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EQUIPPING THE MEN OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF
ENTERPRISE, ALABAMA TO BE GOSPEL-CENTERED
LEADERS IN THEIR HOMES

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APPROVAL SHEET

EQUIPPING THE MEN OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF
ENTERPRISE, ALABAMA TO BE GOSPEL-CENTERED
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PREFACE

The journey over the last several years to complete this project has been both daunting and enriching. Since beginning the project, I have transitioned from Associate Pastor to Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church of Enterprise, Alabama. While the journey has not been painless, it has certainly been worth it. Countless hours of research and study went into this project, but the result is more men equipped and ready to herald the excellencies of Christ in their homes. The completion of this project is a product of God's grace. I thank God for this opportunity and his unmerited favor in my life. I must also acknowledge my debt of gratitude to the people who helped me along in this process.

First, I would like to thank my wife and children. I was not the only one to shed blood, sweat, and tears in order to complete this project. Lindsay, when I started filling out the application for this doctoral program, we only had three children. Now we have five! Your willingness to joyfully serve me, our family, our church, and our Lord is matchless. You gladly made adjustments in our budget and rhythm of life in order to allow me to travel, study, read, and write in order to complete this project. You spurred me on when I was weary and wanted to quit. Your humility and selflessness makes me want to be a better man. I love you. I love sharing life with you. I hope our little girls grow up to be like you and our boys one day bring home a girl like you. Libby, Susie, Annie, George, and Jake, your daddy is so proud of you. I love each of you in a special way that only a daddy can. Your smiles and tickles helped carry me through the exhaustion. I picked this project with you and your mama in mind. I want to be the best husband and daddy I can be, constantly pointing you to the riches of Christ.

Second, I would like to thank the congregation of First Baptist Church of Enterprise, Alabama. When I gave my heart to Christ at First Baptist Enterprise in the

summer of 1998, I had no idea that I would be in the ministry, much less pastor the very church where I came to know Jesus. I am indebted to the faithful members who prayed for me and urged me to complete this task. I am also thankful for the men who gave their time and energy to go through the “Family Shepherds” class. I love the people of FBC and look forward to many more years of partnership in the gospel. FBC gave me the opportunity to study on the academic level in order to equip men to be spiritual leaders in their homes. This project allowed me to create a tool that will, with the Lord’s help, continually equip men at FBC for many years to come.

Third, I would like to thank Dr. John David Trentham. What a privilege it has been to study with you. Thank you for your gracious critiques and helpful suggestions. Studying at this level of academia was quite the challenge. However, your patience and encouragement meant the world.

Ben Bowden

Enterprise, Alabama

December 2016

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip the men of First Baptist Church of Enterprise, Alabama (FBC), to be gospel-centered leaders in their homes.

Goals

The first goal of this project was to assess the current understanding and practices of gospel-centered leadership among men who are active members at FBC. This goal was measured with a pre-series survey of the participants' understanding and practices of spiritual leadership in the home.¹ The desired target group was married men with at least one child residing in the home. This narrow focus in the target group was intentional. The nature of this project had immediate application for men in this target group, resulting in the most immediate impact on FBC families. This goal was considered successful when 50 men who were active members of the desired target group completed the survey and the survey revealed the current understanding and practices of male spiritual leadership in the home.²

The second goal was to develop a four-week study to be utilize with at least 20 men who fall within the target group. The curriculum covered biblical manhood and womanhood issues, such as the role of men in the home. It also covered basic family

¹See appendix 1.

²Fifty men equals approximately 33 percent of the total target group population (active and inactive members at FBC).

discipleship issues, such as leading a family worship experience and instilling godly character in the wife and children. This goal was measured by an expert panel consisting of three pastors and a deacon who used a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, clarity, and relevance of the study.³ This goal was considered successfully met when each evaluator scored a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion at sufficient or above levels.

The third goal was to develop a daily devotional in written and audio format to accompany the study. It consisted of twenty devotions for the men to use as they meditated on the biblical truths of manhood throughout the period of the study. The content was extracted from the study, but devotional in nature. This goal was measured by an expert panel consisting of three pastors and one deacon who used a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, clarity, and relevance of the devotional.⁴ This goal was considered successfully met when each evaluator scored a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion at sufficient or above levels.

The fourth goal was to develop an individualized family shepherding plan (IFSP) outline.⁵ Because this outline was tailored according to the curriculum, the outline was developed after the curriculum was developed. Upon conclusion of the final study, the participants were given the IFSP outline in order for the participants to tailor a realistic plan of spiritual leadership that they would implement in their homes. This goal was measured by an expert panel consisting of three pastors and one deacon who used a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, clarity, and relevance of the IFSP outline.⁶

³See appendix 2.

⁴See appendix 2.

⁵See appendix 12.

⁶See appendix 5.

This goal was considered successfully met when each evaluator scored a minimum of 90 percent of the indicators on the rubric at sufficient or above levels.

The fifth goal was to equip the men of FBC to be gospel-centered leaders in their home by implementing the four-week study, the accompanying devotional, and the IFSP. This goal was measured through administering a post-series survey that measured the participants' level of knowledge, confidence, and motivation to exercise spiritual leadership in the home. Additionally, this goal was measured through administering a post-series survey to the participants' spouse that measured the participants' level of execution in being the spiritual leader in the home. This goal was considered met when the *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference between the pre and post-series scores. As well, this goal was considered met when the post-series survey of spouses displayed that a minimum of the participants were rated at a mean score of 4.5 or above on a 6-point scale on the evaluation rubric. A final indicator of the success of this goal was successfully met when each participant satisfactorily completed the IFSP.

Context of the Ministry Project

The ministry context for this project was First Baptist Church of Enterprise, Alabama. Five aspects of the ministry context at FBC were relevant to this project. First, FBC had a tendency toward emphasizing moralistic aspects of the gospel while deemphasizing the grace involved in salvation. In other words, the gospel was often reduced to a mere change of behavior. FBC's propensity was to appeal to a moral code as grounds for justification. Even well-intentioned programs could become devices for moralism if the programs were not explicitly grounded in the gospel.

Second, FBC has experienced exponential growth in the number of young families that have joined the church. Since 2010, 378 people who are part of a family

with at least one child living at home have joined FBC.⁷ Many more are newly married or single parents. From 2011 to 2015, FBC launched eight new classes to accommodate the growing number of young families.

Third, not everyone at FBC understood the idea of men being the spiritual leaders in their home. Fort Rucker, the Army's largest helicopter base, is located on the outskirts of Enterprise, Alabama. Approximately six thousand people reside on the base, with many more living in Enterprise. Many retired military choose to live in Enterprise. These military families make up a large part of FBC, both in participation and leadership. However, military families come from all over the nation and world and bring a myriad of backgrounds to the table. For this reason, some have different denominational heritages and others are non-churched. While mild egalitarian and feminist tendencies are present, a domineering idea of manhood is also common. Although FBC has no overt hostility to the idea of male headship in the home, there seems to be a lack of understanding in its precise meaning.

Fourth, many men did not know how to lead their families spiritually, nor did they practice such leadership. They felt the weight of the fact that their children were growing up in a world that is increasingly hostile to the way of Christ. Therefore, many of the men desired to be the spiritual leaders of their homes; they just had never been intentionally taught how. The idea of family worship was not just archaic, but alien. FBC has a highly energetic women's ministry. The Women's Missionary Union is multi-generational and the younger women deeply respect the older. It is quite unfortunate that the women were engaged in strong ministries at FBC and the husbands of these women were not.

⁷Data taken from FBC's ACS data records on June 12, 2014.

Finally, FBC made no intentional effort to train men to be the spiritual leaders of their homes. As mentioned, the men at FBC did not lack the desire to lead; the leadership of the church simply had not given them direction.

Rationale for the Project

The five aspects of the ministry context at FBC indicate good reason to equip the men of FBC to be the gospel-centered leaders of their home. First, because of moralism at FBC, explicit gospel-centrality was needed. If the gospel was ambiguous in this project, it could easily turn into just another instrument for moralism. The project's title included the phrase "gospel-centered" in order to maintain intentionality and to keep it grounded in the gospel.

Second, because FBC had been exponential growth in the number of young families that have joined the church, FBC bears the responsibility to train them to live in light of the gospel within the home. While many benefits could be named from this project, one especially important benefit was that it helped raise up healthier church leaders. If FBC was not equipping its men to lead their families spiritually, then FBC could not expect young men to grow into healthy leaders in the church. Paul uses this rationale when he says, "For if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?" (1 Tim 3:5). While the immediate context in this verse is directed toward elders, a principle is also implied: a man is proven unfit for leadership in the church by his lack of leadership in the home.

Third, because not everyone at FBC understood the idea of men being the spiritual leaders in their home, FBC had the responsibility to teach them in this matter. It was not enough to rely solely on the pulpit ministry to clarify a complementarian view of manhood and womanhood. Because sermons did not allow for questions and dialogue, it was helpful to teach the various dimensions of male headship in a setting where men could engage with questions. FBC must not assume that all agree with even the basic ideas of

biblical manhood and womanhood. For instance, the teaching that men are to be the spiritual leaders in their home may seem chauvinistic to some who carry mild feminist tendencies. To others, it may be perceived as a license for a man to treat his wife in a domineering way. Therefore, it was important for FBC to crystalize its understanding of the calling for men to be the spiritual leaders of their home.

Fourth, because many men were not being the spiritual leaders of their home, FBC had an obligation to make sure these men carried out this non-negotiable task. Ephesians 4:12 commands FBC leadership “to equip the saints for the work of the ministry.” One implication of this verse is that FBC leadership must equip the men to lead their families spiritually. Thus, to the degree that FBC neglects this important duty, FBC will be disobedient.

Finally, because no intentional effort to train men to be the spiritual leaders of their homes existed, it was essential for FBC to provide a systematic approach to engage in this task intentionally. This project addressed a substantial void in FBC ministry programs. FBC has no excuse to neglect this important task since many of the men desire to be the spiritual leaders of their homes. Thus, this was a project the congregation of FBC found urgent, essential, valuable, and sensible.

Definitions, Limitations, and Delimitations

The following definitions of key terms were used in the ministry project.

Biblical shepherding. This term refers to a metaphor used in the Bible to describe the tender, loving leadership displayed in Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and subsequently carried out among leadership in the church and home (John 10:14; 1 Pet 5:1-5; Eph 6:4).⁸

⁸Timothy Z. Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home: Knowing, Leading, Protecting, and Providing for Your Family* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 11-14.

Complementarianism. This term refers to the view that God created men and women equal but different.⁹ While men and women are both equal in value, they have different roles within the home and the church. God gives the responsibility of spiritual leadership within the home to men.

Egalitarianism. This term refers to the view that men and women are equal in all aspects, even in regard to roles within the home and the church. Egalitarians believe that “there is no unique leadership role that belongs to the husband in marriage, and that all governing and teaching roles in the church should be open to both men and women alike.”¹⁰

Family worship. This term refers to devotions the family has together that is distinct from corporate worship with the church and individual devotional time. It may vary in terms of length, depth, and content, but usually includes reading the Bible, praying together, and possibly singing together.¹¹

Gospel-centered. This term refers to idea that God’s work in redeeming His people through Christ is the lifeblood for Christian living. “Gospel-centered” carries the notion that “we are saved by believing the gospel, and then we are transformed in every part of our minds, hearts, and lives by believing the gospel more and more deeply as life goes on.”¹² If the gospel was not central in this project, then it could have easily turned into just another instrument for moralism.

⁹Wayne A. Grudem, “The Key Issues in the Manhood-Womanhood Controversy,” in *Building Strong Families*, ed. Dennis Rainey (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 29-58.

¹⁰Wayne A. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism & Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than One Hundred Disputed Questions* (repr., Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 17.

¹¹Donald Whitney, *Family Worship* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 44-51.

¹²Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 48.

Moralism. This term refers to “the belief that the Gospel can be reduced to improvements in behavior.”¹³ This project was intentional that men at FBC do not treat the call to be the spiritual leaders in their homes as mere behavior modification. With the gospel at the center, their hearts are to be changed so that behavior flows from faith.

Spiritual leadership. Spiritual leadership is “knowing where God wants people to be and taking the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power.”¹⁴ God desires His people to reflect His character for His glory. Therefore, the man is responsible for casting this vision in the home and taking the appropriate measures to accomplish that end.

Two limitations applied to this project. First, the pre- and post-series surveys were accurate to the degree that the participants were willing and accurate in their response. In order to mitigate this limitation, anonymity was guaranteed to the participants. Second, the duration of the project was limited to twenty weeks.

Three delimitations were placed on this project. First, the project addressed spiritual leadership in the home but not the church. Church involvement was addressed as a necessary aspect of spiritual leadership in the home, but church leadership itself was not addressed in this project. Second, the project was confined to a twenty-week timeframe, which gave appropriate time to carry out the tasks of surveys and teaching. Third, though women are responsible for spiritual leadership over their children, this project was limited to equipping men to provide spiritual leadership over their wives and children.

¹³R. Albert Mohler, “Why Moralism Is Not the Gospel—And Why So Many Christians Think It Is,” September 3, 2009, accessed July 3, 2014, <http://www.albertmohler.com/2009/09/03/why-moralism-is-not-the-gospel-and-why-so-many-christians-think-it-is/>.

¹⁴John Piper, “The Marks of a Spiritual Leader,” *Desiring God*, January 1, 1995, accessed July 3, 2014, <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-marks-of-a-spiritual-leader>.

Research Methodology

The research methodology for this project included a pre- and post-series survey, a spouse survey, and an evaluation rubric.¹⁵ Five goals determined the effectiveness of the project. The first goal of this project was to assess the current understanding and practices of gospel-centered leadership among men at FBC. Prior to the first training session, a pre-series survey was distributed and completed by the members who fell within the target group.¹⁶ Each participant identified himself on the survey using a personal four-digit code of his choice. To be included in this group, a participant must have committed to attend at least two of the four training sessions and listen to or read all of the daily devotions. The participant group included a minimum of 20 men.

The pre-series survey sought to determine two things about each participant. First, it assessed awareness and conviction regarding the biblical principles of spiritual leadership. The survey included questions about biblical passages, the husband's role in marriage, and the father's role in the home. Second, the survey assessed the participant's current practices of spiritual leadership in the home. This portion of the survey included questions regarding personal devotional life and family worship. This goal was considered successfully met when 50 men who are active members of the desired target group completed the survey and the survey revealed the current understanding and practices of male spiritual leadership in the home.¹⁷

The second goal was to develop a four-week study to be utilized with at least 20 men who fall within the target group. The study consisted of four ninety- minute

¹⁵All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

¹⁶See appendix 1. The target group consists of married men with at least one child residing in the home.

¹⁷Fifty men equals approximately 33 percent of the total target group population (active and inactive members at FBC).

sessions covering topics such as scriptural foundation for male spiritual leadership in the home, the role of a man in the home, leading a family worship experience, and instilling godly character in the wife and children. This curriculum was submitted to the expert panel consisting of three pastors and one deacon for approval in the eight weeks prior to the beginning of the series. This goal was measured by the expert panel who used a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, clarity, and relevance of the study.¹⁸ The rubric led the panel to evaluate the study on its faithfulness to Scripture along with its thoroughness, clarity, and practicality. If less than 90 percent of the indicators on the rubric were scored at “sufficient” or above, the panel’s feedback was used to modify the series, after which the material would be submitted again to the panel for approval. This process continued until at least 90 percent of the indicators on the rubric scored at “sufficient” or above by each evaluator, at which time the second goal was considered successfully met.

The third goal was to develop a daily devotional in written and audio format to accompany the study. It consisted of twenty devotions for the men to use as they meditated on the biblical truths of manhood and family discipleship throughout the study. Both formats were promptly emailed to the participants each weekday morning. The content was extracted from the study, but was devotional in nature. The material was submitted to the expert panel consisting of three pastors and one deacon for approval in the eight weeks prior to the beginning of the series. This goal was measured by the expert panel who used a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, clarity, and relevance of the study.¹⁹ If less than 90 percent of the indicators on the rubric scored at “sufficient” or above, the panel’s feedback was used to modify the series, after which the material would

¹⁸See appendix 3.

¹⁹See appendix 4.

have been submitted again to the panel for approval. This process continued until at least 90 percent of the indicators on the rubric scored at “sufficient” or above, at which time the second goal was considered successfully met.

The fourth goal was to develop an individualized family shepherding plan (IFSP) outline.²⁰ The participants utilized this IFSP outline during the last session in order to tailor a realistic plan of spiritual leadership that they implemented in their homes. The IFSP outline directed the participants to exercise spiritual leadership in the home by helping construct a biblical vision, clear process, and plan of action. This outline was submitted to the expert panel consisting of three pastors and one deacon for approval in the eight weeks prior to the beginning of the series. This goal was measured by the expert panel who used a rubric to evaluate the quality and practicality of the outline.²¹ If less than 90 percent of the indicators on the rubric were scored at “sufficient” or above, the panel’s feedback would have been used to modify the series, after which the material would have been submitted again to the panel for approval. This process would have continued until at least 90 percent of the indicators on the rubric were scored at “sufficient” or above, at which time the second goal was to be considered successfully met.

The fifth goal was to equip the men of FBC to be gospel-centered leaders in their homes by conducting the four-week study, the accompanying devotional, and the IFSP. The study took place on four Sunday afternoons. Each study began with prayer and the teaching lasted approximately 90 minutes. During the conclusion of the final study, the participants were given the opportunity to fill out the IFSP outline so that they could begin immediately implementing the principles of spiritual leadership in their homes. After the completion of the study, the men had four weeks of implementing the

²⁰See appendix 5.

²¹See appendix 2.

IFSP in the homes. To capstone the study, there was a dinner for the participants and their spouses in order for the participants to share what the study meant for them and also for the participants to take the post-series survey, which was the instrument by which the fifth goal was measured.²² A minimum number of 10 participants had to complete the course. Only those who completed a pre-series survey, attended at least two training sessions, and listened or read the daily devotions were invited to take the post-series survey. Each participant was asked to identify himself with the same four-digit code that he used on the pre-series survey. Like the initial survey, the post-series survey measured the participant's level of knowledge, confidence, motivation, and practice of spiritual leadership in the home. Additionally, this goal was measured through administering a post-series survey to the participants' spouse that measured the participants' level of execution in being the spiritual leader in the home.

A *t*-test for dependent samples was used to verify if there was a positive statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-series scores. A *t*-test for dependent samples “involves a comparison of the means from each group of scores and focuses on the differences between the scores.”²³ A *t*-test of dependent samples was the appropriate test statistic since this project involved a single group of the same subjects surveyed under two conditions. The fifth goal was considered met when the *t*-test for dependent samples verified a positive statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-series. As well, this goal was considered met when the post-series survey of spouses displayed that a minimum of the participants were rated at a mean score of 4.5 or above on a 6-point scale on the evaluation rubric.

²²See appendix 1.

²³Neil J. Salkind, *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008), 91.

CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR MALE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP IN THE HOME

Men are called to be gospel-centered leaders of their homes. The gospel is the good news that God gives grace to sinners through His Son's life, death, and resurrection. Sinners are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Yet, that faith which alone saves is never alone. Those who embrace the gospel with their hearts must display the gospel with their lives. The gospel demands that one's life increasingly reflect the character of God. God is Trinity, meaning each person of the Godhead is equal in deity but different in the roles they carry out. In the same way, God made man and woman equal in value, but different in roles. This view is called complementarianism, which highlights the equal dignity of both male and female as image bearers of God while distinguishing their complementary roles and responsibilities within the home and church.¹ There is a growing trend in the church to embrace complementarianism's antithesis: egalitarianism.² Egalitarians see complementarianism as chauvinistic, claiming that it

¹Dennis Rainey, "Appendix: The Danvers Statement," in *Building Strong Families*, ed. Dennis Rainey (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 227-30. Rainey states, "The 'Danvers Statement' summarizes the need for the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) and serves as an overview of [their core] beliefs. Several evangelical leaders at a CBMW meeting in Danvers, Massachusetts, in December of 1987, prepared this statement. It was first published in final form by the CBMW in November of 1988."

²CBE International, "History of CBE," accessed November 24, 2014, <http://www.cbeinternational.org/content/cbes-history>. Christians for Biblical Equality is a coalition of egalitarians. The website states that they have seen significant growth since their beginning in 1987: "CBE has grown to include members from over 100 denominations and 65 countries. It conducts annual international conferences; publishes two award-winning publications, a blog, and a weekly e-newsletter; and hosts an online bookstore devoted to reviewing and promoting resources on gender and the Bible from an egalitarian perspective."

oppresses women and promotes injustice.³ Yet complementarianism is simply a reflection of the equal-but-different authority structure within the Godhead.⁴ If Christian men are going to be faithful in reflecting God’s character, they must be the spiritual leaders of their homes.

Taking the complementarian view, this chapter establishes the biblical and theological basis for male spiritual leadership in the home, showing that the Bible teaches that godly men are responsible to lead their wives and children to increasingly reflect the character of God by treasuring Christ above all things. An exposition of four biblical passages, along with a survey of historical theology, support this thesis. First, an exegetically-based exposition of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Ephesians 6:4 supports the thesis by showing that a man is to be a sanctifying tool for his children through his sacrificial love and shepherding. Second, an exegetically-based exposition of Ephesians 5:25-33 supports the thesis by showing that a man is to be a sanctifying tool for his wife through his sacrificial love and shepherding. Finally, a survey of historical theology supports the thesis by showing that the church has historically affirmed male spiritual leadership in the home. When these things are accomplished, it will support the assertion that the Bible demands male spiritual leadership in the home.

Fathers Are to Love and Shepherd Their Children

Children are great gifts from God, but they come with great responsibility.

Few things shape a person’s life like the way he or she was fathered. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 highlights the priority of the calling on fathers to shepherd their children. Ephesians 6:4

³The fifth core value of Christians for Biblical Equality states, “Restricting believers from exercising their gifts—on the basis of their gender . . . resists the work of the Spirit of God and is unjust.” CBE International, “Core Values,” accessed November 24, 2014, <http://www.cbeinternational.org/content/cbes-mission>.

⁴Wayne Grudem, “The Key Issues in the Manhood-Womanhood Controversy,” in *Building Strong Families*, 59-62. Grudem states, “Key Issue 3: The Equality and Differences Between Men and Women Reflect the Equality and Differences in the Trinity.” He goes on to say that this issue is the “heart of the controversy.” *Ibid.*, 59.

underscores what the Deuteronomy passage demands and gives further instruction on the nature of this shepherding, namely discipline without exasperation. Together these two passages clearly teach that fathers are responsible to love and shepherd their children.

Men as “Shepherds” of the Their Home

Timothy Witmer points out that the New Testament teaches that the role of the pastor in the church is to shepherd the flock, which includes, but is not limited to, knowing, leading, providing for, and protecting the flock entrusted to him (see 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9): “There is a clear parallel between God’s covenantal care for his people and a man’s care for his family.”⁵ Richard Baxter saw such a close connection between the home and the church that he wrote, “You are not likely to see any general reformation, till you procure family reformation.”⁶ Therefore, the idea that husbands and fathers are shepherds reinforces the truth that each husband and father is responsible for the instruction and discipline in his home.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Though God’s people are now under the new covenant, Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is a relevant text. Voddie Baucham explains, “While acknowledging these Old Testament precepts, the New Testament makes no effort to introduce a new pattern.”⁷ Robert Plummer also points out that the New Testament writers

viewed passages in the Old Testament about the importance of parents passing on spiritual truth to their children as *authoritative divine instruction*. The “newness” of the new covenant was found in the Messiah’s consummated work of salvation and

⁵Timothy Witmer claims that knowing, leading, providing for, and protecting are four fundamental responsibilities for a shepherd at church and a shepherd at home. Timothy Z. Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home: Knowing, Leading, Protecting, and Providing for Your Family* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 13.

⁶Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1997), 102.

⁷Voddie Baucham, Jr., *Family Shepherds: Calling and Equipping Men to Lead Their Homes* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 24.

in the regenerative work in the Spirit—not in any radical alterations in parent-child relationships.⁸

Therefore, it is helpful to unpack this rich text.

Moses wrote Deuteronomy as the Lord renewed his covenant with Israel, preparing them to enter the Promised Land.⁹ As they entered this land, they would be exposed to pronounced violence and temptation and they would feel the enticement to abandon Yahweh’s covenant and worship the idols of the surrounding nations. So what was God’s blueprint to ensure covenant loyalty? Establish kings? Raise up mighty warriors? Interestingly, the burden for Israel’s faithfulness, and thereby Israel’s prosperity, was laid upon the fathers. As Moses delivered a series of sermons, individual fathers of individual families were singled out to faithfully and consistently pass on the teachings of Yahweh to the next generation.

A question must be settled at this point. Are fathers more responsible for shepherding the children than mothers? The answer is yes for two reasons. First, it is assumed that fathers are the ones addressed here because they hold the primary responsibility in ancient Israel. Daniel Block contends for the term *patricentric* rather than *patriarchal* to describe family life in ancient Israel.¹⁰ In other words, the father was not merely the head of the family (patriarchal), but the family actually centered on him (patricentric). However, what does “patricentrism” mean? Andreas Kostenberger and David Jones note, “It was not primarily the power and privileges associated with the

⁸Robert L. Plummer, “Bring Them Up in the Discipline and Instruction of the Lord,” *The Journal of Family Ministry* 1, no. 1 (Fall 2010): 20, emphasis added.

⁹Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1976), 28-29. Craigie notes, “It is important to stress that ‘authorship’ of a book such as Deuteronomy has to do with the *substance* (viz. the ‘words that Moses spoke’) and not primarily with the mechanical process of writing or recording.” *Ibid.*, 29n31.

¹⁰Daniel I. Block, “Marriage and Family in Ancient Israel,” in *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World*, ed. Ken M. Campbell (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 41.

father's position but rather the *responsibilities* associated with his headship that were emphasized."¹¹ Second, אתה (you) in Deuteronomy 6:7 is second person masculine singular. Unlike English, Hebrew distinguishes the gender addressed in this pronoun. Therefore, Deuteronomy 6:7 should be understood as calling fathers to the responsibility of teaching their sons the Word. Hamilton explains that because the pronoun is singular, it is not calling for a host of male spiritual leaders in Israel to teach the Word to young men, but rather the responsibility is given to each individual father to carry out covenant fidelity within his home.¹² Obviously this text does not prohibit mothers to engage in these things. The point is that God holds fathers ultimately responsible for the spiritual nourishment of the children.

According to Christopher Wright, Deuteronomy 6:4-5 is the "most fundamental of Israel's 'creedal' traditions."¹³ Wright says that this statement, known as the Shema, was often quoted by Israelites. שמע (Shema) is the imperative form of the Hebrew word for "hear." This passage is signature for the Israelites because it is both propositional and personal. It summons Israel to acknowledge that Yahweh made all things and they owe their very existence as a covenant people to Him.¹⁴ If they miss this, any other imperative is made null. Thus Merrill points out that the Shema is the foundation of all God's imperatives.¹⁵ Since God is the one and only God, He is to be loved, known, and obeyed.

¹¹Andreas J. Kostenberger and David W. Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 95, emphasis added.

¹²James M. Hamilton, Jr., "That the Coming Generation Might Praise the Lord: Family Discipleship in the Old Testament," in *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*, ed. Timothy Paul Jones and Randy Stinson (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 37.

¹³Christopher J. H. Wright, *Deuteronomy*, Understanding the Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 95.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, New American Commentary, vol. 4 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 165. Merrill calls the Shema the "essence of the

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 presents both personal and familial responsibilities to the father, which is not surprising. The father's personal devotion effects familial devotion—he should not expect hearts to burn in his home if the fire has not been lit in his heart. These personal and familial responsibilities given to the father are summed up in three points: love the Lord, know the Word, and teach the Word.

Fathers must love the Lord. Deuteronomy 6:5 says, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” This is the supreme calling on God's people; the highest pursuit of one's being. In fact, Jesus called this “the great and first commandment” (Matt 22:38). Block observes that here in Deuteronomy, Moses demands nothing less than a “verbal commitment expressed . . . with wholehearted and full-bodied love.”¹⁶ The imperative to love God in Deuteronomy is not empty emotionalism. Rather, Tigay notes, “Israel's duty to love God is . . . inseparable from action; it is regularly connected with the observance of His commandments, as in 10:12-13; 11:1, 13; 19:9; 30:16.”¹⁷ In other words, a man who says he loves God but neglects his God-sanctioned responsibilities is a hypocrite. According to Merrill, Deuteronomy 6:5 is a holistic imperative, demanding one's entirety:

The heart is, in Old Testament anthropology, the seat of the intellect, equivalent to the mind or rational part of humankind. The “soul” (better, “being” or “essential person” in line with commonly accepted understanding of Heb. *Nepes*) refers to the invisible part of the individual, the person qua person including the will and sensibilities. The strength is, of course, the physical side with all its functions and capacities. . . . The notion is basically that of “muchness.” That is, Israel must love God with all its essence and expression.¹⁸

Decalogue and, indeed, of all the law.”

¹⁶Daniel I. Block, *Deuteronomy*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 182.

¹⁷Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 77.

¹⁸Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 164.

The people of God should be fully committed to God. However, Thompson notes, “Israel’s obedience was not to spring from a barren legalism based on necessity and duty. It was to arise from a relationship based on love.”¹⁹ The father must submit to Yahweh’s Lordship before he can be ready to pass these truths on to the next generation. There is no mistake in the order of Deuteronomy 6:4-9: first acknowledge God’s sovereignty, then love him supremely, and finally share him faithfully. Wright observes that just as other parts of Scripture teach, the loving comes before the sharing (Ps 63:3; 1 John 4:19).²⁰ In fact, the sharing is a display of the loving. Jesus said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15). One cannot give away what he does not possess. Since Yahweh is the only true God, one must submit to His lordship and give Him the love and honor that is due Him. However, God’s love is not stagnant; it grows in hearts and overflows into surrounding people. Block writes, “Those who claim to be religious tend to be subject to two temptations: either to treat spirituality as primarily interior and private, or to treat it as matter of external performance.”²¹ Wright contends that in Deuteronomy, the command to love and the command to obey are virtually synonymous.²² The father’s great responsibility is to press into the next generation a heart-felt reverence for God’s majesty and splendor. Therefore, this is a calling for a father to have an authentic personal spiritual life with God. It all starts here.

God and His Word should consume a man’s mind and life. If a man is to teach God’s ways to His son and yet neglect God’s ways in his life, his hypocrisy will sow destruction for subsequent generations. Children can see through counterfeits. A father must take pains to exercise personal spiritual disciplines. The calling is to love God with

¹⁹J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1974), 138.

²⁰Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 98. Wright points out, “Statement and response is the typical form of Deuteronomical exhortation, characteristic indeed of the biblical faith.”

²¹Block, *Deuteronomy*, 189.

²²Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 36.

all of one's heart, soul, and might. If things keep one away from the Lord, he must put them away. It is prudent for a man to think through his weaknesses in order to set up boundaries and "make no provision for the flesh" (Rom 13:14). He should entreat men to pray for him, seek godly counsel, and put full exertion into the worthy pursuit of godliness. Loving God does not come easy. Everything in the old nature works against the pursuit of loving God. An enemy seeks to put every obstacle imaginable in a father's life. Yet for the father who leverages everything at his disposal to love and obey God, there are great rewards. Foremost is that he provides for his children a tangible demonstration of a man who loves God.

Fathers must know the Word. Deuteronomy 6:6 says, "And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart." The word "heart" (לֵב) is not to be reduced to mere emotional affection. Rather, it is "the seat of the intellect or rational side of humankind."²³ There is an important connection between the command to love God in verse 5 and to keep "these words . . . on your heart" in verse 6. Verse 6 "is saying that the person's thinking and behavior is markedly affected by the Word."²⁴ Thus, it is imperative for one to internalize the Word if he is going to love God. Merrill argues that "These words" in verse 6 indicate the entire panorama of God's Word.²⁵ In other words, Moses is communicating that God's people should hide God's Word in their hearts (Ps 119:11). The progression up to this point goes like this: recognize God's sovereignty, love God, and let His Word be on the heart and in the mind consciously and continually. In other words, the people of God are to be enamored with the Word of God. Thus, fathers must be faithful students of God's Word.

