TRAINING CHURCH MEMBERS AT NEW CANAAN BAPTIST CHURCH IN DALLAS, GEORGIA, FOR EVANGELISM AND MISSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

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APPROVAL SHEET

TRAINING CHURCH MEMBERS AT NEW CANAAN BAPTIST CHURCH IN DALLAS, GEORGIA, FOR EVANGELISM AND MISSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

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I dedicate this ministry project to my bride and best friend, Courtney. Her love for Christ and his bride constantly encourages me to love Christ and the church.
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PREFACE

Jesus told his disciples in John 15:8, “By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.” As followers of Jesus Christ, we are expected to show evidence of our faith. James even goes so far as to say that “faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (Jas 2:17). The primary means of showing evidence of our faith in Jesus is obedience to him. He commanded his disciples to “make disciples” (Matt 28:19) and therefore, the primary mission of the church is to make disciples. We cannot make disciples without sharing the gospel. I am passionate about the local church being a group of people who share the gospel with others, bearing fruit to the glory of God. This project was born out of my desire to see New Canaan Baptist Church become that kind of church.

I would like to thank three men in the ministry who have impacted my life and my involvement in personal evangelism. First, Dr. Timothy McCoy, Pastor of Ingleside Baptist Church in Macon, Georgia, was influential in encouraging my call into the ministry and shaping my view of pastoral ministry. Second, Rev. Irmal Elliott taught me the value of outreach and ministry as I served as an associate pastor under his leadership. Finally, Dr. Timothy Beougher invested in the lives of many seminary students as he taught us personal evangelism, helping develop in my life a greater desire to share the gospel with others.

I would like to thank professors who have helped facilitate significant growth in my life as a pastor and leader over the past several years. I would also like to express appreciation to the administration of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for their support, especially Dr. Wilder, Dr. Parker, Coleman Ford, Jessica McMichael, Summer Corn, and the other members of the Professional Doctoral Studies office. Finally, I am
thankful for the investment of time and care given to this project by Dr. Joseph Harrod, my faculty supervisor.

I would like to acknowledge the members of New Canaan Baptist Church, who have faithfully joined me in this project and have received the instruction of God’s Word as we work together to reach the people of Paulding County, Georgia. Without their willingness to learn and apply their knowledge, this project would not have been possible.

Jason Loudermilk

Dallas, Georgia
December 2017
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The mission of the local church is to develop fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.¹ This task of discipleship begins with evangelism, as Christ-followers share the gospel with unbelieving family members, friends, coworkers, and neighbors. Healthy churches will develop mature followers of Jesus, and maturing disciples of Jesus Christ will reach the lost in their local communities and engage in sharing the gospel around the world.² New Canaan Baptist Church in Dallas, Georgia, was lacking in both evangelistic practice and missional engagement locally and globally. As a result, the church was not fulfilling the Great Commission of making disciples of Jesus Christ. This project was designed to address and correct these issues so that New Canaan Baptist Church would become a healthy, disciple-making body of believers.

Context

New Canaan Baptist Church (NCBC) was established as a community congregation in rural Paulding County, Georgia, in 1868. Paulding County remained a primarily rural and agricultural community until the mid 1990s, when urban sprawl from the Metro Atlanta area began to pour into the county. The population of the county grew from 25,000 in 1990 to over 140,000 in 2015. During the ten years between 2005 and 2015, as the county continued to grow, NCBC decreased in worship attendance, from

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¹In Matt 28:18-20, Jesus instructed His disciples to “[go] . . . and make disciples of all nations.” Jesus defines discipleship as “baptizing them . . . and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19-20). All Scripture quotations taken from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

²In Acts 1:8, Jesus told His disciples that their witness for him would be in their local community, to their neighbors and throughout the world; “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
over 250 in the early 2000s to approximately 130 in 2015.\textsuperscript{3} The church is centrally located near most of the largest residential areas of Paulding County. Over 70,000 people live within a five-mile radius of the church.\textsuperscript{4} Of those who resided within that radius in 2015, 82 percent, or roughly 57,000, did not consider it important to attend religious services.\textsuperscript{5} The demographics of the area also reflected a growing population that is also increasingly multicultural and multi-ethnic.\textsuperscript{6}

New Canaan was failing to fulfill Jesus’ mission for the church to make disciples. Even an optimistic view of the state of the church in 2015 would see that unless something changed, the church could close its doors within the next twenty years. New Canaan was in a serious state of decline, and had been so for more than a decade.

NCBC had a lack of significant outreach ministries or missions emphases, and was found lacking in making disciples. The primary missions emphases for the past fifteen years had been giving to the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention and special offerings to support the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American missions. The only other international missions focus occurred each November as NCBC collected packed shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child, an annual project of Samaritan’s Purse.\textsuperscript{7} Changes were beginning to occur, however, as a mission trip to the Dominican Republic was planned for and was completed in February 2017.

Locally, NCBC gave money to the Paulding County food bank, called Helping Hands. The children and youth ministries planned community outreach events, but the

\textsuperscript{3}See appendix 7.
\textsuperscript{4}See appendix 9.
\textsuperscript{5}See appendix 9.
\textsuperscript{6}See appendix 9.
\textsuperscript{7}Samaritan’s Purse is a Christian ministry led by Franklin Graham that focuses on meeting needs of the poor and sharing the gospel. For more information, see https://www.samaritanspurse.org.
difficulty in recruiting volunteers from among the members of the congregation limited the effectiveness of these events. Follow-up visits with the contacts made through these outreach events was limited to the pastor and one other member. When given opportunities to be trained in sharing their faith, usually only two or three people in the church participated.

In 2012, the church began a new members class as a prerequisite for membership. Several members clearly communicated that they did not see a need for anything like a new members’ class. The prevailing sentiment was that since the church had never had that class, there was no need to start one now. In truth, there are over 900 members on the roll at NCBC, but the average Sunday attendance was 130.\(^8\) Hundreds of people had joined in the past but could no longer be found. However, since the inception of the class, 93 percent of the new members who have completed the class have remained active members of the church.\(^9\)

The ministries and facilities of NCBC were focused primarily upon the church members. For example, a request to allow the facilities to be used by a local homeowners’ association looking for a large enough place for their annual meeting in 2012 was denied. The neighborhood requesting to use the space is located less than a mile from the church, and NCBC is the closest church to this neighborhood. Therefore, NCBC missed an opportunity to connect with geographically near individuals and families for fear of how this group may not take care of the facilities. One evidence of the changing state of NCBC is that in 2016, that same homeowners’ association contacted NCBC again, and was allowed to meet at the church, resulting in new relationships being formed between the church members and residents of the area.

New Canaan did have a history of community involvement and outreach. By

\(^8\)The discrepancy between membership and active worship participants is unbiblical, spiritually unhealthy, and is currently being addressed at NCBC.

\(^9\)This data is tracked through member participation in Sunday School and other ministries, compiled in ACS (church membership software). See appendix 10.
2015, however, the church was less involved in the Paulding County community. There was a period of time where this was not the case. In 2010, NCBC began hosting an after-school Bible club at Dallas Elementary School called “Kid’s Beach Club.” This after-school program was staffed by volunteers from among the membership of NCBC who spent one hour, one day per week at the school. Each year, the program would attract over 60 children. During the three years that NCBC ran the program, 45 children indicated they had asked Jesus to save them. Families from the school visited worship services and outreach events because of the impact of NCBC members in the lives of their children. However, the number of volunteers dwindled from twelve down to three over three years, and NCBC was no longer able to adequately staff the program, so it was discontinued. Thankfully, another church in the community has restarted the Kid’s Beach Club after-school program at Dallas Elementary.

**Rationale**

The decline in the numbers of worship attenders at NCBC reflected the lack of spiritual growth of the members. Members who are not growing in their own faith will not share the gospel with others. In order to reverse the trend of decline, New Canaan Baptist Church had to begin to reach the lost people of Paulding County. Equipping church members for evangelism would train them to share the gospel with the lost in the community. Reaching lost people with the message of the gospel of Christ would begin the process of making disciples, thereby bringing the church into obedience to the commands of Jesus Christ. A key factor in spiritual growth is the passion and ability to share the gospel with the lost. Therefore, through this project, NCBC members were trained to participate in outreach to the lost in the Paulding County community.

Emphasizing missional engagement, coupled with evangelism training, helped

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10“Kid’s Beach Club” is an interdenominational after-school Bible club program for use by local churches in local public elementary schools. The program is targeted for children in grades three through five. See https://www.kidsbeachclub.org.
to change the focus of the membership from themselves to the community and beyond. Shifting their focus off themselves opened their eyes to the lost-ness of the community and the world. When the people began to see the need for the gospel in the lives of people around them, then the focus of the ministries of the church began to shift from members toward reaching others. As members developed a heart for evangelism and missional engagement, their passion for new avenues of ministries also grew. The people desperately needed to be engaged in externally focused ministries. Church members who prayerfully recognized the need for reaching the lost increasingly would begin to take ownership of the outreach ministries rather than waiting for the pastor to run all activities. Additionally, they would begin to see the changing landscape of culture around them, and became more willing and able to witness among people of various backgrounds with the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Equipping the church members for missional engagement locally also opened their eyes to the spread of the gospel around the world. As people participated in evangelism, their attention was turned away from themselves and toward ministry to others, including other cultural contexts. Engaging with other cultures opened their eyes to the growing multi-cultural nature of Paulding County. The hope was that as neighbors from other cultures come to faith in Christ, they will share the gospel with family still residing in their home culture or country. Therefore, by sharing the gospel with the varied cultures living in Paulding County, the people of NCBC are growing in their own faith and reaching new people within their community, making an impact locally and globally.

11The term “missional” has been used in recent years to describe the people of God as a “sent people” because God is a missionary God, or “sending God.” According to Darrell Guder, “The research project that generated the book Missional Church . . . must be held accountable, it appears, for the rapid spread of the term ‘missional’ in many circles of discussion dealing with the situation of the church in North America.” Darrell L. Guder, Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 63.

For the purpose of this work, “missional engagement” refers to an understanding among the people of the local church that they have been sent out by God to be missionaries, both locally and globally. For more information on the concept of a missional church, see Darrell L. Guder, ed, Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998).
If current declining attendance trends had continued, then the projected worship attendance at NCBC by 2035 would have been 57 members. However, equipping the people for evangelism and missional engagement has helped reverse the decline in spiritual growth, which should positively affect worship attendance and member participation in the coming years. As people come to faith in Jesus Christ, they will join together with the membership and the church will continue to grow. More importantly, as new Christians join with a family of faith that is passionate about reaching others, new Christians will be taught how to share their faith and reach the lost themselves. By equipping members for evangelism and missional engagement, New Canaan is becoming a church of disciples who are making disciples.

Purpose
The purpose of this project was to train church members at New Canaan Baptist Church in Dallas, Georgia for evangelism and missional engagement.

Goals
The following goals were set to define success in the completion of this project. Accomplishing these goals would serve to equip church members at NCBC for evangelism and provide training and opportunities for missional engagement. These goals represented necessary steps in the process, and were completed in the order they are listed.

1. The first goal was to assess the current perspectives and practices of church members in the areas of evangelism and missional engagement at New Canaan Baptist Church.

2. The second goal was to develop an 8-week exegetical sermon series and discipleship curriculum on the mission of the church to spread the gospel through evangelism and missional engagement.

3. The third goal was to increase the number of members actively involved in outreach and evangelism at New Canaan Baptist Church.

\[12\text{See appendix 7.}\]
As these goals were met, the members of NCBC were given tools to help them grow spiritually, to reach new people, and to make disciples. A heightened awareness of missional engagement and evangelism has helped NCBC reverse the trends of decline and fulfill the Great Commission. The following section details the methodology used to measure the progress and success of each of the stated goals of this project.

**Research Methodology**

The research methodology and instruments were used to measure the progress and success of each of the following stated goals. The first goal was to assess the perspectives and practices of church members in the areas of evangelism and missions at NCBC. This goal was measured by administering the Evangelism & Outreach Practices Inventory (EOPI) to 75 actively involved youth and adult members of NCBC. The members were surveyed regarding their current evangelism practices and outreach ministry participation. The survey was conducted during the Sunday Evening worship service two weeks before the sermon series and discipleship curriculum began. The survey was administered via paper copy to each participating member, and was collected anonymously via return boxes. The inventory answers were tallied in an Excel spreadsheet. Each participant recorded a four-digit PIN to match pre-curriculum responses with his/her post-curriculum responses. All participants also signed a commitment statement promising attendance during the 8-week sermon series and discipleship curriculum. This goal was considered successfully met when at least 50 members completed the EOPI and the inventory was analyzed yielding a clearer picture of the evangelism and outreach perspectives and practices of the members of NCBC at the time.

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13 All 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.

14 See appendix 1 and appendix 2.

15 See appendix 3.
The second goal was to develop an eight-week sermon series and discipleship curriculum on the mission of the church to spread the gospel through evangelism and missional engagement. The sermon series was preached during the Sunday morning worship service, and the discipleship curriculum was facilitated during the Sunday evening worship services at NCBC. This goal was measured by an expert panel of three local pastors who have demonstrated expertise in evangelism and missions. The panel utilized rubrics to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, clarity, relevance and applicability of both the curriculum and sermon series. This goal was considered successful when all of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level. Should the initial feedback have yielded any responses less than a score of three, the curriculum and sermon series would have been revised until it met or exceeded the sufficient level.

The third goal was to increase the number of members actively involved in outreach and evangelism at NCBC. This goal was measured by administering the EOPI again to the same members who completed it before, comparing the results pre and post curriculum. The second EOPI was also administered via paper copy during the Sunday evening worship service four weeks after the conclusion of the sermon series and discipleship curriculum to allow members time to begin implementation of what they had learned. This goal was considered successful when the EOPI demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre and post survey scores. The results were evaluated and themes summarized resulting in additional insights into the factors that led to the changes in evangelism and missional engagement.

**Definitions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

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

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16 See appendix 5 for a sample invitation letter to the members of the expert panel.

17 See appendix 4 and appendix 6.
Disciple. A disciple of Jesus Christ is a “fully devoted follower” of Christ. A disciple is mentored by a teacher through spiritual disciplines like Bible study, prayer, worship, evangelism and accountability to grow in his or her faith.

Discipleship. Discipleship generally is the process through which people are mentored from non-believer to mature Christian. For the purpose of this project, discipleship was limited to deepening the faith of Christ-followers, growing from initial, saving faith in Christ toward a lifestyle of obedience to God. Henry Blackaby states, “You cannot stay where you are and go with God. You cannot continue doing things your way and accomplish God’s purposes in His ways. Once you have adjusted your life to God, His purposes, and His ways you are prepared to obey Him.” Obedience to God includes faithfulness to share the gospel with non-believers.

Train. The act of preparing the people of God for a specific purpose. Ephesians 4:12 says that God gives ministers to the church “to equip the saints for the work of ministry.” The word “equip” in this passage refers to “making someone adequate or sufficient for something.” For the purpose of this project, church members were trained, or equipped (made sufficient), for the tasks of evangelism and missional engagement.

Evangelism. For the purpose of this project, evangelism was defined as “teaching the gospel [of Jesus Christ] with the aim to persuade.” Additionally, T. A. Kantonen notes,

Evangelism is the activity of the church which has as its purpose, and results in, 1)
the deepening of the spiritual life of believers, and 2) the leading of nonbelievers to a living faith in Jesus Christ and into the fellowship of the church, through the power of the living Word.\textsuperscript{22}

Therefore, evangelism is necessary in the church both as the proclamation of the gospel to non-believers and a key discipline for the spiritual health and growth of the follower of Jesus Christ.

**Missional.** An understanding of life lived by Christ-followers who have been “sent out” by God, who is a missionary, or “sending,” God.\textsuperscript{23} As David Bosch writes, “The classical doctrine on the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit . . . expanded to include yet another ‘movement’: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the church in the world.”\textsuperscript{24} A church that is missional does not see evangelism as just a program of the church. Rather, Tim Keller says, the missional church is seen “adapting and reformulating absolutely everything it [does] in worship, discipleship, community, and service--so as to be engaged with the non-Christian society around it.”\textsuperscript{25}

**Lifestyle Evangelism.** A concept of outreach, espoused by Joe Aldrich among others, that emphasizes the actions of the Christian over the verbal witness of the gospel. The idea is that the Christian will live out his or her faith in such a way that the lost will take notice and ask about the Christian’s faith.\textsuperscript{26} While the lifestyle of the believer is of vast importance, for the purpose of this project, the verbal witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ is evangelism. The lifestyle of the believer must then reflect belief in the words he or she shares with the lost.


\textsuperscript{26}For more information, see Joe Aldrich, *Lifestyle Evangelism: Learning to Open Your Life to Those Around You* (Sisters, OR: Questar Publishers, Inc., 1993).
Four limitations applied to this project. First, the accuracy of the pre and post-series surveys was dependent upon the willingness of the respondents to be honest about their knowledge and practice of outreach and evangelism. To mitigate this limitation, the respondents were promised that their answers would remain anonymous. Second, the effectiveness of the training would be limited by the consistency of the participants’ attendance. If they did not attend all of the worship services when the sermon series was preached or the Sunday evening services where the discipleship curriculum was facilitated, it would be difficult to measure how beneficial the training had been. To mitigate this limitation, each week of the sermon series was recorded and made available online via audio recording and Facebook live video. The participants filled out a listening outline to show they completed the sermon recording. Additionally, each participant completed a commitment statement prior to the beginning of the sermon series and discipleship curriculum. A third limitation was the seeming ignorance of the congregation regarding evangelism and the mission of the church. To mitigate this limitation, definitions were provided to the participants prior to the administration of the first EOPI survey. Finally, this project was delimited to a sixteen-week timeframe. This gave time to prepare and teach the eight-week sermon series, conduct the pre-series survey, and conduct the post-series survey and interviews after the series was completed.

Conclusion

Evangelism and missional engagement are key characteristics of healthy, growing churches. This project sought to address the deficiency in personal evangelism and missional engagement at NCBC. This was accomplished by equipping NCBC members in evangelism and missional engagement to their local community of Paulding County. Without a focus upon evangelism and missional engagement, New Canaan Baptist Church would have continued to decline in numbers and cultural influence.

27See appendix 3.
CHAPTER 2
THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS
FOR EVANGELISM AND MISSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

The New Testament is the story of Jesus making disciples, who in turn themselves make disciples. The process of disciple-making begins with Christ-followers engaging the community around them with the gospel. The New Testament is clear that the gospel must be proclaimed. Every Christ-follower is called by God to be a messenger of the good news as he or she engages with the lost in their cultural context. Therefore, believers and non-believers alike need the message of the gospel. Unbelievers must hear the gospel to come to faith. Believers who fail to see their need for the living Christ (the gospel) will grow apathetic in their witness to the lost. However, when the church understands the gospel and the mission, and every believer responds to the call to be ministers of the gospel, then the church will be healthy. Healthy churches make disciples.

The Biblical Mission

The New Testament records the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and the resulting birth of the early church. The catalyst for the beginning of the early church is the power of the Holy Spirit given to the disciples to accomplish the mission Jesus had given. The mission of the church, given to Christ-followers by Jesus, is to make

1Paul writes, “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?” (Rom 10:14).

2“When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4).
disciples of all nations. The following passages of Scripture detail the mission of the church to proclaim the gospel throughout the world.

**Matthew 28:18-20**

As Jesus prepares to ascend into heaven, he leaves his disciples with a clear command to fulfill the mission of the kingdom of heaven. Matthew records the final words of Jesus to his disciples in this way:

> And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt 28:18-20)

The command of Jesus to make disciples would lack weight without the authority that he has been given. Jesus had earlier taught his disciples, “All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Matt 11:27). The connection between these two passages is the authority given, clarified by the latter as authority coming from God the Father. As Grant Osborne notes, “The kingdom of heaven . . . is already present in Christ and thus his assertion of authority (v.18) provides the foundation for the ecclesiastical command (v.19-20a).”

Davies and Allison agree: “The Son of man, who was once handed over to the power of others, now has authority over them.” The sense here is that “Jesus is ruler of all.”

The command that Jesus is preparing to give the disciples is rooted in the absolute authority that is given to him by God the Father.

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3Craig Keener notes that the deity of Christ is shown in his “authority,” his name being equal with the Father and Spirit in baptism, and his omnipresent promise at the end of the commission. Without a proper understanding of the deity of Christ, his authority carries less weight. However, as God, Jesus has all and ultimate authority. Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 716.


The “therefore” of 28:19 connects Jesus’ authority with the command that follows. Aulrich Luz confirms this understanding when he writes, “As the word ‘therefore’ indicates, the power over all creation that has been given to Jesus is the basis for the mission command that follows.”6 Leon Morris observes, “We might have expected that this would lead on to his disciples of some of the ways in which that authority would be exercised, but instead Jesus goes on to its implications for those who follow him.”7 Rather than doing the work himself, Jesus’ authority allows him to command his disciples to go and make disciples.

The primary imperative of this passage is found in the command to “make disciples.” Morris makes a brilliant observation when he says,

Jesus’ disciples are people for whom a life has been given in ransom (20:28) and who are committed to the service of the Master, who not only took time to teach his disciples but who died for them and rose again. Those who are disciples of such a leader are committed people. And, of course, this is the kind of disciples that he looks for his followers to make.8

The other participles within the command serve as explanation for how to accomplish the task that Jesus has given. Osborne states, “The main verb ‘make disciples’ dominates and all [other participles] are aspects of that central part of the commission.”9 The clear command of Christ to His followers is that they make disciples.

Jesus explains how his followers are to accomplish their task of disciple-making. First, they must “go and make disciples.” Disciple-making is an active venture. Jesus expects his followers to take initiate in going to the lost. As Daniel Doriani states it, “We are not pushy, but we have plans, individually and corporately, to reach the world

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9Osborne, Matthew, 1080.
for Christ. We take the initiative.” Osborne rightly observes, “is the operative act, as now God’s people are no longer to stay in Jerusalem and be a kind of ‘show ‘n’ tell’ for the nations but they are actively to go and take the message to the nations.” Jesus even anticipates the disciples’ question of where they should go by telling them to make disciples of “all nations.” Keener suggests that nations “probably signifies ‘all peoples,’ rather than the modern concept of nation-states.” John Piper agrees, pointing out that “the meaning of panta ta ethne leans heavily in the direction of ‘all the nations (people groups).’” Jesus was telling the eleven that the gospel would be proclaimed in Israel and beyond, to all the nations. Luz disagrees, and instead sees Jesus telling the eleven disciples “to leave Galilee and to ‘make disciples’ of all nations.” His argument is that Jesus had already sent them to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt 10:5-6). Now they are to leave Israel and take the gospel to the nations.

The problem with Luz’s view is the command in Acts 1:8, where Jesus clearly states that the disciples will be his witnesses “in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Jesus expects his disciples to go to their community and then expand out, even to all nations and people groups. Jesus instructed them to go to both Jerusalem (their community) and the rest of the world. In the same way, the application for the modern church is that the gospel is to be preached within its local context and beyond. Christ-followers are to be engaged in gospel proclamation in their own communities and throughout the world. The expectation of gospel proclamation is echoed

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11 Osborne, Matthew, 1080.
12 Keener, A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, 718.
14 Luz, Matthew 21-28, 625.
in Mark’s account of Jesus’ parting instructions. Mark records Jesus saying, “Go into all
the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15).\textsuperscript{15}

The second aspect of making disciples is to baptize them. The location of this
participle in the command shows that it is only the people who have followed Jesus who
are to be baptized. Jesus is commanding that those who have believed are to be baptized.
Mark’s account supports this understanding of believer’s baptism when he records Jesus
saying, “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe
will be condemned” (Mark 16:16). The emphasis in Mark’s record is on belief in Jesus,
not the act of baptism. Therefore, faith in Jesus Christ is necessary before baptism can
occur. Proclamation of the gospel is necessary for people to come to faith. Baptism is an
act of obedience following the believer’s conversion to faith in Christ.

Mark’s account is helpful to understand Matthew’s instruction from Jesus
regarding baptism. Luz argues that only since the Reformation has Matthew’s text come
to be seen as the Great Commission for the church. Rather, Mark’s text was more widely
regarded as the evangelistic command.\textsuperscript{16} Guder agrees that the widespread use of
Matthew’s account is recent, but argues that it was actually in the eighteenth century
when the change began to occur. He writes,

One of the most important signals of this change in perspective was William
Carey’s An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the
Conversion of the Heathen (1792), in which he interpreted the Great Commission of
Matthew 28:18-20 as a binding mandate upon Western Christians. In the preceding
centuries, it was virtually never applied to the contemporary church but always
interpreted as applying only to the original apostolic generation.\textsuperscript{17}

While Carey’s writings certainly began the use of Matthew’s account, David Wright

\textsuperscript{15}The resurrection account found in Mark 16:9-20 is questioned as to the authenticity of
Mark’s authorship because these verses are missing from the earliest Greek manuscripts. Craig A. Evans
notes that “scholars are almost evenly divided over the question of whether v. 8 was the original conclusion

\textsuperscript{16}Luz, Matthew 21-28, 626.

\textsuperscript{17}Darrell L. Guder, Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology (Grand Rapids: William B.
contends that “it was not until the last decades of the nineteenth century, or even perhaps the earliest years of the twentieth, that Matthew 28:18-20 came to be conventionally referred to as ‘the Great Commission.’”

