your soul diligently.” Repeated again in verses 15 and 23, the word “keep” can also be translated “watch” or “guard.”¹¹ The object of this “guarding” is important: “your soul.” Putting together the words of this warning, Peter Craigie translates these opening phrases to say: “Only guard yourself carefully and guard very carefully your desire.”¹²

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 59.

¹²Peter Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 133.

Third, after this stern warning, Moses provides two reasons for Israel to guard their soul: so that they do not forget what they experienced, and so that the memories of what they experienced does not leave their hearts. Israel is to reflect on what happened 40 years ago, taking the utmost care so that they do not forget what they had seen. Eugene Merrill notes that “this must be an ongoing reflection, one that remains part and parcel of the experience of that generation and every one to follow.”¹³ In Craigie’s estimation, “Forgetfulness opened the door to failure, and so it was vital that the people of God not only remember their experience of God’s mighty hand, but also that they pass on the memory, and thus the experience, to their children.”¹⁴ The command for Israel to be careful and guard their soul is important because if Israel does not guard their soul, they will forget what they experienced.

So how can Israel be sure not to forget what they experienced, and thereby guard their soul? The next imperative answers that through the command for Israel to “make them known to your children and your children’s children.” They are to make sure their children know of their parents and grandparents’ experience of God delivering them out of Egypt and bringing them to himself. They were delivered out of Egypt so that they might worship and serve God.¹⁵ Part of that experience of worship was the grace of receiving the Torah, the Word of God.

¹³Eugene Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 119.

¹⁴Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 133.

¹⁵Exodus reiterates that the reason God brought Israel out of Egypt is so that they might worship him (Exod 3:12, 4:23, 7:16, 8:1, 19:1).

This imperative of making these truths known to one's children parallels the first imperative of taking care and guarding one's soul. The connection is clear, in Christensen's words: "The future of Israel depends on the transmission of the experience of God's mighty acts in history and his demands to each successive generation."¹⁶

Finally, this act of "making known to your children" what God did for Israel was not simply for their education, but for their spiritual formation. Moreover, the transmission of God's Word in a family was an act of family worship. The next verse, Deuteronomy 4:10, makes this more clear: "On the day that you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, the Lord said to me, 'Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so.'" The act of "standing before the Lord" is an act of worship.¹⁷ When God's people gathered before him (an act of worship), they were gathered to hear God's Word. So when God calls families together to hear God's Word, he is gathering them for worship. McConville reiterates this: "Deuteronomy emphasizes that Israel meets God [worship!] primarily by means of his word."¹⁸

The idea that families gathering to hear God's Word are actually gathering to worship God is further corroborated in the rest of chapter 4, which warns against idolatry. Israel is to watch herself very carefully against idolatry (4:15). The antidote to this

¹⁶Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1-21:9*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 2001), 81.

¹⁷J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 105.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

unbiblical worship of idolatry is the practice of biblical worship: families gathered under God's Word.

In the excitement of Yahweh's new covenant with Israel, Israel must pay careful attention and be on the guard, spiritually speaking. One key way to do this was by relating to the next generations the salvation they experienced from slavery, and the mercy of the revelation they received from their gracious Covenant God.

Deuteronomy 6:7

After urging Israel to forsake all other gods and worship Yahweh alone in Deuteronomy 4, Moses begins an exposition of the covenant stipulations in Deuteronomy 5, summarized in the Ten Commandments (5:6-21). Deuteronomy 6 continues an exposition of the covenant stipulations, starting with a plea to be careful to keep the commandments as they enter the Promised land (6:1-3), and continuing with the famous Shema (6:4-5), which calls Israel to absolute allegiance and loyal love to Yahweh. Moses preaches that these commands are to be on their hearts as they live (6:6), on their lips as they teach their children (6:7), on their minds (6:8), and in their homes (6:9). It is within this context that Moses says, "You shall teach them [these words] diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise" (6:7). Four things should be noted from this verse.

First, parents are teachers to their children. Moses is speaking to all of Israel (verse 4: "Hear, O Israel"), not simply to those who feel called or equipped to teach. All who are parents in the covenant community are to "teach . . . your children" (v. 7). The

word “teach” contains the idea of “repeat, to speak, or to recite again and again.”¹⁹ The English Standard translation uses the word “diligently” to convey the required perseverance of this teaching. The grammar (an intensive piel) portrays an engraver of a monument who, in the words of Eugene Merrill, “takes hammer and chisel in hand and with painstaking care etches a text into the face of a solid slab of granite. The sheer labor of such a task is daunting indeed, but once done the message is there to stay.”²⁰ By the continual reciting and repeating of the covenant stipulations, parents would teach their children about Yahweh and what it means to worship him.

The second thing to notice is the heart of the parent-teacher, as indicated in the prior two verses. In verse 5 Moses tells Israel to love Yahweh with all of who they are (“with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might”). Israel is not simply to have mystical affections for Yahweh. Rather, as verse six indicates, the Torah is to reign preeminently and reside in people’s hearts. Thus, before parents are told to teach their children, they are first told to have a heart for God (v. 5), and a mind that is saturated with the truth of Scripture (v. 6). Parental teaching comes in the context of a love for God and a serious embracing of his Word.

Third, this teaching takes place within ordinary life (“when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise”). The contrasts (sit, walk, lie, rise) indicate the constant preoccupation parents are to have in transmitting the truths of the covenant. In the words of Wright, “The law was to be the

¹⁹Walter Baumgartner, Ludwig Koehler, and M. E. J. Richardson, eds., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1607.

²⁰Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 167.

topic of ordinary conversation in ordinary homes in ordinary life, from breakfast to bedtime.”²¹ This verse speaks less of a formal curriculum that every parent must utilize, and more of a lifestyle of making God’s Word the “fabric of life and conversation.”²²

Fourth, this family lifestyle centered on the Word of God was primarily a lifestyle of Scripture driven worship. The context stresses the importance for Israel to fear God (6:2). Moses uses the word “fear” with overtones of worship.²³ He connects fear with worship later in the chapter: “It is the Lord your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve [worship] and by his name you shall swear” (Deut 6:13). Thus, the continual teaching of God’s Word in families was the continual *worship* of God in families through the repeated reading of his Word.

Deuteronomy 11:19

At first glance, Deuteronomy 11:19 seems to be no more than a repetition of 6:7. After telling Israel (again) to “lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul,” Moses directs their attention to the responsibility of parents: “You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise” (11:19).

Moses repeats this piece of instruction because of its importance. As Block states, “He repeats what he had said earlier to imprint the message indelibly on their

²¹Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 100.

²²McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 142.

²³The *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* describes this biblical fear: “Encompassing and building on attitudes of awe and reverence, [fear of God] is the proper and elemental response of a person to God.” Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III, eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), s.v. “Fear of God.”

minds and hearts.”²⁴ But Moses is doing more than emphasizing the importance through repetition. Since 6:7, Moses has relayed the story of Israel’s rebellion in the Golden Calf incident. The need to internalize the Torah has only increased, and thus so has the need for parents to teach their children the Torah. As Wright observes, “The importance of regular inculcation of the law takes on a new urgency in view of the preceding warnings.”

²⁵ But even in the repetition there are subtle differences in the wording Moses uses in 11:19. Again, these can be explained by the reminders in chapters 9 and 10 of the Golden Calf rebellion, and the need for covenant fidelity as the new tablets of stone are given to Israel. On the basis of these incidents, Moses reminds Israel of the need for families teaching the covenant to their children, sternly warning them: “Take care let your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them; then the anger of Yahweh will be kindled against you.” Right after this stern warning, Moses repeats the command for children to be instructed. Block wisely observes the changes: “Most of the changes from the earlier text reflect Moses’ renewed passion, especially in the wake of his rehearsal of Israel’s history of apostasy in chapter 9 and his brief consideration of the unthinkable in verses 16-17.”²⁶ Disastrous episodes of worship (the Golden Calf) necessitated the imperative to biblical forms of worship: God’s Word repeated and taught within families.

Deuteronomy 32:46

²⁴Block, *Deuteronomy*, 289.

²⁵Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 155.

²⁶ Block, *Deuteronomy*, 288.

As Moses is nearing the end of his life and ministry, he declares a final blessing to Israel's individual tribes. It is within the context of these final teaching moments before his impending death that he implores Israel one last time in Deuteronomy 32:46-47:

Take to heart all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.

Central to Moses' warning and description of the blessed covenant life is the need for children to be taught by their parents the words of God. For Israel, it was not an option, but a central feature to faithful biblical spirituality on the way to the Promised Land. To appreciate what Moses says here, a quick overview of what Moses says about family worship would be appropriate.

So far, Moses has clearly commanded families to worship God together through the reading and teaching of His Word. But is there evidence of anything else happening during these times of worship? Three things can be said to answer this. First, in Deuteronomy the reading and teaching of God's Word certainly takes center stage. Peter Adam similarly notes this in his discussion on biblical spirituality. He makes this clear in answering the question, "what is the shape and structure of biblical spirituality?" Part of his answer is, "Its practice is hearing the word of God by faith."²⁷

Second, there is a strong indication that worship in Deuteronomy includes both the hearing of God's Word *and* calling out to God in prayer. This is seen in 4:7-8 when Moses brings to Israel's attention the two devotional blessings they have because of their

²⁷Peter Adam, *Hearing God's Words: Exploring Biblical Spirituality* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 45.

relationship with Yahweh. He says, “For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as Yahweh our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?” In these verses Moses unites prayer (“call upon him”) and the intake of Scripture (“this law”) and sees them both as privileges of worship that make them as a nation especially blessed. Though the importance of Scripture intake will receive much more attention in the rest of the book, the importance of prayer and its link to Scripture intake cannot be overlooked, especially as it relates to families worshipping with God’s Word at the center of their worship.

Third, Moses himself is commanded to write a song given to him by God, and to teach it to the people of Israel (31:19). It is right after Moses recites “all the words of this song in the hearing of the people” (32:44) that he gives his final instructions to parents to teach their children God’s Word, as described above. God commanded Moses to learn and recite a song, and soon after Moses does this he commands Israel to “take to heart all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children” (32:46). The specific words Moses gives to Israel are words of a *song*. This indicates learning songs was a part of what families did when they gathered to hear God’s Word.

Moses shows the importance of family worship by not only commending it frequently, but by commending it in critical contexts within the narrative. The importance of family worship is seen no less than four times in what Block calls Moses’ “theological

manifesto.”²⁸ Thus, Moses in Deuteronomy gives clear instructions to the fathers among God’s people to teach their children the truths of their covenant with God, accompanying the teaching with prayer and singing.

Family Worship according to Asaph

Psalm 78:1-8 provides the biblical expectation that fathers will teach their children about God so that their children might worship God. The psalm as a whole is a review of Israel’s history, a history that highlights God’s continued mercy and love, and Israel’s consistent faithlessness. Commentator Samuel Terrien summarizes it well: “The condemnation of Israel is repeated and stressed, not in a sort of ballad of praise but as a litany of guilt, not only for the fathers but also for their descendants.”²⁹ The story of Israel has a specific pedagogical purpose: to warn, mold, and disciple the next generation. This becomes clear in the first eight verses, which serve as a prelude to the story:

Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth! I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our fathers told us. We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they

²⁸Block, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 25. Block stresses the theological importance of Deuteronomy, which is important to consider in light of the frequency “family worship” comes up. Block explains: “The theological significance of Deuteronomy can scarcely be overestimated. Inasmuch as this book offers the most systematic presentation of theological truth in the entire Old Testament, we may compare its place to that of Romans in the New Testament Just as John wrote his gospel after several decades of reflection on the death and resurrection of Jesus, so Moses preached the sermons in Deuteronomy after almost four decades of reflection on the significance of the Exodus and God’s covenant with Israel. Thus, like the gospel of John, the book of Deuteronomy functions as a theological manifesto, calling on Israel to respond to God’s grace with unreserved loyalty and love” (ibid.).

²⁹Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 565.

should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful.

Three things should be noted from these verses that together provide the expectation for fathers to lead their families in worship. First, Asaph asks for the attention of Israel because he has “a parable” and “dark sayings” to share with them. Even though Asaph uses these mysterious words to summarize his message, he makes it clear that he does not want to shroud his message in mystery. He is forthright in his message, even saying in verse 4 that he will not hide the message he has. He is to the point, though his message does contain profound questions. In the words of commentator John Goldingay, “If the speaker can gain the audience’s attention, it will hear something wise and deep. They are mysteries that the people’s story ‘of old’ reveals.”³⁰

Secondly, Asaph summarizes the content of the message that he wants to share. In verse 4 he alludes to the “glorious deeds of Yahweh, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.” These are words of worship. Ultimately, Asaph wants people to behold the greatness of God. Though he claims this as his personal responsibility in verse 2 (“I will open my mouth”), in verse 4 he moves to being part of a community that tells the next generation of the greatness of God (“We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation.”). Asaph considers himself part of an integral cohort who is responsible to teach the next generation about their great God.

But more than Asaph’s generation is expected to teach the next generation of families. Verse 4 indicates that all future fathers are to teach their children about the

³⁰John Goldingay, *Psalms 42-89*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 485.

“glorious deeds of the Lord.” Asaph makes it clear that God appointed a law in Israel, and commanded Israel’s fathers to teach this law to their children.

Moreover, because of the content of what is being taught (God’s glorious deeds and wonders), this is more than an exhortation for fathers to teach. Whenever God’s deeds are proclaimed in the Psalms, worshipful prayer and singing are not far behind. For instance, David prays in Psalm 9:1 “I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all your wonderful *deeds*.” Later, in Psalm 9:11, David enjoins people to sing: “Sing praises to the Lord, who sits enthroned in Zion! Tell among his peoples his *deeds*!” Thus, for fathers to make God’s glorious deeds the centerpiece of their interaction with their children, they would have had to include prayer and singing as a part of that interaction.

Third, Asaph states the six goals for fathers teaching their children about the wonders of God. One goal is for the next generation to know God’s Word (v. 6). A second goal is for the learning generation to be able to tell others about God’s greatness (v. 6). If this interaction from fathers to families is to produce children who can worshipfully tell others about God, the fathers must themselves lead their families in worship.

Next, fathers are to teach their children so that “they should set their hope in God,” “not forget the works of God,” “keep his commandments,” and not be part of a generation “whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.” Again, these goals are not all directed to what children *know*, but rather how and who they worship. So a father does not simply assume the role of teacher to his family, but the role of a worship leader through Scripture reading, prayer, and song.

Asaph's focus is on the generations to come. He wants them to know Yahweh's might. He wants a worshipful attitude to continue. A key to that, from a human standpoint, is the necessary practice of fathers leading in family worship. Though Israel's history from Deuteronomy to the exile is not an entirely positive one, the necessity for family worship has not changed. Asaph lays upon fathers the same responsibility Moses laid on the fathers on the plains of Moab: to lead the next generation in worship through the hearing of God's Word, accompanied with prayer and singing.

Expectations within the New Covenant

With Moses and Asaph, the necessity for family worship is clear. But did anything change with regard to family worship by the inauguration of the new covenant in Christ Jesus? This question is particularly important for a Baptist to consider, for the covenantal promises that a paedobaptist would see in infant baptism help set the context for family worship within the covenant family. Is family worship simply a practice for the old covenant or paedobaptists? Should a Baptist, under the stipulations of the New Covenant, feel obligated to lead and participate in family worship?

A consideration of Ephesians 6:4 indicates that the role of fathers to lead their families in worship continues in the context of the New Covenant. After telling children to obey their parents and reminding them of the promise that comes with this commandment, Paul speaks directly to fathers: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Seven things should be noticed from this verse.