²³Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 167.

²⁴Ajith Fernando, *Deuteronomy: Loving Obedience to a Loving God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 263.

²⁵Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 167.

The call for fathers to know God’s Word is not a call for fathers to be scholars. However, it is a call for all fathers to love God by immersing themselves in His Word. How can one “teach” or “talk” about God’s Word if he has little knowledge of it? The text goes on to describe the repetitive and constant nature of this focus on God’s Word: “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes” (Deut 6:8), as well as, “write them on the doorposts of your house and your gates” (Deut 6:9). Some took this literal and would tie phylacteries (little boxes that contained brief sections of the Mosaic law) on their forearms and foreheads.²⁶ When they prayed, the position of their left forearm would press the little box against their heart. Hence, they would literally have it pressing in their mind and heart. It is quite imprudent to inject such a literal notion to an obvious meaning. This passage is simply suggesting that a father must be a student of God’s Word.²⁷ Fathers do well to give themselves to the Bible. Fathers should pour themselves into God’s Word to know it and let it change them from the inside out. God’s Word ought to flavor a father’s life and color the way he views the world. John Piper writes, “I love the Bible the way I love my eyes – not because my eyes are lovely, but because without them I can’t see what’s lovely.”²⁸ The power of God is unleashed on the people of God through the Word of God. Therefore, fathers must know the Word of God.

Fathers must teach the Word. This passage is clear that a child’s instruction is not limited to a classroom setting. In fact, the passage teaches that a child’s primary teacher is his father and the primary classroom is the home and everyday whereabouts.

²⁶The Master Library, *Everyday Life In Judea* (Chicago: Good Counsel, 1964), 16.

²⁷Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 167.

²⁸John Piper, “Good English with Minimal Translation: Why Bethlehem Uses the ESV,” January 1, 2004, accessed November 24, 2014, <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/good-english-with-minimal-translation-why-bethlehem-uses-the-esv>.

John Currid explains that the command to “teach them diligently” (למד) indicates there is at least some measure of planning the time, content, frequency, place, etc., for teaching God’s Word to the children.²⁹ This means that a father must not be haphazard in his approach. There is no room for carelessness. The stakes are too high and the casualties are too real. The serpent of old is willing and ready to strike at children every chance he gets. If he can keep them ignorant of God’s Word, he will. If he can malign God’s Word in the minds of children, he will. A father must be diligent in strategizing how he will accomplish this important task. Eugene Merrill likens verse 7 to a man who inscribes a Bible verse into a slab of granite with a mere chisel.³⁰ The work is gruesome, exhausting, and long, but when the painstaking work is done, it will never be undone. Writing words in sand is much easier, but they are gone as soon as a wave washes to shore; it is as if nothing had ever been written. So might it be for children who lack instruction by fathers. There is no higher priority for fathers than the diligent matter of teaching God’s Word to their children.

Deuteronomy 6:7b says that fathers should “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.” Currid explains, “This is a double merism that signifies that they are to talk of the Scriptures all the time, and they are always to be a model of scriptural principles for children in the way they live.”³¹ In other words, the father is to be preoccupied with thoughts of God. This preoccupation encompasses all of a person’s time and effort. “So important is covenant truth that it must be at the very center of all one’s labor and life.”³² One clear implication highlights what was established above, namely that the father must

²⁹John D. Currid, *Deuteronomy*, Evangelical Press Study Commentary (Webster, NY: Evangelical Press, 2006), 165.

³⁰Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 167.

³¹Currid, *Deuteronomy*, 165.

³²Ibid., 167.

study the Word of God so as to be ready when questions come and opportunities arise. This teaching goes beyond merely transferring Bible knowledge. Instead, the father is helping shape his children's worldview so that they interpret the world around them through a God-centered lens. Fathers are to show their children how biblical precepts filter their cultural intake. For instance, when a son asks his father to what degree of friendship should he have with a schoolmate who has two moms and no dad, biblical wisdom must be applied—mere Bible knowledge will not suffice. Godly fatherhood requires a great deal of thinking and contemplating, which is why Scripture must be on the minds and hearts of fathers at all times.

Ephesians 6:4

The letter to the Ephesians has been described as “the quintessence of Paulinism.”³³ Paul breaks down this letter into two major parts. The first half is the doctrine of the church and the second half is the practice of the church. Ephesians 6:1-4 deals with the essential calling of fathers as shepherds of their home. Though the mother also carries obligation for this duty, the primary responsibility of the children's spiritual nourishment is upon the father.³⁴ The text begins with the negative and then moves to the positive.

First it says, “Fathers, do not provoke you children to anger” (Eph 6:4a). The word *παροργίζω* translates “provoke,” which Paul uses in Romans 10:19—the only other

³³F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 229.

³⁴Robert L. Plummer, “Bring Them Up in the Discipline and Instruction of the Lord: Family Discipleship among the First Christians,” in *Trained in the Fear of God*, 51. Egalitarians hold a different view. Whereas complementarians argue for male headship in the home based on understanding *κεφαλή* as “authority,” egalitarians argue that *κεφαλή* should be understood as “source.” Stephen Bedale, “The Meaning of *kephale* in the Pauline Epistles,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 5 (1954): 211-15. Wayne Grudem notes, “In the 1950s, Stephen Bedale still argued for authority attaching to the meaning of the word, though he was the first to propose the sense “source” for this passage.” Grudem, “The Key Issue,” 85-86n39.

time it was used in the Pauline corpus.³⁵ This statement shows that Paul is not naïve, but draws from the harsh reality of how a father is prone to nag or ruthlessly lord over his children. Paul’s instruction here concerning paternal gentleness was in stark contrast to the backdrop of the Hellenistic-Judeo thought in his day. “In Hellenistic Judaism severe punishment could be meted out to disobedient children.”³⁶ Fathers do well to remember that though they are responsible for the discipline and instruction of their children, they should never overextend this authority. Children are their own people.³⁷ The father does not own them and should not try to manipulate them. Christian fathers should temper their discipline and instruction with gentleness, kindness, and love. The father who is belligerent with his orders, and humiliating with his sarcasm, will see resentment build in the child until it ripens with rebellion. Unfortunately, negative parenting traits are cyclical.³⁸ As these children grow up and become parents, they tend to repeat the same kind of vindictiveness toward their children. Christian fathers must ensure this cycle neither begins nor continues with them. Paul’s instruction to fathers makes it clear that great wisdom and prudence is required in shepherding.

Second, fathers are to bring up their children in the discipline (*παιδεία*) and instruction (*νουθεσία*) of the Lord. There are two nuances to these similar words. Second Timothy 3:16 is the only other time Paul uses *παιδεία*: “All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for . . . *training* in righteousness.” Hebrews 12:5-11 uses this word

³⁵William W. Klein, *Ephesians*, in vol. 12 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 2006), 157.

³⁶Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 445.

³⁷John Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity, 1979), 246.

³⁸Lisa Firestone, “Are You Parenting Like Your Parent? For Better or for Worse, Many of Our Parents’ Traits Live on in Us,” accessed July 23, 2015, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/compassion-matters/201211/are-you-parenting-your-parent>.

four times, each time carrying the notion of correction.³⁹ Physical discipline is often involved with the use of this particular word.⁴⁰ Danger lurks at two extremes. Paul has already issued a warning to menacing fathers who extend cruel punishment toward their children; however, a danger exists on the other extreme, namely retreating from any corrective discipline while a father tolerates disobedience. Fathers should never suppress this calling. Voices in contemporary thought suggest “permissive parenting” style, claiming that children should find their own course in life with little guidance or discipline.⁴¹ Yet, God’s Word stands opposed to such a notion. So where is the balance? D. Martin Lloyd-Jones writes, “The opposite of wrong discipline is not the absence of discipline, but the right discipline, true discipline.”⁴² Yet this must be said about the other extreme: “The opposite of no discipline at all is not cruelty, it is balanced discipline, it is controlled discipline.”⁴³

Corrective discipline is not the only instruction Paul gives. He also says that fathers should bring their children up in the instruction (*νουθεσία*) of the Lord. Similar to Deuteronomy’s teaching, the father is the primary teacher of the children. For practical purposes, it is fine to delegate at least some measure of this responsibility to the mother, church, school, etc. However, the father should neither give up this responsibility completely nor be uninformed with what the children are learning. In addition, the father’s

³⁹Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 399.

⁴⁰Klein, *Ephesians*, 157.

⁴¹For the background on “permissive parenting” style, see Diana Baumrind, “Child Care Practices Antecedent Three Patterns of Preschool Behavior,” *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, 75, no. 1 (1967): 43-88. See also Gwen Dwar, “Permissive Parenting: An Evidence-Based Guide,” accessed November 29, 2014, <http://www.parentingscience.com/permissive-parenting.html>.

⁴²D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Life in the Spirit in Marriage, Home and Work: An Exposition of Ephesians 5:18 to 6:9* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1974), 268.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 283.

role according to this text calls for more than a mere good example for his children. The father is called to instruct. Timothy Paul Jones explains, “The meaning of the term that Paul connected here to the training of children (*νοουθεσία*) includes planned and intentional teaching of particular content.”⁴⁴ While not pointing to the exact blueprint of the frequency and teaching style this instruction should take, he makes one thing clear: the content of the discipline and instruction carried out by the father should be “of the Lord.” This phrase “could be understood as a subjective genitive, indicating that behind those who teach and discipline their children stand the Lord himself.”⁴⁵ However, “if ‘training’ is to be understood more broadly, the ‘of the Lord’ is probably a genitive of quality, indicating that the training and instruction is in the sphere of the Lord or has him as its reference point.”⁴⁶ So which interpretation is right? The latter interpretation is correct because it fits better with Ephesians 4:20-21 where Paul reminded the Ephesians that they had “learned Christ” and were “taught in him.”⁴⁷ Fathers should be lovers of Jesus so as to carry out the important task of Christian nurture.

Husbands Are to Love and Shepherd Their Wives

The foundational aspect of a man’s shepherding ministry is to love and nourish his wife.⁴⁸ The purpose and design of marriage takes this priority to the superlative degree.

⁴⁴Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan, 2011), 153.

⁴⁵O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 446.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 447.

⁴⁷*Ibid.* O’Brien takes this position while pointing out that the former interpretation makes sense theologically and is “consistent with Old Testament reference, ‘the discipline of the LORD’ (Prov. 3:11).”

⁴⁸Baucham writes, “Leading a wife is the foundation upon which a man’s shepherding ministry in the home is built. . . . “This is true because marriage is designed in such a way that, ideally, a man gets a wife before he gets children. Furthermore, whether or not God blesses a man with children, if he has a wife, he’s still a family shepherd. It’s also the case that once the children are gone, a man must continue to lead his home and shepherd his wife.” Baucham, *Family Shepherds*, 83. The typical flow of a

Ephesians 5:25-33 teaches that God designed the marriage institution to be connected to the Christ-church relationship in two ways. First, marriage gets its example from the Christ-church relationship. Second, marriage portrays the Christ-church relationship. Therefore, gleaning from the great example of the Christ-church relationship with a desire to display the great reality of Christ-church oneness, husbands are to love and shepherd their wives.

Gleaning from the Great Example

Paul reasons that husbands understand their role by looking to the example of Christ and his loving service to the church:

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (Eph 5:25-27)

Jesus' self-sacrificing love for his church is the ultimate pattern of a husband's love for his wife.⁴⁹ There are three aspects of Christ's love: seeking love (Eph 5:25), sacrificial love (Eph 5:25), and sanctifying love (Eph 5:26, 27).⁵⁰ First, the love of Christ is a

man's life proves that he is married to his wife before, during, and after children are in the home.

⁴⁹Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 386.

⁵⁰Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 227. Stott points out the five verbs that Paul uses and connects them "to indicate the unfolding stages of Christ's commitment to his bride, the church. He *loved* her, *gave himself up* for her, to *sanctify* her, having *cleansed* her, that he might *present* her to himself." While noting these five stages is helpful, I am doing something a little different than Stott. While Stott deals with the specific verbs in the text and the *stages* those verbs represent, I am dealing with three *aspects* of what these verbs tell about the nature of Christ's love for his church. There are three reasons for this. First, Christ's *initiating* love is clear in the text (see above) and absent in Stott's commentary. Second, O'Brien rightly notes that there should not be a separation of ideas between "Christ loved the church" and "gave himself up for her" in v. 25, but rather understand the latter to be epexegetical of the former: "Both expressions refer to the cross." O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 419n235. Third, I use "sanctifying love" broadly, intending it to encompass the cleansing and presenting referred to in vv. 26 and 27. According to this passage, cleansing is the *grounds* of sanctification and presenting is the *goal* of sanctification.

seeking love. Jesus did not wait for the church to love and bless him before he began to love and bless her (Eph 1:3-4). He sought her in the midst of her wickedness and sin (Eph 2:1-6). “Christ laid down his life *that she might become his bride.*”⁵¹ He denied himself and “gave himself up for her” (Eph 5:25). The verb “gave up” linked with the reflexive pronoun “himself” indicates that Jesus took the initiative to become the ransom for sinners.⁵² If Jesus displayed a seeking love, then husbands should not wait on their wives to become submissive or respectful. The godly husband ought to model Jesus by pursuing his wife with sacrificial and sanctifying love.

Second, the love of Christ is a sacrificial love. Jesus “gave himself up for [the church]” (Eph 5:25). There is no greater love than this (John 15:13; 1 John 3:16). Paul demands that husbands love their wives in the same way that Jesus loved the church, which is radical both then and now. In fact, Klein goes so far as to say that Paul’s statement here “goes against *all* cultural expectations for husbands” and “revolutionizes the patriarchy [sic] of the day.”⁵³ Perhaps nothing is more common today than marriages splitting over the unmet expectation of personal happiness.⁵⁴ One or both parties want out of the marriage because they feel as though the respective spouse does not provide adequate happiness and self-actualization. While sinful nature is the root of this demeanor toward marriage, the widespread acceptance comes on the heels of the Enlightenment, which “privatized marriage, taking it out of the public sphere, and

⁵¹Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 386, emphasis added.

⁵²O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 419.

⁵³Klein, *Ephesians*, 151, emphasis added.

⁵⁴Tara Parker-Pope, “The Happy Marriage is the ‘Me’ Marriage,” *New York Times*, December 31, 2010, accessed November 24, 2014, www.nytimes.com/2011/01/02/weekinreview/02parkerpoppe.html. In this article, Parker-Pope comments on the predominant desire driving relationships in modernity: “In modern relationships, people are looking for a partnership, and they want partners who make their lives more interesting . . . [who will] help [them reach personal] goals.”

redefined its purpose as individual gratification.”⁵⁵ However, this self-centered outlook on marriage is nothing new.

Demosthenes, a renowned Greek intellectual of the fourth century, described how self-serving the institution of marriage had become in his culture: “Mistresses we keep for the sake of pleasure, concubines for the daily care of our persons, but wives to bear us legitimate children and to be faithful guardians of our households.”⁵⁶ While some of these household affairs are unacceptable today, the posture toward marriage is not much different. Under the curse, mankind’s default nature is selfishness (Eph 2:3), which is highly exposed in marriage. Yet speaking into both Hellenistic and contemporary cultures, the Word of God demands that husbands die to self, rooting the imperative in the sacrificial love of Christ.⁵⁷ An argument from the greater to the lesser can be applied here. Jesus’ love for the church is displayed through his death. Likewise, husbands are to display their love for their wives through their readiness to die—the ultimate sacrifice of life itself. If the ultimate sacrifice is demanded (i.e., death), then surely the lesser sacrifices of time, hobbies, money, etc., are also required. Interestingly, although Paul recognizes male headship in the home in verse 23, he never commands men to exercise headship over their wives.⁵⁸ Rather, husbands are exhorted to love their wives; to care for their entire being. This love rules out both domineering treatment and passivity and helps correct man’s epidemic of self-focus by looking more to his wife’s interest rather than his own (Phil 2:4).

⁵⁵Timothy Keller and Kathy Keller, *Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God* (New York: Penguin, 2011), 28.

⁵⁶Demosthenes, *Against Neaera*, trans. Norman W. DeWitt, accessed November 24, 2014, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0080%3Aspeech%3D59%3Asection%3D122>.

⁵⁷Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 387.

⁵⁸Both Klein and O’Brien make this observation. Klein, *Ephesians*, 151; O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 419.

Third, the love of Christ is a sanctifying love. In verses 26 and 27, Paul proceeds to give three reasons why Christ died for the church: that he might “sanctify her” (Eph 5:26), “present her to himself in splendor” (Eph 5:27a), and enable her to be “holy and without blemish” (Eph 5:27c).⁵⁹ In other words, the goal for Jesus’ sacrificial death was that He would sanctify his church and present her to himself in complete holiness.⁶⁰ The word “sanctify” can mean different things. To put it in systematic theological categories, it could mean a positional sanctification (having been set apart) or progressive sanctification (being made holy). Stott rightly claims that Paul is referring to progressive sanctification, which is a process of being made holy.⁶¹ The presentation of the spotless and perfect bride is eschatological and will take place at the *parousia*.⁶² Martin Lloyd-Jones writes,

The Beauty-Specialist will have put his final touch to the church, the massaging will have been so perfect that there will not be a single wrinkle left. She will look young, and in the bloom of youth, with colour in her cheeks, with her skin perfect, without any spots or wrinkles. And she will remain like that for ever and ever.⁶³

This is a picture of what Jesus is in the process of doing to the church. He laid down his life for the church and “cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,” so that the church will increasingly reflect his character until the day he presents the church to himself in splendor. This is how a husband should love his wife. He should leverage

⁵⁹These three purposes clauses are all introduced by the Greek conjunction *ἵνα*. Klein, *Ephesians*, 151; O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 420.

⁶⁰Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 387.

⁶¹Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 228. O’Brien disagrees with Stott and argues that Paul has positional sanctification in view here. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 422. Stott is convincing because he points to the future nature of the “presenting” and the present reality of the “sanctifying.” Certainly both of them are not that far from each other in light of the eschatological “already and not-yet” reality of the kingdom.

⁶²Charles Hodge, *Ephesians*, The Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1994), 193; Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 389; O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 424.

⁶³Lloyd-Jones, *Life in the Spirit*, 175-76.

everything at his disposal, even if it means embracing hardship, pain, and death for her greater good. The writer of Hebrews called Christians to look to “Jesus . . . who for the joy set before him endured the cross” (Heb 12:2). What an incredible picture of Christ’s sacrificial love: ultimate pain for ultimate joy. For Jesus, pain was the path to joy.⁶⁴ He prayed for the pain to bypass him (Matt 26:39; Luke 22:42), but he submitted to his Father’s will. He did not crush the church; he was crushed *for* the church—“in order that she might become everything he longs for her to be.”⁶⁵ He endured all of the hardship of the cross and the weight of sin because there was a throbbing joy set in tune by the vision of a redeemed holy people glorifying God. Likewise, a husband displays sanctifying love by taking the initiative to sacrifice everything for his wife’s greater good; and her greater good is nothing less than holiness.

Though it is still grounded in the example of Christ and the church, Paul transitions to talk about self-love:

In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. (Eph 5:28-31)

Normally self-love has a negative connotation, but here Paul recognizes the legitimate love of self, similar to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:39; Mark 12:31). Paul determines to draw out self-attesting logic that goes along with one-flesh unions.⁶⁶ Christ cares for His church because it belongs to him—“we are members of his body” (Eph 5:25-27, 29-30). A man cares for his own body because it belongs to him (Eph 5:28-29). A husband cares for his wife because she belongs to him: “The two shall become one flesh” (Eph 5:31-32; cf. 1 Cor 7:4). There is such a union between a husband and wife

⁶⁴Thomas Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation, ed. T. Desmond Alexander, Andreas J. Kostenberger, and Thomas R. Schreiner (Nashville: B & H, 2015), 379.

⁶⁵Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 229.

⁶⁶Klein, *Ephesians*, 153.

that God's Word declares them one flesh. The wife's joys, pains, and desires become the husband's joys, pains, and desires. Because a wife is part of the husband's body ("one flesh"), he should care for her accordingly.

Displaying the Great Reality

Imagine a beautiful painting of the Grand Canyon. At some point the painter stood at the edge of the Grand Canyon and painted its brilliance. Now imagine a person who looks at the painting and is left breathless. He or she has never seen the Grand Canyon before, but the painter so incredibly put the Grand Canyon on display through his painting that a person gets a glimpse of its majesty and beauty. In this passage, Paul similarly describes marriage. The Christian couple is the painter, they look to the gospel as the example for marriage, and they put the gospel on display through their marriage canvas. Others who cannot see Jesus look to their marriage canvas and in so doing gain insight into the greater gospel reality. Paul says, "This mystery is profound and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church" (Eph 5:32). Paul normally uses the word "mystery" (*μυστήριον*) to describe something that was once concealed but now has been revealed.⁶⁷ So what is this "mystery?" He states it in the text: "I am saying that [the mystery] refers to Christ and the church" (Eph 5:32). Roman Catholics wrongly understand Paul's use of *μυστήριον* to refer to marriage, thus making it a sacrament.⁶⁸ However, Paul is showing that "when God designed the original marriage, He already had Christ and the church in mind."⁶⁹ Though this "mystery" was once concealed, it has now been revealed. Paul is essentially saying that though marriage has been around since

⁶⁷Klein, *Ephesians*, 154.

⁶⁸Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 430; Kostenberger and Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family*, 81-83.

⁶⁹G. W. Knight, "Husbands and Wives as Analogues of Christ and the Church: Ephesians 5:21-33 and Colossians 3:18-19," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 176.

the beginning, its purpose of pointing to a greater reality has been hidden until now. This greater reality is that of Christ and the church. R. C. Ortlund writes,

The first Adam's love for his wife as *one flesh* with himself and the last Adam's love for his own bride, his body, are . . . the typology [that] serves Paul's pastoral purpose of providing a model for Christian marriage which is grounded in primeval human origins and reflective of ultimate divine reality.⁷⁰

The purpose of marriage is to show the world what is true about Christ and the church. Marriage "reproduces in miniature the beauty shared between the Bridegroom and the Bride."⁷¹ If God had the Christ-church relationship in mind when He established marriage, "then marriage only 'works' to the degree that approximates the pattern of God's self-giving love in Christ."⁷² Since the husband's role in marriage represents Christ's role in the gospel, a husband must love and shepherd his wife.

A Historical Survey of Male Shepherding in the Home

Every major Christian teaching and doctrine has developed and crystalized over the course of church history.⁷³ As the church faced scrutiny from the pressures of surrounding cultures, wise teachers and writers were forced to express these doctrines with more precision. The current posture of Western culture concerning the home and the natural family is at odds with a Christian worldview.⁷⁴ "The state has invaded the home,

⁷⁰Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., *Whoredom: God's Unfaithful Wife in Biblical Theology*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 156.

⁷¹Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 434.

⁷²Keller and Keller, *Meaning of Marriage*, 46.

⁷³Gregg R. Allison, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 24-29. Allison lists eight ways that historical theology serves the church. In so doing, he exposes how orthodoxy has been crystalized in the face of heresy throughout church history, which sets the tone for his book.

⁷⁴Carlson and Mero highlight the growing skepticism toward the natural family and how it "stands reviled and threatened in the early twenty-first century." Allan C. Carlson and Paul T. Mero, *The Natural Family: A Manifesto* (Dallas: Spence, 2007), 6. They also trace the patterns that led to extreme alienation of the natural authority structure and responsibilities within the home.

seizing the protection of childhood from parents through the reform of school movement and later schemes to ‘prevent child abuse.’”⁷⁵ Ideologies such as feminism, sexual hedonism, and secular liberalism are increasingly imposed upon children.⁷⁶ For parents to teach otherwise, even if the parent’s religion is opposed to such things, is seen as enslaving one’s children to “the chains of tradition.”⁷⁷ Yet, Christian tradition will help guard the church from folding under the pressures to let the state and its current ideologies bring up the next generation. Tradition is not authoritative, but it is very important. Alister McGrath writes, “Tradition is like a filter, which allows us to identify suspect teachings immediately.”⁷⁸ D. H. Williams makes a keen observation of the detrimental consequences if this filter is abandoned.⁷⁹ He points out that evangelical churches will eventually exude “spiritual subjectivism” and dismiss “the uniqueness of the Christian identity” in the name of pragmatism.⁸⁰ Certainly in the church today parents are prone to fumble the responsibility of their children’s spiritual nourishment. It will be helpful to survey church history and see how the church has stood against the changing tide of her surrounding culture. Throughout church history there has been a consistent reverberation of the home being a place of worship and instruction in the things of the Lord. Since it has already been established that primary responsibility of shepherding rests upon the husband and father, a survey of historical theology concerning the general idea of parents disciplining their

⁷⁵Carlson and Mero, *The Natural Family*, 7.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 8.

⁷⁷See Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1950).

⁷⁸Alister E. McGrath, “Importance of Tradition for Modern Evangelicalism,” in *Doing Theology for the People of God*, ed. Donald Lewis and Alister E. McGrath (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 167.

⁷⁹D. H. Williams, *Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism: A Primer for Suspicious Protestants* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 14.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*

children will support the thesis by showing that the church has historically affirmed that the home should be a place of worship and instruction.

Early Church

From the beginning, Christian parents understood the vital role in teaching their children the truths of God’s Word. “A sermon from the late first century A. D. admonishes parents to make certain their children ‘receive the instruction that is in Christ.’”⁸¹ In the second century, a Roman governor asked Paeon, a Christian who was on trial for his faith, how he learned about Jesus. Paeon responded, “I received from my parents this good confession.”⁸² Another Christian who was present at the trial, shouted out, “I did indeed listen gladly to the words of Justin, but I too received the Christian faith through my parents.”⁸³ Augustine was the preeminent theologian of the fourth and fifth centuries and beyond. He recognized the major influence his mother had on him, therefore “he frequently emphasized the important role that a parent plays in the discipleship of children” when he taught on marriage.⁸⁴ While it is unfortunate that such a great theologian had a warped view of sex, it is not impossible for Evangelicals to glean wisdom from Augustine when it comes to family.⁸⁵ Michael Wren notes that while many in Augustine’s day were obsessed with asceticism, “Augustine saw value in this relationship precisely because

⁸¹Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 154.

⁸²*Martyrdom of Justin*, in *Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, vol. 2, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (London: Hamilton & Co., 1868), 369.

⁸³*Ibid.*

⁸⁴C. Michael Wren, Jr., “Among Your Company at Home: Family Discipleship in Late Ancient and Medieval Households,” in *Trained in the Fear of God*, 103.

⁸⁵Augustine believed that sex was acceptable *only* for the purpose of procreation. For the background on Augustine’s treatises on sex, see Augustine, *Marriage and Virginty, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, part 1, vol. 9, trans. Ray Kearney, ed. David G. Hunter (Hyde Park, IL: New City, 1999).

marriage provided an opportunity for parents to educate children in the Christian faith.”⁸⁶ As the early church era was ending, Caesarius of Arles, a bishop in southern Gaul, gave this charge: “Among your company at home you should engage in sacred reading, even several hours, at night, when the days are short.”⁸⁷

Middle Ages

At the dawn of the Middle Ages, a shift in focus from home-based discipleship to institutional discipleship proved to set in motion a perilous trajectory for the family.⁸⁸ Church leadership became a profession leaving parents feeling inadequate. Moreover, illiteracy was on the rise.⁸⁹ Suddenly, parents demonstrated a growing tendency to abdicate parental responsibility to the professional clergy. This apathetic trend was widespread. There was such a lack of emphasis upon family discipleship that “no major medieval theologians seem to have produced any works exclusively devoted to the subject of spiritual training in the context of a family.”⁹⁰ However, amidst the silence of family-based discipleship, pastors and theologians along the way boldly harkened for churches to equip parents in the worthy task of discipleship in the home. In the seventh century, Caesarius said, “You yourselves learn especially the creed and the Lord’s Prayer, and teach them to your children.”⁹¹ When Charlemagne was Emperor, reformers took heed to Caesarius’s call by requiring godparents to pledge to teach their respective godchildren

⁸⁶Wren, “Among Your Company at Home,” 104.

⁸⁷Caesarius of Arles, *Sermons*, vol. 1, *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 31, trans. Mary Magdeleine Mueller (New York: The Fathers of the Church, 1956), 46.

⁸⁸Wren, “Among Your Company at Home,” 101.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 105.

⁹¹Caesarius of Arles, *Sermons*, 100.

both the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer.⁹² In the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas taught that the intent of marriage was not only "the begetting of children, but also their education, to which as its end is directed the entire communion of works that exists between man and wife as united in marriage."⁹³ In other words, education was a major goal for child rearing and this would certainly include the instruction of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the fourteenth century, Jean Gerson, the chancellor of the University of Paris, called parents to re-embrace the duty of discipleship in the home. He said that if parents are unwilling to carry out this crucial duty, they "will be held more accountable than if they let their offspring die of hunger."⁹⁴

Reformation and Post-Reformation

Two of the chief doctrines asserted by Martin Luther and other reformers during the Reformation were *sola fide* (justification by faith alone) and *sola Scriptura* (by Scripture alone). These two doctrines had major effect on the landscape of Christian faith and practice. No longer were Protestants offering indulgences, looking to clergy to mediate prayers, or submitting to Tradition as authority.⁹⁵ Suddenly the divisive wall between sacred and secular, laity and clergy was broken. These doctrines had practical application for families. The embracing of *sola Scriptura* and *sola fide* calls for parents to take pains to know Scripture and make it known in their home, impressing faith into the next generation through family discipleship. Submission to Scripture alone as final authority gave Luther the ability to call into question long held beliefs and practices of

⁹²Wren, "Among Your Company at Home," 110.

⁹³Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, vol. 5, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Allen, TX: Thomas More), 2726.

⁹⁴Jean Gerson, quoted in D. Catherine Brown, *Pastor and Laity in the Theology of Jean Gerson* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 238-42.

⁹⁵Martin Luther, "The Ninety-five Theses, 1517," in *Documents of the Christian Church*, ed. Henry Bettenson and Christ Maunder (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 205-12.

Roman Catholicism. One of which was clergy celibacy.⁹⁶ Luther saw no teaching in Scripture that supported such a practice and rejected it with his pen and his life. He was married in June of 1525 to a runaway nun and eventually fathered ten children. He argued that raising godly children was the purpose in marriage: “The best thing in married life . . . is the fact that God gives children and commands us to bring them up to serve Him.”⁹⁷ Parenting was a holy calling for Luther. He even wrote a catechism to assist parents in the sacred duty of family discipleship. In his preface to the *Larger Catechism*, he gave a charge to the father: “It is the duty of every head of a household at least once a week to examine the children and servants one after the other to ascertain what they know or have learned of it, and, if they do not know it, to keep them faithfully at it.”⁹⁸ John Calvin was also convinced that fathers should give themselves to the duty of family discipleship: “Constant conversation should be held . . . with their children, in order that fathers should diligently attend and apply themselves to the duty of instruction.”⁹⁹ In Calvin’s mind, this was such an important duty that he harkened the church to be prudent “that this [instruction] might be done more conveniently . . . and individuals enjoined properly to teach their families.”¹⁰⁰ He also persuaded parents to be “mild and considerate” in their

⁹⁶Michael Reeves, *The Unquenchable Flame: Discovering the Heart of the Reformation* (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 58-59.

⁹⁷Martin Luther, “Sermon on Married Life,” quoted in Leland Ryken, *Wordly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 239n3.

⁹⁸Martin Luther, *The Large Catechism in The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, trans. Charles Arand (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2000), 410.

⁹⁹John Calvin, *Harmony of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy* (1563), *Calvin’s Commentaries*, vol. 2, trans. Charles William Bingham (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 367.

¹⁰⁰John Calvin, *Tracts and Letters*, vol. 2, trans. Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), 33.

children’s discipline “so as to guide them in their fear of the Lord.”¹⁰¹ Clearly, both Luther and Calvin were advocates for family discipleship.