Baptism is purposely symbolic of the new life of the believer in Christ. David Platt says, “Baptism is a part of what it means to make disciples because baptism symbolizes identification with the person of Christ and including in the body of Christ.” Platt goes on to say, “if [a person is] a follower of Christ and [has] not been baptized, [he or she is] living in direct disobedience to Christ.” Luz notes, “Since baptism is the sign that all Christians have in common, the command to baptize is a confession of the whole church. To become a disciple is not to belong to one of Jesus’ ‘schools’ but to become a member of the whole church.” Paul is clear in his teaching to the church in Rome that the act of baptism symbolizes the death of the believer to sin, the burial, and then resurrection to new life. Jesus is also clear in whose name the baptism should occur (Matt 28:19). Baptism, then, is a means of expressing the new relationship between the believer and the three Persons of the Godhead. Albright and Mann agree: “This lustration with or in water assumed (a) repentance on the part of the person being baptized, the baptism itself conveying or implying forgiveness (cf. Acts ii 38); (b) faith in Jesus as Messiah and Lord.” Baptism, as an act of obedience, is the first step of a

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20Luz, Matthew 21-28, 631.

21Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:3-4).

22Osborne writes, “It is better to see this as a baptism ‘into fellowship with’ (Allen, Albright and Mann) or ‘into the Lordship of’ (Carson) the Godhead, expressing a new relationship (Davies and Allison).” Osborne, Matthew, 1081.

lifestyle of discipleship, following Jesus Christ.

Third, teaching believers what Jesus commanded establishes the ethic and theology of this new community. Donald Hagner points out that Jesus is telling them “to do what Jesus himself did (Jesus is referred to as teaching in 4:23; 5:2; 7:29; 9:35; 11:1; 13:34; 21:23; 26:55).” Jesus had already told his disciples, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15). The command is not simply to teach the commands of Jesus. Rather, Jesus told them to teach new believers to obey all that he had commanded. He had already taught them, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away” (Matt 24:35). Given the eternal quality of the words of Christ, Jesus expects his followers to obey, and a part of discipleship is to teach others to obey his words. Disciple-making is not an exclusively educational endeavor. Christ-followers are not saved for mere intellectual knowledge. Instead, the people who have placed their faith in Jesus are to be taught to obey what Jesus commanded. Therefore, knowledge is necessary for obedience, not just for knowledge’s sake. Osborne says, “The emphasis on obeying ‘everything I have commanded you’ shows that the discourse sections are not really didactic material to be learned but more importantly practical injunctions to be lived.” Becoming a disciple is a process of learning to obey Jesus. Luz even suggests that “the goal of the disciples’ missionary preaching is not conversion but the practice of Jesus’ newly won disciples. For this reason the disciples’ ‘teaching’ is also accompanied by their good deeds so that ‘your light shines before people that they see your good works and therefore ‘praise your Father in heaven’ (5:16).” The goal of teaching is to make obedient disciples.

As Jesus concludes his command, he provides a great comfort to his disciples

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25 Osborne, Matthew, 1082.

26 Luz, Matthew 21-28, 634.
by telling them that he will always be with them.  

In fact, Davies and Allison see this final phrase of Jesus as an invitation for “the reader to enter the story.” They continue this thought by saying, “The result is that the believing audience and the ever-living Son of God become intimate. The Jesus who commands difficult obedience is at the same time the ever-graceful divine presence.” Osborne states, “The Great Commission is thus framed by the omnipotence (v. 18) and omnipresence (v. 20b) of Christ.” The power that they need to complete the task Jesus has given is found in his presence, manifest in the Holy Spirit given to the church at Pentecost. Jesus has already promised them that he would send the Holy Spirit. Luke records Jesus saying, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The promise is that the Holy Spirit’s power would give them the ability to take the Good News to all the world. That promise was fulfilled to the disciples at Pentecost as the Holy Spirit descended upon each of them. His promise to be with them to the end echoes another promise he made: “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:18).

The Great Commission is given as instruction and encouragement to Christ-followers to make disciples of all nations. That encouragement is bookended by his declaration of authority at the outset and his promised presence at the end. As Craig Evans writes, “The missionary task of Jesus did not end with his death; it resumed

27 Doriani writes, “The sweep of the commission is evident in the fourfold use of the word ‘all’: Jesus has all authority. His followers make disciples of all nations, by teaching all that Jesus commands, fortified by the knowledge that he is with us, literally, all days. Since Jesus loves us, he closes not with a command but with comfort.” Doriani, Matthew, 2:534.


30 Osborne, Matthew, 1082.

31 “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:16-17).

32 Acts 2:1-4 records the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost.
his resurrection and is carried on by his faithful disciples, with whom he is present.”

The command to make disciples is explained by the use of the three supporting participles that tell the disciples to go to the nations, baptize new believers into the fellowship, and teach all Christians to obey the commands of Jesus. Osborne concludes his study of the book of Matthew with this observation: “The church is God’s chosen messenger during the interim before the consummation and as such is promised the continuous presence of the authoritative One in executing that task.”

The task of disciple-making is given to the church, and every member of the church (every disciple of Jesus Christ) must be engaged in the task Jesus has given.

**John 20:21**

Jesus gave his disciples a worthy model of disciple-making in the example that he set for them. He invested his time in a small group of men without neglecting his teaching ministry to the crowds with whom he came into contact. Jesus’ earthly ministry occurred because he was sent by the Father from heaven, and “though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men” (Phil 2:6-7). Jesus was sent to the people of Israel, and in particular to the disciples, coming “to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). After his resurrection, Jesus told his disciples, “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you” (John 20:21). The disciples had heard these words before, as Jesus uttered them as part of the high priestly prayer recorded in John 17.35

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34 Osborne, *Matthew*, 1083.

35 See Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray, R. W. N. Hoarse, and J. K. Riches (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971). While Bultmann probably did not personally believe what he argued, his writing on this passage may be helpful. He called this a “missionary charge” which “is formulated in close dependence on the wording of the prayer in 17.18, and of course it must be understood in the same sense” (692). Bultmann’s understanding of this missionary charge reflected his view of Jesus’ charge in the high priestly prayer in John 17, about which Bultmann wrote, “As the sending of the Son is not only his destiny but his task, so also is the sending of the community through the Son. The community has a task analogous to his and rooted in it” (509-10).
Jesus’ own life, sent from the Father, is a model for the church of all generations to follow in being sent to make disciples.\(^{36}\) Rather than see this verse as a methodology for missions or discipleship, however, D. A. Carson argues that ‘sending’ is central to what Jesus is saying. Carson writes,

> In so far as Jesus was entirely obedient to and dependent upon his Father, who sealed and sanctified him and poured out the Spirit upon him without limit . . . , so far also does he constitute the definitive model for his disciples: they have become children of God . . . , the Spirit has been promised to them . . . and will soon be imparted to them . . . , they have been sanctified by Christ and will be sanctified by God’s Word . . . , as they grow in unqualified obedience to and dependence upon their Lord.\(^ {37}\)

Having been sent from the Father, Jesus now sends His disciples to the world.

> Jesus makes clear that it was the Father’s will that he come to earth. God the Father sent Jesus the Son with the purpose of bringing salvation to sinful humanity. Leon Morris states that “the thought that the Father has sent the Son is one of the master thoughts of this Gospel.”\(^ {38}\) George Beasley-Murray posits that “the sending of the Son into the world by the Father is a constant theme of [John’s] Gospel.”\(^ {39}\) In fact, the peace with which Jesus greets the disciples comes from the fact that the Father sent him to them. Jesus understood the reason the Father sent him. He also understood that there was an expectation of obedience to the will of the Father. Jesus himself said, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work” (John 4:34). Even when facing the temptation of disobedience in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said, “Father, if

\(^{36}\) See Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (xiii-xxi)*, The Anchor Bible Reference Library (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1970). Supporting a universal reading of John 20, Raymond Brown argues that the sending of the apostles in John 20:21 is for all generations, not just the original eleven disciples. He writes, “Although this verse probably does reflect the commissioning of apostles, it cannot be used to argue that only the Eleven were present, for an earlier understanding of ‘apostle’ did not confine that term to the Twelve” (1022).


you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42). He submitted his own will to that of God the Father, choosing obedience over his own desires or will. Throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus modeled obedience to his sending Father for his disciples, and in so doing, he showed them the purpose for which he had been sent by the Father. That purpose was to make disciples.

The importance of the Father’s sending of Jesus is more than just Jesus knowing his purpose. As Beasley-Murray explains, “It reflects in measure the principle of Jewish authorization ‘One who is sent is as he who sends him.’ In the person of the Son, in his words and deeds, the Father himself is present, his words declared and his actions performed.”40 Just as Jesus is as the Father in the world, so also his disciples are as Jesus to the world. Christians are authorized representatives of Jesus in the world and to the world. Christ-followers are sent to the world by Jesus to accomplish the work they are sent by him to do.

Jesus first reminds his followers that he himself was sent by the Father, and then with the words “even so” he begins the process of commissioning his own disciples. When Jesus bases his sending of the disciples on the Father’s sending of him, Köstenberger suggests, “The disciples are drawn into the unity and mission of Father and Son.”41 He has given them an example of obedience in disciple-making to follow, and in the same way that he obeyed, he expects them to obey. D. A. Carson says, “Here it is the perfect obedience of the Son that is especially emphasized, an obedience that has already been made a paradigm for the relation of the believers to Jesus.”42 Jesus makes a distinct correlation between his own commissioning by the Father and his commissioning of the disciples. In the same way, there is a correlating expectation of obedience from the sender

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40 Beasley-Murray, John, 379.
to the commissioned. The Father expects Jesus to obey, and Jesus expects his followers to obey. Further, because the Father sent Jesus, the added emphasis of Jesus’ command to the disciples is that he is sending them out from the authority of God the Father. Beasley-Murray suggests that this “implies a sending in the past that continues to hold good in the present.”

Brooke Westcott further explains,

The mission of Christ is here regarded not in the point of its historical fulfilment (sent), but in the permanence of its effects (hath sent). The form of the fulfillment of Christ’s mission was now to be changed, but the mission itself was continued and still effective. The apostles were commissioned to carry on Christ’s work, and not to begin a new one.

The disciples are being commissioned to join in the work of God begun by Jesus. The concept of commissioning is further confirmed by the giving of the Holy Spirit in verse 22. Köstenberger correctly observes, “In a clear allusion to Gen 2:7, where God breathes his Spirit into Adam at creation, constituting him as a living being, at the commissioning of his disciples Jesus constitutes them as the new messianic community in anticipation of the outpouring of the Spirit subsequent to his ascension (20:22).”

The giving of the Holy Spirit is described in Acts 2:1-4. While gathered in the upper room, the Holy Spirit descends upon the disciples, fulfilling the promise of Jesus that he would send “another Helper, to be with you forever” (John 14:16). The result of the Holy Spirit coming in Acts 2 is boldness in the preaching of the disciples, leading to about three thousand souls being saved and baptized that day (Acts 2:41). The gifting of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer accomplishes two primary things. First, the Holy Spirit is proof of God’s salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul tells the Ephesian Christians, “In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the

43 Beasley-Murray, John, 379.
guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory” (Eph 1:13-14). Christians have assurance of salvation because the Holy Spirit indwells them. Second, the Holy Spirit provides the power to obey the commands of Christ. John tells his readers, “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God” (1 John 3:9). The seed of God is referring to the Holy Spirit, and Christians are able to obey and live righteously through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowers the believer to do everything the Christ-follower is commanded by Jesus to do.

While the Father’s authority is sufficient motivation for Jesus to send out his disciples, a second benefit of being sent is seen in Jesus’ own life. John records Jesus saying the following during his evangelism of the woman at the well: “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work” (John 4:34). In Jesus’ life, the joy that sustained him was doing the work of the Father who sent him. So also, the sustaining joy of the believer is in accomplishing the work which he or she has been sent by Jesus to do in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus has the authority to send, he gives the power to accomplish through his Holy Spirit, but he also gives the joy of life in doing the work to which he sent his followers.

Finally, the sending command is given: “I am sending you.” Ernst Haenchen sees Jesus’ commissioning as positional: “The disciples . . . enter into the office and position of Jesus. On their words hang the decision whether the hearers will find the way to the Father or miss it. Power and service are joined.”46 Jesus has already reminded them of his purpose, and correlated his own work with the work that he is preparing them to do. Now they receive the instruction; they are being sent out. Given the fact that this commissioning from Jesus occurs post-Resurrection, Carson maintains, “Now that Jesus’ disciples no longer belong to the world (15:19), they must also be sent back into the

world (20:21) in order to bear witness.”47 Because Jesus compares his own missional life with the commissioning of his disciples, the life of Jesus should provide a model for making disciples. Carson suggests that any attempt to make these verses mean that Jesus is our model for how to do ministry is “faulty.”48 However, when considered in context not only within John’s Gospel, but also compared with the commissioning statements in the other Gospels, Jesus’ sending of the eleven is for the purpose of making disciples. In the same way the Father sent him to make disciples, now he is sending his disciples out to make disciples. In order to understand what Jesus was sending his disciples to do, the church should look to Jesus’ own ministry to gain insight into how to make disciples.

A Biblical Methodology

1 Peter 3:14-16

Peter wrote his letter to the early Christians, some of whom had been exiled because of their faith in Jesus. He offers them encouragement in the face of persecution, saying to them, “Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless…that you may obtain a blessing” (1 Pet 3:9).49 Within the context of this encouragement in the face of persecution, Peter offered them this instruction regarding the task of proclaiming the gospel to all nations:

But even if you should suffer for righteousness sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. (1 Pet 3:14-16)


49 Joe Aldrich, among others, might suggest Peter’s instruction precludes a believer from having to give a verbal witness of the gospel. While Aldrich’s approach is generally passive, suggesting that believers wait until unbelievers ask questions, the general tenor of the New Testament is active evangelism. Believer must be both proactive to share the gospel and able to answer unbelievers’ questions. See Joe Aldrich, Lifestyle Evangelism: Learning to Open Your Life to Those Around You (Sisters, OR: Questar Publishers, Inc., 1993).
Even when they were facing persecution, Peter instructed Christians to be a witness for the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who were causing their suffering.

Peter begins this passage by reminding believers that even in the face of persecution, they should not fear. Fear is an obstacle to disciple-making in any generation, for it potentially stops the Christian from proclaiming salvation through Christ alone. For the early church, however, fear was much deeper. Their fear was persecution leading to death for their belief in Christ. Evangelism meant willingly risking their lives to tell nonbelievers about their hope in Christ. Peter is not telling them not to worry about what people will think of them; instead, he is telling them not to let crippling fear of torture or death stop them from being a messenger of the gospel. To use an expression of Paul, Peter is telling Christ-followers to “count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:8). The primary means of overcoming fear is found in the phrase “honor Christ the Lord as holy.” As Pheme Perkins rightly states, “Peter proposes the remedy for both the anxiety caused and for the verbal confrontation: for the heart, Christians reverence Christ, the Lord (v. 15a); for the verbal confrontation, the gentle answer that defends the Christian hope that shapes a believer’s life (v. 15b)”⁵⁰ For the believer, the antidote to fear is a realization of the holiness of Christ. Peter reminds them that even in the face of persecution, Christ-followers should not fear because Christ is holy, worthy of their suffering. As Schreiner points out, “Peter had just affirmed in v. 12 that the Lord will look with favor on the righteous, but he sets his face against those who practice evil.”⁵¹ Schreiner goes on to say, “A rhetorical question is employed to stimulate the thinking of Peter’s readers. Who will inflict harm upon believers if they pursue what is good?”⁵² Further, Christ offered them

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⁵⁰Pheme Perkins, *First and Second Peter, James, and Jude*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1995), 62.


⁵²Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 169.
an example of suffering by willingly laying down his life for them. Therefore, their suffering for the sake of the gospel is a means of honoring the holiness of Christ. Christ’s authority is certainly implied in his holiness, but his holiness is also a product of his obedience to the Father. Jesus suffered and laid down his life for believers. Now Peter tells them to lay down their lives in honor of and obedience to Christ.

The honoring of Christ the Lord as holy alludes to Isaiah 8:13, where Isaiah also contrasts fear of what man can do with the call to honor the Lord. Peter utilizes Isaiah’s text, but offers a Christocentric reading by declaring it is Christ who is Lord. Christ is to be regarded as Lord and holy in the heart of the believer. John Elliott says, “This phrase, which does not derive from the cited Isaian text, makes it clear that the sanctification of Christ as Lord commences in the believers’ hearts, the organ of thought, disposition, and intention.”

Elliott goes on to say that “it is the internal disposition of the heart (which God alone can see) that matters most and that has God’s approval.”

Regarding the fear Peter mentions, faith in Christ is proved through a reordered fear. As Elliott shows, “Fearlessness toward outside detractors is to be manifested in a readiness to provide a public account of oneself, especially regarding the hope that arouses their curiosity.” The reminder to not fear persecutors is a consistent theme for Peter. As Watson points out, “The way of life of Christians is rooted in reverence for God rather than fear of any man or anything man can do to Christians.”

Paul Achtemeier states that instead of fearing others, Peter makes clear “that the only one whom the Christian is to ‘fear’ (i.e., revere) is God. If the Christian reveres God alone, there is no need for

54 Elliott, 1 Peter, 626.
55 Elliott, 1 Peter, 626.
terror in the face of any kind of danger.”

The early Christians who were suffering for the cause of Christ needed to be ready to defend their faith. The same is true for the modern church. John MacArthur says, “It is not just endurance through the blessing of suffering that believers are to submit to; there is also the opportunity to defend the truth when they are being persecuted. Christians must be ready to make a defense of the faith.” Peter Davids says, “There is a proper response to non-believers (even persecuting ones) other than fear, one based on the Lordship of Christ. Peter expresses it in ‘make a defense to all who question you about the hope that is in you.’” Peter tells them to “always be ready.” Christ-followers need to be ready to share the gospel. This readiness could be in willingness to share, even in the face of persecution. Readiness could also refer to preparation, so that when presented with an opportunity to share the Good News, the Christ-follower knows how to share the gospel. While evangelism and apologetics training is a necessity within the church to help prepare Christians to defend their faith, the responsibility for preparedness lies with each believer, according to Peter. Christians must take advantage of training opportunities presented to them by their local church to learn to share the gospel. Christians must also immerse themselves in the Word of God so that they are armed with “the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God” (Eph 6:17). Of particular note is the context of the verses following this passage, where Peter writes, “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God” (1 Pet 3:18). Peter showed the example of Christ in his suffering, and encouraged the early church to be bold in their witness even in the face of their own suffering through

persecution. Peter is specific regarding what each believer needs to be prepared to do. As Christians were arrested for their participation in the early church or interacted with non-believers in the public arena, they would need to defend the faith. Specifically, Peter tells them that their defense would be in response to “anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.” Elliott states: “The generalizing expressions ‘always’ (aei) and ‘to everyone who requests’ (panti toí aitounti) point to an ongoing state of preparedness for a response to inquiry from any quarter.” Peter is not calling the Christians to attend just one evangelism training seminar. Rather, his expectation is that as a result of a Christ-centered life, the believers will be ready to defend the faith, no matter their life stage, length of time as a believer, or the situation in which the question is asked.

Peter expected God’s people to live in such a way that their hope in Christ was evident to everyone, including those who would persecute them for their faith. While some have argued that this preparedness is only for formal situations, like when standing trial, Charles Bigg notes that it “means any kind of answer, whether formal before a judge, or informal.” Perkins further explains, “Peter must be using the term as a general expression for responding to any demand for an explanation of the ‘hope’ that Christians possess.” The clear point is that a believer’s lifestyle must communicate the gospel in a way that is supported by the words they share. Peter understood this personally, as Bigg points out, for “when the critical moment came upon him, he was not ready with his

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60See Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 128.

61Elliott, *1 Peter*, 627.

62John Elliott says, “Curiosity about hope, a personal attitude rather than a legal crime, indicates that the author is referring here not to formal defenses before legal authorities (who would be concerned not with expectation concerning the future but culpable behavior before them) but rather to replies to informal inquiries concerning the nature and basis of Christian hope, whenever and from whomever they should come.” Elliott, *1 Peter*, 627.


64Perkins, *First and Second Peter, James, and Jude*, 62.
answer and so denied his Lord.”\textsuperscript{65} At the trial of Jesus, Peter was not ready; but in the power of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Peter was bold in giving the reason for the hope of the apostles in Jerusalem. The Christians’ defense of their hope in Christ was meant to explain why they lived a life devoted to Christ. To sum up the argument, Achtemeier says, “The ensuing open statement of one’s hope is to be an expression of one’s deepest convictions.”\textsuperscript{66} The reason a believer has hope in Christ is that he or she has sanctified Christ as holy in his or her heart.

Peter’s call to make a defense represents a shift from his exhortations toward lifestyle evangelism to an expectation of a verbal defense. Perkins says, “Earlier in the letter, the ‘lifestyle’ of Christians was the primary form of witness to others (2:15; 3:1-2). Now a verbal response includes more than a blessing, it engages the outsider in a conversation. The apology must do more than ‘explain.’ Its ultimate goal must be conversion of the other party.”\textsuperscript{67} While Peter expects the lifestyle of the believer to attract the attention of the lost, he is clearly calling for a verbal witness to explain the reason for the believer’s hope in Christ. The problem faced by the modern church is a lack of ability on the part of Christians to be able to verbalize their faith. Perkins offers this discouraging observation:

Many adults today are inarticulate when asked to explain their Christian faith. If a challenger is not silenced by a few Bible verses or religious phrases, people will shrug and change the topic. Such reactions would hardly serve as a “defense” of the faith. One ABC News reporter said during an interview that people are quite willing to reveal the most intimate details of their sexual lives, but most mainline church members have nothing to say about their religion. First Peter indicates that all believers, not only clergy and theologians, should be able to give an account of what they believe.\textsuperscript{68}

The task of the Christ-follower is one of verbal witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

\textsuperscript{65}Bigg, \textit{Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude}, 158.

\textsuperscript{66}Achtemeier, \textit{1 Peter}, 233.

\textsuperscript{67}Perkins, \textit{First and Second Peter, James, and Jude}, 62.

\textsuperscript{68}Perkins, \textit{First and Second Peter, James, and Jude}, 63.
Karen Jobes makes a similar point when she writes, “This verse raises the question of how many Christians today could make an articulate statement of the reasons for their faith in Christ in terms that would be understood by modern society.”69 Schreiner brings application when he clearly states, “The truth of the gospel is a public truth that can be defended in the public arena.”70 He goes on to state that this means “that every believer should grasp the essentials of the faith and should have the ability to explain to others why they think the Christian faith is true.”71

Finally, Peter shares the manner in which they make their defense. Rather than being belligerent or argumentative, Peter instructs them to make their defense “with gentleness and respect” (1 Pet 3:15). As Schreiner notes, “Defending a position could easily be transmuted into attacking one’s opponents. Hence, Peter added that the defense must be made ‘with gentleness and reverence.’”72 Jobes says that this means “believers must be able to relate the Christian faith to unbelievers by addressing their questions in terms they find meaningful.”73 Essentially, their means of defense must match their words and their lifestyle. Ultimately, the Christian is called to be a person of integrity, where his or her words and actions corroborate each other in the public square. Peter then explains that their good behavior, even when faced with suffering, will bring “to shame” those who sought to destroy them (1 Pet 3:16). Peter’s instruction echoes Jesus’ teaching to his disciples. While he taught them to make disciples, he also told them, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). People will not hear the message of the gospel if the life of the believer does not match his or her words.


70Schreiner, 1, 2 Peter, Jude, 175.

71Schreiner, 1, 2 Peter, Jude, 175.

72Schreiner, 1, 2 Peter, Jude, 175.

Ephesians 4:11-13

Most Christians in the modern church are not obedient to Scriptural commands to share their faith. Paul emphasizes the roles of leaders within the church to give instruction to the Ephesian Christians regarding the work of ministry for each believer. He writes, “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God” (Eph 4:11-13). Every church has been given the gift of leaders to equip and train the members to do the work of ministry, including but not limited to, sharing the gospel. As Darrell Robinson states, “The pastor and church leaders are responsible and accountable to God for the work of encouraging, enlisting, equipping, and engaging the laity in reaching the lost . . . Herein lies the hope of reaching our world for Christ.”

In verse 11, Paul begins his statement regarding ministry in the church by proclaiming that the roles he listed were actually gifts of God to the church. Andrew Lincoln points out that Paul is quoting Psalm 68:11, and says that Paul is “making plain that he of whom the psalm said ‘he gave gifts to men’ is the exalted Christ who fills the universe.” The people whom God uses to teach and preach within the church, the evangelists who are gifted apologists, even those whose pastoral responsibilities are to shepherd God’s people toward holiness, are God’s gifts to the church. As Lincoln says, “They are seen as the royal largesse which Christ distributes from his position of cosmic lordship after his triumphant ascent. In fact, Christ has given these ministers as part of the


overall purpose for which he ascended—that his work of filling all things might be brought to completion.”

Therefore, God’s people are to view these roles as gifts of God, not merely employees of the church. When a pastor or leader is seen as an employee of the church, then the people suffer under the mistaken notion that the employee is paid to do the work of ministry. Some interpreters of this verse see the special roles mentioned by Paul having the jobs of equipping the saints, doing the work of ministry, and building up the body. If that were true, Harold Hoehner argues, “It portrays the gifted people in verse 11 as the ones referred to in all the above three phrases with the rest of the people having little responsibility, thereby making a definite distinction between the clergy and laity.” In that view, ministry is seen by the congregation as the work of the employee, not the calling of the people of God. When ministry is viewed in this way, even evangelism is seen as the work of the pastor and/or staff or leaders rather than the calling of every believer. O’Brien objects in the following way: “If it is only the leaders of v. 11 who perfect the saints, do the work of ministry, and edify the body of Christ, then this is a departure from Paul’s usual insistence that every member is equipped for ministry.”

Instead, Paul makes it clear that God has given these roles as gifts to the church for a specific purpose. O’Brien rightly asserts, “If the three phrases described activities in which ministers alone were engaged, then one might have expected the term ‘saints’ to appear at the point of change, namely, in v. 12c; instead, it occurs at the conclusion of the first phrase, v. 12a, ‘for equipping the saints.’”

