

Copyright © 2018 Michael Timothy Sterlachini, Jr.

All rights reserved. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has permission to reproduce and disseminate this document in any form by any means for purposes chosen by the Seminary, including, without limitation, preservation or instruction.

EQUIPPING PARENTS AT PICKENS FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH IN PICKENS, SOUTH CAROLINA
TO BE THE PRIMARY DISCIPLERS
OF THEIR CHILDREN

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

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

by
Michael Timothy Sterlachini, Jr.
May 2018

APPROVAL SHEET

EQUIPPING PARENTS AT PICKENS FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH IN PICKENS, SOUTH CAROLINA
TO BE THE PRIMARY DISCIPLERS
OF THEIR CHILDREN

Michael Timothy Sterlachini, Jr.

Read and Approved by:

Timothy P. Jones (Faculty Supervisor)

Shane W. Parker

Date _____

I dedicate this project to my wonderful wife,
who has persevered through my many academic years.

Your prayers, love, patience, and support make my research and practice in family
ministry possible. You make me a better man and for that I am thankful.

I love you, sweetheart.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	vi
PREFACE	vii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Context	1
Rationale	4
Purpose	5
Goals	6
Research Methodology	6
Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations	8
Conclusion	10
2. BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT	11
Biblical and Theological Support in the Old Testament	11
Biblical and Theological Support in the New Testament	22
Conclusion	33
3. THEORETICAL, PRACTICAL, AND HISTORICAL SUPPORT FOR PARENTAL DISCIPLESHIP	36
Contemporary History of Family Ministry	36
Biblical Manhood and Womanhood	40
Contemporary Models of Family Ministry	50
Conclusion	58

Chapter	Page
4. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	61
Preparation	62
Promotion	63
Implementation	64
5. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT	84
Evaluation of the Project's Purpose	84
Evaluation of the Project's Goals	85
Strengths of the Project	98
Weaknesses of the Project	99
What I Would Do Differently	100
Theological Reflections	101
Personal Reflections	102
Conclusion	104
 Appendix	
1. FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP PERCEPTIONS AND SURVEY	106
2. FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP PERCEPTIONS AND SURVEY: PRE-PROJECT RESULTS	108
3. FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP PERCEPTIONS AND SURVEY: POST-PROJECT RESULTS	111
4. SEMINAR SYLLABUS	114
5. SESSION 1	115
6. SESSION 2	120
7. SESSION 3	126
8. SESSION 4	135
9. SESSION 5	140
10. SESSION 6	144
11. SESSION 7	151
BIBLIOGRAPHY	158

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Parental Perceptions Pre-Project Survey responses for goal 1	86
2. Parental Practices Pre-Project Survey responses for goal 1	86
3. Parental Perceptions Pre-Project Survey responses for goal 2	89
4. Parental Perceptions Post-Project Survey responses for goal 2	89
5. Parental Perceptions Pre-Project Survey responses for goal 3	92
6. Parental Perceptions Post-Project Survey responses for goal 3	93
7. Parental Perceptions Pre-Project Survey responses for goal 4	94
8. Parental Practices Pre-Project Survey responses for goal 4	95
9. Parental Perceptions Post-Project Survey responses for goal 4	96
10. Parental Practices Post-Project Survey responses for goal 4	96
A1. Pre-project results for parental perceptions	108
A2. Pre-project results for parental practices	110
A3. Post-project results for parental perceptions	111
A4. Post-project results for parental practices	113

PREFACE

I will always be thankful for my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who saved me from my sins. By God's grace, I am a child of God through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. I am thankful for Charlie Benway, the man God used to lead me to Christ. Charlie not only shared the gospel with me, but also gave me my first opportunity to teach Sunday school to eighth grade boys. Charlie's influence in my life will never be forgotten. I am also thankful for God's calling into ministry, which has given me the opportunity to serve families for over a decade. His calling has also given me tremendous opportunities to study His Word at some of the best seminaries in the world.

I am also thankful for the church leadership at Pickens First Baptist Church for allowing me to plan and implement this project. Without their willingness and flexibility, I would not have been able to pursue this course of study. I would also like to especially thank Dr. Fred Stone, my pastor. Without his encouragement and prayer, I do not know if I would have enrolled into this program. He was instrumental in me enrolling at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

I am appreciative for the faculty at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Their professionalism and expertise in their fields of study are unparalleled. I am thankful for Dr. Albert Mohler and his leadership at this great institution. This world needs more men like him who are willing to stand up for what is right and biblical. I am also thankful for Dr. Michael Wilder and his leadership in the Professional Doctoral Studies Office. The way he has polished the Doctor of Ministry program over the years makes pursuing this degree much more feasible for individuals involved in full-time ministry. Finally, I am especially grateful for my faculty supervisor, Dr. Timothy Jones. His expertise and

passion for family ministry has been a tremendous help to me throughout the course of this program.

Most importantly, I am thankful for my family. God has blessed me with my wonderful wife, Karen. Her godly influence in my life has always been a source of inspiration to me. Words cannot describe just how much I love her. I thank God everyday for my bride and her passion for Jesus.

Finally, I am thankful for our children, Ava and Michael. Watching them grow up and love Jesus has been a tremendous blessing. My prayer for them is that they continue to pursue God with all their heart and pass the faith to the next generation. My family is the breeding and proving ground for this project and for that I am thankful. May God be honored and blessed through it.

Michael Sterlachini

Pickens, South Carolina

May 2018

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Pickens First Baptist Church in Pickens, South Carolina, exists to be a worshipping, evangelizing, learning, and loving church for God's glory. These four components are derived from the Great Commandment (Matt 22:37) and the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20). Since the children and student ministries are extensions of the church, its purpose is to fulfill these four components in partnership with families and their children. This venture requires families to surrender to the lordship of Christ and the church to resource, involve, and equip parents to disciple their children. Pickens First Baptist Church has historically equipped parents through small group discipleship classes, church-based programs, leadership teams, and curriculum. Parents at Pickens First Baptist Church readily acknowledge that they are the primary disciplers of their children. However, discipleship was not taking place in many homes. Parents, primarily fathers, were not training their families in the fear and admonition of the Lord. The reason why they were neglecting this vital command is multifaceted: not equipped, too busy, unformed, and not a priority. Therefore, the purpose of this project was to develop a curriculum for parents that informs, resources, and equips them to fulfill God's command to disciple their children.

Context

This ministry project took place in the context of Pickens First Baptist Church (PFBC) in Pickens, South Carolina. PFBC is located in northwestern South Carolina and is considered the most conservative locale of the state. There is a strong emphasis on conservative values and family in this area. This conservative mindset is also found in the

church. Since its inception, PFBC has been part of the Southern Baptist Convention. Currently, PFBC affiliates voluntarily with the Pickens-Twelve Mile Baptist Association, the South Carolina Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention. As a member of the Southern Baptist Convention, PFBC ascribes to the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

The traditional family is one of the most important elements in Pickens, South Carolina. On any given Sunday, it is not unusual to find two generations of families sitting together in one of the worship services. After service, these family members have lunch and spend the entire afternoon together. Afterwards, many families attend one of the discipleship classes offered at PFBC on Sunday evenings. At PFBC, a high priority is placed on family worshipping, serving, growing, and fellowshiping together. The church not only emphasizes family, but so does the culture of Pickens, South Carolina. In addition to worshipping together, many family members work and play together. It is not unusual for extended families to see each other four or five times a week. Pickens, South Carolina, and PFBC are the stereotypes of southern charm and hospitality. This part of South Carolina is a beautiful area of the country and a great place to raise children.

With such an emphasis on family both in the culture and church, a visitor would expect PFBC to have a thriving children's ministry with a strong emphasis on parental discipleship. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The children's ministry at PFBC is one of the weakest ministries within the church. PFBC averages about 350-400 people in attendance on Sunday morning with only an average of 30 children in its preschool and children's ministries. In addition, the median age of the membership is about 45 years old. Thus, there are many young families with young children attending PFBC; however, many young families are seemingly unengaged when it comes to anything other than the church service and Vacation Bible School. The children's ministry programs on Sunday mornings, Sunday evenings, and Wednesday evenings are not well attended.

There could be several reasons for poor attendance in the children's ministry. First, parents are busier than ever before. Many people work on weekends and nights. Second, extracurricular activities consume more time than they did in the past. Some community sports are now scheduling practice and games on Sundays. Third, families are traveling more. Even though most people at PFBC grew up in Pickens, some moved here because of jobs. Therefore, some families travel to see loved ones on the weekends. However, many young families are not placing a priority on worship because of indifference. Instead of having their children involved and worshipping together, they go hunting, golfing, or to the lake. Some parents believe that playing ball or having a good time is more important than partnering with the church in the discipleship of their children. However, most parents at PFBC agree that they are the primary disciplers and influencers of their children. They have grown up in the church and know their role as a parent. The problem was that they did not understand how to assume the role as primary discipler nor did they know where to start. Thus, many parents abandoned the role altogether.

This problem becomes greater once these children reach the student ministry in sixth grade. For the last eleven years, some children have witnessed their parents not placing a priority on worship and church partnership. They have seen their parents dismiss their God-given roles and emphasize mismatched priorities. Thus, many of these youth begin to assume the same priorities that they learned from their parents. These youth begin to highlight friendships, self-image, sports, extracurricular activities, and academics over their walk with Christ. Unfortunately, this vicious cycle gets worse throughout the college years and then repeats itself once they get married and have children of their own.

The question was, "How do we get out of this cycle?" If so many parents at PFBC believe that the family is important, and they are the primary disciplers of their children, then why do so many parents abandon this high calling? The problem at PFBC was a lack of training. Parents want to raise their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Parents at PFBC desire to teach their children to be wholehearted worshippers

of God, but they do not know where to start. If new parents were trained in what is expected of them biblically and were given resources that would help them be successful, more parents may be inclined to be the primary disciplers of their children. Unfortunately, many busy families today are simply handed a sheet of paper from their child's Sunday school teacher letting them know what their child learned that morning. Parents are then expected build on that lesson later in the week. Handing parents a resource and not training them is setting them up for failure. Parents not only need resources, they need training and encouragement that will help them be successful during these crucial years.

Rationale

Due to the factors mentioned, PFBC has incredible potential for growth in family discipleship. First, the traditional family has been championed in the cultural. Even though not everyone in Pickens, South Carolina, would claim to be Christian, many would place a priority on family. Therefore, the congregants who have grown up in the church have been raised in an environment where the family and traditional values are considered important. This element cannot be overlooked. The context of Pickens is very different from San Diego or New York—it will take less time persuading PFBC members of the importance of family principles. For some in the church, anything other than the traditional, nuclear family is an oddity.

Second, most parents in the church would agree that they are the primary disciplers of their children. This fact has been proclaimed from the pulpit and taught in many discipleship classes. Most parents at PFBC do not want to abdicate their God-given role in their children's lives. Parents at PFBC want to do the right and biblical thing. Unfortunately, PFBC has a new generation of parents that are not prioritizing church partnership and discipleship of their children, which will have to be overcome.

Third, developing a curriculum that explains to parents what the Bible teaches on being their child's primary discipler is pertinent. However, the curriculum cannot stop there. Parents need to be given a method to disciple their children. Many Sunday school

curriculums on the market give parents a sheet telling them what was taught that week, but that is insufficient. Parents at PFBC and the church at large need to know the “why” and “how” when it comes to partnering with the church in the discipleship of their children. Once again, parents at PFBC readily agree that they are the primary disciplers and that the church reinforces what they are teaching. However, many of the parents feel unqualified and ill-equipped to handle such a task. The thought of teaching their children can be intimidating. Parents of children and youth at PFBC need to know the theology and methodology of family discipleship. It is important that parents walk away from their training confident with themselves and have a long-term plan to disciple their children.

Finally, such a curriculum would be a blessing to PFBC and the church at large. What is happening at PFBC is not occurring in a vacuum. Parents all over the country struggle with this topic. Many Christian parents are aware that they should be discipling their children, but they misunderstand what that means. Some parents believe their responsibility is to bring their children to church and trust them to the care of professional clergy. Certain Christian parents understand that they should be teaching their children, but they do not know how. Other Christian parents never took such a task seriously until their children were in middle school and are now overwhelmed with such an undertaking. Whatever the situation may be, parents must be taught their role as the spiritual caregiver of their children and given the resources and long-term plan on how to do it for God’s glory.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip parents to be the primary disciplers of their children at Pickens First Baptist Church in Pickens, South Carolina.

Goals

Four goals measure the effectiveness of this ministry project. These goals were completed progressively. All four goals also served as components in the family discipleship curriculum that was developed for this ministry project.

1. Assess the current discipleship practices of parents at PFBC that participate in the project.
2. Develop a seven-week curriculum to educate and train parents to be the primary disciplers of their children at PFBC.
3. Equip parents for family discipleship using the seven-week curriculum and through one-on-one interactions facilitated by a leader in a discussion group.
4. Develop a long-term plan to increase family discipleship practices among participants.

These goals utilize a definitive research methodology to measure their efficiency. Each goal also incorporated a benchmark of success to ensure effectiveness. This methodology also provided insight into the number of families at PFBC that are having consistent family worship. The curriculum developed in this project and information gathered from church members served as tools for church staff at PFBC to train future parents in the years to come.

Research Methodology

All four goals were assessed using selected questions from the “Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey” from the book *Family Ministry Field Guide* by Timothy Paul Jones.¹ This survey asked parents about discipleship practices outside of the church and various resources they use to teach their children the Bible. It examined the mode, time, and frequency that family discipleship takes place. It also investigated parents’ understanding about their role as the primary disciplers of their children. The first goal was to assess the current discipleship practices among parents at PFBC that participated in the project. This goal was assessed from questions 1, 11, 12, and 13 of the survey.

¹See appendix 1 for survey.

The second goal was to develop a seven-week curriculum to educate and train parents to be the primary disciplers of their children at PFBC. This goal was carried out by focusing on key biblical texts, historical biblical data, theological implications, and practical applications of said texts. Each week's lesson also contained discussion questions to further apply what was being taught. The series covered additional information on the family-equipping model and used key Scripture passages to reinforce the truth of this model. The objective of this goal was to equip and educate parents on the biblical truth of discipling their children. This goal was assessed from questions 3, 6, 7, and 8 of the survey.

The third goal was to equip parents for family discipleship using the seven-week curriculum and through one-on-one interactions facilitated by a leader in a discussion group. The objective of this goal was to instill confidence in parents who may have felt unequipped to disciple their children. By utilizing the truths taught in the second goal, this goal challenged parents to put what they learn into practice. I further equipped parents by presenting pertinent resources and showing them how they can be used. Emphasis was placed on the father's responsibility to lead while being sensitive to the fact that not all fathers are involved in their children's lives at PFBC. Various means were used to teach parents how to use these resources. Increased confidence and in-home discipleship was gauged through small-group discussion during the study. This goal was assessed from questions 4, 5, 7, and 8 of the survey.