First, Paul sees fathers having a key part in the spiritual formation of their children. The role of fathers cannot be overstated. As Peter O'Brien states, "Accordingly,

learning Christ and being instructed in the truth that is in Jesus occur not only within the Christian community as a whole, but also and particularly within the family, coming from fathers whose lives are being shaped by this Christ-centered apostolic tradition.”³¹

Second, Paul describes the methods fathers are to use in their role. Provoking children to anger is not the biblical method of disciplining one’s children, even though fathers in Paul’s day had plenty of unhealthy examples of ancient fathers who had “far-reaching authority over [their] children.”³² Instead, Paul “wants Christian fathers to be gentle, patient educators of their children, whose chief ‘weapon’ is Christian instruction focused on loyalty to Christ as Lord.”³³ In other words, *how* one teaches children (not in anger) is just as important as *who* teaches them (their father).

Third, Paul gets more specific in describing the role of fathers in saying they are to “bring [their children] up.” The wording “bring up” (*ektepho*) is also used in Ephesians 5:29 to describe how a loving husband should care for his wife.³⁴ Moreover, similar wording is used in the Old Testament in contexts where God’s law is taught.³⁵ Thus, Paul is enjoining fathers to teach God’s Word to their children in a caring manner.

A fourth observation is the use of the word “discipline” (*paideia*). Thielman notes that *paideia* has a wide range of meanings:

³¹Peter O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 447.

³²Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 401.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

from physical and mental training in the values of a particular culture, to disciplinary punishment. In early Christian literature, even when the element of disciplinary punishment in *paidea* is emphasized, the educational value of the punishment, and so its inherently merciful quality, is also important.³⁶

The word is used similarly in Hebrews 12, where God's discipline for his children is "for our good, that we may share his holiness" and for the "peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Heb 12:10-11). Thus, the role of a father disciplining his children is a role of instruction.

The next word to describe the way fathers are to bring up their children confirms this. The word "instruction" (*nouthesia*) is a little more explicit as a word of teaching and training. Sometimes the word means "good counsel" but often it has more negative nuances, such as a "warning."³⁷ A helpful parallel is 1 Corinthians 10:11 in which Paul describes the purpose for many of the Old Testament stories: "Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction [*nouthesia*], on whom the end of the ages has come." On the basis of this usage, Thielman concludes, "Here in Ephesians 6:4, where Paul both circumscribes the power of the father of the household and reminds him of his responsibilities, it is likely that *nouthesia* has an admonitory, but not a punitive, nuance."³⁸

A sixth observation is the Christ-centeredness of this command to fathers. Paul ends the verse with the phrase "of the Lord." Hoehner makes the important observation that "the father's training and admonition is not to be anthropocentric as it was in

³⁶Thielman, *The Book of Ephesians*, 402.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

Hellenism nor centered around the law as in the rabbinics but, rather, Christocentric.”³⁹

Thielman elaborates more on the implications of this phrase:

Paul refers to the training and instruction that the Lord gives to children through the family father. Paul probably had especially in mind the sort of training and instruction about “the truth about Jesus” (4:21) that he had already mentioned in 4:20-24.⁴⁰

Fathers have a key role in “bringing up” their children. It is to be done “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord,” meaning their focus is on the teachings of Jesus and the teachings about Jesus which help shape their children.

Finally, this commandment to fathers is not about an academic enterprise. It is critical to note Paul’s description of spiritual devotion which he gives right before he delves into the “household code” of Ephesians 5:22-6:9. He tells the Ephesians to address one another “in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (5:19-21). So “addressing one another” for Paul included the singing of songs and giving thanks to God. With this lifestyle of relational ministry still ringing in the ears of the Ephesians, Paul tells the fathers to instruct their children. An attentive father would connect prayer and singing to the instruction he was to give his children. Instruction in Scripture, prayer, and singing were staple ingredients in Paul’s teaching on personal ministry, even in the context of a father spiritually leading his family.

³⁹Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 798.

⁴⁰Thielman, *The Book of Ephesians*, 402.

Thus, Ephesians 6:4 makes it clear that the role of fathers to teach their children, and lead them in worship, continues in the context of the New Covenant. The established pattern from Deuteronomy and Psalm 78 of God's Word being taught, accompanied with prayer and singing, continues in families today.

Training for Ministry of the Word

After listening to Moses preach to fathers on their role in leading their families in worship, and after Paul repeats this expectation to the Ephesian fathers, one may well assume that fathers simply need to obey God's Word on this matter, and lead their kids in Scripture reading and worship. Though this assumption is certainly true, it does not give the entire biblical picture. In the New Testament, all believers are expected to be engaged in some kind of word-centered personal ministry, which would include fathers shepherding their children with the truth of Scripture. God does not just expect pastors to pursue some kind of word-based ministry. Rather, pastors are called to help Christians in their word-based ministry, which means pastors are to train fathers to be faithful in their word-centered ministry in their homes. The Apostle Paul makes this clear in a few key statements about ministry that he makes to the Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians.

Romans 15:14

In Romans 15, the Apostle Paul brings to a conclusion his practical discussion of how the strong in faith are to serve the weaker in faith. He points to the example of Christ, and particularly shows the practical relevance of the gospel for the Gentiles. It is right after this discussion that he declares, "I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another" (15:14). Four things should be noticed from this verse.

First, Paul is speaking to his fellow Christians. The word “brothers” makes it clear that Paul is speaking to Christians. Romans 1:7 (“to all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints”) clarifies that Paul is not just addressing pastors and elders, but all the believers in that church.

Second, Paul refers to all the believers in Rome as “full of goodness.” This “goodness” is, in the words of John Murray, “that virtue opposed to all that is mean and evil and includes uprightness, kindness, and beneficence of heart and life.”⁴¹ The brothers in Rome did not just have chards or slivers of goodness. They were “full” of this attribute of God. Paul is commending their character.

Third, the Christians in Rome are full of another important quality. They are “filled with all knowledge.” If “goodness” focuses on the heart and character, “knowledge” focuses on the mind and understanding. Believers in Rome had reached some level of discernable maturity in their understanding of biblical truth and doctrine. Obviously they were still in need of significant theological growth, evidenced by all the theology Paul teaches in the epistle. Yet even with all the doctrine he clarifies in the letter, Paul still identifies the believers as “filled with all knowledge.”

This statement flows into the fourth observation: the Romans were also full of the ability to “instruct one another”. Paul expected the Roman Christians to speak God’s Word to each other. Though Paul is certainly not taking away the biblical position of pastor and teacher, he is raising the expectation for all believers to be involved in some sort of ministry of the Word.

⁴¹John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 209. This commentary was first published as a volume in the New International Commentary of the New Testament, but was subsequently replaced in the series and thereafter published as an individual volume.

The Romans had the good heart, the knowledgeable mind, and a skillful hand to teach. Moo wisely connects these three commendations from Paul: “The Roman Christians’ ‘goodness’ flows from their comprehensive understanding of the Christian faith (‘all knowledge’). Indeed, so complete is their understanding that they are ‘able to admonish one another.’”⁴²

Fourth, the Romans did not have the ability to speak God’s Word to each other simply so that they could learn more through their pooled knowledge. Rather, the Word was the means by which they could help each other worship God in hope. Paul had already declared in 15:4, “For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” Thus, the Romans were to instruct one another in Scripture so that they might encourage one another’s hope in God. He later elaborates on this hope as an attitude of glorifying “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (15:6).

But Paul knew more than the recitation of Scripture would bring this attitude of worship and hope. That is why he prays in verse 13, right before his declaration of his satisfaction with them, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” Paul establishes for the Romans a pattern of instruction in the Word to encourage hope, and to accompany that intake of Scripture with prayer.

The expectation of believers sharing God’s Word with each other, and accompanying that sharing of Scripture with prayer, is critical to understand. When applied to fathers, it means that a Christian father should be able to lead his family in

⁴²Douglas Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, The Pillar New Testament

interacting over God’s Word and praying together, both for the purpose of worship and a growing hope in God. Thus, it is expected that a Christian father is equipped to lead in the elements of family worship.

Colossians 3:16

Paul’s commendation of the Romans for instructing one another is not unique, for he shares a similar desire with the Colossians. He commands them in 3:16, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” Paul expects all believers to “teach” (*didasko*) and “admonish” (*noutheteo*) other believers. This “teaching” and “admonishing” are centered on Christ. Paul takes these actions very seriously, and reveals his own seriousness in Colossians 1:28: “Him [Christ] we proclaim, warning [*noutheteo*] everyone and teaching [*didasko*] everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.” Thus, in Moo’s words, Paul “gives to each member of the congregation the responsibility to teach and admonish other members.”⁴³

This “teaching” and “admonishing” take a particular form here. They occur through God’s Word being sung and prayed (3:16). Paul assumes every believer can “admonish” another believer through Scripture, prayer, and song within the context of the congregation. A parallel application includes Christian fathers leading their families through the reading of God’s Word, prayer, and singing. But who is to make sure that all Christians are equipped to do this ministry? More specifically for fathers leading their

Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 888.

⁴³Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 289.

families, who is to train them? Paul answers this critical question as he addresses the Ephesians.

Ephesians 4:11-12

If all Christians are to be involved in a word-centered ministry, does God expect believers to do this automatically on their own as soon as they become aware of this biblical lifestyle? Though that is certainly the ideal, God has purposefully planned for pastors to play an important role in training fathers to lead in family worship. This training aspect of pastors is best seen in Ephesians 4:11-12, which states, “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” There are several observations to be made on these verses, both exegetical and practical.

The first exegetical decision is whether “pastors and teachers” refers to one role or two. Part of the controversy stems from Paul’s use of the article. When all the evidence is considered, it seems the article is common enough that it does not *necessitate* “pastors” and “teachers” to be two kinds of gifts in the same person.⁴⁴ Thielman agrees that “the evidence is not clear enough to allow us to consider ‘pastors’ and ‘teachers’ as a single group.”⁴⁵ O’Brien similarly notes,

Although it has often been held that the two groups are identical, it is more likely that the terms describe overlapping functions. All pastors teach (since teaching is an essential part of pastoral ministry), but not all teachers are also pastors. The latter exercise their leadership role by feeding God’s flock with his word.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Thielman, *The Book of Ephesians*, 275.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 300.

Granted, whether “pastors and teachers” is one role or two does not affect the applications that are taken from these verses. But because these verses are central to the role of a pastor in equipping fathers for leadership, exact exegesis is required.

Second, Paul gives a reason why God gave his church pastors and teachers in verse 12: “to equip the saints for the work of ministry.” Paul makes it clear that the “saints” are to do the work of ministry, not just the professional clergy. O’Brien wisely remarks, “The ministry of the officials does not find its fulfillment in their own existence but only in the preparing of others to minister.”⁴⁷

Granted, conclusions from verse 12 must be tempered, for the relationships of the three prepositional phrases to each other are not conclusive. The main question concerns the relationship of the phrase “for the works of ministry” to the prior phrase “to equip the saints” and the later phrase “for building up the body of Christ.” There are some reliable Bible scholars who see the three phrases as parallel, all describing the reason why God gave pastors.⁴⁸ But there is a healthy amount of evidence dictating otherwise, both in the grammar of the phrases and the context.⁴⁹ Thielman wisely notes that the context (4:7-16) is about the “role of all believers in the unity of the church.” He continues,

Christ, who has extended his victory over all opposing forces and his sovereignty over all creation, is the very one who now equips the church to join him in his sovereign reign over all creation. He does this through giving gifts to discrete groups of people so they, in turn, can equip others to serve and

⁴⁷Ibid., 304.

⁴⁸Thielman notes that John of Damascus and John Calvin are two prominent interpreters who interpret v. 12 this way. Thielman, *The Book of Ephesians*, 277.

⁴⁹Ibid., 278.

edify the church. Although the syntax of the list of gifted groups is complex and disputed, the most plausible understanding of the text places the emphasis less on the positions that certain people hold in the church and more on the activities that Christ has equipped certain people to perform.⁵⁰

From his letters to the Romans, the Colossians, and the Ephesians, Paul makes two things clear: (1) all Christians are to be involved in word-based ministry, such as fathers leading in family worship, and (2) one responsibility of pastors and elders is to equip Christians to do this. Thus, it is the responsibility of pastors to equip fathers to lead in family worship.

Conclusion

For Moses and Israel, family worship was an important spiritual discipline that would help their survival and spiritual fidelity in the Promised Land. Though Israel did not keep the spiritual discipline, Asaph brings their attention back to it, imploring fathers to take their role in this discipline seriously. The Apostle Paul continues with similar pleas. Moreover, since the New Testament paints a picture of every Christian being involved in a “word-driven ministry,” expecting fathers to lead their families in family worship feels natural to the expectations of Scripture.

If faithful family worship rests on the shoulders of fathers, then pastors are responsible to keep fathers accountability to this discipline. The New Testament paints a picture of all believers ministering the Word, but it also portrays pastors being on the front line of equipping people for this ministry. Thus, Scripture instructs fathers to lead their families in family worship, and pastors are to train the fathers in this important task.

⁵⁰Ibid., 273.

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL SUPPORT FOR TRAINING FATHERS
TO LEAD IN FAMILY WORSHIP

Voices from Church History

Many Christians today and in the past recognize the importance of fathers leading their families spiritually in worship. Fathers need to be trained by the church in what this entails and why it is important.

Christians throughout history have recognized the need for fathers leading in family worship. In the early church, evidence points to a continuing practice of family worship. In the first century, Jewish Christians continued using the Bible in personal and family worship.¹ In the second century, Clement advised that married people should read the Bible together. The Bible was observably found and used in Christian families.² Patristics scholar Lyman Coleman describes the normal practice during this period: “At an early hour in the morning the family was assembled, when a portion of Scripture was read from the Old Testament, which was followed by a hymn and a prayer, in which thanks were offered up to the Almighty. In the evening, before retiring to rest, the family

¹ Adolf Harnack, *Bible Reading in the Early Church*, trans J.R. Wilkinson. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2005), 32. He observes, “We know that among the Gentile Christians the order of public worship and private and family discipline in matters of religion and morality, took form in accordance with the Jewish (Jewish Christian) models.” Ibid.

² Harnack, *Bible Reading in the Early Church*, 58.

again assembled, when the same form of worship was observed as in the morning.”³

Summarizing the first couple centuries, Harnack concludes, “It is evident that we have here a rule of long standing for Christian families.”⁴

In the third century, Origen was exposed to the Bible as a child through his family. Harnack writes about Origen’s experience: “His father, besides seeing that his son was instructed in the usual subjects of study, made a special point of instruction in the Scriptures. He incited him to practice himself above all in the doctrines of religion. . . and made him each day learn and say by heart some passages.”⁵ Harnack comments, “We have here a glimpse into the home of an ordinary Christian citizen: the children hear the Scriptures read and learn passages of them by heart. A Bible was not only in the home: the Bible was the principle text-book of education; the chief aim in the whole training of a child was that he should be taught to understand the Bible.”⁶

This encouragement to engage God’s Word in family worship continued with Basil (4th Century), Tertullian (4th Century) and Chrysostom (5th century). Harnack summarizes the evidence, “The Fathers without scruple direct that children in Christian homes should be introduced to the Bible from the very earliest age.”⁷ The practice

³ Lyman Coleman, *The Antiquities of the Christian Church* (Andover and New York: Gould, Newman & Saxton, 1841), 375.