As heirs of the Reformation, the Puritans grabbed the torch of family discipleship and took it to new heights. The Puritan era was a time of zealous pursuit for godliness in the home, church, and world. J. I. Packer notes, “The Puritan ethic of nurture was to train up children in the way they should go, to care for their bodies and souls together, and to educate them for sober, godly, socially useful adult living.”¹⁰² This Puritan ethic called for a major concentration of family worship, seeing “every house [as a] household of faith” and “every father [as] a priest in his own family.”¹⁰³ Both the Westminster and the Second London Baptist confessions include the same phrase: “God is to be worshiped everywhere in spirit and in truth; *as in private families daily*, and in secret each one by himself.”¹⁰⁴ Richard Baxter sought to “persuade the master of every family to cause his children and servants to repeat the Catechism to him.”¹⁰⁵ One cannot overestimate the importance that the Puritans placed upon the man in the home. John Bunyan summed up the vision for the Puritan home in a sermon he preached in 1674:

First, concerning the spiritual state of his family; [the father] ought to be very diligent and cautious, doing his utmost both to increase faith where it is begun, and to begin it where it is not. Therefore, he must diligently and frequently bring before

¹⁰¹John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, *Calvin’s Commentaries*, vol. 21, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 329.

¹⁰²J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1990), 25.

¹⁰³C. Jeffery Robinson, “The Home Is an Earthly Kingdom: Family Discipleship among Reformers and Puritans,” in *Trained in the Fear of God*, 119-20.

¹⁰⁴Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 21:6, in Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 1190, emphasis added; Second London Confession of Faith, Chapter 22:6, in *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, ed. William Lumpkin (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1959), 281-82, emphasis added.

¹⁰⁵Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*, ed. William Brown (London: Religious Tract Society, 1829), 93.

his family the things of God, from His Holy Word, in accordance with what is suitable for each person. And let no man question his authority from the Word of God for such a practice.¹⁰⁶

Modern Period

Toward the end of the Post-Reformation era of church history, Jonathan Edwards called on fathers to “revive . . . the ancient good practice of catechizing.”¹⁰⁷ This statement implies two things. First, catechizing is an “ancient” practice. Second, catechizing had been, at least to some degree, lost. In all generations, there is a temptation to lose the good practices of old. Catechizing and family discipleship as a whole can be easily lost since it is such a painful process. B. B. Warfield held out a vision of triumph in light of the tears involved with catechism.¹⁰⁸ He made the point that one naturally assumes the pain involved in basic math and reading is worth his child’s maturation. If that is the case in temporary matters, how much more effort should a parent take in terms of the eternal matters of the gospel? “No doubt it requires some effort whether to teach or to learn the Shorter Catechism . . . [but it is] worth . . . some tears.”¹⁰⁹

It was not simply catechizing that declined during this era of church history. Family discipleship as a whole began to deteriorate, replacing it with age-segmented programs within the church. The beginnings of much of today’s normalized church ministries to youth and children that take the ministry focus off the home and put it on

¹⁰⁶John Bunyan, *Christian Behavior*, 1674, updated by Tony Capoccia 1999, accessed November 26, 2014, <http://www.biblebb.com/files/JB-001.htm>.

¹⁰⁷Jonathan Edwards, letter to James Robe, May 23, 1749, quoted in Sereno E. Dwight, *Life of President Edwards*, ed. Edward Hickman, in *Works of President Edwards: With a Memoir of His Life in Ten Volumes* (New York: S. Converse, 1829), 1:282.

¹⁰⁸Benjamin B. Warfield, “Is the Shorter Catechism Worthwhile?” The Westminster Presbyterian, accessed July 14, 2015, <http://www.westminsterconfession.org/confessional-standards/is-the-shorter-catechism-worthwhile.php>.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

church programs can be traced back to the nineteenth century.¹¹⁰ Churches gradually assumed primary responsibility for nurturing children’s Christian formation. In 1805, Pastor Frederick Smith despairingly wrote a letter to the parents in his congregation:

It is a complaint, and I fear made with too much justice, that many parents are too negligent respecting the religious education and instruction of their children . . . I am grieved to add, that I apprehend this declension is much to be attributed to the spiritual weakness, and indulgence of parents.¹¹¹

Some of the causes of the lack of focus on the home were the Industrial Revolution and public education.¹¹² With the family fragmented throughout the majority of each day, the parents had less opportunity for instruction in godly matters. Churches felt the pain of the neglect of family discipleship and responded by churning out more programs within the church. Unfortunately, more activities at church meant more time away from home, which only added to the neglect of family discipleship. Edmund Fergusson reflected on the pattern of the church at the dawn of the twentieth century and noted that churches had been

enriching [their own programs] of centralized activities at the expense of the home’s chance to cultivate family religion. . . . The churches, in fact, have done for religious training what the factories had done for industrial training. They have taken it out of the home.¹¹³

This trend continued to escalate through the First World War to the extent that the Sunday school program, rather than family discipleship, was recognized as “the chief instrument of the church for training the young in religion.”¹¹⁴ As the Second World War

¹¹⁰W. Ryan Steenburg and Timothy Paul Jones, “Growing Gaps from Generation to Generation,” in *Trained in the Fear of God*, 143-60.

¹¹¹Frederick Smith, *A Letter to Parents* (London: Darton and Harvey, 1806), 4-5.

¹¹²Carlson and Mero, *The Natural Family*, 7.

¹¹³Edmund Morris Fergusson, *Church-School Administration* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1922), 124-25.

¹¹⁴Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in American Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1929), 393-98.

ended, there were various parachurch organizations on the rise in order to evangelize unchurched youth. “By the mid-twentieth century, local churches were imitating parachurch ministries such as Young Life and Youth for Christ by hiring professional ministers whose primary purpose was to engage adolescents.”¹¹⁵ The mindset of many churches during this time was that if the church was going to be faithful in ministering to families, then each family member must separate into different programs within the church. “Adolescents receive their training in youth group, children go to children’s church, and adults have Bible studies and worship celebrations tailored to their particular preferences.”¹¹⁶ The problem? Parents could raise their children in church and still have very little input in their children’s spiritual formation. In the past couple of decades, church leaders have sought to turn the ship around and bring more focus to the family. Jones points out three different family ministry models have emerged: family-based, family-equipping, and family-integrated.¹¹⁷ All three have the common thread of seeking to create an atmosphere where churches can partner with parents and equip them for the task of “bringing [children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph 6:4).

Conclusion

This chapter sought to establish the biblical and theological basis for male spiritual leadership in the home, showing that the Bible teaches that godly men are

¹¹⁵Steenburg and Jones, “Growing Gaps,” 156-57.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 158.

¹¹⁷Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 133. Family-Based Ministry Model is defined as “programmatic structures remain unchanged, but each separate ministry plans and programs activities that intentionally draw generations together and invite parents to take part in the discipleship of their children and youth”; Family-Equipping Ministry Model is defined as “although age-organized programs and events still exist, the ministry is completely restructured to draw generations together equipping parents championing their role as primary disciple-makers, and holding them accountable to fulfill this role”; Family-Integrated Ministry Model is defined as “the church eliminates age-segregated programs and events. All or nearly all programs and events are multi-generational, with a strong focus on parents’ responsibility to use their household as a context for evangelizing and discipling not only their own families but also others, inside and outside the faith community.”

responsible to lead their wives and children to increasingly reflect the character of God by treasuring Christ above all things. Through an exposition of three biblical passages it has been shown that man is to be a sanctifying tool for his children and wife through his sacrificial love and shepherding. This stance has been affirmed throughout church history even though the church did a better job at family discipleship during some periods than others. This careful and thoughtful work has proven that the Bible demands male spiritual leadership in the home.

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED TO
MALE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP IN THE HOME

Desire without direction lacks impact. The desire for a man to be the spiritual leader in his home is commendable, but without clear direction, he will find it difficult to calculate progress in family discipleship. Good intentions need a good direction. The devil has declared war on the family and he will not retreat until Jesus has put him away forever. Allen Carlson and Paul Mero observe that this spiritual war is seen in many ways, not the least of which is the moral insanity of the Western world as the natural family continues to erode.¹ As established in the previous chapter, God has designed and called the man to shepherd his wife and children (Eph 5:22-33). Men must get into the battle and protect their home from the enemy. Therefore, it is essential that men establish spiritual leadership in the home.

This chapter establishes the theoretical and practical issues related to male spiritual leadership in the home. John Piper suggests that spiritual leadership in the home requires a man to “[know] where God wants [his family] to be and [take] the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power.”² This definition

¹See Allan C. Carlson and Paul T. Mero, *The Natural Family: A Manifesto* (Dallas: Spence, 2007). See also Voddie Baucham, *Family Driven Faith: Doing What It Takes to Raise Sons and Daughters Who Walk with God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 24-28.

²John Piper, “The Marks of a Spiritual Leader,” *Desiring God*, January 1, 1995, accessed February 19, 2016, <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-marks-of-a-spiritual-leader>. The original quote is “knowing where God wants people to be and taking the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power.” In order to fit the context for the purpose of this assignment, I replaced “people” with “his family.”

implies that a man must possess at least three elements in order to be the spiritual leader in his home: direction, methodology, and power. While Piper is not specifically addressing men in the home, this definition is biblical and applicable to how men are to think through their calling as spiritual leaders of their home.³ This chapter deals with the practical issues involved with each of these three components while maintaining interaction with general theories of leadership. When these things are accomplished it will prove the point that a man must possess three elements in order to be the spiritual leader in his home: direction, methodology, and power.⁴

Spiritual Leadership in the Home Requires a Man to Have Direction

Spiritual leadership requires a man to have direction. In other words, he must know “where God wants his [family] to be.”⁵ Direction demands a destination. Knowing the destination is essential for any type of leadership; leaders “make decisions and chart a direction.”⁶ If a man is going to chart the direction for his family, he must have an endpoint that magnetizes the direction, constantly pulling him toward the goal. Piper argues that in

³Jerry Greg Birdwell, “Training the Men of Providence Bible Fellowship, West Chester, Ohio, to Be Spiritual Leaders in the Home” (D.Min. project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 6. Birdwell takes a similar approach by using Piper’s definition and applying it to male spiritual leadership in the home. However, Birdwell and I differ in that he derives five principles based on Piper’s definition, while I concentrate specifically on the three parts of the definition itself, drawing out three elements necessary for male spiritual leadership in the home.

⁴This chapter assumes the premise argued in chap. 2, namely that a man is called by God to be the spiritual leader of his home. While some theoretical and practical issues are not gender-specific, I maintain that the man holds final responsibility for execution of all issues discussed.

⁵Piper, “The Marks of a Spiritual Leader.” This chap. understands “family” as “primarily, one man and one woman united in matrimony (barring death of a spouse) plus (normally) natural or adopted children and, secondarily, any other persons related by blood.” Andreas J. Kostenberger and David W. Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 93.

⁶R. Albert Mohler, Jr., *The Conviction to Lead: 25 Principles for Leadership That Matters* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 2012), 32.

order for a man to know where God wants his family to be, he must take a step back and frame it in a larger context, namely God’s goal of all things.⁷ God’s goal of all things is his glory, therefore, a man must equip and empower his family to be agents of God’s glory.⁸ Knowing where God is leading all of history helps set a path for a man to lead his family in that same direction. Only the gospel metanarrative gives insight into such direction—for God has graciously revealed the goal of all things in the biblical narrative. Therefore, the gospel metanarrative must be known and communicated well in the home. This section lays out what the gospel metanarrative is and explains four reasons why the gospel metanarrative is essential in terms of a man knowing the direction God has entrusted him to take his family.

What Is the Gospel Metanarrative?

Focusing on the gospel metanarrative does not divert one’s attention away from the family; on the contrary, it helps set the contours for the family’s purpose and mission.⁹ The end to which God intends all things, including families, is his glory (Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 10:31). In other words, a man’s family exists to glorify God. Therefore, if a

⁷John Piper, “The Surpassing Goal: Marriage Lived for the Glory of God,” in *Building Strong Families*, ed. Dennis Rainey (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 91-96. While Piper addresses marriage in his essay, the implications of what he says expand to the home as a whole. His point is the same as mine: “So knowing God and cherishing God and valuing the glory of God above all things, including your spouse, is the key to living marriage to the glory of God.” *Ibid.*, 95. In the same vein, the key to leading one’s family is doing it to the glory of God. Therefore, any direction the man is to chart for his family must be magnetized to the destination God intends for families, namely equipped and empowered to bring God glory.

⁸Timothy Z. Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader At Home: Knowing, Leading, Protecting, and Providing for Your Family* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 66. Witmer writes, “The ultimate goal [of the family is] knowing the Lord and walking with him to bring him glory.”

⁹James M. Hamilton, Jr., “That the Coming Generation Might Praise the Lord: Family Discipleship in the Old Testament,” 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, 2011), 34.

man is going to be the spiritual leader of his family, then he has the responsibility to “make decisions and chart a direction” that inclines his wife and children to glorify God.¹⁰

In the beginning, God made all things to bring God glory. Human beings are the pinnacle of creation because only they were made in God’s image and given the unique role of glorifying God through praise (Gen 1:27). Praising God is not dreadful duty, but delight. Piper writes, “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.”¹¹ In Genesis 1-2, before sin entered the world, mankind was perfectly praising God. Things were as they should be—perfect wholeness and peace. However, Adam and Eve rejected God’s rule over them and worshipped something other than God. All mankind is now born in sin, cut off from God, and spiritually dead. Therefore, all mankind tries to find ultimate joy in things outside of God. C. S. Lewis states, “Our Lord finds our desire, not too strong, but too weak . . . we are far too easily pleased.”¹² In other words, the true killjoy is not the pursuit of God, but the settling of lesser joys. The Westminster Shorter Catechism asks, “What is the chief end of man?” Answer: To glorify God and enjoy him forever. The only way one can glorify God by enjoying Him is to be in relationship with him. However, sin has cut off everyone from being in right relationship with God. Moreover, the Bible describes sinners as are objects of the justified wrath of God, helpless and hopeless if left to themselves (John 3:36; Eph 2:1-10). The only way a person can be forgiven of sin and brought back in relationship with God is by being reconciled to God the Father through Jesus. In the fullness of time, God the Father sent God the Son on a rescue mission to renew the world and restore His people. The gospel is the good news that God redeems a people for Himself by grace through faith in His Son Jesus, who lived a perfect life, died on a cross, and rose again from the dead on behalf of sinners. On the

¹⁰Mohler, *Conviction to Lead*, 32.

¹¹John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1986), 50.

¹²C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 2.

cross, God extinguished his wrath on Jesus so that he could extend his mercy to those who receive him. The redeemed are not only forgiven, but are grafted into the family of God and given the Holy Spirit of God in order to enjoy a new relationship with God, in whom is *fullness* of joy (Ps 16:11). Even though there is still darkness and pain in the world, Jesus is on his throne. One day he will return and consummate his redemption by resurrecting the dead, judging sin and evil, renewing the world by purging all evil, and spreading righteousness and peace.

Four Reasons for Gospel Metanarrative

For at least four reasons, this gospel metanarrative is important in terms of a man having direction in the home: (1) people operate on the basis of narrative,¹³ (2) the gospel metanarrative helps a man understand and appreciate his family in light of the gospel,¹⁴ (3) the gospel metanarrative must be explicitly and continually communicated in the home so that a false gospel does not arise within the home,¹⁵ and (4) the gospel metanarrative establishes that the home is designed to be a place to practice missional living.¹⁶ First, the gospel metanarrative is important in terms of a man having direction

¹³See Mohler, *Conviction to Lead*, 37-42. See also James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 54.

¹⁴See Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan, 2011), 69-79. See also John Piper, *This Momentary Marriage: A Parable of Permanence* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 4. Piper writes, “The highest meaning and the most ultimate purpose of marriage is to put the covenant relationship of Christ and his church on display. That is why marriage exists.” In other words, the gospel is central to the meaning of marriage.

¹⁵Gordon Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 289. Fee acknowledges a “surface attractiveness” to the Judaizer’s gospel. This could really be said about any false gospel. Certainly Paul understood the seductive nature of false gospels and hurls down a curse on anyone who preaches them (Gal 1:8-9).

¹⁶Marriage portrays the gospel and child-rearing makes disciples of the gospel. Michael Wilder argues, “The family is a God-ordained launching pad for gospel

in the home because people operate based on narrative. Mohler argues that a leader draws followers into a story that frames all of life.¹⁷ He points to the Bible as the great story of “God’s determination to glorify himself by saving sinners through the atonement accomplished by his own Son.”¹⁸ This, he says, is “the story that underlies every true story, and in which every other true story finds its meaning.”¹⁹ Whatever narrative captures a person’s heart will shape his or her life. Narratives appeal to the fundamental faculties of desire. James K. A. Smith explains, “The penultimate decisions, actions, and paths we undertake are implicitly and ultimately aimed at trying to live out the vision of the good life that we love and want to pursue. . . . The good life” is nothing less than a story that captures one’s attention, imagination, and love.²⁰ Smith argues that everyone has a vision of “the good life” that “pulls us to get up in the morning and suit up for the quest.”²¹ The gospel metanarrative defines and shapes a Christian’s vision of the good life and compels him to live only for that vision of the good life. Timothy Keller explains that a man could be tempted to envision the good life with good things at the center: success, family, money, or countless other idols.²² However, the gospel metanarrative puts Christ at the center of the good life with a man lovingly and sacrificially serving his family, nourishing them in

ministry.” Michael Wilder, “Building and Equipping Missional Families,” in *Trained in the Fear of God*, 245.

¹⁷Mohler, *Conviction to Lead*, 37-42.

¹⁸Ibid., 40.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 54.

²¹Ibid.

²²See Timothy Keller, *Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope That Matters* (New York: Penguin, 2009). See also William P. Farley, *Gospel-Powered Parenting: How the Gospel Shapes and Transforms Parenting* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2009), 31-36. Farley points out the subtle, but deadly, idol of “child-centered families.”

the Word and teaching them to walk in the way of the Lord (Ps 128; Eph 5:22-33; 1 Tim 5:8). A man must be rooted in the gospel metanarrative if he is going to get up in the morning and suit up for the *right* quest. That quest, argues Michele Anthony, includes rooting his wife and children in this compelling story and showing how it is better than all other competing stories.²³ The gospel metanarrative is important in the home because it is so compelling that it will drive people to risk it all and give it all for the sake of honoring the King in the story. Smith explains that the gospel narrative shapes and forms proper loves and directs them toward the right *telos*.²⁴ This story brings true identity to the people who embrace it because this story is true. John Westerhoff writes, “At the heart of our faith is a story. . . . Unless the story is known, understood, owned, and lived out, we and our children will not have Christian faith.”²⁵ The gospel story frames the life of a Christian. A fundamental element in having direction in the home begins with the greatest story ever told. To the degree that a man sees himself in the story, his direction will have the accurate trajectory to rightly lead his family into the destination marked out by God.

The second reason why the gospel metanarrative is important in terms of a man having direction in the home is that it helps a man understand and appreciate his family in light of the gospel. Timothy Paul Jones states, “When the whole story of God frames every part of a family’s existence, parents don’t just see their children as sons and daughters in

²³Michele Anthony, “Equipping Parents to Be the Spiritual Leaders in the Home,” in *A Theology for Family Ministries*, ed. Michael and Michelle Anthony (Nashville: B & H, 2011), 190-91.

²⁴Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 17-18. Smith argues, “The most basic way that we intend the world is on affective order of love. This love constitutes our fundamental and governing orientation of the world. As such, our love is always ultimately aimed at *telos*, a picture of the good life that pulls us toward it, thus shaping our actions and behavior.” Ibid.

²⁵John H. Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith?* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 2000), 32.

Christ. They also see their children as potential or actual brothers and sisters in Christ.”²⁶ The gospel changes everything, particularly relationships. Mutual respect permeates a gospel-centered home because the gospel narrative promotes the dignity and worth of each human life (Gen 1:27; Ps 139). In the creation account, “God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gen 1:31). The creation narrative also teaches that marriage and children are gifts from God. Marriage and family predate the Fall, signaling that neither are an afterthought of God’s plan for the world. Unfortunately, because of the Fall, marriage and family have been stained with the curse, like the rest of creation, and futility and frustration bleed into family life.²⁷ Because both husband and wife are sinners, marriage demands both parties to practice humility, forgiveness, and patience. Marriage is designed to portray that which is true about the Christ-church relationship (Eph 5:22-33). A husband’s sacrificial love for his wife portrays Christ’s sacrificial love for the church. The wife’s submission to her husband portrays the church’s submission to the church. The gospel paradigm also helps see parenting as more than mere instruction and behavior modification. “Viewed from the vantage of creation and fall, children are both gifts to be treasured and sinners to be trained.”²⁸ Parents should nurture their children in the Word of God and help them make good decisions that promote virtue (Deut 6:4-9; Ps 119:9; Prov 4:1-2; Eph 6:1-4). However, Tedd Tripp explains that because of the curse, more is needed than just a push toward virtue:

²⁶Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 71.

²⁷In the US, there are 9.9 million single mothers living with children younger than 18 in 2010. This is an increase from 3.4 million in 1970. US Census Bureau, “America’s Families and Living Arrangements,” accessed March 9, 2016, <https://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2010.html>. There has also been a 64 percent increase over the last two decades of children living with grandparents, which seems to be symptomatic the futility experienced in family life. US Census Bureau, “Census Bureau Reports 64 Percent Increase in Number of Children Living with a Grandparent Over Last Two Decades,” accessed March 9, 2016. <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/children/cb11-117.html>.

²⁸Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 74.

Children need a heart change.²⁹ Children, like the rest of mankind, will never live up to the perfect standard that God's law demands (Rom 3:20). They need to be redeemed, bought back from sin and the death curse (Rom 3:24; 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 2:4-5). Only the precious blood of Jesus will suffice (Heb 9:12-14). Because Jesus bled and died, children who repent and trust in him are saved and guaranteed of the future redemption when Jesus comes back. While parents rightly celebrate the salvation of their children, they know that this salvation, as Wayne Grudem explains, is just the beginning of the process called sanctification.³⁰ When spouses sinfully fight against one another or when Christian children sin and rebel against their parents, the gospel metanarrative reminds a man to neither lose heart nor authority. The gospel reminds him not to lose heart because he lives in what George Eldon Ladd explains as the time between the times.³¹ Jesus has come to bring salvation to anyone who wants it, but Jesus has yet to return and make all things new. Christians still struggle with sin in the present time; perfection will not be reached on this side of heaven. Therefore, the man will experience hurt, disappointment, and frustration with his own family due to sin in general. In the midst of trials, he should not lose heart, for he can discern the ails through the lens of the gospel. The gospel metanarrative also demands that the man not neglect his God-given authority in his home.³² A structure of authority predates the fall and thus shows that authority is part of

²⁹See Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd, 1995), 4.

³⁰Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 1253. Grudem defines sanctification as "a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and more like Christ in our actual lives."

³¹See George Eldon Ladd, *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Bible Realism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 307.

³²While this statement is true in light of biblical manhood, Christopher Ash rightly cautions men to take great care in exercising authority: "The submissions enjoined by the Scripture between human beings are to be the voluntary acts of spiritual men and women. God's word comes in each case to the one who is to submit; the other is not told to keep them in subjugation. In particular, husbands are never told to make sure their wives submit to them or to keep them in submission." Christopher Ash, *Marriage: Sex in*

God's good creation.³³ Unlike his first father Adam, a gospel man must reject passivity and press into the family with love and direction. The sanctification of a man's wife and children are at stake and "the father [is] the key to the family."³⁴ Therefore, to neglect the responsibility and authority God has laid out for a man to have in his home would be to act worse than an unbeliever (1 Tim 5:8).³⁵ The man must carry out appropriate leadership with his wife and appropriate discipline with his children. Fathers are specifically addressed with the responsibility of bringing their children up "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" *only* after a clear warning: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger" (Eph 6:4).³⁶ Gospel-centered discipline is neither too harsh nor too soft; it deals with the behavior *and* with the heart because at the heart of gospel-centered discipline is grace.³⁷ Such a gospel-centered approach to the home will give a man the ability to understand and appreciate his family in light of the gospel.

The third reason the gospel metanarrative is important is because the gospel metanarrative must be explicitly communicated in the home or else a false gospel is prone to arise within the home. Research shows that many American teens believe

the Service of God (Leicester: InterVarsity, 2003), 316.

³³Wayne Grudem, "The Key Issues in the Manhood-Womanhood Controversy," in *Building Strong Families*, 29-88.

³⁴Hamilton, "That the Coming Generation Might Praise the Lord," 38.

³⁵Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home*, 107. Witmer's premise is that a man is the shepherd of his home. He then argues that a shepherd knows, leads, provides, and protects his home. To do otherwise is to fall under the rebuke of 1 Tim 5:8.

³⁶Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 445. O'Brien notes that "οἱ πατέρες can denote 'parents' in general . . . but there is a change of wording in v. 4 . . . suggesting that οἱ πατέρες means 'fathers,' while there is no mention of mothers after the explicit reference to them in the commandment of v. 2." See also Kostenberger and Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family*, 118: "While children ought to obey both parents (Eph 6:1; Col 3:20), fathers bear special responsibility for disciplining their children and are specifically singled out by Paul in [Ephesians 6:4]."

³⁷Elyse Fitzpatrick and Jessica Thompson, *Give Them Grace: Dazzling Your Kids with the Love of Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 82-83.

something coined by Christian Smith as “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism,”³⁸ which is the idea that God is a nice Creator who promotes a person’s self-actualization and in the end, good people go to heaven. Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is clearly a false gospel. Paul said if anyone preaches a different gospel, “let him be accursed” (Gal 1:8-9). While such obvious fallacies are prone to be deflected from a prudent man’s home, much subtler false gospels can still arise. The problem with false gospels is that they do not have to be too far from the full gospel to be totally false. If a man is going to lead his family in the *right* direction, he and his family must not be misdirected by false gospels. Therefore, as Steve Wright contends, a man must not only grasp, but also clearly articulate orthodox soteriology.³⁹ Some Christian parents “find it easier to simply take their child to see a pastor as an easy remedy, but that should not be the default approach.”⁴⁰ A man must combat false gospels arising in the home by constantly and explicitly communicating the true gospel. Only then will a man prove his diligence to contend against false gospels within his family.

Lastly, the gospel story line of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation are important in terms of a man having direction in the home because it establishes that the home is designed to be a place to practice missional living. There is more at stake than good behavior in one’s children and pleasant date nights with one’s wife. There is far more at stake than to get “to see the sun rise, to see the love in my woman’s eyes, to

³⁸Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 118.

³⁹Steve Wright, “Family: A Context for Evangelism,” in *Practical Family Ministry: A Collection of Ideas for Your Church*, ed. Timothy Paul Jones and John David Trentham (Nashville: Randall, 2015), 29-38.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 32. Unfortunately, this remedy is often the default approach in my ministry context. It is common in my ministry context for parents to take their children to see a pastor in order to discuss gospel matters that parents should be equipped to handle.

feel the touch of a precious child, and know a mother's love."⁴¹ Nice houses, cars, vacations, and PG movies are not enough for a man who is captivated by the gospel metanarrative. John Wesley explains,

The person in your house that claims your first and nearest attention, is, undoubtedly, your wife; seeing you are to love her, even as Christ hath loved the Church. . . . Your children [are] immortal spirits whom God hath, for a time, entrusted to your care, that you may train them up in all holiness, and fit them for the enjoyment of God in eternity. This is a glorious and important trust; seeing one soul is of more value than all the world beside. Every child, therefore, you are to watch over with the utmost care, that, when you are called to give an account of each to the Father of spirits, you may give your accounts with joy and not with grief.⁴²

A man who is compelled by the gospel metanarrative views his wife and children in the same manner as Wesley. He cannot simply give a small effort for such a great calling. If a Christian man looks at his home through gospel lenses, he sees that his wife and children are "potential or actual brothers and sisters in Christ," depending on whether they believe the gospel.⁴³ Therefore, a man sees his family in the context of evangelism and discipleship, raising up the next generation to be warriors for the kingdom of Christ.⁴⁴ He is engaged in home life because he knows that the home is his primary mission field.⁴⁵ The mission in the home is a part of the larger vision of the mission of God. Simply attending church is not enough for the gospel man. In terms of discipline, behavior modification alone is too shallow for proper discipleship. A man has been entrusted to shepherd the *heart* of his wife and children.⁴⁶ He is not simply shaping the members of

⁴¹Zac Brown and Keith Stegall, "Chicken Fried," *The Foundation*, CD, Nashville: Atlantic, released June 16, 2008, track 6.

⁴²John Wesley, *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley* (New York: J & J Harper, 1826), 7:116.

⁴³Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 71.

⁴⁴See Wright, "Family: A Context for Evangelism," 29-38. Wright argues the necessity of evangelism within the home.

⁴⁵See John Ellis Steen, "Family: A Context for Discipleship," in *Practical Family Ministry*, 39-48.

⁴⁶See chap. 2 for why the man, not the woman, will ultimately be held responsible. See Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* for a clear argument of why a man

his family to be morally decent citizens, he is engaging in a cosmic war with the serpent of old so that his wife and children may grow to be mighty warriors in the kingdom of Christ. In this way, “the family is a God-ordained launching pad for gospel ministry.”⁴⁷

So far, this chapter has defined the gospel metanarrative and explained four reasons why the gospel metanarrative is essential in terms of a man knowing the direction God has entrusted him to take his family. The next section explains why spiritual leadership in the home requires a man to have methodology.

Spiritual Leadership in the Home Requires a Man to Have Methodology

As mentioned, spiritual leadership in the home requires a man to “[know] where God wants [his family] to be and [take] the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power.”⁴⁸ The glory of God is the goal of a man’s leadership in his home. The place God wants a man’s family to be is equipped and empowered to increasingly bring him glory. This section argues that methodology is essential for a man to carry out spiritual leadership in his home. God has not given an exact methodological blueprint for male spiritual leadership in the home; however, the home is analogous with a local church. Jonathan Edwards explains, “Every Christian family ought to be as it were a little church.”⁴⁹ Therefore, men must take on the role of a shepherd-leader in the home in accordance with the household codes of Ephesians 5:22-6:4. Witmer writes, “While there is no explicit application of the shepherding metaphor to family leadership in Scripture, there is a clear parallel between God’s covenantal care for his people and a

must shepherd the *heart* of his wife and children.

⁴⁷Wilder, “Building and Equipping Missional Families,” 245.

⁴⁸Piper, “The Marks of a Spiritual Leader.”

⁴⁹Jonathan Edwards, *The Complete Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Edward Hickman (London, 1834; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974), 1:ccvi.

man's care for his family."⁵⁰ In other words, a man gleans much from the New Testament's teaching of the pastor-shepherd's role in the life of the local church in how he ought to shepherd his own family flock (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1-5).⁵¹ Witmer espouses four components of a shepherd leader in the home: knowing, leading, providing, and protecting.⁵² In this section, three of these four components are going to be addressed in light of a man reaching the goal for his family.⁵³

A Man Must *Know* His Family

Knowing and being known is ingrained in the fabric of humanity. One of the implications of being made in the image of God is that humanity desires relationships.⁵⁴ Though God made everything good in the beginning, He said, "It is *not* good that the man should be alone" (Gen 2:18). Family predates the Fall and is to be embraced and understood as one of God's good gifts to humanity in order to help meet mankind's innate desire for relationships. Sin has done great damage to family relationships, replacing love and intimacy with apathy and fear. One of the implications of God's redemption in Christ is that his people are empowered to rightly display gospel intimacy

⁵⁰Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home*, 12-13.

⁵¹Ibid., 96. See also Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL, InterVarsity, 2006), 247. Laniak gives extensive attention to the New Testament's understanding of the shepherd rooted in the Old Testament dynamic of shepherds seen in the Mosaic and Davidic narratives: "Good shepherding is expressed by decision and behaviours that benefit the 'flock', often at great personal cost." Ibid. If a man is to glean from the biblical contours of a shepherd in the way he shepherds his flock at home, he is going to have to lay down his selfish ambitions in order to lead and serve his family.