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77 Lincoln, Ephesians, 248.


given to the church to “equip” the people of God for the work of ministry. This view is strengthened by the fact that Paul tells the Ephesian Christians that Christ’s riches are for all of the saints, not just their leaders (Eph 1:3-19, 3:20). This expectation includes training the people of the church to share their faith to non-believers. Frank Thielman says, “Christ has given the five groups of verse 11 to the church for the ‘equipping’ or ‘preparation’ of the saints, and the purpose of this preparation was that the saints might do the work of ministry.”

Martin Lloyd-Jones sums up this passage by saying,

So the work is being done in every one of us, we are being made to fit in properly into our particular place in the Church, with the result that the whole body will function in an harmonious and satisfactory manner. Everything that our Lord has appointed for the Church has that end and object in view, namely, that this body of Christ in all its members may be made perfect and entire.

Therefore, the role of pastor/shepherds in the church is such that the people are moved from their apathy and/or ignorance to a point where they are fulfilling the calling to be messengers of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Thielman argues that this training “has less the nuance of ‘completing’ or ‘perfecting’ the saints than of ‘equipping’ them for a particular purpose.” MacArthur disagrees with this view when he writes, “Katartismos . . . basically refers to that which is fit, is restored to its original condition, or is made complete.” The purpose of training God’s people to be ministers of the gospel is that the church is strengthened. Paul echoes this point several verses later when he says,

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

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84 Thielman, Ephesians, 279.

Healthy churches teach their people to share the gospel of Christ and minister in his name. John Polhill espouses this same view when he writes,

All the members of the body of Christ are to do the work of ministry. The church leaders are equippers. The entire body of Christ are the ministers. When all work together, the church progresses toward its goal of full maturity in Christ (v. 13). This is described as being fully unified, having full knowledge of Christ, and reaching the full measure of Christ’s stature.86

Growing Christians, who share their faith, produce healthy, disciple-making churches.

Churches become healthy when their members are equipped to minister and are obedient to Christ’s teaching to make disciples. Thielman asserts that Paul is saying “the work of building up the church continues ‘until we all arrive’. ”87 Paul implies that a church cannot be healthy if the people are simply expecting others to do the work of ministry. As Hoehner rightly asserts, “The ‘all’ is mentioned because we are all being prepared for the work of the ministry with the goal of building up the body of Christ of which we are all a part.”88 He also writes that Paul’s “point is that the gifted persons listed in verse 11 serve as the foundational gifts that are used for the immediate purpose of preparing all the saints to minister. Thus, every believer must do the work of the ministry.”89 In the same way that the human body is not healthy if all of the parts are not working properly, so also the church is not healthy if its members are not working together for the common mission of disciple-making.

An Early Biblical Model

Acts 2:42-47

The story of the early church living on mission is most clearly illustrated in Acts 2, where Luke records the following regarding the early believers:

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87 Thielman, Ephesians, 280.
88 Hoehner, Ephesians, 552.
89 Hoehner, Ephesians, 549.
And they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved (Acts 2:42-47).

The early Christians lived in community while interacting with non-believers in the culture at the same time. Regarding this story of early church life, David Williams notes that “it is a feature of Luke’s method in these early chapters to intersperse his narrative with little cameos of life in the early church, intended, no doubt, as models for the church of his own day” (italics added). As a result of what the non-believers saw in the way the early believers conducted themselves in public and toward one another, people who were formerly hostile came to faith in Jesus Christ. Johannes Munck argues that “the apostles, witnesses to the resurrection, demonstrate what separates them from the other Jews.”

This story of the early church should serve as a model for the modern church in missional living.

Luke first describes the devotion of the early church. He lists four things to which the early believers were devoted: teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. Rather than simply their order of worship, the list is a summary of their life in Jerusalem. Fitzmeyer concludes that “the four elements underscore the common accord of Jerusalem Christians.” This common accord and unity is further shown by the fact that “all who believed were together and had all things in common” (Acts 2:44). Hans Conzelmann arrives at the same conclusion: “It has been suggested that the four concepts here (teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers) describe the liturgical course

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of a worship service. But the character of the summary, the concepts themselves, and their sequence all argue against this interpretation.”93 The description of the early church is an explanation of the devotion they had to the things of God.

The culture of the early church was one of disciple-making. The early believers were “devoted” to the teaching of Christ’s words, to loving one another, to serving one another, and to their relationship with the Lord. John Polhill interestingly ties the devotions listed in verse 42 back to those converted in verses 40-41, and says that the devotion list actually “provides a glimpse into the manner in which the new converts were incorporated into the believing community.”94 This view would show Acts 2:42 to be an example of the early church obeying the command of Christ to “make disciples” as discussed earlier in this chapter (Matt 28:19).

Regardless of which group Luke is describing (the entire church or only new converts), the early Christians were clearly living out Christ’s explanation of the greatest two commands in the law: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:37-39). They loved God through their devotion to teaching, prayer, corporate worship, and obedience to the Word of Christ. They loved one another by sharing with one another and in their fellowship. They lived out their love for God and for others in the public square, so that the non-believers saw their faith in action. Their care for one another and the resulting faith of the lost is proof of the truth of Jesus’ statement: “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).

Signs and wonders were prevalent in the early church. Ernst Haenchen writes,


“The expression ‘many wonders and signs’ gives the reader the impression that that whole life of the primitive Church was filled with miracles.”

These signs and wonders offered proof of both their message and their sincerity in the faith. The early church was devoted to the things of God, and God worked among them in mighty ways, revealing to the non-believers around them his power and the truth of the belief of the early Christians. This power at work among them was in part responsible for the favor that the people of Jerusalem showed to the early church.

The daily worship of the Christ-followers in the temple was among the Jews, who themselves were at the temple in order to complete the requirements of the law through sacrifices and offerings. Munck says that “the disciples took part in the hours of prayer at the temple and on certain occasions they spoke there (cf. iii 11 ff., v 20-21, 25).” He goes on to comment, “They appeared in full view of the public in the temple at the daily prayers as missionaries of Jesus.” In contrast to those seeking to earn the favor of God through their good works, the early Christians’ joyous praise of God in Christ must have shone brightly in the temple. Polhill says, “The Christian presence in the temple . . . evidences their zeal for witness. In Jerusalem the temple was the primary place where crowds would be found, and there the Christians went to bear witness.”

As Haenchen notes, “After the attitude towards God, the relation with men is described: the Christians are liked by the whole (Jewish) people.” Luke records that as a result of their worship, their generosity toward one another, and their lifestyles, the early Christians enjoyed “favor with all the people.” Fitzmeyer reminds his readers, “The respect they

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enjoyed stands in contrast to the reaction of religious authorities later in Acts.”

Not only was there favor in the eyes of the world, but people came to faith in Jesus Christ daily as a result of the witness of the early Christians. Conzelmann notices that “the ‘favor’ mentioned here balances the fear motif of vs. 43.” His analysis is that “the repetition serves . . . to begin the story of the community in the world.” Luke understood and communicated that the church was sent to the world. The only explanation for the phenomenon of conversion of the lost is that their lives so reflected Christ that the lost took notice and wanted to experience the same kind of life-change. Munck observes that because of their lifestyles, the members of the early church “were well-liked by the people and day by day God allowed their community to grow.” The Bible’s record of the early church reflects the truth that a Christian’s lifestyle must reflect his or her words in order for his or her testimony to hold merit with non-believers.

Verse 47 of Acts 2 records an important truth for Christians who desire to share their faith to non-believers: it is God who saves. The early church did not save the lost through their witness of Christ or their lifestyle. Rather, “the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” The lives the early Christians lived clearly pointed the lost to faith in Jesus Christ alone. As Williams notes, “The steady growth of the church was due ultimately to the Lord. There was much (essential) human activity, but it was he who added to their number.” God honored their testimony by saving those who believed. The task of evangelism, given to every Christian as a minister of the good news, is the task of messenger. Salvation is the work of God alone by grace

103“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph 2:8-9).
104Williams, Acts, 62.
through faith in Christ alone. Haenchen notes that God’s favor on the early church “is manifested in his daily addition to the number of the saved.” God blessed their missional living by saving the lost people around them through their witness.

The testimony of the early church reveals that through devoted worship of God and sincere love for one another, Christians can reveal the salvation of God in Christ to non-believers. Genuine faith shown in action to close friends and relatives, followed by a verbal gospel witness, is a far more powerful evangelistic tool than random encounters with strangers. The example of the early church is an example of life-style evangelism, where the preaching of the gospel reinforces to the non-believer what he or she has already seen in the life of a Christian. While the Bible is clear that proclamation of the gospel is necessary for a person to come to faith in Christ, if the lifestyle of the believer does not match the words proclaimed, the message will seem false. The early church saw people coming to faith in Jesus every day through gospel proclamation because they loved God and each other, and that love was revealed in their words and actions.

**Conclusion**

The New Testament calls all believers to share the Good News of Christ with the lost, making disciples. The call to mission is not only for the early disciples (or only for clergy in the modern church), but for every believer. Jesus was sent by the Father with a mission, and in the same way he sends his followers out to make disciples. The sending of Jesus by the Father resulted in “favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52). The sending of the church by Jesus, as modeled by the early church, resulted in the blessing of God

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106 Paul writes, “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?” (Rom 10:14). Paul’s point is simple: without the preaching of the gospel, people will not come to faith in Christ. The lifestyle evangelism being described above is not a replacement for the proclamation of salvation through faith in Christ alone. Rather, the proclamation of the gospel will be more well-received by the lost when the one proclaiming it reveals his or her faith born out in the way he or she lives their life.
shown through “having favor with all the people” (Acts 2:47).\textsuperscript{107} The New Testament provides the mission, a type of methodology, and even a model for all Christians so that, in maturity, the church will work together to reach the lost. God’s plan, through Christ, is that Christians “make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19)

\textsuperscript{107}Polhill makes this point when he writes, “God responded to their faith and blessed the young community, adding new converts daily. Indeed, as with the young Jesus, so it was for the growing church—favor with God and favor with humanity.” Polhill, \textit{Acts}, 122.
As presented in the previous chapter, the biblical mandate for evangelism and missional engagement is strong. The New Testament is uniform in its call for all Christ-followers to share their faith. Even so, many Christians do not share the gospel with non-believers. ¹ This project seeks to address two reasons for this discrepancy. First, Christians who know how to share the gospel do not feel an urgency to share the gospel. Second, some Christ-followers, especially new converts, do not know how to share the gospel. The Church’s focus on programs, fear of others, misunderstanding of discipleship in the Christian life, the current post-Christian culture, and the changing cultural demographics around American Christians have exacerbated the problem and encouraged Christians away from personal evangelism. Healthy church growth will occur, however, when Christians share their faith, because the unchurched will respond, and a majority of new Christians will join the church responsible for sending the person who evangelized them.² Churches that train members in evangelism will see spiritual and numerical growth.

¹A recent LifeWay Research study found that “80 percent of those who attend church one or more times a month, believe they have a personal responsibility to share their faith, but 61 percent have not told another person about how to become a Christian in the previous six months.” Further, the distressing fact is that 75 percent of those surveyed felt that they were able to share their faith, yet only “25 percent say they have shared their faith once or twice, and 14 percent have shared three or more times over the last six months.” The survey also asked evangelical Christians about inviting non-believers to church. “Nearly half (48 percent) of church attendees responded, ‘zero.’ 33 percent of people say they’ve personally invited someone one or two times, and 19 percent say they’ve done so on three or more occasions in the last six months.” Jon D. Wilke, “Churchgoers Believe in Sharing Faith, Most Never Do,” accessed September 10, 2016, http://www.lifeway.com/Article/research-survey-sharing-christ-2012.

²Thom S. Rainer, Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 43.
Evangelism Is Not Just a Program

Throughout the twentieth century, much attention was given to various evangelism programs for churches to implement. Evangelism Explosion, FAITH Evangelism, the Four Spiritual Laws, and others have all been promoted to churches as outreach and evangelism tools that would help believers share their faith. John Avant describes the climate by saying, “Never in the history of the church has there been such a diversity of methods to share the gospel message. Just a few decades ago, who could have dreamed of seeker services and satellite communications, contemporary Christian music and computer technology, power evangelism and power teams?” These programs are great tools to use in sharing the gospel. However, the programmed nature of evangelism tools in the church may provide Christians who are not engaged in the program an excuse to avoid sharing their faith. The true call upon each Christ-follower is to share the Good News with the lost around them. Limiting evangelism to a programmed event can take the responsibility for sharing the gospel away from individual Christians and make it seem more like a corporate mandate.

Evangelism and missional outreach must be more than just another preset event in the life of the church. Evangelism should be the lifestyle of every disciple of Jesus Christ. Paige Patterson describes one of the benefits of lifestyle evangelism in this way: “Lifestyle evangelism recognizes that strangers tend not to communicate as naturally or as effectively as friends.”

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witnessing to strangers, Christ-followers should realize that God has already placed the lost in their lives. All believers have friends, co-workers, neighbors, or relatives who have not placed their faith in Christ. Lifestyle evangelism does not negate witnessing to strangers, but Christians have a ready opportunity to be witnesses as they interact with the people already in their lives.6

Programs are not inherently bad. Having an evangelism program reveals the heart desire of the local church to be faithful to reach the lost with the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Programmed outreach events, however, can be problematic because programs may tend to be focused primarily upon results. Biblical evangelism is not results oriented. Instead, evangelism is the proclamation of the good news of God’s love through Jesus Christ. As John Stott notes, “Evangelism is the announcement of the good news, irrespective of the results.”7 Further, the results of gospel evangelism are the work of God, not the work of people. As J. Mack Stiles says, “We long to see people converted because we understand that conversion is required for them to become Christians. But true conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit.”8 As was discussed in chapter two, the Lord added those who were saved to the early church (Acts 2:47).

Churches that are event- or program-driven are often so busy that they are ineffective in evangelism. Churches may confuse activity for productivity and end up with busy schedules without new converts. Rick Warren calls these “Churches Driven by Events” and says, “In the event-driven church, attendance becomes the sole measurement of faithfulness and maturity. We must be wary of the tendency to allow meeting to

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6The Great Commission, found in Matt 28:19-20, is often translated as “go and make disciples.” However, it may be more correctly rendered as “in your going make disciples” or “as you are going, make disciples” (Matt 28:19). The participle “go” is not an imperative, but instead a means of making disciples. As the Christ-follower goes about his or her day, wherever he or she may be, be a witness of Christ. (See chap. 2 of this project for a more detailed discourse on the participle “go” found in Matthew’s account of Jesus’ parting instruction for his disciples.)


replace ministry as the primary activity of believers. Churches busy with programs are not necessarily accomplishing their goals, nor are they always effective. In fact, a large number of events in the life of the local church may hinder the work of evangelism in the lives of its members. If a church member finds himself with a calendar full of church events, he may spend his time working those events and neglect sharing the gospel with his unchurched next-door neighbor.

Evangelism programs become even more problematic when the focus is upon methodology rather than message. If this is the case, especially in door-to-door styles of evangelism, the gospel message can sound more like a sales pitch than the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ alone. Christians who utilize these tactics may be compared with Jehovah’s Witnesses or other religious groups, and the clear message of the gospel would be diluted by a comparison with false religions. Door-to-door evangelism does give Christians the opportunity to meet neighbors with whom they otherwise would not interact, but the Christian must be someone who is perceived to care. Merely trying to finish a presentation so that he can proceed to the next house would make the evangelist seem insincere. In this case, evangelism would be seen as an event rather than a full-time calling. Those who participate in the evangelism program may think of the gospel only as something to be shared while engaged in knocking on doors. Once the programmed time is complete, he or she can go back to life. Evangelism as a program would then become a compartmentalized event rather than a habitual way of life. On the other hand, participating in an evangelistic event will give the participants experiences in sharing the gospel, which will help them overcome their fear in evangelism.

Focusing upon a particular methodology, at the exclusion of other methods, also means that a program may not be able to reach everyone with the gospel. Some unbelievers may respond to the Four Spiritual Laws, while post-modernists may reject

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the idea of absolutes and be closed to hearing the gospel presented in that way. Churches would do better to heed Paul’s instruction regarding how he related to the people in the various places he ministered. He said, “I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some” (1 Cor 9:22). Rather than use just one method, Paul sought to share the gospel with everyone in their own context so that he could reach the maximum number of people with the message of God’s saving grace. Methodologies and programs for evangelism are not bad, but they can be problematic and should be viewed as a tool to help evangelism and not as evangelism itself.

**Personal Evangelism**

Of particular importance in the discipleship of each individual believer is the call to personal evangelism. Every Christian is a messenger of the gospel in some context. As John Stott points out, “It is still our duty, when the opportunity is given and in a spirit of humility, to share Christ with those of our relatives, friends, neighbours and colleagues who do not yet know him.”10 Darrell Guder suggests that Karl Barth would insist that “vocation to witness is an essential aspect of the gospel of reconciliation. Justification and sanctification are not adequately understood and confessed apart from their outworking in the vocation of the individual Christian as witness.”11 Essentially, a Christian cannot claim that he or she is growing in Christ if that person does not proclaim the salvation of Christ to the lost.

Personal evangelism is intentional. Christians should purposely use opportunities in conversation to tell others about Jesus. Christians should deliberately invest time with the lost in order to share the good news with them. As Will McRaney says, “We should prayerfully and persistently pursue the presence of lost people, then

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proclaim and persuade at the prompting and in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Christians are called to share their faith in their walk with Christ, and that calling is to an intentional lifestyle of making disciples. Don Whitney even calls evangelism a spiritual discipline in the life of a believer. He says, “Unless we discipline ourselves for evangelism, it is very easy to excuse ourselves from ever sharing the gospel with anyone.” Christ-followers need to develop a lifestyle of evangelism, being personally disciplined to share the gospel with the people around them.

Jesus’ ministry is an example for his followers, for he modeled personal evangelism. He initiated intentional conversations with people like Zacchaeus, Nicodemus, the woman at the well, and others for the purpose of Kingdom conversations. As he went from town to town, he preached to the crowds, but he also invested time in individuals who needed redemption. He taught his disciples the value of reaching those individuals. Darrell Robinson notes, “[Jesus] took time to deal personally with the lost in all kinds of situations. He did not delegate the work of winning individuals to his disciples while reserving for himself the task of preaching to the multitudes.” Philip evidenced that he understood and learned from Jesus’ example. In obedience to the angel of the Lord’s command, Philip left ministry to large crowds to go to the desert, finding there the lone Ethiopian eunuch with whom he shared the gospel, using the questions the eunuch was asking about the prophet Isaiah. The result of this


14See Luke 19:1-10 for the story of Zacchaeus. See John 3:1-21 for Jesus’ interaction with and teaching to Nicodemus. See John 4:1-45 for the story of the Samaritan woman at the well. John 4 also records Jesus interacting with his disciples regarding his intentional conversation with the Samaritan woman. “Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest’” (John 4:34-35). Jesus taught them that some of the lost are ready to hear the message of the gospel if Christians will but see them and then tell them the Good News.

encounter was that the eunuch was saved and baptized (Acts 8:26-39).

The call to evangelism is both a personal call on the life of the believer and a call to the corporate unity of the church body. Christians are to work together to be a witness to the gospel. J. Mack Stiles writes, “I appreciate personal evangelism, and we need to be equipped for it. But since I believe in the church as the engine of evangelism, we need to develop cultures of evangelism in our local churches, too. We want whole churches that speak of Jesus.”\textsuperscript{16} The responsibility does not only lie with individual Christians to share their faith. If that were the case, then a Christ-follower could avoid evangelism by claiming that other Christians are more gifted than he at sharing the gospel. This misunderstanding of the gospel mandate could be the by-product of spiritual gifts inventories, where Christians believe that evangelism is one spiritual gift among many. Rather than only an individual mandate, or a program of the local church, the call to missions is the central purpose of the Body of Christ. Evangelism and outreach “must be seen as the fundamental, the essential, the centering understanding of the church’s purpose and action.”\textsuperscript{17} Much more than a program, evangelism (through discipleship) is the purpose for which the Body of Christ is assembled.

One caveat is needed in the discussion of evangelism programs in the local church. While focusing upon only one program can be problematic, churches that are engaged in reaching the lost through evangelism of any type should be celebrated. The warning against methodology contained in this chapter is not meant to be used as an excuse against evangelism of any sort. Christians are clearly called in Scripture to share their faith, and not doing so simply because evangelism programs can be problematic is sinful disobedience to the command of Christ and the Word of God.

\textsuperscript{16}Stiles, \textit{Evangelism}, 42.

\textsuperscript{17}Guder, \textit{Called to Witness}, 65.
Fear and Spiritual Immaturity

Among the various obstacles that hinder evangelism in the believer’s spiritual life, fear and spiritual immaturity are quite common. These obstacles are linked, for those who are immature spiritually lack the knowledge, ability, or faith to overcome crippling fear. Scripture is specific in the commands against fear in the life of the believer. Scripture is equally clear in instructing spiritual growth. Christ-followers will evidence their faith and their maturity in Christ through obedience in evangelism.

Fear

When Peter wrote to Christians suffering in Asia Minor, he instructed them to not fear persecution. Two-thousand years removed from that instruction, modern Western believers no longer face intense persecution (torture and death), yet fear still cripples Christ-followers, stopping them from sharing their faith. Today, fear of rejection, fear of failure, fear of offending someone, and fear of what others will think cause many Christians to remain silent.

Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, and author of the Four Spiritual Laws, wrote about the fear of failure, “Fear of [failure] can be one of the biggest cri- pplers of a faithful witness, for none of us likes to be ‘turned down.’ We tend to take it personally, regarding a rejection to our message as a rejection of our person.” The problem with this particular fear is that the focus is upon the believer, not the lost. The Christian chooses not to tell the lost about Jesus because he or she is scared of being...

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18 The Psalmist says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea" (Ps 46:1-2). Paul wrote, “do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (Phil 4:6). James offers this instruction: “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds” (Jas 1:2).

19 Paul writes, “We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ” (Eph 4:15).

20 See chap. 2 of this project for a discussion of 1 Pet 3:14-16.

rejected by the lost person. The antidote to this crippling fear is found in the ministry of Jesus. Bright suggests that we follow Jesus’ example, and realize that “success in witnessing is simply taking the initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, and leaving the results to God.” To state this truth another way, the only way to fail in sharing the gospel is to avoid sharing the gospel. Sharing the message of the gospel is success. As Spurgeon wrote, “He that is faithful is, in God’s way and in God’s judgment, successful.”

Jesus taught the same principle in the Parable of the Sower (Matt 13:3-8). He said, “When anyone hears the word of the Kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart” (Matt 13:19). Jesus’ point is that the seed they are sowing is good, regardless of the condition of the soil. The implication is that regardless of the condition of the heart of the hearers, the gospel is to be proclaimed. Some hearers will receive the message of the gospel. Some will not, for various reasons. But in each case, the seed sown is worth sowing. Some people will hear and receive the gospel, and will grow in their faith. Others will receive it but fall away, and still others will reject it. Nevertheless, the message of the gospel is to be proclaimed because the gospel is good, and that proclamation is the calling of every disciple of Jesus as witnesses of the gospel.

Fear of rejection, or more accurately, fear of what others will think of a person, is another aspect of fear that is a major temptation for Christians. This fear also serves as an excuse not to share the gospel. Edward Welch suggests that this “fear of man” is universal to humanity. He writes, “[Fear] includes being afraid of someone, but it extends to holding someone in awe, being controlled or mastered by people, worshipping other people, putting your trust in people, or needing people.” Essentially, fear of man puts

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22 Bright, “Personal Evangelism,” 157.
others in the place that only God should hold in the life of the believer. Rather than cowering in fear, the disciple of Jesus Christ believes and obeys in the knowledge that salvation is God’s work, not man’s. Therefore, rejection or acceptance, success or failure is not determined based upon human ability, but rather the work of God’s Holy Spirit in the life of the one hearing the gospel. J. Mack Stiles’ statement is helpful here, when he says,

Paul says we persuade others to follow Jesus (2 Cor. 5:11). I find the word persuade helpful, as it guards us from error: we persuade, but we do not manipulate; we persuade, but we are not the ones who bring about repentance or conversion. Of course, we long to see people converted because we understand that conversion is required for them to become Christians. But true conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit.  

Rejection of the gospel, when it happens, is not rejection of the person, but rejection of the message of salvation. Christians will always fear if they believe that they are responsible for the result of evangelism. But trusting God to work, and obeying Him by proclaiming the gospel will lead to a lifetime and lifestyle of evangelism.

The current culture of the United States has added an element of fear of rejection to the life of the believer. People are only allowed to share their opinion without ridicule if that opinion does not offend anyone else. D. A. Carson says that “although the politically correct world would have a great deal of difficulty agreeing on what constitutes goodness and truth, they have no trouble at all agreeing that intolerance itself is wrong. Why? Because no one deserves to be offended.” He further notes,

Intolerance is no longer a refusal to allow contrary opinions to say their piece in public, but must be understood to be any questioning or contradicting the view that all opinions are equal in value, that all worldviews have equal worth, that all stances are equally valid. To question such postmodern axioms is by definition intolerant. For such questioning there is no tolerance whatsoever, for it is classed as intolerance and must therefore be condemned. It has become the supreme vice.

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25 Stiles, Evangelism, 36.


27 Carson, The Intolerance of Tolerance, loc. 148.
Americans’ obsession with political correctness has paralyzed many believers who fear saying the wrong thing. Bill Bright said that this is a favorite tactic of Satan, where he convinces believers that “you don’t have any right to force your views on someone else.” The fear of offending others is a powerful way to stop Christians from sharing their faith with the lost. Thabiti Anyabwile says this tendency reveals itself when we “begin to evaluate ourselves not in light of the gospel but in light of the judgments of others, which are not made on the basis of the gospel but on the basis of self-made religion, asceticism, forms of self-righteousness” and other means. Evaluating the gospel message with the world’s wisdom brings about the fear of offending those who hear the gospel. The problem is that the message of the gospel is offensive to sinful man. Americans are told to say nothing that will offend others, and the Good News that Christ-followers share is that sinful man cannot save himself, and can only find redemption through faith in Jesus Christ. Telling sinful people that they cannot save themselves is offensive to people who are in fact working to try to save themselves.