⁴ Harnack, *Bible Reading in the Early Church*, 55.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 122.

continued in the sixth century, evidenced by Caesarius of Arles telling his congregation the importance of families having time at night reading Scripture together.⁸

Unfortunately, the regular practice of fathers leading their families in worship did not continue. C. Michael Wren, Jr. observes, “With the dawning of imperial favor in the fourth century AD and the crumbling of the Roman Empire in the fifth, the primary locus of Christian practice drifted from homes to dedicated institutional structures.”⁹

With the recovery of the Gospel in the Reformation came the recovery of Scripture’s authority in the church. As Reformers helped move the church closer to Scripture, families were also being reformed and shaped according to Scripture. Soon, parents were regarded as responsible for nurturing their children in the true faith.¹⁰ Martin Luther in particular saw a need to equip parents in their role. He was dismayed over the ignorance he encountered in his travels, and realized people needed “simple instruction in the faith addressed to daily life.”¹¹ To help parents interact with their children on the true faith, Luther wrote his Small Catechism. Its purpose was the presentation of “the fundamentals of the Christian faith in simple language.”¹² Its intended use was in the home, making it a valuable resource for families in worship.

⁸ C. Michael Wren Jr. cites Caesarius of Arles, a bishop in the sixth century, telling his congregation the importance of families having time at night reading Scripture together. C. Michael Wren, Jr., “Among Your Company at Home: Family Discipleship in Late Ancient and Medieval Churches,” ed. Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones, in *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2011), 101.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰ Philip D.W. Krey, *Luther’s Spirituality* (Mahway, NJ: Paulist Press, 2007), xxv.

¹¹ Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 129.

¹² Ibid.

After Luther, catechisms continued having an important role in the discipleship and worship of families. For example, a primary reason the Heidelberg catechism was written was to be a tool for teaching doctrine to children.¹³ The use of catechisms in families during family worship was a key way by which the reformation spread. C.

Jeffrey Robinson, Sr. summarizes what happened in the Reformation,

The Reformers, particularly Luther and Calvin, developed a robust vision for Christian training in the household and called parents to disciple their children. The Puritans in England and America cultivated this Reformation vision and brought it to its fullest flower in the form of consistent family worship and discipleship.¹⁴

It is from this later group, the Puritans, that “the most mature expressions of the theology and practice of what came to be known as ‘family worship’” developed.¹⁵ Through the diverse voices of the Puritan movement, there are several clear themes that emerge concerning family worship. These themes include the importance of the family, the role of the father, the importance of family worship, and the contents of family worship.

Importance of the Family

One does not need to read far into the deep corpus of Puritan writings before one hears the refrain of the family’s importance. The family was not an optional social construction to the Puritans, but a vital community that has been created, ordered, and

¹³ Kevin DeYoung, *The Good News We Almost Forgot: Rediscovering the Gospel in at 16th Century Catechism* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2010), 16.

¹⁴C. Jeffrey Robinson Sr., “The Home is an Earthly Kingdom: Family Discipleship among Reformers and Puritans,” in *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*, ed. Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2011), 115.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 119.

sustained by God himself.¹⁶ The family's influence on the spiritual health of society cannot be overstated. Richard Baxter makes this point by summarizing the Puritan perspective that the beginning of a national reformation comes from reformation in the family:

Even those rulers and princes who are the pillars and patrons of heathenism, Islam, popery and ungodliness in the world did themselves receive that venom from their parents, in their birth and education, which inclines them to all this mischief. Family reformation is the easiest and most likely way to a common reformation, or at least to send many souls to heaven and train up multitudes for God if it reaches not to national reformation.¹⁷

Role of the Father

The same Richard Baxter who spoke of the family's importance spoke similarly about fathers. In fact, Baxter devoted a major portion of his *Christian Directory* to the duties of the father in family worship. For instance, Baxter wrote a chapter simply devoted to "Motives to Persuade Men to the Holy Government of Families," in which he gives compelling motives for fathers to consider family worship.

Central to a father's role in the house was the idea that the family was a small church. J. I. Packer, quoting John Gere, describes the perspective of the Puritan father: "His family he endeavored to make a church, both in regard of persons and exercises, admitting none into it but such as feared God; and labouring that those that were born into it, might be born again to God."¹⁸ In his sermon "A Church in the House," Matthew Henry shares a similar view, teaching that a family's leader should be prophet, priest, and

¹⁶J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1990), 270.

¹⁷Richard Baxter, *The Godly Home* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2010), 113.

¹⁸Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*, 270.

king. He is prophet in that he teaches, a priest in that he intercedes, and a king in that he disciplines.¹⁹ The Puritan Oliver Heywood similarly declares the responsibility of fathers (householders) to lead their families spiritually: “Householders have a charge upon their hands, which they must give an account of, and opportunity to discharge this trust.”²⁰

Thus, the father is the main one responsible to lead in family worship. James W. Alexander, in his classic book on family worship, makes this Puritan ideal clear: “The person, whose office it is to lead in Family-Worship, is undoubtedly the head of the household. The father is here in his proper place, as the prophet and patriarch of his little State.”²¹ The *Westminster Directory for Family Worship* concurs in answering the question “who should lead family worship?” The answer is, “The head of the family is to take care that none of the family withdraw himself from any part of family-worship.”²² It must have been with this Puritan ideal on his mind that Arthur W. Pink asks, “How much of the dreadful moral and spiritual conditions of the masses today may be traced back to the neglect of their fathers in this duty?”²³

¹⁹Matthew Henry, *Family Religion: Principles for Raising a Godly Family* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2008), 32-40.

²⁰Oliver Heywood, *The Family Altar* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1999), 321.

²¹James W. Alexander, *Thoughts on Family Worship* (Ligonier, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1990), 193.

²²Douglas W. Comin, *Returning to the Family Altar: A Commentary and Study Guide on the Directory for Family Worship* (Aberdeen, UK: The James Begg Society, 2004), 21. This *Directory for Family Worship* was produced the same time as the Westminster Confession, and gives scriptural and theological foundations and explanations for the practice of family worship.

²³A. W. Pink, “Family Worship,” accessed December 7, 2013, <http://www.apuritansmind.com/the-christian-walk/the-christian-family/family-worship-by-a-w-pink/>.

Importance of Family Worship

With the importance of the family and the role of the father in Puritan thought summarized, one should not be surprised to learn of the high value they placed upon family worship. But family worship was not a pursuit for pragmatic reasons. As Oliver Heywood exclaimed in his treatise on the family: “None hath power to order God’s worship but himself alone.”²⁴ It was because they understood family worship to be a scriptural practice that they promoted it. Among others, Richard Baxter wrote one section in his *Christian Directory* entitled “Worship of God in families: is it by divine appointment?” He answers with a resounding “yes” through the use of logical propositions, arguments from Scripture, and by carefully answering objections to the practice.²⁵

Like Baxter, many other Puritan authors concentrate on convincing their audiences of the necessity of family worship. Much of Alexander’s book on family worship is spent convincing the reader of its importance. For example:

It is highly honorable to family-worship, as a spiritual service, that it languishes and goes into decay in times when error and worldliness make inroads upon the church. . . . From what has been said, it is manifest, that the universal voice of the Church, in its best periods, has been in favor of family-worship.²⁶

²⁴Heywood, *The Family Altar*, 305.

²⁵Richard Baxter, *The Godly Home*, 57-97.

²⁶Alexander, *Thoughts on Family Worship*, 29.

Similarly, George Hamond (b. 1620), in his *The Case for Family Worship*, makes the purpose of his work clear: “I shall endeavor to impress upon your consciences the necessity of the daily performance of family worship.”²⁷

In Evangelical thought, family worship has an effect far beyond the local time and place of a family gathered together. Samuel Davies (1723-1761), a colonial minister in the Puritan tradition, and Charles Spurgeon, who is often referred to as an “heir of the Puritans,” agree on the effect family worship has on society. Davies exclaimed,

If you love your children; if you would bring down the blessing of heaven upon your families: if you would have your children make their houses the receptacles of religion when they set up in life for themselves; if you would have religion survive in this place, and be conveyed from age to age; if you would deliver your own souls- I beseech, I entreat, I charge you to begin and continue the worship of God in your families from this day to the close of your lives ... Consider family religion not merely as a duty imposed by authority, but as your greatest privilege granted by divine grace.²⁸

Spurgeon continues the thought: “If we want to bring up a godly family, who shall be a seed to serve God when our heads are under the clods of the valley, let us seek to train them up in the fear of God by meeting together as a family for worship.”²⁹

The Puritans were realistic in their convictions about family worship. They knew the practice needed to be understood and embraced by the father of a house, or it would never happen. Thus, the *Directory for Family Worship* gives sobering consequences for a father who purposefully disregards family worship: “if he be found

²⁷George Hamond, *The Case for Family Worship* (Orlando: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 2005), xiii.

²⁸Samuel Davies, “The Necessity and Excellence of Family Religion.” *Sermons of the Reverend Samuel Davies*, vol. 2. (Morgan, Penn.: Soli Deo Gloria, n.d.), 86.

²⁹C.H. Spurgeon, “A Pastoral Visit,” *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol.54, (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1908; reprint, Pasadena, Tex.: Pilgrim Publications, 1978), 362-363.

still to neglect Family-worship, let him be, for his obstinacy in such an offence, suspended and debarred from the Lord's supper, as being justly esteemed unworthy to communicate therein, till he amend."³⁰

Family worship was considered to be so important that it needed to be a continual preoccupation of the father. Alexander states: "It only remains to be observed, that if the father of a family would make this service one of the greatest advantage, he must deem it worthy of being in his thoughts at moments when he is not actually engaged in it. He will seek to keep his mind in such a frame as not to unfit him for leading his children to God."³¹

Jonathan Edwards considered the Christian family "a little church and commonwealth by itself," and "the head of the family has more advantage in his little community to promote religion than ministers have in the congregation."³² It is no surprise that Edwards sees the importance of fathers leading in family worship. He himself exemplified this leadership. Robinson explains, "Jonathan Edwards diligently read Scripture with his eleven children each day and taught them the catechisms. Each Saturday, he carefully prepared them for worship on the Lord's Day."³³

With a faithful lifestyle of leadership in his own family, Jonathan Edwards implored the fathers in his congregation to lead their own families in worship. In his final

³⁰Comin, *Returning to the Family Altar*, 9.

³¹Alexander, *Thoughts on Family Worship*, 200.

³² Jonathan Edwards, "Living to Christ," in *Sermons and Discourses, 1720-1723*, The Works of Jonathan Edwards, vol.10, ed Wilson H. Kimnach (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 577.

³³ Robinson, "The Home is an Earthly Kingdom: Family Discipleship among Reformers and Puritans," 126.

sermon to his congregation in Northampton, his passion for family worship is clearly seen. In it he states:

Let us now therefore, once more, before I finally cease to speak to this congregation, repeat, and earnestly press the counsel which I have often urged on the heads of families, while I was their pastor, to great painfulness in teaching, warning, and directing their children; bringing them up in the training and admonition of the Lord; beginning early, where there is yet opportunity, and maintaining constant diligence in labors of this kind.³⁴

Contents of Family Worship

With the importance of family worship established, a practical question arises concerning what a family should do during family worship. But before this specific question of application is answered, it must be noted that the Puritans truly understood this practice as *worship*. Thus, it should have the same flavor as corporate or private worship. Hamond makes this clear: “Family worship, rightly and religiously performed, is truly the worship of God; for it partakes of the general nature of divine worship, is the same with it for substance, and has all the essentials of it.”³⁵ He adds: “I take it for a fundamental, comprehensive principle that wheresoever the worship of God is rightly performed, it is always the same for substance, and includes whatsoever is essential to it.”³⁶

So how should families worship God? Or, in the words of the *Directory of Family Worship*, what are the basic elements of family worship? Its answer:

First, prayer and praises performed with a special reference, as well as to the public condition of the church of God and this kingdom, as to the present case of the family, and every member thereof. Next, reading of the Scriptures, with

³⁴ Jonathan Edwards, *A Farewell Sermon*, The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 1, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), ccxlviii.

³⁵Hamond, *The Case for Family Worship*, 1.

³⁶Ibid., 7.

catechizing in a plain way, that the understandings of the simpler may be the better enabled to profit under the public ordinances, and they made more capable to understand the Scriptures when they are read.³⁷

Other Puritans agree with the simplicity of this structure. Alexander echoes the Westminster Divines: “The constituent parts of Family-Worship, when fully observed, are, first, the reading of the Scriptures; secondly, the singing of praise to God; and thirdly, prayer.”³⁸ Thus, the structure is simple. Comin, commenting on the *Directory of Family Worship*, explains,

There is no need for an elaborate program, though many families hesitate to begin the practice of family worship because they think it must be involved and complicated. The simple elements of prayer, praise, and Bible reading (with application) are sufficient and full of spiritual power. In these basic elements the Christian family will find all that is needful for the promotion of godliness and growth in grace.³⁹

The voices from church history, articulated the best by the Puritans, are clear. Family worship is a necessary practice for God’s people. Moreover, fathers bear the responsibility for leading their families in this practice, and should be held accountable by the church to their wise leading of their families in this.

Contemporary Christians and the Christian Father’s Role

Voices from the past are not the only voices to be heard declaring the importance of fathers leading their families spiritually through family worship. A

³⁷Comin, *Returning to the Family Altar*, 15.

³⁸Alexander, *Thoughts on Family Worship*, 193.

³⁹Comin, *Returning to the Family Altar*, 16.

pleasant symphony of contemporary Christians are giving increased recognition to the father's importance and role in spiritually leading his family.

A father's leadership in worship begins, of course, with their presence in the family. George Gallup Jr. sadly reported in 1999 that "79 percent of Americans say father absence is the nation's most significant problem."⁴⁰ Another survey indicates that neither education nor income were the key cause of crime, "but whether or not a child lives with his biological father."⁴¹

But being physically present does not mean the father is emotionally and spiritually present. A father needs to know and fulfill his role in his family. This critical need is recognized by a variety of perspectives. The Charismatic Catholic Robert R. Iatesta states: "He is a father who has accepted his role as spiritual leader of his family, a man who knows his weakness and trusts God to be God."⁴² Professor Bruce Ware is even more explicit: "The husband of the household is granted a privilege and a duty, before the Lord, to direct the discipleship and development that takes place with their wives and with their children."⁴³

This mentality is different than the impression one may get from many churches today. Timothy Paul Jones has written extensively on the role of parents in the

⁴⁰George Gallup Jr., "What Americans Believe about Fatherhood and the Role of Religion," in *The Faith Factor in Fatherhood: Renewing the Sacred Vocation of Fathering*, ed. Don E. Eberly (New York: Lexington Books, 1999), 39.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Robert R. Iatesta, *Fathers: A Fresh Start for the Christian Family* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1980), 13.

⁴³Bruce Ware, "The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: The Trinity as Theological Foundation for Family Ministry," in *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*, ed. Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2011), 68.

discipleship of their children. What he writes concerning both parents in family discipleship certainly applies to fathers leading in family worship:

Churches have presented moms and dads with the impression that active participation in the discipleship of children is optional for parents. Of course, no one has explicitly told parents that they shouldn't guide their children in light of redemption and consummation. What many churches have done instead is to children, all while rarely (if ever) even mentioning the role of parents in discipling their children.⁴⁴

Professionalization of certain ministry roles has kept parents, and fathers in particular, away from their God-given role of spiritually leading and shepherding their families.

Jones continues,

The unspoken message has been that the task of discipleship is best left to trained professionals. Schoolteachers are perceived as the persons responsible to grow the children's bodies, and specialized ministers at church ought to develop their souls. When it comes to schooling and coaching, such perspectives may or may not be particularly problematic. When it comes to Christian formation, however, this perspective faces an insurmountable snag: God specifically calls not only the community of faith but also the parents to engage personally in the Christian formation of children.⁴⁵

As a final indicator of this renewed seriousness that contemporary Christians are placing on fathers leading their families spiritually, one can consider two leading Evangelical voices who have written books on this subject in the last ten years.