The final goal was to develop a long-term plan to increase family discipleship practices among member families. This goal was accomplished through recommending relevant resources during the study, along with a dialogue about utilizing these resources in age-appropriate ways. This was executed through small-group discussion during the study, followed by a question and answer time after the resources were presented. This gave parents the opportunity to understand how to use these resources for their specific family. This goal was assessed from questions 8-14 of the survey.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

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

Family. *Family* is defined as a man and woman that have entered the covenant of marriage with at least one child under the age of eighteen residing in the home.²

Discipleship. Timothy Paul Jones' definition of *discipleship* is used in this project: "A personal and intentional process in which one or more Christians guide unbelievers or less-mature believers to embrace and apply the gospel in every part of their lives."³

Family discipleship. In this project, *family discipleship* is the process by which parents disciple their children for "spiritual development and Christian formation."⁴

Family ministry. For this project, as defined by Jones, *family ministry* is "the process of intentionally and persistently coordinating a congregation's proclamation and practices so that parents are acknowledged, trained, and held accountable as primary disciple makers in their children's lives."⁵

Primary disciplers. *Primary disciplers* is used in this project to affirm that "parents remain the most influential people in children's spiritual, social, and behavioral development."⁶ Richard Ross explains, "Parents are the primary Christian educators . . . and the family is the God-ordained institution for building faith in young people and for passing faith on from one generation to the next."⁷

²Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011), 73.

³Ibid., 17.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., 33.

⁶Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones, *Training in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 17.

⁷Ken Hemphill and Richard Ross, *Parenting with Kingdom Purpose* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2005), 83.

Family devotion. For parents to be the primary disciplers of the children, they “must become Bible teachers in their homes.”⁸ A *family devotion* is defined as anytime a family comes together to discipleship, prayer, and worship.

Two limitations apply to this project. First, the accuracy of the survey was dependent upon the willingness of the respondents to be honest about their discipleship practices in the home. To mitigate this limitation, the respondents were promised that their survey would remain anonymous. Second, the effectiveness of the training was limited by the consistency of attendance. If the participants did not attend all training sessions, it would be difficult to determine how beneficial the training has been. To mitigate this limitation, each class was recorded and made available for later viewing.

Three delimitations were placed on the project. First, the project only focused on families in the church currently with children through the age of eighteen. For this project, married couples without children were not be asked to participate. Second, this project was completed in one year. This included the development and implementation of the curriculum. The Professional Doctoral Studies office of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has determined this deadline. Third, since the final goal of this project was to provide families with a long-term plan to disciple their children, it was impossible to determine if families continue to use the resources this curriculum provided them.

Conclusion

God’s Word affirms that parents, principally fathers, are the primary disciplers of their children. However, the Bible also teaches that the church should partner with families to raise the next generation to be committed Christ followers. Therefore, the church should equip, resource, and train parents so that they can carry out their God-ordained calling with excellence. The second chapter of this project will exegete four main

⁸Hemphill and Ross, *Parenting with Kingdom*, 155.

biblical texts that explain this truth. The third chapter will examine theoretical, practical, and historical literature that relate to this topic. Chapter 4 will cover the details of the project to give the reader insight into the development and implementation of the curriculum. The final chapter will evaluate the project by examining strengths and weaknesses and reflecting on things I would do differently.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT

The purpose of this chapter is to show how the Old and New Testaments charge parents, primarily fathers, to be the primary disciplers of their children and how this mandate helps fulfill the Great Commission. Even though fathers have been given this responsibility primarily, it should not diminish the mother's role in this important task. Husband and wives become "one flesh" in the covenant of marriage, so this undertaking should be viewed as a partnership (Gen 2:24). The biblical and theological support given in this chapter emphasizes the father's role in discipleship; however, the mother cannot be separated from this responsibility, as many children come from homes where fathers are absent, lazy, or unbelievers. Parents' duty to disciple their children is alluded to throughout the Bible. Due to space, four specific texts will be exegeted in this chapter. Three texts are considered by most biblical scholars as the foundational passages on family discipleship: Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Psalm 78:1-8, and Ephesians 6:1-4. The last text examined will be the Great Commission, found in Matthew 28:18-20, as family discipleship is a primary component in fulfilling the Great Commission.¹

Biblical and Theological Support in the Old Testament

As mentioned, biblical and theological support will be given from both Testaments of the Bible. The Old Testament will be examined first, focusing on Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Psalm 78:1-8. Early in Jewish history, formal schooling was not available for children. Thus, the sole responsibility for educating children resided with the

¹Michael Anthony and Michelle Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministries* (Nashville: B & H, 2011), 39.

parents, and this included teaching the Scriptures. The Old Testament affirms this view by commanding fathers to teach their children God's decrees and to train them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Deuteronomy 6:4-9, otherwise known as the "Shema," is considered by most students of the Bible to be the chief passage on family discipleship:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.²

The Shema was given this title due to the imperative "שמע" in verse 4, which is translated in English as "hear." Merrill explains that, like the Decalogue, this passage "is prefaced by its description as 'commands, decrees, and laws (or the like) and by injunctions to obey them.'³ Thus, to hear the Word of the Lord and not obey it was incompatible. It is also worth noting that the Hebrew word "שמע" is in the second person singular form. Even though this text was written to God's people jointly, Moses viewed the nation as one. Merrill explains that the "singular form of the verb emphasizes the corporate or collective nature of the addressee, that is Israel."⁴ The nation was viewed as a unified community and they were to submit corporately. Not only was corporate surrender to God's Word expected by Israel, but also individual submission. This truth is seen in the phrase "our God" in verse 4. Yahweh is not only the God of the nation, but also the Lord of each person in covenant relationship with Him.

²All Scripture is taken from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

³Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, The New American Commentary, vol. 4 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 162.

⁴Ibid.

The Shema was very important to the Israelites throughout their history. Affirmation of and submission to the Shema was equivalent to religious orthodoxy. Post-biblical rabbis understood the role of the Shema to be the very heart of all the Law.⁵ In fact, when Jesus was asked about the greatest of the commandments, He cited this passage (and its companion in Lev 19:18) as the fundamental tenet of Jewish faith, an opinion His hearers obviously agreed.⁶ Thus, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Moses was commanding the Israelites to heed what he was getting ready to say. What follows is a charge to all of God's people that echoes throughout the pages of Scripture.

After commanding his readers' attention, Moses introduces the theological concept of monotheism, the belief that there is only one God. He writes in verse 4, "The Lord our God, the Lord is one." The divine name "Lord" should be viewed as a nominative in both cases, while "one" is interpreted as parallel predicate nominatives. This understanding is a more natural reading of the text that testifies to God's oneness, but also to His uniqueness.⁷ The Oneness of God is a core theological concept in both Judaism and Christianity. There are neither multiple gods (otherwise known as polytheism) nor individual manifestations of this one God (which is sometimes called modalism). Trinitarianism should not be confused with either of these views. Kalland points out, "That the Israelites (at least some of them) often believed in the reality of other deities is obvious, but it does not follow that this declaration of the nature of the Lord admits of the real existence of other gods."⁸ There is only one God of the universe.

⁵Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 163.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Earl Kalland, *Deuteronomy*, in vol. 3 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 64.

Kalland concludes by saying, “The consistent teaching of Moses and the prophets, as well as the psalmists and the wise men, admits of the Lord only as true deity.”⁹

However, how does the principle of monotheism fit with the belief that this one God exists in three eternal persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? According to Craigie, “One” in this passage does not mean “singleness,” but unity.¹⁰ Furthermore, it is the same word used in Genesis 2:24, where the husband and wife were said to be “one flesh.” Also, the context of this passage must be taken into consideration. The Israelites were moving into an area where pagans dwelled and the people worshipped many false gods. The Israelites were commanded to worship the one true God, Yahweh, the Lord with which they had entered into a covenant relationship. The people were called to love the triune God with all of their heart, soul, and might. In addition, when Moses commanded the Israelites to love God with their heart, soul, and might, he was not implying that there are three distinct natures to a human being’s existence; rather, he was explaining that their total being must be devoted to the Lord. In everything, God must be at the center of their lives and their children must see this trait in their parents.¹¹

In verse 6, Moses says, “These words I command you today shall be on your heart.” Three words in this verse are pertinent to parental discipleship: words, command, and heart. The Hebrew word “דְּבָרִים” is translated as “words” and it is the subject of this verse—it is a reference to Scripture. “Command” is the verb of the sentence and it comes from the Hebrew word “צִוָּה.” It is a strong word that means “to give an order or to lay charge.”¹² In other words, God’s Word is a command or charge that demands absolute

⁹Kalland, *Deuteronomy*, 64.

¹⁰Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 169.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. Johann Jakob Stam, trans. M. E. J. Richardson, BibleWorks, vol. 10 (Leiden, The

obedience from the believer and his family. The final word in verse 6 is “heart.” This word comes from the Hebrew word “לֵב,” which can be translated as “inner man, mind, will; or heart.”¹³ In the psychology of the Old Testament, the heart is not the center of emotional life and response, but the seat of the intellect or rational side of humankind. To “be upon the heart” is to be in one’s constant, conscious reflection. Therefore, as the Israelites went throughout the day, they were to ponder and mediate upon God’s Word. They were to be so saturated with the Word of God that obedience just came as a natural outflow of their love for the Lord. The Israelites were to think and meditate on these commandments so that their obedience was based on understanding.

In verse 7, Moses says, “You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” Two words in this verse are especially important for parents: teach and talk. Teach comes from the Hebrew word “שָׁנַן,” which means to pierce, sharpen, or teach diligently.¹⁴ The NIV translates it as “impress.” The image is of an engraver who carefully and meticulously takes a hammer and chisels a piece of art or writing from a raw piece of granite. In the same way, teaching children God’s Word is a long process that lasts forever once it is complete. However, parents do not just teach their children the Scripture, but they are to talk about them.

The next pertinent word in verse 7 is translated “talk,” which comes from the Hebrew word “דָּבַר.” The difference between “teaching” and “talking” about the Scriptures is that teaching is the parents’ responsibility to impress the words of covenant faith into the thinking of their children, whereas talking denotes constant repetition to aid with memory. Thus, as parents are sitting around the house, going about their daily

Netherlands: Brill, 1994), s.v. “צָוָה.”

¹³Koehler and Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, s.v. “לֵב.”

¹⁴*Ibid.*, s.v. “שָׁנַן.”

routines, walking to and from, preparing for bed, and after getting up in the morning, the Word of God should be a topic discussion to help reinforce God's Word into their lives. Thompson writes, "The demands of Yahweh's covenant are to be the subject of conversation at all times in the home, by the way, by night, and by day. Israel is to teach them diligently, talk of them constantly, bind them as a sign on various parts of the body, and write them."¹⁵ This consistency will help impress into the minds of their children what they have been taught.

In verses 8 and 9, Moses says something that many parents may dismiss as irrelevant today, but is actually very applicable to family discipleship. He says, "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." What does it mean to bind God's commands on your hands and make them as frontlets between your eyes, and why does God's commands need to be written on our doorposts and gates? When originally written, it meant that the Israelite should meditate on God's commands at all hours of the day. Thus, these verses may have had a degree of symbolism behind them. However, later Jewish leaders took these verses literally and the people tied phylacteries (small boxes containing Deut 6:4-9) to their hands and foreheads with straps of leather. In addition, the people literally attached these verses to their doorposts.¹⁶ Thus, the people lost sight of the original intention of verses 8 and 9. Christensen rightly points out,

The injunctions "as frontlets between your eyes" and "on the doorposts of your house" (vv 8-9) led to specific practices that, at times, caused people to lose sight of the remarkable vision of an internalized covenant suggested in vv 5-7: namely, phylacteries and mezuzot, small containers for parchments containing certain biblical verses.¹⁷

¹⁵J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 3 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1974), 123.

¹⁶Kalland, *Deuteronomy*, 64-65.

¹⁷Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 6A (Dallas: Word, 1991), 143.

These verses do have a degree of symbolism in them. Moses was communicating that the Word of God should be so prevalent in the family's life that they constantly guide how they live.

The Shema is arguably one of the most important passages in the Old Testament for the Jews. The Israelites held it in high regard due to its proclamation about God and their responsibility to love Him uncompromisingly. It was held in such high regard that it triggered a martyrological tradition in Judaism. Later Jewish martyrs would actually die while speaking the words of the Shema.¹⁸ Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is also one of the most complete passages on family discipleship found in the Bible. These verses, along with the following passages, form a comprehensive theology of family discipleship. The Shema clearly articulates that parents must have a visible and uncompromising love for God that their children can see, that they must model biblical obedience to the Law of Christ, and they must teach their children the Word of God with the goal of impressing it into their children's conscience and daily life. God's Word could not be any clearer on the subject.

Psalm 78:1-8

The next text that will be examined is Psalm 78:1-8. This didactic psalm is a part of the Asaph collection, who is the author of this psalm. VanGemeran writes that "asaph was one of David's choirmasters and a descendant of Gershon, son of Levi (cf. 1 Chron 6:39; 15:17; 2Chron 5:12)."¹⁹ The psalm may have been composed in the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the period of secession. If this is true, then the psalm explains the evil of apostasy and the requisite to surrender to Yahweh's calling of the Davidic

¹⁸Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries, vol. 5 (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 352.

¹⁹Willem A. VanGemeran, *Psalms*, in vol. 5 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 34-35.

family and the Jerusalem temple.²⁰ However, Campbell argues for a tenth-century date, stating that this psalm represents the literary productivity of the Davidic era.²¹ Psalm 78 also serves as a reminder to the Israelites by appealing to their conscience. The psalmist informs his readers of the past mistakes that the nation has made. These mishaps should be taught to the coming generations so that these mistakes are not repeated. In addition, Kinder states that this psalm is “meant to warm the heart, for it tells of the great miracles, of a grace that persists through all the judgments, and of the promise that displays its tokens in the chosen city and the chosen king.”²² Psalm 78:1-8, along with the Shema, forms a broad teaching on family discipleship from the Old Testament:

Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth! I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God. (Ps 78:1-8)

In combination with Deuteronomy 6:4-9, the Old Testament is clear about parental responsibility when it comes to discipleship. In this passage, the psalmist commands the Israelites to pay close attention to what he has written. He exhorts them to “give ear” and “incline your ears to the words of my mouth.” The phrase “give ear” comes from the Hebrew word “שָׁמַע,” which means to listen, to hear, or to give heed.²³ The phrase

²⁰VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 504.

²¹Anthony F. Campbell, “Psalm 78: A Contribution to the Theology of Tenth Century Israel,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (1979): 51-79.

²²Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 14b (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1975), 280.

²³Koehler, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, s.v. “שָׁמַע”

“נָטָה” can be translated “stretch out, spread out, extend, or bend.”²⁴ Altogether, the psalmist wants his readers to hear and understand the very important things he is getting ready to say. In addition, the words he speaks in verse 2 are not new; they are teachings that God’s covenant people have always had in the pages of Scripture.

The important words that the psalmist wants to communicate under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit are described as “dark sayings from of old” and “things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us.” The psalmist likely had the Shema in mind as he penned these words. In addition, he tells the Israelites, “We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.” It is important for the children to be taught all that God has done for His covenant people so that it will not be forgotten. It is imperative to notice the significance of parental discipleship as faith is passed down to succeeding generations. According to Kinder, “Scripture has no room for parental neutrality.”²⁵

The passing down of the divine oracles to succeeding generations was important to Israel’s relationship with God. Each generation needed to know about the covenant relationship that the Lord had entered into sovereignly and graciously. This is clear in the words the psalmist used to describe God’s righteous decrees in verse 5: testimony and law. The word *testimony* comes from the Hebrew word “עֲדוּת,” which means “warning, admonition, or ordinance.”²⁶ God’s Word should be heeded and applied to the believer’s life. God’s people are to be careful and follow God’s Word because it is authoritative. The word *law* is the Hebrew word “תּוֹרָה.” This word is a common title for the first five books of the Old Testament, otherwise known as the Pentateuch. It can be translated as

²⁴Koehler, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, s.v. “נָטָה.”

²⁵Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, 281.

²⁶Koehler, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, s.v. “עֲדוּת.”