Jesus surely faced the temptation to fear offending the people who heard him teach. Yet his example was bold proclamation of the Kingdom in the face of that fear. He was not afraid to speak truth. He called the Pharisees a “brood of vipers” (Matt 3:7, 12:34, 23:33), “hypocrites” (Matt 13:13), “blind guides” (Matt 13:16), and “whitewashed tombs” (Matt 13:27). He told the woman at the well her sin of adultery and invited her through faith to receive the eternal life that only he could give (John 4:14-26). He told those who expressed faith that their “sins are forgiven” (Matt 9:2, Mark 2:5, Luke 5:20, 7:48). He told Nicodemus “unless one is born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Jesus said that he was sent to do the will of the Father (John 4:34), and he told

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his disciples that he was sending them out in the same way he was sent (John 20:21).\textsuperscript{30} Christ-followers would do well to follow the example of Jesus in the face of fear, and boldly proclaim salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

Christ-followers, who by very definition are people of faith, must not let fear of the future stop their witness either. No one knows the future, and fear of what will happen is a real struggle in the human experience. But rather than join the cultural tendency to fear the future and worry over wars, elections, court decisions, disease, and government overreach, Christians who trust in the power of God should seek ways to share the good news of the gospel with unbelievers who fear uncertainty. Guder rightly instructs, “In place of fruitless speculation about events that have not yet happened, we must focus upon the certainty of our hope that enables us now to witness to Christ fearlessly and point away from ourselves modestly.”\textsuperscript{31}

**Spiritual Immaturity**

Fear of man in evangelism is a symptom of a much bigger problem throughout the church: spiritual immaturity. The church is filled with people who are spiritual babies, or spiritually apathetic. Bill Bright called this “spiritual lethargy” and says, “If you aren’t excited about something, chances are you won’t tell many people about it.”\textsuperscript{32} Many American Christians believe that salvation is merely a ticket to eternity rather that a life submitted to Christ, and are unclear on how salvation occurs.\textsuperscript{33} Because they are weak in their faith, they do not know how to share their faith and do not fully understand the faith

\textsuperscript{30}See chap. 2 of this project for a more complete discussion of John 20:21.

\textsuperscript{31}Guder, *Called to Witness*, 76-77.

\textsuperscript{32}Bright, *Witnessing without Fear*, 54.

\textsuperscript{33}A 2007 Barna study found that only 19 percent of people who self-identified as “evangelical” actually held beliefs that are traditionally considered evangelical in nine categories. Of the remaining 77 percent who self-identify as “evangelical Christian” in America, only about half believe that salvation is by grace and not by works, and fewer than half believe that evangelism is a responsibility of the Christian life. “Survey Explores Who Qualifies as an Evangelical,” January 18, 2007, accessed December 6, 2016, https://www.barna.com/research/survey-explores-who-qualifies-as-an-evangelical/.
through which God has saved them to be messengers. The focus of many average Christians is upon their daily lives, needs, and desires, and there lacks a sense of urgency in the impending return of Christ, or the impending judgment of God on a world filled with sin.\(^\text{34}\) Stiles says that “one might know the gospel and many unbelievers, but be dull to the spiritual reality of the eternal judgment that those friends without Christ are facing.”\(^\text{35}\)

Robert Coleman points out that the first disciples discovered a truth that must be realized by Christians today. He says, “It soon became apparent that being a disciple of Christ involved far more than a joyful acceptance of the Messianic promise: it meant the surrender of one’s whole life to the Master in absolute submission to his sovereignty.”\(^\text{36}\)

Failure to share the gospel message with unbelievers could also indicate a cultural universalism in the American church.\(^\text{37}\) Though Christians say that they believe that Jesus is the means of salvation, the fact that they do not share the gospel with the lost suggests that they may believe the lost may not be eternally condemned by God. James says, “Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works” (Jas 2:18). James is essentially saying that Christians show their beliefs in their actions. Christ-followers who do not share the gospel may be too immature to understand

\(^{34}\)The research study found that only about half of the people surveyed listed their faith in God as the top priority in their lives. “Survey Explores Who Qualifies As an Evangelical,” January 18, 2007, accessed December 6, 2016, https://www.barna.com/research/survey-explores-who-qualifies-as-an-evangelical/

\(^{35}\)Stiles, *Evangelism*, 84.


\(^{37}\)George Barna is quoted in a 2003 survey, saying, “Many committed born again Christians believe that people have multiple options for gaining entry to Heaven. They are saying, in essence, ‘Personally, I am trusting Jesus Christ as my means of gaining God’s permanent favor and a place in Heaven – but someone else could get to Heaven based upon living an exemplary life.’ Millions of Americans have redefined grace to mean that God is so eager to save people from Hell that He will change His nature and universal principles for their individual benefit. It is astounding how many people develop their faith according to their feelings or cultural assumptions rather than biblical teachings.” The research of the study in which he is quoted found that 50 percent of Christians surveyed believed that a person can earn salvation based upon their good works. “Americans Describe Their Views about Life after Death,” October 21, 2003, accessed December 6, 2016, https://www.barna.com/research/americans-describe-their-views-about-life-after-death/.
their calling to share the gospel, or may feel guilt because they are unequipped to share the gospel. Regardless of the reason for it, the current apathy of many Western Christians is contrasted sharply with the agony Paul felt over those who were unsaved. Paul wrote, “Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved” (Rom 10:1). Regarding Paul’s inward desire to see people saved, John Stott writes, “That few if any of us feel this inward agony is a mark of our spiritual immaturity.”38 In order for Christ-followers to overcome this apathy, each Christian must be growing in his or her faith through intentional discipleship.

**Evangelism and Discipleship**

Jesus’ command to his followers as he was preparing to return to the Father was for them to “make disciples” (Matt 28:19).39 Evangelism, the sharing of the gospel of Christ, cannot be separated from discipleship. Paul says in Romans that it is the “hearing” of the word, precipitated on the “preaching” of the word that leads people to faith in Jesus (Rom 10:14-15). Therefore, it is evangelism that begins the process of discipleship, as people hear the gospel and then respond in faith. But evangelism is also an important part of discipleship, as Christ-followers who are growing in their faith also share the gospel with the lost.

Mark Dever defines discipling (the act of making disciples) in the following way: “helping others to follow Jesus.”40 Dever says about discipleship, “Following Jesus first means that you have entered into a personal, saving relationship with him. You have been ‘united with Christ,’ as the Bible puts it (Phil. 2:1, NIV).”41 One sees in Dever’s statement the first connection between discipleship and evangelism. People hear the

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39 See chap. 2 of this project for a detailed discussion of Matt 28:18-20.
gospel and believe in Jesus, entering into relationship with him. This response to the gospel is the beginning of a life spent growing in relationship with Jesus, or discipleship.

Unfortunately, evangelism has often been separated from discipleship in the teaching and practices of the local church. Using New Canaan Baptist Church as an example, there are currently 930 people on the membership role of NCBC. Of that group, only 181 are recorded as active members, meaning that they have attended at least one church service in the last year. The average weekly attendance of members (not counting guests and regular attenders) is about 130. A primary reason so many people are inactive members is that they heard the gospel, responded by walking an aisle and praying a prayer, but were not discipled into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. When evangelism is a separate event from discipleship, people are at best saved and left as immature Christians. At worst, they are given false hope of salvation without any evidence of them knowing Jesus as they move forward in life toward eternity.

Evangelism is also far less effective when it is done apart from discipleship. Greg Ogden contrasts the difference between an evangelism-only approach to sharing the gospel and a discipleship model of sharing the gospel. The evangelist will attempt to share the gospel with one unique person every day of the year, every year for sixteen straight years. The discipler will invest in only two people for the first year. At the end of the year, those who have been discipled will then each invest in two new converts for a year. Each year, the number of people being discipled doubles, as each convert grows from immature, new believer into a maturing Christian who makes disciples. This concept is often called multiplication, and the gospel could reach all nations in a short

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42 This is a setting for the ACS church management software used by NCBC. In the software, for recording purposes, “active” means the member has attended a church service at least once in the past year. The Barna Group, in doing research on church attendance, now consider attendance of at least once per month as active. “New Statistics on Church Attendance and Avoidance,” March 3, 2008, accessed September 13, 2016, https://www.barna.com/research/new-statistics-on-church-attendance-and-avoidance/#.V9hREzuMDq0.

43 See appendix 8.
time if the church implemented this strategy. Table 1 reveals the results over 16 years of these two methods.\(^{44}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Evangelist</th>
<th>Discipler</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>730</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2,190</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2,555</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2,920</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>5,840</td>
<td>65,536</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As table 1 demonstrates, engaging new believers in a process of discipleship nets far more followers of Jesus over the years than mere evangelism alone. Robby Gallaty, discussing this idea, says, “Multiplication—not addition—is Jesus’ plan for reaching the world with the gospel.” He goes on to say, “If the body of Christ would accept this plan, embrace it, and faithfully obey it, then the Great Commission would be accomplished.”\(^{45}\) Clearly Jesus followed a model of discipleship, for he spent a vast amount of time with

\(^{44}\)Table 1 adapted from Greg Odgen, *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Books, 2007), 12.

his twelve disciples, teaching them what he was unwilling to teach the crowds.\(^{46}\) In fact, Eugene Peterson suggests that Jesus spent a remarkable ninety percent of his time on earth with the twelve disciples.\(^{47}\) And though the disciples often exhibited their immaturity and lack of understanding, still Jesus patiently taught them. As Robert Coleman points out, Jesus knew that “their capacity to receive revelation would grow provided they continued to practice what truth they did understand.”\(^{48}\) Such is the heart of discipleship, to practice what one has learned as he or she grows to learn new things.

As Christ-followers learn and grow, they will share the good news of the gospel with the lost. Evangelism is a result of discipleship. As a disciple grows, his or her life will begin to look more and more like Jesus. Paul said that God has predestined his people “to be conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom 8:29). As Christians grow to be more like Jesus, they will follow his example. They will tell others about Jesus because they are growing to be like him. They will disciple new converts, because Jesus taught them by investing in the spiritual growth of his disciples. As Christ-followers grow, they will fulfill the command to “make disciples” as they go about their lives.

**Evangelism in a Post-Christian Culture**

The post-Christian, pluralistic culture of the United States is no longer likely to accept the morality of Christians as normative. Christians are generally viewed as a fringe group, known more about what they are against rather than what they believe. Albert Mohler writes, “The truth claims of Christianity, by their very particularity and exclusivity, are inherently offensive to those who would demand some other gospel.”\(^{49}\)

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\(^{46}\) Matt 13 records Jesus teaching the Parable of the Sower. In vv. 1-9, the crowds are gathered around Jesus and he tells them the parable. After he talks with the crowds, however, his disciples come to him and ask why he taught in parables and what the parable meant. Verses 10-52 record Jesus answering his disciples’ questions and teaching them other parables. He told his disciples that the crowds could not understand what he was teaching (13:11) and made clear that his teaching was for the disciples, not the crowds.

\(^{47}\) Eugene Peterson, *Traveling Light* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1982), 182.

\(^{48}\) Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 56.

\(^{49}\) R. Albert Mohler, *Culture Shift: The Battle for the Moral Heart of America* (Colorado
New-Age spirituality is celebrated in the media as a way to find peace, and a vast array of religions and belief systems are counted as equal ways of finding joy, help, satisfaction, or God. This tolerance of anything and everything means that the culture at large is much less likely to look to Christians for a message of hope than in times past. The church is no longer the place to which many Americans turn to find answers to life’s questions. Yet, Darrell Robinson points out, “Many churches are trying all kinds of gimmick approaches, spectacular events, indirect methods, marketing techniques, and innovative and creative approaches to attract people to their meetings and gain members.”

Some churches attempt to connect with the lost via methods that were attractive to the culture two or more generations ago. Current cultural trends are foreign to these churches, and the lost in American culture do not seem interested in what the church is offering. In order to mitigate these changes, the American church needs to look outward to the lost and forward to new ways of engaging the culture. The churches that are growing in new converts are doing just that.

**Looking Outward**

Many Christians have for too long looked inward, focused upon their own needs or wants, and the church has insulated itself from a world that is continuing to move further away from Judeo-Christian values. Churches often have become membership clubs, focused upon maintaining the happiness of members rather than affecting the eternal state of people’s souls. Sunday School small groups, started as evangelistic outreaches, have become havens for class members to meet together and

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51 Thom Rainer notes that recent studies “found that newly growing churches are more likely to be involved in community ministries than declining churches.” Thom Rainer, *Effective Evangelistic Churches: Successful Churches Reveal What Works and What Doesn’t* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1996), 135.
study the Bible for their own pleasure. Too few Christians cultivate any significant relationships with non-believers. This continues the cycle of Christianity’s loss of influence in the culture at large.

The phenomenon of culture moving away from Christian values and morality is not new. In fact, Spurgeon recognized this in his ministry, and even said that a person’s love for sin is always an obstacle to reaching people with the gospel.\(^5^2\) Every generation of the church has been called by God to be a light in the darkness of sin in humanity.\(^5^3\) Christians (and churches) must look outside the walls of the church, outside of the wants of the members. Christians need to foster relationships with acquaintances, co-workers, and neighbors who are lost and share the gospel with them. Churches need to stop hosting entertainment-oriented events and serve together in their communities, showing the world that unity in service and love is possible through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

**Looking Forward**

Many older Christians in the church today look back on the rise of the Moral Majority and Religious Right of the 1970’s-80’s as some of the glory days of the modern church.\(^5^4\) The blending of the gospel of Christ with political conservatism caused many in the church to lose sight of the church’s mission to make disciples. Rather than proclaim the good news of the gospel boldly, Christians now often look to elected officials as the answer to fix the moral decline of society. This is not to say that Christians have no place in the political system. On the contrary, Mohler notes, “love of God leads us to love our

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\(^5^3\) Jesus said, “You are the light of the world.” He continued by explaining what that meant for his followers: “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matt 5:14,16).

\(^5^4\) The Moral Majority was a fundamentalist Christian organization founded by televangelist Jerry Falwell in 1979. The Moral Majority was established to preserve ‘traditional’ American values and to combat increasing acceptance of social movements and culture changes. The organization became a major political influence in its opposition to gay rights, abortion, feminism, and other liberal movements during the 1980s. In 1989, Falwell disbanded the organization, declaring that it had achieved its goals.” “Moral Majority,” accessed September 13, 2016, [http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/age-reagan/timeline-terms/moral-majority](http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/age-reagan/timeline-terms/moral-majority).
neighbor, and love of neighbor requires our participation in the culture and in the political process.”

However, government, no matter the power or influence, is not the ultimate answer for the Christ-follower. Lesslie Newbigin rightly asserts,

“If the gospel is to challenge the public life of our society, if Christians are to occupy the ‘high ground’ which they vacated in the noontime of ‘modernity,’ it will not be by forming a Christian political party, or by aggressive propaganda campaigns . . . . It will only be by movements that begin with the local congregation in which the reality of the new creation is present, known, and experienced, and from which men and women will go into every sector of public life to claim it for Christ, to unmask the illusions which have remained hidden and to expose all areas of public life to the illumination of the gospel. But that will only happen as and when local congregations renounce an introverted concern for their own life, and recognize that they exist for the sake of those who are not members, as sign, instrument, and foretaste of God’s redeeming grace for the whole life of society.”

Christ-followers are not called to defend a culture or way of life in society. Rather, they are called to surrender their lives to Christ, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, take the message of life change to those who do not know Christ.

Looking forward means that church members may have to abandon traditions of the past that no longer connect with a lost world. As stated earlier, this does not mean that Christians lose or dilute the clear message of the gospel. Church members that rigidly insist on maintaining traditions (such as music styles or Bible translations) already find themselves unable to communicate with a growing majority of the population of the lost in America. This lack of engagement will only grow if churches remain entrenched in tradition and refuse to meet the lost where they are. Regarding the calling to engage the culture, Mohler asserts that “we can never be counted faithful in the City of God if we neglect our duty in the City of Man.”

**Reaching Post-Modern America**

Thabiti Anyabwile suggests that the apostle Paul’s approach to engaging the

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55Mohler, *Culture Shift*, 2.


secular culture, based upon his letter to the Colossian Christians, is “(1) to engage the church, (2) to conform the church to the likeness of Christ, (3) to have the church adopt Christ as its distinctive philosophy and wisdom, and (4) to then live out of that philosophy in a distinctive practice.” Essentially, Anyabwile is arguing that in order to engage the culture, the church must first be Christ-centered. The church must have its own unique culture, devoted to Jesus Christ, before it can interact with a world that believes something different. The world must see the difference Christ makes in the lives of Christians before it will hear the message of the gospel. David Platt echoes this truth when he writes,

What if the main issue in our culture today is not poverty or sex trafficking, homosexuality or abortion? What if the main issue is God? And what might happen if we made him our focus instead? In a world marked by sex slavery and sexual immorality, the abandonment of children and the murder of children, racism and persecution, the needs of the poor and the neglect of the widow, how would we act if we fixed our gaze on the holiness, love, goodness, truth, justice, authority, and mercy of God revealed in the gospel?

Rather than picking certain social issues with which to engage the culture in conversation (while ignoring others that make him or her uncomfortable), the Christian must first make Christ the focus of his or her life and conversation.

The post-modern culture of pluralism has not been able to deliver what it promised. People are still seeking meaning in life, and in some cases culture has left them feeling empty and alone. The plurality of religious ideas has not met the need of the people for redemption. As John Stott points out, “The contemporary world is positively

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59 David Platt, Counter Culture: A Compassionate Call to Counter Culture in a World of Poverty, Same-Sex Marriage, Racism, Sex Slavery, Immigration, Persecution, Abortion, Orphans, and Pornography (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), xiv-xv.
60 According to Barna’s research, “One of the greatest self-perception changes over the past decade is in how Americans see themselves in relation to others. For all the technological advances in the past decade, the desire for human connectedness remains. Ten years ago, slightly over one out of 10 Americans self-identified as lonely. Today, that number has doubled—a paradoxical reality in the full swing of the social media age.” “How the Last Decade Changed American Life,” July 31, 2013, accessed September 13, 2016, https://www.barna.com/research/how-the-last-decade-changed-american-life/#.V9he4zuMDq0.
reverberating with cries of anger, frustration and pain. Too often, however we turn a deaf ear to these anguished voices.” This does not mean that the job of Christians is to merely address the felt needs of the lost. W. A. Vissert’t Hooft makes this statement:

I do not believe that evangelism is adequately described as answering the questions which men are asking, however deep those questions may be. For evangelism is in the first place the transmission of God’s question to man. And that question is and remains whether we are willing to accept Jesus Christ as the one and only Lord of Life.

Rather than merely answering culture’s questions, Christians must relate the things of God to the culture of man. To quote John Stott, “We must try to relate God’s question to the existential situation of men and show that as they answer God’s question they find at the same time the answer to their deepest concerns.” Dave Earley rightly states, “Deep happiness never comes through focusing on yourself. It is the result of living a life centered on God and directed toward others.” His claim is true for both a world searching for meaning, and the believer seeking to share Christ with the post-modern world.

In order to reach the culture of the United States, at least three things must happen. First, Christ-followers must live lives that reflect what they claim to believe. In fact, Christians need to move beyond mere belief into life-change. Tim Keller says, “Even though the gospel is a set of truths to understand and believe, it cannot remain a set of beliefs if it is truly believed and understood.” He further explains, “Scripture teaches that the gospel creates an entire way of life and affects literally everything about us. It is a power (Rom 1:16-17) that creates new life in us (Col 1:5-6; 1 Pet 1:23-25).”

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followers must not let worry or anxiety cause them to fret publicly over the changes in society. They must live by faith, no matter how bleak the circumstances. They must love one another as Jesus has instructed. They must live the gospel message in every area of their lives.

Second, Christians must be faithful to proclaim the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This proclamation must be made in the face of fear and without regard for the result. Stott says, “If we want to be biblically accurate we must insist that the essence of evangelism lies in the faithful proclamation of the gospel.” He goes on to say that no matter the end result, “it is still evangelism whether in fact men are persuaded to embrace it or not.” The church must stand, not for political ideologies or mere social justice, but for the unchanging message of salvation through faith alone in Christ alone. That stand must be made through the unapologetically bold proclamation of the gospel.

Third, the church must make use of the opportunities given to share the gospel. McRaney points out, “Observation reveals that there are times when people are more receptive to the gospel than others.” Major life changes, including births, deaths, and job changes, or major social or climate events provide opportunities to reach people with the gospel. In fact, McRaney says that “in America people are more receptive during times of intense stress or change.” This does not mean that Christians need to capitalize on calamity, but it does mean that God opens doors for sharing the gospel when people are vulnerable and contemplating deeper issues than the day-to-day demands of living. Christ-followers must be aware of what is happening in their community (and around the world) and take the opportunity to share the gospel, especially making good use of the

 Jesús said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35). Christians’ care for one another proclaims the gospel to the lost.

  

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times when the world around them is hurting and looking for hope.

**Multi-cultural Evangelism**

The call to make disciples, initiated through evangelism, is a multi-cultural, multi-national call. The gospel is for all nations and people groups. John records in Revelation “a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb” (Rev 7:9). All people need to hear the gospel, and Christians are given the task of taking the message of redemption through Jesus to all people groups. As John Piper aptly states, “If people all over the world are under condemnation for sin and cut off from eternal life... and if calling on Jesus is their only hope for eternal, joyful fellowship with God... then love demands missions.”

Evangelism must occur locally and globally.

People groups are more than just a nation or country. Ralph Winter sharply criticized the missionary movement in 1974 when he noted the following at the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization:

I’m afraid that all our exultation about the fact that every country of the world has been penetrated [with the gospel] has allowed many to suppose that every culture has by now been penetrated. This misunderstanding is a malady so widespread that it deserves a special name. Let us call it ‘people blindness,’ that is, blindness to the existence of separate peoples within countries—a blindness, I might add, which seems more prevalent in the U.S. and among U.S. missionaries than anywhere else.

While the gospel has touched all parts of the world geographically, Piper points out that “four out of five non-Christians are still cut off from the gospel because the barriers are cultural and linguistic, not geographic.” Since Winter first began calling attention to people groups, much work has been done in penetrating cultures and peoples with the

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gospel, but there is still much to do. In order to understand the idea of people groups more clearly, a definition of people groups will be helpful. The Lausanne Strategy Working Group in 1982 developed the following definition, stating a people group as a significantly large grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another because of their shared language, religion, ethnicity, residence, occupation, class or caste, situation, etc. or combinations of these . . . [It is] the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.\footnote{Ralph Winter, “Unreached Peoples: Recent Developments in the Concept,” \textit{Mission Frontiers} (August/September 1989), 12.}

An argument could be made that “occupation” should be left out of this list because people of different cultures, ethnicities, and languages can work in the same or similar jobs and careers. However, the more important reality of the notion of people groups is that people tend to surround themselves with others who share similarities to themselves. Christians must meet people groups where they are and shine the light of the gospel into every people group.

American society is not homogenous. It is growing ever more multi-cultural, more global. As groups migrate from other countries into the United States and have children, Caucasian Americans are decreasing in size as the majority ethnic group. David Sills notes that “missiologists’ growing interest in diaspora missions is due to the fact that increasing numbers of people now live outside the country of their birth, where they find work, education and eventually a home.”\footnote{M. David Sills, \textit{Changing World, Unchanging Mission: Responding to Global Challenges} (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015), 31.} In fact, projections suggest that “by 2055, the U.S. will not have a single racial or ethnic majority.”\footnote{D’Vera Cohn and Andrea Caumont, “10 Demographic Trends That Are Shaping the U. S. and the World,” March 31, 2016, accessed September 10, 2016, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/03/31/10-demographic-trends-that-are-shaping-the-u-s-and-the-world/.} Recent statistics show that 14 percent of the U.S. population was born outside of the United States.\footnote{Cohn and Caumont, “10 Demographic Trends That Are Shaping the U. S. and the World.”} The good news for the discipleship mandate is that Christians can now reach some other people groups.
without leaving their own communities. While Paulding County (where NCBC is located) remains 75 percent Caucasian, the area has growing populations of African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians.  

For too long, Western Christianity has been so merged with Western culture that missionaries inadvertently sought to convert other people groups to Christianity and Western culture. Guder sums up this history, which he calls “Christendom” in this way:

Once the Christian religion had become the only allowed religion within the boundaries of Christendom, mission was not seen as the central task of the church. Rather, her theological definition gradually came to focus upon the care and tending of the salvation of her members, who were simultaneously citizens of Christendom. This centering on the savedness of the saved reflected another profoundly important shift in thought and practice, relating directly to the gospel itself. The biblical message of salvation underwent a reductionism that resulted in emphasis upon individual salvation, how it was attained and how it was maintained.

This shift in focus from evangelism to membership maintenance caused the church to come to believe that tradition and culture were equivalent to the Christian religion. Unfortunately, this belief has continued into the modern era, and many churches today seek to preserve their culture and tradition rather than share the gospel with people of different ethnic backgrounds who live across the street.

In order to reach people from different cultures, Christians need to proclaim the unchanging message of the gospel of Jesus in a way that is familiar to the culture. Regarding the unchanging message of the gospel, Christians must declare what Thabiti Anyabwile calls the “irreducible minimum, that individuals must repent and believe the message.” While maintaining the unchanged message of the gospel, Will McRaney advises, “Different cultures or subcultures have appropriate levels of directness in verbal communication.” This fact means that “we must continue to share while seeking God’s wisdom in learning the cultural norms in which we are sharing.”