First, in 2004 Tony Payne of Matthias Media in Australia wrote *Fatherhood: What It Is and What It's For*. Payne observes the difficulties facing fathers today as they "find themselves separated from their children for most of their waking lives."⁴⁶ When

⁴⁴Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011), 83.

⁴⁵Ibid., 83.

⁴⁶ Tony Payne, *Fatherhood: What It Is and What It's For* (Kingsford, Australia: Mathias Media, 2004), 11.

one adds to the state of fatherhood the effects of the feminist revolution the last thirty years, Payne notes that “no-one’s exactly sure these days what a ‘father’ is, and what he should do.”⁴⁷

Payne seeks to correct this by a careful look at what the Bible says about fathers. He makes the simple observation that in the Bible, fathers are “senior partners in the baby production business.”⁴⁸ This has an implication on what fathers are to do: “If fathers are the life-givers, the senior partners in the creation of children, then it follows that we are ultimately *responsible* for the lives that we have initiated and brought into being.”⁴⁹ If fathers have this responsibility in the family then they must also have authority in the family to fulfill their responsibility. Simply put, “In the biblical way of thinking, fathers are in charge of their families.”⁵⁰ Payne mentions several aspects of this charge, one of which is the responsibility for “teaching them about life, and themselves, and God.”⁵¹

A second recent work on fathers comes from Voddie Baucham, Jr., preaching pastor of Grace Family Baptist Church in Spring, Texas. His book *Family Shepherds: Calling and Equipping Men to Lead their Homes* carefully lays out the importance of fathers actively engaging their children in discipleship. In explaining the role of fathers, he highlights the importance of fathers leading in family worship. He recognizes the

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., 22.

⁴⁹Ibid., 31.

⁵⁰Ibid., 49.

⁵¹Ibid., 73.

difficulties with this mentality, as “professional” ministers make a father’s role in leading his family seem unnecessary. Baucham gives voice to the objection many fathers might raise:

If the church hires a youth pastor, a senior high pastor, a middle school pastor, associates for high school and middle school (separate ones for boys and for girls), a children’s pastor, and a preschool director, many of whom have specialized degrees in their field from reputable seminaries- they why should a father who has no titles, positions, or special training dare to take it upon himself to do what these men and women have spent years preparing for? Isn’t letting go of the reins and allowing the ‘professionals’ to do their job the wise thing to do?⁵²

Of course, this mentality is exactly what Baucham seeks to confront with the truth of Scripture. Payne and Baucham identify the importance of a biblical understanding of fatherhood. This biblical understanding identifies the cultural reasons (both inside and outside the church) that work against it, and seeks to teach the importance of fathers spiritually leading their families today.

Spiritual Leadership and Family Worship

The recognition by many evangelicals today that fathers must spiritually lead their families is healthy and biblical. But it is not enough if the important component of family worship is not also embraced. In the midst of all the options of programming that an average evangelical family in an average evangelical church can choose, J. Ligon Duncan and Terry L. Johnson speak a wise word: “The family should commit itself to the

⁵²Voddie Baucham Jr., *Family Shepherds: Calling and Equipping Men to Lead their Homes* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 69.

time-proven, biblically based means of spiritual nurture- public worship and family worship.”⁵³

The biblical expectation of fathers leading their families spiritually, specifically in family worship, is eagerly promoted by Baucham, who says, “Regular family worship may well have greater impact on the spiritual life of a man’s family than any other practice he commits himself to.”⁵⁴ To further explain the place of family worship in leading a family, we turn our attention to two questions: “Why have family worship?” and “How does one lead family worship?”

Why Practice Family Worship

The simple answer to the question “why have family worship” has already been stated and explained in chapter two: namely, it is commanded in Scripture. Jason Helopoulos helpfully summarizes,

The argument can be made that there is no direct command in the Bible to spend fifteen or twenty minutes a day worshipping with your family at home. You can search high and low and you won’t find one. However, there are plenty of commands that in our homes we are to teach our children, read the Word, pray: in essence-worship. And these commands will be hard to obey without the kind of planning and consistency that family worship helps to provide.⁵⁵

Two other helpful comments can be added at this point, both related to a father’s desire for his family. First, a biblically informed father and husband desires for his family to be

⁵³J. Ligon Duncan III and Terry L. Johnson, “A Call to Family Worship,” in *Give Praise to God: A Vision for Reforming Worship*, ed. Philip Graham Ryken, Derek W. H. Thomas, and J. Ligon Duncan III (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2003), 338.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 73.

⁵⁵Jason Helopoulos, *A Neglected Grace: Family Worship in the Christian Home* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2013), 30.

conformed more and more into the image of Christ. Marcellino wisely notes, “Our hearts’ desire toward our children ought to be like Paul’s toward the Galatians, whom he called ‘my children with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you’ (Gal 4:19).”⁵⁶

The responsibility to do something with this desire rests particularly on the father.

Helopoulos agrees:

In a primary sense, spiritual leadership in the home is the husband’s responsibility as one appointed to love and care for his wife. If there are children in the home, then it is primarily the father’s responsibility as the head of the home to nurture those under his care by leading them in worship.⁵⁷

A second desire a man should have for his family is their increased delight in and desire for God. The truths Thompson observes concerning family discipleship certainly also applies to family worship: “The ultimate goal of discipleship is that our children will come to delight in the grace of God and desire to love and obey him. They will develop these attitudes only if they understand what God has done for them.”⁵⁸ He later adds: “The goal of family discipleship is to raise children who treasure Jesus above all things.”⁵⁹ Family worship disciplines and trains children to treasure Jesus in the future. It also provides an immediate and present opportunity where families can enjoy, treasure, and delight in God through Scripture reading, prayer, and singing.

⁵⁶ Jerry Marcellino, *Rediscovering Family Worship* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 1996), 6.

⁵⁷ Helopoulos, *A Neglected Grace*, 31.

⁵⁸ Tad Thompson, *Intentional Parenting: Family Discipleship by Design* (Adelphi, ON: Cruciform Press, 2011), 60.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

How to Practice Family Worship

Family Worship begins the most natural way when the man is convinced and convicted that his family must practice it. Baucham notes, “As the head of the household, family worship will usually rise and fall with me. And if I am committed to family worship, my wife and children will likely follow suit.”⁶⁰ Baucham adds five other steps to beginning family worship. It must be simple, scheduled, natural, mandatory, and participatory.⁶¹

Beyond these introductory remarks, there is a tremendous agreement from contemporary authors on the three basic components to family worship. In family worship, a family reads the Bible, prays, and sings.⁶² These are the same three ingredients the Puritans promoted, as explained above. Thus, there is not a new format to family worship being espoused today, but rather a call to return to the reliable paths walked by families for centuries.

First, a family reads the Bible together. Scripture must be central to worship. The family should develop a love and thirst for God’s Word as it is read “reverently and creatively, as well as with much animation.”⁶³ Carr adds, “The aim isn’t to give a lecture

⁶⁰Baucham, *Family Shepherds*, 140.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 139ff.

⁶²The following is just a sampling of current authors whose writings on family worship identify the ingredients of reading the Bible, praying, and singing: Joel R. Beeke, *Family Worship* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2002), 10-15; Francois Carr, *Lead Your Family in Worship: Discovering the Enjoyment of God* (Leominster, Great Britain: Day One Publications, 2008), 49-56; Duncan and Johnson, “A Call to Family Worship,” 324-25; Jason Helopoulos, *A Neglected Grace*, 53-61; Marcellino, *Rediscovering Family Worship*, 15-18; Whitney, *Family Worship*, 37-42.

⁶³ Marcellino, *Rediscovering Family Worship*, 16.

or message, but to make time for the family to ‘listen’ together to the Voice of the Lord. The ultimate goal is to worship the Lord together.”⁶⁴

Fathers must work hard so that Scripture does not come across as boring and that the whole family is appropriately engaged in the reading and discussion. Whitney suggests a father should “read enthusiastically and interpretively. Clarify the meaning of key verses. To improve their understanding, ask the children to explain a particular verse or phrase to you.”⁶⁵ Thus, a father should both thoughtfully illustrate the passage, while also being straightforward in what a passages says and means. Age-appropriate questions go far to help a family’s worshipful engagement of Scripture.

As leader, the father should have a plan for what is being read. Working through books of the Bible while reading a chapter every day in an age-appropriate translation is ideal. Before the reading on a particular day, an introduction of a sentence or two is helpful. For special events and holidays, special readings are appropriate.

The simple reading of Scripture must be the main input of Scripture in family worship. However, two other practices of Scripture intake can be added: the explanation of Scripture through catechisms, and the memorization of Scripture. Memorizing Scripture together helps a family dig deep into specific verses or whole passages. It also encourages participation by every family member.

Most catechisms are written for the purpose of children learning good doctrine. Marcellino encourages the use of catechisms to augment Bible intake, saying they are “a

⁶⁴ Carr , *Lead Your Family in Worship*, 52.

⁶⁵ Whitney, *Family Worship*, 37.

very successful method of teaching biblical truths by simple questions and answers.”⁶⁶ Whitney also commends the practice, describing what takes place: “The questions are reviewed and new ones are learned incrementally so that over time the children absorb a tremendous amount of biblical truth. A good, age-appropriate catechism is as valuable for learning the Bible as memorizing multiplication tables is for learning mathematics.”⁶⁷

The second basic component to family worship is prayer. Carr stresses that “a family that prays together stays together.”⁶⁸ Ideally every family member who is old enough would regularly participate in prayer. The father would pray the most, setting the tone for the family’s prayer time. He would be direct, natural and yet solemn, and simple without being shallow.⁶⁹

How long should prayer last during an average time of family worship? Beeke suggests it should be short, meaning less than five minutes.⁷⁰ Carr agrees: “the quality of prayer time is more important than its length.”⁷¹

The content of prayer should include praise and adoration, thanksgiving, confession, and intercession. Not every element must be included every day, though a family should participate in every element every few days. In addition, it is wise for

⁶⁶ Marcellino, *Rediscovering Family Worship*, 17.

⁶⁷ Whitney, *Family Worship*, 40.

⁶⁸ Carr, *Lead Your Family in Worship*, 54.

⁶⁹ Beeke, *Family Worship*, 29.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁷¹ Carr, *Lead Your Family in Worship*, 54.

families to pray about at least one thing suggested by the Scripture passage read that day.⁷²

The intercession element of prayer can be further divided into various subjects, including personal needs, family needs, church needs, the unsaved, and missionaries.⁷³ The wise father and leader will ensure that his family is supplicating for all these needs.

The final basic component to family worship is singing. Though music and singing are commonly associated with worship, Helopoulos rightly observes the trepidation that singing has for many families: “For the vast majority of families, this is initially the most awkward element of family worship. Most of us are not that excited about the voices we have been blessed with!”⁷⁴

There are multiple benefits to a family singing together. In a way, singing is a subcategory of both Scripture intake and prayer. A family that sings appropriate songs is either rehearsing the truth of Scripture together, or praying together in praise, confession, or intercession. Hymns are one of the best ways to learn theology and memorize Scripture together. Carr observes, “When we sing together, our songs that are based on the Word build us up and strengthen us.”⁷⁵

What songs should be used? First, songs that are sung in church or in a children’s discipleship program would be helpful. Beyond that, a father can find hymns and songs that will help shepherd the hearts of his children. Beeke elaborates: “Choose

⁷² Whitney, *Family Worship*, 38.

⁷³ Carr, *Lead Your Family in Worship*, 55.

⁷⁴ Helopoulos, *A Neglected Grace*, 59.

⁷⁵ Carr, *Lead Your Family in Worship*, 49.

songs that express the spiritual needs of your children for repentance, faith, and renewal of heart and life; songs that reveal God's love for His people, and the love of Christ for the lambs of His flock; or that remind them of their covenant privileges and duty."⁷⁶

Though many families may be intimidated to sing together, there are many tools to help facilitate singing in a family. A family can obtain a collection of hymnals. They can utilize the many hymns, worship songs, and psalters found on the internet. *Youtube* is full of hymns and modern worship songs with which a family can sing along.

Family worship is simple and straightforward. It involves reading the Bible, praying, and singing. Therefore, the reason family worship is minimally practiced today has less to do with its complexity, and more to do with unbiblical ideas of masculinity and ignored biblical roles of the local church. To those problems we now turn our attention.

Masculine Spirituality and Family Worship

The importance of a father leading family worship is not only found in the effect it has on the family, but also in its connection to the father's own personal spirituality.

In the big picture of the spiritual growth and maturity of men in a local church, family worship is often sadly ignored. But when family worship is ignored, an important means by which men in a church can grow is also ignored. To explain, we must first survey and settle on what biblical spirituality for a man is, especially as it is distinct from biblical spirituality for women. This is important because what a church believes about

⁷⁶ Beeke, *Family Worship*, 32.

mature masculinity will influence what a church expects of its fathers. After exploring masculine spirituality, we will better see the connection between a father's faithfulness in family worship and his own spiritual growth.

A Biblical Masculine Spirituality

Before we discuss what a biblical masculine spirituality is, we must first acknowledge that some people who write about masculinity and spirituality deny the need for revelation from God to understand these things. Jerome Neyrey of the University of Notre Dame begins his essay in the collection *New Testament Masculinities* by stating boldly, "It is an axiom of contemporary scholarship that gender is a social construct."⁷⁷ This has a profound impact on how one understands the spirituality of men. Mark Muesse, Vice-President of the American Men's Studies Association, similarly writes in *Spirituality of Men*, "By masculinity, I mean the expectations and ideals of behavior and modes of being societies believe to be appropriate to men. In this sense, masculinity varies from culture to culture."⁷⁸ These views are incompatible with an evangelical view of Scripture's inerrancy and authority.

Other views of masculinity from non-evangelical sources have had more success in their influence among evangelicals. Popular in men's literature is a reference to "father hunger" and a need for approval from an earthly father. This is often connected

⁷⁷Jerome Neyrey, "Jesus, Gender, and the Gospel of Matthew," in *New Testament Masculinities*, ed. Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 43.

⁷⁸Mark Muesse, "Don't Just Do Something, Sit There: Spiritual Practice and Men's Wholeness," in *Spirituality of Men: Sixteen Christians Write about Their Faith*, ed. Philip L. Culbertson (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2002), 4.

to a “father wound.” Catholic writer Rohr writes about this in his *From Wild Man to Wise Man: Reflections on Male Spirituality*:

Father hunger often becomes a full-blown father wound. Some use that term to highlight the woundedness in a man’s psyche that results from not having a father—whether it is because the father has died or left the family, because the father’s work keeps him absent from the scene most of the time or because the father keeps himself aloof from involvement with his children. In any event, the result is a deep hurt, a deprivation that leads to a poor sense of one’s own center and boundaries, a mind that is disconnected from one’s body and emotions, a life often with the passivity of an unlit fire.⁷⁹

Many evangelical writings on masculinity reflect this thinking. For example, the conservative men’s discipleship program *Men’s Fraternity* and the popular book *Wild at Heart* both consider the concept important enough to include a chapter on “father wounds.”⁸⁰

A second perspective on masculinity comes from psychologists Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette’s *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover: Rediscovering the Archetypes of the Mature Masculine*. Moore and Gillette claim that these four images explain a mature “masculine psyche,” and by their writing seek to offer an “operator’s manual for the male psyche.”⁸¹ They openly recognize that they are simply borrowing the categories Carl G. Jung used in his psychology.⁸²

⁷⁹Richard Rohr, with Joseph Martos, *From Wild Man to Wise Man: Reflections on Male Spirituality* (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1990), 73.