“direction, instruction, or law.”²⁷ Tate explains that the “speaker urges the audience to pay heed to the ‘teaching’ about to be offered. . . . The speaker seeks to pass on the story of God and Israel, which includes the command that are part of the תּוֹרָה.”²⁸ Similar to the word *testimony*, *law* speaks of the binding nature of Scripture upon God’s people. The breaking of God’s testimonies and laws will bring about wrath, whereas keeping them will bring about blessing in their lives.

The primary way children in the Old Testament were to learn about God’s testimonies and laws was from their parents. The psalmist says that God “commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children.” One cannot overlook the importance of parental responsibility. The psalmist says that God commands fathers to teach their children “the legislation of the Pentateuch.”²⁹ The word “command” comes from the Hebrew word “צִוָּה,” which can also be translated as “command” or “order.”³⁰ It would be inherently sinful for a father to not teach his children the Scriptures, as he would be disobeying God while doing a disservice to his family. However, the Israelites were not to just follow God’s testimonies as a means of external conformity, but to embrace His Law “so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.” God is not interested in simple behavior modification; He is after heart change. In fact, the Shema is explicit when it says to love God “with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” God’s people were to receive His

²⁷Koehler, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, s.v. “תּוֹרָה.”

²⁸Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 20 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 288.

²⁹Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms II: 51-100*, Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries, vol. 5 (New York: Doubleday, 1968), 239.

³⁰Koehler, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, s.v. “צִוָּה.”

covenant externally and embrace it with their hearts. Parents have a duty to pass this down to their children.

However, parents were not always faithful in disciplining their children. Walford explains, “Verse 8 reminds that this lesson is also a warning, to learn from the ancestors not only what to do, but what not to do.”³¹ This is not only a problem that exists today, but also a misfortune that has occurred throughout the history of God’s people. The psalmist said his desire is that “children should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.” Rather, God prefers a generation of people who loves Him with the totality of their beings. This kind of love should be taught and displayed from godly parents. It is important for children to be taught God’s grace, love, mercy, and goodness. Though, it is also vital that children see their parents loving God in return. When children see a love for God that manifests itself in apathy and despondency, they will likely follow suit. That’s what the psalmist communicates in this passage when he calls the fathers stubborn and rebellious, “whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.” The fathers were simply living out and passing down what they saw in their parents’ lives. Generational faith begins with a faithful parent that loves God with all their being, seeks to live their faith out every day, teaches it to their children, and puts it on display for them to see.

As explained, Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Psalm 78:1-8 are the two most complete passages on family discipleship. They explicitly teach that God’s people should obey God because of their passionate love for Him. Obedience to God’s Word is not about simply obeying a set of rules, but loving God with a pure heart that results in life transformation. However, the Old Testament is not the only place in the Bible that teaches the importance of parental discipleship. The New Testament builds on the foundation of these pertinent

³¹Nancy Declaisse-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth LaNeel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 622.

passages. What will be surveyed next is a brief treatment on Ephesians 6:1-4 and how parental discipleship results in obedience to the Great Commission.

Biblical and Theological Support in the New Testament

Ephesians 6:1-4

Even though the Old Testament has much to say about family discipleship and parental responsibility, the New Testament affirms and builds on that foundation in Ephesians 6:1-4. Ephesians was written by the apostle Paul around AD 61-62 and is a letter that circulated among the churches throughout Asia Minor.³² Unlike many of Paul's letters, Thielman writes that he "did not deal with particular issues, as in Colossians and in much of his other correspondence, but with the implications of the Gospel."³³ Thus, the reader of Ephesians learns about theological topics more broadly by examining them through the lenses of Christian fellowship, the church, and the reconciliation of all things in Christ.³⁴ Lifestyle topics found in Ephesians include Christian unity, the significance of godliness and love, how to have healthy relationships, and the importance of resisting evil.

Ephesian 6:1-4 is the longest treatment on family discipleship found in the New Testament. It serves to reinforce what has already been taught in the Old Testament. In this text, Paul addresses the role of children in relation to their mother and father. He also emphasizes the importance of fathers raising their children in the Lord. In Ephesians 6:1-4, Paul says,

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise), that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

³²Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 52.

³³Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 20.

³⁴A. Skevington Wood, *Ephesians*, in vol. 11 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 16-17.

After giving a treatment on marriage and the responsibilities of husbands and wives in chapter 5, Paul commands children to obey and honor their parents. But how old were these children that Paul was speaking of in this text? Also, are children obligated to obey their parents into adulthood? The word for “children” in verse 1 is the Greek word τέκνα. Paul is likely referring to children who live in their parents’ home. However, a couple points must be explained. First, the children Paul is referring to in verse 1 are able to understand their parents’ instruction. Second, these children are old enough to choose to obey. This can be argued since Paul commands the children specifically and not their parents. This would also imply that the children are present when the church comes together to worship, hear the Word, and receive teaching. Third, such a command presupposes that their parents are still raising them. These children have not married and left home. Thus, a likely age-range for the children being mentioned in verse 1 would be early elementary to the late teens or early twenties.”³⁵

Children have a responsibility to obey and honor their parents. It could be argued that honoring parents is also taught from the mother and father through their love and example. Paul reinforces this command in Colossians 3:20 when he says children are to obey their parents “in everything.” One cannot help but think about Isaac’s unwavering obedience to his father when he was almost sacrificed. The Greek word for *obey* is ὑπακούω. Arnold says it means to “follow instruction, follow, obey, or to be subject to someone.”³⁶ Just as the husband is to be surrendered to Christ and the wife is to be submissive to her husband, children are to obey their parents. True obedience to this command flows from the child’s love and relationships to Yahweh. In the Old Testament, honoring one’s parents meant obeying them, while dishonoring them was disobedience.

³⁵Arnold, *Ephesians*, 415.

³⁶Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick W. Danker, 3rd ed., BibleWorks, vol. 10 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. “ὑπακούω.”

Thielman writes, “Both parents are addressed in this commandment.”³⁷ Also, Paul outlines to his readers proper channels of authority in Ephesians 5:22-6:4. The importance of this command is reinforced in light of the Old Testament’s teaching on the subject. Exodus 21:15-17 says, “Whoever strikes his father or his mother shall be put to death. Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be put to death. Whoever curses his father or his mother shall be put to death.” Leviticus 20:9 reinforces this teaching when Moses says, “For anyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death; he has cursed his father or his mother; his blood is upon him.”

Paul commands children in verse 1 to lovingly obey and submit to their parents “in the Lord.” A few comments are in order here. Wood explains, “Children are invited not simply to copy the example of Jesus when he was subject to his parents, but to realize that both they and their parents are under the authority of the living Christ.”³⁸ In fact, Paul says that obedience to parents “is right.” The word *right* in verse 1 comes from the Greek word δίκαιον and it is in the neuter voice. When written in such a way, this word literally means just, fair, right, or equitable in an obligatory manner.³⁹ Arnold writes, “While it is the expected and appropriate standard in society as a whole (as attested by the popular moral teachers of the day), for Paul it is right because obedience is what the Lord expects.”⁴⁰ Obedience to parents is ultimately right because the child is surrendering to Jesus’ lordship over his life.

In addition, this is the only commandment in the Decalogue that has a promise. Paul says in verse 2, “This is the first commandment with a promise.” There is not a consensus among commentators regarding the application of this promise to the church.

³⁷Thielman, *Ephesians*, 403.

³⁸Wood, *Ephesians*, 81.

³⁹Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “δίκαιον.”

⁴⁰Arnold, *Ephesians*, 416.

Wood says it “is more likely that Paul wished to emphasize that in obedience to their parents, children will live to prove that their true welfare (“that it may go well with thee”) depends on God (Deut. 5:10).”⁴¹ However, this passage should be spiritualized since there is no reference to the land of Israel. Therefore, this passage is speaking of this present earthly life.⁴² He explains that just “as in the Old Testament children who honored or obeyed their parents were blessed with the promise of a full life, so, too, in the age of the new covenant this general principle holds true for obedient Christian children.”⁴³ Therefore, this clause may be interpreted in the following manner: when children obey their parents, they are blessed and God is glorified.

In verse 3, Paul says that when children honor their parents they will live long in the land. While this passage alludes to God’s promise to the Jews, many commentators tend to spiritualize its application to the church. Wood writes,

What was originally a specific assurance to the Jews becomes a generalization for Christians. The prospect of longevity is not held out elsewhere in the NT as part of the Christian hope, and commentators have tended to spiritualize the application by linking it with eternal life.⁴⁴

When Christian children honor and obey their parents, it serves as evidence that the children know the Lord.

Finally, when Paul gets to verse 4, he addresses fathers specifically: “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” To properly understand what Paul is communicating, it is helpful to examine the word *provoke* and understand the phrase “discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

⁴¹Wood, *Ephesians*, 81.

⁴²Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Epheisans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 444.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Wood, *Ephesians*, 81.

Provoke comes from the Greek word παροργίζω, which means “to anger.”⁴⁵ It is also an imperative in the present tense. Thus, a father’s discipline should always be fair and just. A father should never discipline his child with wrong motives or intentions. Furthermore, Paul is specific about who is to do the disciplining; the father has been charged with this aspect of childrearing. Therefore, in a home where the mother and father are present, the man is the primary correcting agent. Wood is helpful here when he says,

Above all else, he warns fathers against goading their children into a state of perpetual resentment. He is not thinking of extreme instances like disinheritance, but the everyday tensions of family life. Fathers must not make unreasonable demands. Otherwise children, being overcorrected, may lose heart.⁴⁶

In the next clause of verse 4, Paul tells fathers to “bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” The word *discipline* in this verse comes from the Greek word παιδεία, which is the act of providing guidance for responsible living. It also relates to upbringing, training, and instruction, that is mainly attained by discipline or correction.⁴⁷ Regarding the word *discipline*, Arnold says it is used commonly in the “sense of ‘raising’ or ‘bringing up’ children which includes the idea of nurturing care but goes beyond that to refer to all that goes into raising children to maturity.”⁴⁸ This word can be used to describe the entire training process of child rearing that extends into adulthood. In conclusion, Arnold writes, “Paul lays on the shoulders of the fathers not only the responsibility of raising their children to be decent and responsible people (which is likely assumed here as part of the cultural expectation), but training and instructing them

⁴⁵Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “παροργίζω.”

⁴⁶Wood, *Ephesians*, 82.

⁴⁷Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “παιδεία.”

⁴⁸Arnold, *Ephesians*, 418.

in the ways of the Lord.”⁴⁹ Thus, fathers are primarily responsible for the Christian education of their children.

Yet, not only are fathers responsible for bringing their children up in the discipline of the Lord, but also “the instruction of the Lord.” The word *instruction* comes from the Greek word *νουθεσία*, which means to give counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct. It can also be translated “admonition” or “instruction.”⁵⁰ This word refers to “verbal counsel, including exhortations to proper behavior, warnings, and even rebukes.”⁵¹ Thus, fathers are responsible for providing discipline, instruction, correction, training, and encouragement. This appears to be the beginnings of Christian education in the home.

The Old and New Testaments provide parents with comprehensive teachings on family discipleship. As the student of the Bible can see, both testaments provide specific instructions on Christian education in the home. God’s Word does not allow for pastors, church members, or other Bible teachers to usurp the responsibility parents have to their children. Also, the idea of delegating this responsibility or allowing a professional to be the primary instructor is a foreign concept in the Bible. The church certainly has a responsibility to partner with parents in the discipleship of their children; however, parents have the ultimate responsibility before God to train them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Now that a biblical precedent has been established for family discipleship, it is important to understand its goal. Parents are called to disciple their children, but what is the purpose? It will be argued that the fulfillment of the Great Commission should be the parent’s primary objective.

⁴⁹Arnold, *Ephesians*, 418.

⁵⁰Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “*νουθεσία*.”

⁵¹O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 418.

Matthew 28:18-20

After the resurrection and just before the ascension, Jesus stood on the Mount of Olives with his eleven remaining disciples. This must have been a time of joy, confusion, and excitement. After being with Jesus for three years, His disciples probably wanted to know what would happen next. After all, they had witnessed Jesus perform many miracles, overcome hostility from the religious leaders, and even defeat death. What more could possibly happen? Just before He ascended, Jesus gave them what many people consider to be the establishment and mission of the church.⁵² This is known as the Great Commission. Jesus said,

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 church is not only commanded to take the gospel to every nation, tribe, and tongue, but to make disciples. In addition, if the church's mission is to make disciples and Christian parents are part of the church, it logically follows that parents are to make disciples. Christian families need to look no further than the people living under their roofs as a starting point.

In addition, Luke records Jesus' commission to His disciples a little differently in Acts 1:8 when he writes, "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." Jesus' blueprint for making disciples did not just include going to people in foreign lands, but also teaching people that live around and even in our house. For parents, that would be their children. It would be irresponsible to think that the Great Commission does not apply to teaching those living in a family's home. Thus, it would seem like Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Psalm 78:1-8, and Ephesians 6:1-4 are intricately linked to Matthew 28:18-20.

⁵²Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 162.

In Matthew 28:18, Jesus tells His disciples that “all authority has been given to me.” The reason the church and parents make disciples is because Jesus commanded it. The word *authority* comes from the Greek word ἐξουσία, which means to have the right to command or control something. It can also mean to govern, exercise power, or have the capability to regulate.⁵³ Jesus has the power, capability, and right to command Christians to make disciples. Bloomberg is helpful here when he says, “Jesus can make the claim of v. 18 only if He is fully God, inasmuch as the whole universe is embraced in the authority delegated to Him.”⁵⁴ Because of Jesus’ exaltation and being God Himself, He has the right to make demands on His followers. The disciple of Jesus Christ has no choice but to lovingly submit. Blomberg explains that “because of this authority, Jesus has the right to issue His followers their ‘marching orders,’ but He also has the ability to help them carry out those orders.”⁵⁵

The authority that Jesus possesses ties this passage together. Jesus has all authority—all nations and all things are subordinate to Him. Jesus’ position as the Messiah and Son of God was heavily stressed throughout Matthew’s Gospel. Carson writes, “It is incautious, if not altogether wrong, to claim that the Resurrection conferred on Jesus an authority incomparably greater than what he enjoyed before his crucifixion. The truth is more subtle.”⁵⁶ In other words, the authority that Jesus has post-resurrection is not greater than before His death. Carson goes on to say that it is not

Jesus’ authority per se that becomes more absolute. Rather, the sphere in which he now exercises absolute authority is enlarged to include all heaven and earth, i.e., the

⁵³Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “νοῦθεσία.”

⁵⁴Blomberg, *Matthew*, 431.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 8 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 594.

universe. This authority has been ‘given’ him by the Father; and so, of course, the Father is exempt from the Son’s authority.⁵⁷

Jesus is the one through whom all God’s authority is mediated; He is the mediatorial King.⁵⁸

Based upon this authority that Jesus has received, Jesus tells His followers to “go therefore and make disciples.” The command to “go” is based upon the authority given to Him from the Father. Blomberg believes that too much and too little has been made about the Great Commission: “Too much is made of it when the disciples’ ‘going’ is overly subordinated, so that Jesus’ charge is to proselytize merely where one is.”⁵⁹ In other words, Jesus’ command to “go and make disciples” is not simply relegated to making converts. The process of making disciples is much more intimate than that. To disciple like Jesus means that the disciple-maker would not only share the gospel, but also teach the new believer how biblical principles are lived out in life. This truth should impact the individual’s worldview, intellect, and habits. In addition, Christians do not have to go overseas to be obedient to Jesus’ command. Blomberg goes on to say that “too little is made of it when all attention is centered on the command to ‘go,’ as in countless appeals for missionary candidates, so the foreign missions are elevated to higher status of Christian service than other forms of spiritual activity.”⁶⁰ There must be a balance of authentic discipleship and a Great Commission fulfillment where each believer lives.