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77 See appendix 10.
78 Guder, Called to Witness, 67.
80 McRaney, The Art of Personal Evangelism, 72.
looking to export Western culture; rather, Christ transforms every human culture. Darrell Guder points out that “the theological discourse itself is by definition multicultural, and that no particular cultural articulation of Christian faith and practice may make the claim to be normative.”\textsuperscript{81} To articulate his point more directly, Chinese Christians, African Christians, Chilean Christians, and Russian Christians are just as “normal” as American Christians.

The broadening of ethnicities within the United States means that the local church needs to share the gospel outside of its own homogenous social or ethnic group. Stott recommends each local church become familiar with the geographic locality surrounding the church by asking some key questions, like: “What sort of people live in our parish or locality? What is their ethnic origin, nationality, religion, culture, media preference, and work? What proportions are there of [traditional] families, single-parent families, single people, senior citizens, young people?”\textsuperscript{82} Too often churches are only interested in reaching people who look, act, or talk like the current membership.

As detailed throughout this chapter, Christ-followers must allow Christ’s example to be their model for evangelism. Jesus laid down his glory and his life to enter the human experience. As John Stott writes,

\begin{quote}
For the Son of God did not stay in the safe immunity of his heaven, remote from human sin and tragedy. He actually entered our world. He emptied himself of his glory and humbled himself to serve. He took our nature, lived our life, endured our temptations, experienced our sorrow, felt our hurts, bore our sins and died our death. He penetrated deeply into our humanness. He never stayed aloof from the people he might have been expected to avoid. He made friends with the dropouts of society. He even touched untouchables. He could not have become more one with us than he did. It was the total identification of love.\textsuperscript{83}
\end{quote}

Christ-followers are called not to just reach out to people like them, but to embrace the message of the gospel given for all the nations. Christians are called to “reach out across

\textsuperscript{81}Guder, Called to Witness, 20.
\textsuperscript{82}Stott, The Contemporary Christian, 247.
\textsuperscript{83}Stott, The Contemporary Christian, 357.
all cultural, ethnic, and social boundaries in the expansion of the called and sent people of God as the ‘ecclesia.’”

To limit the gospel to one group is to deny the power of God at work around the world and deny the promise of Scripture that people from all over the world will be gathered around the throne of God. Timothy Keller remarks, “The gospel has supernatural versatility to address the particular hopes, fears, and idols of every culture and every person. This points us to the need for contextualization.” Christians must share the gospel with all people groups, whether they live down the street or around the world.

**Conclusion**

The calling on every Christ-follower is to make disciples. Each Christian is personally called to witness his or her faith in Jesus. Each disciple is called to share in faith, overcoming fear and growing beyond spiritual immaturity. As each believer grows in discipleship, the church will be able to engage the culture and share Jesus in an environment that is becoming increasingly hostile to the Christian religion. Finally, renewed focus on the nations will reveal each church’s own need to share the gospel with all cultures. When disciples of Jesus obey his commands and share the gospel, they will grow in their walk as they reach new people with his love.

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84 Guder, *Called to Witness*, 22.
85 Keller, *Shaped by the Gospel*, 57.
CHAPTER 4
DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The initial plan for this project included an eight-week sermon series combined with a small group Bible study for the adult and youth Sunday school classes of New Canaan Baptist Church (NCBC). After meeting with the Sunday School teachers of the adult classes and reviewing the results of the first survey, I concluded that the small group lessons would not be successful in the Sunday School classes. The teachers were reluctant to change their lessons for those weeks. I also became concerned about their ability to teach material related to evangelism and missional living as several of them indicated they did not regularly share the gospel. Two teachers admitted they had never shared their faith with anyone. Accordingly, I changed the format for the small group portion to be a time of training and discussion during the Sunday evening services, which I facilitated.

Preparing the Curriculum for the Project

My personal preparation for this project began during my time in college. I was mentored by an older college student, who modeled for me the importance of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with people who were not believers. During my years serving in the pastorate, I have studied the Bible’s teaching on evangelism, preached on evangelism, and shared the gospel regularly. However, addressing the specific challenges at NCBC limited my ability to focus upon evangelism and missional living until the implementation of this project. The formal preparation for the sermon series and discussion group material began in September of 2016 as I started to lay out the plan for the sermon series “Biblical Evangelism.”
Determination of Curriculum Content

Based upon the research conducted in preparing chapters two and three of this project, I began preparing an outline of the sermon series and content in September of 2016. Based upon study of Scripture related to evangelism, I chose eight sermon topics on evangelism and missional living. Those sermon topics and the related Scripture passages are shown in table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Scripture</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Matthew 28:18-20</td>
<td>Making disciples of Jesus Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Acts 1:8</td>
<td>The role of the Holy Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 Peter 3:14-16</td>
<td>Ready to share the gospel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>John 20:19-22</td>
<td>Sent by Jesus to witness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 Peter 3:14-15</td>
<td>Overcoming fear of evangelism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ephesians 4:11-16</td>
<td>Every believer is a witness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Acts 2:42-47</td>
<td>Christian lifestyle as witness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Psalm 67:1-7</td>
<td>Every nation and people group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As stated above, I based these sermons upon the teachings of Scripture on the topic of evangelism. I spent a week per sermon topic, preparing the outline and then filling in the details of the sermon text. I completed the sermon outline preparation during November 2016. Starting in December I began to fill-out the sermon content, adding to the outlined material. I also edited the sermon material based upon the pre-series survey when the results were compiled in January 2017.

While working on the sermon material, I also began preparing the small group discussion material to be utilized in the Sunday School classes. Using the same topics as the Sunday morning sermons, the discipleship curriculum was written to delve deeper into each topic, using illustrations, personal stories, and group discussion and participation in order to encourage the participants to share their faith. On December 18,
2016 I held a meeting for the Sunday School teachers to introduce the eight week curriculum. During that meeting, several of the teachers expressed their reluctance to participate, and the rate of participation in the small groups would have dropped to about thirty people. Therefore, I determined that conducting the discipleship portion of the project during the Sunday evening services following the corresponding Sunday morning sermon was the better option. The average attendance on Sunday evening at NCBC is sixty adults, and so I was able to have double the participation in the discipleship portion than I would have had during Sunday School.

**Curriculum Evaluators**

The post curriculum Evangelism and Outreach Practices Inventory (EOPI) would produce helpful feedback regarding the success of the project. However, I determined that additional feedback would be helpful to review the sermon series and the discipleship curriculum materials. Therefore, I asked a select group of fellow pastors from the West Metro Baptist Association to act as evaluators of the sermon series and the discipleship training materials. The group was asked to read the sermon text and discipleship materials and fill out the corresponding evaluation forms.¹ The following criteria were used to select the evaluators:

1. They must be the lead/senior pastor of a local church.
2. They needed to exhibit mature faith and biblical fidelity.
3. They needed to be of varied backgrounds or life experiences.
4. They needed to actively share their faith and demonstrate their belief in the importance of evangelism through their preaching ministries.

Ultimately, three local pastors were chosen and agreed to evaluate the content of the sermon outlines and the discipleship training materials.

On January 19, 2017, I received approval to run the project from my project manager.

¹See appendix 4 and appendix 6.
supervisor. Therefore, I began sending the materials to the evaluators on January 23, 2017. I asked them to provide feedback first on the week one materials, and then proceed so that I could begin the project. Over the next several weeks, I received their feedback on all of the materials. As each evaluation was received the comments were reviewed and edits made accordingly. Each of the evaluators gave positive feedback with every evaluation question being marked as either “sufficient” or “exemplary” for each of the sermons and the discipleship materials.

**Pre-Curriculum Survey**

On January 29, 2017, I administered the pre-curriculum EOPI to those attending the Sunday evening worship service. Each attendee was instructed to provide a four digit numerical code to ensure anonymity in the survey. The code would allow me to compare results when the EOPI was administered post-curriculum. Of the 62 people who attended the service where the EOPI was administered, 51 participated by returning their survey sheets. This represented an 82 percent participation rate of the Sunday evening attendees. Those who completed the survey were Sunday evening attenders, who tend to be more mature in their spiritual growth. This maturity is evidenced by their frequent participation in church events and service in ministry through church programs.

Therefore, I anticipated that the results could be skewed toward the more mature Christian’s attitudes toward and involvement in evangelism practices. However, the pre-curriculum survey revealed that many of the assumptions made regarding the current state of evangelism at NCBC were true, and even many of those who consider themselves mature Christians were inactive in sharing their faith.

On average, those who completed their survey ranked themselves between “somewhat mature” and “mature” in how they viewed their spiritual maturity. Yet only twelve responded with “agree” or “strongly agree” that they regularly share the gospel.

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2See appendix 2.
with others, representing 24 percent of participants. When asked how many people they had shared the gospel with in the past year, the average of responses of all participants was 2.53. However, this number includes the twelve people who regularly share the gospel, and who stated they had each shared the gospel with five or more people in the past year. When those twelve responses are removed, the number drops to an average of 1.27. The clear indication is that a low percentage of the people in the church are the ones who regularly share the gospel, and the evangelistic outreach of the church is limited to those few people. Yet only eleven respondents marked evangelism as a spiritual discipline that is only “somewhat important” or less in the life of the believer. The pre-curriculum survey revealed a disconnect between the what church members say about the importance of evangelism and their practice of evangelism.

Running the Project

The title of the sermon series and discipleship curriculum was “Biblical Evangelism.” I chose that title because I wanted to show that this was not an evangelism program, but rather a study of Scripture’s teachings on the mission of the believer and the church to share the gospel with the lost. The sermon series was conducted in eight weeks during the Sunday morning worship services, beginning on February 12, 2017. The corresponding discipleship training was conducted during the evening worship services on the same Sundays. What follows is a summary of each sermon and discipleship training.

Week 1

The first sermon was based upon Matthew 28:18-20 and sought to answer the question “How do I make disciples of Jesus?” Matthew’s account of the Great Commission Jesus gave to his disciples gives four answers to that question:

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3See appendix 11 for all week one materials.
1. I go and tell the gospel wherever I am.
2. I bring new converts into the community of faith.
3. I teach new believers to obey what Jesus commanded.
4. I obey Jesus in the power he gives.

During the evening service discipleship training, I facilitated a discussion seeking to answer the questions “What is a disciple?” and “What is the gospel?” At the end of the lesson, a homework assignment was given to begin a 8-week study of the book of Romans and a corresponding reading list was given. I chose the book of Romans for this assignment because the book is very gospel-centric. This sermon and discipleship training were conducted on February 12, 2017.

Week 2

The second sermon was focused upon Acts 1:8 and investigated to the role of the Holy Spirit in the evangelistic practices of the believer. The primary focus of the sermon was Scripture’s teaching on the Holy Spirit, particularly as regards evangelism. This was accomplished by answering two questions: “Who is the Holy Spirit?” and “What does the Holy Spirit do?” The evening discipleship training service continued the conversation on the Holy Spirit, and added a third question: “How should I witness in the power of the Holy Spirit?” To answer this question, particular attention was given to Galatians 5:16-26 to investigate the difference between those walking in the flesh and those walking in the Spirit. At the end of the lesson, the homework assignment was given to pray for the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of the participants to the lost that they encounter every day and give them courage to share the gospel with the lost. This sermon and discipleship training were conducted on February 19, 2017.

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4See appendix 11 for all week 1 materials.
5See appendix 12 for all week 2 materials.
Week 3

The third sermon examined Peter’s instruction to early believers to “make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Pet 3:15). The primary thrust of the message centered around the question, “How can I be ready to witness?” A large portion of the answer to that question is found in Peter’s admonition: “but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy” (1 Peter 3:15). The evening discipleship training time was spent in finding answers to questions that non-believers might ask so that the participants are trained and prepared to answer those questions. The homework assignment for the week was to study the answers to the questions presented and do further research to be prepared to answer the questions of their lost friends. This sermon and discipleship training were conducted on February 26, 2017.

Week 4

Studying John 20:19-22, the fourth sermon’s topic was understanding that Jesus sent his disciples to be his messengers. The sermon focused on two big ideas. First, I taught on what it means to be sent by Jesus. Second, we looked briefly at the life of Jesus as an example in our evangelistic outreach. The evening discipleship training time was a discussion of how Jesus reached out to the lost and how we could further learn from his example. The homework assignment for week 4 was to identify the names of three lost people with whom the participant interacted regularly. They were to begin praying for those three people to come to faith in Jesus Christ. This sermon and discipleship training was conducted on March 5, 2017.

Week 5

Returning to 1 Peter 3:14-15, the fifth sermon specifically focused on

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6See appendix 13 for all week 3 materials.
7See appendix 14 for all week 4 materials.
overcoming the fear of man as an excuse to avoid evangelism. This was accomplished by discussing the fears we face, identifying fear of man as sin, and finally using biblical instruction to help overcome fear. The evening discipleship training time was interactive, dividing people into groups and allowing them to practice questions that would allow them to open the conversation to sharing the gospel. This practice also allowed them to practice facing fear by starting conversations with others. The homework assignment was for the participant to face his or her fear by starting a conversation about the gospel with the three lost people for whom they had begun praying the previous week. This sermon and discipleship training was conducted on March 12, 2017.

**Week 6**

The sixth sermon focused upon God’s plan for every believer to be a witness. The Scripture passage for this sermon was Ephesians 4:11-16, where Paul tells the church at Ephesus that God gave the pastors and other leaders in the church “to equip the saints for the work of ministry” (Eph 4:12). The primary focus was to abolish the false idea that only Christians who have a “gift of evangelism” need to share the gospel. Scripture is clear that every believer is called to be a witness of the saving grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

The discipleship training during the evening service taught the people how to prepare their testimony to share with others. Participants were also instructed in sharing the gospel using the “Romans Road” and the “Bridge Diagram.” During the discussion we also talked about using smart phone apps that assist a person in sharing the gospel. The homework assignment for this week was for the participant to write down their testimony and then share their testimony with their three lost friends as the opportunity arose. This sermon and discipleship training was conducted on March 19, 2017.

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8See appendix 15 for all week 5 materials.

9See appendix 16 for all week 6 materials.
Week 7

The seventh sermon in the series focused on the lifestyle of the believer, based on the description of the early church found in Acts 2:42-47.¹⁰ I began by detailing the lives of the believers in the early church and how they conducted themselves together and in public. Then I finished by showing the result of the lifestyle of the early believers. Because of their witness and their way of life, the church had a good reputation among all of the people and God brought new people into the faith. The discipleship training time focused on areas of lifestyle where Christians could destroy their witness, and what the Bible says about those issues. The homework assignment for week 7 was to correct areas in the participant’s Christian life where the Holy Spirit had convicted them of harming their witness. Then they were also to invite their three lost friends to come to church with them. This sermon and discipleship training was conducted on March 26, 2017.

Week 8

The final sermon in the series focused upon the glory of God, specifically that he deserves to be worshiped by people from every nation and people group, based upon Psalm 67.¹¹ The sermon ended by asking the question, “How can I reach all peoples?” I answered that question in the following ways:

1. Pray for the lost to be saved.
2. Go to unchurched neighbors, friends, and co-workers and share the gospel.
3. Build relationships with people of different cultures.
4. Be ready to go to share with other cultures through missions.
5. Give generously to help others go to the harvest among the nations.

The discipleship training time was focused upon the different cultures and ethnicities within Paulding County and the region immediately surrounding. We

¹⁰See appendix 17 for all week 7 materials.
¹¹See appendix 18 for all week 8 materials.
investigated how we can help reach those groups through our witness, through cultural sensitivity, and through local ethnic church planting. The final homework assignment was for the participants to introduce themselves to someone of a different ethnicity and start a conversation about the gospel with them. This sermon was delivered and the discipleship training taught on April 2, 2017.

**Evaluating the Project**

While the assessment of each curriculum piece began with the group of pastors, the post-curriculum EOPI provided the formal evaluation of the success of the project. Participants completed the post-curriculum EOPI on April 30, 2017. More specific results of the project will be discussed in chapter 5.

**Post-Curriculum Survey**

A second copy of the EOPI was distributed before the evening service on April 30, 2017, four weeks after the completion of the eight-week sermon series and discipleship training curriculum. Not everyone who completed the first survey submitted a second one. However, 42 of the 51 people who filled out the first survey also completed the second one. This resulted in an 82 percent participation rate in the number of people who completed the first survey. This also represents a 35 percent participation rate of the average worship attendance of 120 during the Sunday morning worship service. The second survey was exactly the same survey given before the project curriculum began.

**T-Test**

I used a six-point Likert scale to determine numeric values for seventeen questions of the EOPI. The scale allowed the EOPI each participant completed to be compared with other participants and their responses. The data of the responses was entered into a spreadsheet which included the responses from each person who completed both the pre- and post-curriculum EOPI. Once the data was input into the spreadsheet, a t-test was performed to determine if the curriculum was successful in its mission to
increase the evangelism and missional engagement of the membership of New Canaan Baptist Church.

The EOPI utilized 36 total questions. Only 17 of the questions were Likert scale questions, with the remainder being primarily “yes or no” questions. With the 17 Likert questions, the total maximum score for the survey was 102. After the data was entered in the spreadsheet, the results revealed the teaching on evangelism and missional engagement to the participants at NCBC made a statistically significant difference resulting in the increase of their evangelism knowledge and participation ($t_{(42)}=7.47$, $p<0.0000000155274$).

**Analyzing the Results**

After receiving the returned post-curriculum EOPI surveys, time was taken to review the responses on the Likert scale questions, as well as the other questions. These responses were also compared to the responses on the pre-curriculum survey. The differences between the two sets of responses helped determine if the sermon series and the discipleship training sessions were successful in increasing the participants’ engagement in evangelism and missional living.

While reviewing the overall scores proved helpful, the analysis of the responses to individual questions was even more beneficial. For instance, seeing the response on question 17 regarding evangelism training change from “no” to “yes” showed that people realized the purpose of this curriculum was to help equip them to share the gospel. Also, four people on question 18 on the pre-survey who had never shared the gospel answered that they had shared the gospel recently in the post-survey revealed that they did the homework outlined in the training. Every person except one who answered question 20 in the post-curriculum survey indicated they know how to share their testimony, compared with seven in the pre-curriculum survey who did not know how to share their testimony. I am encouraged because these results indicate more people are now engaged in evangelism and outreach at NCBC.
A final marker of results was the Easter worship service, on April 16, 2017. At the conclusion of the project sermon series and discipleship training, a church-wide emphasis was made to invite lost people to church, using invite cards. While Easter is always a larger crowd at NCBC, the attendance on Easter 2017 was double the average attendance on a normal Sunday. Typically, most visitors at Easter in the past have noted that they attended because they drove by and saw the church. However, in 2017, 42 percent of the visitors indicated they had been specifically invited by a church member. During that service, everyone in attendance heard the gospel proclaimed, and the church has guest information cards on them for follow-up and outreach purposes.

**Conclusion**

The time spent preparing the sermon series and the discipleship training materials was a blessing to me, as it solidified my own understanding of biblical evangelism and challenged me to be more engaged personally in sharing the gospel. Preaching the sermon series and teaching the training materials was a joy, as I was able to communicate the information I had learned in my study and preparation. Finally, the evaluation of the project has proven to be a learning experience, as I have evaluated the results and considered what I would change if I were to preach this series again.
CHAPTER 5
EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

My desire was that this project would help the congregation of New Canaan Baptist Church (NCBC) become more intentional in their evangelism and missional engagement within their community. Obedience to the biblical calling to evangelism and missional engagement is necessary for spiritual growth in the life of the Christ-follower and overall health of the local church. Training for church members in evangelism and missional engagement is an important need in every local church, and NCBC was no exception. By God’s grace, this project proved successful in accomplishing the purpose and goals set forth at the beginning.

Evaluation of the Project’s Purpose

The purpose of this project was to train church members at NCBC in Dallas, Georgia for evangelism and missional engagement. To be trained in the area of evangelism, the participants needed biblical teaching on evangelism and practical instruction in beginning conversations and talking with unbelievers about the gospel of Jesus Christ. To accomplish the purpose of the project, the people of NCBC needed to demonstrate their ability to share the gospel with others through evangelistic encounters in their daily lives. By sharing the gospel as they were trained, more people in the communities of Paulding County would hear the good news, leading some to respond in faith to Jesus Christ. Prior to the project, a majority of the participants indicated that they did not regularly share the gospel, and many had never told anyone about Jesus.

My heart for training church members in evangelism and missional engagement was born out of two life experiences. First, I became a Christian during my freshman year of college in 1994, in part due to the witness of believers who were
involved in Campus Crusade for Christ. As a young Christian, I also became involved in that organization and received their training in evangelism. One part of that training involved visiting malls and other public places with older believers to witness to people. While that training was helpful, as an introvert, I was fearful of talking with others and I could not shake the feeling that evangelism was a duty. I believed that God would somehow love me less if I did not share the gospel. I believed that until my time under the preaching of Pastor Tim McCoy at Ingleside Baptist Church in Macon, Georgia, when I began to understand the delight of being on mission with our missional God to His glory.

Second, as I entered the pastorate, I met and ministered to people who knew they should be sharing the gospel, but were scared, or did not know how to talk to others about Jesus. Many of them were struggling with the same frustrations in witnessing I had experienced as a young believer. The other group of people that I encountered in the pastorate were those who believed that evangelism was the job of the pastor and ministerial staff. Neither of these groups of people were regularly sharing the gospel, nor could they articulate Scripture’s instructions regarding evangelism and missional engagement.

These experiences revealed to me the need for biblical training in evangelism, and thus the purpose of this project. Six years after I began pastoring NCBC, I began this project with the purpose of training the members to share their faith and reach out to their community with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The results of this project have demonstrated that it has accomplished its purpose, evidenced by the results of the completed surveys and the evaluation of the sermons by other pastors.

The Survey Results

As described in chapter 4, when the pre-curriculum survey results were compared with the post-curriculum surveys, the comparison revealed a statistical improvement in participants’ confidence in sharing the gospel, in their ability to bridge
everyday conversations to gospel matters, and in their missional engagement with the community. Of the forty-three participants who completed both the pre- and post-curriculum surveys, only four did not have a numerical increase in their overall score when comparing their survey results. Of those four, three of them had scored high on the first survey and matched that score on the second, indicating they had already received training in evangelism and were more active than others in their outreach efforts. The fourth person’s score was only one point below his or her pre-survey score, so the difference between the two was minimal. The surveys were conducted anonymously, and so the reason for the decrease of that score is difficult to know. Since 91 percent of the participants showed numeric growth in their survey scores, 7 percent of the participants showed no change in their score, and only 2 percent showed a decrease of one point numerically, I believe the survey results demonstrate the success of this project.

The Evaluators’ Results

Three local pastors evaluated the curriculum using a scoring rubric. Each of the evaluators gave positive feedback with every evaluation question being marked as either “sufficient” or “exemplary” for each of the sermons and the discipleship materials. One of the evaluators recommended using more practical helps for people during the week 6 discipleship training that involved helping people write and share their testimony. As a result of that feedback, I included the “Romans Road” and “Bridge Diagram” gospel presentation methodologies. The positive feedback from the evaluators demonstrates the success of the project and the value of the project’s original purpose.

Evaluation of the Project’s Goals

As stated in chapter 1, the following goals were set to define success in the

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1The results were measured by a t-test. The results revealed the teaching on evangelism and missional engagement to the participants at NCBC made a statistically significant difference resulting in the increase of their evangelism knowledge and participation ($t_{(42)}=7.47, p< .0000000155274$).
completion of this project. Accomplishing these goals would serve to equip church
members at NCBC for evangelism and provide training and opportunities for missional
engagement. The three goals were as follows:

1. The first goal was to assess the current perspectives and practices of church
members in the areas of evangelism and missional engagement at New Canaan
Baptist Church.

2. The second goal was to develop an 8-week exegetical sermon series and
discipleship curriculum on the mission of the church to spread the gospel through
evangelism and missional engagement.

3. The third goal was to increase the number of members actively involved in
outreach and evangelism at New Canaan Baptist Church.

During my prior six years as pastor at NCBC, conversations with church
members, low numbers of guests who indicated they were invited by a member, and a
low number of conversions had indicated that the membership of the church were not
actively sharing the gospel. The pre-curriculum survey results confirmed this anecdotal
evidence. Of the 51 people who completed the pre-curriculum survey, only 14 of them
answered “agree” or “agree strongly” with the statement “I regularly share the gospel
with others.” Therefore, 73 percent of the pre-curriculum survey participants did not
regularly share the gospel. The pre-curriculum survey also indicated that while 76
percent of the participants had shared the gospel with another person at least once in their
Christian life, only 43 percent of the participants had shared the gospel with at least one
person in the previous year.

The findings of the pre-curriculum survey accomplished the first goal of this
project. The findings validated the anecdotal evidence and revealed both the perspectives

2Question 12 on the EOPI. See appendix 2.

3Only 43 of the participants completed both surveys. However, all 51 pre-curriculum survey
results were consulted in preparing the sermon series and discipleship curriculum content.

4Question 18 on the EOPI stated, “I have shared the gospel with another person at some point
in my Christian life.” 39 responses answered “yes,” representing 76 percent of the responses. Question 19
on the EOPI asked: “How many people have you shared the gospel with in the past year?”; 29 of the
participants answered “0,” representing 57 percent of the participants. See appendix 2.
and practices of the members of NCBC related to evangelism. On average, the respondents recorded that they considered themselves at least “somewhat mature” in their Christian life. In addition, when rating the importance of evangelism as a spiritual discipline in the life of the believer, only eleven participants rated it less than “important.” Thus, 78 percent of the participants viewed evangelism as at least important, and 25 of those participants answered “very important.” While the participants were more likely to say that evangelism is important for the life of the believer and the health of the local church, most of the participants did not practice evangelism or outreach in any regular manner. The assessment thus was that evangelism was important in the minds of the membership, but their practices did not match their perspectives. This assessment helped shape the project moving forward and further revealed the need for evangelism training at NCBC.