⁸⁰Robert Lewis, *The Quest for Authentic Manhood* (Nashville: Lifeway Press, 2003), 22-23; John Eldridge, *Wild at Heart: Discovering the Secret of a Man’s Soul* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 61-78.

⁸¹Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette, *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover: Rediscovering the Archetypes of Mature Masculine* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1990), xii.

⁸²*Ibid.*, xi.

Evangelical author Stu Weber, in his *Four Pillars of Manhood*, takes Moore and Gillete's four parts of masculinity and reinterprets them through the lens of Scripture.⁸³ Though Weber's book has much to commend it, the fact that he starts with a view originally proposed by secular psychologists leaves it lacking, especially compared to the views espoused below that *begin* with Scripture.

Some popular evangelical writings on masculinity stem more from a reaction to perceived problems than a careful look at what the Bible says about spiritual manhood. For example, Patrick Morley in his successful book *Man in the Mirror* summarizes the purpose of his book as a "look into the problems, issues, and temptations that face the man in the mirror every day and see what practical solutions we can discover for winning the *right* race."⁸⁴ Morley does not define masculinity or godly masculinity, but is driven by an identification of problems, and in good masculine fashion, seeks to solve these problems (namely, our identify problem, our relationship problems, our money problems, our time problems, our temperament problems, and our integrity problems).

Before we transition to views of masculinity that are more helpfully taken from Scripture, it would be wise to review why we are having this discussion. Leading in family worship is a reflection of a father's masculinity and a primary way men exercise a masculine spirituality. In speaking more broadly of family discipleship, Prince states:

⁸³Stu Weber, *Four Pillars of a Man's Heart: Bringing Strength into Balance* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah Books, 1997), 62-63.

⁸⁴Patrick Morley, *The Man in the Mirror* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 14.

“The call for churches to embrace a family-equipping ministry vision begins with a call for men to embrace biblical manhood.”⁸⁵

In seeking to define and describe biblical masculinity from Scripture, there are broadly three approaches. First, one can consider the Apostle Paul’s qualifications for church leadership in 1 Timothy and Titus. These qualifications form the basis for Gene Getz’ popular book on manhood, *The Measure of a Man*. Getz calls the qualifications “20 dynamic qualities for measuring maturity.”⁸⁶ He elaborates:

While Paul was outlining criteria for selecting leaders, he was in essence saying, “Timothy, if a man wants to become a spiritual leader, that’s great. Just make sure he’s a mature man, and here’s how you can determine if he measures up to God’s standards as a Christian.” In other words, . . . the qualities . . . are goals for every Christian man.⁸⁷

Stuart Scott agrees with Getz’ approach:

The instructions were given to insure that male leaders were habitually the kind of men that God wants every man to be. Because a leader is always some sort of example (good or bad), it is very important to God that every male leader reflect Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). Therefore, since these two passages were specifically given by God to men, the basic instructions found in them are profitable for understanding what is truly masculine and what is not.⁸⁸

A second way to define and describe masculinity from the Bible is to concentrate on the first few chapters of the Bible and what God says to and about Adam, the first man.

⁸⁵David Prince, “The Pastor’s Home as Paradigm for the Church’s Family Ministry,” in *Trained in the Fear of God*, ed. Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2011), 175.

⁸⁶Gene Getz, *The Measure of a Man: Twenty Attributes of a Godly Man* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2004), 15.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 21.

⁸⁸Stuart Scott, *Biblical Manhood: Masculinity, Leadership, and Decision Making* (Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2009), 16. Scott then defines masculinity as “the possession and pursuit of redeemed perspective and character, enhanced by qualities consistent with the distinguishing male roles of leading, loving, protecting, and providing—all for the glory of God” (21).

Reformed Pastor Richard Phillips encourages this approach by saying: “When it comes to practically every question about God’s intentions for men and women, the answer is almost always the same: go back to the garden.”⁸⁹ He elaborates,

Genesis 2:7-8 tells us who man is, a spiritual creature made so as to know and glorify God; where man is, placed by God in the heart of the garden that God made; and what man is, the lord and servant of God’s created glory....To work and keep it: here is the how of biblical masculinity, the mandate of Scripture for males.” Thus this is the Masculine Mandate: “to be spiritual men placed in real-world, God-defined relationships, as lords and servants under God, to bear God’s fruit by serving and leading.”⁹⁰

Mark Chanski similarly looks to Genesis, specifically 1:29-28, to describe biblical manhood. He concludes: “Men as image bearers includes subjugation, dominion, and possession Man is to aggressively dominate his environment, instead of allowing his environment to dominate him.”⁹¹ Steve Masterson also relies on Genesis in his book on biblical masculinity when he writes, “God designed us as men to be initiators, to use the substance of our maleness to enter our world as He would enter it and in a way that reflects His character. We are to enter with gentle but aggressive strength to be creators, bringing life out of death and light out of darkness.”⁹²

The third approach to understanding masculinity biblically is more theological in its approach to Scripture. That is, while including the Genesis, 1 Timothy, and Titus passages, it also includes broad themes across Scripture that seem to describe godly men

⁸⁹Richard D. Phillips, *The Masculine Mandate* (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2010), 4.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 8-9.

⁹¹Mark Chanski, *Manly Dominion in a Passive-Purple-Four-Ball World* (Merrick, NY: Calvary Press Publishing, 2004), 15-18.

⁹²Steve Masterson, *Out of the Locker Room of the Male Soul* (Camp Hill, PA: Horizon Books, 1997), 16.

and a masculine spirituality. A few examples of this will indicate the similar themes captured by these writers.

In their handbook on biblical masculinity, Randy Stinson and Dan Dumas of Southern Seminary identify “three essential characteristics of biblical manhood: leadership, provision, and protection.”⁹³ John Piper includes the same three characteristics in his definition of masculinity: “At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to a man’s differing relationships.”⁹⁴ Douglas Wilson is simpler but similar: “Masculinity is the glad assumption of sacrificial responsibility.”⁹⁵

Christian psychologist Larry Crabb takes several of these ideas (taking responsibly and taking the initiative) and ties them to a lifestyle of worship. He states, “Our best efforts to become manly will never produce authentic manhood until an abiding sense of worship grows in our hearts.”⁹⁶ He continues, “Men who learn to be fascinated more with Christ than with themselves will become the authentic men of our day.”⁹⁷

⁹³Randy Stinson and Dan Dumas, *A Guide to Biblical Manhood* (Louisville: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011), 7.

⁹⁴John Piper, “A Vision of Biblical Complementarity: Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 36. Dennis Rainey agrees with Piper, noting especially the characteristics of responsibility and taking the initiative. Dennis Rainey, *Stepping Up: A Call to Courageous Manhood* (Little Rock: FamilyLife Publishing, 2011), 24.

⁹⁵Doug Wilson, *Father Hunger: Why God Calls Men to Love and Lead their Families* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012), 41.

⁹⁶Larry Crabb, *The Silence of Adam* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 33.

⁹⁷Ibid.

So what is biblical masculinity? Whether one uses the passages in Genesis, 1 Timothy, or broad themes of masculinity observed throughout the Bible, biblical masculinity includes the pursuit of biblical maturity (as described by Paul in 1 Timothy and Titus), taking the initiative as a leader under the worshipful leadership of God (as described in Genesis), and particularly showing that leadership through providing and protecting. These are the essentials of a masculine spirituality. Darrin Patrick helpfully adds, “Since, according to the Bible, God made both males and females in his image and likeness, gender is inextricably linked with spirituality. Being a male has to do with biology; being a man has to do with how one relates to, thinks about, and serves God.”⁹⁸

A particularly important way for men to express this masculinity is by leading in family worship. Voddie Baucham wisely expresses the importance of understanding a biblical masculinity, the importance of family worship, and a church’s role in connecting them together:

Everywhere I go churches are trying to crack the code in men’s ministry. Some churches try big events where they bring in top-flight speakers and musicians. Others opt for weekly Bible studies geared toward practical, real-life issues. Some churches host hunting and wild game dinners. Still others opt for the weekly accountability meeting/small group approach. All of these emphases are designed to answer one question: How do we get our men to engage? Ironically, these approaches all leave out the preeminent biblical mandate that God has given to men—the mandate to love their wives as Christ loved the church and to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We fail to hold men’s feet to the fire and to equip, expect, and encourage them to stand at the helm of their families and plot the course. No wonder men today feel they have less status and challenge in life!⁹⁹

⁹⁸Darrin Patrick, *Church Planter: The Man, The Message, the Mission* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 13.

⁹⁹Baucham, *Family Shepherds*, 196.

When men in a church are encouraged to *lead* in family worship, they are encouraged to pursue biblical masculinity. In family worship, men pursue with their families biblical maturity. They initiate times of pursuing God as a family in prayer and song. They spiritually *protect* their families by having their minds brought back to God and Scripture. They spiritually *provide* for their families as they regularly bring their families back to biblical worship where they encounter God who alone can satisfy their souls. Leading in family worship is an expression of a Christian man's biblical masculinity.

Family Worship and Personal Worship

Leading in family worship is also intricately connected to a man's personal times of worship. Arthur W. Pink observes how much family worship can help a man's personal worship: "Many have found in family worship that help and communion with God which they sought for and with less effect in private prayer."¹⁰⁰

Unfortunately, the opposite can also be the case: a man who is undisciplined and uncommitted to his personal times of worship will very likely be undisciplined in leading family worship. Comin observes,

It is especially hard for a person who is inconsistent in his own personal devotions to be faithful in organizing or participating in family worship. The first step, then, in the development of a beneficial regimen of household worship is the encouragement of parents to be disciplined in their own personal quiet times If a father is not walking in close fellowship with God in his private devotions, he will lack the spiritual motivation to gather his family together for worship.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰Pink, "Family Worship."

¹⁰¹Comin, *Returning to the Family Altar*, 13.

Men may be reticent to lead in family worship because they are not equipped in the basic disciplines of personal worship. Thompson is right to declare, “You cannot disciple your children beyond your own level of discipleship. If you are not faithful to meditate on the Scriptures daily, you will not be able to train your children to do so.”¹⁰² In other words, the building blocks for a man leading in family worship include a proper understanding of biblical masculinity, and a disciplined practice of personal worship.

The Need for Training in Family Worship

If it is so critically important for fathers to lead in family worship, why does it seem the practice is so scarce? Many answers could be given, but a prime one is that churches have not taken responsibility to train fathers in this practice. In order for fathers to lead their families successfully in family worship, they must be trained by the church. To explain, we must first explore the general biblical role pastors have in training, followed by specific comments on training fathers for family worship.

Pastor as Trainer

Of the many roles that the New Testament assigns to pastors and elders, one commonly ignored one is the role of a trainer. Ephesians 4, discussed in chapter 2, makes this biblically clear. But, as Marshall states in *The Trellis and the Vine*, “In most churches and for most pastors, hardly any effort goes into training.”¹⁰³

Of course, this does not diminish one of the most important tasks of a pastor: teaching and preaching the Word of God. Rather, it helps the preached Word to be

¹⁰²Thompson, *Intentional Parenting*, 56.

¹⁰³ Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine: The Ministry Mind-Shift that Changes Everything* (Kingsford, Australia, Mathias Media, 2009), 99.

disseminated to individuals and families when more people are trained to discuss God's Word in a way that helps bring out the meaning. Marshall continues to explain:

The Pastor is also a trainer. His job is not just to provide spiritual services, nor is it his job to do all of the ministry. His task is to teach and train his congregation, by his word and this life, to become disciple-making disciples of Jesus. There is a radical dissolution, in this model, of the clergy-lay distinction.¹⁰⁴

To help dissolve this unbiblical clergy/laity distinction, pastors, the leaders of congregational worship, must train fathers to lead in family worship.

Responsibility of the Church

Churches have much influence over what the fathers of their congregation do. In speaking of the broader category of family discipleship, Timothy Paul Jones reports the results of a study on why parents are not more involved. He explains: "What are these top two factors in parents' failure to disciple their children? The primary point of resistance was that churches weren't training the parents. The secondary reason was that parents weren't making the time."¹⁰⁵ He elaborates, "The issue seems to be not so much that parents have resigned their role as primary disciple-makers. It isn't even that parents don't desire to disciple their children. In most cases, the problem is that churches are neither expecting nor equipping parents to disciple their children."¹⁰⁶ Likewise, many churches are neither expecting nor equipping fathers to lead in family worship.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 100.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 108.

This means that the weekly and monthly schedule of church activities, in addition to its programs, need to be evaluated to make sure proper emphasis and energy is put towards equipping fathers for family worship. Bruce Ware agrees:

Church ministries must be designed in ways that acknowledge and equip husbands and fathers to carry out these responsibilities. In too many cases, well-intended church ministries have usurped the father's role in the discipleship of his children. How much better to train men so that they can lead their families to grow in love for God and in knowledge of God's Word!¹⁰⁷

What would this training entail? Randy Stinson gives some guidance:

Much like a man would receive some basic training at the start of a new job, so churches should provide intensely practical instruction on how to call your family together for regular worship. This kind of training should include a live demonstration and then opportunities for men to practice and be observed in the process. Most men just need a clear plan with detailed instructions.¹⁰⁸

Finally, it should be noted that training of this kind is not just a recent phenomenon or a reactive strategy to the minimal presence of family worship today. Rather, as fathers are prone to sin, and as new generations of fathers come forth, training will continually be required. The Westminster Divines saw this to be true: "Seeing the ordinary performance of all the parts of family-worship belongest properly to the head of the family, the minister is to stir up such as are lazy, and train up such as are weak, to a fitness to these exercises."¹⁰⁹ As pastors preach about the importance of family worship, they must also train fathers and keep them accountable to its practice, giving "guidance to fathers who find the task of leading family worship to be difficult."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷Ware, *The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*, 70.

¹⁰⁸Randy Stinson, "Male and Female, He Created Them: Gender Roles and Relationships in Biblical Perspective," in *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*, 87.

¹⁰⁹Comin, *Returning to the Family Altar*, 21.

Conclusion

Christians in the past have shown the importance of fathers leading in family worship. The obstacles today to this mentality and practice are plentiful. The needed response is clear. First, fathers must be recognized as the spiritual leaders of their families. Second, a biblical definition of masculinity must be embraced. Similarly, men must be encouraged to have a habit and discipline of personal worship. Finally, churches must fulfill their responsibility of training fathers for their leadership in family worship.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 22.

CHAPTER 4

DETAILS OF THE PROJECT

Before the First Week

This chapter will explore the details of the project to train fathers of Calvary Baptist Church to lead in Family Worship.

Three weeks before the project started, a letter was sent to twenty-two fathers who were members of the church and who had children in elementary school or younger. The letter introduced the concept of family worship and the academic reasons for the project. It invited them to commit to the “Family Worship Boot-Camp” and gave a broad overview of what would be expected of them. The letter recognized that they might not be inclined to participate in a project like this, especially since it was openly acknowledged that they would have an accountability partner who would give feedback at the end of the project. In addition, their wives would be asked to give feedback. The specific dates of the meetings were communicated. The letter ended with a final challenge that participating in the “Family Worship Boot-Camp” would be good for their family and personal walk with the Lord.

A week after the letter was sent, follow-up was made with all the fathers who had not yet responded. Through these contacts and conversations, 19 fathers committed to participating in the project.