As explained, followers of Christ are called to go in His name and authority to make disciples for Jesus. While not denying that some are called to go overseas, the Great Commission does not require a person to sell all that he has and move to a third-world country. Believers are called to make disciples right where they live, work, and worship.

⁵⁷Carson, *Matthew*, 594.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 595.

⁵⁹Blomberg, *Matthew*, 431.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*

Though that begs the question, if believers are called to make disciples where they live, would not that include members of their family who are living under their roof? In addition, a major component of discipleship is establishing a relationship with the person that is being discipled. What deeper and more intimate relationship exists than the connection between a parent and child? Furthermore, what does making disciples of one's children look like? Should parents simply aim at converting their children and leave the primary discipleship up to the church? A study into the word *disciple* is necessary to understand what is involved.

The Greek word for *disciple* in this verse is μαθητεύω and it is in the imperative mood. *Disciple* means to become a pupil or to teach.⁶¹ Parents are commanded to share with their children the great truths of the Bible. They should share the gospel and explain their need for a Savior. However, disciple making is much more than simply sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. Parents must model and live out the gospel for their children to see every day. Bloomberg again is helpful when he writes,

The verb “make disciples” also commands a kind of evangelism that does not stop after someone makes a profession of faith. The truly subordinate participles in v. 19 explain what making disciples involves: “baptizing” them and “teaching” them obedience to all of Jesus’ commandments.⁶²

It is obvious from Jesus’ own words that “making disciples” entails more than conversion. Bloomberg concludes his treatment of verse 19 by explaining that the “first of these will be a once-for-all, decisive initiation into Christian community. The second proves a perennially incomplete, life-long task.”⁶³ Parents not only have an obligation to teach their children about Jesus, but to also disciple them in the Christian faith.

Mothers and fathers are a child’s biggest influencers, so they will be looking to them for authenticity. To be obedient to the Great Commission, parents must ensure they

⁶¹Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “μαθητεύω.”

⁶²Bloomberg, *Matthew*, 431.

⁶³Ibid.

are displaying the gospel in their everyday lives. However, parents should also teach their children the Bible and show them how gospel-centered living is manifested in every aspect of their lives. If the word *disciple* means to teach or to become a pupil, then there should also be consistent times of formal Bible teaching in the home. Parents should be prepared on a regular basis to teach the Scriptures and doctrine to their children with a focus on life application. In fact, Jesus commanded His followers to teach the Scriptures in verse 20: “Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” But what does it mean to teach biblically and what does that entail?

To understand discipleship, a proper definition of *teaching* is needed. The word *teaching* comes from the Greek word διδάσκω, which means to teach in a formal or informal manner.⁶⁴ Matthew uses this word in verse 20. Morris explains that the “teaching function is thus of great importance. We teach because Jesus commanded us to teach, and there is no way of diminishing the importance of an activity that owes its origin to the command of our Lord himself.”⁶⁵ Teaching was one of Jesus’ most pertinent ministries. In fact, everything that Jesus did had a teaching element in it. From the Sermon on the Mount to miracles He performed, everything was meant to disciple His followers. Morris goes on to write, “Jesus is not speaking about education for education’s sake. He speaks of the taught as ‘observing’ what Jesus has commanded. In other words, Jesus is concerned with a new way of life.”⁶⁶ Jesus’ command to His church to make disciples is to teach the Bible in such a way that it results in heart change and obedience in the life of the disciple. However, how does this translate to the home and family discipleship?

There should be no dichotomy between making disciples of those who live in one’s home versus anywhere else. All Christians are commanded to share the gospel and

⁶⁴Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “διδάσκω.”

⁶⁵Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1992), 749.

⁶⁶Ibid.

make disciples wherever they find themselves. In fact, parents have a duty to teach their children God's Word at a very early age, as seen in the passages exegeted. This truth would include formal teaching at home and in partnership with the local church. However, some parents will object to discipling their children or bringing them to church because they are not yet Christians or they find church boring. This argument claims that a child must be converted or find church fun before being taught the Scriptures. This objection fails at two levels: biblically and logically. Biblically, nothing in Scripture validates the claim that a parent must wait to disciple their child until they become a believer. In fact, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Psalm 78:1-8, and Ephesians 6:4 mention nothing about the child making a profession of faith. Rather, these passages are commands to parents to teach and raise their children up in the Lord. From a logical standpoint, this objection fails because this is not how society is structured. For example, parents do not wait for their children to want to do what is morally right before teaching them how to make good decisions. Also, mothers and fathers do not allow children to stay home from school simply because they do not like studying. There is an expectation in society that parents will raise their children to be upright contributors to society. Therefore, it could be argued from a logical standpoint that Christian parents have a duty to teach, correct, and apply biblical principles simply because they are good parents. Therefore, the argument of not teaching biblical values to children because they are not yet believers or find church boring is void. Parents should ensure that ongoing instruction in the Bible is a priority in their home. When parents are consistently teaching, modeling, and living out the gospel for their children, they are being obedient disciples of Jesus Christ.⁶⁷

Conclusion

Parents are the primary influencers in their child's life. No one has a bigger impact on a child than their mother and father. Children will learn and begin to develop

⁶⁷Blomberg, *Matthew*, 434.

their worldview from their parents. Four relevant passages have been exegeted to establish a biblical precedent for family discipleship and obedience to the Great Commission.

The first passage examined was Deuteronomy 6:4-9, otherwise known as the “Shema.” The God that Christian parents serve is the Creator, Sustainer, and Sovereign King of the universe. Parents should help their children understand who God is and how He desires to know them intimately. Also, emphasis should be placed on how they can love God with all their heart, soul, and might. As explained, to love God with your heart, soul, and might means to love Him with the totality of your being. Every aspect of the disciple’s life should be sold out to God.

However, special attention should be given to verse 7 where Moses commands parents to teach and talk about the Scriptures. The Bible is consistent about parents’ role in the spiritual development of their children. Neglecting and/or delegating discipleship to a teacher, pastor, or mentor are not options. This also means that parents must be committed disciples of Christ as well. To faithfully teach the Scriptures, they must be immersed in God’s Word. Parents will be poor teachers and examples if they are not modeling their lives after the Bible and seeking to glorify God in every realm of life.

In addition to being good teachers and examples, parents must be intentional in their discipleship practices. Moses said to talk about the Scriptures “when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” In other words, the Scriptures should be an ongoing family conversation that takes precedence over everything else. Mothers and fathers must take advantage of every opportunity to raise their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Moses knew the importance of parents passing down their faith to their children. It was one of the essential components to the Israelites’ identity and survival. Likewise, parents today must instill biblical principles into their children, as they are the primary influencers in their lives.

The second passage examined was Psalm 78:1-8. In this passage, it is interesting that the psalmist says, “I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us.” These “dark sayings from of old” were the teachings that his parents had passed down to him. These teaching are the truths of Scripture. The psalmist was well acquainted with God’s Word since he was taught it from his father. In family ministry, a father’s importance and influence in a child’s life cannot be stressed enough. The internal evidence of the Bible and external evidence of scholarly research has proven time and again that an active and loving father is paramount to a child’s development. Fathers also have the responsibility of being the spiritual leaders of their family.

When fathers fail to disciple their children, disaster can ensue. The psalmist said “that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.” It can be argued that one of the primary reasons each succeeding Israelite generation plummeted into heinous sin is because of the poor examples of their parents and ancestors. Parents in the twenty-first century should take note of this example. A human being’s heart is bent towards sin, which is a result of the Fall. Children will not naturally follow after God. They must be taught and guided. Fathers must be obedient to Scripture and pass down the great truths found within the pages of the Bible.

Finally, the New Testament reinforces what was taught in the Old Testament. Paul said in Ephesians 6:4 says, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” Paul emphasizes the special place that fathers have in the spiritual upbringing of their children. It is the father’s duty to be the primary discipler of his family. Regardless of the spiritual condition of their children, fathers have a duty to teach their children biblical principles from an early age. This biblical education that fathers engage in with their children should always be viewed as obedience to and fulfillment of the Great Commission.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL, PRACTICAL, AND HISTORICAL SUPPORT FOR PARENTAL DISCIPLESHIP

The purpose of this chapter is to present the theoretical, practical, and practical support for parental discipleship. The primary influencers and disciplers in a child's life are the mother and father. Unfortunately, ministries that have served children and youth over the years have overlooked the parents' influence in their children's lives. To understand this deficiency, a review of family ministry's contemporary history is important. Next, it is imperative to understand the roles that God has given to mothers and fathers. Thus, a survey of biblical manhood and womanhood is needed. Society has distorted the understanding of these God-ordained roles over the years, which further adds to the confusion and misapplication of family discipleship. While reviewing biblical manhood and womanhood, differences between complementarianism and egalitarianism are also explored. Finally, it is necessary to examine the various models of family ministry that exist today and determine which one is more effective at championing parents as the primary disciplers. Not all models of family ministry models are created equal. Since the pertinent passages related to this topic have been examined in the previous section, this chapter focuses on the subjects of the contemporary history of family ministry, biblical manhood and womanhood, and current models of family ministry within the local church.

Contemporary History of Family Ministry

To understand how family ministries have neglected to fully champion parents as the primary disciplers of their children, a basic understanding of its recent history must be explored. Children and youth ministries did not occur in a vacuum. The challenges people faced throughout these years helped to develop and shape the various programs

that ministered to families. Thus, a brief history of the development of family ministry in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is surveyed here.

Family ministry throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries took on many different forms. Sunday school began in the early nineteenth century. The Sunday school movement played a vital role in the development of youth ministry. Senter writes, “The Sunday school . . . was a vital part of the first cycle of youth ministry in the United States.”¹ As the country expanded west, social societies brought youth together. Due to the perceived evils of that day, societies such as “the Cadets of Temperance originated in 1843, for maintaining the good moral character of young person of either sex between the ages of twelve and twenty-one.”² These societies, even though not directly affiliated with the church, desired to instill Christian values into its membership. One pertinent society of this time was the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA).

In 1861, the Civil War began, and it drastically affected family life. Mintz writes, “Perhaps the Civil War’s greatest impact on children was to family life. Like the American Revolution, the Civil War produced huge numbers of orphans and impoverished fatherless families.”³ Due to the conditions of many families after the Civil War, the landscape of the American family drastically changed. The role of the father diminished, and families began to shelter their children. Mintz continues, “In reaction to wartime disruptions, postwar parents strengthened and intensified family bonds. Middle-class parents responded to the war’s traumas through an intensified commitment to a protected, prolonged childhood.”⁴

¹Mark H. Senter III, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*, ed. Chap Clark (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 100.

²Ibid., 102.

³Steven Mintz, *Huck’s Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2004), 131.

⁴Ibid., 132.

When surveying the history of youth ministry, one would be remiss not to mention the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor. Organized by Francis E. Clark, this society impacted youth in ways that no other society ever did. Erb explains that this society’s “characteristic features were the prayer-meeting pledge, the consecration meeting, and the committee work.”⁵ Due to the work of this society throughout the United States, youth were impacted for the cause of Christ and the propagation of the gospel.

As the 1800s ended, youth ministry began to change again. Churches and denominations began to develop their own youth programs. Many of these programs mimicked the societies that preceded them. Imitating these societies was a mistake, as the societies did not seek to minister to the entire family and equip parents; they primarily ministered to youth and young adults. During this time, America saw the beginnings of the Epworth League, the Baptist Young People’s Union, the Walther League, and the Presbyterian Youth Fellowship. Denominational youth ministry allowed churches to partner together to impact more students. This is also when youth ministry began to be professionalized. Senter states, “Activities in which denominational youth workers participated were effective. Camps, conferences, and area-wide meetings were too great an effort for volunteer youth workers to accomplish themselves, so into this vacuum stepped professional youth workers.”⁶ It was during this time that denominations began to build retreat centers and campgrounds to accommodate large gatherings of youth from multiple churches. According to Senter, two of these centers were located “in North Carolina, Montreat for Presbyterians and Ridgecrest for the Southern Baptists.”⁷ In the quest to professionalize youth ministry and build retreat centers, the church neglected to equip parents to disciple their children.

⁵Frank Otis Erb, *The Development of the Young People’s Movement* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1917), 52.

⁶Senter, *When God Shows Up*, 183.

⁷Ibid.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, the family dynamic began to change. Mintz writes, “During the 1960s widely held presuppositions about authority, family, life, gender, race relations, sexuality, and proper behavior were contested. At first many of the emerging values and behavior patterns were widely rejected, even by a majority of the young.”⁸ It was in this environment that youth ministry began to grow, and many parachurch organizations began. The United States saw the beginnings of Young Life, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Youth for Christ, and Youth Specialties. These parachurch organizations were helpful at reaching youth, but they did nothing to equip parents to disciple their children. As the twentieth century came to a close, the professionalization of youth ministry grew, and the church saw the beginnings of formal youth ministry training, national youth ministry networks, and paradigms like seeker-driven and purpose-driven youth models. Youth ministry had become an industry.

What can be said about how youth ministry has evolved over the years? First, youth ministry had humble beginnings. The church did not have the resources in the 1800s as they do today. A person would think that the twenty-first century church could effectively reach more youth than it did two hundred years ago. Through technology, formal training of volunteers and professionals, to student ministry networking, the gospel has the potential to reach more students. The church of today has more means at her disposal than ever before.

However, the church is reaching fewer students than it did fifty years ago. A variety of reasons can be given to why this is happening: the secularization of society, a church that primarily ministers to the comfortable middle-class, and the mismatched priorities of today’s families. However, the primary reason the church is reaching less youth is because it has failed to resource, involve, and equip parents to be the primary

⁸Mintz, *Huck’s Raft*, 312.

disciplers of their children. After giving some discouraging statistics of how many students drop out of the church after graduation, Steve Wright explains,

Parents think they are only responsible to take their child to church—put him or her in a spiritual environment and out comes a morally sound young adult. They are then angry when things do not turn out as expected and demand an explanation from a student pastor they barely know or may have never met.⁹

Timothy Paul Jones' research agrees with Wright's conclusion. Jones found that one-third of parents never engaged in any form of family devotional or worship time in the past couple months. He also discovered that two-thirds of parents had biblical discussions with their children less than once a week. Finally, Jones' study concluded that one in five parents never read or even discussed the Bible with their children.¹⁰ This apathy from parents regarding biblical discipleship has to change. Churches must place an emphasis on resourcing, involving, and equipping parents to fulfill their God-given roles.

However, failing to minister and train parents has created another problem within the church: how Christians view the topics of biblical manhood and womanhood. If Christian men and women have a distorted view of their God-given roles, reaching the next generation and teaching them a Christian worldview will be almost impossible. A treatment on this subject follows next.

Biblical Manhood and Womanhood

The topic of manhood and womanhood has become a controversial topic in today's society. Since the LGBT revolution, the United States has never been more divided over this topic. Does biology determine the gender of a child? What qualities define a man and a woman? Should an individual affirm complementarianism or egalitarianism? Can a person be born as a boy, but identify as a girl, and vice-versa? Should a person's worldview influence the way he answers these questions, or should society determine the

⁹Steve Wright, *reThink: Is Student Ministry Working* (Wake Forest, NC: InQuest, 2008), 47.