⁵²Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home*, 13.

⁵³I do not address "leading" here because the chap. as a whole deals with male leadership of his home. The aim in this section is to address the biblical methods that help a man lead his family spiritually.

⁵⁴The doctrine of the Trinity teaches that community has always existed among the Godhead, displaying the essential nature of relationships among all humanity, who is made in God's image.

within the family.⁵⁵ A man must take initiative in this arena and seek to know his family.⁵⁶

Witmer argues that at least two elements are required for a man to know his family: time and communication.⁵⁷ First, a man must be willing to spend time with his family. Time is an irreplaceable jewel that everyone is losing. A man must steward this jewel well in order to lead his family. Tom Peters and Robert Waterman espoused a popular management technique called MBWA or Management By Wandering Around.⁵⁸ The idea is that the manager spends a great deal of time walking around on the floor with the workers rather than staying cooped up in the office. Many were amazed at how productive they became because their accessibility allowed them to answer the workers' questions the moment they arose. In the same way, a man who is accessible to his wife and children can be intentional about weaving the gospel into their lives. It takes time for a man to develop and maintain spiritual, relational, and physical intimacy with his wife. Willard Harley, Jr., observes,

I studied couples who were dating, couples who had maintained romantic love while married, and couples having affairs. In all of these cases, I found that those who

⁵⁵What I would understand as “gospel intimacy” is best described in the words of Timothy Keller: “To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is, well, a lot like being loved by God. It is what we need more than anything. It liberates us from pretense, humbles us out of our self-righteousness, and fortifies us for any difficulty life can throw at us.” Timothy Keller and Kathy Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God* (New York: Dutton, 2011), 95.

⁵⁶According to the complementarian view of male headship, the man is held ultimately responsible for all matters of leadership in the home, including taking the initiative to know his wife and children.

⁵⁷Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home*, 17-62. Witmer suggests other things as well, such as intimacy, partnership with the wife, praying together, etc. However, everything else he mentions falls within the broad categories of time and communication. For instance, praying together takes time. Intimacy is a form of and result of strong communication—whether it is spiritual and relational intimacy with the children or even physical intimacy with the wife.

⁵⁸See Tom Peters and Robert Waterman, *In Search of Excellence* (New York: Warner, 1982).

maintained their love for each other scheduled time to be together almost every day. While their daily time together varied, the time they spend each week was almost always over fifteen hours. During that time they had each other's undivided attention, and they used most of it to engage in intimate conversation...Based on these findings, and overwhelming evidence I've acquired since then, I tell couples that if they want to maintain their love for each other, they should learn to do what those in love are doing—set aside at least fifteen hours a week for undivided attention, where one of the primary purposes is to engage in intimate conversation.⁵⁹

While there is no rule about fifteen hours, the observation is telling—it takes time for a man to know his wife. Witmer suggests that the man should appropriate daily time to spend with his wife and daily time to spend with his children.⁶⁰ Consistently investing this time is essential for a man to know his family and disciple them in the truth, and equipping and empowering them to increasingly glorify God. Unfortunately, children's education and family entertainment are sometimes outside of the father's influence.

George Barna comments that “a number of scholarly studies have noted kids draw most of their information from the television, spending an average of more than 10,000 hours watching it by the time they reach age eighteen.”⁶¹ While some degree of the time spent on television has transferred to personal devices, Barna's findings are still relevant and revealing: children are learning more from media outlets than the careful instruction of a father. This is a tragedy. Not only is the myriad of information they absorb simply up for grabs without any type of vetting process, various media outlets also inhibit the time it takes for the father to know his children. In other words, when children spend so much time focusing their attention on a personal device, computer, or television, their father simply cannot connect on the level they need for true relational intimacy. Such

⁵⁹Willard F. Harley, Jr., *His Needs, Her Needs: Building an Affair-Proof Marriage* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 2001), 80.

⁶⁰Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home*, 49.

⁶¹George Barna, *The Future of the American Family* (Chicago: Moody, 1993), 99. Barna notes that this 10,000 hours “represents more than one entire year—twenty-four-hour days, seven days a week—absorbed in the messages broadcast by television producers.”

distractions from conversation and dialogue within the home result in the father being absent in the life and heart of his children—a subtle absence that erodes the home even if the father is present. The *Fatherhood Initiative* found that

teens from fatherless homes are: 5 times more likely to commit suicide, 32 times more likely to run away, 20 times more likely to have behavioral disorders, 14 times more likely to commit rape, 9 times more likely to drop out of high school, 10 times more likely to end up in a state-operate institution, and 20 times more likely to end up in prison.⁶²

One can only conclude that at least some level of damage is done if a father allows a great deal of his children’s time to be absorbed by other things.⁶³ The prospect of such damage, both emotionally and spiritually, demands that fathers make an intentional effort to win back their children’s attention by guarding family time and creating appropriate boundaries for all media.

The second essential component to Witmer’s proposal for a man to know his family is communication. Wayne Mack writes, “Wherever you find marital failure, you will find a breakdown in real communication. Wherever you find marital success, you will find a good communication system.”⁶⁴ A good communication system not only includes being able to articulate what one wants to say, but being able to listen well. Ken Sande explains,

Good listening . . . improves your ability to understand others, it shows that you realize you do not have all the answers, and it tells the other person that you value his or her thoughts and opinions. Even if you cannot agree with everything others say or do, your willingness to listen demonstrates respect and shows that you are trying to understand their perspective.⁶⁵

⁶²Stuart Birks, “Effects of Fatherlessness (US data),” *Fatherhood Initiative*, January 24, 1996, accessed March 9, 2016, <http://www.massey.ac.nz/~kbirks/gender/econ/nodad.htm>.

⁶³Not to mention the temptation to supplant family time with things like school and extra-curricular activities that leave the home vacant a vast majority of the time. Moreover, the father himself must be disciplined to not let his own hobbies and personal devices to take away from quality family time.

⁶⁴Wayne Mack, *Strengthening Your Marriage* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1999), 56.

⁶⁵Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal*

Moreover, the man must communicate to the *heart* of his wife and children. Tedd Tripp writes, “Communication must be multi-faceted and richly textured. It must include encouragement, correction, rebuke, entreaty, instruction, warning, understanding, teaching and prayer.”⁶⁶ While “small talk” has a place in the home, the father must initiate deeper level conversing that deals with hopes, fears, worries, etc. Only then will the communication set a stage to help apply the gospel in the home.

A Man Must *Provide* for His Family

“But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim 5:8). Witmer argues that biblical provision entrusted to the man includes both material and spiritual.⁶⁷ First, a man must make material provision for his family; therefore, a man must work (2 Thess 3:10).⁶⁸ Work is woven into the fabric of creation. As Mark Chanski argues, work is a good gift that God has graciously given to humanity.⁶⁹ However, sin has tainted work so that it can be distorted in different ways. Witmer points out that while a man is called to work hard in order to provide for his family, he should make sure to stay away from two sinful extremes: working too much and working too little. A man must reject working too much. Full-time workers in America, on average,

Conflict (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 165.

⁶⁶Tripp, *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*, 104.

⁶⁷Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home*, 96-118.

⁶⁸This is not to say that provision is the *only* reason that a man must work. A man must work in order to serve, cultivate, bless, make culture, and reflect the character of God. See Timothy Keller with Katherine Leary Alsdorf, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God’s Work* (New York: Penguin, 2012).

⁶⁹See Mark Chanski, *Manly Dominion: In a Passive-Purple-Four-Ball World* (Lincroft, NJ: Calvary, 2004), 71-74. Chanski comments, “The Bible teaches no such ‘sacred vs. secular’ dichotomy when it comes to human endeavoring.” *Ibid.*, 72.

report working forty-seven hours weekly.⁷⁰ Because this is an average, many people work much more than forty-seven hours. Working too much is problematic because it causes a man to expend all of his energy at work and have little time to invest in the hearts and lives of his family. On the other hand, the answer to overwork is not laziness. Because work predates the Fall, work is a gift to be stewarded. Dorothy Sayers writes, “What is the Christian understanding of work? . . . [It] is that work is not, primarily, a thing one does to live, but the thing one lives to do. It is, or it should be, the full expression of the worker’s faculties . . . the medium in which he offers himself to God.”⁷¹ A godly man must reject both overwork and underwork. A healthy balance leads to a healthy life: “According to Gallup workplace management scientists Jim Harter and Sangeeta Agrawal, certain workplace policies—including the number of hours worked—can affect employee well-being.”⁷² Therefore, a man must find the biblical sweet spot when it comes to work—working hard to provide for his family without becoming a slave to his work.

Second, a man must make spiritual provision for his family. Witmer is helpful as he observes four facets of spiritual provision: the source, content, goal, and means of spiritual provision.⁷³ The *source* of a man’s spiritual provision in the home is the Word of God.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (2 Tim 3:14-15)

⁷⁰Lydia Saad, “The ‘40-Hour’ Workweek Is Actually Longer—by Seven Hours,” accessed March 12, 2016, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/175286/hour-workweek-actually-longer-seven-hours.aspx>.

⁷¹Dorothy Sayers, “Why Work?” in *Creed or Chaos? Why Christians Must Choose Either Dogma or Disaster* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1949), 53.

⁷²Saad, “The “40-Hour” Workweek.”

⁷³Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home*, 107-18

A man must center his home on the Word of God, passing it down from generation to generation (Deut 6:7-9). Witmer comments on 2 Timothy 3:14-15: “Paul is concerned that [Timothy] *continue* to be grounded in the Scriptures as he carries out his life and ministry.”⁷⁴ Similarly, every man should be concerned that that his Bible is not just known in his heart and home, but it becomes to him and his family sweeter than “drippings of the honeycomb” (Ps 19:10).

The *content* of a man’s spiritual provision in the home is summed up as Paul continues in his second epistle to Timothy: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16). Witmer unpacks this text by highlighting that Scripture is profitable for four things: teaching, reproof, correction, and training.⁷⁵ Taking these four ideas together, one can see the necessity of Scripture in the home.

Paul clearly articulates the *goal* of a man’s spiritual provision in the home: “that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:17). As mentioned, the goal of a man’s family is that they would be equipped and empowered to increasingly glorify God. This passage could not be clearer on how that happens, namely, through the Word of God.

There is a *means to spiritual provision*: family devotions.⁷⁶ Witmer offers six principles to consider when doing family devotions: be realistic, systematic, flexible, consistent, interactive, and real.⁷⁷ Family worship can come in different shapes and sizes. There is room for great flexibility and creativity as each man must be able to apply a

⁷⁴Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home*, 110.

⁷⁵Ibid., 111-13.

⁷⁶Ibid., 114-16.

⁷⁷Ibid.

structure that works for his family. Nonetheless, family worship's importance cannot be overstated.⁷⁸ It is the means for spiritual provision.

A Man Must *Protect* His Family

Witmer turns to the final fundamental function of a shepherd and heralds men to protect their families as godly shepherds.⁷⁹ He first considers what it means for a man to protect his marriage by dealing with components involved in a man affair-proofing his marriage by battling against lust.⁸⁰ Witmer then exhorts men to protect their children by setting appropriate boundaries and extending loving discipline. This section unpacks both of these areas of protection in the home.

First, a man must make a concerted effort to protect his wife. Due to the forceful nature of sexual temptation, a man must guard his marriage from the perils of sexual failure. The Bible instructs, "The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights . . . so that Satan may not tempt [her]" (1 Cor 7:3, 5). A man should also keep a close watch

⁷⁸See Donald Whitney, *Family Worship* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016). With brevity, Whitney traces family worship in the Bible and in church history along with practical suggestions for what it may look like in the home for a twenty-first century family. Whitney espouses a Read-Pray-Sing model which can be very helpful. However, it is not the only way to develop a gospel-centered culture within the family unit. Peter R. Schemm, Jr., expresses his concerns with some who think that the Read-Pray-Sing model is the only way or the best way to do family worship: "I propose that we think beyond 'family worship' and consider numerous ways to develop a gospel-centered family." He then spends a chapter encouraging parents toward that end. Peter R. Schemm, Jr., "Habits of a Gospel-Centered Household," in *Trained in the Fear of the God*, 177-92. See also Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 151-70. Jones suggests something he calls "faith walks," "faith talks," and "faith processes," as different ways of thinking through devotions within the home as a man intentionally disciples the members of his household.

⁷⁹Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home*, 123-54.

⁸⁰While lust and sexual immorality are certainly struggles for most men, there are some other components of protection such as physical, emotional, and spiritual protection. See Tim Challies, "Leadership in the Home—A Godly Man Protects," December 03, 2009, accessed on March 8, 2016, <http://www.challies.com/christian-living/leadership-in-the-home-a-godly-man-protects>. Challies makes no assertion that this list is exhaustive. In other words, man should protect his family in many ways. However, due to the widespread reality of marital unfaithfulness and the prevalent nature of sexual temptation, I take Witmer's approach and limit the scope in this section to a man protecting his wife in terms of battling against warped versions of sex (e.g., affair, porn, etc.).

on himself so that he does not fall into marital unfaithfulness.⁸¹ Although sex predated the Fall and is therefore a good gift from God, sin has distorted sexuality so that humanity is prone to use it for wicked ends. This distortion of sexuality does not mean that the powerful impulse that people have for sex is sinful, only that great care must be taken to express it in its God-ordained context, namely marriage. David Powlison explains,

We are meant to be ruled by godly passions and desires. Natural desires . . . are meant to exist subordinate to our desire to please the Giver of gifts. Grasping that the evil lies in the ruling status of the desire, not the object, is frequently a turning point in self-understanding, in seeing the need for Christ's mercies, and in changing.⁸²

Such self-understanding will profit a godly man as he relies on Christ's mercies and puts boundaries in place to rightly steward sex in his marriage, protecting his wife and marriage from the turmoil of unfaithfulness.⁸³ Witmer includes accountability with other Christian men as a means of a man protecting his marriage.⁸⁴ An isolated Christian is unthinkable in the New Testament. A biblical understanding of transparency teaches that a Christian's heart is "not private property but communal property."⁸⁵ Therefore, he must

⁸¹According to Tom Smith, director of General Social Survey at the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, "The proportion of Americans who have ever had an affair rises from 13% among 18- to 29-year-olds to 20% among those in the mid-life-crisis years, from ages 40 to 49." Tom Smith, quoted in Karlyn Bowman, "Just How Many Spouses Cheat?" accessed March 8, 2016, <http://www.forbes.com/2009/06/28/sanford-ensign-affair-opinions-columnists-extramarital-sex.html>. These findings simply undergird the importance of a man declaring war against sexual temptation and why he must "pay careful attention to yourselves" (Acts 20:28).

⁸²David Powlison, *Seeing with New Eyes* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2003), 149.

⁸³See Dennis Rainey, "The Pastor's Responsibility for Romance in His Congregation and Marriage," in *Pastoral Leadership for Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. Wayne Grudem and Dennis Rainey (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003). Rainey gives practical wisdom as he espouses five "foxes" or obstacles that often serve as obstacles for romance among married couples: apathy, children, a mistress, unresolved conflict, and differences. He exhorts pastors to encourage their flock to make romance a priority in their marriages; men being ultimately responsible.

⁸⁴Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home*, 137-38.

⁸⁵Kyle Strobel, *Formed for the Glory of God: Learning from the Spiritual*

develop healthy relationships within the church so that he has someone with whom he can “share [his] struggle and with whom [he] can pray as [he] seeks to walk away from the darkness and into the light.”⁸⁶ The Puritans saw the value in such accountability and made sure that they consistently met for the purpose of “nourishing receptive souls and helping impoverished ones.”⁸⁷ A man will be wise to take up the discipline of accountability and transparency in order to protect his wife and marriage.

Second, a man must protect his children by setting appropriate boundaries and extending loving discipline.⁸⁸ What is meant by setting appropriate boundaries is simply communicating what is acceptable in the home and what is not. It is impossible to carry out healthy discipline if the children do not know the boundaries. Healthy discipline is essential for the well being of the family, the church, and the world. The great Puritan Cotton Mather puts it well:

As the great God, who at the beginning said, “Let us make man after our image,” has made man a sociable creature, so it is evident that families are the nurseries of all societies. . . . When families are under ill discipline, all other societies, being ill-disciplined as a result, will feel that terror.⁸⁹

Practices of Jonathan Edwards (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013), 150.

⁸⁶Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home*, 138.

⁸⁷Joanne J. Jung, *Godly Conversation: Rediscovering the Puritan Practice of Conference* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2011), xi. The Puritans referred to this concept of accountability as conferencing. See also Strobel, *Formed for the Glory of God*, 149-55.

⁸⁸Certainly a man can protect his children in more ways (e.g., physically, emotionally, spiritually, etc.). Since the spiritual aspect is dealt with throughout this chap., there is no need to rehash what has already been said. The physical and emotional protection points are important and must not be neglected. In fact, when discipline is rightly done, there should be an element of physical and emotional protection involved. However, due to limited space and the prevailing nature of the two extremes of passivism and severity in terms men who discipline their children, I limit the scope in this section to a man protecting his children through discipline.

⁸⁹Cotton Mather, *A Family Well-Ordered*, ed. Don Kistler (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 2001), n.p.

In other words, a man who extends loving discipline to his children is helping to limit terror in the world—terror that will inevitably harm the children themselves. In that way, discipline serves as a significant way for a man to protect his children. A man should carry out two major types of loving discipline: formative and corrective. Formative disciplines are “principles and absolutes by which to live—hooks to hang life on.”⁹⁰ Tedd Tripp gives five goals for formative instruction: “Remember Scripture is our personal history, develop godly habits, apply Scripture to life, model spiritual vitality, and grow into a mature relationship with your children.”⁹¹ The second type of discipline a man should carry out in order to protect his children is corrective discipline. “Corrective discipline is a rescue mission, designed to direct straying or unbelieving children back inside the circle of blessing where they honor and obey parents (Eph 6:1-2).”⁹² Although the idea of corrective discipline in Western culture has grown unpopular, the Bible highlights its important role in displaying love: “Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him” (Prov 13:24).⁹³ A father’s outpouring of discipline is actually an outpouring of love. Paul Wegner outlines discipline in Proverbs and notes the increasing intensity with each level:

Level 1: Encourage proper behavior: A wise parent encourages a child to behave properly (Prov. 1:8-9; 2:2-5; 3:13-15; 4:7-8).

⁹⁰Margy Tripp and Tedd Tripp, *Instructing a Child’s Heart* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd, 2008), 16.

⁹¹Tripp and Tripp, *Instructing a Child’s Heart*, 23-30.

⁹²Ibid., 156.

⁹³For instance, the “permissive parenting” style has no place for corporal punishment. See Diana Baumrind, “Child Care Practices Antecedent Three Patterns of Preschool Behavior,” *Genetic Psychology Monographs* 75, no. 1 (1967): 43-88. See also Gwen Dwar, “Permissive Parenting: An Evidence-Based Guide,” accessed November 29, 2014, <http://www.parentingscience.com/permissive-parenting.html>. Prov 13:24 is a general truth does not suggest that spanking is to be done in all cases (e.g. when a child has experienced physical abuse).

Level 2: Inform of improper behavior: A wise parent is proactive and addresses certain issues before the child might be confronted by them (Prov. 1:10-15; 3:31-32).

Level 3: Explain the negative consequences of sin: A wise parent points out the negative consequences that lie along the path of life (Prov. 1:18-19; 5:3-6).

Level 4: Gently exhort: Wise parents will, on an ongoing basis, advise and exhort their children against sin that can easily become a pattern and encourage them to use wisdom (Prov. 4:1-2, 14-16).

Level 5: Gently rebuke or reprove: The wise parent knows when to use rebuke properly (Prov. 3:12; 24:24-25).

Level 6: Corporal punishment that does not cause physical harm: A wise parent knows when to use corporal, non-abusive punishment (Prov. 19:18; 13:24; 23:13-14; 29:15).⁹⁴

Levels 1 through 4 are types of formative discipline. Levels 5 and 6 are types of corrective discipline. Both types of discipline are biblical and necessary for a man to protect his children through loving discipline.

Spiritual Leadership in the Home Requires a Man to Have Power

This chapter has examined two of the three parts of Piper’s definition of male spiritual leadership in the home: direction and methodology. Piper writes that spiritual leadership in the home requires a man to “[know] where God wants [his family] to be and [take] the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power.”⁹⁵ Finally, this chapter turns to the third segment of the definition: a man’s reliance on God’s power. As previously argued, the goal toward which a man is moving his family is equipping and empowering them to glorify God increasingly. To say it another way, the man is responsible to help his wife and children grow spiritually. A prudent man will realize his inability to do such a task on his own. In order to endure and be effective in his God-assigned charge, he must access more than *will*-power—he needs *God’s* power.

⁹⁴Paul D. Wegner, “Discipline in the Book of Proverbs: ‘To Spank or Not to Spank?’” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48, no. 4 (December 2005): 715-32. Wegner also lays out two more levels that have to do with living under the civil law that does not concern the discussion here.

⁹⁵Piper, “The Marks of a Spiritual Leader.”

The power of God is generally accessed through means of grace.⁹⁶ Mathis notes that while no one can control the supply of God's grace, it is essential for God's people to place themselves in regular channels of blessing,⁹⁷ which is what the means of grace are all about—putting oneself in the general flow of God's grace so that one may receive God's power. The means of grace “enable us to do what we cannot do by direct effort.”⁹⁸ They are usually “unimpressively mundane, but spectacularly potent by the Spirit.”⁹⁹ Because of a man's inability to produce his own power, it is essential that he place himself in the usual streams of God's grace to receive God's power in order to carry out God's task of leading his family spiritually. This section is built on two ideas: (1) the means of grace are the means of growth¹⁰⁰ and (2) the man is given the responsibility to help his family grow.¹⁰¹ Therefore, the means of grace are essential for the man's personal growth and the growth of his family. While there are numerous different means of grace, David Mathis has clustered them all under three main headings: hear God's voice

⁹⁶By “means of grace,” I am referring to what many call “spiritual disciplines.” D. A. Carson prefers the phrase “means of grace” over “spiritual disciplines. He explains that “means of grace” is “a lovely expression less susceptible to misinterpretation than spiritual disciplines.” D. A. Carson, “Spiritual Disciplines,” *Themelios* 36, no. 3 (November 2011): 379.

⁹⁷David Mathis, *Habits of Grace: Enjoying Jesus through the Spiritual Disciplines* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 25.

⁹⁸Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 151.

⁹⁹Mathis, *Habits of Grace*, 26.

¹⁰⁰This is not to say that the means of grace are Christian versions of self-help, by growing in Christ-likeness through self-exertion. Instead, “these actions are powerless in themselves to change our lives or make us holy.” Strobel, *Formed for the Glory of God*, 77. Strobel points out, “Practicing means of grace does not create grace or holiness in the life of the believer. At best, the means of grace are irrigation channels for the real water of life.” *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁰¹As noted previously, this is not to say that the woman has no measure of responsibility to help her family grow spiritually. It simply means that the Bible lays ultimate and final responsibility for this task upon the man, for which he will have to give an account.

(Word), have God’s ear (prayer), and belong to Christ’s body (fellowship).¹⁰² Using Mathis’s paradigm, this section interacts with these three most central means of grace by highlighting the vital nature of each stream in the life of a man seeking to be the spiritual leader of his home.¹⁰³

Hear God’s Voice (Word)

The most foundational means of grace is the hearing of God’s voice. Jonathan Edwards said, “The chief of the means of grace is the Word of God: that standing revelation of the mind and will of God that he gives the world, and it is as it were the sum of all means.”¹⁰⁴ It is essential that a man hear God’s voice in order to be the spiritual leader of his home. As was argued in chapter 2, a man must be apt to teach the Word to his wife and children (Eph 5:22-6:4). Obviously, a man cannot give away what he does not have. If he has no knowledge of God’s Word, he has no ability to pass on knowledge of God’s Word to His family. Mathis unpacks three components for one to increase in the knowledge of God’s Word: reading, meditation, and memorization. In light of the first two, reading is done for breadth and meditation is done for depth. Donald Whitney gives an

¹⁰²Mathis, *Habits of Grace*, 26. Mathis admits that he did not come up with this three-fold formula and gives credit to John Frame, *Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2013); and J. C. Ryle, *Holiness: It’s Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 26.

¹⁰³While there are many more “means of grace,” I limit the scope here to these three broad headings. It is right to take this route because a person is less likely to achieve goals with excellence if there are more than three. Sean Covey, Jim Huling, and Chris McChesney, *The 4 Disciplines of Execution: Achieving Your Wildly Important Goals* (New York: Free Press, 2012), 25. In other words, the more goals a man has, the fewer goals he will actually achieve with excellence. Leaders tend to be over achievers, therefore, some men can think that setting a higher number of goals can lead to better performance. However, the opposite is true. If a man can chisel his goals down to three or less, then he will increase his focus and thus be more likely to carry out those goals with excellence.

¹⁰⁴Jonathan Edwards, “Graces of the Spirit,” in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758*, ed. Wilson H. Kimnach, The Works of Jonathan Edwards, vol. 25 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 285.

illustration of dipping a teabag into a cup of hot water.¹⁰⁵ If one dips it quickly, the water does not absorb the flavor and remains unchanged. However, if one leaves it in there for a little while, the water absorbs it, changing the kind of drink altogether (i.e., it was water that became tea). In the same way, God's Word will change a man who reads and meditates on God's Word. Third, memorization of God's Word is important for a man who leads his family well. Deuteronomy 6:6 says, "And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart." Ajith Fernando explains, "[A] person's thinking and behavior is markedly affected by the Word."¹⁰⁶ Thus, it is imperative for a man to internalize the Word if he is going to be the spiritual leader God is calling him to be. Eugene Merrill points out that "these words" in verse 6 indicate the entire panorama of God's Word.¹⁰⁷ Moses is communicating that God's people should hide God's Word in their hearts so that they might not sin against God (Ps 119:11). God's Word has a potent ability by the Spirit to lessen sin's grip upon God's people. Moreover, when issues or questions come up in everyday talk, a man may not have time to look up particular verses. Instead, it is imperative that a man know how to speak from God's Word. The only way that can happen is if he memorizes God's Word. He must try to press and mold his family with a Christian worldview, which is only done when Scripture is continually on a man's heart. However, mere knowledge of God's Word is not what brings about change, for "knowledge' puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Cor 8:1). As a man practices the habit of hearing from God in his Word, the love that wells up and builds up in the heart and home of a man is brought about by "a variable [he] can't control. An enigmatic power [he] cannot command. A mysterious goodness [he] can only receive. [Namely,] the Holy

¹⁰⁵Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991), 48.

¹⁰⁶Ajith Fernando, *Deuteronomy: Loving Obedience to a Loving God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 263.

¹⁰⁷Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, New American Commentary, vol. 4 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 167.

Spirit.” Therefore, if a man is going to access the power of God in order to glorify God in his home by leading his family spiritually, he must hear God’s voice.

Have God’s Ear (Prayer)

Prayer assumes a relationship with God. In the beginning, mankind enjoyed a perfect relationship with God. Though sin had cut off this relationship, Jesus graciously restores for his people a relationship with the Father by which his people can boldly approach his throne (Heb 4:14-16). The people of God need God and are enabled to come to God with their petitions. Kent Hughes explains that petitionary prayer encompasses a great deal of the biblical teaching and historical witness on prayer.¹⁰⁸ Mathis approaches prayer with a much broader view than mere petitions: “The great purpose of prayer is to come humbly, expectantly, and—because of Jesus—boldly into the conscious presence of God, to relate to him, talk to him, and ultimately enjoy him as our great Treasure.”¹⁰⁹ Mathis gives six charges in light of prayer: enjoy prayer, pray in secret, pray in company, fast, journal, and retreat. Five of these charges are profitable and necessary for a man to lead his family spiritually.¹¹⁰ First, a man must enjoy prayer. A burdensome prayer life communicates a burdensome God. If lessons are more often caught than taught, then a man must be diligent to sincerely enjoy prayer as he beseeches the Lord. A man may ponder what to do if he does not sincerely enjoy prayer. Much could be said about this that goes far beyond the scope of this section. Suffice it to say that the most foundational thing for a man to do is fall in line with the psalmists in the Old Testament along with many throughout church history “who did not merely identify,

¹⁰⁸See R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Man* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 95-107. Hughes espouses five elements necessary for healthy petitionary prayer: in-spirited prayer, continual prayer, varied prayer, persistent prayer, and intercessory prayer. Also see Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 65-83.

¹⁰⁹Mathis, *Habits of Grace*, 94.

¹¹⁰I am intentionally excluding journaling. For though it is profitable, it is not “necessary” for a man to lead his family spiritually.

express, and vent their feelings but also processed them with brutal honesty in God's presence."¹¹¹ In other words, the beginning point for a man who struggles to enjoy prayer is telling God with brutal honesty and desperation that prayer is burdensome to him.

The next two components go together: praying in private and in company. Both of these components are essential in the life of a man who is leading his family spiritually. A man who prays only in private has forsaken the gift and necessity of beseeching the Lord in community. A man who prays only in public has merged into the Pharisaic lane that Jesus rebuked (Matt 6:5-6). "The infallible test of spiritual integrity, Jesus says, is your private prayer life."¹¹² Mathis also points to the joy and importance of praying in company. Praying in company is the overflow and crescendo of private prayer time.¹¹³ As much as a man and his family are dependent upon the prayers *of* God's people, they are also dependent upon the prayers *with* God's people. Fourth, fasting is essential to hungering for God—stirring one's affections for the Lord. Jesus assumes that a person will fast and instructs the godly to do so with humility (Matt 6:16). Last, is the vital purpose of retreating. While a man should make prayer a habitual part of his daily routine, there are also times where the man needs to retreat from his normal schedule and focus on prayer (see 1 Cor 7:5). While a man should invest time with his family in order to lead them, he must also get *away* from his family from time to time if he wants to be a healthy leader. Piper writes, "If you want to be a great leader of people you have to get away from people to be with God."¹¹⁴ A godly leader must stay in tune with the heart of God so that he can pursue personal holiness. Speaking with pastoral wisdom that applies

¹¹¹Timothy Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* (New York: Dutton, 2014), 11.

¹¹²*Ibid.*, 23.

¹¹³Mathis, *Habits of Grace*, 108.

¹¹⁴Piper, "The Marks of a Spiritual Leader."

to a man and his family Robert Murray Mc'Cheyne explains, "My people's greatest need is my own personal holiness."¹¹⁵ Without a holy husband and father they will be like sheep without a shepherd.¹¹⁶ William Still writes, "It is the godly character which is the real pastor, or is the basis of him."¹¹⁷

Belong to Christ's Body (Fellowship)

Since man is made in God's image and since God is triune, mankind is made for community. After rehearsing the importance of biblical fellowship, Mathis lays out five major components to belonging to Christ's body: corporate worship, preaching, baptism, the Lord's Supper, and rebuke.¹¹⁸ Since the man is to lead in helping his family grow, and the church is a means of grace where growth is accomplished, it is vital for the man to make sure his family is appropriately participating in each of these five components. First, it is essential that a man is consistent in having his family participate in corporate worship. Mathis makes that point that corporate worship holds out great blessings and graces, five of which are awakening, assurance, advance, accepting another's leading, and accentuated joy.¹¹⁹ A man that allows other things in life to drown out his family from receiving these blessings is doing harm, not good, to his family. A man must make sure that his family is in church. In the June 2003 issue of *Touchstone* magazine, Robbie Low wrote about a Swiss study on a father's influence upon his children's spiritual lives:

¹¹⁵Robert Murray Mc'Cheyne, quoted in Jason Helopoulos, "Why Pastors Quit," accessed March 12, 2016, <http://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/kevindeyoung/2013/04/18/why-pastors-quit/>.

¹¹⁶Helopoulos, "Why Pastors Quit."

¹¹⁷William Still, quoted in Helopoulos, "Why Pastors Quit."

¹¹⁸Mathis, *Habits of Grace*, 145-94.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, 159-63.