Before the first week, the curriculum used in the meetings and sessions was written (appendix 7). Since the elements of family worship are simple and straightforward (read the Bible, pray, and sing), the training sessions were an opportunity to make sure the fathers knew the biblical foundations for what they were doing. They needed to know their biblical role as fathers, what biblical worship entails, what it means to be a man, and how to read and study the Bible. Many of the fathers had busy schedules, and needed to be convinced of the primacy of family worship, and the need to prioritize their schedules around it. In addition, they needed to become more comfortable reading and praying with their families. The curriculum was designed with these ideas in mind. Though each session was a basic review of the components of family worship, every session also helped the men to see their biblical roles and the theology behind the proposed practices. Each week also included very practical recommendations for how to grow in leading family worship. There were a total of five sessions with the fathers, meaning there were five parts to the curriculum.

The curriculum was given to three other full-time pastors, who completed a peer review of the curriculum through a written survey (appendix 1).

Week 1

During the first week of the project, eighteen fathers came to the first meeting on April 10, 2014. At that meeting, the men completed the pre-project survey (appendix 2), and were given more details on what to expect at the end of the project.

Tracking Progress

Throughout the project, tracking progress and encouraging accountability was important. For that reason, at the first session the fathers were assigned an accountability

partner with whom they would dialogue at least once a week regarding their practice of family worship. It was communicated that these interactions would not necessarily need to be in person, but did need to be consistent so that the participant would be legitimately encouraged in his practice of family worship.

In addition to the accountability partner, participants were informed that I would email them once a week. The email would be short, requesting simple and straightforward feedback on three questions: (1) What specific activities have you done in your times of family worship? (2) What makes it difficult to have times of family worship? (3) What is the specific plan for family worship in the coming week?

The wives of the participants were not asked to give feedback until the end of the project. However, the fathers were made aware at the first session of the exact questions their wives would be asked at the end (appendix 5). Thus, the wives added an additional layer of accountability.

Session 1

The first session covered a biblical theology of worship. Utilizing David Peterson's definition of worship ("Worship of the living and true God is essentially an engagement with him on the terms that he proposes and in the way that he alone makes possible"¹), various biblical texts were considered to explain Peterson's definition of worship. This included a discussion of biblical stories that display God's concern for how he is worshiped, such as Cain and Abel (Gen 4), the first and second commandments (Exod 20:2-6), the warnings Moses gives Israel concerning worship (Deut 4:2, 12:32),

¹David Peterson, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 20.

Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10), Saul's unprescribed worship (1 Sam 15:22), David and Uzziah (2 Sam 6:3,13), and the pagan rites in Jeremiah's day (Jer 19:5, 32:35).

Significant time was then spent discussing the elements of private and corporate worship. The discussion began with a look at the activities that take place in corporate worship: reading Scripture, listening to sermons, prayer, and singing. Private worship was then considered, with a look at its importance, its elements, and the barriers that keep Christians from faithfulness in private worship.

This topic naturally led to a discussion on the elements of family worship, beginning with a consideration of what the Bible says concerning its importance. The session concluded with a summary of the ingredients of family worship (Bible reading, explaining the Bible, prayer, and music), and its similarity to congregational and private worship.

Week 2

During the second week, fathers continued the accountability and training set-up in the first week. On April 17, fifteen men attended, which covered a biblical theology of masculinity and fatherhood. After a brief review of biblical worship, the fathers were challenged to consider why it is their responsibility to lead in family worship. The answer is that they are men. This led to a consideration of 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, and Genesis 1-2 and what they imply for biblical masculinity. Three areas of manhood were highlighted: leadership, provision, and protection. John Piper and Douglas Wilson's respective definitions of manhood were used: "At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for, and protect women in ways appropriate to

a man's differing relationships,"² and "Masculinity is the glad assumption of sacrificial responsibility."³

Next, a biblical understanding of fatherhood was covered, relying heavily on Tony Payne's *Fatherhood: What It Is, and What It's For*. The purpose of fatherhood was addressed with three ideas: Father are life-givers, responsible for the lives they have brought into this world, and given authority to fulfill the previously mentioned responsibility. A biblical understanding of authority was conveyed, which led to a discussion on how fathers express their authority. The four ways authority is expressed (in love, by making good decisions when they need to, by taking the initiative, and discipline and teaching) ended with a detailed exposition of Ephesians 6:4, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

A particular resource was made available for fathers to borrow and use. Marty Machowski's books *Long Story Short* and *Old Story New* are specifically written for families to engage God's Word together.⁴ A video was played that introduced the use of Machowski's books within a family. It was explained that Machowski's books will be especially helpful the following autumn, because at that time the Discipleship classes for children at the church were going to use the parallel Sunday School curriculum. Thus,

²John Piper, "A Vision of Biblical Complementarity: Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 36.

³Doug Wilson, *Father Hunger: Why God Calls Men to Love and Lead their Families* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012), 41.

⁴Machowski, Marty, *Long Story Short: Ten Minute Devotions to Draw Your Family to God* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2010), and idem, *Old Story New: Ten Minute Devotions to Draw Your Family to God* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2012).

using the home devotional tools would align well with what the kids would be learning at church. Finally, a series of healthy guidelines for leading in family worship were reviewed.⁵

Weeks 3 through 12

In weeks 3 through 12, the fathers continued to lead their families in family worship. The accountability continued with the use of email, accountability partners, and the regular sharing of success and frustrations at the meetings. All remaining meetings of the fathers contained this time for the men to share the progress and struggles in consistently leading family worship. These times of sharing included the fathers revealing specific methods and practices that they found particularly helpful. It also included a time of mutual prayer for each other to continue faithfully in this importance practice.

For example, one father shared a creative idea of how his family divides prayer requests. All prayer requests are written on popsicle sticks, with one request on each stick. Every day, everyone in the family takes a popsicle stick and is to pray for that request during their family worship time. After a week, when all the prayer requests on popsicle sticks have been covered, the popsicle sticks are gathered again and passed out again, with each family member taking one each day.

Week 5

The third session took place on May 8, 2014 with 14 men in attendance. The teaching during this fifth week of the project began with a review of the fathers' roles as

⁵Jason Helopoulos lists many of these "Helps for the Journey," such as (1) Find the Best Time; (2) Same Time; (3) Same Place; (4) Start Slow; (5) Brevity; (6) Make it a Priority; (7) Be Flexible; (8) Model the Right Attitude; (9) Perseverance. Jason Helopoulos, *A Neglected Grace: Family Worship in the Christian Home* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2013), 81-89.

worshippers, which was highlighted as their number one priority. Fathers are worshipers of God before they are fathers. As fathers, their role is to shepherd their family to worship. They must view part of their calling as fathers to be shepherds and worship leaders in their families. An interactive discussion ensued that evaluated what faithfulness looks like and what possible obstacles might be experienced as fathers shepherd their families in worship.

The main tool of family worship, the Bible, was then discussed. Basic techniques of Bible study were taught, illustrated, and then practiced by the men. The four techniques were observation (what does the passage actually say?), interpretation (what does the passage actually mean?), application (how does one live out the meaning of the passage?), and prayer (what in the passage's meaning or application can be prayed?).

Finally, some practical resources were shared and discussed. One particular resource was the *Fighter Verses* program from Desiring God Ministries. A video was shown on how a family can use a memory verse system like *Fighter Verses* in its family worship time.

Week 9

The fourth session, on June 5, with fourteen men in attendance, contained much time for feedback and discussion on how family worship was progressing. Many guidelines were reviewed, including the importance of making it a priority, the need to be brief, flexible, persevering, and creative in finding the best time and place.

There was a more focused discussion on prayer at this meeting. Five guidelines were shared from Joel Beeke's book on *Family Worship*: (1) Be short (don't teach in

your prayer); (2) Be simple without being shallow; (3) Be direct, natural yet reverent; (4) Be varied (ask, praise, give thanks, confess); (5) Keep a list of things and people for whom your family is praying.⁶

Including music and singing in family worship seemed to be the most difficult task for the fathers. Different resources were discussed, including hymns and praise songs that can be found on YouTube, as well as a particular ministry that creates songs for family worship: Seeds.⁷

Finally, clips from the documentary *Gather the Family: Open the Word, Awaken the Worship* were utilized to show examples of various families engaged in family worship.⁸ The families in the documentary are purposefully very different from each other. One lived in an urban context, one had very young children, and one was a single parent. Yet they all purposefully engaged daily in family worship. The video clips of the families worshipping were augmented by interviews regarding the commitments, difficulties, and joys of family worship.

Week 12

On June 26, 13 fathers attended the final session. It began with an in-depth review and exposition of four key passages on family worship: Deuteronomy 6:4-7, 32:46-47a, Psalm 78:2-7, and Ephesians 6:4. The fathers were strongly challenged to take these passages seriously and to live out what they describe.

⁶Joel R. Beeke, *Family Worship* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2002), 28-31.

⁷“Seeds Family Worship,” accessed November 11, 2014, [http:// www.seedsfamilyworship.com](http://www.seedsfamilyworship.com).

⁸*Gather the Family: Open the Word, Awaken Worship*, DVD, directed by Ken Carpenter (Franklin Springs Family Media, 2011).

The three main ingredients of family worship were reviewed (Bible intake, prayer, and music). The first category of Bible Intake was divided into three more categories: reading the Bible, memorizing the Bible, and understanding the Bible. The use of catechisms was discussed in view of understanding the Bible. Though some Christians have had bad experiences with catechisms, it was stressed that catechisms are a useful tool to understand doctrine and the Bible. A particular catechism, the *New City Catechism*, was considered. The online app was examined, as well as the videos that can be used to explain the doctrine behind the answers.

After a final review and time of teaching, the fathers completed the post-project survey of their experience (appendix 3). They were also given forms for their wives and accountability partners to complete (appendix 5).

Finally, the session ended with a time of prayer and commitment by the fathers.

Weeks 13 and 14

During the thirteenth and fourteenth week, all the accountability partners and wives were contacted. They were asked to complete the survey regarding the success of their accountability partner or husband's faithfulness in leading family worship. Return envelopes were provided, as well as the opportunity to email their answers back. Those who did not return the survey within a week, by either mail or email, were contacted again and encouraged to provide their feedback.

Week 15

During the fifteenth week of the project, a continued strategy for the future training and accountability for fathers was composed. The men's ministry leadership

team was instrumental in putting the plan together. Three full-time pastors gave a peer review of the strategy through a written survey (appendix 6).

The strategy has five components. First, there will be continual seminars and workshops on family worship. They will be offered bi-annually, and will include learning opportunities for every level of spiritual maturity and faithfulness to family worship among parents. The biannual seminars will extend to other topics that will address all members of the family. Thus, mothers and children will also have opportunities to learn and be biblically refocused in their biblical roles. But the emphasize will be the need for the fathers to lead in worship.

Second, fathers will be encouraged to participate more in the present discipleship ministries that are available for their children at Calvary. This involvement could be as minimal as occasionally joining their children in their classes to observe how to interact well with their children over spiritual things. It may include a longer commitment by the father to help the discipleship ministry on a consistent basis. The purpose of the encouraged involvement is to train fathers who do not feel comfortable talking with their children about spiritual things. The discipleship ministry (such as Sunday School) will allow them to see other fathers interacting with kids over spiritual things.

The third part of the strategy is the creation of a simple resource center at the church for families. More specifically, the resource center will help fathers to lead and facilitate family worship. Thus, Bibles will be available, as well as basic guides to family worship. Theological books that will help sharpen a father's ability to discuss the Bible with his children will also be easily accessible.

Next, family worship will become a topic regularly referred to on Sunday mornings. During sermons, the preaching pastor will point out specific things that would be helpful to discuss in family worship. Families will be encouraged to sing particular songs, and to remember certain prayer requests when they gather in their homes for worship. Family Worship will be a continual topic that is alluded to and encouraged. Therefore, family worship will be an expectation for members who are a part of the church body.

The final part of the strategy includes a deliberate attempt to think more carefully on the topic of family worship, and to extend the discussion to the wider topic of family roles and discipleship. Since time and training are two reported reasons why families do not engage in discipleship, more careful thinking must be applied.⁹ Thus, the Elders will commission a “Family Ministry Think-Tank” to further consider how the structure and calendar of the church may inadvertently deemphasize the need for families to engage in their own practices of worship. The purpose of the team is to think more on what changes should happen at the church so that fathers leading in family worship is not the exception, but the norm.

After the strategy was discussed, agreed upon, and written, three full-time pastors reviewed the strategy, completing a written review of it (appendix 6).

All the fathers, accountability partners, and wives who had not returned their final evaluation surveys were contacted again by email and telephone. By the time the

⁹Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011), 88.

project ended, 14 fathers, 10 wives, and 6 accountability partners returned their evaluations.

Conclusion

The project officially began April 5, 2014, and ended July 19, 2014. That period of time included five training sessions and seven forms of evaluation handed out and received back. The heart of the project focused on training the fathers in their role of leading in family worship.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Purpose

The project was stained with many flaws. Certain goals were not met. Yet the overall purpose was clearly achieved.

The purpose of the project was to train the fathers of Calvary Baptist Church in Easton, Pennsylvania, to lead in family worship. In one sense, evaluating the faithfulness of a father to lead in family worship is relatively straightforward. They either read the Bible with their family on a given day, or they do not. They either increase the frequency of their leadership in family worship, or the quantity of family worship plateaus or declines. But it is much more difficult to measure the growth in a father's heart and the conviction that may grow in him to take his role more seriously. Nevertheless, the purpose, as will be evidenced in the ensuing sections, was clearly met.

Goals

The project had four goals: (1) to develop a training curriculum for fathers in how to lead in family worship, (2) to train 20 fathers in family worship, (3) for the fathers who went through the training to lead family worship consistently for three months, and (4) to develop an ongoing strategy for the training and accountability of fathers in leading family worship.

Goal 1

The first goal was to develop a training curriculum for fathers in how to lead in family worship (appendix 7). Three local full-time pastors gave a peer review of the curriculum (appendix 1). The pastors had different backgrounds (congregational, Baptist, and Presbyterian), different ages (30s, 40s, and 60s), and different ministry passions (families, theology and worship, and apologetics). Altogether, they had fifty years of ministry experience. Though they did not share the same level of involvement in the family ministries of their churches, they all lead family worship to some degree in their homes.

All three pastors were in either agreement or strong agreement on nearly all the review questions, meaning that they viewed the curriculum as biblically sound, helpful in explaining key Scripture passages, covering all the necessary topics, communicating well to men, user friendly for other pastors, focused on tools men can use, properly addressing the men's role and the heart of the father, and inspiring for men in their leadership role. Whereas one pastor considered the curriculum somewhat complex for its purpose, two pastors did not. In their overall recommendation, two pastors agreed that they would recommend the curriculum to be used, and one pastor strongly agreed that it should be used.

The 14 participants who completed the project also took a survey reviewing the curriculum (appendix 3). Most importantly, all of them either agreed or strongly agreed that the training helped them know what God says about family worship, and that they would recommend the training to others. There was a little more variance on the finer points of the training. For instance, 2 fathers only somewhat agreed that the training

helped them know their role as a father, though the rest agreed or strongly agreed.

Moreover, one participant disagreed, and one somewhat disagreed that the training helped him in his private times of worship.

Table 1. Curriculum analysis by participants

<i>Participant</i>	<i>It helped me know what God says about family worship.</i>	<i>It helped me know my role as a father.</i>	<i>It helped me in my private times of worship.</i>	<i>I recommend the material.</i>
Participant 1	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat agree	Agree
Participant 2	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Agree
Participant 3	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Participant 4	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree
Participant 5	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Participant 6	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
Participant 7	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Participant 8	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree
Participant 9	Agree	Agree	Somewhat disagree	Agree
Participant 10	Agree	Agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Participant 11	Agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Agree
Participant 12	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
Participant 13	Strongly agree	Agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Participant 14	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat agree	Agree

Though the curriculum could be refined, all three pastors and all 14 participants recommended its use. They viewed it as a worthy tool in training fathers in how to lead in family worship. Therefore, the first goal was clearly met.