¹⁰Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011), 28-29.

answers? Most of these questions were not asked twenty years ago. Today, American culture has shifted their views on manhood and womanhood. As Kostenberger writes, “There is an evil being called Satan who wages war against God’s creative purposes in this world, it should come as no surprise that the divine foundation of these institutions has come under massive attack in recent years.”¹¹ Fortunately, God’s view of manhood and womanhood has not changed, as it is rooted in the immutable nature of God. In addition, God’s purpose for biblical manhood and womanhood is directly linked to parenting, as their children’s spiritual development is affected by it. Hemphill asks, “Do your children know that their spiritual development is the most important thing to you? Have you communicated this and modeled it? Do you want to?”¹² The purpose of this section is to define and elaborate on biblical manhood and womanhood to further understand parents as the primary disciplers of their children. When parents fail to understand their God-given roles as husband, father, wife, and mother, it can have disastrous results on the family. While examining the topics of biblical manhood and womanhood, complementarianism and egalitarianism are also addressed.

Biblical Manhood

The Bible has much to say on the topic of biblical manhood. To define biblical manhood, Piper is helpful: “At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to a man’s differing relationships.”¹³ Piper’s definition of manhood is helpful because it communicates

¹¹Andreas J. Kostenberger and David W. Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Foundation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 15.

¹²Ken Hemphill and Richard Ross, *Parenting with Kingdom Purpose* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 31.

¹³John Piper, “A Vision of Biblical Complementarity: Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 35.

what the Bible teaches. However, before biblical manhood can be explored, some key issues regarding complementarianism and egalitarianism must be examined.

Some people argue that a conservative view on biblical manhood and womanhood devalues women. The assumption is that complementarianism views men as superior. This is not only wrong, but also unbiblical. Genesis 1:27 says, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” The emphasis in this verse is on “in his image.” Both man and woman are created in God’s image and thus of equal worth. To be made in God’s image means that human beings are like God and represent him. No other creature ever created has been given this status. Therefore, man and woman are of equal worth, value, and importance to their Creator.¹⁴

In addition to the creation account, further evidence for equality is found in the New Testament church. In Acts 2:17-18, Peter preaches his great sermon on Pentecost. Peter says,

And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit and they shall prophesy.

What is pertinent in this narrative is that the Holy Spirit will be “poured out on all flesh,” male and female. Both men and women will be baptized into the body of Christ and receive spiritual gifts to use in the church. Furthermore, the apostle Paul reminds the church that they should not be divided into factions. He says in Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” This passage indicates that no group or sex in the church should view themselves as superior to other members.¹⁵

¹⁴Wayne Grudem, ed., *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 19-20.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 21.

Men and women have equal value, worth, and dignity; however, God has given men and women different roles in marriage as part of the created order. This truth is known as complementarianism. Regarding the equality of men and women and their God-given differences, the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 is helpful:

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.¹⁶

As can be seen by the above statement on biblical manhood and womanhood, complementarians believe men and women have equal worth, but different roles in the created order.

Egalitarians do not affirm the above position. Egalitarians believe that men and women are created equally, but do not affirm the difference in roles. The following quotations comes from the "Statement on Men, Women and Biblical Equality" published by the Christians for Biblical Equality. The numbers represent the original article numbers:

1. The Bible teaches that both man and woman were created in God's image, had a direct relationship with God, and shared jointly the responsibilities of bearing and rearing children and having dominion over the created order.
5. The Bible teaches that the rulership of Adam over Eve resulted from the Fall and was, therefore, not part of the original created order.
10. The Bible defines the function of leadership as the empowerment of others for service rather than as the exercise of power over them.¹⁷

These articles from this statement of faith demonstrate that egalitarians deny the different functions of men and women and see the authority of Adam over Eve as a result of sin.

¹⁶Southern Baptist Convention, "Baptist Faith and Message, 2000," accessed August 1, 2017, <http://www.sbc.net/bfm2000/bfm2000.asp>.

¹⁷Christians for Biblical Equality, "Statement on Men, Women and Biblical Equality," accessed August 2, 2017, https://www.cbeinternational.org/sites/default/files/english_3.pdf.

This understanding of biblical manhood and womanhood has several implications on the doctrines of the Bible, God, man, family, redemption, the church, and eschatology. It also introduces hermeneutical and exegetical problems to the Bible generally, and Genesis 1-3 specifically, as it clearly denies the differing functions of men and women in the creation account. To refute egalitarianism, Grudem gives ten examples from Genesis establishing male headship and differing gender roles: Adam was created first; Adam represents the human race; Adam named the woman; the naming of the human race; the primary accountability of Adam to God; Eve's purpose as a helper to Adam; sin's distortion of gender roles; the restoration of the created order at Christ return; the relationship between Christ and his church; and the parallel with the Trinity.¹⁸ As can be seen, a plain reading of the biblical text supports a complementarian view of biblical manhood and womanhood. Mahaney says, "It's a striking fact that every New Testament passage discussing the role of a wife in relation to her husband requires her to submit to him, while no passage indicates that a husband should be subordinate to his wife."¹⁹

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, John Piper says that "at the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's differing relationships."²⁰ This is the definition he uses to explain manhood. What follows is an explanation of this definition and how it aligns with a biblical understanding of manhood.

First, Piper says men are to exhibit mature masculinity. There is to be an emphasis on the word *mature*. A man can be masculine without being mature. For example, a man can be fully-grown and sexually capable but irresponsible. If he is not a

¹⁸Christians for Biblical Equality, "Statement on Men, Women and Biblical Equality," 25-37.

¹⁹C. J. Mahaney, "How to Encourage Men to Lead and Wives to Follow," in *Pastoral Leadership for Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. Wayne Grudem and Dennis Rainey (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 203-4.

²⁰Piper, "A Vision of Biblical Complementarity," 35.

benevolent and responsible leader that provides and protects his family, then he would not be described as exhibiting mature masculinity. Piper says, “Mature means that a man’s sense of responsibility is in the process of growing out of its sinful distortions and limitations, and finding its true nature as a form of love, not a form of self-assertion.”²¹

A mature masculine male will also have a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide, and protect. Men should have a sense or awareness within them to be compassionate and servant leaders. The Bible calls men to lead their families and churches. In fact, Paul says in 1 Timothy 3:4-5 that the pastor must “manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church.” Leadership in the family is paramount when being a leader in the church. Furthermore, the man is directly called to lead his family. In Ephesians 5:22 Paul says, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.” In Colossians 3:18-19 Paul says, “Wives, submit to you husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.” Baucham is helpful when he writes, “The issue for Paul in marriage is not who’s smarter, stronger, or more important; for him, as well as for the other biblical writers, the questions is one of God-ordained order.”²²

Moreover, this sense of leadership should always be benevolent. Piper again is helpful when he says that benevolent “is intended to show that the responsibility of manhood is for the good of the woman. Benevolent responsibility is meant to rule out all self-aggrandizing authoritarianism.”²³ Men are not to lead with an iron fist. This type of leadership is not only hurtful toward his family, but also sinful to God. When Jesus’

²¹Piper, “A Vision of Biblical Complementarity,” 35.

²²Voddie Baucham, Jr., *Family Shepherds: Calling and Equipping Men to Lead their Homes* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 101.

²³*Ibid.*, 37.

disciples were arguing over authority and who would be the greatest, Jesus said, “Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matt 20:26-28). In 1 Peter 3:7, the apostle reminds husbands to “live with your wives in an understand way, show honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers might not be hindered.” Husbands are called to lead, but to do so in a loving and understanding way.

In addition, Piper argues that the husband has a responsibility to lead. He says the burden of this responsibility is “to stress that masculinity is a God-given trust for the good all his creatures, not a right for men to exercise for their own self-exaltation or ego-satisfaction.”²⁴ The husband is to be the responsible shepherd of his household; this is a charge given by God. He is responsible for leading his family; however, the word *lead* can sometimes have negative connotations. Many believe that leading requires complete submissiveness to the authoritarian control of another person, as words carry many different nuances and implications. Nonetheless, the husband’s leadership should never be domineering. Baucham says that the man’s leadership is to express itself “in the strength to serve and to sacrifice for the good of woman.”²⁵ Though, the man should be ready to make the final decision when the husband and wife cannot come to a resolution in a disagreement. These instances should be rare and not involve any sinful action or selfish desire on the part of the husband, as his responsibility to lead requires the man to protect and provide for his family.

This section has reviewed the topics of complementarianism, egalitarianism, and biblical manhood. It has also demonstrated that the husband/father has been delegated the

²⁴Baucham, *Family Shepherds*, 37.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 38.

task to lead his family and train them in the faith. In addition, it can be concluded that there is strong evidence for a complementarian worldview coupled with a biblical understanding of manhood. Now that these subjects have been explored in detail, the topic of biblical womanhood will be examined.

Biblical Womanhood

The Bible has a lot to say about God's purpose for men and women. They are created in his image and for his glory. Human beings are the pinnacle of his creation and are equal in worth, dignity, importance, and respect. God did not create Adam better than Eve or vice-versa. However, God did give men and women different roles or functions within the created order. What are those differing functions? What are some of the differences between men and women and why does it matter? What follows is a survey of biblical womanhood.

As established in the previous section, the man is considered the leader and main discipler of his family; he has ultimate responsibility before God. However, his function as the head of the household does not denigrate or depreciate the woman's purpose in life or family. The woman's role complements that of her husband. Biblical womanhood begins in the opening pages of the creation account. In Genesis 2:18, God says, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." What does it mean to be a helper? How does a helper complement man's function as leader? Elaborating on this verse, Kostenberger writes,

But what is the force of the expression "suitable helper?" A contextual reading of the expression in its original setting suggests that, on the one hand, the woman is congenial to the man in a way that none of the animals are, and, on the other hand, that the woman is placed alongside the man as his associate or assistant.²⁶

Kostenberger sees the woman's role in the creation account as a partner who helps the man fill and subdue the earth. She also fills the man's need for companionship, partners

²⁶Kostenberger and Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family*, 25.

with him in procreation, and submits to his leadership. Farley explains that the “Mom is Dad’s assistant. If she fails to carry out his instruction, she will suffer the fruit of her womb.”²⁷

It is at this point that some people object and claim that the role of helper diminishes the woman’s self-image and worth. They believe that being a helper makes her somehow less valuable than the man. There are many places in the Bible where a helper or the act of subordination is a blessing. While space does not allow the recounting of these many instances, one supreme example of a person becoming a helper is found in the God-Head. In the Father, human beings see a God who condescends himself and his own interests by caring and providing for them. Also, Jesus’ divinity is not compromised by the incarnation, leaving his heavenly dwelling, and submitting himself to the Father’s will. Furthermore, working in and through sinful human beings to bring about regeneration and sanctification does not diminish the Holy Spirit’s divinity.²⁸ All three members of the Trinity remain completely divine while becoming helpers to their creation.

What does the woman’s function as her husband’s helper look like? If the man is called to provide, protect, and lead his family, what is the woman’s role? While the Old Testament gives the reader descriptive elements of the woman’s role during biblical times, they should not be considered prescriptive in a twenty-first century context. In addition, the New Testament does not contain a lot of information on the topic; however, it is not silent. The New Testament includes some specific teaching on biblical womanhood. Therefore, the Bible allows a certain amount of freedom in the woman’s role as man’s helper. What follows is a brief survey on biblical womanhood from the Old and New Testaments.

²⁷William P. Farley, *Gospel-Powered Parenting: How the Gospel Shapes and Transforms Parenting* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2009), 128.

²⁸Kostenberger and Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family*, 26.

In the Old Testament, the wife has three primary duties: provide her husband with children, manage the household, and provide companionship. In Old Testament times, people primarily got married to have children, particularly boys. Giving her husband a child was considered one of the noblest things a wife could do. Failure to do so resulted in disgrace, as seen in the narrative of Rachel and Jacob. Also, in the Old Testament era the wife managed the household by cooking, sewing, tending the garden, and harvesting grain, as seen in Proverbs 31. Most importantly, she provided companionship to her husband. As seen today, the wife was her husband's confidante and trusted friend. This mutual intimacy, trust, and friendship are seen throughout the Song of Solomon.²⁹

The New Testament does not have as many specific examples of the woman's function within the marriage. However, a few passages give insight into what is taught in the Old Testament. In Matthew 19:6, the religious leaders confronted Jesus about his understanding of marriage. Interestingly, Jesus affirmed what had already been taught in the opening pages of Genesis by quoting Genesis 1:27 and 2:24. Jesus understood the Old Testament teachings on marriage and personhood as binding. In 1 Peter 3:17, the apostle gave his readers instruction on the same topics. He reminded the wives that they are to be subject to their husbands. Likewise, husbands are encouraged to live with their wives in an understanding way and show them honor. The apostle Paul also had much to say on marriage and biblical manhood and womanhood. In 1 Timothy 2:15 and 4:1-4, Paul affirmed virtuousness of marriage since God created it. Everything created by God is good and should not be rejected. In Ephesians 5:21-22, Paul gave the longest treatment on marriage found anywhere in the New Testament. In this passage, an important parallel was given between the church, Christ, and marriage. Kostenberger states, "Christ's relationship with the church . . . provides the pattern for a Christian marriage, in which

²⁹Farley, *Gospel-Powered Parenting*, 30-31.

the husband is appointed as the head (as Christ is the head of the church) and the wife is called to submit to her husband (as the church is to Christ).³⁰

In conclusion, the Bible is consistent in its teaching on biblical womanhood. The woman, although created equal with man, has a different role in God's creation. Her function is to be a helper, supporter, and faithful spouse to her husband. This would include assisting him with the discipleship of their children. Her calling is also to her children and home, which does not necessarily rule out a job or career outside the home. It should also be emphasized that the Bible allows for a certain amount of freedom when it comes to the specifics of the woman's role. When men and women seek to live God's ordained way, marriages are happier, children are effectively disciplined, and life is more fulfilling.³¹

What follows in the next section is a survey of family ministry models that have been utilized within the church. It will be argued that defective family ministry models have compounded the problem of ineffective family discipleship. Not only has a deficient view of biblical manhood and womanhood caused fathers and mothers to disengage from disciplining their children, but the church has also failed to equip and hold them accountable.

Contemporary Models of Family Ministry

How should a family ministry function? Some parents believe the church is the primary place students should receive discipleship. Others believe a children's and/or youth ministry has no business within the church and that all age-graded ministries should be abolished. Some people fall in between these two extremes. Jones gives an example of this balance when he says, "What you do for God beyond your home will typically never be greater than what you practice with God within your home."³² Therefore, it is important

³⁰Farley, *Gospel-Powered Parenting*, 56.

³¹Vern L. Bengtson, Norella M. Putney, and Susan Harris, *Families and Faith: How Religion Is Passed Down across Generations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 76-77.

³²Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones, *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological Historical, and Practical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 14.

for parents to place discipleship as a priority in their family. Regardless of what someone may believe about the function of youth ministry, their belief falls somewhere between these two extremes. Is family ministry even biblical? Can a theological argument be made to justify the existence of family ministry and how it should function? The purpose of this section is to articulate a biblically appropriate function for church-based family ministry that equips parents to be the primary disciplers of their children. To do this, three family ministry models will be explored: family-integrated, family-based, and family-equipping. This section will conclude by arguing that family-equipping ministry is the preferred model in the local church.