If a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular).¹²⁰

A man must have his family in church if he is going to lead subsequent generations in godliness.

Second, Mathis highlights the primacy of preaching in the life of a Christian: "Preaching is that one half hour each week when the assembly of the redeemed closes her collective mouth, opens her ears and heart, and hears the uninterrupted voice of her husband."¹²¹ Mathis then stresses five benefits of sitting under faithful preaching: to forget ourselves, to fill our faith, to grow in grace, to be equipped, and to encounter Jesus.¹²² Neither the man nor his family can afford to sacrifice these graces. Therefore, the man must make sure that his family not only belongs to a local church where the Word is rightly preached, but he must intentionally and consistently sit his family beneath that preaching.

Third, Mathis deals with the ordinance of baptism as a means of grace. Even if a man and his whole family have already been baptized, he must exhort his family to watch in faith as a baptism takes place: "When your church stirs the waters...with eyes of faith, watch the gospel on display in the waters."¹²³

Fourth, Mathis unpacks the Lord's Supper and heralds its value in terms of the Christian's growth. If the goal of a man's spiritual leadership in the home is to empower and equip his family to increasingly glorify God, then the man must get his family to the

¹²⁰Robbie Low, "The Truth about Men & Church," *Touchstone*, June 2003, accessed March 11, 2016, <http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=16-05-024-v>.

¹²¹Mathis, *Habits of Grace*, 166.

¹²²*Ibid.*, 169-71

¹²³*Ibid.*, 177.

Table.¹²⁴ For believing family members, it is an opportunity to obediently partake in the only continual sacrament of the Lord Jesus Christ. For unbelieving family members (e.g. young children who have not yet been baptized), having the bread and the cup pass over them and having them watch the believers around them partake of the Lord's Supper puts the gospel on display.

Fifth, Mathis points to the final component of belonging to Christ's body, which has much to do with healthy church membership and discipline: "[Embracing] the blessing of rebuke."¹²⁵ One of the benefits of godly community is the commitment to lovingly confront the saints in their sin in order to bring about repentance.¹²⁶ Not only does a man and his family need this heightened sense of accountability, but also a man's family needs to see him submit to the authority of the local church. If the family is going to submit to his authority, they need to see that submission is good, and that even their husband/father submits to a higher authority.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to establish the theoretical and practical issues related to male spiritual leadership in the home, showing that spiritual leadership in the home requires a man to possess three elements in order to be the spiritual leader in his home: direction, methodology, and power. This stance is a three-part breakdown of John Piper's definition of spiritual leadership: Spiritual leadership in the home requires a man to "[know] where God wants [his family] to be and [take] the initiative to use God's methods to get them

¹²⁴In my ministry context, we take the Lord's Supper only six times throughout the year. Unfortunately, many young families that have children playing travel ball have a high church absentee rate, which generally results in a high Lord's Supper absentee rate. The father is the one ultimately responsible for navigating his family's schedule to place his family in the streams that commonly flow with an abundance of God's grace, including the Table.

¹²⁵Mathis, *Habits of Grace*, 185-94.

¹²⁶See Jonathan Leeman, "A Church Discipline Primer," accessed March 12, 2016, <http://9marks.org/article/church-discipline-primer/>.

there in reliance on God's power."¹²⁷ This careful and thoughtful chapter dealt with the practical issues involved with each of these three components while maintaining interaction with general theories of leadership. In so doing, this chapter has proven that spiritual leadership in the home requires a man to possess direction, methodology, and power in order to be the spiritual leader in his home.

¹²⁷Piper, "The Marks of a Spiritual Leader."

CHAPTER 4

DETAILS OF FAMILY SHEPHERDS STUDY AND CURRICULUM

The purpose of this project was to equip the men of First Baptist Church of Enterprise, Alabama, to be gospel-centered leaders in their homes. The first goal of this project was to assess the current understanding and practices of gospel-centered leadership among men at FBC.¹ The second goal was to develop and utilize a four-week study with at least twenty men who fall within the target group.² The curriculum covered biblical manhood and womanhood issues, such as the role of men in the home. It also covered basic family discipleship issues such as leading a family worship experience and instilling godly character in the wife and children.

The third goal was to develop a daily devotional in written and audio format to accompany the study.³ It consisted of twenty devotions for the men to use as they meditated on the biblical truths of manhood throughout the period of the study. The content was extracted from the study, but was devotional in nature. Every weekday at 4:00 a.m. throughout the study, the participants received an email with both the audio and written devotion. The fourth goal was to develop an individualized family shepherding

¹See appendix 6. The questions for the survey were developed out of the biblical, theological, and sociological foundations established in chaps. 2 and 3. Additionally, the questions were developed by a close study of Jerry Birdwell's project, which had a very similar topic. Jerry Greg Birdwell, "Training the Men of Providence Bible Fellowship, West Chester, Ohio, to Be Spiritual Leaders in the Home" (D.Min. project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 83-90.

²See appendix 11.

³See appendix 14.

plan outline.⁴ On the fourth and final class meeting, the participants were given the IFSP outline and tailored a realistic plan of spiritual leadership that they were to implement in their homes. The fifth goal was to equip the men of FBC to be gospel-centered leaders in their home by implementing the four-week study, the accompanying devotional, and the IFSP outline to the target group.

Family Shepherds Curriculum Development and Approval

The initial step in the implementation of this project was a four-week preparation period in order to develop the curriculum on spiritual leadership in the home. During this time, the current understanding and practices of spiritual leadership among men at FBC were assessed through the distribution of the pre-series survey to the target group.⁵ Upon retrieving the sufficient number of completed pre-series surveys, the curriculum development began. The name of the curriculum was “Family Shepherds: Becoming a Gospel-Centered Leader in Your Home.”⁶ The main idea was built around John Piper’s definition of spiritual leadership: Spiritual leadership in the home requires a man to “[know] where God wants [his family] to be and [take] the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power.”⁷ This definition entails three things: a man must have direction, methodology, and power in order to be the spiritual leader of his home. The first three lessons unpacked each of these components. The final lesson put a plan in place as it laid out the IFSP outline and provided the opportunity for each man to tailor his own plan in order to shepherd his family. The idea was to first lay

⁴See appendix 12.

⁵See appendix 6.

⁶See appendix 11.

⁷John Piper, “The Marks of a Spiritual Leader,” *Desiring God*, January 1, 1995, accessed February 19, 2016, <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-marks-of-a-spiritual-leader>.

a strong foundation, and then increasingly become more practical with each lesson, culminating in a man tailoring his own plan to shepherd his family.

The “individual” aspect in the IFSP had a two-fold significance. First, it was meant to contrast with a “cookie-cutter” approach where the men were handed a rigid plan and told to follow it. In light of different schedules and seasons of life, such an approach would prove ineffective. Each man needed guidance, but not without flexibility. Thus, they were given an outline in order to shape a plan around their family dynamic. Second, the word “individual” carried the notion of the man shepherding each individual in his home who God has entrusted to him. While family worship and family group dynamics are important, one-on-one time with each family member is also needed. Therefore, the final lesson was to lead the men to lay out a plan in order to accomplish not only Bible-reading, prayer, singing, etc., in their home, but also scheduled one-on-one time with each member of the family so that he could assess the spiritual maturity of each member and help them grow.

Evaluation of Curriculum

During the four-week preparation period, an expert panel, made up of three pastors and one deacon, evaluated the curriculum. The panel consisted of Kaleb Wimberly, Edd Brashier, Bryan Barrineau, and Jonathan Aitken. Kaleb Wimberly, the Associate Pastor/Minister of Education at First Baptist Church of Enterprise, Alabama, is a graduate of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is astute in Christian education and therefore able to measure the depth and scope of the study.

Edd Brashier, the Minister of Music and Senior Adults at First Baptist Church of Enterprise, Alabama, has been in the ministry for several decades and thus has a strength of evaluating the palatability of the curriculum to not overwhelm the general laity.

Bryan Barrineau, a graduate of The Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, has been in student ministry sixteen years and thus is able to appraise the usefulness of the curriculum in light of fathers of teenage children.

Jonathan Aitken is a member of First Baptist Church of Enterprise, an ordained deacon, and a Sunday school teacher. He is an intelligent Christian and is able to offer a lay perspective of the curriculum in order to determine whether the content is too weak, too deep, or rightly balanced. These four men offered strong and balanced feedback to the explanation and application of the curriculum by utilizing the evaluation rubric.⁸

Each lesson in the series exceeded 90 percent of the sufficient score on the rubric needed to be considered successful. The goal of 90 percent sufficiency was surpassed and allowed the four-week study to proceed. The panel provided positive feedback for the series. The men were able to see it from different angles and offer great insight that increased the efficacy of the whole study. Three of these men fell within the target audience and thus these three men went through the study and implementation.

Pre-Series Survey and Observations

During the four-week preparation period (weeks 1-4), the pre-series survey was administered.⁹ The survey included questions that revealed each man's demographics, understanding and vision for spiritual leadership, practices for personal holiness, practices for shepherding his wife, and practices for shepherding his children. The results were determined by the answers to the measurable questions, which included thirty-five of the forty-three questions.¹⁰ The responses to the measurable questions revealed the current practices of male spiritual leadership in the home among men at FBC.¹¹

⁸See appendix 3.

⁹See appendix 1.

¹⁰Some of the questions were for the purpose of providing a biographical sketch, but were not for the purpose of measuring alongside the post-series survey. For instance, question 18 asked, "I most often pray: (a) At church, (b) at home; (c) while traveling; (d) at work; (e) other." Obviously there is not a right or wrong answer here and it does not indicate improvement if the participant's answer differs between the pre- and post-series survey. Therefore, the only questions used in the *t*-test were those that were "measurable." See appendix 7 for all the questions considered measurable.

¹¹See appendix 6.

The survey was divided into four parts. Part 1 had to do with biographical information. Part 2 revealed the participants' understanding of spiritual leadership in the home and current practices of personal holiness. Part 3 revealed the spiritual intimacy between the man and his wife. Finally, part 4 contained questions that indicated whether the man was taking measures to disciple his children.

The distribution and retrieval of the pre-series survey was quite the challenge. For several weeks, it took face-to-face encouragement, phone calls, emails, and in-home visits in order to distribute and retrieve the pre-series surveys. Upon the retrieval and assessment of 51 of the pre-series surveys, the current practices of spiritual leadership among FBC men was clearly understood.¹² Much of the weaknesses revealed in the pre-series surveys were addressed with convictional kindness during the study.

Devotional Development, Approval, and Recording

Upon the development and approval of the curriculum, weeks 5-8 were spent developing and approving devotional content that went along with the study. The devotions were first written and then upon approval, they were recorded. Weeks 9 and 10 were spent recording, editing, and implementing them into an email distribution system. The devotions were mostly extracted from the curriculum, but were devotional in nature. They were distributed through email at 4:00 a.m. every weekday during the following week of each of the studies. The class met on Sunday afternoon. Every weekday during the week following each lesson, the daily devotions were sent to the participants as a review and supplement of the truths from that week's lesson. Each email contained the devotion in both written and audio form. Next is a brief overview of each devotion.

¹²See appendix 6. As noted in chap. 1, 50 men equals approximately 33 percent of the total target group population (active and inactive members at FBC).

Week 5—Daily Devotions for Lesson 1

Lesson 1 devotions revolved around the truth that spiritual leadership in the home required a man to have direction. In other words, he must know where God wants his family to be. On Monday, the participants were reminded of John Piper’s definition for spiritual leadership: spiritual leadership requires a man to “[know] where God wants [his family] to be and [take] the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power.”¹³ On Tuesday, the participants were challenged to consider the fact that the gospel is not handed down like a last name. Every person in the home must hear the gospel, believe it, and work out its implications for his given context. While the gospel is beyond precious, it is never beyond losing. Just because a man knows the gospel well does not mean that his children will know the gospel well. The men were challenged to faithfully pass the gospel down to the next generation.

On Wednesday, participants were encouraged to view their family differently than the world views their families. Through gospel lenses, Christians understand that while family predates the fall and therefore is a good gift from God, family is also effected by the fall and every man’s family will experience futility and frustration. However, fundamentally, marriage and family are not about making one happy, but rather, making one holy. Such a perspective ensures a realistic view of marriage and decreases naïveté. With perseverance, patience, and the power of the Holy Spirit, a man will be able to reach God’s goal for his family: living a life that glorifies God increasingly and equipping his family to glorify God increasingly. The devotion on Thursday of week 1 drove the participants to ponder what they really want out of family life—was it making good memories, easy-living, morally decent entertainment, and vacations? The essential challenge was that Christ would be treasured above all things in their heart and home. On Friday, participants were challenged to do more than simply believe the gospel, but press it into the hearts of their family members. The mission in the home is the same as in the

¹³Piper, “The Marks of a Spiritual Leader.”

church—to make disciples. Therefore, a man must concentrate on more than behavior modification in the home. Discipleship has the aim of propelling a man’s family into the world to live for the glory of Christ.

Week 6—Daily Devotions for Lesson 2

Lesson 2 devotions had to do with methodology, which carried the idea that a man must not only have a desire to be the spiritual leader of his family, but also have practical components of what that involves. On Monday, the devotion acknowledged that while God has not given an exact methodological blueprint for male spiritual leadership in the home, much could be gained through viewing the family as analogous to the church. Therefore, the man must take on the role of a shepherd-leader in the home. Thus, a man can glean much from the New Testament’s teaching of the pastor-shepherd’s role in the life of the local church in how one ought to shepherd his own family flock (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1-5). The devotion pointed out that Timothy Witmer teaches that there are at least three components of a shepherd leader in the home: knowing, providing, and protecting.¹⁴ In order for a man to strategically work toward equipping and empowering his family to increasingly glorify God, he needs to intentionally work to know his family, provide for his family, and protect his family. On Tuesday, the men were challenged with the idea that if they want to know their family, it was going to take time and communication. They must spend quality and quantity time with all members in their family and they will have to work hard at communicating well.

The devotion on Wednesday had to do with provision, both material and spiritual. The men were challenged to work to provide materially for their family. They were also challenged to provide spiritually in such a way that the Bible is not merely known in their heart and home, but it becomes to him and his family sweeter than “drippings of the honeycomb” (Ps 19:10). Thursday’s devotion challenged the men to

¹⁴Timothy Z. Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home: Knowing, Leading, Protecting, and Providing for Your Family* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 13.

protect their family. While a man is responsible for many facets of protection—physical, emotional, spiritual, etc.—due to the widespread reality of marital unfaithfulness, the pervasive nature of sexual temptation, and the damage it does to the family unit, the focus of the devotion was narrowed to the idea of protecting one’s family by battling against warped versions of sex (e.g., marital unfaithfulness and porn). On Friday, the devotion heralded the importance of discipline in the home, calling men to extend both formative and corrective discipline in a loving manner. Anything less is truly unloving.

Week 7—Daily Devotions for Lesson 3

The devotions for lesson 3 centered around the reality that if a man is going to be the spiritual leader of his family, he must have power. A man is responsible to help his wife and children grow spiritually. If one has even a shred of self-awareness, he realizes his inability to do such a task on his own. In order to endure and be effective in his God-assigned charge, he must access more than will power—he needs God’s power. On Monday’s devotion, the men were reminded that the power of God is generally accessed through means of grace. While no one can control the supply of God’s grace, it is essential for God’s people to place themselves in regular channels of blessing. That is what the means of grace are all about—putting oneself in the general flow of God’s grace so that one may receive God’s power. While there are numerous means of grace, they can be clustered under three main headings: Word, prayer, and fellowship. The men were asked to ponder which means of grace is the greatest struggle in terms of consistency and joy. They were then challenged to take these things to God in prayer so that their excuses may die with their apathy. On Tuesday of week 3, participants considered the most foundational means of grace: God’s Word. According to God’s Word, a man must be apt to teach the Word to his wife and children (Eph 5:22-6:4). Obviously he cannot give away what he does not have. If he has no knowledge of God’s Word, he has no ability to pass on knowledge of God’s Word to his family. Therefore, the men were challenged to read the Word, meditate on the Word, and memorize the Word.

On Wednesday of week 3, the men were confronted with the responsibility of prayer. Men should be prayer warriors for their families. Unfortunately, many men struggle with consistency in this area. The devotion submitted that the most foundational thing to do is fall in line with the psalmists in the Old Testament along with many throughout church history “who did not merely identify, express, and vent their feelings but also processed them with brutal honesty in God’s presence”.¹⁵ In other words, the beginning point for a man struggling to pray is to tell God with brutal honesty and desperation that prayer is burdensome. God already knows every man’s heart. A man must be honest with God and ask God to give him joy in his prayer life. On Thursday of week 3, the devotion allowed the men to consider that responsibility of church involvement. If a man allows other things in life to keep his family from receiving the blessing of corporate worship, he is doing harm to his family. In other words, if some things keep a man’s family from gathering and worshipping with the Lord’s people on the Lord’s day, he is actually worshipping those things and sacrificing his family upon the altar of those gods. He is also teaching his children that church is only important to the extent that nothing else comes along. Finally, on Friday of week 3, the devotion drove the men to consider two essential means of grace that are part of corporate worship: baptism and the Lord’s Supper. These two ancient rites are extremely simple, but very powerful. Both are opportunities to see the gospel put on display before their eyes. If a man does not lead his family to observe these ordinances, he is hindering the growth of his family—the very opposite of what God has entrusted to him.

Week 8—Daily Devotions Lesson 4

The fourth lesson’s devotions consisted of the men putting their learning into practice. By the time they heard the daily devotions for lesson 4, they had already filled out their IFSP outline and were beginning to implement their plan of action. The IFSP

¹⁵Timothy Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* (New York: Dutton, 2014), 11.

calls the man to execute two basic disciplines: faith talks (family devotions) and faith processes (one-on-one discipleship meetings). On Monday's devotion, the men were challenged to do some self-contemplation and lay their souls bare before God and ask Him to expose any sin they needed to confess, lest they sacrifice the very salvation they teach their family. Sin is horrible, ugly and deceptive—so much that a man may think he has been forgiven only to realize on the day of the Lord that he stands in condemnation because he never stood in the shadow of the cross. Therefore, man cannot afford to give a mere glance to the perils that come at the disposal of his sin. If he lessens the horror of sin, he will lessen the glory of God. A man must lead in contemplation of sin, confession of sin, and repentance of sin. On Tuesday's devotion, the men considered how to navigate faith walks. Faith walks are informal and sporadic times of teaching when opportunities in life arise. Faith walks were not mentioned on the IFSP outline because of the spontaneous nature of these conversations. In order to carry out faith walks well, the devotion encouraged the men to be four things: available, present, trustworthy, and thoughtful.

On Wednesday of lesson 4, the devotion encouraged men to carry out faith talks—intentional times set aside at least once each week for conversation around the Scripture with one's family. Faith talks are essentially family devotions that may include three components: reading the Bible, praying, and singing Christ-centered songs. On Thursday of lesson 4, the devotion challenged the men to do more than shepherd their given family in general. Instead, they should take their family shepherding to another level in order to ensure that each individual in the family is being shepherded according to their personal needs. This is where a “faith process” comes into play. A faith process is a plan that involves the man individually shepherding his wife and children by addressing their particular needs at each stage of life. The final devotion for the study was the foundational challenge to know God. The men were presented with the idea that what they need more than anything else is to know God. They were also challenged with the idea that what their family needs from them more than anything is to for them to know God.

Evaluation of the Devotions

The same panel enlisted to evaluate the curriculum also evaluated the twenty daily devotions. Because these men were familiar with the curriculum, they were able to read the devotions in tandem with the curriculum. The panel evaluated the devotions as a whole and their evaluation exceeded the 90 percent sufficiency score required by the rubric to indicate success. Consequently, the devotions were ready to proceed with the curriculum.

Weeks 9 and 10—Recording of Devotions

Upon the approval of the devotions, the next challenge was to put them in an audio format and pre-set them to distribute through email. In order for the audio format of the devotions to be excellent, it required brevity in length and quality in sound. The tag line at the beginning announced the date, the name of the devotion, and the description. For instance, on the Thursday devotion during week 1, the tagline was, “It’s Thursday, May 19, 2016, I’m Ben Bowden and this is the Family Shepherd Devotion: A daily podcast aimed at equipping me to be gospel-centered leaders in their home.” After all of devotions were recorded, bumper music was added to the beginning and end in order to peak interest and increase professionalism. The devotions were then transferred to a universal format that could be easily embedded into an email. Then the email was set up through an email distribution channel. The email included the written format along with the audio format of the devotion. All of the emails were pre-set to be sent on their appropriate day.

Four-Week Study

Weeks 11-15 were spent taking men through the study. The class met on Sunday afternoon. Each class lasted around 1.5 hours. Beginning the day after the first study, the devotions were distributed through email at 4:00 a.m. every weekday morning during the following week of each of the studies. The daily devotions served as a review and supplement of the lesson on the previous Sunday.

Week 11—Lesson 1

Week 11, May 15, 2016, at 2:30 p.m., the first class met in room C-110 at FBC. As previously, the class was called, “Family Shepherds: Equipping Men to be a Gospel-Centered Leader in Their Home.” Approximately 40 men showed up the first Sunday. Music was playing when they walked in the room and their Family Shepherds packet awaited them at their seat of choice. Candy was spread across the table to make the experience enjoyable. Most of the men already knew each other, so there was plenty of small-talk taking place before we began.

A brief orientation was the first thing the men experienced as they were introduced to the purpose and scope of the class. They were then instructed on each article within their Family Shepherd packet. The packet included the Family Shepherds outline booklet, a letter to the wife, a catechism for boys and girls, and a stapled stack of the daily devotions in written form.¹⁶ The men were instructed on the timeline of the Family Shepherd’s experience—which included a four-week study, four-week IFSP implementation, and a date-night to bring it all to a close.

The lesson started out with a little levity—some typical thoughts of what it means to be a man in today’s culture. The teaching then went immediately into stating the definition for a spiritual leader: spiritual leadership in the home requires a man to “[know] where God wants [his family] to be and [take] the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power.”¹⁷ The class was told that this definition would frame the study as it entailed three things: a man must have direction, methodology, and power. Lesson 1 centered around the assertion that a man must have direction in his home. The lesson was divided into three sections by asking three questions: (1) where does God want a man’s family to be? (2) what is the gospel? (3) why is the gospel important in the home?

¹⁶See appendices 11-14.

¹⁷Piper, “The Marks of a Spiritual Leader.”

First, the lesson on direction began with pondering where God desires families to be. If a man does not know God's direction for the family unit, then he will be lost and helpless trying to figure it out on his own. The curriculum determined that according to the Bible, God's goal for all things was God's glory (Rom 11:36). Along that same line of logic, God's goal for all families is a man who increasingly glorifies God and equips His family to glorify God increasingly. At this point, one is left wondering how to glorify God. The curriculum went on to teach that the gospel is the message of how people are empowered to glorify God and the story of why God is worthy of glory. Therefore, the gospel metanarrative must be known and communicated well in the home.

The second section of lesson 1 asks, "What is the gospel?" This section is broken up into two parts: "the gospel on the ground" and "the gospel in the air."¹⁸ The gospel on the ground explains the good news of Jesus through the God, Man, Christ, Response paradigm. This paradigm is more personal, giving the most immediate answer to the question, "How must I be saved?" The gospel in the air on the other hand explains the good news of Jesus through the Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation paradigm. This paradigm captures the big picture of God's storyline of redemption. The lesson explained that both are essential to be understood, embraced, and taught in their home.

The third and final section of lesson 1 asks, "Why is the gospel important in the home?" The three reasons explained and discussed in class were to (1) appreciate one's family; (2) ward off false gospels; and (3) practice missional living. First, the gospel is necessary in the home so that one may appreciate his family. The gospel in the air explains that family existed before the fall and therefore is a good gift from God. However, because of sin, family life experiences futility and frustration, which is key to understand if one is going to maintain a realistic outlook on family life. Perseverance will subside if naiveté does not. In addition, the gospel in the air explains that family is

¹⁸Matt Chandler with Jared Wilson, *The Explicit Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 16.

essential in God's plan for the world. Marriage exists to portray the Christ-church relationship and fathers are to bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph 6:4). Second, the gospel must be known, embraced, and communicated in the home in order to ward off false gospels. The issue Paul addressed in the Galatian church is an issue with which every church is prone to struggle, namely distorting the true gospel. If it is a struggle in the church, it will be a struggle in the home. Therefore, a man must grasp the gospel clearly and articulate it continually. Third, the gospel is important in the home in order to practice missional living. A man's goal is not merely to produce morally decent people who are disinfected from a corrupt world. Instead, a man's goal for the home is to equip his family to glorify God increasingly. In other words, a man must disciple his family in such a way that it propels them into the world to live for the glory of Christ.

The lesson concluded with a time of reflection guided by three lingering questions. The first question was, "Are you ready to be the man God has made you to be?" This question was intended for the men to contemplate whether they wanted to truly do what it was going to take to be a family shepherd. The second question was, "Will you commit to pray for a heart that desires to increasingly glorify God?" The intent with this question was to get them to ponder their personal holiness prayerfully. The third question was, "Will you commit to pray for a heart that desires to equip your family to increasingly glorify God?" This question forced each man to consider his commitment to his God-assigned leadership role in the home.

Week 12—Lesson 2

Lesson 2 centered around the fact that a man must have methodology if he is going to be the spiritual leader of his home. The lesson proposed that the biblical methodology for a spiritual leader is that a man must know, provide for, and protect his family. The men were challenged that knowing their family took two things: time and communication. In light of time, they were challenged to consider if they spend more

quality or quantity time with their family and practical ways they could increase the lesser. In terms of communication, the men were given practical direction to build up with words, listen well, and speak to the heart.

The second section of lesson 2 submitted that a man must *provide* for his family. This included not only material provision, but also spiritual provision. By the verbal exchange during this time in the class, it seemed that material provision came easy for most of the men. They knew they were to work hard and make money to support their families. However, they were warned that hard work could be taken to a sinful extreme, namely being a workaholic. The challenge is to find the biblical sweet spot—working hard to provide for one’s family without becoming a slave to work. The men acknowledged that most of them spent less time on material provision than on spiritual provision. The men were confronted with the truth that if they were going to equip their family to increasingly glorify God, the Word of God had to be central in the home. Spiritual maturity cannot take place without the Word of God; therefore, they need to systematically and consistently press God’s Word into the hearts of their family members. It was here that the idea of family devotions, or “Faith Talks,” was introduced. The men were given some practical tips and told that they would be called to carry out family devotions in their homes at the close of the lesson 4.

The third section called the men to consider their God-ordained responsibility to protect their family. While there are many facets in terms of protecting one’s marriage, because of the pervasive and destructive nature of sexual sin, the men were called to protect their marriage through sexual purity. A great deal of time was spent here because of the widespread sin of infidelity among many families within the church. The men were told that sex is beautifully designed by God as a blessing to all mankind. However, they were also warned that sexual sin will absolutely destroy their lives. The challenge was for men to be captivated by the beauty of Jesus as the essential way to fight lust,

porn, and all kinds of sexual immorality. The men were also called to protect their children through formative and corrective discipline.

Week 13—Lesson 3

The third lesson called men to obtain adequate power in order to be the spiritual leader of their home. Any self-contemplative person understands their inadequacy for the task of glorifying God increasingly and equipping one's family to glorify God increasingly. No amount of raw strength and determination will suffice. Therefore, the men were led to the Bible to consider how they can activate *God's* power, rather than mere *will* power. The men were instructed that they cannot manipulate or force the Holy Spirit to give them power, but Christians are to go to expectantly toward certain channels of blessing. Those channels are the spiritual disciplines, or the means of grace. The Bible is filled with these means of grace, but they can be clustered under three headings: the Word, prayer, and church fellowship.

First, the men were challenged with the essential nature of hearing from God. The power of God is unleashed on the people of God through the Word of God. The men were taught that a family shepherd must lead his family in reading, meditating on, and memorizing God's Word. The second section of lesson 3 had to do with prayer. The men were challenged to consider the awesome privilege of having God's ear in prayer. Six charges were given to the men to heighten their prayer life: enjoy prayer, pray in secret, pray in company, fast, journal, and retreat. The third section of lesson 3 had to do with the fellowship of the local church. Since the men in the class were all members of FBC, they had at least a minimal commitment to a local church. However, they were challenged to consider deepening their family's commitment in some of the essential elements of the local church, namely corporate worship, preaching, baptism, the Lord's Supper, and rebuke. Each of these elements are essential in the life and health of a local church. Moreover, a family's commitment to and involvement in these elements are

essential in the life and health of the family. Therefore, the men were called to commit themselves to ensure their family's involvement in the life of their local church.

Week 14—Lesson 4

The purpose of the final lesson was two-fold. First, there was need to instruct further on some of the practical elements involved in a family shepherd's daily, weekly, and monthly rhythm. The men were taught the vital nature of "faith walks," "faith talks," and "faith processes." Faith walks are informal and sporadic times of teaching. The men were called to be ready for times when their wife or children ask a question or point out something that easily takes the conversation to eternal matters. Faith talks are simply family devotions. The men were challenged to read, pray, and sing with their families during these family devotions. The men were encouraged that these devotions can be lengthy and formal or they can be short and less formal. The men simply needed to be consistent with their "faith talks." The third part of the instruction was called "faith process," which is a plan that involves the man individually shepherding his wife and children by addressing their particular needs at each stage of life. The men were given two examples from two different leaders in the area of family ministry: Timothy Paul Jones and Brian Croft.

The second part of the class was designated to allow the men to put together their IFSP. They were given an IFSP outline so that they could consider their family's schedule and map out exactly when in the next month that they would do "faith talks" and "faith processes."¹⁹ They had to answer whether they were going to do daily, weekly, or monthly "faith talks" and "faith processes." The IFSP forced them to not only choose a frequency for the "faith processes," but also specify the time, place, person, and content of the "faith process." The frequency and style differed depending on the man and his

¹⁹See appendix 12.

family dynamic, but each man walked away from this lesson with a clear path for shepherding his family over the following four weeks.

Four-Week IFSP Implementation

Weeks 16-19 were used for the men to implement the IFSP in their homes. Having determined the details of their “faith talks” and “faith processes,” the men were equipped and empowered to be the family shepherds in their homes. During this time, I was available for questions and encouragement for anyone who felt like it was not going the way they had planned. However, I intentionally backed off during this time so that the men would be able to shepherd on their own.

Date Night and Post-Series Survey

Week 20 was spent planning and executing a date night with the men and spouses along with administering the post-series survey and spouse survey.²⁰ On July 12, 2016, 25 couples (including my wife and me) met at the historic Rawl’s Hotel in downtown Enterprise, Alabama, for an elegant night of fellowship and encouragement. Thirty-five men finished the class, but due to schedule conflicts, only 24 were able to participate in the date night. As the couples entered the private banquet room, they were handed two surveys. The first survey was for the husband. It was the post-series survey and consisted of the exact same questions as the pre-series survey. The purpose of this survey was to measure the efficacy of the study. The second survey was for the spouse. It consisted of ten questions that sought to measure the wife’s satisfaction of the study. Upon completion all the surveys, the meal was served.

After dinner, I gave a brief overview of the class and all that the men had done. I commended the men for their commitment to their families and honored them in front of their wives with encouraging words. I then asked if any of the men would like to share

²⁰See appendices 1 and 2.

any successes or failures that happened during the four-week implementation. Several men opened up and shared some heartwarming and inspiring experiences. At the close, I challenged the men to continue shepherding their families. I let them know that they may need to adjust their IFSP as seasons change, but they should never get out of the habit of carrying out the wonderful task of being a family shepherd. I prayed and dismissed everyone. Since then, I have received letters, emails, and comments from both husbands and wives saying that the Family Shepherds study has completely changed their family for the glory of Christ. After the date night, I sent out the post-series survey to those who were not in attendance. Some men never filled out the post-series survey, and some men filled it out incorrectly (e.g., skipped a page of questions), so I had to discard them. The total of 23 completed post-surveys was enough to meet the minimum requirement, which was 20, so the analysis was ready to proceed.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT EVALUATION

This project was designed to equip the men of First Baptist Church of Enterprise, Alabama, to be gospel-centered leaders in their home. The desired effect was to be accomplished through developing and teaching a four-week curriculum and endowing the men with an Individualized Family Shepherding Plan. This chapter serves to assess the overall effectiveness of the project through evaluating the purpose and goals. Additionally, the strengths and weaknesses of the project are discussed before investigating what could have been done differently. Finally, the chapter concludes with theological and personal reflections.