Goal 2

The second goal was to train 20 fathers in leading family worship, using the approved curriculum. If this goal was met, the fathers would feel more comfortable reading the Bible, praying, and singing with their families. They would embrace their biblical role within the family. The measurement used in the goal was the pre- and post-survey by the participants on their habits and attitudes related to leading family worship (appendices 2 and 3).

Two parts were measured to determine whether the goal was met. The first measurement was to have 15 of the 20 fathers complete the training. Though over 20 fathers were invited, only 19 committed to the training at the beginning of the project. Five of the 19 fathers only came to the first session and dismissed themselves from the project after that.¹ Thus, only 14 completed the project, meaning the goal of 15 was not met.

The second part of the measured growth included a positive statistical difference in the pre/post surveys. Four answers on the survey initially indicated a slight growth. At the end of the training, all the fathers disagreed with the notion that “the church is where children ought to receive most of their Bible teaching.” However, *before* the training two fathers agreed with that statement. Moreover, the intensity with which the men disagreed on that question increased. Before the training, only 22 percent

¹The reasoning and background for the 5 who backed out were varied. All 5 disagreed that the church should be the primary place for their children to receive Bible teaching, as well as disagreeing that they would want their children to go to a pastor first with a theological question, rather than them. Three already prioritize family worship in their family’s schedule, though 2 openly did not. Though 3 of them say they prioritize family worship, only 1 of the 5 led his family in more than 7 times of family worship in the past month. All of this simply suggests there was not one cumulative reasoning for why the 5 did not continue with the project.

strongly disagreed with the statement, but after the training 50 percent strongly disagreed. Thus, the conviction that they already held grew in its intensity. A very similar trend of the fathers' convictions growing in intensity occurred on three related questions.²

These slight positive changes initially indicated that the goal was met. However, when a T-Test was performed on these four answers, the changes in the pre- and post-surveys proved to be statistically insignificant. The training in family worship, using the approved curriculum, did not make a statistically significant difference in the father's leadership and practice ($t_{(9)}=.028$, $p<.008$).

One question exemplifies the lack of statistical difference. There was no change to Question 6: "Parents, and particularly fathers, have a responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children." In fact, 86 percent strongly agreed with it before and after the training.³ This lack of change shows that for most of the fathers, they already had a strong sense of their responsibility. Thus this goal was not met.

Goal 3

The third goal was for the fathers who went through the training to lead family worship consistently over a period of three months. Four measurements were used to

²For Question 4 ("When my child spontaneously asks a biblical or theological question, I really wish that my child would have asked a minister or other church leader instead of me") those who strongly disagreed increased from 50 percent to 72 percent. For Question 5 ("I want to do whatever it takes for my child to succeed in certain sports or school activities— even if that means my family is too busy some weeks to eat meals together"), those who strongly disagreed increased from 29 to 43 percent. Moreover, prior to the training one person agreed with that statement, whereas after the training nobody agreed. For Question 7 ("Church leaders are the people primarily responsible for discipling my children and teaching them to share the Gospel with others"), 50 percent strongly disagreed in the beginning, but 72 percent strongly disagreed at the end.

³The other two responses agreed with it before and after the training, but not strongly.

evaluate this goal: (1) weekly emails to the participants, (2) feedback from the participants' accountability partners, (3) feedback from the participants' wives, and (4) the pre- and post- survey of the participants. If there was a positive statistical growth, the goal was considered successful.

Unfortunately, responses to the weekly emails were minimal. Fourteen fathers responded the first week. Eight fathers responded the second week. Seven fathers responded the third week. Only 5 and 4 responded on the fourth and fifth respective weeks. Thus, the emails did not prove helpful in tracking the overall performance.

Part of the goal included getting at least 75 percent of the wives and accountability partners to return their feedback. Of the 14 fathers who completed the project, only 72 percent of the wives returned the feedback, and only 40 percent of the accountability partners returned the feedback. Though these percentages are less than desired (especially for the accountability partners), the feedback provided by the wives and accountability partners confirmed what the fathers themselves reported in their surveys.

Many fathers already had consistent times of prayer with their children (question 9), reading the Bible with their children (question 10), and talking about spiritual things with their children (question 12). But family worship proved to be a different matter.⁴ One question proved to be especially helpful in tracking this growth. Question 13 asked the participants "how many times in the past two months has my family engaged in any family devotional or worship time in our home?" A comparison of

⁴Over 72 percent already prayed with their children at least five times a week. Half of them had already prayed at least seven times a week with their children. Similarly, over 72 percent already read the Bible with their children at least five times a week.

the participants' answers from the pre-project survey to the post-project survey separates the fathers into three groups.

The first group, and thankfully the smallest, did not engage in any family worship at the beginning or end of the project. Only one participant was in this category. It is no surprise that this participant missed a couple of the training sessions. In an email attached to the post-survey, the participant lamented, "I think your series hit a deficiency in my own life as a father. I would like to say that because of Little League and other commitments that I wasn't able to make all the Thursday night sessions, but in reality it was more embarrassment that I had let something like this slip so far."⁵

The second group also showed no significant growth in their leading of family worship. But the fathers in this group already had a healthy practice of leading in family worship before the training. These 36 percent certainly improved some aspects of their leading, but did not need to grow significantly because of their established faithfulness before the project.

The third group showed significant growth in their practice of family worship. These fathers (57 percent) greatly benefitted from the training. The wives and accountability partners who responded confirmed this growth. Four of these fathers had consistent growth in many areas, such as the amount of times they pray with their children outside mealtimes (question 9), the amount of media on during meals (question 10), and the amount of discussion with the family on the Bible or other spiritual things (questions 11 and 12). Thus, a more consistent practice of family worship was linked to a more spiritually healthy environment in the home.

⁵ Email to Paul Wilson, July 15, 2014.

Of the fathers who showed significant growth, four fathers showed drastic change in their leading in family worship. Before the project, they either led Family Worship once a month or never. Through the project, they consistently led family worship to the degree that at the end, they indicated on the survey the highest option (7 or more times a month).

Of the fourteen fathers who went through the training, all but one of them consistently led family worship throughout the project. For some it was a habit they already embraced. For others it was an opportunity to grow in their family leadership role. Whatever the practice before the project, the basic premise of the goal was clearly met.

Goal 4

The fourth goal was to develop an ongoing strategy for the training and accountability of fathers to lead in family worship (appendix 8). The written strategy was reviewed by three local pastors through a written survey (appendix 6). If all three pastors “agreed” or “strongly agreed” on the last question of the written survey, then the goal was met.

All three pastors consulted agreed that the strategy is practically helpful for fathers needing training in leading family worship (question 2) and that it coincides with other ministries geared towards fathers and parents at Calvary (question 7). The last and most important question asks whether the strategy is recommended. Two pastors strongly agreed that it should be recommended. However, one pastor somewhat disagreed that it should be recommended. In a follow-up email, he explained, “Although the elements included in the project were great ideas, the overall approach seemed to be rather passive; whereas I would view a plan for family worship to be more active in the strategy and

implementation involved.”⁶ So with only two of the pastors strongly agreeing that the written strategy should be used, this goal was not met.

Therefore, of the four goals set for this project, the first and third goals were met. The second and fourth goals were only partially met. But to evaluate further the success and failures of the project, the strengths and weaknesses must be more directly addressed.

Strengths

Four strengths are readily observed at the conclusion of the project. First, the project at its core achieved its modest goal of having more fathers engage in family worship. Though many things could be discussed concerning ways the project could be improved, this encouraging outcome should not be ignored.

Second, the project raised awareness at the church of an important practice. Before the project, family worship was not an item of discussion between fathers. Christians involved in small groups and accountability partnerships would speak of many profitable things, including personal pursuits of holiness and spiritual disciplines. But accountability to lead or participate in family worship was not a regular part of spiritual conversations. This project not only created a conversation between fathers in their accountability relationships, but it also forced husbands and wives to have conversations about the practice of family worship and what level of importance it had for them.

Third, the curriculum written for the project will prove to be a continually helpful resource for future times of training and accountability. Though there are certainly areas in which the curriculum can be trimmed and improved, overall it proved

⁶ Email to Paul Wilson, August 22, 2014.

to be a resource that provides a unique service for churches. Though this researcher found many helpful books on family worship, and an increased amount of resources on family discipleship, there was not a resource found that churches could use in training their fathers in family worship.

Finally, the sessions with the fathers properly addressed, through the written curriculum and open discussion, all the obstacles fathers may potentially face in leading family worship. These obstacles include difficulties in a father's mind, heart, and practice. Regarding the mind, many fathers do not know how they should think biblically as dads. They are ignorant of what the Bible says about family worship and their specific role as spiritual leaders in their home. Therefore, they need to be taught from the Bible on these things.

Regarding the heart, some fathers may know enough about what the Bible says concerning their role and responsibility. But due to some sinful reason lurking in their heart, whether it be laziness or selfishness, they need to be confronted again with the truth of God's Word. The sessions provided open opportunities for confession of sin and prayer for struggles in the biblical practice.

Other fathers may have a sense of what they should be doing, and know that a practice like family worship is a good biblical practice. But they lack the very basic skills to lead their families. Even though the practice to lead is simple, they still feel intimidated to read the Bible, pray, and sing with their families. They need to be shown how family worship practically happens, and that they can do it.

Weaknesses and Suggested Changes

Many weaknesses can be identified with the project. Six will be presently highlighted. First, some of the tools used to measure growth were unhelpful in the kind of questions that were asked. The survey used for the fathers was initially designed for surveying the practice of family discipleship, which is a much broader discussion than family worship. It would have been wise to compose a unique survey for fathers that would have directly correlated with the things expected of them in this project. For example, question 13 of the pre/post survey (appendix 1), asks, “How many times in the past two months has my family engaged in any family devotional or worship time in our home?” This question was heavily relied upon in gathering the results. But the question does not come close to providing some of the specific analysis that the project required. A better question would have asked the average of days in a week that the father led family worship.

Moreover, there was no direct correlation in the surveys completed by the participants and the surveys completed by the accountability partners and wives. Thus, it was difficult to compare and contrast the answers and responses of the participants with their respective accountability partners and wives. For example, the accountability partners and wives were both asked to respond to this summary statement: “Overall, he was faithful in leading family worship at least five times a week” (question 1, appendix 5). But this helpful question does not directly echo any of the questions the participants were asked. The closest question is the one previously mentioned (“How many times in the past two months has my family engaged in any family devotional or worship time in our home?”). Thus, the surveys for the fathers could have been better written for the sake of more accurate statistics.

A second weakness concerns the number of fathers who participated in the project. More fathers should have been invited to participate. Though there was an initial high percentage of interest in participating (95 percent showed interest), the actual numbers suggest more should have been invited to ensure the goal of fifteen participants finishing the project.

The idea of using email to track progress was a third weakness. Depending on the fathers to answer the weekly email, even with a simple answer, proved to be too much for most of the fathers. In retrospect, there was not a big need for the email if the accountability partners and wives were better informed of their role in the project. This was the fourth weakness. The wives of the participants were not directly given information on what they would be asked at the end of the project. Moreover, the responsibilities of the accountability partners were not communicated adequately. It may have been judicial for all the accountability partners to be men who were not a part of the project. Thus, each father would be able to focus solely on their own practice of family worship.

A fifth weakness concerns the strategy composed at the end of the project. As indicated by one of the pastor's reservations in recommending it, the strategy should be elaborated upon and expanded. The survey questions for its peer-review asked about its biblical basis and its connection with other ministries, but it provided none of these. In its current form, it is anemic.

Finally, the project as a whole may have been difficult because it took a very simple practice and complicated it for the sake of fulfilling this project. Training the fathers in family worship technically may only have needed an one hour session on what

the Bible says and how the Bible's teaching can be lived out. But to fill in the other sessions, more information from the Bible and best practices for fathers and families needed to be provided. As helpful as this was, it may have overly complicated the simple practice for the fathers. Perhaps the project would have been better served by expanding its purpose to more than just family worship.

Theological Reflections

One cannot properly discuss weighty subjects and practices such as worship, the family, and biblical masculinity without rigorous biblical and theological reflection. This is especially important upon the completion of this project. Five theological reflections are worth considering.

The Heart of Worship

For genuine family worship to occur within a home, the father must take the worship of God seriously in his own life. It became apparent throughout the project that the men who were serious and purposeful about their own private and corporate worship of God readily embraced the calling of family worship. But the men who were currently struggling in their overall worship of God struggled in family worship as well. This displays the truth that our worship of God affects everything we do (consider Rom 12:1-2). While it is certainly true that private, family, and congregational worship will have an impact on the hearts of fathers and draw them closer to the Lord (see below), it is equally true that these practices cannot be genuinely pursued without the fathers having worship in their hearts already.

What would happen if fathers engaged in the practice of family worship, but had little genuine affection for the Lord? The outward practice of family worship could

become a tool of manipulation. It could wrongly convince a father that his relationship with the Lord is healthy and abundant. Moreover, the father could use family worship to bully his family to do what he wants. Instead of leading with holy love and godly wisdom, his leadership would be self-centered and self-serving. Thus, in order for genuine family worship to occur, genuine worship must reside in the heart of the father. Family worship would then be the overflow of his own desire and treasuring of God in authentic worship.

The Power of the Word and Prayer

When a Christian father first hears about the idea of family worship, one concern often voiced is how he can get his children to stay still and listen. Though a father can employ many practical and wise techniques, the sheer power of God's Word and heartfelt prayer should not be minimized. Keeping God's Word and prayer central does not mean children will automatically listen with interest and submission. It does mean that a father should not assume the reading of God's Word is having no impact on his children when it seems that they are not paying attention. To put it positively, God's Word is powerful and effective and can shape the heart and life of antsy five year olds and outwardly uninterested fifteen year olds.

A Growing Awareness of Biblical Masculinity

All the men contacted for the project were very interested in becoming better leaders. None of them needed to be convinced that they should be leaders. To some extent, they already knew their role. This can be attributed to two theological realities. First, men are created by God to act like men. As image-bearers of God, they are

distinctly created to bear God's image as a man. So it should be no surprise that the men in the project wanted to grow in leading, providing, and protecting their families.

Moreover, the fact that I was working with biblically mature Christians meant they had an even greater desire to live out their biblical calling as men, husbands, and fathers. It was evident from the Holy Spirit's work of progressive sanctification that the fathers had a distinct awareness that they should be doing something like family worship. It felt good, right, and biblical to them.

The Role of Accountability and Fellowship

Once the fathers were exposed to the biblical practice of family worship, and were trained in helpful tools to make it happen, the main thing they needed to improve their faithfulness in leading was accountability. They needed another Christian father to inquire and push them on their personal faithfulness in this practice. This is truly part of what it means to encourage one another to "love and good deeds" (Heb 10:24). So for family worship to happen, the practice must not only be embraced by fathers, but by the congregation as a whole.

The Pastoral Role of Training

Throughout this project, the practical benefit of Ephesians 4:12 became more apparent. The verse declares that a purpose of God giving the church pastors and teachers is to "equip the saints for the work of ministry." The fathers were extremely open and receptive to being trained. As a pastor, I was extremely excited to train them. As I engaged the men in how to be pastors and shepherds in their homes, and how to lead in

worship, the wisdom of Ephesians 4:12 resonated within me. This is an important aspect of pastoral theology that is sadly overlooked. How many pastors take their role of equipper seriously, specifically as it pertains to fathers and family worship?