Family-Integrated Ministry

When discussing family ministry, the family-integrated model is the least popular in the evangelical church. However, there is a biblical precedent for it. Like all three models that will be reviewed, the family-integrated model emphasizes that parents are the primary disciplers of their children and that the church partners with parents for this task. However, how the church partners with parents is very different from the family-based and family-equipping models. The family-integrated model is a radical shift from the way churches have done family ministry over the last fifty years. The most drastic change this model makes is abolishing all age-graded ministries. Therefore, the family-integrated church does not have children and youth ministries. In this model, families worship together, study the Bible together, and go to Sunday school together. This model believes that the church's poor retention rate over the last fifty years of high school graduates is sufficient enough to eliminate age-graded ministry. However, there are many errors in the drop-out statistic.³³

³³Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 46-47.

In *Perspectives on Family Ministry: 3 Views*, Paul Renfro gives his readers a definition of family-integrated ministry from the National Center for Family-Integrated Churches:

According to the National Center for Family-Integrated Churches, ‘we affirm that the biblical family is a scripturally ordered household of parents, children, and sometimes others (such as singles, widows, divorcees, or grandparents), forming the God-ordained building blocks of the church (2Tim 4:19). We . . . reject the church’s implementation of modern individualism by fragmenting the family through age-graded, peer-oriented, and special-interest classes, thus preventing rather than promoting family unity.’³⁴

While this model does make some valid points, the family-integrated model does not serve the family’s best interest. For example, most teenagers appreciate a youth ministry. While there is a time and place for students to study the Bible at church with their families, that does not necessitate abolishing all age-graded ministries. Second, every church segregates, even family-integrated churches. For example, Family-integrated churches emphasize fathers as primary disciplers and spend a lot of time equipping them. To do this, family-integrated churches must have men’s training classes, which is a form of segregation. Third, singles, divorcees, and widows would struggle with assimilating in a family-integrated church. In many areas of the country, the intact, nuclear family is a minority. Many children and youth grow up in single-parent homes. How does a family-integrated church effectively minister to these kind of needs? When presented with this argument, family-integrationists do not appear to have an adequate answer. They often use theological jargon like the church needs to be “authentic” and “gospel-centered,” in order to avoid answering the question. For example, in addressing this very question, Renfro says that what “the church needs is faithful proclamation of Scripture and an authentic faith-community that strives to obey the Lord’s commands, including ‘making disciples of all nations.’”³⁵

³⁴Timothy Paul Jones, “Historical Contexts for Family Ministry,” in *Perspectives on Family Ministry: 3 Views*, ed. Timothy Paul Jones (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 55.

³⁵Paul Renfro, “Responses to Paul Renfro: Family-Integrated Ministry,” in Jones, *Perspectives*

While there are some benefits to the family-integrated model, a lot of issues are still not solved. The family-integrated model creates more concerns than the last fifty years of family ministry has done. The family-integrated model is not a viable choice for local church ministry.

Family-Based Ministry

The family-based model was popularized by Mark DeVries in his book *Family-Based Youth Ministry*. This model of family ministry is probably the most popular and utilized style in the local church today. Unlike the family-integrated model, family-based ministry retains the segmented-programmatic structure, thus maintaining separate preschool ministries, children’s ministries, and youth ministries. This model attempts to involve parents and provide students with a separate ministry where they are ministered to in an age-appropriate way. Brandon Shields explains,

Family-based churches retain separate, age-segmented ministry structures. The difference between family-based models and typical programmatic models is that family-based churches intentionally include intergenerational and family-focused events in each ministry.³⁶

Thus, this ministry attempts to bring families together by adding events and classes to the church calendar that bring families together. In fact, this is one of the major implications of family-based ministry. DeVries writes,

There are basically two types of family-based programs—those designed to equip parents to effectively nurture their children in the Christian family (for example, classes and events for parents) and those designed to build cross-generational friendships between teenagers and adults (such as classes and events for parents and teenagers together).³⁷

The family-based ministry also retains many of the elements found in youth ministry models. For example, students likely have mid-week worship experiences, small

on Family Ministry, 92.

³⁶Brandon Shields, “Family-Based Ministry: Separated Contexts, Shared Focus,” in Jones, *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 100.

³⁷Mark DeVries, *Family-Based Youth Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 117.

group Bible studies with their peers, and events that attempt to bring the generation together. Thus, family-based ministry does not look drastically different from programmatic ministry models. Family-based ministries will typically have a purpose statement and strategy to accomplish that statement. It will implement programs, studies, and activities in order to fulfill its mission. In addition, family-based ministry can look similar to family-equipping ministry in that they may involve parents in the planning, executing, and evaluating of the program. Family-based ministries may also offer parenting classes and seminars, involve them in leadership, and distribute resources to help with family discipleship.

If family-based ministry is so similar to programmatic and family-equipping ministry models, then how is it different? Family-based ministry is different from programmatic ministry models in how it intentionally involves parents. Family-based ministry deliberately plans events and studies that bring families together.³⁸ Programmatic ministry models of the 1980s and 1990s usually did not include parents in any way. In fact, many programmatic ministry models had an unspoken “no parents allowed” policy. Family-equipping ministry is different from family-based ministry in philosophy and implementation. Family-equipping ministry avoids adding extra events to an already busy church calendar. Anthony writes, “Every practice at every level of ministry is reworked completely to champion the place of parents as primary disciple-makers in their children’s lives.”³⁹ This point will be elaborated more in the following section.

In summary, the family-based ministry has many positive elements. It encourages parental involvement, has events and studies that attempt to bring parents, children, and the church together. It recognizes parents as the primary disciplers of their

³⁸Devries, *Family-Based Youth Ministry*, 117.

³⁹Timothy Paul Jones and Randy Stinson, “Family Ministry Models,” *A Theology for Family Ministries*, ed. Michael Anthony and Michelle Anthony (Nashville: B & H, 2011), 175.

children and attempts to avoid the parent/child divide. However, its main weakness is found in its strength. Jones and Stinson are helpful when they write,

One way to envision the family-based model is to think of a sunflower: Each petal remains separate, yet all the petals come together at the central disk. In the same way each ministry in a family-based model remains separate; central to the congregation's mission, however, is the expectation that every ministry will consistently plan events and learning experiences that draw families and generations together.⁴⁰

In its attempt to bring families together, family-based ministry adds more events to an already busy calendar. Families are busier than ever today, so implementing more programs that parents will have to attend can be counterproductive. Instead of planning more events for families to attend, restructuring current programs and events would be more beneficial. Therefore, the family-based ministry model does not seem like the best model for the local church.

Family-Equipping Ministry

The final ministry model explored is called family-equipping; this is my preferred model. In this section, the family-equipping model is defined, an explanation is given on how it works in the local church, and an example is presented of what this model may look like in a youth ministry. This section also explains how a family-equipping ministry better serves the church and trains parents to be the primary disciplers of their children.

The family-equipping model is a recent development within evangelical churches to champion parents as the disciplers of their children. This model's core belief is that parents are the primary Bible teachers and the church partners with them in this endeavor. Family-equipping is more of a shift in ministry philosophy than it is a program. It is also a philosophy that should impact every ministry within the church, not just the children and youth ministries. Jay Strother writes, "Family-equipping churches retain

⁴⁰Jones and Stinson, "Family Ministry Models," 174.

some age-organized ministries but restructure the congregation to partner with parents at every level of ministry so that parents are acknowledged, equipped, and held accountable for the discipleship of their children.”⁴¹

So, what does a family-equipping church look like? How does this model practically work itself out in the life of the local church? To answer these questions, one must discuss what the family-equipping model does not do. First, family-equipping ministry is not another event on the calendar. The family-equipping ministry does not try to make families busier by adding activities to the church calendar. Rather, the family-equipping model sometimes does the opposite. If an event does not fulfill the purpose of equipping, involving, or resourcing parents, then that activity is cancelled. Second, the family-equipping model does not abolish age-graded ministries. Family-equipping ministry retains children, youth, and adult ministries; however, it restructures those ministries so that parents are taught and held accountable to disciple their children. Finally, the family-equipping ministry is not a radical shift in how the church programs. Instead, it asks, “How does this event, activity, Bible study, or sermon series better equip families?”

To carry out a family-equipping ministry, church leaders must ensure that their ministries involve, resource, and equip parents. Therefore, adult Sunday school classes focus on teaching godly parenting. The men’s ministry will emphasize accountability and the importance of fathers being the spiritual leaders of their families. The women’s ministry will highlight the importance of wives supporting, loving, and submitting to their husbands’ leadership. The children and youth ministries will involve parents in leadership, provide them with the resources they need to lead their family, and equip them on godly parenting through classes and occasional seminars. These classes and seminars can be offered at times that families are already at church. Senior adult ministries can stress the importance that grandparents have on raising grandchildren. The senior pastor should

⁴¹Jay Strother, “Family-Equipping Ministry: Church and Home as Cochampions,” in Jones, *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 144.

regularly communicate from the pulpit the church's conviction that parents are the primary disciplers of their children, while offering occasional Bible study classes on how to do it with excellence. The church's educational and discipleship ministries can offer short-term, small-group studies to ensure that parents are resourced and equipped to carry out their God-given roles. The mission's ministry can offer family mission trips and stress the importance of families doing missions together. Every ministry within the church should champion the family and stress the importance of the Great Commission starting within the family unit.

How does the family-equipping model manifest itself within the youth ministry in particular? Does a family-equipping model of youth ministry look different than a family-based or purpose-driven youth ministry? The answer to these questions is yes and no. As mentioned, the family-equipping model of ministry is not about adding a program to the calendar or completely abolishing age-segregated ministries. The family-equipping model is more of a shift in ministry philosophy than anything else. However, a family-equipping youth ministry will make some changes to programming to align with its philosophy. First, youth ministry leaders may want to select curriculum that corresponds with what the children and adult ministries are studying. This means that each member of the family will study similar topics and passages in their Sunday school classes. However, each age group may approach the study a little differently, which allows for more fruitful discussion among family members later as parents seek to reinforce the biblical truths taught during the week. Youth leaders will also want to ensure that parents are given a resource that will help them discuss the lesson at home. In addition, youth leaders will want to have plenty of resources available to help parents lead family worship at home during the week. Resources can include catechisms, songs, lessons, and suggested Bible stories.

One overlooked element in partnering with parents is involving them in leadership. Parents must be included in decision making when it comes to youth ministry

programming. The wise youth leader will develop and regularly meet with a leadership team that consists of youth parents. Working with parents can sometimes be burdensome, but it is an essential aspect of a successful family-equipping youth ministry. This point is especially true if the youth leader does not have children that are youth age. A seminary-trained youth pastor may be able to articulate a theology on the family, but if he does not have a teenager of his own, he has no idea what it is like to live with one and the struggles these families are facing. Therefore, parents on the leadership team bring a unique perspective. A parent leadership team can help the youth leader by praying, discussing, planning, executing, and evaluating a successful family ministry. If the youth ministry desires to come alongside parents in the discipleship of their children, parents' voices must be heard in leadership meetings.

The function of youth ministry has greatly changed over the years. Many models and philosophies have been developed so that youth ministries can operate at the local church level. However, a person does not have to look any further than Scripture to see where God intends discipleship to primarily take place. Wayne Rice speaks truth when he writes, "If I were reinventing youth ministry (again), I don't think I'd have to look too much further than Deuteronomy 6 for a game plan."⁴² God intends for the discipleship of children and youth to take place within the home, in connection with the local church. Family-equipping church is the best model for this partnership.

Conclusion

How should a youth ministry function based upon historical, biblical, and theological foundations? As reviewed, youth ministry has greatly progressed over the years. It had humble beginnings as societies and clubs that evolved into professionalized church and denominational ministries. Some church youth ministries have been seeker-sensitive, simple, and purpose-driven. Others have been event-driven, family-based, and

⁴²Wayne Rice, *Reinventing Youth Ministry Again* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 166.

family-integrated. While some models are more biblical than others, each model brings something unique to the table. However, all of these models fall short when it comes to the church partnering with parents to equip them to be the primary disciplers of their children. Family-equipping ministry facilitates this point and champions parents' calling to make disciples of their children. Instead of removing all age-graded ministries as the family-integrated model does, the church retains its children, youth, and adult ministries while equipping, involving, and resourcing parents to disciple their children. This model restructures its current ministries and philosophies to serve parents and strengthen the family unit.

Second, Stinson and Jones say that parents and church leaders must biblically “consider families within the context of God’s creation, humanity’s fall, a crucified and risen Redeemer, and God’s guarantee that he will someday turn the groaning of the cosmos into glory divine.”⁴³ Families are God’s creation and were originally made good. However, sin has disrupted God’s created order, which has negatively impacted the family. Families do not function today as God originally created them. However, through the life, death, resurrection, and ultimate return of Jesus Christ, God’s families will be restored to what they were before the Fall. Stinson and Jones continue,

The divine design for families is rooted not in fleeting social conventions but in the eternal character of God. It is only through God the Father that any family ‘in heaven [or] on earth’ will be able to discover the character an identity that God intended (Eph 3:14-15).⁴⁴

The overarching theme of creation, fall, and restoration cannot be overlooked when constructing a biblically-based youth ministry.

Third, the theological foundation must also be reviewed when considering how a youth ministry should function. As mentioned, God intends for parents to be the primary disciplers of their children. This charge cannot be delegated to another individual or

⁴³Stinson and Jones, *Trained in the Fear of God*, 31.

⁴⁴Ibid., 31-32.

organization no matter how willing they are to accept it. God intends primarily fathers, but also mothers, to lead in this regard. However, Christ has also inaugurated the greatest organization this world has ever seen: the church. The church has been given the task to propagate the gospel and make disciples. One of the ways it does this is by equipping parents to disciple their children. Also, each parent should view their children as their primary mission field. When the church and family lock arms to reach the next generation, they can impact youth and children in ways that were not otherwise possible.

Finally, when the church and family partner together, families experience God's Word in ways that would not be possible if done in isolation from one another. In doing so, the church is obedient to the Great Commission and parents function as the primary disciplers of their children. Family-equipping ministry is the best paradigm for this component to take place. Cope states, "If the family is engaged in the development of religious character through its life and organization, it ought somehow to find very close relations with the other great social institution engaged in precisely the same work, the church."⁴⁵

⁴⁵Henry Frederick Cope, *Religious Education in the Family* (Middletown, DE: Hard Press, 2016), 159.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Pickens First Baptist Church believes family ministry is important. PFBC plans, budgets, and equips its leaders to ensure that children are taught the Word of God. A large part of the church's resources is spent to reach and share the gospel with children and youth. Many of these resources were spent on events: summer camps, Vacation Bible School, and ski retreats. While there is nothing wrong with these events, few resources are used to equip parents to be the primary disciplers of their children. Parents at PFBC are rarely taught or held accountable for being the primary disciplers of their children, so a shift needed to occur. The families at PFBC needed to understand that they are responsible for the biblical upbringing of their children and that the responsibility does not fall solely on the pastors and Sunday school teachers. This kind of change not only requires an adjustment in how the church programs, but also how parents view themselves in light of the biblical command to disciple their children. A shift in thinking and programming would require years and this project marks the beginning of that change.

For change to happen, the children's and youth ministries would need to involve, resource, and equip parents to carry out their God-given roles. Also, the leaders of these ministries would need to start viewing themselves more as a supplement to what parents were already doing rather than the primary way children and youth received biblical instruction. Furthermore, the entire church would need to learn that family discipleship is not a program or event added to the calendar. Thus, every single ministry within the church needed to champion the family. When this kind of mindset infiltrates the church, church and family partnership can truly take place.