The pre-curriculum survey provided insight into the practices and beliefs of church members in the area of evangelism and outreach, and I crafted the sermon series to teach the biblical commands and expectations for the life of the Christ-follower. I completed the second goal of the project, to develop and deliver an eight-week sermon series and discipleship curriculum, at the end of the eight-week series which ran on consecutive Sundays from February 12 through April 2, 2017. Anecdotal responses to the sermons helped reveal which content registered with people as it was delivered. The most significant of these responses occurred after week 5, when “fear of man in evangelism” was the topic. The majority of people who spoke to me after that sermon indicated that fear was their biggest obstacle to sharing the gospel, and they were

5 Question 35 on the EOPI asked: “I consider my Christian spiritual maturity to be:” with choices of “very immature/young, immature, somewhat immature, somewhat mature, mature, and very mature.” Using the Likert scale, the average of the answers was 4.16, which would be “somewhat mature.” See appendix 2.

6 Question 32 on the EOPI. See appendix 2.

7 See chap. 4 for a detailed description of the individual sermon and discipleship curriculum content for the eight-week series.
thankful to hear what Scripture said regarding fear and the call to witness.

After the curriculum was delivered, the post-curriculum survey sought to ascertain whether the content had made any statistical difference. This survey would determine whether the third goal was successful. As stated in chapter four, the comparison of the two surveys revealed an increase in evangelism among the members, and an increase in knowledge about how to share the gospel. Of the participants who completed both surveys, 26 said that they had not shared the gospel with anyone in the past year before the curriculum was taught. After the material was presented, that number dropped to five who had not shared with anyone in the past year.⁸ There are now 21 people actively sharing the gospel this year that were not before the project.

Additionally, when asked to respond to the statement “I have participated in some type of evangelism training,” 24 of the respondents to the pre-curriculum survey answered “no.” After the project, 100 percent of the participants answered “yes” to the same question on the post-curriculum survey. The people seemed to understand that they were being trained from Scripture in evangelism. These results indicate that goal three of this project was successfully completed, as the number of people trained and involved in evangelism and outreach has increased.

**Strengths of the Project**

The primary strength of the project was the successful completion of the goals as previously discussed. In addition, I attribute the success of the project to three particular strengths: the timing of the series in the life of the church, the juxtaposition of biblical instruction with practical training, and the relationship of trust I had built with the congregation. I will expound upon these strengths in the following sections.

⁸Question 19 on the EOPI asked, “How many people have you shared the gospel with in the past year?” The average response on the pre-survey was 1.21 per participant. The average of answers in the post-survey was 2.95 per participant. On average, the participants shared with at least one more person than they had before the project. See appendix 2.
The Timing of the Series

During the six years of my pastoral ministry at NCBC prior to this project, the church had gone through necessary times of healing from past hurts. God had used me to minister to the congregation through these times, and during the fifth year the church had begun to see growth. NCBC’s baptism numbers doubled year over year, and the number of people involved in various ministries in the church began to increase. The overall mood of the church seemed to be that they were ready to be on mission together. This change in tone for the church body served as a perfect backdrop for this series. People had begun asking how they could be more missional, and this project provided a biblical answer to those questions.

In addition, four key leaders in various ministries in the church had come to me separately, unknown to each other, and asked when I was planning to preach on evangelism and outreach. Each of these leaders had recognized a lack of outreach efforts in the membership of the church and were eager to see a priority be placed on evangelism in the church. All of these conversations occurred within the six months leading up to the teaching of the material of this project. NCBC members and key lay leaders in the body were ready to hear what the Bible had to say about sharing the gospel, and received positively Scripture’s instruction.

Two noticeable changes occurred at NCBC during and after the completion of this project. First, two men began an outreach ministry to visit guests and church prospects. They have invited other church members to join them and be intentional about sharing the gospel and inviting people to NCBC. Second, the children from two non-white families attended Vacation Bible School in 2017 (NCBC’s membership is over 95 percent white). Both families indicated on their registration forms that they were specifically invited by members of NCBC. As a result of these changes and others motivated by this project, attendance trends are up as new guests visit NCBC, and more people have come to faith in Christ and been baptized so far this year than the total number for 2016.
The Juxtaposition of Scripture with Practical Training

To avoid the sermon series becoming merely academic, I determined from the beginning to include a discipleship training companion to the sermon series that would focus on teaching practical obedience to the scriptural commands. I believed that many people in the church have knowledge about evangelism, but may lack the practical instruction on how to share their faith. However, I also did not want this project to become merely another methodology for evangelism. The modern Christian has easy access to many evangelism programs.

The solution was to share the biblical instruction through the sermon series, and then use the discipleship training series to offer practical instruction in how to obey what the Bible taught. For example, during week six, the sermon was taught from Ephesians 4, and particular emphasis was given to the fact that every believer is a minister of the gospel, and every believer has a story to tell of God’s salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. During the discipleship training portion, instruction was given on writing a believer’s testimony, and then the homework given was to share that testimony with an unbeliever for whom the participants had been praying. During week three, the sermon focused on 1 Peter 3:15, where Peter instructs the early believers to “make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.” The evening discipleship training time was spent in finding answers to questions that non-believers might ask so that the participants were trained and prepared to answer those questions.

Relationship with the Congregation

Related to the timing of the project, the previous six years of pastoral ministry at NCBC provided a foundation of trust in me for the membership. During those years of ministry, we had built relationships both on the individual level and the corporate level so

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9See appendix 16 for all week 6 materials.
10See appendix 13 for all week 3 materials.
that the church was open to receive instruction and take risks in following my leadership. Thom Rainer has found in his research that “a church is likely to experience some of its best years, by almost any metrics, during [years six through ten] of a pastor’s tenure” because “both parties have worked through the tough times. They now trust each other and love each other more deeply.”\textsuperscript{11} I found this research to ring true in my own experience. The relationship that we had built between pastor and congregation allowed the members of NCBC to trust me as their pastor, and receive from me the Bible’s instruction in taking the gospel to a lost world.

\textbf{Weaknesses of the Project}

While the project proved a statistical success, there were areas of weakness that could have been made better. The preparation time for the sermon series and discipleship curriculum was rushed, the audience for the instruction was primarily adult, and the material may have been better suited for small group instruction rather than a formal worship setting. I will discuss each of these weaknesses in the following paragraphs.

\textbf{The Preparation Time}

Prior to beginning teaching of the project, the Lord began to open a new door of ministry for me. He began to make clear that He was leading me out of the pastorate at NCBC and into a new role leading our local Baptist association. Knowing this was a possibility, I endeavored to begin running the project as soon as was possible in order to have it completed before I left NCBC. As a result, my time for preparation before the sermon series began was greatly reduced. I had originally planned to finish writing all of the material before beginning to teach any of it, but instead I had only completed five weeks’ worth of material before the sermon series began, and I continued to write during

the first three weeks while I was simultaneously running the project. Even though the feedback via the evaluators was positive, I still believe that rushing to prepare the material caused it to be less strong than it may have been if I had given it the time I had originally planned.

The Audience

The original design for the project involved the sermon series being preached by me, and the small-group material being taught by the Sunday School teachers in their classes. This plan would engage age groups ranging from middle school students to senior adults. However, as noted earlier, some of the teachers were unwilling to teach the material to their class, and so the small-group curriculum became the discipleship training curriculum taught by me during the Sunday evening worship service. While middle and high school aged students were present during the Sunday morning services to hear the sermon series, few if any of them normally attend the Sunday evening services, and this remained true during the running of this project. Therefore, students who would greatly benefit from knowing how to share the gospel with their unbelieving friends did not receive the practical instruction on Sunday evenings. I believe that this weakened the effectiveness of the project for those students.

The Setting

While the sermon series and discipleship curriculum proved successful in accomplishing the goals of the project, one weakness may have been that the delivery occurred in front of a large group. The material may have worked better in a small group, especially the practical training of the discipleship curriculum. A small group setting would have allowed for more discussion and follow-up questions to be asked and answered immediately. A small-group setting would also have provided more opportunity for practice or role-playing, so that the participants could have received hands-on practice in sharing the gospel, sharing their testimonies, or initiating
conversations with unbelievers. However, the benefit to the larger setting was that more people received the instruction, and as the earlier results mentioned, 21 people began sharing the gospel who had previously not recently shared. That number would not have been as significant an increase with less participants involved.

**What I Would Do Differently**

If I ran this project again, I would change three things. First, I would change the training plan for the small-group leaders. I believe that the teachers’ reticence to teach the material in their Sunday School classes was due in part to the short time between when we met and when the class would begin. In my original plan, I allotted two training sessions for the training of the small group leaders. In retrospect, two sessions was not enough time because the teachers were fearful of trying something new. Running this project through the Sunday School classes would have represented a significant change from their accustomed teaching content and styles, and several of the teachers were unwilling to change. I believe that if I had been able to give them more time to be trained and ask questions, then presenting the small-group curriculum in the Sunday School classes would have been successful. This needed change is also related to the limited time I had to start the project, as noted above. However, since several teachers indicated they were not evangelistic, then the Sunday School may not have been the best vehicle through which to run this curriculum.

The second thing I would change would be to ask participants to share their experiences as they shared the gospel. As members completed their weekly homework assignments, I would ask for them to share testimonies of their conversations with unbelievers. These testimonies could have been shared live in an interview format. If they were afraid of public speaking, their testimony could have been pre-recorded and shared as a video during the discipleship training time. These testimonies of fellow participants may have encouraged the members to share the gospel even more as they could celebrate together what God was doing in and through his church.
The third change I would make would be to adjust the Likert scale used from a six-point to a five-point scale. I employed the following six-point scale: strongly disagree; disagree; disagree somewhat; agree somewhat; agree; and strongly agree. Several people mentioned that they had difficulty deciding between “agree” and “strongly agree” on many questions. The six-point scale also tended to encourage people who had no opinion on a question to answer “agree somewhat” as that was the more positive of the two neutral options. Therefore, I would change the scale to a five-point scale with the following options: disagree; disagree somewhat; no opinion; agree somewhat; and agree. Utilizing this scale would allow people to express “no opinion” on a question, and remove any confusion between “agree” and “strongly agree.”

**Theological Reflections**

The reading and research involved in preparing for this project confirmed for me much of the theological framework I had already established concerning evangelism and missional engagement. In addition, being forced to articulate the theology of outreach through writing this project was beneficial, both for the overall project and for my personal theological position on evangelism. The work of this project confirmed for me that evangelism and missional engagement are necessary in the life of the believer. The research and study also served to convict me personally of people in my life to whom I had failed to share a witness of what Christ has done for me.

The example of Jesus in the New Testament shows that he invested time in making disciples, training them through teaching and example. In the same way, the local church and its members must be about the task of making disciples. The people of God need to be trained, and thus the purpose of this project, namely to train church members for evangelism and missional engagement. While evangelism was the clear focus of this project, outreach is but one aspect of the training needed in making disciples. Churches must not neglect training in evangelism, but they must also not neglect training in all of the spiritual disciplines, so that their members may truly grow in spiritual maturity.
My hope was that NCBC members would be trained to share their faith in Jesus. However, my desire was that their evangelistic efforts were born out of a love for God and an understanding of His glory. He deserves to be worshiped in all the earth, and thus his people share the gospel.\(^\text{12}\) Evangelism is the declaring of God’s glory, for he has revealed himself through his Son, Jesus Christ. I believe that this concept was received and understood by the members of NCBC, evidenced by their increased participation in evangelism in Paulding County.

**Personal Reflections**

I chose the topic of evangelism for this project because it was a subject that has become very important to me personally as I have matured in my spiritual life. Much more than the duty I once believed it to be, sharing the gospel with others has become a joy for me because I am allowed to be on mission with the God who saved me by sending his Son to die in my place. I have been redeemed by the grace of God, not through my own works, and I now have the opportunity to tell others what God has done for them. I rejoice as people come to faith in Jesus, and I rejoice as new believers begin sharing their story of God’s grace to the lost.

Two conversations stand out to me from the time I spent running this project. The first involved a long-time church member, who came to me one Sunday after the morning worship service and said, “I have never thought about telling people about Jesus so they could worship him! I thought evangelism was just something we were supposed to do because Jesus told us to.” While Jesus did command that we make disciples, Scripture also makes clear that if we are merely trying to keep a law with our evangelism, we will fail.\(^\text{13}\) However, when we share the gospel because we understand that God

\(^{12}\)In Ps 67:1-3, the psalmist cries out for God to bless his people so “that your way may be known on earth.” The result of this knowledge is the praise of the nations. God works in and through his people so that he may be praised and glorified throughout the earth.

\(^{13}\)Romans 3:20 says, “For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.” Romans 5:20 says, “Now the law came in to increase the trespass.” The Bible is teaching that sin increases with knowledge of the law. If evangelism is merely an act
deserves to be worshiped by all of creation, then we will joyfully proclaim his goodness.

The second conversation occurred when a relatively new believer came and told me that she had heard about sharing her testimony, but she was scared that her story was not exciting enough to tell. She then shared that she understood now that God had created her and her story of salvation to share with others. She was excited to go home and write down her testimony and practice it so that she could tell some of her friends what God had done for her. I was blessed to see a child of God become excited about sharing with others his goodness to her.

This project has helped me become more faithful in sharing the good news of the gospel personally. It has had an impact in my life, and by the grace of God, in the lives of the people of NCBC. I look forward to hearing more stories of faithful witness and salvation as church members tell others about Jesus.

Conclusion

I am grateful for the privilege and opportunity to design and run this project. The completion of the purpose and goals, as well as the evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses, have sharpened my focus and made me a more missional individual and minister of the gospel. I am thankful for the success of the project. I am thankful for the guidance of my advisor, the love and support of my wife and children, and the power of the Holy Spirit to complete this task. May God be glorified as his name is proclaimed in Paulding County and around the world.

[Of keeping the law, then disobedience to that law will increase.]
APPENDIX 1

EVANGELISM & OUTREACH PRACTICES
INVENTORY (EOPI) PERMISSION FORM

Agreement to Participate
The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the current understanding and practices of evangelism and outreach of the participant. This research is being conducted by Jason Loudermilk for purposes of collecting data for a ministry research 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 in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.
APPENDIX 2
EVANGELISM & OUTREACH PRACTICES INVENTORY (EOPI)

Personal Identification Number: ________________________
(Please select a four-digit number that will be easy to remember. You may use the last four digits of your SSN. This number will only be used to match your responses on this survey with responses on a future survey and will not be associated with your name.)

Evangelism: a necessary activity in the church that serves both as the proclamation of the gospel to non-believers and a key discipline for the spiritual health and growth of the disciple of Jesus Christ.

Directions: Circle the answer that most closely matches your level of agreement with the statement in each question, using the following descriptions:
SD  Strongly Disagree  D  Disagree  DS  Disagree Somewhat
AS  Agree Somewhat  A  Agree  SA  Strongly Agree

1. Evangelism is important for the growth of a church.
   SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA

2. Healthy churches will grow.
   SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA

3. Evangelism is a spiritual gift given to a few Christians.
   SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA

4. Evangelism is the calling of every Christ-follower.
   SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA

5. Evangelism is important to my spiritual growth.
   SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA

6. Mature Christians share the gospel more often.
   SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA
7. New small groups help our church reach new people.
   SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA

8. Planting new churches is a biblical way to reach new people.
   SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA

9. Giving is an important part of missions involvement.
   SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA

10. I personally know at least five non-Christians.
    SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA

11. I regularly share the gospel with others.
    SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA

12. The church should engage with our community.
    SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA

13. Outreach events are good ways to invite the community to our church.
    SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA

14. Evangelism training is important for the Christian life.
    SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA

15. Mission trips are important for the health of the local church.
    SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA

Directions: Please select the answer to the following questions or statements that most closely represents your life and practice. Remember that all responses are confidential and will be used for research purposes only.

16. I have participated in some type of evangelism training.
    Yes  No

17. I have shared the gospel with another person at some point in my Christian life.
    Yes  No

18. How many people have you shared the gospel with in the past year?
    0  1  2  3  4  5+

19. I can tell someone else my testimony of faith in Jesus Christ.
    Yes  No

20. I have personally led another person to repent of sin and trust Jesus
    Yes  No
21. How many people have you led to repent and trust Jesus in the past year?
   0  1  2  3  4  5+

22. I have participated in a mission trip to another state or country.
   Yes  No

23. I am willing to go on a mission trip to another country.
   Yes  No

24. I have given money to support others to go on a mission trip.
   Yes  No

25. I gave above my normal tithe to support SBC missions this year.
   Yes  No

Directions: Please rate the following spiritual disciplines on a scale of 1-6, where 1=Not Important and 6=Very Important. Please be honest with your personal beliefs in your answers.

26. Bible reading and study  1  2  3  4  5  6
27. Bible memorization  1  2  3  4  5  6
28. Private prayer  1  2  3  4  5  6
29. Worship attendance  1  2  3  4  5  6
30. Ministry to others  1  2  3  4  5  6
31. Evangelism/sharing the gospel  1  2  3  4  5  6
32. Fasting  1  2  3  4  5  6
33. Tithing  1  2  3  4  5  6

34. I consider my Christian spiritual maturity to be:
   □ Very Immature/young
   □ Immature
   □ Somewhat Immature
   □ Somewhat Mature
   □ Mature
   □ Very Mature
APPENDIX 3

COMMITMENT FORM

My Commitment
Unless providentially hindered, I will be present for each Sunday morning small group and worship service through the 8-week duration of this project. If I am forced to miss a session, I will listen to the audio recording or watch the video recording of the sermon in order to gain the information provided in that service.

By signing my name below, I am committing to participate fully in this project.

Participant Name __________________________________________
Participant Signature _______________________________________
Date ______________________________________________________
## APPENDIX 4

### SERMON SERIES EVALUATION RUBRIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The material is faithful to the Bible’s teaching on evangelism</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The material is theologically and doctrinally sound.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The thesis of the sermon is clearly stated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The points of the sermon clearly support the thesis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The sermon is relevant to the lives of Christ-followers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The sermon contains points of practical application.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall, the sermon is complete, clear and ready for presentation.</td>
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APPENDIX 5
SAMPLE INVITATION LETTER TO EXPERT PANEL

Dear ________________,

My name is Jason Loudermilk, and I am a Doctor of Ministry student at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. I have planned a ministry project as part of my doctoral studies, to be implemented at New Canaan Baptist Church in Dallas, Georgia. The project includes an eight-week sermon series and corresponding discipleship curriculum on the importance of evangelism and missional living for the spiritual health of the believer and the church. This aspect of the project requires the feedback of a panel of three-five experts in the areas of outreach and evangelism. I would like to invite you to join this panel and provide feedback for this project.

I am asking because you have demonstrated in your ministry an expertise in evangelism. As a member of the panel, I will ask you to utilize rubrics to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, clarity, relevance and applicability of both the curriculum and sermon series. Your feedback will be greatly helpful as I plan and implement this project.

I will forward the sermon outlines and discipleship lessons to you along with the evaluation rubrics when I have received your response indicating your willingness to participate in this project. I thank you in advance for you help.

In Christ,

Jason Loudermilk
## Small Group Curriculum Evaluation Tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson One</th>
<th>1= insufficient</th>
<th>2= requires attention</th>
<th>3= sufficient</th>
<th>4= exemplary</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The material is faithful to the Bible’s teaching on evangelism</td>
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<tr>
<td>The material is theologically and doctrinally sound.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The thesis of the lesson is clearly stated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The points of the lesson clearly support the thesis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The lesson is relevant to the lives of Christ-followers.</td>
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<td>The lesson contains points of practical application.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall, the lesson is complete, clear, and ready for presentation.</td>
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APPENDIX 7
CHURCH TRENDS PROFILE 2005-2014

The following table was compiled from information provided in a Church Trend Profile on July 17, 2016, for New Canaan Baptist Church by the Research Services department of the Georgia Baptist Mission Board.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Worship Attendance</th>
<th>Sunday School Enrollment</th>
<th>Baptisms</th>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>271</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>215</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>894</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>220</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>934</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>933</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
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</table>
APPENDIX 8

ACR FOR NEW CANAAN BAPTIST CHURCH

The Annual Church Report is reported electronically by New Canaan Baptist Church to the Georgia Baptist Mission Board and the Southern Baptist Convention. The following are statistics from the 2016 report.

- Total Members: 930
- Resident Members: 458
- Average Weekly Worship Attendance: 140
- Total Baptisms: 11
- Sunday School Enrollment: 161
APPENDIX 9

DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY FOR NEW CANAAN BAPTIST CHURCH

The “FullInSite Report” is a demographic study of the area within a five-mile radius of New Canaan Baptist Church. This study was prepared on July 17, 2015, by the Research Services department of the Georgia Baptist Mission Board. The following statistics were included in that report.

Table A2. Demographic statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2025</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>42,311</td>
<td>66,895</td>
<td>70,653</td>
<td>81,082</td>
<td>92,835</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avg. Age</td>
<td>31.42</td>
<td>33.39</td>
<td>35.13</td>
<td>36.57</td>
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<td>Avg. Income</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$65,480</td>
<td>$68,949</td>
<td>$72,536</td>
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<td>Households</td>
<td>14,564</td>
<td>23,286</td>
<td>24,585</td>
<td>28,255</td>
<td>32,394</td>
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<td>Black Pop.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12,755</td>
<td>13,550</td>
<td>15,598</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Latino Pop.</td>
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<td>3,654</td>
<td>3,847</td>
<td>4,419</td>
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<tr>
<td>White Pop.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>48,258</td>
<td>50,890</td>
<td>58,338</td>
<td>-</td>
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</table>

Religious Practices

Conservative Evangelical Christian 38.90 percent
Important to Attend Religious Services 17.80 percent
My Faith is Really Important to Me 14.50 percent
APPENDIX 10
NEW MEMBER STATISTICS 2012-2015

The statistics presented are based upon records kept in the office at New Canaan Baptist Church and tracked via ACS Membership Software.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Joined</th>
<th>Number of New Members</th>
<th>Number of New members still active in 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 57 new members since 2012, 53 of them remain active members of the church. Therefore, New Canaan Baptist Church has maintained a 93 percent retention rate of new members since adoption of the new member class.
APPENDIX 11

WEEK 1 MATERIALS

Make Disciples
message #1 in the series

Matthew 28:18-20, ESV
And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

First Things First: Jesus is in charge!
And the instruction that He has give, the task of making disciples, is given to the church, and every member of the church (every disciple of Jesus Christ) must be engaged in the task Jesus has given.

How Do I Make Disciples of Jesus?
1. I go and tell wherever I am.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”

Isaiah 52:7, ESV

Disciple-making is an active venture. Jesus expects his followers to TAKE INITIATIVE in going to the lost. Jesus is telling his disciples that “God’s people are no longer to stay in Jerusalem and be a kind of ‘show ‘n’ tell for the nations but they are actively to go and take the message to the nations.” (Osborne, Matthew, 1080)

We can have one of two attitudes about evangelism. Consider this story:
30 years ago two shoe salesmen were sent to Nigeria to survey the country for the possibility of building a shoe factory. The first man came back and said, "Few people here wear shoes so there is little need to build a new shoe factory in Nigeria. The second came back to London and said, "This is the greatest opportunity we have ever had. Everybody I saw needs a good pair of shoes.” That is how we need to look at every community when it comes to their need for Jesus Christ and His love and forgiveness.

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”

John 20:21, ESV
Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

_Ephesians 5:1-2, ESV_

**Focused on the eternal, not the temporary.**

These verses are difficult to translate understandably in English, but the word that we read as the imperative “Go!” is really a participle that literally translated would be something like “as you are going” or “in your going.” See, the main point of the command, the primary verb, is “make disciples.” Perhaps it could be translated “As you are going make disciples.” But this does not mean that “go” is something we should ignore. Rather, it means that “going” is something that we are supposed to already be doing. In your going, share the gospel. That means that everywhere we go, whatever we are doing, we need to be aware that there are lost people around us to whom is offered the free gift of salvation in Jesus Christ through His shed blood on the cross. Some will say that this means we should employ a type of lifestyle evangelism. We’ve all heard the famous line, “Preach the gospel and if necessary use words.” (St. Francis of Assissi) Unfortunately, most Christians use this as an excuse to never share the gospel, and their lives look nothing like Jesus, so they are not even presenting a Christian witness through their lives. I would even venture to disagree with St. Francis, because Scripture says:

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?

_Romans 10:14-15, ESV_

I think what Jesus was really saying is, you are going to be going and doing in your life. As you go and do, share the gospel. Sometimes that will be in your hometown, at your job, in your normal life activities. Sometimes the call to go will be a special call to go and take the gospel to another state or country, but either way, in your going, multiply your life by making disciples of me. He says we are to go to “all nations.” Think about how Jesus made disciples:

As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Mathew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him. And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples.

_Matthew 9:9-10, ESV_

In His going, Jesus called people to follow Him and believe.

2. **I bring new converts into the community of faith, the church.**

The second participle of the Great Commission is “baptizing them.” Those who have believed are to be baptized. Rightly understood, baptism is an act of obedience following the believer’s conversion to faith in Christ.

**How?**

By immersion in water. The Greek word literally means “immerse” them. In the names of the Trinity. We are saved by the grace of God the Father, shown and applied to us by the sacrifice of God the Son, and sanctified by God the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

**Why?**

An outward sign of the inward change that God has worked in us.

An act of obedience that begins the process of obedience to the teachings of Jesus.
Hear Paul’s words:

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, \(^5\) he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, \(^6\) whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, \(^7\) so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

*Titus 3:4-7, ESV*

So the imagery of water baptism is a symbolism of the baptism whereby the Holy Spirit comes into our lives and washes clean our hearts by the blood of Jesus Christ. Baptism is purposely symbolic of the new life of the believer in Jesus Christ. As such, it symbolizes identification with the person of Christ and including in the body of Christ.

David Platt has argued that “if a person is a follower of Christ and has not been baptized, he or she is living in direct disobedience to Christ.” (Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, 376)

And Jesus is clear that baptism should be done in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Baptism, then, is a means of expressing the new relationship between the believer and the three Persons of the Godhead.