Evaluation of the Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip the men of First Baptist Church of Enterprise, Alabama, to be gospel-centered leaders in their homes. The first chapter of this project described the rationale. While FBC has seen many young families join the church, there has been no systematic effort to train men for spiritual leadership in the home. The pre-series survey showed that many FBC men understood that they were supposed to be the spiritual leader of their home and desired to take on that role. The survey showed that 96 percent of men desired to lead their family well and 90 percent considered themselves the spiritual leader of their home.¹ However, only 75 percent had a biblical vision, 63 percent had a clear process, and only 55 percent had a plan of action

¹See appendix 1 for survey and appendix 6 observed results.

for spiritually leading their family.² From these numbers it was clear that the men knew they were supposed to be the spiritual leaders of their home, but were unequipped to actually carry out that task.

Since the completion of the project, there is no doubt of the desperate need for such a study. From the moment the class began being advertised, older members communicated that they regretted not having such a training series when they were younger. Scripture clearly teaches that the man is called to be the spiritual leader of his family. In fact, a man's primary ministry is his family. Churches are to equip men for ministry (Eph 4:11-12); therefore, if the church fails at equipping men to be spiritual leaders of their homes, the church has failed.

Evaluation of the Goals

The project was comprised of five goals. The development and completion of these goals were vital to the success of the project. The first goal of this project was to assess the current understanding and practices of gospel-centered leadership among men who were active members at FBC. The second goal was to develop a four-week study to be utilized with at least twenty men who fall within the target group.³ The third goal was to develop a daily devotional in written and audio format to accompany the study.⁴ The fourth goal was to develop an individualized family shepherding plan (IFSP) outline.⁵ The fifth goal was to equip the men of FBC to be gospel-centered leaders in their home by implementing the four-week study, the accompanying devotional, and the IFSP to the target group.

²See appendix 6.

³See appendix 11.

⁴See appendix 14.

⁵See appendix 12.

Goal 1

The first goal of this project was to assess the current understanding and practices of gospel-centered leadership among men who are active members at FBC. This goal was measured with a pre-series survey of the participants' understanding and practices of spiritual leadership in the home.⁶ Each participant identified himself on the survey by using a unique four-digit personal identification number (pin) in order to guarantee anonymity. The survey consisted of forty-three questions and statements that helped reveal the current understanding and practices of FBC men's spiritual leadership in the home. The desired target group was married men with at least one child residing in the home. In order for this goal to be considered successfully reached, fifty men who were active members of the desired target group had to complete the survey and the survey had to reveal the current understanding and practices of male spiritual leadership in the home.⁷ Once all of the pre-series surveys were administered and retrieved, and the surveys revealed an overall picture of the current understanding and practices of spiritual leadership in the home among the men, the first goal was considered met.

Goal 2

The second goal was to develop and a four-week study to be utilized with at least twenty men who fall within the target group.⁸ The study covered basic family discipleship issues, such as leading a family worship experience and instilling godly character in the wife and children. This goal was measured by an expert panel consisting of three pastors and one deacon who used a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, clarity, and relevance of the study.⁹ This goal was considered successfully met when

⁶See appendix 1

⁷Fifty men equals approximately 33 percent of the total target group population (active and inactive members at FBC).

⁸See appendix 11.

⁹See appendix 3.

each evaluator scored a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion at sufficient or above levels.

The panel was presented with all four lessons that made up the study. The men welcomed the ability to critique with honesty. Upon reading the curriculum, they overwhelmingly supported and approved the content of the study. Every evaluator exceeded the minimum requirement of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion at sufficient or above levels. Upon receiving the final rubric from the evaluators, the goal of developing a four-week study on equipping men to be spiritual leaders in their homes was successful.

Goal 3

The third goal was to develop a daily devotional in written and audio format to accompany the study.¹⁰ This devotional consisted of twenty devotions for the men to use as they meditated on the biblical truths of manhood throughout the period of the study. This goal was measured by an expert panel consisting of the same people who measured the four-week study. This panel used a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, clarity, and relevance of the devotional.¹¹ Since the recording was simply a reading of the written devotional, the only form of the devotional that needed to be measured was the written form. This goal was considered successfully met when each evaluator scored a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion at sufficient or above levels.

The panel was presented with all twenty devotions that made up the devotional. Similar to the curriculum, they overwhelmingly supported and approved the content of the devotional. Every evaluator exceeded the minimum requirement of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion at sufficient or above levels. Upon reviewing the final rubric from the evaluators, the goal of developing a devotional on equipping men to be spiritual leaders in their homes was considered met.

¹⁰See appendix 14.

¹¹See appendix 3.

Goal 4

The fourth goal was to develop an individualized family shepherding plan (IFSP) outline.¹² Upon the conclusion of the final study, the participants were given the IFSP outline in order for the participants to tailor a realistic plan of spiritual leadership that they would implement in their homes. This goal was measured by the same expert panel that measured the curriculum and devotional. This panel used a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, clarity, and relevance of the IFSP outline.¹³ This goal was successfully met when upon retrieval of the rubrics, it was determined that each evaluator scored a minimum of 90 percent⁰% of the indicators on the rubric at sufficient or above levels.

Goal 5

The fifth goal was to equip the men of FBC to be gospel-centered leaders in their home by implementing the four-week study, the accompanying devotional, and the IFSP to the target group. This material developed in goals 2 to 4 was used during the implementation of the fifth goal. This goal was measured through administering a post-project survey that measured the participant's level of knowledge, confidence, and motivation to exercise spiritual leadership in the home. Additionally, this goal was measured through administering a post-project survey to the participant's spouse that measured the participant's level of execution in being the spiritual leader in the home.

This goal was met when the *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference between the pre and post-series scores. The *t*-test was appropriate because it displayed the statistical difference between the pre- and post-series surveys. Upon the execution of the *t*-test, it was revealed that the goal was

¹²See appendix 12.

¹³See appendix 5.

successfully met.¹⁴ The four-week study resulted in an increase in the understanding and practice of spiritual leadership in the home, proving that the study actually equipped men to be gospel-centered leaders in their homes.¹⁵

In addition to the *t*-test, this goal was met when the post-project survey of spouses displayed that a minimum of the participants were rated at a mean score of 4.5 or above on a six-point scale on the evaluation rubric. On the date night, Tuesday, July 19, 2016, the spouses were given a survey to measure their perception of the value of the study. Upon the retrieval and calculation of the survey, it was apparent that the spouses highly valued the study. It was also clear that the men executed their plan to shepherd their family. In fact, the lowest mean score of the ten statements on the spouse survey was a 5.0.¹⁶

A final indicator of the success of this goal was successfully met when each participant satisfactorily completed the IFSP. The last lesson was designed to ensure that every man completed the IFSP by the time the class was over. Leading up to the final class, the importance of the IFSP was reiterated a number of times. Moreover, the men were continually told that the final class would allow time for them to fill out their IFSP outline. The men were also told to talk to their wives about schedule commitments within the next month. The men were encouraged to bring their calendars to the last session. During the final day of class, music played as the men sat silently and filled out their IFSP outline. I was there to answer any of the men's questions. Upon the closing of the final session, the participants had completed their IFSP.

¹⁴See appendix 9.

¹⁵See appendices 7 and 8.

¹⁶See appendix 10.

Strengths of the Project

This project proved to have a number of strengths. The first strength was the fact that this project met a true need in the congregation. As the results of the pre-series survey were calculated, it was clear that the men of FBC desired to be the spiritual leader of the home, but needed some clarity on what that entailed. For instance, 90 percent of the men showed a desire to be the spiritual leader of the home, but only 42 percent prayed with their wives, only 29 percent read the Bible with their wives, and only 28 percent led their families in family worship.¹⁷ If the church expects men to be the spiritual leaders of their homes, but is not equipping them to do so, the result is guilt and shame without any measure of helpfulness. Therefore, this project proved to be timely and useful for men who needed guidance in terms of spiritual leadership.

The second strength was the project's gospel-centered focus. There is a propensity toward legalism for any study that calls someone to do something that they are not currently doing. Obviously, it would be a self-defeating study if the men simply replaced cheap grace with legalism. So the imperatives were always girded with the larger scope of God's grace in Christ. Even during the daily devotions, the men were often challenged to remember that their greatest need was to know Christ.

The third strength was the audio portion of the daily devotions. The audio format of the devotions took a great deal of time and planning, but the payoff was well worth it. Many of the men going through the study would simply not have read the devotions if the audible format was unavailable. However, the way it was set up, the men could listen to the devotion while shaving, working out, or traveling to work. It was the only way to ensure that the message from the class was confronting the men in their daily lives.

¹⁷See appendix 6.

The fourth strength was the ability to personalize the IFSP.¹⁸ Given the fluidity of the participants' lives, depending on number of children and season of life, it would have proven unhelpful to give a one-size-fits-all plan for the men to implement in their homes. Therefore, the men were able to align the biblical truths and practical ideas with their ever-changing schedule.

The fifth strength was the date night. The participation level was high in terms of attendance and willingness to share openly about struggles and victories. The date night was a nice touch for the couples to come together and have fun as the participants experienced a sense of accomplishment. For many, this proved to be a night of encouragement and resolve. As the men shared their failures and successes, it was clear that most everyone was encouraged and thankful for the study. The night ended with a prayer of blessing upon the couples so that generations yet to be born will rise up and proclaim the excellencies of Christ.

Weaknesses of the Project

While the project was an overall success, there were at least three weaknesses. The first weakness was the inability for the men to watch me shepherding my own family. It would have served the men well if they could have had the opportunity to see an actual family devotion played out in front of them. There are two reasons for the inability for the men to watch me shepherding my own family. The first reason is that the season of life for my family makes it near impossible to have men observe our family devotions, catechisms, etc. My wife and I have five children under the age of seven. At the time of this study, our youngest son was just a few weeks old. Moreover, the church is short-staffed as I have recently become the senior pastor. The demands of the church have pulled me away from home more than usual. For these reasons, my wife and I simply were not able to receive people into our home during this season of life. The second reason I

¹⁸See appendix 5.

was unable to have men watch me shepherd my own family was because “faith processes” are intimate in nature. While it is true that much could be gained from a man sitting in on a family worship experience, having a visitor for a “faith process” lessens the authenticity of the meeting. The goal of a “faith process” is to be able to shepherd each member of the family individually. Because of this, having someone else in the room would tarnish the efficacy of the “faith process.”

The second weakness of the project was that some participants could come to only two or three classes. Though they desired to participate fully, a few of the men were not able to attend every class because of schedule conflicts. While much was still gained for those who participated in only two or three classes, the full value of the class was not experienced. For this reason, and at the request of several men, I plan to teach this class again.

The third weakness of the project was the lack of homework. As the statistics reveal, only 31 percent of the men who took the class led their family in family worship prior to the class.¹⁹ In light of this reality, it is safe to say that the men did not have a good grasp on how to lead in family worship. However, the first three weeks were spent without ever giving the men a homework assignment. Countless assignments could have been given in order for the men to start taking baby steps before they were launched on their own to carry out the IFSP. It would seem reasonable to think that the men’s confidence could have been heightened prior to implementing their IFSP if they had already started practicing certain components of family shepherding.

The fourth weakness was the lack of discussion. Such a great amount of content was unpacked through lecturing that it left little time for discussion. Often times Christians can glean from other Christians as they share their experiences around the Word of God. Men could have shared insight into what they have learned and in so doing given some

¹⁹See appendix 7. This statistic is based on the pre-series survey statistics concerning only those who went through the class.

great thoughts in leading one's family spiritually. The men in the study interacted well as they engaged in discussion before and after the meetings. As was seen on the date night, the men were not shy to open up and share; however, because of limited time and a great amount of content, the opportunity for discussion dwindled.

What I Would Do Differently

While I will do much of the same with the project when I teach it again, I would change four things. These changes are connected to the stated weaknesses of the project. The first thing I would do differently is invite men into my home and let them observe me leading my family in our "faith talks." As argued, "faith processes" are not good settings for someone to observe; however, family worship is suitable for visitors. The men would most likely be encouraged just by the sheer brevity of my family's devotion. An old adage says, "I heard and I forgot, I saw and I remembered, I did and I understood." The curriculum is designed for a man to "hear" and then "do." If the participants were able to "see" family worship in my home, it might have built confidence in the participants as they had the opportunity to be exposed to an actual "faith talk."

The second thing I would do differently is record each lecture for those who missed. The men who missed only a class or two still received all of the devotionals, so if they would have had the ability to watch or listen to the lecture with their Family Shepherds booklet on hand, they would not have missed anything. In today's world of technology, recording the lecture and distributing it to the participants would be simple. Gone are the days of sitting in front of a television or next to a CD player in order to be exposed to a recording. Each lecture could be distributed to the participants through email in much the same way the devotions were distributed. Additionally, the availability of the lectures proved beneficial for those who did not miss any classes, but simply want to go back and listen to the lecture.

The third thing I would do differently is have an intentional homework regimen. The benefit of homework is the ability to spur on the men to start moving. When one

pushes a car that is in neutral, the hardest part is for it start moving. Once the wheels begin to turn, then it becomes easier to keep the car rolling. In the same way, many of these men had never led their family in worship; they were like an idle car. The IFSP is designed for them to carry out “faith talks” and “faith processes,” which can be very intimidating for a man who has done neither. Therefore, when I teach this class again, I plan to add a homework assignment to each of the first three lessons. The first homework assignment during week 1 could be reading at least one catechism question and answer during dinner a couple nights throughout the week, which would help the man not have to come up with something to say, whether it be in a prayer or in a discussion. Such an assignment would also help to build confidence because with a catechism the man simply asks a question for which he already knows the answer. For the men who are already operating at a higher level, they have the freedom to continue through the catechism by asking more questions. For these reasons, the first homework assignment will be appropriate for any man to tackle, regardless of his level of spiritual leadership. The second and third homework assignments would be given at the conclusion of the second and third lessons. These homework assignments could be for each man to lead his family in family worship at least one time throughout the week. Upon the beginning of the third lesson, we would discuss the homework. If anyone failed to do it, it would be great opportunity to encourage the men to not let past failure ensure future failure. Such an approach would be intentional, so the men would already be moving in the right direction before the IFSP is put in place.

The fourth thing I would do differently is make time for discussion and ask discussion questions. The men in the study were well-acquainted with one another and enjoyed one another’s company. It was clear on the date night that the men did not fear opening up and sharing their hearts. The date night was the only night that I was intentional about asking men to share. The result was a great deal of encouragement as they shared their successes and failures. Therefore, when I teach this study again, I plan

to think through discussion questions that help the participants to process the content being taught.

Theological Reflections

The aim of this project was to equip men to be gospel-centered leaders in their homes. Though women are responsible for spiritual leadership over their children, men were the focus, which was intentional. The following theological reflections served to undergird this project.

First, the Bible teaches that godly men are to love and shepherd their wives. The purpose and design of marriage takes this priority to the superlative degree. Ephesians 5:25-33 teaches that God designed the marriage institution to be connected to the Christ-church relationship in two ways. First, marriage gets its example from the Christ-church relationship. The ideal submission that the church should have for Christ is the ultimate pattern for the total submission of a wife to her husband. At the same time, the selfless and sacrificial love of Christ for his church is the ultimate pattern of a husband's love for his wife. Second, marriage portrays the Christ-church relationship. Though marriage has been around since the beginning, its purpose of pointing to a greater reality was been hidden until the mystery was made known by the fuller revelation of the Christ-church relationship. This greater reality is that of Christ and the church. In other words, the purpose of marriage is to show the world what is true about Christ and the church. Since the husband's role in marriage represents Christ's role in the gospel, a husband must love and shepherd his wife. Therefore, husbands are to love and shepherd their wives by gleaning from the great example of the Christ-church relationship with a desire to display the great reality of Christ-church oneness.

Second, the Bible teaches that godly men are to love and shepherd their children. Children are great gifts from God, but they come with great responsibility. Few things will shape a person's life like the way he or she was fathered. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 highlights the priority of the calling on fathers to shepherd their children. Fathers must

first love the Lord themselves; they cannot give away what they do not possess. What children need more than anything is for their fathers to know and love God. This also means that fathers must know and teach the Word. God's Word has the ability to equip subsequent generations for every good work. However, fathers must take the time to study the Word, know the Word, and teach the Word to their children. Ephesians 6:4 underscores what the Deuteronomy passage demands and gives further instruction on the nature of this shepherding, namely discipline without exasperation. Though the mother also carries obligation to press the gospel into the hearts of the children in the home, the primary responsibility of the children's spiritual nourishment is upon the father.

Third, the church has historically affirmed that the home should be a place of worship and instruction. Tradition is not authoritative, but it is very important. Through every major era of church history, including the early church, middle ages, reformation and post-reformation, and modern periods, there has been a consistent pattern of the home being a place of worship and instruction in the things of the Lord. This stance has been affirmed throughout church history, even though the church did a better job at family discipleship during some periods than others. Unfortunately, the church has sometimes called men to the weighty task of spiritual leadership in the home without properly equipping them to carry it out, which leads to guilt and shame. As the church moves into the future, she must not only continue to affirm and call men to this weighty task, but also equip them to carry out the mission.

Personal Reflections

I am thankful that FBC is a church that saw the value of me pursuing this degree. I am indebted to the faithful members that prayed for me and spurred me on. To whom much is given, much is required. I was given the opportunity to study on an academic level in order to equip men to be spiritual leaders in their homes. This project allowed me to create a tool that will, with the Lord's help, continually equip men to be gospel-centered leaders in their homes. Therefore, I now carry a great deal of responsibility to

ensure that men entrusted to me are continually spurred on to faithfully carry out spiritual leadership in their homes.

The desire to implement a project like this was driven by a deep responsibility to help men become the family shepherds God had designed them to be. When I became a husband, I sensed the weighty calling to lead my family spiritually. However, I never quite felt that I was doing it well. In fact, I did not even know how to measure my effectiveness in this matter. I needed a practical plan that had biblical depth. So I set out on a journey to figure out how the church could not only *call* men to be the spiritual leaders of their homes, but also adequately *equip* them to accomplish that mission. This project allowed me to focus my energy on something I knew could change the culture of a local church if rightly applied. This project offers practical and biblical insight that can streamline family shepherding and make it a widespread practice in the church. I dream of the day when I see family shepherds as the norm, not the exception.

As the research and implementation of this project unfolded, I was gripped with three principles. First, this project made me remember the vital nature of gospel-centrality. Much could be said here, but I want to focus on how hope is heralded when the gospel is central. Many of the men who went through the class were failing in their shepherding, but not because their hearts were hardened or they did not care. Their failures were because family shepherding in a Genesis 3 world is hard. They had experienced much futility and frustration. They had tried to use discipline as gospel-teaching moments, only to feel like it did not work. They had tried to communicate with their wives, only to frustrate them more. They had tried to deny themselves to work hard and make money for their family, but received little respect. What they needed more than anything was hope—hope that their efforts are not futile, which is why the gospel is so important. The gospel gives hope because it gives a realistic view of family. No man should be surprised when his family seems to have major issues. Having a meta-narrative perspective guards

a man from naiveté and despair. The gospel also empowers a man as he continually stands upon it, being strengthened for every task (1 Cor 15:1; 2 Tim 3:16-17).

The second principle is the fact that men must be equipped to be teachers. As the project was underway, I was surprised how many men did not consider themselves teachers and therefore dismissed any measure of teaching the Bible to their children. Though, the Bible is clear. God's design for passing on the gospel to subsequent generations happens through teaching. Fathers are to teach biblical truths to their children (Deut 6:4-9; Eph 6:4). Jesus said that discipleship happens through teaching (Matt 28:20). The implications for husbands and fathers is that godly men do not have a choice; they must know the Word and teach it to their families.

The third principle that gripped me as the class came to a close was the essential duty for the church to give men direction in terms of spiritual leadership in their homes. I did not find myself in a place where I had to awaken men out of apathy. Instead, there was a deep desire among many men at FBC to be the spiritual leader of their families. However, while desire was present, direction was not. The men did not need to be *told* to lead their family spiritually as much as they needed to be told *how* to lead their family spiritually. This reality was a great encouragement to me as I think through the project's future implications on FBC's health now that the men's desire has been coupled with direction.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to equip the men of First Baptist Church of Enterprise, Alabama, to be gospel-centered leaders in their homes. The purpose of the project was accomplished, and each of the five goals were successfully accomplished. The goals were built around the effort to arm men with biblical and practical principles of spiritual leadership as they laid out a plan of action in their home.

In chapter 1, the project demonstrated the need to equip FBC men to be gospel-centered leaders in their homes. Chapter 2 set forth the biblical and theological basis for

male spiritual leadership in the home. Chapter 3 established the theoretical and practical issues related to male spiritual leadership in the home. Chapter 4 explained the details and description of the project. Chapter 5 was the overall evaluation of the project including the project's purpose, goals, strengths, weaknesses, necessary modifications, theological reflections, and personal reflections.

The project fulfilled its purpose of equipping men of First Baptist Church of Enterprise, Alabama, to be gospel-centered leaders in their home. By God's grace, this project will continue to impact FBC in three ways. First, there will be more men confidently making disciples in their homes. Most of the men did not need to be *told* to lead their families spiritually as much as they needed to be told *how* to lead their families spiritually. This project gave them the tool they needed. Second, there will be more men consistently making disciples in their homes. The Family Shepherds curriculum served as a catalyst for launching a strong men's ministry at FBC. This ministry will be designed to accommodate men with greater accountability and encouragement that will help keep them faithful. Finally, FBC will be a healthier church. Healthy churches have healthy leadership. FBC exists to glorify God by making disciples of all nations. A man's family is included in "all nations" and is unquestionably his highest priority. Since the completion of this project, more men are taking up this responsibility that has been entrusted to them, which means more men fit for healthy leadership within the church. By God's grace, subsequent generations will taste the sweet fruit of the faithfulness carried out by the men of First Baptist Church of Enterprise, Alabama.

APPENDIX 1

PRE- AND POST-SERIES SURVEY

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the current understanding and practices of spiritual leadership of the participant. This research is being conducted by James Benjamin Bowden for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Personal Identification Number: _____ (Please put a four-digit number)

Directions: Answer the following multiple-choice questions by placing a check next to the appropriate answer.

Part 1

1. Do you consider yourself a Christian?
 A. Yes
 B. No
2. Have you repented of your sin and trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation?
 A. Yes
 B. No
3. What is your age in years?

Continue on next page.

Directions: Answer the following questions: (1) Place a check by the multiple-choice questions. (2) Some questions ask you to give your opinion using the following scale: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, DS = disagree somewhat, AS = agree somewhat, A = agree, SA = strongly agree; please circle the appropriate answer.

Part 2

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 4. | I consider myself to be the spiritual leader of my home. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 5. | I am an effective spiritual leader of my home. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 6. | I desire to lead my family well. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 7. | I have a biblical vision for spiritually leading my wife and children. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 8. | I have a clear process (big picture of what I should do) for spiritually leading my wife and children. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 9. | I have a plan of action (steps I will take) for spiritually leading my wife and children. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 10. | My spiritual health directly impacts my ability to lead my family spiritually. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 11. | If asked, I could articulate the gospel. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 12. | I could instruct another man in how to be the spiritual leader of his home. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 13. | I read my Bible (check only one)
<input type="checkbox"/> A. more than once per day
<input type="checkbox"/> B. once per day
<input type="checkbox"/> C. several times per week
<input type="checkbox"/> D. once per week
<input type="checkbox"/> E. several times per month
<input type="checkbox"/> F. once per month
<input type="checkbox"/> G. several times per year
<input type="checkbox"/> H. not at all | | | | | | |

Continue on next page.

14. I meditate on Scripture (check only one)
- A. more than once per day
 - B. once per day
 - C. several times per week
 - D. once per week
 - E. several times per month
 - F. once per month
 - G. several times per year
 - H. not at all
15. I pray (check only one)
- A. more than once per day
 - B. once per day
 - C. several times per week
 - D. once per week
 - E. several times per month
 - F. once per month
 - G. several times per year
 - H. not at all
16. I have a specific time set aside for prayer.
- A. Yes
 - B. No
17. I most often pray for (check only one)
- A. myself
 - B. family
 - C. friends
 - D. other
18. I most often pray (check only one)
- A. at church
 - B. at home
 - C. while traveling
 - D. at work
 - E. other

Continue on next page.

Directions: Answer the following questions: (1) Place a check by the multiple-choice questions. (2) Some questions ask you to give your opinion using the following scale: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, DS = disagree somewhat, AS = agree somewhat, A = agree, SA = strongly agree; please circle the appropriate answer.

Part 3

19. I understand what the Bible teaches regarding how to lead my wife spiritually. SD D DS AS A SA
20. I strive to love my wife as Christ loved the church. SD D DS AS A SA
21. If asked, my wife could articulate the gospel. SD D DS AS A SA
22. I pray with my wife (check only one)
___ A. more than once per day
___ B. once per day
___ C. several times per week
___ D. once per week
___ E. several times per month
___ F. once per month
___ G. several times per year
___ H. not at all
23. I discuss spiritual matters with my wife (check only one)
___ A. more than once per day
___ B. once per day
___ C. several times per week
___ D. once per week
___ E. several times per month
___ F. once per month
___ G. several times per year
___ H. not at all
24. I read the Bible with my wife (check only one)
___ A. more than once per day
___ B. once per day
___ C. several times per week
___ D. once per week
___ E. several times per month
___ F. once per month
___ G. several times per year
___ H. not at all

Continue on next page.

25. My wife and I read and discuss Christian books or devotionals. (check only one)
- ___ A. more than once per day
 ___ B. once per day
 ___ C. several times per week
 ___ D. once per week
 ___ E. several times per month
 ___ F. once per month
 ___ G. several times per year
 ___ H. not at all
26. I know the areas in which my wife is struggling in her sanctification. SD D DS AS A SA
27. I encourage my wife to spend time reading the Bible and to pray. SD D DS AS A SA
28. I seek to serve in the church with my wife. SD D DS AS A SA
29. I seek to minimize the impediments to my wife's spiritual growth. SD D DS AS A SA
30. I value my wife's help in my own spiritual growth. SD D DS AS A SA
31. When I sin against my wife, I express repentance and ask for forgiveness. SD D DS AS A SA
32. When my wife and I have conflict, I take the lead in seeking biblical resolution. SD D DS AS A SA

Part 4

33. I strive to raise my children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. SD D DS AS A SA
34. I am an effective spiritual leader for my children. SD D DS AS A SA
35. I know the areas in which I need to be praying for my children. SD D DS AS A SA
36. I use occasions of my children's sin to instruct them with the gospel. SD D DS AS A SA

Continue on next page.

37. I instill in my children the value of reading the Bible and praying. SD D DS AS A SA
38. I use everyday situations as opportunities to instruct my children with Biblical principles. SD D DS AS A SA
39. When I sin against my children, I express repentance and ask for forgiveness. SD D DS AS A SA
40. I pray with my children (choose only one)
 A. more than once per day
 B. once per day
 C. several times per week
 D. once per week
 E. several times per month
 F. once per month
 G. several times per year
 H. not at all
41. I read the Bible with my children (choose only one)
 A. more than once per day
 B. once per day
 C. several times per week
 D. once per week
 E. several times per month
 F. once per month
 G. several times per year
 H. not at all
42. I read Christian books to/with my children (choose only one)
 A. more than once per day
 B. once per day
 C. several times per week
 D. once per week
 E. several times per month
 F. once per month
 G. several times per year
 H. not at all
43. I lead my home in family worship (specific time of Bible-reading and prayer) (check only one)
 A. more than once per day
 B. once per day
 C. several times per week
 D. once per week
 E. several times per month
 F. once per month
 G. several times per year
 H. not at all

Continue on next page.

APPENDIX 2
SPOUSE SURVEY

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the current understanding and practices of spiritual leadership of the participant. This research is being conducted by James Benjamin Bowden for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions concerning the improvement you have seen in your husband’s spiritual leadership in the home since the study. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Husband’s Personal Identification Number: _____ (Please put a four-digit number)

Directions: Answer the following questions: (1) Place a check by the multiple-choice questions. (2) Some questions ask you to give your opinion using the following scale: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, DS = disagree somewhat, AS = agree somewhat, A = agree, SA = strongly agree; please circle the appropriate answer.

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 1. | Since the study, my husband can articulate the gospel more faithfully. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 2. | Since the study, my husband can articulate a clearer biblical vision for his role as the spiritual leader of the home. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 3. | Since the study, my husband has implemented a plan of action in his role as spiritual leader of the home. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 4. | Since the study, my husband is more faithful in leading family worship. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 5. | Since the study, my husband is more faithful in leading our family in prayer. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 6. | Since the study, my husband is a more effective spiritual leader to me. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

Continue on next page.

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 7. | Since the study, my husband is a more effective spiritual leader to our children. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 8. | Since the study, my husband is more faithful to encourage our children to spend time reading the Bible and praying. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 9. | Since the study, my husband is more faithful to ask for forgiveness when he sins against me. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 10. | Since the study, my husband is more faithful to ask for forgiveness when he sins against the children. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

APPENDIX 3
CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

Spiritual Leadership Curriculum Evaluation Tool					
Lesson Evaluation					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The lesson is clearly relevant to the issue of spiritual leadership in the home.					
The material is biblical.					
The material is theologically sound.					
The main idea of the lesson is clearly stated.					
The points of the lesson clearly support the lesson aim.					
The lesson contains points of practical application.					
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.					
The teaching methodology meets the needs of various learning styles.					
Overall, the lesson is clear.					

APPENDIX 4

DEVOTIONAL EVALUATION RUBRIC

Spiritual Leadership Curriculum Evaluation Tool					
Devotional Evaluation					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The devotions are clearly relevant to the issue of spiritual leadership in the home.					
The devotions are biblical.					
The devotions are theologically accurate.					
The devotions are Christ-centered.					
The devotions are engaging.					
The devotions have practical application.					
The devotions are sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.					
The devotions are memorable.					

APPENDIX 5

INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SHEPHERDING
PLAN EVALUATION RUBRIC

Spiritual Leadership Curriculum Evaluation Tool					
Individualized Family Shepherding Plan Evaluation					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The IFSP is helpful in producing direction for spiritual leadership in one's home.					
The IFSP is helpful in producing methods for spiritual leadership in one's home.					
The IFSP is helpful in utilizing God's power for spiritual leadership in one's home.					
The IFSP has an attractive layout.					
The IFSP is flexible enough for it to be personalized.					
The IFSP is a straightforward procedure.					