Preparation

Before project implementation, two years were spent researching family discipleship from biblical and practical perspectives. This research was done through four on-campus doctoral seminars: “Issues in Student and Family Ministry,” “Marriage and Family Counseling,” “Models of Student and Family Ministry,” and “Christian Formation of Children and Adolescents.” Each seminar required over 2,500 pages of reading, multiple research papers, and class presentations. In addition, four contextualized writing seminars were conducted, which allowed for further research and reflection.

I tested many of the materials and resources used for the project at my home during my personal family devotionals. Thus, various catechism books, Bible story books, and church resources were used with our children to gauge effectiveness in keeping their attention. I also informally monitored how much information my children were retaining from these resources. Throughout this testing phase, I elicited our children’s opinion about each resource, allowing me to share my results with the church’s parents once the project was implemented.

After the research and testing phase was completed, I met with my senior pastor to discern the best time to implement the seven-week project. Various times were suggested, but we ultimately decided on January 7, 2018. On January 7, two things were getting ready to happen within the church: people were coming back from their holiday break and winter discipleship classes were beginning. These discipleship classes are small group Bible studies conducted on Sunday nights. At first, we thought this would be the perfect time to implement the project. However, as we reviewed the attendance of these discipleship classes, we discovered that many of the parents we were targeting did not attend a Sunday night discipleship class. Thus, we decided to implement the project during the Sunday school hour since many parents are on campus at that time.

Promotion

Once we decided that Sunday morning would be the best time to implement the project, entitled “Family Discipleship Seminar,” we began to promote the seven-week class. First, all the Sunday school teachers were sent a memo in October informing them that the class would be offered during the Sunday school hour beginning on January 7, 2018. Thus, some parents in their classes might elect to come to the seminar and not be in their classes for seven weeks. Fortunately, we received favorable responses from all the Sunday school teachers. On Sunday, November 19, the senior pastor began to promote the class by writing an article in the bulletin that encouraged parents to attend. In December, parents started receiving church-wide emails that promoted the seminar. The email also gave them the opportunity to register. A sign-up sheet was also posted in the vestibule of the sanctuary. Throughout the month of December, numerous social media ads were published informing church members and the community about the class. Announcements were also given each week from the pulpit. People could register through Sunday, January 7. Finally, the young married couples Sunday school class was personally encouraged to register by the senior pastor. This class is made up of about 20 adults and they were in the principal age group. Fortunately, the entire class registered.

During the registration period, I spent a considerable amount of time preparing handouts, a PowerPoint presentation for all seven sessions, and icebreaker activities to keep the class lively. Much attention was given to public speaking to ensure that what was on the PowerPoint presentation flowed with what I was saying. Finally, a lot of time was spent in prayer. More than anything else, I wanted parents to not just understand what was being taught, but for the Holy Spirit to stir the hearts of the participants to action. If parents did not implement what they were taught, then the project would not achieve its primary purpose.

Implementation

Week 1

Because I was unsure of the exact number of people that would show up for the seminar, the decision was made to host it in the church's fellowship hall. This room would easily accommodate 200 people. A large, flat-screen TV was set up for video and PowerPoint presentations. Ten round tables with eight chairs at each table were placed in a specific area of the fellowship hall to ensure that everyone sat together. Some of the youth parents graciously provided a breakfast for the first session, which started at 9:15 a.m. The first session started with the senior pastor opening in prayer and briefly speaking on the importance of the topic. An exact number was not taken, however, roughly 50 people were in attendance. A few people from the community attended because they heard about it from church members and social media ads.

The session began by handing out the seminar syllabus. The syllabus gave the participants my contact information, a course description, course goals, and a course sequence. Many parents were thankful for this information, as it gave them a clear direction on what to expect in future sessions. Next, each participant was given the "Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey," from Timothy Paul Jones' *Family Ministry Field Guide*. While this handout was being passed around, I briefly explained that the seminar was the culmination of my doctoral program in family ministry and the "Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey" was being utilized for research purposes. They were asked to voluntarily and anonymously fill it out during the first session, and it was collected at the end of the first session. They were also told that the exact same questionnaire would be distributed in the last session to gauge how their answers had changed.¹

¹See results of the pre- and post-survey in appendices 2 and 3. An explanation of the results is also given in chap. 5

After the syllabus was explained and the “Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey” was passed out, the first session officially began. This session’s title was, “What Is Family Discipleship?” The session’s objectives were to help families understand what family discipleship is and why it is important. To begin this session, participants were asked to define *family discipleship* and what it would look like in our church. Many answers were given, most event-oriented. Parents immediately thought that implementing a family ministry involved adding extra events to the church calendar. This concern was quickly squelched when it was explained that family ministry is not an event; it is not something added onto a family’s already busy calendar. In fact, it was explained that family ministry would sometimes take events off the church calendar if it does not have a clear objective and does not champion families. It was also interesting to observe how many parents did not understand what family discipleship at home looked like. Thus, I dispelled the myth that family discipleship required families to hold long Bible studies every night in their home where they sang songs and the father gave a thirty-five-minute sermon.

After correcting misunderstandings on family ministry, a considerable amount of time was spent defining it. Emphasis was placed on how family ministry is a partnership between the local church and family. Thus, family ministry has two parts: what the church does and what the family does. Parents were told that family ministry is “the process of intentionally and persistently coordinating a ministry’s proclamation and practices so that parents are acknowledge, trained, and held accountable as primary disciple-makers in their children’s lives.”² Parents were taught that family ministry is not something that only the preschool, children, and youth ministries do—family ministry is something the entire church does. Thus, preschool all the way through the senior adult ministry are championing families.

²Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011), 33.

After this block of teaching, discussion ensued. Parents were asked what PFBC was doing well to equip families. Many parents thought the church was doing a fair job at accomplishing this task. However, some parents thought that the missions ministry needed to offer more in terms of family mission trips. The father that brought this topic up was passionate about families and the Great Commission. Also, some parents thought that more resources for discipleship from the church would be helpful. When told that these resources were available and emailed weekly to church members, they were surprised. Obviously, more needs to be done to promote the availability of these resources.

Following the discussion, parents were briefly introduced to Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Psalm 78:1-8, and Ephesians 6:1-4. These passages were not exegeted, as this was going to be done in sessions 2 and 3 of the project. However, it was pointed out that Scripture commands and expects parents to be the primary disciplers of their children—this is a task that cannot be delegated to a pastor, Sunday school teacher, or ministry professional. Partnership with the local church was stressed in the same way that parents partner with their child’s school teacher or ball coach. Parents are expected to partner with these individuals to ensure that their child is successful in school and on the ball field. To illustrate the importance of partnering with the local church, parents were presented with some facts. They were told that their children go to school 35 hours per week. They also spend up to 15 hours per week playing sports. If older youth have jobs, they are working 20-30 hours per week. Various recent polls also show that teenagers can spend around 6-9 hours per day consuming media. Even though these things are not necessarily evil, they do affect children’s worldview for better or worse. Then the question was asked: do we think that a couple of hours at church each week is really going to counteract the influences they experience throughout their week? This was eye opening for many parents in the room.

After giving parents some facts, I presented various resources available to parents to help them disciple their children. No specific titles to these resources were

supplied, as this is the point of session 7; however, a review was quickly given. Some of the resources mentioned were catechisms, Bible story books, parents' pages from their child's Sunday school curriculum, prayer, Bible reading, and miscellaneous opportunities throughout the day where they can apply biblical truths to their child's life. This brief discussion on resources concluded the presentation for session 1.

At the end of each session, a homework assignment was given. The purpose of each homework assignment was to encourage parents to begin having family devotionals. The first session's homework assignment encouraged parents to pray as a family at least one time during the week. This prayer had to be something other than a mealtime blessing. They were asked to formally sit down as a family and one parent would open in prayer. After that parent opened, each member of the family would pray. They were told that this would be a topic of discussion at the beginning of the next session.

Week 2

Session 2 was the parents' introduction to the biblical passages that taught family discipleship. This study focused on the Old Testament, specifically Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Psalm 78:1-8. Session 2 had more parents in attendance than session 1, pushing the attendance to about 60 adults. The session started with a welcome and brief introduction. Parents were then asked how their homework assignment went the previous week. Several parents gladly reported. Kelly, a parent of first grade child, said her family prayer went well overall; however, her child was nervous when it was his turn to pray. Her son had never prayed in front of his parents, so he was somewhat reluctant. Francis, a mother of teenage twins, said, "Our family pray time was just precious last week." Her daughters enjoyed their time together. Deana, a mother of teenage boys, said that one of her sons gets nervous when asked to pray in front of others, especially his parents. She admitted that he had not done that a lot, so it required him to come out of his comfort zone. What was interesting is that not one father offered any information. The only people who

reported on the homework assignment were mothers, even though there were more fathers present at this session.

After we reviewed the homework assignment, parents were introduced to session 2, entitled “Biblical Foundations for Family Discipleship: Old Testament.” The session objectives were presented, a review from session 1 was given, and a quick video from RightNow Media on family discipleship was shown as an icebreaker. Parents were reminded that they are the biggest influencers in their children’s lives, despite their children’s age. After this reminder, this question was presented: If parents are the biggest influencers in their children’s lives, how much more should family discipleship be a priority?

Once the introduction was given, parents were presented with some studies that reported roughly 10 percent of families in the church have consistent family devotionals. It was explained that at PFBC, that would be about ten families. Next, parents were asked to give their thoughts and reasons on this low percentage. Without hesitation, one parent answered, “We are so busy.” Other parents began to nod and agree. Another mother said she did not know how to disciple her children, while a father suggested laziness. I then presented the parents with five reasons I discovered in my research: lack of time, busyness, not equipped, intimidation, and laziness. Most parents in the room nodded in agreement.

Next, parents were told that God’s Word should always guide how they live their lives, and that a reliance on the Bible’s trustworthiness and authority is essential for understanding its teaching on family discipleship. If one believes that God’s Word is trustworthy and authoritative, then everything it teaches is binding on the Christian. Thus, if one discovers that the Bible teaches that parents are the primary disciplers of their children and they are to train them up accordingly, then the proper response to this command is absolute obedience.

After briefly reviewing the authority and trustworthiness of Scripture, I introduced parents to Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Parents were shown that Moses taught that

believers are to love God with all their being: heart, soul, and might. This is the most important point of the *Shema*. However, directly after being commanded to love God with all their being, they were told to be examples of this love for God to their children. Parents can do this in two ways: teaching their children the Scripture and talking to their children about Scripture. A period of instruction ensued on what teaching and talking about Scripture looked like in their daily lives. Next, verses 8 and 9 were exegeted. Parents were taught the importance of not just teaching their children, but also living out their faith for their children to see. Parents cannot expect their children to adopt and live out a faith they do not see in their mother and father.

Next, Psalm 78:1-8 was presented. A brief period of instruction was given on the phrase “dark sayings from of old” in verse 2. It was explained that the Psalmist likely had the *Shema* in mind when he wrote those words. Emphasis was also given to the multiple times fathers were commanded to teach their children the Scripture so that faith is passed down to the succeeding generation. Sensitively, I told the fathers that Scripture unequivocally lays the responsibility of leadership and discipleship onto them. Although mothers can teach their children the Scripture, fathers have been given this responsibility and they cannot delegate it to anyone. I then reminded the fathers of the earlier discussion on the Bible’s trustworthiness and authority. Thus, if parents fail to execute this responsibility, they are doing their family a disservice and sinning against God.

After finishing the discussion on Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Psalm 78:1-8, a time for questions was given. One mother said, “Knowing the responsibility that my husband has moves me to pray for him everyday.” Another mother asked, “Why have we never gone over this before and at what point in American history did we lose this conviction?” I thanked her for the question and said that World War II and the Industrial Revolution had a huge impact on parental discipleship and teaching. I assured her that this question would be addressed in more detail at a later session.

Once the questions were addressed, parents were assigned homework. Their assignment was the same as it was from session 1, but they had to do it twice. Thus, they were to have two family prayers that were separate from mealtime. Fathers were encouraged to lead these prayers, with each family member praying after him. Parents were told that the assignment would be a topic of discussion at the beginning of the next session.

Week 3

The third's week session was entitled "Biblical Foundations for Family Discipleship: New Testament." Once parents arrived, they were welcomed and the session's objectives were given. This study looked at what the New Testament taught about family discipleship and how it fits into the Great Commission. Parents were asked how their homework assignment went. A few parents spoke up and were very positive. Next, I reviewed the key points addressed in the previous session. Parents were reminded that their children learn from watching them and that they are the biggest influencers in the children's lives. They were encouraged to take advantage of that influence by teaching their children Scripture and living out their faith.

Next, parents were reminded that Deuteronomy 6:4-9 taught that there is a difference between teaching and talking about the Scriptures with their children. Teaching Scripture was described as the period of formal biblical instruction and that talking about Scripture was the conversation that is had throughout the day. I also reviewed that wearing Scripture and posting it their gates as Deuteronomy 6 said, described the way they should live out their faith for their children to see. Parents cannot teach and talk about Scripture with their children and not live it out. These details were examined in detail in chapter 1 when exegeting the *Shema*.

Following this discussion, parents were reminded that Psalm 78:1-8 taught that faith should be passed down to the next generation and that this was the responsibility of the father. Fathers were encouraged to remember their conviction in the Bible's

trustworthiness and authority. If the Bible is trustworthy and authoritative, then everything it teaches is binding. Thus, family discipleship and their calling to be the spiritual leaders and primary disciplers of their family are binding on their lives. If fathers are apathetic or fail to respond in obedience, then they are doing a disservice to their family and are in sin.

After the review of session 2, two comical videos were shown to illustrate parents' influence over their children. A small discussion ensued about how children learn from watching their parents. Children learn from their parents early in life what their parents' priorities are, how much they love Jesus, and how important the church is to them. Parents were told that various verses in the New Testament teach about family discipleship, but the class was focusing on two passages: Ephesians 6:1-4 and Matthew 28:18-20.

Ephesians 6:1-4 was reviewed and exegeted. Parents were taught that these verses are the longest treatment on family discipleship found in the New Testament. It is God's command to children and parents, primarily fathers. It also serves to reinforce what has already been taught in the Old Testament. In this passage, Paul addresses the role of children in relation to their mother and fathers, while emphasizing the importance of fathers raising their children in the Lord. Paul tells children to obey their parents. Parents were told that when children obey, they are honoring their parents.

An analysis of the word *children* was given from verse 1, as this was important for distinguishing the likely age range Paul was addressing. Parents were told that the Greek word for *children* referred to children living in the home. Thus, this was insufficient in determining the age of the children being commanded. Next, through deductive reasoning, we concluded that the age range of the children were early elementary to the late teens or early twenties. The children being commanded were able to understand their parents. They were also old enough to obey and would have been present when the church came together for worship. Thus, it is likely that the parents are still raising them.³ After

³Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 415.

determining the age of the children, a discussion ensued on how honoring parents necessitates obedience. Children cannot honor their parents through disobedience. In addition, when Paul said, “That it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land” (v. 4), he was likely saying that when children obey and honor their parents, life will be better. I did not go into the various interpretations for this section, as this was not the focus of the study.

After working through verses 1-3, time was spent reviewing verse 4. The class examined the phrases “provoke” and “bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” in relation to the father. Fathers are not to intentionally anger their children through their discipling.⁴ Thus, fathers were encouraged to not discipline when angry, and they should always be fair and just. Further, fathers were reminded that they had been given the responsibility to discipline—this is part of being the spiritual leader and discipler of their family. Mothers were reminded that this does not mean they cannot discipline, but it does mean God has given this responsibility to the father.