3. **I teach new believers to obey what Jesus commanded.**

Teaching believers what Jesus commanded establishes the ethic and theology of the community of faith.

Command and teach these things. \(^{12}\) Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. \(^{13}\) Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.

*I Timothy 4:11-13, ESV*

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”

*Matthew 24:35, ESV*

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

*John 14:15, ESV*

By very definition, the word disciple means someone that follows the precepts or instruction of their leader. As disciples of Jesus, there is an expectation that we will obey what He commands. I submit that it is in this lack of obedience that we find the biggest problems of the church today. I believe that if we really loved one another, the act of evangelism would be so much easier. Lost people would really see something different in our lives if we obeyed Jesus with our lives.

And disciple-making is not just an educational endeavor. We have not been saved so that we can gain mere intellectual knowledge. Instead, the people who have placed their faith in Jesus are to be taught to obey what Jesus commanded. Knowledge is necessary for obedience, not just to know more things. The goal of teaching is to make OBEDIENT disciples.

4. **I obey in Jesus’ power, not my own.**

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

*Acts 1:8, NIV*
Look at the last sentence of Jesus’ command to take the gospel. “I am with you always…to the end of the age. Fear is taken away when we realize that we are not doing this on our own. Jesus is always with us. He will never leave us. He provides the power and the strength for us to do what He has commanded. Do not fear.

“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Hebrews 13:5, ESV

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9, ESV

And notice that “The Great Commission is framed by the omnipotence (v. 18) and the omnipresence of (v. 20b) of Christ.” (Osborne, Matthew, 1082) The same Jesus who commands difficult obedience is at the same time the ever-graceful divine presence.

**My Response:**

I will go to make disciples of Jesus Christ, bring them into the community of faith, and teach them to obey Jesus because He is King and He is with me.

---

**Discipleship Curriculum**

**Week 1 – Disciple-Making**

This morning’s sermon was focused upon Matthew 28:18-20 as Jesus commands his disciples to “make disciples.” During our time of Bible Study today, we are looking at God’s Word to define the word “disciple” and think through what the gospel message is that we are to share as we begin to make disciples.

**Opening Question:** Have you ever made something without working on it? The answer should be no, because everything that we make (cooking, writing, building, etc) requires work on the part of the maker. So it is with making disciples. It requires work.

**What is a Disciple?**

We know that we are to make disciples, but before we can do that, we need to know what a disciple is. So our first question as a group is, based on what the Bible says, how would you define “disciple.”

**Disciple** – a person who follows the precepts and instructions of their leader.

**So a Christian Disciple is a person who follows Jesus and obeys His teachings.**

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples.”

John 8:31, ESV
What does Jesus mean by “abide in my word”? He means that we are to live all of our lives centered around His word and in obedience to His word.

How do we show that we believe in Jesus? By obedience to His word.

How do we become disciples? By Faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 14:6, ESV

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9, ESV

 Romans 5:8, ESV

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23, ESV

How do we begin the process of making disciples? By sharing with people the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

Romans 10:14, ESV

What is the Gospel, according to Scripture?

1. Read Genesis 1:27.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:27, ESV

 Who created man? God did.

 How was man created? He was created in the image of God, for the purpose of being in relationship with God.

 Who deserves to be worshiped, God or man? God does!

2. Read Romans 3:23 and Romans 6:23.

 …for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God…

Romans 3:23, ESV

For the wages of sin is death…

Romans 6:23, ESV

 After the fall of Adam and Eve, what is the state of human nature? We are all sinful and we are separated from God, falling short of His great glory.

 What is the result of sin in humanity? It leads to death. We all deserve death for our sin.
3. Read these passages and answer the questions that follow.
In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Matthew 3:1-2, ESV

“But unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

Luke 13:3, ESV

And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:38, ESV

“The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

Acts 17:30, ESV

- What is necessary for us to receive the gospel? We must repent of our sins.
- What does God do when we repent? He gives us forgiveness of our sins.

Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

Hebrews 9:22, ESV

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:16, ESV

…but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8, ESV

- How does the law state that we must be forgiven? By the shedding of blood on our behalf.
- How did God honor the law and offer us forgiveness? By shedding the blood of His Son Jesus Christ in our place.
- What do these verses tell us about God’s love? God loved us before we loved Him, and He showed His love by sending Jesus to die in our place.

5. Read Romans 10:9.
…because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:9, ESV

- What is necessary for salvation? We must confess Jesus as our Lord and Savior, and we must sincerely believe that God sent Him to die for us, and then raised Him from the dead.

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

John 3:18, ESV
Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”

*John 14:6, ESV*

“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

*Acts 4:12, ESV*

- **How many Saviors are there in the history of the world?** Just one, Jesus Christ.
- **How many ways of salvation are there?** Just one, through belief in Jesus Christ.

The exclusivity of the gospel may seem obvious, but it is not necessarily a popular doctrine. Jesus clearly stated that He is the only way of salvation, but in a recent survey of 35,000 American adults, “57% of evangelical church attendees (we are evangelical church attendees!) said they believe many religions can lead to eternal life, in conflict with traditional evangelical teaching.” (from an Associated Press article dated June 24, 2008)

**Homework** – Begin your 8 week Bible study and prayer plan, helping begin good habits of Discipleship.
APPENDIX 12

WEEK 2 MATERIALS

In the Power of the Holy Spirit
message #2 in the series

Acts 1:8, ESV
But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

First Things First: Without the Holy Spirit, we are hopeless.
"And it shall come to pass afterward,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.
Joel 2:28, ESV

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.
Ephesians 1:13-14, ESV

Now, when we talk about the Holy Spirit, very often people’s mind goes to Pentacostal emotionalism. Consider this story:
The story is told of Rich Mullins, the singer-songwriter who wrote Awesome God, that after a concert a man came up to him and remarked, “When you sang that one song, there was one part where the Holy Spirit really showed up!” Rich asked him what part of the song it was, and when the man told him, Rich said, “That wasn’t the Holy Spirit, that was the kick-drum!” We need to not mistake our emotional response to a song or sermon for the Holy Spirit. That is not what the Bible talks about when it refers to God pouring His Spirit out on all flesh. Instead, Scripture tells us about the power of the Holy Spirit. And that power is given to us to tell others about Jesus.

What the Bible Says about the Spirit’s Power

1. The power of creation was manifested through the Holy Spirit.
   When you send forth your Spirit, they are created,
   and you renew the face of the ground.
Psalm 104:30, ESV
The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Genesis 1:2, ESV
2. **The power of redemption is from the Holy Spirit.**
For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

1 Peter 3:18, ESV
3. **The power of faith and regeneration is from the Holy Spirit.**
If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Romans 8:11, ESV
…because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

1 Thessalonians 1:5, ESV
4. **The power to witness comes from the Holy Spirit.**
And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Acts 4:31, ESV
5. **The power to say the right message comes from the Holy Spirit.**
And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”

Luke 12:11-12, ESV
6. **The power to obey Jesus comes from the Holy Spirit.**
And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Luke 24:49, ESV
7. **The power to see the miraculous is of the Holy Spirit.**
For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience—by word and deed, 19 by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God—so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ;
**Romans 15:18-19, ESV**

And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

**Mark 16:17-18, ESV**

For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, 4 while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

**Hebrews 2:2-4, ESV**

8. **The power to encourage others is from the Holy Spirit.**

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

**1 Corinthians 12:4-7, ESV**

My Response:

I will trust the power of the Holy Spirit at work in me to make me a witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Discipleship Curriculum**

**Week 2 – Power of the Holy Spirit**

**Opening Question:** If someone were to ask you, “Who is the Holy Spirit?”, what would you say?

**Who is the Holy Spirit?**

We know that the Holy Spirit gives us power, but first we need to know who the Holy Spirit is:

There are many misconceptions about the identity of the Holy Spirit. Some view the Holy Spirit as a mystical force. Others understand the Holy Spirit as the impersonal power that God makes available to followers of Christ. What does the Bible say about the identity of the Holy Spirit? Simply put, the Bible declares that the Holy Spirit is God. The Bible also tells us that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, a being with a mind, emotions, and a will.

**The Holy Spirit is God.**

Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?...You have not lied to men but to God.”

**Acts 5:3-4,NIV**
Where shall I go from your Spirit?
Or where shall I flee from your presence?
8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
9 If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
10 even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me.

Psalm 139:7-10, ESV

The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity.
Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Mathew 28:19, ESV

What Does the Holy Spirit do?

1. He fulfills the promise of God to dwell among humanity.
   Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.
   Deuteronomy 6:4, ESV
   Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.
   Isaiah 43:10, ESV
   "And it shall come to pass afterward,
   that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.
   Joel 2:28, ESV

2. He is the comforting presence of God in the believer’s life.
   “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he
   will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the
   world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he
dwells with you and will be in you.
   John 14:15-17, ESV
   Other translations also use words like comforter, advocate.

3. He sanctifies us (grows us to spiritual maturity).
   And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were
   justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
   1 Corinthians 6:11, ESV
   How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has
   trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which
   he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?
   Hebrews 10:29, ESV
   “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Helper, the Holy
   Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to
   your remembrance all that I have said to you.
   John 14:25-26, ESV
4. He is the power to witness about Jesus in our lives.
And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Acts 4:31, ESV

“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. 27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.”

John 15:26-27, ESV

5. He defeats fear in our lives.
for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

2 Timothy 1:7, ESV

And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”

Luke 12:11-12, ESV

6. He is the assurance of our salvation.
In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 1:13-14, ESV

Listen to what A.W. Tozer wrote concerning the Holy Spirit:

Let us review something here that we probably know: the doctrine of the life and operation of Christian believers on earth—starting with the fact that the Christian church is the body of Christ, Jesus Himself being the Headship of that body. Every true Christian, no matter where he or she lives, is a part of that body, and the Holy Spirit is to the church what our own souls are to our physical bodies. Through the operation of the Holy Spirit, Christ becomes the life, the unity and the consciousness of the body, which is the church. Let the soul leave the physical body and all the parts of the body cease to function. Let the Spirit be denied His place in the spiritual body, and the church ceases to function as God intended....

According to the Bible, the whole body exists for its members and the members exist for the whole body. And that, of course, is the reason God gives gifts, so that the body may profit spiritually and maintain spiritual health and prosperity in its service for Jesus Christ in an unfriendly world. Tragedy in the Church: The Missing Gifts, 14-15.

How Should I Witness in the Power of the Holy Spirit?

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity,
strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Galatians 5:21-26, ESV
But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

First Things First: Honor Jesus in everything!

The early Christians who were suffering for the cause of Christ needed to be ready to defend their faith. The same is true for the modern church. Peter tells them to “always be ready.” Christ-followers need to be ready to share the gospel. This readiness could be in willingness to share, even in the face of persecution. Readiness could also refer to preparation, so that when presented with an opportunity to share the Good News, the Christ-follower knows how to share the gospel. While evangelism and apologetics training is a necessity within the church to help prepare Christians to defend their faith, the responsibility for preparedness lies with each believer, according to Peter. Christians must take advantage of training opportunities presented to them by their local church to learn to share the gospel. Christians must also immerse themselves in the Word of God so that they are armed with “the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God” (Eph 6:17). Of particular note is the context of the verses following this passage, where Peter writes, “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God” (1 Pet 3:18).

How Can I Be Ready to Witness?

1. I will not let fear rule my life.
   …for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.
   2 Timothy 1:7, ESV

   There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.
   1 John 4:18, ESV

2. I will not let worry and anxiety rule my life.
   “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you
will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Matthew 6:25-33, ESV

...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7, ESV

3. I will dedicate my heart to the Lordship of Christ.
I will daily submit myself to Him. I will live my life to His glory. I will make decisions asking the question, “Will doing this bring glory or shame to the name of Jesus?”

4. I will be prepared to answer questions about my faith.
Peter is specific regarding what each believer needs to be prepared to do. As Christians were arrested for their participation in the early church or interacted with non-believers in the public arena, they would need to defend the faith. Specifically, Peter tells them that their defense would be in response to “anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.” Peter is not calling the Christians to attend just one evangelism training seminar. Rather, his expectation is that as a result of a Christ-centered life, the believers will be ready to defend the faith, no matter their life stage, length of time as a believer, or the situation in which the question is asked.

When we think of being prepared, we often think of studying and making sure we know material, as in studying for a test. And there is certainly an aspect of this that is true in the Christian life. If we never crack our Bibles, we will be hard-pressed to be prepared to talk to someone about Jesus. Paul rightly tells Timothy:

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15, ESV

However, there is a must deeper understanding. To truly be prepared in the Christian life to give the reason for the hope that we have, we must have hope. We must walk with Christ. We must adore Him. Our study of the Bible must not be academic, but relational.

We must read, memorize and study Scripture because it teaches us about Jesus and we want to grow closer to Him. Jesus taught His disciples the value of that kind of relationship with Him when He said this:

16 “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. 17 Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, 18 and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. 19 When they deliver you over, do not
Matthew 10:16-20, ESV

These verses are not meant to be a call to debate non-Christians. Peter is writing that as Christians, we must honor Christ, and as we honor Him we will be given opportunities to talk to a skeptical world about Him, so honor Him in your heart and be ready.

How are we to share the gospel?

5. **I will show respect to others in the answers I give.**

With gentleness. Jesus was gentle, showing people the love and mercy of God.

With respect. All people are created in the image of God, and as such deserve respect.

This does not mean that we have to agree with or respect other religions, but we do have to listen to people, and respect where they are coming from so that they know that we really care about them, and are not just trying to add numbers to our church or religion.

With a good conscience. When we walk away from an evangelistic opportunity, we should have a clear conscience. That means we should know that we tried to share the gospel, that we respected them, and were gentle in the way that we shared with them.

What is the HOPE that we have?

It is Jesus.

6. **I will live so that my reputation glorifies Christ.**

Notice that Peter says this in several different ways. First, he says we are to be gentle and respectful in our defense of the hope that we have. Second, he says that we should have a good conscience, meaning that every time we walk away from an encounter with a non-believer, we must know that we have represented Christ well. Your reputation as a Christ-follower should be such that even when people try to speak evil against you, they will be shamed, not because you can out-debate them, but because their words are clearly untrue.

Why are we to be gentle and respectful?

Because people will slander us for believing in Jesus.

Our good behavior reflects directly on our Savior. People will exalt the name of Jesus if they see His people acting with love and in obedience to His word. Conversely, people will curse the name of Jesus if they see us acting in defiance to what His Word commands.

Ultimately, we desire that Christ be exalted, which means that all who oppose Him must be brought to shame. Paul tells us in Philippians 2 that every knee will bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord.

My Response:

I will be ready to tell others about Jesus and live so that my life points others to Jesus.

Discipleship Curriculum

Week 3 – Getting Ready
Opening Question: Do you feel ready to share the gospel or answer non-believers’ questions?

The story is told that a bishop was giving a speech at a progressive university, after which he invited the audience to ask questions. One skeptical wiseacre chimed in with a question evidently designed to make the bishop—and Christianity—look foolish. He asked: “Bishop, do you really believe that Jonah was swallowed by a whale and lived inside it for three days?”

The bishop responded, “Yes, I do.” The wiseacre followed up: “Well, can you tell me how something like that could happen?” Unflustered, the bishop responded: “I don’t know, but when I get to heaven I intend to ask Jonah.”

Thinking he had the bishop in check, the wiseacre countered: “Well, what if Jonah didn’t make it to Heaven?”

The bishop responded: “Well, then you ask him!”

Official scoring: Bishop takes pawn.

While the wiseacre in the story had plenty of questions, one thing is obvious: the college student was not looking for an answer. Non-Christians may not realize this, but the truth is that we Christians get those types of questions all the time—the type of questions that do not seek real answers.

What might an unbeliever ask me and how can I answer?

1. “How would you feel if you died and learned that God is not real and that there is no heaven or hell?”

Answer: just fine. I’ve lived a life where I tried to help others and do right by others, and so I’ve not wasted my life.

2. All religions are the same. What makes Christianity special? How can Jesus be the only way to God? Isn’t God just looking for people to sincerely believe in something?

   - If God exists, could there be only one way to reach Him? To be open-minded, I had to admit this possibility.
     - Why consider Jesus as a candidate for that possible one way? He claimed it. His plan of rescuing humans ("by grace … through faith … not … works," Eph. 2:8-9) was distinct from those requiring works, as many other religions do. These two kinds of systems were mutually exclusive. Both could be false or either could be true, but both could not be true.
     - Was Jesus' plan true? Historical evidence for his resurrection, fulfilled prophecy and deity, and for the reliability of the New Testament, convinced me I could trust his words.

Regarding sincerity: After discussing this, a respected psychologist told me, "I guess a person could be sincere in what he believed, but be sincerely wrong." In the 1960s, many
women took the drug thalidomide sincerely believing it would ease their pregnancies—never suspecting it could cause severe birth defects.

- Ultimately, faith is only as valid as its object. Jesus demonstrated by His life, death, and resurrection that he is a worthy object for faith.

- Your questioners may be turned off because many Christians haven't acted like Jesus. Maybe they're angry at God because of personal illness, a broken relationship, a loved one's death, or personal pain. Ask God for patience and love as you follow Peter's admonition: "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15).

Religious tolerance has become a cardinal virtue in our day. Common consensus is that all religions basically lead to the same place. One of my favorite chapters in The God Questions is where we compare the top ten religious systems to each other. They all espouse different gods, different paths to him, and different after-lives. When a person gets through looking at these together, their only conclusion is, "These are all so different, they could all be wrong, but only one of them could be right."

Our world needs this information! And when we give it to them, hearts soften, because minds are opened.

3. **Why is there evil and suffering?**

Because sin exists, and God allows us to experience the result of sin in our world. God did not create suffering, suffering is the result of our disobedience to God.

The number one question everyone has is, "If God is so good, strong and caring, why is there so much suffering in this world?" Understanding the nature of free will doesn't cure the pain of suffering, but it does provide a moment of intellectual satisfaction, and opens the possibility of trusting God.

That God didn't author evil, doesn't like or approve of evil, and is working as lovingly and diligently as possible to restore us to the Paradise He created in the beginning is a good answer.

4. **How can I know if God is real?**

The simple answer to this is "Yes, and He's given pointers to His existence all over the universe."

Psalm 19:1 says, *The heavens declare the glory of God*" (MEV). Eccelestiastes 3:11 says, "He has also set eternity in the human heart" (NIV). The cosmological, teleological, ontological and moral arguments all point to the existence of God. So does the life and witness of Jesus. So does the personal testimony of billions of Christians.
Surprisingly, people in our day and age haven't heard these things. Giving them these answers removes one stumbling point from them trusting their lives to the Lord.

5. **What about all the contradictions in the Bible?**

Ask your questioner for specific examples. Often people have none, but rely on hearsay. If there is a specific example, consider these guidelines as you respond.

- Omission does not necessarily create contradiction. Luke, for example, writes of two angels at Jesus' tomb after the Resurrection (24:1-9). Matthew mentions "an angel" (28:1-8). Is this a contradiction? If Matthew stated that only one angel was present, the accounts would be dissonant. As it stands, they can be harmonized.
- Differing accounts aren't necessarily contradictory. Matthew and Luke, for example, differ in their accounts of Jesus' birth. Luke records Joseph and Mary starting in Nazareth, traveling to Bethlehem (Jesus' birthplace), and returning to Nazareth (Luke 1:26-2:40). Matthew starts with Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, relates the family's journey to Egypt to escape King Herod's rage, and recounts their travel to Nazareth after Herod's death (Matt. 1:18-2:23). The Gospels never claim to be exhaustive records. Biographers must be selective. The accounts seem complementary, not contradictory. Space precludes more complex examples here. But time and again, supposed biblical problems fade in light of logic, history, and archaeology. The Bible's track record under scrutiny argues for its trustworthiness.

Most people in our society have heard a lot about the Bible, but they've rarely heard it defended by an informed and gentle source. Few of our neighbors have had a friend walk them through the Bible's claims for itself or how it was composed, or its historical, prophetical, archeological or transmissional accuracy.

They don't know about the Massoretes or the Talmudim and how carefully both groups transcribed the pages of the Old Testament to ensure no errors crept in. They don't know that we have nearly 25,000 ancient manuscripts of the New Testament that enable us to reconstruct the original documents more reliably than the next ten or twenty ancient books put together.

6. **What about the people who’ve never heard about Jesus?**

God's perfect love and justice far exceed our own. Whatever He decides will be loving and fair. A friend once told me that many asking this question seek a personal loophole, a way so they won't need to believe in Christ. C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* wrote, "If you are worried about the people outside [of Christianity], the most unreasonable thing you can do is to remain outside yourself." If Christianity is true, the most logical behavior for someone concerned about those without Christ's message would be to trust Christ and go tell them about Him.

7. **You believe in Creation. But what about Evolutionary science?**
Western classrooms teach evolution with such security that it is hard for anyone to raise their hand with confidence and say, "Excuse me, there is a God who created all this!" Christians feel unequipped to explain the scientific accuracy behind the Genesis 1 account of creation.

What if they could know for certain that the earth was created by an omnipotent being? That Einstein's theory of relativity requires that our universe had a beginning? That the Big Bang theory requires that the beginning was created by something outside our four-dimensional universe? That quantum mechanics and string theory point to dimensions outside ours, from which such a Creator could come? Imagine people understanding the impossibility of non-theistic evolution because of recent discoveries in microbiology?

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth* is more than religious poetry. It's scientifically plausible, accurate, and trustworthy. Helping neighbors to understand this empowers them to make an intellectually credible response to the God who is calling them to follow Him.

**8. Isn’t Christianity just a psychological crutch?**
Bob Prall has often said, "If Christianity is a psychological crutch, then Jesus Christ came because there was an epidemic of broken legs." Christianity claims to meet real human needs such as those for forgiveness, love, identity, and self-acceptance. We might describe Jesus not as a crutch but an iron lung, essential for life itself.

Christian faith and its benefits can be described in psychological terms, but that does not negate its validity. Evidence supports Christianity’s truthfulness, so we would expect it to work in individual lives, as millions attest.

**9. How can you just blindly believe something? I can’t see God so how do I know He exists?**
We exercise faith every day. Few of us understand everything about electricity or aerodynamics, but we have evidence of their validity. Whenever we use electric lights or airplanes, we exercise faith—not blind faith, but faith based on evidence. Christians act similarly. The evidence for Jesus is compelling, so one can trust him on that basis.

**Homework** – Continue your daily bible study and prayer plan. In addition, spend time researching these questions and study/learn the answers to them so that you are more ready to answer questions from unbelievers.
APPENDIX 14

WEEK 4 MATERIALS

Sent Out by Jesus
message #4 in the series

John 20:19-22, ESV

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

First Things First: I am sent by Jesus to make disciples!

What Does It Mean to be “Sent”?

1. I am united on mission with God.

Jesus first reminds his followers that he himself was sent by the Father, and then with the words “even so” he begins the process of commissioning his own disciples. When Jesus bases his sending of the disciples on the Father’s sending of him, Andreas Köstenberger suggests, “The disciples are drawn into the unity and mission of Father and Son.” He has given them an example of obedience in disciple-making to follow, and in the same way that he obeyed, he expects them to obey. D. A. Carson says, “Here it is the perfect obedience of the Son that is especially emphasized, an obedience that has already been made a paradigm for the relation of the believers to Jesus.” Jesus makes a distinct correlation between his own commissioning by the Father and his commissioning of the disciples. In the same way, there is a correlating expectation of obedience from the sender to the commissioned. The Father expects Jesus to obey, and Jesus expects his followers to obey. Further, because the Father sent Jesus, the added emphasis of Jesus’ command to the disciples is that he is sending them out from the authority of God the Father. Beasley-Murray suggests that this “implies a sending in the past that continues to hold good in the


present.”

The disciples are being commissioned to join in the work of God begun by Jesus. The concept of commissioning is further confirmed by the giving of the Holy Spirit in verse 22. Köstenberger correctly observes, “In a clear allusion to Gen 2:7, where God breathes his Spirit into Adam at creation, constituting him as a living being, at the commissioning of his disciples Jesus constitutes them as the new messianic community in anticipation of the outpouring of the Spirit subsequent to his ascension (20:22).”

2. **I represent the name of Jesus in everything.**

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

*1 Corinthians 10:31, ESV*

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

*Colossians 3:17, ESV*

3. **I am empowered to witness about Jesus to everyone.**

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

*Acts 4:31, ESV*

“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. 27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

*John 15:26-27, ESV*

4. **God is finishing Jesus’ work through me.**

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

*Matthew 28:18-20, ESV*

**My Response:**

I will go and share the gospel with non-believers because Jesus sends me in His power for the glory of God.

**Discipleship Curriculum**

**Week 4 – Jesus and the Lost**

**Opening Question:** When you think about Jesus and the lost, what comes to mind?

**How Did Jesus “Do” Evangelism?**

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1. **He came in humility.**

   Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

   *Matthew 16:24, NIV*

   He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me."

   *John 13:4-8, ESV*

2. **He went to the lost with compassion.**

   As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Mathew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him. And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples.

   *Matthew 9:9-10, ESV*

   When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him; so he went in and reclined at the table.

   When Jesus left there, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege him with questions, waiting to catch him in something he might say.

   *Luke 11:37, 53-54, NIV*

   When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

   *Matthew 14:14, ESV*

3. **He met real needs with power.**

   And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you."

   And their eyes were opened.

   *Matthew 9:27-30, ESV*

   Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves." But Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat."

   They said to him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

   *Matthew 14:15-21, ESV*

   When Jesus arrived at the official’s home, he saw the noisy crowd and heard the funeral music. “Get out!” he told them. “The girl isn’t dead; she’s only asleep.” But the crowd
laughed at him. After the crowd was put outside, however, Jesus went in and took the
girl by the hand, and she stood up! The report of this miracle swept through the entire
countryside.