APPENDIX 6

PRE-SERIES SURVEY AVERAGES

Table A1. Pre-series survey observations data

All pre-series survey (51 men)		Avg
4	I consider myself to be the spiritual leader of my home.	5.373
5	I am an effective spiritual leader of my home.	3.882
6	I desire to lead my family well.	5.784
7	I have a biblical vision for spiritually leading my wife and children.	4.529
8	I have a clear process (big picture) of what I should do for spiritually leading my wife and children.	3.765
9	I have a plan of action (steps I will take) for spiritually leading my wife and children.	3.294
10	My spiritual health directly impacts my ability to lead my family spiritually.	5.549
11	If asked, I could articulate the gospel.	4.451
12	I could instruct another man in how to be the spiritual leader of his home.	3.255
13	I read my Bible (check only one)	3.706
14	I meditate on Scripture (check only one)	3.029
15	I pray (check only one)	5.412
19	I understand what the Bible teaches regarding how to lead my wife spiritually.	4.255
20	I strive to love my wife as Christ loved the church.	5.314
21	If asked, my wife could articulate the gospel.	4.961
22	I pray with my wife (check only one)	2.515
23	I discuss spiritual matters with my wife (check only one)	3.118
24	I read the Bible with my wife (check only one)	1.765
26	I know the areas in which my wife is struggling in her sanctification.	3.784
27	I encourage my wife to spend time reading the Bible and to pray.	3.490
28	I seek to serve in the church with my wife.	4.667
29	I seek to minimize the impediments to my wife's spiritual growth.	4.490
30	I value my wife's help in my own spiritual growth.	5.392
31	When I sin against my wife, I express repentance and ask for forgiveness.	4.980
32	When my wife and I have conflict, I take the lead in seeking biblical resolution.	3.588
33	I strive to raise my children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.	5.569
34	I am an effective spiritual leader for my children.	4.039

35	I know the areas in which I need to be praying for my children.	4.667
36	I use occasions of my children's sin to instruct them with the gospel.	4.255
37	I instill in my children the value of reading the Bible and praying.	4.275
38	I use everyday situations as opportunities to instruct my children with biblical principles.	4.275
39	When I sin against my children, I express repentance and ask for forgiveness.	4.745
40	I pray with my children (choose only one)	3.147
41	I read the Bible with my children (choose only one)	2.559
43	I lead my family in family worship (specific time of Bible-reading and prayer) (check only one)	1.676

APPENDIX 7

PRE- AND POST-SERIES SURVEY AVERAGES

Table A2. Pre- and post-series survey observations data

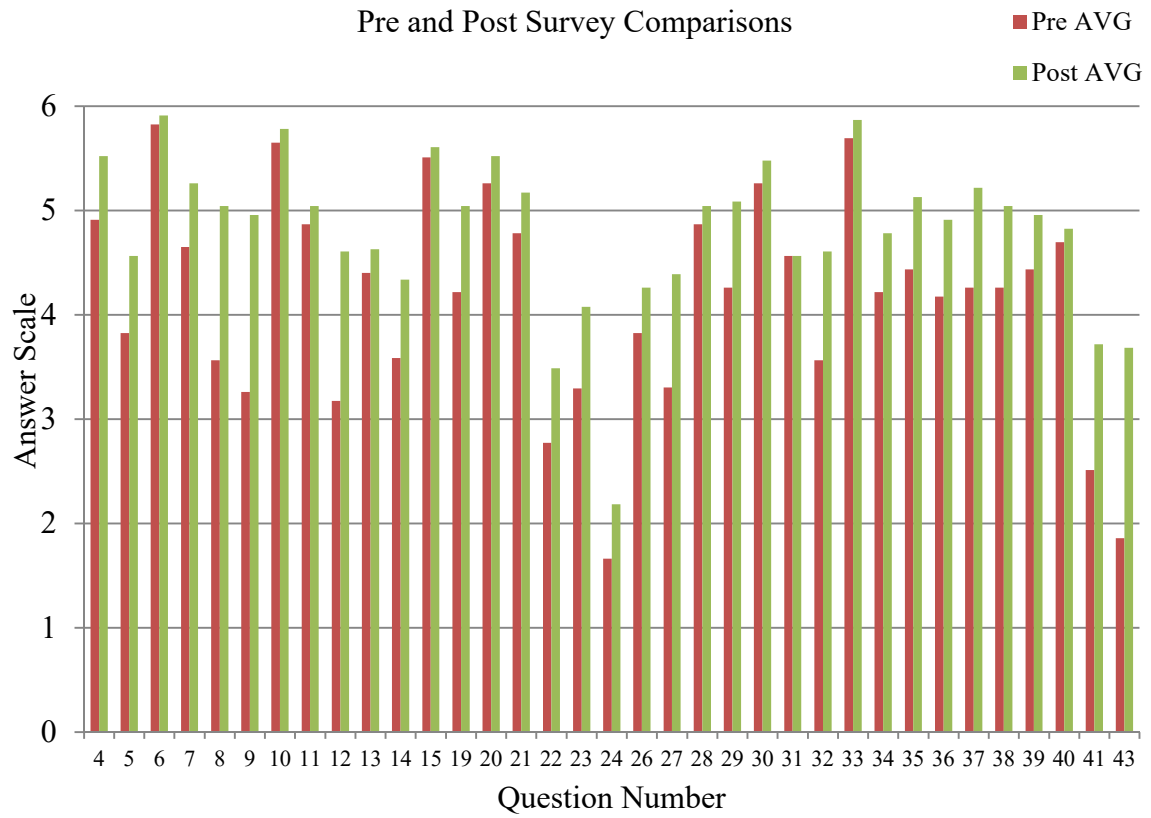
The participants who took the class (23 Men)		Pre Avg	Post Avg
4	I consider myself to be the spiritual leader of my home.	4.913	5.522
5	I am an effective spiritual leader of my home.	3.826	4.565
6	I desire to lead my family well.	5.826	5.913
7	I have a biblical vision for spiritually leading my wife and children.	4.652	5.261
8	I have a clear process (big picture) of what I should do for spiritually leading my wife and children.	3.565	5.043
9	I have a plan of action (steps I will take) for spiritually leading my wife and children.	3.261	4.957
10	My spiritual health directly impacts my ability to lead my family spiritually.	5.652	5.783
11	If asked, I could articulate the gospel.	4.870	5.043
12	I could instruct another man in how to be the spiritual leader of his home.	3.174	4.609
13	I read my Bible (check only one)	4.402	4.630
14	I meditate on Scripture (check only one)	3.587	4.337
15	I pray (check only one)	5.511	5.609
19	I understand what the Bible teaches regarding how to lead my wife spiritually.	4.217	5.043
20	I strive to love my wife as Christ loved the church.	5.261	5.522
21	If asked, my wife could articulate the gospel.	4.783	5.174
22	I pray with my wife (check only one)	2.772	3.489
23	I discuss spiritual matters with my wife (check only one)	3.293	4.076
24	I read the Bible with my wife (check only one)	1.663	2.185
26	I know the areas in which my wife is struggling in her sanctification.	3.826	4.261
27	I encourage my wife to spend time reading the Bible and to pray.	3.304	4.391
28	I seek to serve in the church with my wife.	4.870	5.043
29	I seek to minimize the impediments to my wife's spiritual growth.	4.261	5.087
30	I value my wife's help in my own spiritual growth.	5.261	5.478

Table A2 continued

31	When I sin against my wife, I express repentance and ask for forgiveness.	4.565	4.565
32	When my wife and I have conflict, I take the lead in seeking biblical resolution.	3.565	4.609
33	I strive to raise my children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.	5.696	5.870
34	I am an effective spiritual leader for my children.	4.217	4.783
35	I know the areas in which I need to be prayign for my children.	4.435	5.130
36	I use occasions of my children's sin to instruct them with the gospel.	4.174	4.913
37	I instill in my children the value of reading the Bible and praying.	4.261	5.217
38	I use everyday situations as opportunities to instruct my children with Biblcial principles.	4.261	5.043
39	When I sin against my children, I express repentance and ask for forgiveness.	4.435	4.957
40	I pray with my children (choose only one)	4.696	4.826
41	I read the Bible with my children (choose only one)	2.511	3.717
43	I lead my family in family worship (specific time of Bible-reading and prayer) (check only one)	1.859	3.685

APPENDIX 8

PRE- AND POST-SURVEY COMPARISONS



APPENDIX 9

PRE- AND POST-SERIES SURVEY T-TEST

Table A3. T-test: Paired two sample for means for pre- and post-series survey

	<i>Pre AVG</i>	<i>Post AVG</i>
Mean	4.155	4.810
Variance	1.036	0.558
Observations	35.000	35.000
Pearson Correlation	0.901	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0.000	
df	34.000	
t Stat	-8.194	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.000	
t Critical one-tail	1.691	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.000	
t Critical two-tail	2.032	

APPENDIX 10

SPOUSE SURVEY RESULTS

1. Since the study, my husband can articulate the gospel more faithfully.

SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
0	0	0	6	10	7

Mean Score = 5.0

2. Since the study, my husband can articulate a clearer biblical vision for his role as the spiritual leader of the home.

SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
0	0	0	6	4	13

Mean Score = 5.3

3. Since the study, my husband has implemented a plan of action in his role as the spiritual leader of the home.

SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
0	0	0	6	9	8

Mean Score = 5.1

4. Since the study, my husband is more faithful in leading family worship.

SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
0	1	0	6	8	8

Mean Score = 5.0

5. Since the study, my husband is more faithful in leading our family in prayer.

SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
0	1	0	4	7	11

Mean Score = 5.2

6. Since the study, my husband is a more effective spiritual leader to me.

SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
0	0	0	7	8	8

Mean = 5.0

7. Since the study, my husband is a more effective spiritual leader to our children.

SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
0	0	0	4	9	10

Mean = 5.3

8. Since the study my husband in more faithful to encourage our children to spend time reading the Bible and praying.

SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
0	1	0	4	7	11

Mean = 5.2

9. Since the study, my husband is more faithful to ask for forgiveness when he sins against me.

SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
0	0	1	8	5	9

Mean = 5.0

10. Since the study, my husband is more faithful to ask for forgiveness when he sins against the children.

SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
0	0	0	7	7	9

Mean = 5.1

APPENDIX 11

FAMILY SHEPHERDS CURRICULUM

Lesson 1: A Man Must Have Direction in His Home

Spiritual Leadership: spiritual leadership in the home requires a man to “[know] where God wants [his family] to be and [take] the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power.”¹

This definition entails 3 things:

1. A man must have **Direction**
2. A man must have **Methodology**
3. A man must have **Power**

I. Where does God want a man’s family to be?

- a. God’s goal for all things: God’s **glory** (Rom 11:36)
- b. God’s goal for all families: A man who increasingly glorifies God and **equips** His family to increasingly glorify God.²
- c. The gospel is the message of how we are empowered to glorify God and the story of why God is worthy of glory.

II. What is the gospel?

- a. The Gospel on the **Ground**
 - i. God
 1. God is **merciful** (Ex 34:6)
 2. God is **just** (Ex 34:6)
 - ii. Man
 1. Man is made in God’s image (Gen 1:27)
 2. Man has **sinned** against God (Rom 3:23)

*Every generation
must rediscover the
gospel for itself.
~Dane Ortland*

¹John Piper, “The Marks of a Spiritual Leader,” *Desiring God*, January 1, 1995, accessed February 19, 2016, <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-marks-of-a-spiritual-leader>.

²Timothy Z. Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home: Knowing, Leading, Protecting, and Providing for Your Family* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 66, writes “the ultimate goal [of the family is] knowing the Lord and walking with him to bring him glory.”

3. Man deserves God's punishment (Rom 6:23)
- iii. Christ
 1. Jesus is fully God and fully man
 2. Jesus **died** on a cross for sinners (1 Pet 3:18)
- iv. Response
 1. **Faith** (Rom 10:9)
 2. **Repentance** (Mark 1:15)
- b. The Gospel in the *Air*³
 - i. Creation
 1. One Hebrew word sums up the picture of Genesis 1 and 2: **shalom** (perfect wholeness and peace).
 2. The earth was full of God's shalom, the kind of peace in which everything works according to God's intention.
 3. The world was made for human **flourishing**, there we could live in joy in the presence of our Maker, worshiping God by loving Him and one another forever
 - ii. Fall
 1. Adam and Eve rejected God's rule over them.
 2. We refer to their rebellious choice as "the fall," and because they represented all of humanity, their action affects us too.
 3. We have—through our **attitudes** and **actions**—declared ourselves to be God's enemies.
 4. This rebellion results in physical and spiritual death.
 5. All the earth is now corrupted with sadness and sorrow.
 6. All mankind is now born in sin, cut off from God, and spiritually **dead**.
 - iii. Redemption
 1. Thankfully the loving Creator who rightly shows Himself to be wrathful toward our sin is determined to turn evil and suffering we have caused into good that will be to His ultimate glory.

³Ed Stetzer, "The Big Story of Scripture (Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration) In Pictures: Your Input Requested," The Exchange, accessed April 7, 2016, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2012/november/big-story-of-scripture-creation-fall-redemption.html>.

2. So the next movement shows God implementing a master **plan** for redeeming His world and rescuing fallen sinners.
3. In the Person of Jesus Christ, God Himself comes to renew the world and restore His people—extinguishing His **wrath** on Jesus so that He can extend his **mercy** to us.
4. The grand narrative of Scripture climaxes with the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Christian children (and their parents) don't need to learn to be "nice." They need death and resurrection and a Savior who has gone before them as faithful high priest, who was a child himself and who lived and died perfectly in their place. ~Elyse Fitzpatrick

iv. Consummation

1. The story doesn't end with redemption.
2. God has promised to **renew** the whole world, and the Bible gives us a peak into this glorious future.
3. The restoration of all things will take place in two ways:
 - a. Christ will return to judge sin and evil, and He will usher in righteousness and peace.
 - b. God will **purge** this world of evil once and for all.

III. Why is the gospel important in the home?

- a. To **appreciate** one's family
 - i. Family predates the fall and therefore is a good gift from God.
 - ii. Family life is effected by the fall and therefore will experience futility and frustration.
 1. Marriage is a covenant between two sinners, thus requiring:
 - a. Humility
 - b. Forgiveness
 - c. Patience
 2. Children are:
 - a. **Gifts** to be treasured (Ps 127:3).
 - b. **Sinners** to be trained (Prov 22:6).
 - iii. Family is essential in God's plan for the world.
 1. Marriage exists to portray the Christ-church relationship (Eph 5:22-33)
 2. Fathers are to bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph 6:4)
- b. To ward off **false** gospels
 - i. A man must **grasp** the gospel clearly
 - ii. A man must **articulate** the gospel continually
- c. To practice **missional** living—The mission is discipling, not disinfecting:
 - i. Disinfecting concentrates on behavior modification, training your family only to be morally good. This results in:
 1. Decent moral behavior with little world impact.

2. Disobedience to God’s command to make disciples in the home.
 3. **Wasted** lives.
- ii. Discipling propels your family into the world to live for the glory of Christ. This results in:
1. Disciples of Christ with total world impact.
 2. Obedience to God’s command to shepherd the hearts of your wife and children.
 3. **Abundant** lives.

IV. The lingering questions:

- a. Are you ready to be the man God has made you to be?
- b. Will you commit to pray for a heart that **desires** to increasingly glorify God?
- c. Will you commit to pray for a heart that **desires** to equip your family to increasingly glorify God?

Lesson 2: A Man Must Have Methodology in the Home

Spiritual Leadership: spiritual leadership in the home requires a man to “[know] where God wants [his family] to be and [take] the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power.”⁴

This definition entails 3 things:

1. A man must have **Direction**
2. A man must have **Methodology**
3. A man must have **Power**

I. A Man Must Know His Family

- a. It takes **time** to know your family
 - i. **Quality** Time
 1. Put away distractions (e.g. phone, tablet, TV, etc.)
 2. Engage in the home (e.g. be present, have conversation, play, etc.)
 3. Create memories together
 - ii. **Quantity** Time
 1. Spend time with wife and children daily
 2. Plan date nights with your wife

Neither our careers nor our children can be allowed to keep us from our task of modeling for the world the beautiful, mysterious, one-flesh union of our Savior and his bride.
~Voddie Baucham

⁴John Piper, “The Marks of a Spiritual Leader,” *Desiring God*, last modified January 1, 1995, accessed February 19, 2016, <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-marks-of-a-spiritual-leader>.

3. Plan one-on-one time with your children (“Faith Processes”)⁵
 4. Be available
- b. It takes **communication** to know your family
- i. Build up with words
 - ii. Listen well
 - iii. Speak to the heart

Every Christian family ought to be as it were a little church. ~Jonathan Edwards

II. A Man Must *Provide* for His Family

- a. **Material** Provision
- i. You must **work** (2 Thess 3:10).
 - ii. Stay away from two sinful extremes: being a workaholic or being **lazy**
 - iii. Find the biblical sweet spot—working hard to provide for your family without becoming a slave to your work.
- b. **Spiritual** Provision
- i. The Source – The **Word** of God (2 Tim 3:14-15)
 - ii. The Content - Teaching, Reproof, Correction, and **Training** (2 Tim 3:16)
 - iii. The Goal – Equipped to **Glorify** God (2 Tim 3:17)
 - iv. The Means – Family **Devotions** (“Faith Talks”)⁶
 1. Be **Realistic**
 2. Be Systematic
 3. Be **Flexible**
 4. Be Consistent
 5. Be Interactive
 6. Be **Real**

There is a clear parallel between God’s covenantal care for his people and a man’s care for his family. ~Timothy Witmer

III. A Man Must *Protect* His Family

- a. Protect your marriage⁷
- i. **Sexual** sin will absolutely destroy your life
 - ii. Get engaged in the battle
 - iii. Keep yourself away from **temptation**
 - iv. Be captivated by the **beauty** of Jesus
 - v. Don’t cover up your sin
- b. Protect your children
- i. **Formative** Discipline
 - ii. **Corrective** Discipline

⁵See lesson 4 for further teaching on “Faith Processes.”

⁶Witmer offers six principles to consider when doing family devotions. See lesson 4 for further teaching on “Faith Talks.”

⁷J. D. Greear, “Men’s Conference: Session Two,” Summit Church, March 4, 2016, accessed August 28, 2016, <http://subsplash.com/summit/v/0cc9672>.

Lesson 3: A Man Must Have Power in the Home

Spiritual Leadership: spiritual leadership in the home requires a man to “[know] where God wants [his family] to be and [take] the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power.”⁸

This definition entails 3 things:

1. A man must have **Direction**
2. A man must have **Methodology**
3. A man must have **Power**

I. Hear God’s Voice (Word)

- a. **Reading** (Ps 19:7-11)
- b. **Meditation** (Ps 1:2)
- c. **Memorization** (Ps 119:11)

You are not likely to see any general reformation, till you procure family reformation. ~Richard Baxter

II. Have God’s Ear (Prayer)

- a. **Enjoy** Prayer
- b. Pray in **secret**
- c. Pray in **company**
- d. **Fast**
- e. **Journal**
- f. **Retreat**

III. Belong to Christ’s Body (Church)

- a. Corporate **Worship** (Heb 10:25)
 - i. Show Up
 - ii. Participate
- b. **Preaching** (2 Tim 4:1-2)
 - i. To Forget Yourself
 - ii. To Fuel Your Faith
 - iii. To Grow in Grace
 - iv. To Be Equipped
 - v. To Encounter Jesus
- c. **Baptism** (Matt 28:19)
 - i. Watch
 - ii. Instruct
 - iii. Celebrate
- d. The **Lord’s Supper** (1 Cor 11:17-34)
 - i. Partake
 - ii. Instruct
 - iii. Celebrate
- e. **Rebuke** (2 Tim 3:16)
 - i. Personal Accountability
 - ii. Familial Witness
 - iii. A Blessing to the Church

The character of the Church and of the state depends on the character of the family. If religion dies out in the family, it cannot elsewhere be maintained. ~Charles Hodge

⁸John Piper, “The Marks of a Spiritual Leader,” *Desiring God*, January 1, 1995, accessed February 19, 2016, <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-marks-of-a-spiritual-leader>.

Lesson 4: Putting Together an Individualized Family Shepherding Plan

Spiritual Leadership: spiritual leadership in the home requires a man to “[know] where God wants [his family] to be and [take] the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power.”⁹

This definition entails 3 things:

1. A man must have **Direction**
2. A man must have **Methodology**
3. A man must have **Power**

I. What Am I Going To Do?

- a. Faith Walks
 - i. Definition: Faith walks are informal and sporadic times of teaching.
 - ii. What does it take to do faith walks well?
 1. Be **available**
 2. Be **present**
 3. Be **trustworthy**
 4. Be **thoughtful**
- b. Faith Talks (family devotions)
 - i. Definition: Faith Talks are intentional times set aside at least once each week for conversation around the Scriptures with your family.¹⁰
 - ii. Three Elements¹¹
 1. **Read**
 2. **Pray**
 3. **Sing** (Optional)
 - iii. Three Additional Ideas
 1. Catechisms
 2. Scripture **Memorization**
 3. Read Christian **Books** (e.g. Jesus Storybook Bible, The Big Picture Interactive Bible, etc.)
 - iv. Three Reminders
 1. Be **Realistic**

⁹John Piper, “The Marks of a Spiritual Leader,” *Desiring God*, January 1, 1995, accessed February 19, 2016, <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-marks-of-a-spiritual-leader>.

¹⁰Legacy Milestones, accessed February 5, 2016, <http://legacymilestones.com/faithtalk>.

¹¹See Donald Whitney, *Family Worship* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 44-51.

2. Be **Flexible**
 3. Be **Consistent**
- c. Faith Processes (Shepherding each member individually)
- i. Definition: A plan that involves the man individually shepherding his wife and children by addressing their particular needs at each stage of life.
 - ii. Two Ideas:
 1. Timothy Paul Jones:¹²
 - a. *Location*: Choose an enjoyable place to be together; if possible, make it a weekly tradition where your child/wife goes somewhere or orders some menu item that he or she usually does not have at other times. Consider having a special journal that is used only for your weekly faith process.
 - b. *Content*: Choose a book of the Bible, a particular biblical text, or a creed that you will work on little by little over many weeks; the time spent together is more important than how many words or verses you cover each week. By choosing a book of the Bible or a creed, you do not have to figure out what to do each week; simply pick up where you left off the week before. Read the Scripture or creed together.
 - c. *Discuss*: “What did this mean to people back then? What should this mean for us today?”
 - d. *Ask*: “What has God been doing in your life this week? What struggles are you facing right now? How does the gospel apply to these struggles? What needs to happen next in your life to follow Jesus more closely?” Be willing to share your own answers to these questions too, confessing your sins to one another (James 5:16-18).
 - e. *Response*: Together, write in the journal a one-sentence thought, a Scripture verse from today’s discussion, and a brief prayer.
 2. Brian Croft:¹³
 - a. Each child gets one night to stay up beyond his or her usual bedtime.
 - b. When the other children go to bed, one child goes and meets with you (the father).
 - c. Read a passage of Scripture together, discuss it, and then read a chapter from a book the child has chosen to read.

¹²Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan, 2011), 161-71.

¹³Brian Croft, “How Can I Make Sure I Am Individually Shepherding My Children?” *Practical Shepherding*, accessed April 4, 2016, <http://practicalshepherding.com/2010/07/21/how-can-i-make-sure-i-am-individually-shepherding-my-children/>.

- d. Then ask how you can pray for the child.
- e. Pray with child and put him or her to bed.

II. When Am I Going To Do It?

- a. When will I do Faith Walks? (Random times throughout each day)
- b. When will I do Faith Talks?
 - i. Choose one—Daily, Weekly, or Certain Days Throughout the Week (if not daily, designate which day(s): _____)
 - ii. Choose one—Morning, Dinner, Evening, Bed-Time, Other (if other, specify when: _____)
- c. Faith Processes
 - i. Choose one—Weekly, Monthly, Other (if other, specify when: _____)
 - ii. Choose one— Morning, Dinner, Evening, Bed Time, Other (if other, specify when: _____)
- d. Evaluation
 - i. Choose one—Monthly, Quarterly or Other (if other, specify when: _____)
 - ii. What does the evaluation look like?
 - 1. What have you been doing?
 - 2. How has that gone?
 - 3. What has been successful?
 - 4. What areas need improvement?

APPENDIX 12

INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SHEPHERDING PLAN

My faith talks will look like this (FT):

My faith processes will look like this (FP):

My weekly shepherding schedule over the next four weeks will look like this:

	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Week One							
Week Two							
Week Three							
Week Four							

APPENDIX 13

LETTER TO WIVES

May 15, 2016

Dear Wife,

Your husband is on a journey to increasingly become what God has made him to be as the spiritual leader of his home. Over the next several weeks he will be engaging in a four-week study (May 15, 22, June 5, 12) called, ***Family Shepherds: Becoming a Gospel-Centered Leader in Your Home***. Upon completion of the study, there will be a four-week implementation in the home. During this time, your husband will be applying the various things he learned throughout the study. On July 12 at 6:00 PM, we will have a date night at the Rawl's. Childcare will be provided. This will be a good time for all of us to get together with our spouses and celebrate the hard but worthy task of these men embracing their calling as family shepherds. ***Please check your calendars and RSVP by May 22.***

I want to ask you to do three things:

1. ***Pray.*** Pray that God would use this time to strengthen your marriage and family. Pray that God would strengthen you to get out of your comfort zone in order to embrace real transparency and repentance in your home. God loves your family more than you do. Trust Him as he calls you to pray for your husband during this pivotal time in the life of your family.
2. ***Encourage.*** Encourage your husband in a non-patronizing way. With sincere words and actions, affirm him as a man and the spiritual leader of your home. Grant your husband respect and support, all for the honor and glory of Christ your Savior.
3. ***Submit.*** Submission is a bad word in contemporary culture. But you are called to follow Christ, not culture. You are instructed in God's word to submit to your husband as unto the Lord (Eph 5:22-33). For your husband is the head of your household as Christ is the head of the church. Submit to your husband as he sacrificially leads your family.

Please know that I am praying for you and your family during this time. May God use this study to strengthen his church.

For the glory of God,

Ben Bowden
Pastor, FBC Enterprise
ben@fbcenterprise.com

APPENDIX 14

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Week 1

Monday

From my experience as a pastor, many Christian men know that they're supposed to be the spiritual leaders of their home. However, other than getting their family to church and praying before meals, most of these men have a hard time knowing what spiritual leadership entails. In other words, most of these men lack direction.

In the study this week, we dealt with how a man must have direction in his home.

The definition for spiritual leadership in the home is this: spiritual leadership requires a man to “[know] where God wants [his family] to be and [take] the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power” (John Piper).

So a man must know “where God wants his [family] to be.” Do you know where God wants your family to be? Direction demands a destination. Knowing the destination is essential for any type of leadership, because leaders “make decisions and chart a direction” (Al Mohler). If a man is going to chart the direction for his family, he must have an endpoint that magnetizes the direction, constantly pulling him toward the goal.

So what *is* the goal for your home? In other words, where does God want *your* family to be? In order for a man to know where God wants his family to be, he must take a step back and frame it in a larger context, namely God’s goal for all things.

So what is God’s goal for all things? The answer is God’s glory. “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen” (Romans 11:36). Therefore, we could say that God’s goal for all families, including yours, is this: the man of the home increasingly glorifies God and equips His family to increasingly glorify God.

Would you say that you have a heart that truly desires to increasingly glorify God? What about equipping your family to increasingly glorify God?

Why not pray this: *Dear Lord, increase my desire to honor You in word and deed. Also, increase my desire to equip my family to bring You glory. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

Tuesday

Dane Ortland said, “Every generation must rediscover the gospel for itself.” In other words, the gospel is not handed down like a last name. Every person must hear the gospel, believe it, and work out its implications for his given context. While the gospel is beyond precious, it is never beyond losing. Just because you know the gospel well does not mean that your children will know the gospel well. Dad, you are responsible to faithfully pass the gospel down to the next generation.

Focusing on the gospel does not divert one’s attention away from the family; on the contrary, it helps set the contours for the family’s purpose and mission. The end to which God intends all things, including families, is his glory (Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 10:31). In other words, a man’s family exists to glorify God. Therefore, if a man is going to be the spiritual leader of his family, then he has the responsibility to “make decisions and chart a direction” that inclines his wife and children to glorify God (Al Mohler). The gospel is the message of how we are empowered to glorify God and the story of why God is worthy of glory.

It’s clear that the gospel is important, but what *is* the gospel? There are at least two primary angles to look at the gospel: The gospel on the ground and the gospel in the air. The gospel on the ground captures a more immediate perspective involving the individual. The gospel in the air is the big picture, the story of all that God has done and will do. We will deal with one today and the other tomorrow.

The gospel on the ground is the good news that God being holy made us in his image, to rightly reflect him and multiply his glory on earth. We didn’t do that. Instead, we sinned and we trusted in something or someone other than God. Because God is just, He will extend a punishment that meets our crime. Because the crime is infinitely horrible, the punishment will be infinitely horrible. Because God is merciful, He sent his only Son Jesus who is fully God and fully man. Jesus lived a perfect life thus fulfilling the law in himself. He died on a cross thus taking on the punishment we deserve. He rose again proving that he completed the payment for sin. Now he calls all men everywhere to repent and believe in him. If we turn from our sin and trust in Christ alone for salvation, we will be saved from the punishment we deserve, given the righteousness of Christ, adopted by God as sons, empowered to live a life that increasingly reflects the character of God and given the promise of eternal life with God and other believers in heaven. If we do not turn to Jesus, then the wrath of God remains on us and there is no hope, only a fearful expectation of eternal judgment.

So here’s what every man must ask himself: Do I believe this? Am I really trusting only in Jesus and his finished work on the cross?

Why not pray this: *Lord, I am thankful for the gospel because I would be hopeless without it. Help me to increasingly know and love the gospel so that I may teach it to my children and work out its implications in my home. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

Wednesday

According to Romans 1:16, the gospel is “the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.” So the gospel is important in the home because the gospel is what makes us right with God. As husbands and fathers, we must continually explain the gospel to our wife and children and make every effort to entreat them to believe it. John Wesley said,

The person in your house that claims your first and nearest attention, is, undoubtedly, your wife; seeing you are to love her, even as Christ hath loved the Church... Your children [are] immortal spirits whom God hath, for a time, entrusted to your care, that you may train them up in all holiness, and fit them for the enjoyment of God in eternity. This is a glorious and important trust; seeing one soul is of more value than all the world beside. Every child, therefore, you are to watch over with the utmost care, that, when you are called to give an account of each to the Father of spirits, you may give your accounts with joy and not with grief.

This is a weighty calling. Only the gospel will give us the perspective to view our families this way and the power to lead our families as we should. “When the whole story of God frames every part of a family’s existence, parents don’t just see their children as sons and daughters in Christ. They also see their children as potential or actual brothers and sisters in Christ” (Timothy Paul Jones). In the biblical narrative, family predates the fall and therefore is a good gift from God. Unfortunately, when sin entered the world, we see an immediate effect upon the family unit—husband blames wife and brother murders brother (Gen 3:12; 4:8).

Family life is effected by the fall even today and therefore we will experience futility and frustration at home—do not be surprised when you experience this! Marriage is not merely about making you happy, but making you holy. Marriage exists to portray the Christ-church relationship (Eph 5:22-33). Marriage is a covenant between two sinners, thus it requires humility, forgiveness, and patience. Likewise, your children are gifts to be treasured (Ps 127:3) and sinners to be trained (Prov 22:6). Fathers are to bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph 6:4). Your children will test your patience and expose your sin, but Christ will supply your strength if you lean on Him. In the power of the Holy Spirit, you will be able to reach God’s goal for your family: living a life that increasingly glorifies God and equipping your family to increasingly glorify God.

Why not pray this: *Dear God, I need Your power to persevere in the task you have set out for my life. I want to lead my wife and children, but my sin and selfishness often gets in the way. Let the gospel be ever on my heart and lips. Help me to daily die to self, take up my cross, and follow Jesus in the way that I love my wife and children. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

Thursday

The critical question for you as a family shepherd is this: if you could have a great marriage filled with honesty, respect, and love; if you could have perfectly obedient children who genuinely respect their parents and love their siblings; if you could make plenty of memories from date-nights and pleasant family vacations; if your finances were sufficient and misunderstandings were nonexistent; would you be satisfied if Jesus was never mentioned in your home?

My passionate desire is to equip a generation of men who answer that question with a clear and resounding “No!”

Your family’s most fundamental need is not good behavior or better communication. “Christian children (and their parents) don’t need to learn to be ‘nice.’ They need death and resurrection and a Savior who has gone before them as faithful high priest, who was a child himself and who lived and died perfectly in their place” (Elyze Fitzpatrick). At all times and seasons, your family’s most fundamental need is the gospel because your family’s most fundamental problem is sin—and only the gospel sufficiently deals with sin. Unfortunately, the gospel is often misunderstood and misapplied in the home.