Conclusion

This project was by no means perfect. Much could be improved if it was done again. But genuine good things happened in the lives of the fathers and their families, even if some of the specific goals were not met.

APPENDIX 1

SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR THE PEER-REVIEW OF THE TRAINING CURRICULUM

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to help train fathers to lead in family worship. This research is being conducted by Paul W. Wilson for purposes of research for a doctorate. In this research, you will give feedback on the curriculum for training fathers in family worship. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this interview and checking the appropriate box below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

I agree to participate

I do not agree to participate

Please answer the following questions regarding the curriculum for training fathers in family worship:

1. The curriculum is biblically sound.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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2. The curriculum is helpful in explaining key Scripture to participants.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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3. The curriculum covers all the necessary topics to train in family worship.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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4. The curriculum is overly complex for its purpose.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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5. The curriculum communicates well to men.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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6. The curriculum is user friendly in that another pastor could easily teach it.
- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
7. The curriculum promotes practices that can be actually practiced by the fathers of the church.
- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
8. The curriculum properly addresses how fathers view their roles in their families.
- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
9. The curriculum properly addresses the heart of the father and his role in the family.
- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
10. The curriculum inspires the fathers to be engaged in their role as leader.
- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
11. I recommend the curriculum to be used.
- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|

APPENDIX 2

PRE-PROJECT EVALUATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to help train fathers to lead in family worship. This research is being conducted by Paul W. Wilson for purposes of research for a doctorate. In this research, you will give feedback on the curriculum for training fathers in family worship and your personal practice of family worship. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this interview and checking the appropriate box below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

I agree to participate

I do not agree to participate

Please answer the following questions regarding your view of your role as a father and your practice of family worship:¹

1. I prioritize consistent family devotional or worship times in my family's schedule.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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2. I would like to do regular family devotions or Bible reading in our home, but my family is just too busy for that right now. It will probably be that way for quite a while.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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3. The church is where children ought to receive most of their Bible teaching.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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¹Copied from Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan House, 2011), 216-18. Used by permission.

4. When my child spontaneously asks a biblical or theological question, I really wish that my child would have asked a minister or other church leader instead of me.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

5. I want to do whatever it takes for my child to succeed in certain sports or school activities—even if that means my family is too busy some weeks to eat meals together.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

6. Parents, and particularly fathers, have a responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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7. Church leaders are the people primarily responsible for discipling my children and teaching them to share the Gospel with others.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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8. My church has helped me to develop a clear plan for my child's spiritual growth.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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Please answer the following questions regarding your practices as a parent:

9. Other than mealtimes, how many times in the past week have I prayed aloud with any of my children?

Never	Once	A couple of times	Three or four times	Five or six times	Seven or more times
-------	------	-------------------	---------------------	-------------------	---------------------

10. How many times in the past week has my family eaten a meal together with television, music, and other similar media turned off?

Never	Once	A couple of times	Three or four times	Five or six times	Seven or more times
-------	------	-------------------	---------------------	-------------------	---------------------

11. How many times in the past month have I read or discussed the Bible with any of my children?

Never	Once	A couple of times	Three or four times	Five or six times	Seven or more times
-------	------	-------------------	---------------------	-------------------	---------------------

12. How many times in the past month have I discussed any biblical or spiritual matters with any of my children while engaging in day-to-day activities?

Never	Once	A couple of times	Three or four times	Five or six times	Seven or more times
-------	------	----------------------	------------------------	----------------------	------------------------

13. How many times in the past two months has my family engaged in any family devotional or worship time in our home?

Never	Once	A couple of times	Three or four times	Five or six times	Seven or more times
-------	------	----------------------	------------------------	----------------------	------------------------

14. How many times in the past two months have I talked with my spouse or a close friend about my children's spiritual development?

Never	Once	A couple of times	Three or four times	Five or six times	Seven or more times
-------	------	----------------------	------------------------	----------------------	------------------------

15. How many times in the past year have I intentionally participated with one or more of my children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church?

Never	Once	A couple of times	Three or four times	Five or six times	Seven or more times
-------	------	----------------------	------------------------	----------------------	------------------------

16. How often in the past year has any church leader made any contact with me to help me to engage actively in my child's spiritual development?

Never	Once	A couple of times	Three or four times	Five or six times	Seven or more times
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APPENDIX 3

POST-PROJECT EVALUATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

The questions of the pre-project evaluation will also serve as the post-project evaluation. In addition, these questions will be asked concerning the training curriculum:

1. The material used in the training helped me know what God says about family worship.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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2. The material used in the training helped me know my role as a father.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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3. The material used in the training was practical.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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4. The material used in the training helped me in my private times of worship.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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5. The material used in the training helped me understand what it means to be a man.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

6. I recommend the material used in the training.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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APPENDIX 4

EMAILED WEEKLY QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

1. What specific activities have you done in your times of family worship?
2. What makes it difficult to have times of family worship?
3. What is your specific plan for family worship in the coming week?

APPENDIX 5

SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY
PARTNERS AND WIVES

Please respond regarding your knowledge of your partner's practice of family worship:

1. Overall, he was faithful in leading family worship at least five times a week.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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2. He took the task of leading in family worship seriously.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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3. He was able to integrate family worship into the normal habits that the family already has.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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4. I have seen him grow in his ability to lead in family worship.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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5. Moving forward, he could still grow in how to lead in family worship.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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6. Moving forward, he will be really helped by consistent accountability to leading family worship.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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7. He is taking his role as spiritual leader in the home seriously.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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8. His own personal habits of personal worship (bible reading, prayer, etc.) have also grown through this experience.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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9. Based on what I have seen, I would recommend the training to other Christian fathers.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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APPENDIX 6

SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR THE PEER-REVIEW OF THE ON-GOING STRATEGY

1. The strategy is biblically sound.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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2. The strategy is practically helpful for fathers needing training in leading family worship.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

3. The strategy is practically helpful for fathers needing accountability in leading family worship.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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4. The strategy aligns with the church's vision.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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5. The strategy is overly complex.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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6. The strategy coincides with the practices of Men of Calvary.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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7. The strategy coincides with other ministries geared towards fathers and parents at Calvary.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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8. I recommend this strategy and support it.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
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APPENDIX 7

THE FIVE SESSION CURRICULUM: “FAMILY WORSHIP BOOT-CAMP FOR DADS”

Session 1

I. What is Worship?

A. What the biblical words for worship mean:

1. “bow down in grateful submission.”
2. “service and faithful obedience.”
3. “adore and be in awe.”
4. a working biblical definition: “Worship of the living and true God is essentially an engagement with him on the terms he proposes and in the way that he alone makes possible.”¹⁸⁰

B. Why God’s terms? Because God is concerned with how he is worshiped.

1. Cain and Abel (Genesis 4)
2. First and Second Commandments (Exodus 20:2-6, Deuteronomy 4:15-18)
3. Warnings to Israel (Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32)
4. Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10)
5. Saul’s unprescribed worship (1 Samuel 15:22)
6. David and Uzziah (2 Samuel 6:3, 13)

¹⁸⁰David Peterson, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 20.

7. Pagan rites in Jeremiah's day (Jeremiah 19:5, 32:35)

C. Why only in the way God makes possible? (Philippians 3:3)

II. When do we worship?

A. All of life is to be worship (Romans 12:1-2)

B. A more "devoted" time of worship: congregational (Ephesians 5:16-19, Colossians 3:16)

C. What makes what we do on Sunday morning "worship"?

1. Scripture is read (1 Timothy 4:13)

2. Scripture is preached (Acts 2:42)

3. People pray (Acts 2:42)

4. People sing (Ephesians 5:19)

III. Another "Devoted" Time of Worship: Personal/Private Worship

A. How important is personal worship? Some men who valued and practiced it:

1. Jesus (Luke 5:16, 9:18, Mark 1:35, 6:46, Matthew 14:23)

2. David (Psalm 5:3)

3. The Sons of Korah (Psalm 88:13)

4. Daniel (Daniel 6:10)

B. What happens in personal worship?

1. We read and meditate on God's Word (1 Timothy 4:13, Jesus in Matthew 4:4, 2 Timothy 4:13, Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 5:19).

2. We pray (Daniel 6:10)

3. We sing (Psalm 96:1-2)

4. We do all of this in reverence and awe (Hebrews 12:28-29).

IV. Another Devoted Time of Worship: Family Worship

A. How important is Family Worship?

1. Moses thought it was important (Deuteronomy 4:9, 6:7, 11:19, 32:46).
2. The Psalmist thought it was important (Psalm 78:1-8)
3. The Apostle Paul thought it was important (Ephesians 6:4)

B. What happens in Family Worship?

1. Bible reading (with appropriate explanation)
2. Prayer
3. Music

V. Getting Serious and Practical about Worship

- A. What is one thing you can do to be more engaged in congregational worship?
- B. What is one thing you can do to be more engaged in private worship?
- C. What is one thing you can do to lead more in family worship?

Session 2

I. Worship Review: Congregational, Private, and Family

II. Why is it Your Responsibility to Lead Family Worship? Because You're a Man!

A. What does the Bible say about being a man?

1. 1 Timothy 3
2. Titus 1
3. Genesis 1-2

B. So what does it mean to be masculine?

1. Leadership
2. Provision

3. Protection

4. Worthwhile Descriptions:

a. “At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to a man’s differing relationships.”¹⁸¹ John Piper

b. “Masculinity is the glad assumption of sacrificial responsibility.”¹⁸² Douglas Wilson

c. Our best efforts to become manly will never produce authentic manhood until an abiding sense of worship grows in our hearts...Men who learn to be fascinated more with Christ than with themselves will become the authentic men of our day.”¹⁸³ Larry Crabb

III. Being a Dad (adapted from Tony Payne’s *Fatherhood*)¹⁸⁴

A. What does it mean to be a father? It means you are:

1. a life-giver (Genesis 15:4, 25:23, Deuteronomy 32:6, Isaiah 45:9-12, Proverbs 23)
2. responsible for the lives you’ve brought into this world (Job 29:16,

¹⁸¹John Piper, “A Vision of Biblical Complementarity: Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 36.

¹⁸²Doug Wilson, *Father Hunger: Why God Calls Men to Love and Lead their Families* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012), 41.

¹⁸³Larry Crabb, *The Silence of Adam* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 33.

¹⁸⁴Tony Payne, *Fatherhood: What It is and What Its For* (Kingsford, Australia: Mathias Media, 2004).

Genesis 45:8, Matthew 7:9-11)

3. given authority to fulfill your responsibility (Malachi 1:6, Ephesians 6:1, Hebrews 12:7, Proverbs 23:22).

4. putting it together:¹⁸⁵

a. What is authority? It's the right and power to make decisions, and thus to call forth action in others, in fulfillment of one's responsibility.

b. What is the basis of a father's responsibility? The father is the source of life for his family, and thus has a responsibility and commitment to pursue the wellbeing of his family. He is given authority in the family to fulfill this responsibility.

c. What is the purpose of a father's authority? A father is given the power to make decisions and to call forth action from family members, not for his own benefit but for the benefit of his wife and children.

B. How do fathers express their authority?

1. in love

2. by making good decisions when they need to

3. by taking the initiative

4. discipline and teaching: Ephesians 6:4

a. *training/discipline*: to provide the basic content of what should be done, and instilling the content through practice and discipline.

b. *instruction*: good counsel, warning. (1 Corinthians 10:11)

c. *of the Lord*: it focuses on teachings of and about Jesus.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., 59-60.

Session 3

I. Your Role as a Christian: Worshiper

A. Your number one priority (Romans 11:28-12:2)

B. Getting the right order (Matthew 10:37-39)

II. Your Role as a Father: Shepherding Your Family to Worship

A. Being a man: (Genesis 1:26-27)

B. Being a shepherd: (2 Samuel 5:2, 1 Chronicles 11:2, Psalm 80:1, Isaiah 49:11)

C. Being a worship leader: (Deuteronomy 4:9, 6:7, 11:19, 32:46, Psalm 78:1-8)

III. How do I Shepherd my Family and Live as our Worship Leader?

A. Evaluate:

1. what does faithfulness look like?

2. what are the possible obstacles?

3. what should the heart be like?

B. Think through the main areas:

1. personal worship

2. Christian community

3. congregation

4. family

C. How are these all connected?

IV. The Main Tool of the Man/Dad/Shepherd/Worship Leader: the Word of God

A. The Bible in Private Worship

1. Observe: What does the passage actually say?

2. Interpret: What does the passage actually mean?

3. Apply: How can you live out the meaning of the passage?

4. Pray: What in the passage's meaning or application can you pray?

B. The Bible in Congregational Worship

C. The Bible in Family Worship

IV. Getting Serious and Practical about Family Worship

A. Two tools to consider:

1. Fighter Verses (fighterverses.com)

2. New City Catechism (newcitycatechism.com)

B. Stories

Session 4

I. Personal Worship

A. 1 Timothy 4:6-10

B. How is your personal time of encountering God in His Word and through prayer?

What's good? What's not good?

II. Congregational Worship

A. Hebrews 10:24-25

B. Do you feel like you are encountering God with Calvary through the worship services? Why or why not? Is there something you could do to be more personally engaged in worship?

III. Healthy Guidelines for Family Worship

A. Ephesians 6:4

B. Guidelines

1. Have a plan.

2. Start slow. Doing a little each day is better than a large chunk every once in a

while.

3. Try to do it at the same place (preferably a place with few distractions).
4. Find the best time, and try to be consistent in keeping that time.
5. Make it a priority. Let your family know its a priority.
6. Keep it brief.
7. Be flexible.
8. Create an attitude of joy and awe, hope and fear in God.
9. Involve the family.
10. Require attention (Proverbs 4:1).
11. Keep at it. Persevere!

IV. Main Ingredients for Family Worship:

A. Reading the Bible together

B. Memorizing Bible verses together

C. Memorizing a catechism together

D. Praying together

1. be short (don't teach in your prayer)
2. be simple without being shallow
3. be direct, natural yet reverent
4. be varied (ask, praise, give thanks, confess).
5. pray through a verse of Scripture
6. keep a list of things and people your family is praying for

E. Singing together

1. have a hymnal and choose songs that you are comfortable singing and that

have lyrics which are good for your family to commit to memory.

2. Consider using on-line resources:

a. Seeds Family Worship (www.seedsfamilyworship.com)

b. Hymns or Worship songs on *Youtube*

Session 5

I. Review of Key Passages

A. Deuteronomy 6:4-7

B. Deuteronomy 32:46-47a

C. Psalm 78:2-7

D. Ephesians 6:4

II. What should be done in Family Worship

A. Bible Intake

1. Reading the Bible

2. Memorizing the Bible

3. Understanding the Bible (catechisms)

B. Prayer

C. Music

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ABSTRACT

TRAINING THE FATHERS AT CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH IN EASTON, PENNSYLVANIA, TO LEAD IN FAMILY WORSHIP

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015
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This project seeks to train the fathers of Calvary Baptist Church to lead their families in family worship. Chapter 1 establishes the context and the need for such training. Chapter 2 explores the biblical precedent for both family worship and for pastors to train fathers in this practice. To embellish this biblical precedent, chapter 3 considers church history, contemporary assessments of masculinity, and the modern renewal of family worship. Chapter 4 explains the implementation of the project. Chapter 5 evaluates the effectiveness of the training in achieving the purpose.

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Diploma, Fremont Ross High School, Fremont, Ohio, 1997

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