Matthew 9:23-26, NLT

4. He proclaimed truth without fear.
Then the Lord said to him, "Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and
dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You foolish people! Did not the
one who made the outside make the inside also? But give what is inside the dish to the
poor, and everything will be clean for you.

"Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other
kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have
practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.

"Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and
greetings in the marketplaces.

"Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which men walk over without
knowing it."

One of the experts in the law answered him, "Teacher, when you say these things, you
insult us also."

Jesus replied, "And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down
with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help
them.

"Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your forefathers who
killed them. So you testify that you approve of what your forefathers did; they killed the
prophets, and you build their tombs. Because of this, God in his wisdom said, 'I will send
them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.'
Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that
has been shed since the beginning of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of
Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, this
generation will be held responsible for it all.

"Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You
yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering."

When Jesus left there, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him
fiercely and to besiege him with questions, waiting to catch him in something he might
say.

Luke 11:39-54, NIV

5. He called people to repent and believe.
"The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then, the good news of the kingdom of
God has been proclaimed, and everyone is strongly urged to enter it.
**Luke 16:16, HCSB**

6. **He taught the twelve disciples.**

   Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

   2 And he opened his mouth and taught them,

   *Matthew 5:1-2, ESV*

   And he called the people to him again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand: 15 There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.” 17 And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. 18 And he said to them, “Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, 19 since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.) 20 And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him.

   *Mark 7:14-20, ESV*

**Homework** – based on where you go each week, name three people you see every week that are lost. Begin praying for them to come to faith in Jesus.
APPENDIX 15

WEEK 5 MATERIALS

Do Not Be Afraid
message #5 in the series

I Peter 3:14-15, ESV
But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect…

First Things First: Jesus is Lord, so I do not have to fear!

What Fears Do We Face?

1. Fear of failure.
Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, and author of the Four Spiritual Laws, wrote about the fear of failure, “Fear of [failure] can be one of the biggest cripplers of a faithful witness, for none of us likes to be ‘turned down.’ We tend to take it personally, regarding a rejection to our message as a rejection of our person.” The problem with this particular fear is that the focus is upon the believer, not the lost. The Christian chooses not to tell the lost about Jesus because he or she is scared of being rejected by the lost person. The antidote to this crippling fear is found in the ministry of Jesus. Bright suggests that we follow Jesus’ example, and realize that “[s]uccess in witnessing is simply taking the initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, and leaving the results to God.” To state this truth another way, the only way to fail in sharing the gospel is to avoid sharing the gospel. Sharing the message of the gospel is success. As Spurgeon stated, “He that is faithful is, in God’s way and in God’s judgment, successful.”


2. Fear of rejection.

Fear of rejection, or more accurately, fear of what others will think of a person, is another aspect of fear that is a major temptation for Christians. This fear also serves as an excuse not to share the gospel. Edward Welch suggests that this “fear of man” is universal to humanity. He writes, “[Fear] includes being afraid of someone, but it extends to holding someone in awe, being controlled or mastered by people, worshipping other people, putting your trust in people, or needing people.” Essentially, fear of man puts others in the place that only God should hold in the life of the believer. Rather than cowering in fear, the disciple of Jesus Christ rests in faith in the knowledge that salvation is God’s work, not man’s. Therefore, rejection or acceptance, success or failure is not determined based upon human ability, but rather the work of God’s Holy Spirit in the life of the one hearing the gospel. J. Mack Stiles’ statement is helpful here, when he says,

Paul says we persuade others to follow Jesus (2 Cor. 5:11). I find the word persuade helpful, as it guards us from error: we persuade, but we do not manipulate; we persuade, but we are not the ones who bring about repentance or conversion. Of course, we long to see people converted because we understand that conversion is required for them to become Christians. But true conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Rejection of the gospel, when it happens, is not rejection of the person, but rejection of the message of salvation. Christians will always fear if they believe that they are responsible for the result of evangelism. But trusting God to work, and obeying Him by proclaiming the gospel will lead to a lifetime and lifestyle of evangelism.

3. Fear of offending someone.

Americans’ obsession with political correctness has paralyzed many believers who fear saying the wrong thing. Bill Bright said that this is a favorite tactic of Satan, where he convinces believers that “you don’t have any right to force your views on someone else.” The fear of offending others is a powerful way to stop Christians from sharing their faith with the lost. Thabiti Anyabwile says this tendency reveals itself when we “begin to evaluate ourselves not in light of the gospel but in light of the judgments of others, which are not made on the basis of the gospel but on the basis of self-made religion, asceticism, forms of self-righteousness” and other means. Evaluating the gospel message with the world’s wisdom brings about the fear of offending those who hear the gospel. The problem is that the message of the gospel is offensive to sinful man. Americans are told to say nothing that will offend others, and the Good News that Christ-followers share is that sinful man cannot save himself, and can only find redemption through faith in Jesus Christ. Telling sinful people that they cannot save themselves is offensive to people who are in fact working to try to save themselves.

Jesus surely faced the temptation to fear offending the people who heard him teach. Yet his example was bold proclamation of the Kingdom in the face of that fear. He was not afraid to speak truth. He called the Pharisees a “brood of vipers” (Matt 3:7, 12:34, 23:33),

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“hypocrites” (Matt 13:13), “blind guides” (Matt 13:16), and “whitewashed tombs” (Matt 13:27). He told the woman at the well her sin of adultery and invited her through faith to receive the eternal life that only he could give (John 4:14-26). He told those who expressed faith that their “sins are forgiven” (Matt 9:2, Mark 2:5, Luke 5:20, 7:48). He told Nicodemus “unless one is born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Jesus said that he was sent to do the will of the Father (John 4:34), and he told his disciples that he was sending them out in the same was he was sent (John 20:21). Christ-followers would do well to follow the example of Jesus in the face of fear, and boldly proclaim salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

Why is Fear a Sin?

1. **Fear makes me doubt God’s control.**
   God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.
   
   *Psalm 46:1-3, ESV*
   
   In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.
   
   *Psalm 4:8, ESV*

2. **Fear makes me doubt God’s love for me and others.**
   …casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.
   
   *1 Peter 5:7, ESV*

   The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
   
   *Psalm 23:1, ESV*

   “It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.”
   
   *Deuteronomy 31:8, ESV*

   The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
   
   *Psalm 27:1, ESV*

3. **Fear says God is not powerful enough to work through me.**
   Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
   
   *Psalm 23:4, ESV*

   And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.
   
   *Matthew 10:28, ESV*

   Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation.
   
   *Revelation 2:10a, ESV*

4. **Fear says that the temporary is more important than the eternal.**
   So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen
but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18, ESV

Overcoming Fear in Evangelism:

1. Acknowledge and face fear.
2. Pray to God for help, courage, and peace.
   …do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
   Philippians 4:6-7, ESV
3. Remember God’s love for me.
   There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.
   1 John 4:18, ESV
4. Look beyond my circumstances to God’s promises.
   I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.
   Psalm 121, ESV
5. Obey God’s commands.
   “I will not leave you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”
   Joshua 1:5-9, ESV

My Response:
I will face my fear, trust in God, and share the gospel with the lost.

Discipleship Curriculum

Week 5 – Practice Facing Fear
Opening Question: Do you know how to start a spiritual conversation with someone?

In groups of 4 or less, have each person pick one of the following conversation starting questions and practice starting conversations focused upon gospel matters. Let each person practice at least twice (using different questions), and have another member of the group be the person with whom he or she is starting the conversation. Let these practice times be real conversations.

Spiritual Conversation Starters:
1. If you died today, do you know what would happen after death? Would you go to heaven and why?
2. What single thing would you like to make absolutely certain you do (if at all possible) during your lifetime?
3. In a conversation with someone who has never heard about God, what would you say about Him from your experience?
4. How do you handle pressure? Where do you go to find peace?
5. What are the two or three most important things that help you make decisions in life?
6. If you could know God personally, would you be interested?
7. Who was Jesus Christ?
8. What is your spiritual background?
9. Have you ever read the Bible? What did you think about it?
10. What do you value most, and how do that impact how you live?

Important Conversation Note:
If you are talking with someone, express sincere interest in what they are saying. These spiritual conversations are not just a means by which you share the gospel. Instead, you will show them the love of Jesus in you as you listen to and interact with them. If they know that you care about them, they will be more likely to listen to what you want to share with them!

Homework – Face your fear! Start a conversation this week with the three people for whom you have been praying and talk to them about God.

For more examples of conversation starting questions, you can visit: https://www.evangelismcoach.org/2008/44-conversation-questions/
There is this sad nomenclature in our Christian culture, that when asked about evangelism, someone might respond: “I don’t have the gift of evangelism.” This is sad, because it is not biblical. Evangelism is not a spiritual gift. Rather, it is the calling of every believer.

Guess what: I don’t have the gift of evangelism either! Neither does anyone. Instead, we are all called to be equipped (taught, shown how) to share our faith!

_Ephesians 4:11-16, ESV_

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

_First Things First: God is calling me to witness, not make excuses!_

_God’s Plan for Evangelism_

1. God gives us gifts to equip us to grow and minister. It is the responsibility of the Pastors of the local church to equip the members for the work of ministry.

Every believer has been given the gift of leaders in the local church to equip and train him or her to do the work of ministry, including but not limited to, sharing the gospel. “The pastor and church leaders are responsible and accountable to God for the work of encouraging, enlisting, equipping, and engaging the laity in reaching the lost . . . Herein
lies the hope of reaching our world for Christ.”\(^1\)

...shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you...

*1 Peter 5:2, ESV*

If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.

*1 Timothy 3:1, ESV*

2. **Every Christian is created to minister and must be equipped to do so.** Churches become healthy when their members are equipped to minister and obedient to Christ’s teaching to make disciples. Thielman asserts that Paul is saying that “the work of building up the church continues ‘until we all arrive’.\(^2\) Paul implies that a church cannot be healthy if the people are simply expecting others to do the work of ministry. As Hoehner rightly asserts, “The ‘all’ is mentioned because we are all being prepared for the work of the ministry with the goal of building up the body of Christ of which we are all a part.”\(^3\) He also writes that Paul’s “point is that the gifted persons listed in verse 11 serve as the foundational gifts that are used for the immediate purpose of preparing all the saints to minister. Thus, every believer must do the work of the ministry.”\(^4\) In the same way that the human body is not healthy if all of the parts are not working properly, so also the church is not healthy if its members are not working together for the common mission of disciple-making.

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace...

*1 Peter 4:10, ESV*

a. **I know who I follow – Jesus.**

v. 13 – full knowledge of the Son of God.

b. **I know what I believe – doctrine.**

v. 14 – “so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes”

Maturity helps us not be deceived by false teachings.

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

*1 Peter 5:8, ESV*

3. **Every Christian has a story to tell (share the gospel).**

“Speaking the truth in love…”

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\(^4\) Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 549.
Healthy churches teach their people to share the gospel of Christ and minister in his name. John Polhill espouses this same view when he writes:

All the members of the body of Christ are to do the work of ministry. The church leaders are equippers. The entire body of Christ are the ministers. When all work together, the church progresses toward its goal of full maturity in Christ (v. 13). This is described as being fully unified, having full knowledge of Christ, and reaching the full measure of Christ’s stature.\(^5\)

Growing Christians, who share their faith, produce healthy, disciple-making churches.

but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

\(1\) Peter 3:15, ESV

4. **Every Christian should work with others to reach the lost and build up the body of Christ.**

“Whole body, joined and held together…” – we are looking out for the good of everyone and not just ourselves.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.\(^4\) Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

\(\)Philippians 2:3-4, ESV

5. **Love must motivate everything I do as a believer.**

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.

\(\)Romans 12:9, ESV

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.\(^8\) Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.\(^9\) In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.\(^10\) In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.\(^11\) Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.\(^12\) No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

\(\)1 John 4:7-12, ESV

a. **Love for God.**

b. **Love for the Church.**

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!

\(\)Psalm 133:1, ESV

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

\(\)Romans 8:29, ESV

c. **Love for the lost.**

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without

someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

*Romans 10:14-15, ESV*

Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.

*Psalm 2:8, ESV*

My Response:
I will be equipped, grow in Christ, and be a witness to share the gospel with the lost.

So please do not revert back to that unbiblical excuse: I don’t have the gift of evangelism. You don’t because it’s not a gift! But you are being equipped now to share your faith.

Discipleship Curriculum

Week 3 – Testimony/Sharing the gospel

Opening Question: How have you shared the gospel?

Writing my Testimony:

1. Keep your story under 3 minutes.
2. Begin with life before Christ.
3. Share about coming to Christ.
   a. Who told you about Jesus?
   b. I understood my sin had separated me from God.
   c. I repented of my sin and asked Jesus to save me.
   d. I believed that He died for my sins and forgave me.
   e. I trusted Him to be Lord of my life.
4. Talk about how your life has changed.

Sharing the Gospel: The Romans Road

1. Our sin problem.
*Romans 3:23* – “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”
*Romans 3:10-11* - “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God.
*Romans 6:23* – “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

2. God’s answer to our sin problem.
Romans 5:8 - but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

3. Faith in Jesus.
Romans 10:9 - because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
Romans 10:13 - For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

4. Salvation is assured in Jesus.
Romans 5:1 - Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Romans 8:1 - There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
Romans 8:38-39 - For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Sharing the Gospel: The Bridge Diagram

Homework – Prepare and write down your testimony. Pray that God will give you the opportunity to share your testimony with the three lost friends you have identified. Take the opportunity and share with them how God has changed you through faith in Jesus Christ.
Acts 2:42-47, ESV

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

First Things First: How I live matters as I witness for Jesus!

The Christian Lifestyle

1. I am devoted to growth in my walk with Jesus.

Luke first describes the devotion of the early church. He lists four things to which the early believers were devoted: teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. Rather than simply their order of worship, the list is a summary of their life in Jerusalem. Fitzmeyer concludes that “the four elements underscore the common accord of Jerusalem Christians.”¹ This common accord and unity is further shown by the fact that “all who believed were together and had all things in common” (Acts 2:44).

The description of the early church is an explanation of the devotion they had to the things of God.

Devoted to teaching

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Joshua 1:8, ESV

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Psalm 119:105, ESV

**Devoted to fellowship with other believers.**

There was immediate, regular follow-through care of the first converts in the early church. The verbal expression “they were devoting themselves to” covers four activities. The word…Luke uses for fellowship…is used…to denote intimacy and fellowship in general.


**Devoted to prayer**

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

The culture of the early church was one of disciple-making. The early believers were “devoted” to the teaching of Christ’s words, to loving one another, to serving one another, and to their relationship with the Lord. John Polhill interestingly ties the devotions listed in verse 42 back to those converted in verses 40-41, and says that the devotion list actually “provides a glimpse into the manner in which the new converts were incorporated into the believing community.”

This view would show Acts 2:42 to be an example of the early church obeying the command of Christ to “make disciples” as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Regardless of which group Luke is describing (the entire church or only new converts), the early Christians were clearly living out Christ’s explanation of the greatest two commands in the law: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:37-39). They loved God through their devotion to teaching, prayer, corporate worship, and obedience to the Word of Christ. They loved one another by sharing with one another and in their fellowship.

They lived out their love for God and for others in the public square, so that the non-believers saw their faith in action. Their care for one another and the resulting faith of the lost is proof of the truth of Jesus’ statement: “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).

**2. I am generous with my time, money, and ministry.**

Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”

Matthew 19:21, ESV

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

1 Timothy 6:17-19, ESV

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Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

II Corinthians 9:7, ESV

3. I am united with other believers in doctrine, worship, fellowship, and ministry.

The daily worship of the Christ-followers in the temple was among the Jews, who themselves were at the temple in order to complete the requirements of the law through sacrifices and offerings. Munck says that “the disciples took part in the hours of prayer at the temple and on certain occasions they spoke there (cf. iii 11 ff., v 20-21, 25).” He goes on to comment: “They appeared in full view of the public in the temple at the daily prayers as missionaries of Jesus.” In contrast to those seeking to earn the favor of God through their good works, the early Christians’ joyous praise of God in Christ must have shone brightly in the temple. Polhill says, “The Christian presence in the temple…evidences their zeal for witness. In Jerusalem the temple was the primary place where crowds would be found, and there the Christians went to bear witness.”

As Haenchen notes, “After the attitude towards God, the relation with men is described: the Christians are liked by the whole (Jewish) people.” Luke records that as a result of their worship, their generosity toward one another, and their lifestyles, the early Christians enjoyed “favor with all the people.” Fitzmeyer reminds his reader, “The respect they enjoyed stands in contrast to the reaction of religious authorities later in Acts.”

O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

Psalm 95:6

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:1-6, ESV

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!

Psalm 133:1, ESV

4. My actions match my witness about Jesus wherever I am.

but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered,

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5Polhill, Acts, 121.


those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

1 Peter 3:15-17, ESV

A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold.

Proverbs 22:1, ESV

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:1-2, ESV

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Romans 14:17, ESV

The Result

1. The church has a good reputation with the community.
As a result of their devotion, signs and wonders were the norm in the early church. Ernst Haenchen writes, “The expression ‘many wonders and signs’ gives the reader the impression that that whole life of the primitive Church was filled with miracles.”8 These signs and wonders offered proof of both their message and their sincerity in the faith. The early church was devoted to the things of God, and God worked among them in mighty ways, revealing to the non-believers around them his power and the truth of the belief of the early Christians. This power at work among them was in part responsible for the favor that the people of Jerusalem showed to the early Church.

   i. Does not mean that everyone agreed with their beliefs
   ii. The non-believing world saw that the words and actions of the believers were aligned.

2. The Lord brings new people to faith through our witness.
Not only was there favor in the eyes of the world, but people came to faith in Jesus Christ daily as a result of the witness of the early Christians. Conzelmann notices that “The ‘favor’ mentioned here balances the fear motif of vs. 43.” His analysis is that “the repetition serves...to begin the story of the community in the world.”9 Luke understood and communicated that the church was sent to the world. The only explanation for the phenomenon of conversion of the lost is that their lives so reflected Christ that the lost took notice and wanted to experience the same kind of life-change. Munck observes that, because of their lifestyles, the members of the early church “were well-liked by the

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people and day by day God allowed their community to grow.”  

The Bible’s record of the early church reflects the truth that a Christian’s lifestyle must reflect his or her words in order for his or her testimony to hold merit with non-believers.

Verse 47 of Acts 2 records an important truth for Christians who desire to share their faith to non-believers: it is God who saves. The early church did not save the lost through their witness of Christ or their lifestyle. Rather, “the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” The lives the early Christians lived merely pointed the lost to faith in Jesus Christ alone. As Williams notes, “The steady growth of the church was due ultimately to the Lord. There was much (essential) human activity, but it was he who added to their number.” God honored their testimony by saving those who believed. The task of evangelism, given to every Christian as a minister of the good news, is the task of messenger. Salvation is the work of God alone through faith in Christ alone. God’s favor on the early church “is manifested in his daily addition to the number of the saved.”

God blessed their missional living by saving the lost people around them through their witness. The testimony of the early church reveals that through devoted worship of God and sincere love for one another, Christians can reveal the salvation of God in Christ to non-believers. Genuine faith shown in action to close friends and relatives, followed by a verbal gospel witness, is a far more powerful evangelistic tool than random encounters with strangers. The example of the early church is an example of life-style evangelism, where the preaching of the gospel reinforces to the non-believer what he or she has already seen in the life of a Christian. While the Bible is clear that proclamation of the gospel is necessary for a person to come to faith in Christ, if the lifestyle of the believer does not match the words proclaimed, the message will seem false. The early church saw people coming to faith in Jesus every day through gospel proclamation because they loved God and each other, and that love was revealed in their words and actions.

i. The Lord added people daily  
ii. Consistent Christian living will intrigue people  
iii. Authentic Christian worship will inspire people  
iv. Speaking truth will evangelize people  
v. God will use our lives, words, and worship to add to His church.

My Response:  
I will live a righteous life as a witness of what Jesus has done for me!

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11For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph 2:8-9).


14Paul writes, “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?” (Rom 10:14). Paul’s point is simple: without the preaching of the gospel, people will not come to faith in Christ. The lifestyle evangelism being described above is not a replacement for the proclamation of salvation through faith in Christ alone. Rather, the proclamation of the gospel will be more well-received by the lost when the one proclaiming it reveals his or her faith born out in the way he or she lives their life.
Discipleship Curriculum

Week 7 – My Lifestyle

Opening Question: Have you ever seen someone unknowingly destroy their witness by the way they were acting? How did that make you feel?

Destroying our Witness:

1. **Hypocrisy – Our words do not match our actions.**
   Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.
   
   "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets"
   
   Matthew 7:3-5, ESV

2. **Moral Failure – living in sin.**
   But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.  

Galatians 5:16-26, ESV

3. **Gossip – talking unkindly about others.**
   There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.
   
   Proverbs 6:16-19, ESV

4. **Caring more about current events more than eternity.**
   See: http://wadebearden.com/political-hurt-christian-witness/

5. **Lack of Compassion.**

6. **Treating other Christians with hate or disdain.**
7. **Acting/talking like the world.**

You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

*Matthew 12:34, ESV*

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

*Romans 12:2, ESV*

*Homework* – Correct areas in your life where the Holy Spirit has revealed you have harmed your witness by your lifestyle. Invite your three friends to come to church with you.
APPENDIX 18

WEEK 8 MATERIALS

Every Nation and People Group
message #8 in the series

Psalm 67, ESV
May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah
2 that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations.
3 Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!
4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Selah
5 Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!
6 The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us.
7 God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!

First Things First: God deserves to be worshiped by everyone!
After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

Revelation 7:9-10, ESV

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20, NIV
Let the Nations Be Glad

1. **We should pray for God’s grace on our lives so that we can take the gospel to the nations.**
   a. We do not pray selfishly.
   b. We do not believe in a health-and-wealth gospel.
      Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.
      *Philippians 1:27, NIV*

2. **People must know God in order to worship Him.**
   a. God’s purpose in being known is for people to…
      i. Praise Him. (verse 3, “Let the peoples praise you, O God”)  
      ii. Enjoy Him. (verse 4, “Let the nations be glad and sing for joy”)
      “The chief end of man is to glorify God by enjoying Him forever.”
      - John Piper
      iii. Fear Him. (verse 7, “Let all the ends of the earth fear him!”)
      The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding.
      To him belongs eternal praise.
      *Psalm 111:10, NIV*
   b. God’s desire is that we see…
      i. His justice. (verse 4, “You judge the peoples with equity”)
      ii. His power. (verse 4, “guide the nations upon earth”)
      iii. His grace. (verse 1, “God be gracious to us”)

3. **All people begins in our community.**
   “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
   *Acts 1:8, NIV*

   American society is not homogenous. It is growing ever more multi-cultural, more global. As groups migrate from other countries into the United States and have children, Caucasian Americans are decreasing in size as the majority ethnic group. David Sills notes that “Missiologists’ growing interested in diaspora missions is due to the fact that increasing numbers of people now live outside the country of their birth, where they find work, education and eventually a home.”


3Ibid.
Americans, Hispanics, and Asians.

Paulding county has a 5.5% Hispanic population, a 17.5% African American population, a 1% Asian population, and 78% white population. There are people from other cultures living around and among us. Who do you know from another culture?

c. The gospel will go forth into all the earth.
   After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

   Revelation 7:9-10, ESV

d. If we do not take it, God will raise others up.

e. If we do not worship, we will not be interested in missions.

f. God will be praised, either by us, or by others.
   And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."


g. If we do not answer God’s call to go, He will remove His blessing from our church.

How Can I Reach All Peoples?

1. Pray for the lost to be saved.
   When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

   Matthew 9:37-38, ESV

2. Go to your unchurched neighbors, friends, and co-workers.

3. Build relationships with people of different cultures.
   As John Piper aptly states, “If people all over the world are under condemnation for sin and cut off from eternal life . . ., and if calling on Jesus is their only hope for eternal, joyful fellowship with God . . ., then love demands missions.”

4. Evangelism must occur locally and globally.

4. Be ready to go to share with other cultures through missions.

5. Give generously to help others go to the harvest among the nations.

My Response:
I will be a witness so that all nations may know and worship our God through faith in Jesus Christ!

Discipleship Curriculum

Opening Question: What friendships do you have with people who are ethnically different than you?

Which cultures live in and around Paulding County?
- Caucasian Americans (White)
- African Americans
- Mexicans
- Hispanics (from multiple countries)
- Koreans
- Filipinos
- Brazilians
- French
- West African
- Others?

Why does this matter?
Because we know that we are told to make disciples of all nations. We know that all people groups will be around the throne worshiping God, because He deserves to be worshiped by all nations. We also know that we are not to be a stumbling block to anyone coming to faith in Jesus Christ. If the things that we do because we are White Americans cause someone from a different culture to not follow Jesus, then we are a stumbling block. So let’s work to reach people from other cultures.

How do we reach people of different cultures without offending them by our culture?
1. We meet them and get to know them.
2. We listen to them and learn about their culture.
3. We see them as human beings and not just members of a culture.
4. We invite them into our homes and build relationships.
5. We tell them the good news about Jesus.

Homework – Introduce yourself to someone of a different ethnicity and start a conversation with them. Invite them to come to church with you.
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ABSTRACT

TRAINING CHURCH MEMBERS AT NEW CANAAN BAPTIST CHURCH IN DALLAS, GEORGIA, FOR EVANGELISM AND MISSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Jason Wayne Loudermilk, D.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017
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This project was designed for the members of New Canaan Baptist Church to address a deficiency of evangelism and missional engagement. These deficiencies were addressed through a process that included (1) assessment of current practices and (2) the preaching, teaching, and applying of the New Testament’s instruction regarding evangelism. This project is grounded in the New Testament’s call upon every Christian to share the gospel and engage with their culture. Therefore, the expectation is that evangelism will be a lifestyle of verbal witness for the Christ-follower, not just a church program.
VITA

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