Research shows that many American teens believe something coined by Christian Smith as “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.” This is the idea that God is a nice Creator who promotes a person’s self-actualization and in the end, good people go to heaven. Moralistic Therapeutic Deism might produce a morally decent family, but it is clearly a false gospel. Paul said if anyone preaches a different gospel, “let him be accursed” (Gal 1:8-9). The problem with false gospels is that they do not have to be too far from the full gospel to be totally false. If you are going to lead your family in the *right* direction, you and your family must not be misdirected by false gospels. Therefore, you must not only grasp, but clearly articulate the gospel. You may feel more comfortable taking your child to see a pastor in order to discuss the gospel, but that should not be the default approach. *You* are the one responsible for ensuring that your family is gospel-centered. *You* must combat against false gospels arising in your home by constantly and explicitly communicating the true gospel.

Why not pray this: *Dear Lord, help me to know the gospel well and articulate it clearly. I pray that my family would strive for more than mere moral decency. Rather, help us to understand and believe the gospel so that obedience and godliness may be driven by grace and a passion for Your glory. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

Friday

One of the most surprising things about our relationship with God is not that he wants to make us happy, but how He accomplishes that end.

Just as any good father wants his children to experience joy and happiness, so God desires His children to experience *ultimate* joy and *ultimate* happiness. Some may object by saying, “God doesn’t want us to be happy as much as He wants us to be on mission, declaring his goodness across the earth.” True enough, if we define happiness by temporary pleasure. But what if God’s idea of happiness and joy is not the same as ours? What if God’s desire for our joy and God’s mission in the world are not at odds or even two separate paths? What if God’s desire to make us happy is actually accomplished when we are on mission with Him?

Let’s put two psalms together to make the case here. First of all, Psalm 16:11 says, “In your presence [O God] there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” It is impossible to experience a fuller joy anywhere but in the presence of God. When you taste and see that the Lord is good, there is profound joy that wells up in your heart. Nothing compares to knowing Jesus. To know Him is to delight in Him.

Now take a look at another psalm. Psalm 37:4 says, “Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.” If you really see God through the eyes of faith and encounter Him in His glory and worth—it will cause you to be filled with delight. When you delight yourself in the Lord, your desires will eventually mold into His desires. Suddenly the apex of joy that you experience in His presence catapults you into expressing this delight through mission. C.S. Lewis says, “All enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise... the delight is incomplete till it is expressed.” That’s why Christianity is not simply about being good or going to heaven, but rather being on mission to make much of Christ in all the earth by making disciples who delight in Jesus.

The mission in your home is discipling, not disinfecting. Disinfecting concentrates on behavior modification, teaching children to be good. This results in decent moral behavior with little world impact, disobedience to God’s command to make disciples in the home, and ultimately, wasted lives. Discipling on the other hand, propels your family into the world to live for the glory of Christ. This results in disciples of Christ with total world impact, obedience to God’s command to shepherd the hearts of your wife and children, and abundant lives.

Why not pray this: *God help me to know You and make You known in my home. Help me to see You through the eyes of faith and thereby be filled with delight in You. Help me to impress a vision for the beauty of Christ in the hearts of the people in my home. Let me see the home as my primary place for disciple-making, training hearts to delight in Jesus. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

Week 2

Monday

As we have been reiterating, the definition for spiritual leadership in the home is this: spiritual leadership requires a man to “[know] where God wants [his family] to be and [take] the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power” (John Piper).

You should lead your home in such a way that your family is equipped and empowered to increasingly glorify God. But how do you accomplish that goal? What route should you take? While God has not given an exact methodological blueprint for male spiritual leadership in the home, God hasn’t left us in the dark either. Jonathan Edwards points out that “every Christian family ought to be as it were a little church.” Therefore, the man must take on the role of a shepherd-leader in the home.

Timothy Witmer says, “While there is no explicit application of the shepherding metaphor to family leadership in Scripture, there is a clear parallel between God’s covenantal care for his people and a man’s care for his family.” In other words, you can glean much from the New Testament’s teaching of the pastor-shepherd’s role in the life of the local church in how you ought to shepherd your own family flock (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5). Witmer points out that there are at least three components of a shepherd leader in the home: knowing, providing, and protecting. Therefore, in order to strategically work toward equipping and empowering your family to increasingly glorify God, you need to intentionally work to know your family, provide for your family, and protect your family.

In your opinion, with which of these components do you most struggle? Think through why you struggle with that particular component. Is it selfishness? Fear of man? Workaholicism? Christ has called you to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus as you make disciples in your home.

Why not pray this: *Lord, help me to know my family, provide for my family, and protect my family. I desire to apply the proper methods in my home. Help me to lead well. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

Tuesday

If you want to know your family, it requires at least two things: time and communication.

First of all, it takes *time* to know your family—both quality and quantity. Don't underestimate the profound impact your time has upon your family. Jim Elliot said, "Wherever you are, be all there. Live to the hilt every situation you believe to be the will of God." When you are at home, are you all there? Or are you more dialed into your phone or device? There is a popular management technique espoused some years ago called MBWA or Management By Wandering Around. The idea is that the manager spends a great deal of time walking around on the floor with the workers rather than staying cooped up in the office. Many were amazed at how productive they became because their accessibility allowed them to answer the workers' questions the moment they arose. In the same way, if you are accessible to your wife and children, you can be intentional about weaving the gospel into their lives. God has made Himself accessible to us through Jesus and you should model that accessibility in your home. So how do you need to rearrange your schedule in order to spend quality and quantity time with your wife and children? Are there hobbies or toys that need to be set on the backburner during this season of life?

Secondly, it takes *communication* to know your family. "Wherever you find marital failure, you will find a breakdown in real communication. Wherever you find marital success, you will find a good communication system" (Wayne Mack). A good communication system not only includes being able to articulate your feelings, but also being able to listen well. Ken Sande says,

Good listening...improves your ability to understand others, it shows that you realize you do not have all the answers, and it tells the other person that you value his or her thoughts and opinions. Even if you cannot agree with everything others say or do, your willingness to listen demonstrates respect and shows that you are trying to understand their perspective.

Moreover, you must communicate to the *heart* of your wife and children. As Tedd Tripp has said, "Communication must be multi-faceted and richly textured. It must include encouragement, correction, rebuke, entreaty, instruction, warning, understanding, teaching and prayer." That means that while "small talk" has a place in the home, you must initiate deeper level conversing that deals with hopes, fears, worries, etc. Only then will communication set the stage to help apply the gospel in the home.

Why not pray this: *Lord, help me to guard my time with my family. Let me communicate well as I make strides to know my family better for the glory of Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Wednesday

You should work hard. Unfortunately, many men work harder at their jobs than they do at their families. Let me ask you, if you put as much work into your job as you do your family, would you be fired or promoted? Your career should never cause you to neglect your family. The key is balance. You must provide for your family both materially and spiritually.

First of all, you should *materially* provide for your family. “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim 5:8). Work is woven into the fabric of creation and therefore is a good gift that God has graciously given to humanity. However, sin has tainted work so that it can be distorted in different ways. While a man is called to work hard in order to provide for his family, he should make sure to stay away from two sinful extremes: working too much or working too little—being a workaholic or being lazy.

Secondly, you should *spiritually* provide for your family. This means that you must center your home around the Word of God, passing it down from generation to generation (Deut 6:7-9). “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Word does the work. The power of God is unleashed on the people of God *through* the Word of God. Therefore, you must make every effort that the Bible is not just known in your heart and home, but it becomes to you and your family sweeter than “drippings of the honeycomb” (Ps 19:10).

You may wonder how that actually happens. What is the means to pressing the Word of God into the hearts of those entrusted to you? There is a neglected, yet profitable practice that Christian families have exercised throughout church history that has molded the hearts of those in the home to be conformed to the image of Christ by the Spirit’s help. This practice is family worship. Family worship can come in different shapes and sizes. Some propose a “read, pray, sing” model (see Donald Whitney, *Family Worship*). In this model, the family gathers daily or weekly and simply reads the Bible, prays, and sings a hymn. Others memorize catechisms or scripture together and discuss its meaning and application over a meal. It may vary in terms of formality and frequency depending on your family’s season of life. There is room for great flexibility and creativity as you apply a structure that works for your family. Nonetheless, family worship’s importance cannot be overstated. It is a means for spiritual provision.

Are you providing for your family materially *and* spiritually? Are you leading your family in family worship? If not, why not? Is it out of fear, ignorance, or laziness that you have decided to withhold this jewel from those you love the most?

Why not pray this: *Lord, there is nothing I want more than to see Jesus high, exalted, and lifted up in my home. I believe He is worthy of worship. Help me to move forward with boldness and humility as I lead my family in worship in the home. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

Thursday

You must protect your family. We could talk about many facets of protection that you are responsible for—physical, emotional, spiritual, etc. But due to the widespread reality of marital unfaithfulness, the pervasive nature of sexual temptation, and the damage it does to the family unit, we will narrow our focus to the idea of protecting your family by battling against warped versions of sex (e.g. marital unfaithfulness and porn).

Sexual sin will absolutely destroy your family. Therefore, you must fight against sexual temptation. There are many ways you may engage in this fight. I once heard that the greatest buzzkill to any lustful thought is to mentally think through what would happen if you were to carry out that lustful thought and take the full plunge into adultery. In other words, go ahead and play out in your mind what would happen immediately *after* the rendezvous that you are mentally indulging in. Here are just a few of the things that would happen in my life if I were to go down that road:

Instantly there would be a flood of shame and disbelief at what I had just done, followed by absolute self-loathing. Then I would go into all-out detective mode, tracing every step to figure out if I would get caught. I would probably make promises to God on how I will bury it and never do it again. But it would only be a matter of time until I either get caught or I simply confess from absolute guilt. The news would bring immediate shame and turmoil to Lindsay, very much threatening to end our marriage. Then I would have to sit down my children one-by-one (Libby, Susie, Annie, George, and Jake) and try to explain why I couldn't resist a moment of excitement with a woman who did not belong to me, an explanation they'll never be able to understand no matter what age—all the while knowing that my children and I may continue on with a relationship, but it will never be the same again. I will bring shame upon my mother and disgrace upon my father's name. Moreover, I would have to stand before my church and look into the very faces that I love and tell them that I practiced something different than what I so passionately preached. On top of that, I would have to sleep with the fact that I have given people who hate the church yet another reason to mock the name of Christ. So to recap, I will bring untold shame and pain upon my wife, my children, my church, my family name, and my Christ. Is there redemption in Christ? Yes. But if I go down that road, it will never be the same. And to think, all I had to do was just say "no" to my flesh and "yes" to Christ.

God help us as men to be sober-minded and self-controlled in terms of sexual temptation. We must be more captivated with the love of Christ than our love for sensual pleasure.

Why not pray this: *Lord, my problem is not my desire for pleasure, but my lack thereof. I confess that I am not controlled by the greatest desire for pleasure, which is only found in Christ. I am too often driven by lesser desires, the passions and lusts of the flesh. Let me see clearly how sexual sin will destroy my life. Holy Spirit, overwhelm me with the love of Christ so that I may passionately pursue him, and thus protect my family. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Friday

A man must protect his children by setting appropriate boundaries and extending loving discipline.

What is meant by setting appropriate boundaries is simply communicating what is acceptable in the home and what is not. It is impossible to carry out healthy discipline if the children do not know the boundaries, and healthy discipline is essential for the well being of the family, the church, and the world. The great Puritan Cotton Mather puts it well:

As the great God, who at the beginning said, "Let us make man after our image," has made man a sociable creature, so it is evident that families are the nurseries of all societies... When families are under ill discipline, all other societies, being ill-disciplined as a result, will feel that terror.

In other words, a man who extends loving discipline to his children is helping to limit terror in the world—terror that will inevitably harm the children themselves. In that way, discipline serves as a significant way for a man to protect his children.

There are two major types of loving discipline that a man should carry out: formative and corrective. Tedd Tripp defines formative discipline as “principles and absolutes by which to live—hooks to hang life on.” That means that you should discipline or instruct your family to apply Scripture to everyday life, growing in spiritual vitality and maturity.

The second type of discipline that a man should carry out in order to protect his children is corrective discipline. “Corrective discipline is a rescue mission, designed to direct straying or unbelieving children back inside the circle of blessing where they honor and obey parents (Eph 6:1-2).” Although the idea of spanking in Western culture has grown unpopular, the Bible is clear that a man who does not spank his children actually hates his children: “Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him” (Prov 13:24). In other words, a father’s outpouring of discipline is actually an outpouring of love.

Many men have homes where formative and corrective discipline are unbalanced. Which one do you tend to neglect? In what ways can you be intentionally gospel-centered through your discipline?

Why not pray this: *Lord, I need to model my discipline after the way You discipline me. You are never erratic, but always measured. Help me to be self-controlled and dignified as I lovingly exercise both formative and corrective discipline in my home. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

Week 3

Monday

Spiritual leadership in the home requires a man to “[know] where God wants [his family] to be and [take] the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power” (John Piper). We have already examined two parts of this definition: direction and methodology. This week we are dealing with the third segment of the definition: the necessity of our reliance on God’s power.

As previously explored, the goal toward which you should be moving your family is equipping and empowering them to increasingly glorify God. To say it another way, you are responsible to help your wife and children grow spiritually. If you have even a shred of self-awareness, you realize your inability to do such a task on your own. In order to endure and be effective in your God-assigned charge, you must access more than *will*-power—you need *God’s* power.

The power of God is generally accessed through means of grace. While no one can control the supply of God’s grace, it is essential for God’s people to place themselves in regular channels of blessing. That is what the means of grace are all about—putting oneself in the general flow of God’s grace so that one may receive God’s power. The means of grace “enable us to do what we cannot do by direct effort” (Dallas Willard). They are usually “unimpressively mundane, but spectacularly potent by the Spirit” (David Mathis). Because of a man’s inability to produce his own power, it is essential that he places himself in the usual streams of God’s grace to receive God’s power in order to carry out God’s task of leading his family spiritually.

There are two ideas at play here: (1) the means of grace are the means of growth; (2) you as the man are given the responsibility to help your family grow. Therefore, the means of grace are essential for your personal growth and the growth of your family. While there are numerous different means of grace, they can be clustered under three main headings: hear God’s voice (Word), have God’s ear (Prayer), and belong to Christ’s body (Fellowship) (See David Mathis, *Habits of Grace*).

Which of these do you find to be the greatest struggle in terms of consistency? In terms of joy?

Why not pray this: *Lord, help me to grasp the vital nature of each means of grace in the life of a man who is seeking to be the spiritual leader of his home. Stir my desire and my strength for consistency in these matters. Let my excuses wither with my apathy. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

Tuesday

The most foundational means of grace is the hearing of God's voice. Jonathan Edwards said, "The chief of the means of grace is the Word of God: that standing revelation of the mind and will of God that he gives the world, and it is as it were the sum of all means." Therefore, it is essential that you hear God's voice in order to be the spiritual leader of your home.

According to God's Word, you must be apt to teach the Word to your wife and children (Eph 5:22-6:4). Obviously you cannot give away what you do not have. If you have no knowledge of God's Word, you have no ability to pass on knowledge of God's Word to your family.

Three components are necessary for you to increase in your knowledge of God's Word: reading, meditation, and memorization. In light of the first two, reading is done for breadth and meditation is done for depth. Donald Whitney gives an illustration of dipping a teabag into a cup of hot water. If you dip it quickly, the water does not absorb the flavor and remains unchanged. But if you leave it in there for a little while, the water absorbs it, changing the drink altogether (i.e. it was water and it became tea). In the same way, if you read God's Word *and* meditate on God's Word, you will be changed by God's Word.

Memorization of God's Word is also important for a man who leads his family well. Deuteronomy 6:6 says, "And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart." "[A] person's thinking and behavior is markedly affected by the Word" (Ajith Fernando). Thus it is imperative for you to internalize the Word if you are going to be the spiritual leader God is calling you to be. Moses is communicating that God's people should hide God's Word in their hearts so that they might not sin against God (Ps 119:11). God's Word has a potent ability by the Spirit to lessen sin's grip on God's people. Moreover, when issues or questions come up in everyday talk, you may not have time to look up particular verses. Instead, it is imperative that you know how to speak from God's Word in any setting. The only way that can happen is if you memorize God's Word.

Mere knowledge of God's Word is not what brings about change in your home for the glory of Christ, for "'knowledge' puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Cor 8:1). As you practice the habit of hearing from God in His Word, the love that wells up and builds up in your heart and home is brought about by "a variable you can't control. A power you cannot command. A mysterious goodness you can only receive. [Namely,] the Holy Spirit" (David Mathis). Therefore, if you are going to access the power of God in order to glorify God in your home by leading your family spiritually, you *must* hear God's voice.

Why not pray this: *Lord, help me to know my Bible and love my Bible. Let the word of Christ dwell in me richly as I make much of Jesus in my home. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Wednesday

Prayer assumes a relationship with God. In the beginning, mankind enjoyed a perfect relationship with God. Though sin had cut off this relationship, Jesus graciously restores for his people a relationship with the Father by which his people can boldly approach his throne (Heb 4:14-16). In other words, the people of God need God, and by God's grace in Christ, they are enabled to come to God with their petitions.

“The great purpose of prayer is to come humbly, expectantly, and—because of Jesus—boldly into the conscious presence of God, to relate to him, talk to him, and ultimately enjoy him as our great Treasure.” (David Mathis). Here's the great issue that will determine whether you will remain steadfast in prayer: Do you *enjoy* prayer? Is there an impulse of joy in your heart that drives you to pray? If not, why not?

It is essential that you enjoy prayer. A burdensome prayer life communicates a burdensome God. If lessons are more often caught than taught, you must be diligent to sincerely enjoy prayer as you beseech the Lord.

So what do you do if prayer has become more of a burden than a joy?

Much could be said about this that goes far beyond the scope of the purpose today. But suffice it to say two things: Confess and rehearse the gospel. First of all, the most foundational thing to do is fall in line with the psalmists in the Old Testament along with many throughout church history, “who did not merely identify, express, and vent their feelings but also processed them with brutal honesty in God's presence” (Tim Keller). In other words, the beginning point for you, if you struggle to enjoy prayer, is to tell God with brutal honesty and desperation that prayer is burdensome. He knows your heart and He knows your ways. Be honest with him. Confess it to him. And ask God to give you joy in your prayer life.

Secondly, rehearse the gospel. Think through how you were by nature and by choice cut off from God and an object of His justified wrath. But because of God's grace, He came after you in Christ. Jesus was perfect in your place and was killed on your behalf. Through faith in Him, you have been reconciled to God the Father. Jesus' record becomes your record. The God of this universe now calls you His own child. There is nothing you can do to make Him pour out more love and favor upon you. You are God's child now. And He is all you will ever need for everlasting joy. Therefore, run to Him. Go to Him. As the old hymn says, “O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear; all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.”

Why not pray this: *O God, restore to me the joy of my salvation. Help me to feel the depth of your love for me displayed at Calvary. Let me enjoy my time with you in prayer, so much so that my prayer time increases in terms of quality and quantity. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Thursday

Since man is made in God's image, and since God is triune, mankind is made for community.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your family belongs to a godly community, namely a local church where the gospel is declared faithfully. Since you as the man are to lead in helping your family grow, and the church is a means of grace where growth is accomplished, it is vital for you to make sure you and your family appropriately participate in the church. Most fundamentally, this means that you must ensure that your family consistently participates in corporate worship.

If you allow other things in life to keep your family from receiving the blessing of corporate worship, you are doing harm to your family. In other words, you must make sure that your family is in church. So what typically keeps your family from church on Sundays (i.e. extra-curricular activities, travel ball, dance, hunting, fishing, vacations, laziness)? Do you realize that if these things keep your family from gathering and worshipping with the Lord's people on the Lord's day, you are actually worshipping those things and sacrificing your family upon the altar of those gods? And by the way, you are teaching your children that church is only important to the extent that nothing else comes along. In so doing, you are almost guaranteeing that your children and grandchildren are going to give little to no regard to the church. To put it another way, you are guilty of spiritual homicide if your family does not regularly participate in corporate worship.

The June 2003 issue of *Touchstone* magazine wrote about a Swiss study on a father's influence upon his children's spiritual lives. Robbie Low summarizes the study's findings saying, "In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular)." Bottom line, a man must have his family in church if he is going to lead subsequent generations in godliness.

Why not pray this: *Lord, help me to not allow other things to creep up and keep my family away from corporate worship on the Lord's Day. Help me to get my family to church so they may be able to sing, pray, and hear the Word of God preached in the gathering of their faith family. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Friday

Jesus gave the church two things to do in order to rehearse and dramatize the gospel before our eyes: baptism and the Lord's Supper.

First of all, baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper (see Baptist Faith and Message 2000).

Even if a man and his whole family has already been baptized, he must exhort his family to watch in faith as a baptism takes place: "When your church stirs the waters...with eyes of faith, watch the gospel on display in the waters" (David Mathis).

Secondly, the Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming (see Baptist Faith and Message 2000). If the goal of a man's spiritual leadership in the home is to empower and equip his family to increasingly glorify God, then the man must get his family to the table.

For the believing family members, it is an opportunity to obediently partake in the only continual ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ. For the unbelieving family members (e.g. young children who have not yet been baptized), having the bread and the cup pass over them and having them watch the believers around them partake of the Lord's Supper, puts the gospel on display before their eyes.

Biblical remembrance is not just about what happened to Jesus but about happened to me and what happened to you because of Jesus. Russell Moore says, "The Lord's Supper [should] be characterized by even more celebrative singing, and even laughter, than the rest of the service. The Supper is a victory lap—announcing the triumph of Christ over the powers of sin, death, and Satan. At the same time, the Supper [should] maintain the gravity of the moment, as the congregation recognizes that it is performing a sign of God's freeing us from slavery through Christ—a sign of a new covenant that addresses not only other believers but God himself, the unseen demonic rulers, and even unbelievers who might marvel from outside at the meaning we find in this ancient rite."

Why not pray this: *Lord, help me to lead my family to observe the ordinances that you have given to the church. Help me to know you more as I observe the meaning of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Help me be overwhelmed as I remember all that Christ has done and will do for me and my family. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Week 4

Monday

Spiritual leadership in the home requires a man to “[know] where God wants [his family] to be and [take] the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power” (John Piper). We have already seen that this definition encapsulates three parts: direction, methodology, and power.

Now it is time to put some skin on actually leading your family spiritually. While there are thousands of things I could commend you to do, I think it is fitting to exhort you to three practical disciplines: faith walks, faith talks, and faith processes. According to *The 4 Disciplines of Execution*, the more goals you have, the fewer goals you will actually achieve with excellence. Leaders tend to be over achievers, therefore, some men think that setting a higher number of goals can lead to better performance. But the opposite is true. Chiseling your goals down to three or less will increase your focus and thus you will be more likely to carry out those goals with excellence.

But before we talk in detail about these three disciplines to apply in your home in order to lead your family spiritually, there is need to do a little self-contemplation. You can’t give away what you do not have. The Scriptures say “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith.” (2 Corinthians 13:5). The Psalmist says, “Search me, O God, and know my heart...and see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting! (Ps 139:23). The church of Ephesus had left their first (Rev 2:4). The disciple whom Jesus loved said, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

In light of these texts, as you begin to equip and empower your family to increasingly glorify God, you need to lay your soul bare before God and ask Him to expose any sin you need to confess lest you sacrifice the very salvation that you teach your family. Never forget that sin is horrible. Sin is ugly. Sin is deceptive—so much that you may think you have been forgiven only to realize on the day of the Lord that you stand in condemnation because you never stood in the shadow of the cross. Sin separates you from God and sin makes it impossible for you to please God. God is so holy that it took the tortuous murder of His Son in order to satisfy His justice—only then could God extend mercy. So give not a mere glance to the perils that come at the disposal of *your* sin. If we lessen the horror of sin, we will lessen the glory of God.

Why not pray this: *Lord, search me and expose any sin in my heart. Let me hate my sin with passion and love the cross with zeal. My only hope is found in a bloody cross and empty tomb. Let me stand in the love, life, death, and resurrection of Christ and Christ alone. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

Tuesday

In order to help your family see all of life through gospel lenses, you will need to engage in informal and sporadic times of teaching, or “faith walks,” as opportunities arise. What does it take to do faith walks well? There are at least four ways you can create an atmosphere for healthy faith walks.

First of all, be *available*. You need to work hard, but don’t be a slave to your work. Your family needs you to be available. Be intentional about spending one-on-one time with your wife and children. Learn to cherish the wife and children God gave you, not some idea of a perfect wife and family. In so doing, you will find that you desire to increasingly be available for your family.

Secondly, be *present*. Jim Elliot said, “Wherever you are, be all there.” Your routine may put you at home with your family at night, as opposed to at work or at the bar, but if the phone or TV preoccupies your attention, you’re as good as gone. Don’t mentally check out when in the car, at home, or other places. These are precious times to engage in great conversations, shaping the way your family thinks. Redeem the time to talk, encourage, build up, and get to know your family on a deeper level. Also, marvel at the uniqueness of each member of your family. Give God praise for His creativity and intelligence you see revealed in your spouse and children.

Thirdly, be *trustworthy*. Intentionally build a relationship with each family member by keeping your word. If you say that you are going to do something, then do it. Let your wife and children be able to trust you more than they trust the roof on the house you provide them with.

Fourthly, be *thoughtful*. Help your children interpret the world around them through the lens of the gospel. As you watch movies, don’t just neutrally receive the ideas and narratives at play. Every story has different themes that either reflect or contrast God’s story of redemption. Point these things out and discuss them with your family.

Essentially, you must always be ready to point your family to the glories of God in Christ.

Why not pray this: *Lord, help me to be wise and discerning in terms of my readiness to point my family to Jesus. Help me interpret songs, movies, and the world around me in light of the gospel. Help me to teach my family to do the same. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

Wednesday

Faith Talks are merely family devotions—intentional times set aside at least once each week for conversation around the Scripture with your family. Donald Whitney points out three elements that may be included in these family devotions: read, pray, sing.

First of all, *read* Scripture with your family. As Jesus fought against the temptations of the devil, He quoted Deuteronomy, saying, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matt 4:4; cf. Deut 8:3). Paul said to Timothy, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17). What your family needs more than food, clothes, comfort, and security is the Word of God. Do not feed them food for their body and withhold from them food for their soul. Expose them consistently and joyfully to the Word of God.

Secondly, *pray* with your family. Pray with your family, asking God to give you and your family eyes to see the beauty and splendor and majesty of Christ. Confess sin together as you stand under the banner of grace that the gospel affords. Let there be a soberness to your requests—praying for your church and pastors and missionaries and for the nations to be reached. Let your family be well-acquainted with the persecuted church in your prayers—your brothers and sisters in Christ who are giving their lives proclaiming that Jesus died and rose from the dead. Remember, the length of the prayer is not the issue, but the heart behind the beseeching.

Thirdly, *sing* with your family. This is optional because some men simply cannot sing well. However, there are alternatives to ensure that gospel-centered music is played in the home. The point is to encourage your family to delight in Christ in such a way that there is an overflow of truth expressed through joyful singing.

Remember be realistic, flexible, and consistent. Rome was not build in a day and neither will your family.

Why not pray this: *Lord, I want the name of Jesus to be praised and prized above all things in my home. But family devotions are hard. Please help me to be realistic, flexible, and consistent as I read, pray, and sing with my family. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Thursday

It's one thing to shepherd your family in general. But is there a way to ensure that each individual is being shepherded according to their personal needs. This is where a "faith process" come into play. A faith process is a plan that involves the man individually shepherding his wife and children by addressing their particular needs at each stage of life.

The goal here is to know how your wife and children are developing spiritually. How are they encouraged or discouraged? How are they tempted or empowered? Do they struggle with reading the Bible, prayer, or church life? Do they have gifts that they are not exercising that you need to spur them on to use for God's glory? Where are their emotional and theological struggles? What temptations are most difficult for them to overcome? These are the kinds of things that a family shepherd should be discovering in the hearts of those entrusted to him.

Here are two ideas for faith processes:

The first one comes from Timothy Paul Jones. He recommends to choose an enjoyable place to be together; if possible, make it a weekly tradition where you and your child/wife goes somewhere or orders some menu item that you usually do not have at other times. Consider having a special journal that is used only for your weekly faith process. Choose a book of the Bible, a particular biblical text, or a creed that you will work on little by little over many weeks; the time spent together is more important than how many words or verses you cover each week. By choosing a book of the Bible or a creed, you do not have to figure out what to do each week; simply pick up where you left off the week before. Read the Scripture or creed together. Ask, "What did this mean to people back then? What should this mean for us today?" Also ask, "What has God been doing in your life this week? What struggles are you facing right now? How does the gospel apply to these struggles? What needs to happen next in your life to follow Jesus more closely?" Be willing to share your own answers to these questions too, confessing your sins to one another (James 5:16-18). Together, write in the journal a one-sentence thought, a Scripture verse from the day's discussion, and a brief prayer.

The second idea comes from Brian Croft. He suggests that each child get one night a week to stay up beyond his or her usual bedtime. When the other children go to bed, one child goes and meets with you (the father). Read a passage of Scripture together, discuss it, and then read a chapter from a book the child has chosen to read. Then ask how you can pray for the child. Pray with the child and then put him or her to bed.

As you can see, these things are not complex nor do they take a great deal of time. The issue is deciding to do what it takes to ensure that you individually shepherd each member of your family.

Why not pray this: *Lord, help me to do what it takes to press the gospel into the hearts of each member of my family, working out its implications in their lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Friday

Today is the last devotion of the study. I hope that you have enjoyed this study and found it helpful.

If there is one last challenge I can give you as we bring this journey to a close, it's this: know God. "The irony of the Christian is that they know the Lord and yet what they want more than anything else is to know the Lord more." (Ryan Fullerton). To know God more is what you need more than anything and it is what your family needs from you more than anything.

First of all, what you need more than anything is to know God. You were made for God and will be restless until you find your rest in God. Your insatiable appetite for the things of this world is a reminder that you were made for something more. Don't miss this! The problem is that in your sin, your impulse is to try to find satisfaction, joy, wholeness, and peace in something less than God. It could even be in good things such as career, money, friends, and even family. But those things will ultimately disappoint you if you make them ultimate things. When a good thing becomes a god thing, that's a bad thing. So hear me please, you don't need a new personality, a new past, a new brain, a new plan, a new education, a new career, a new wife, a new family. What you need is to know God! Do you know God? Do you love Him? Do you think about Him, talk about Him, live for Him? Do you have the one desire that the Psalmist had? "One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple" (Ps 27:4). What you need more than anything is to know God.

Secondly, what your family needs from you more than anything is for you to know God. The greatest gift you could offer your family is to display before them a heart that genuinely loves and knows God. Men are often deceived into thinking that they need to work longer hours to make more money so that they can buy their family more things. Husbands, your wife does not need a new necklace, she needs you to know God. Dads, your children do not need a new toy, they need you to know God. Your family does not need new clothes, new cars, a new house, better vacations, or more family-friendly activity. Jesus said this is eternal life, that you may know God! (Jn 17:3). If you want to pass on eternal life to your family, show them what it is to know God.

So here's the question: Do you know God?

Why don't you pray: *Lord, I want to know You. I want to be consumed by You. Strip me from the fleeting pleasures of this world that so often take my eyes off You. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit so that I may see and know You. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING THE MEN OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF ENTERPRISE, ALABAMA TO BE GOSPEL-CENTERED LEADERS IN THEIR HOMES

James Benjamin Bowden, D.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. John David Trentham

The purpose of this project was to equip men of First Baptist Church of Enterprise, Alabama.

Chapter 1 defines the goals of the project, ministry context, rationale, definitions, limitations, delimitations, and research methodology.

Chapter 2 establishes the biblical and theological basis for male spiritual leadership in the home.

Chapter 3 explores the theoretical and practical issues related to male spiritual leadership in the home.

Chapter 4 describes the process by which the project was implemented.

Chapter 5 evaluates the efficacy of the four-week project based on its specified goals.

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