Finally, Paul reminds fathers in verse 4 that they are to bring their children up “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” The class was taught that bringing up their children not only meant discipling them, but also raising them to be self-sufficient and mature adults. This phrase can be used to describe the entire training process of child rearing that extends into adulthood. Once again, this is a responsibility given to the father. However, this does mean mothers cannot do this or should not be involved—it means that fathers are primarily responsible for the Christian education of their children. Fathers are responsible for giving counsel, instruction, exhortations, warnings, and even rebuke.

After exegeting Ephesians 6:1-4, I gave a brief testimony on how this works in my home. I explained that my children have a time of formal instruction on the Scripture that is separate from family devotionals. About five times per week, usually after our

⁴Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 444.

children complete their homework, they work on memorizing catechisms and a memory verse or passage I assign them. After repeated practices, they recite their catechisms and memory verses. Once this has been completed to my satisfaction, I explain what they have memorized. The parents seemed to be interested in my testimony, as a couple of parents came up to me after the session to ask about the resources and curriculum I use to instruct our children.

After explaining Ephesians 6:1-4 and telling parents how formal discipleship happens in my home, parents were shown how family discipleship fits into God's larger plan of making disciples in the Great Commission from Matthew 28:18-20. Time was spent explaining that the Great Commission does not mean has to become a vocational missionary. However, parents were shown how all Christians are commanded to make disciples. Thus, parents were asked, If all believers are commanded to make disciples, would not that also include their children? Also, making disciples requires establishing a relationship with the person being disciplined. What deeper and more intimate relationship exists than between a parent and his or her child? Time was spent explaining that there should be no dichotomy between making disciples of those who live in one's home versus anywhere else. Finally, parents were encouraged to ensure that ongoing instruction in the Bible occurred in their home.

At the conclusion of this session, parents were given another homework assignment. This assignment asked parents to have at least one family meeting that week that included prayer and a small devotional. Parents were given the devotionals that came with the Sunday school curriculum their children were using. They were encouraged to use it or another devotional of their choosing. A time of questions and comments were given and the session closed in prayer.

Week 4

Session 4's topic was an introduction to biblical manhood. At the beginning of the session, parents were presented with Genesis 1:26: "Let us make man in our image,

after our likeness.” After this text was read, parents were told that this text was important to the topic of biblical manhood and womanhood. This would be evident as the next two sessions were presented. Next, parents were told that the objectives of the session were to understand what the Bible teaches about biblical manhood and to understand the differences between complementarianism and egalitarianism.

After the session was introduced, we reviewed their homework assignment. Parents were supposed to not only pray with their children, but also do a family devotional. A time of discussion ensued, which was very positive. Many parents chose to use devotional books and supplies that they had at home. It is unclear how many families did the assignment, but the review and discussion lasted about ten minutes. Next, parents were divided up into teams of 5-7 and given five minutes to come up with pairs of foods that complement each other—foods like peanut butter and jelly, cookies and milk, and macaroni and cheese. The purpose of this activity was to illustrate how, though different, men and women complement each, and neither is more important than the other. It was also a fun way to get parents interacting.

After the activity, a review of the previous session was given. Parents were reminded that the New Testament supported and complimented what the Old Testament taught on family discipleship. Also, parents were commanded to be the primary disciplers of their children, primarily fathers. Parents saw that the Bible does not allow parents to disregard this responsibility and the church is not allowed to assume it. However, the church is called to partner with parents in discipling the next generation. Finally, it was emphasized that family discipleship falls into God’s overall plan of making disciples of all nations as described in Matthew 28:18-20.

Once the previous session’s review was completed, an introduction to biblical manhood was given. Parents were told that the topic of biblical manhood and womanhood had become a hotly contested subject since the LGBT revolution. Also, questions about sexuality and gender roles have never been so controversial. Our nation is asking questions

like never before: What qualities define a man and woman? Should an individual affirm complementarianism or egalitarianism? Can a person be born as a boy, but identify as a girl? The way culture answers these questions have drastically changed over the last ten years. Fortunately, the God of the Bible has not changed.

Next, parents were given definitions of biblical manhood, complementarianism, and egalitarianism. Emphasis was placed on Genesis 1:27, which says, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Parents were reminded that no gender is considered better or superior to the other, as everyone is made in the image of God. In addition to this Old Testament reference, parents were shown that the New Testament concurs; thus, Acts 2:17-18 and Galatians 3:28 were reviewed. In addition, the statement from “Baptist Faith and Message 2000” on the family was read to show the Southern Baptist Convention’s conviction on manhood and womanhood.⁵

After reviewing a complementarian view of manhood and womanhood, the egalitarian position was examined. Selected articles from the “Statement on Men, Women and Biblical Equality” published by the “Christians for Biblical Equality” were read to show the opposing viewpoint.⁶ I offered my personal critique of those articles and presented ten objections from Wayne Grudem to establish more credibility.⁷ Parents seemed to understand both viewpoints and were more agreeable toward complementarianism.

⁵Southern Baptist Convention, “Baptist Faith and Message, 2000,” accessed August 1, 2017, <http://www.sbc.net/bfm2000/bfm2000.asp>.

⁶Christians for Biblical Equality, “Statement on Men, Women and Biblical Equality,” accessed August 2, 2017, https://www.cbeinternational.org/sites/default/files/english_3.pdf.

⁷C. J. Mahaney, “How to Encourage Men to Lead and Wives to Follow,” in *Pastoral Leadership for Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. Wayne Grudem and Dennis Rainey (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 203-4.

Once these topics were investigated, Piper's definition on biblical manhood was presented: "At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's differing relationships."⁸ The men were encouraged to exhibit mature masculinity, a loving attitude in leadership, and provide for and protect their family. Most men in the room agreed with the definition and exhortation. This session closed with a brief question and answer time and homework assignment. Parents were told to have two family devotionals before session 5 and be prepared to talk about them.

Week 5

In session 5, parents were introduced to the biblical foundations for womanhood. Parents were reminded of the importance of Genesis 1:27, which says, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." This text was stressed throughout the studies of biblical manhood and womanhood so families would see that God created men and women with equal value, worth, and dignity. This truth was also stressed to help diffuse any objections from parents and debates on gender equality.

Session 5 began with a review of the previous week's homework. Parents were to lead two family devotionals, which included prayer. Parents were given the opportunity to share about their family devotionals. Most parents reported favorable results; however, some parents said that their children still felt awkward. The parents were encouraged and reminded that beginning a family devotional routine would take some adjustment. They were also told that their family devotional time was not meant to be a sprint, but a marathon; it is what happens in the long run that matters.

⁸John Piper, "A Vision of Biblical Complementarity: Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 35.

Next, we reviewed the previous week's session on biblical manhood, complementarianism, and egalitarianism. The parents were reminded of Piper's definition of biblical manhood and how that definition reinforces that men and women have equal value and worth.⁹ However, men and women are different, and those differences complement each other. After reviewing the definition of biblical manhood, parents were reminded of complementarianism and egalitarianism and why complementarianism is more compatible with a biblical worldview.

After reviewing the previous session, biblical womanhood was introduced. Since this lesson was only on this topic, I had extra time for an icebreaker. Thus, we played a comical game I created on PowerPoint called "Biblical Manhood/Womanhood Jeopardy." This game was used to illustrate the differences between men and women in a comical way and to make session 5 stand out from the rest of the studies. The parents seemed to enjoy this game, as it got everyone involved and talking.

After playing the game, the lesson was presented. Parents were reminded that the man is the leader of the family; however, this does not denigrate or depreciate the woman's purpose in life or the family. Genesis 2:18 was read, which says, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a helper fit for him." Emphasis was placed on the word *helper*, which complements the man's function as leader. The class was told that a contextual reading of the expression in its original setting suggests that, on the one hand, the woman is congenial to the man in a way that none of the animals are, and, on the other hand, the woman is placed alongside the man as his associate or assistant. Thus, her role is to help or assist the man in subduing the earth. She also fills the man's need for companionship, partners with him in procreation, and submits to his leadership.¹⁰

⁹Piper, "A Vision of Biblical Complementarity," 35.

¹⁰John H. Sailhammer, *Genesis*, in vol. 2 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 46.

Because submission can be such a controversial subject, time was spent explaining what this word meant and how most twenty-first century understandings are erroneous. Thus, the Trinity was used to illustrate a biblical understanding of submission. I explained that there are many places in the Bible where subordination can be a blessing. To illustrate this truth, I used the example of the Trinity. In the Father, human beings see a God who condescends himself and his interests by caring and providing for them. Since people cannot save themselves, God looked after their interest by sending His Son to die in their place. Also, Jesus' divinity is not compromised by the incarnation, leaving his heavenly dwelling, and submitting himself to the Father's will. Working in and through sinful human beings to bring about regeneration and sanctification does not diminish the Holy Spirit's divinity. All three members of the Trinity remain completely divine while becoming helpers to their creation. In addition, the work that each Member of the Trinity does is specific to that Person. For example, it was not the Father that died on the cross; it was the Son. It is not Jesus that fills the believer and imparts spiritual gifts; it is the Holy Spirit. Each Person of the Trinity has specific functions and each Member of the God-Head compliments one another.¹¹ I then connected this truth to Ephesians 5, where Paul compares Jesus' relationship with His church to marriage. This explanation and comparison was eye opening for most parents and helped to correct flawed understandings of what it means for the wife to submit and help her husband.

After showing the parallel between the Trinity and the marriage relationship, I surveyed the Old and New Testaments for examples of how wives helped their husbands. In the Old Testament, parents were told that the roles wives fill in the Old Testament were descriptive, not prescriptive. In other words, the things that wives did in the Old Testament do not necessarily translate into the twenty-first century. For example, the context of Old Testament Israel is very different from today's culture. Nevertheless, a

¹¹Andreas J. Kostenberger and David W. Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Foundation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 26.

review of these roles is beneficial to establish how wives complemented their husbands during these times. Once selected Old Testament passages were surveyed, parents were told that the New Testament did not have as many examples, but it did give insight into what was taught in the Old Testament. Thus, Jesus' teaching on marriage, Peter's command to couples, and Paul's exhortation to husbands and wives were reviewed.

Once the Old and New Testament passages were surveyed on biblical womanhood, the session was summarized. The Bible is consistent on its teaching on biblical womanhood. Parents were reminded that man and woman are created equal, but God has given them different roles within the created order. The wife functions as a helper, supporter, and faithful spouse to her husband; her calling is to her home and children. However, a person cannot be dogmatic about what this looks like in the twenty-first century. Thus, arguments against wives working outside of the home are invalid. There is just not enough information in the Bible for people to suggest such an ideology. Therefore, it was suggested the Bible gives Christians a certain amount of freedom on what it looks like to be her husband's helper.

After summarizing the session, a time for questions and comments was given. Parents, particularly the wives, looked relieved that such a controversial topic was actually edifying. Parents were also given another homework assignment: have at least two family devotionals over the next seven days where they studied the Word of God and prayed together. They were given one devotional that corresponded with what their children were learning in Sunday school that morning from LifeWay Christian Resources and told to use whatever they would like for the second weekly devotional. The session concluded in prayer.

Week 6

Session 6 was a study about how the church can partner with parents. This session also included a brief history on family ministry and the different models used within the church throughout the years. The session was started with a discussion on the

parents' homework and a review of session 5. After session 5's main points were surveyed, session 6 began with a discussion on the contemporary history of family ministry.

The contemporary history of family ministry is an important topic to this project. It is important to understand how family ministry began and where it went wrong if I am going to allege that there is a problem with how the church programs their children and youth ministries. Thus, I briefly reviewed the beginning of Sunday school, the Cadets of Temperance, and various youth societies that existed in the nineteenth century. I also reviewed the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the impact the Civil War and Industrial Revolution had on families, and the beginnings of formal youth ministries. This historical review took about ten minutes.

Once I briefly reviewed family ministry's history, I presented the family-equipping model as the preferred ministry philosophy. I concisely reviewed the family-based and family-integrated models before explaining how the family-equipping model works. As reviewed above in "Contemporary Models of Family Ministry" in chapter 3, I explained to parents that the family-equipping model is a recent development within evangelical churches to champion parents as the disciplers of their children; it can almost be viewed as a medium between family-based and family-integrated models. This model's core belief is that parents are the primary Bible teachers and the church partners with them in this endeavor. Family-equipping is more of a shift in ministry philosophy than it is a program. It is also a philosophy that should impact every ministry within the church, not just the children and youth ministries.

After explaining the philosophy of family-equipping ministry, the question was asked, "What would this look like in our church?" I explained that to carry out a family-equipping ministry, church leaders must ensure that their ministries involve, resource, and equip parents. Therefore, adult Sunday school classes focus on teaching godly parenting. The men's ministry emphasizes accountability and the importance of fathers being the spiritual leaders of their families. The women's ministry highlights the importance of

wives supporting, loving, and submitting to their husbands' leadership. The children and youth ministries involve parents in leadership, provide them with the resources they need to lead their family, and equip them on godly parenting through classes and occasional seminars. These classes and seminars can be offered at times that families are already at church. Senior adult ministries can stress the importance that grandparents have in raising grandchildren. The senior pastor regularly communicates from the pulpit the church's conviction that parents are the primary disciplers of their children, while offering occasional Wednesday night Bible study classes on how to do it with excellence. The church's educational and discipleship ministries should offer short-term, small-group studies to ensure that parents are resourced and equipped to carry out their God-given roles. The mission's ministry can offer family mission trips and stress the importance of families doing missions together. I summarized by saying every ministry within the church should champion the family and stress the importance of the Great Commission, starting with the family unit.

After explaining how family-equipping ministry functions within the life of the church, one parent commented, "This makes so much sense. How did we miss this?" It was a moment of truth and wake-up for some parents in the room. Many parents nodded in agreement. At the end of the session, parents were given another homework assignment: have three family devotionals over the next week and be prepared to discuss them at the next session. This assignment ended session 6.

Week 7

Session 7 was different from the other studies. In this session, parents were given specific resources that can be used to disciple their children. Thus, there was not any biblical teaching. However, instruction was given on how to use the resources that were presented. We reviewed the homework and lesson from the previous week. Parents were becoming more comfortable with praying and discipling their children. After a brief

discussion, I played a video that reminded parents that they are the primary disciplers of their children. It served to review everything taught over the last six sessions.

The purpose of session 7 was to expose parents to current resources on family discipleship. The first resource presented was *Truth and Grace Memory Books* from Founder's Press. This series gives parents fourteen years' worth of catechisms, memory verses, hymns, and creeds. Parents can begin using this resource once their child turns three years old. In addition to the catechisms, this series takes children through the New Testament twice, the four Gospels three times, Proverbs five times, and the book of Psalms twice.

The next type of resource presented were storybook Bibles. The first storybook Bible reviewed was *The Jesus Storybook Bible*. This resource takes the major stories of the Bible and shows children how Jesus fits into all of them. Unlike other storybook Bibles, *The Jesus Storybook Bible* fits each story together like a puzzle. Also presented was *The Biggest Story* by Kevin DeYoung. Endorsed by Christian leaders like Matt Chandler, Rick Warren, and Randy Alcorn, *The Biggest Story* shows children how every story of the Bible connects to each other. These were the only two storybook Bibles presented.

In addition to books, I reviewed a mobile application called *New City Catechism*. Created by Tim Keller, "New City Catechism" gives parents 52 catechisms to review with their children. This application also includes devotionals on each catechism written by contemporary authors like John Piper, Tim Keller, and Kevin DeYoung. The devotionals also include historical authors like Saint Augustine, John Calvin, and Martin Luther. The "New City Catechisms" application is free, but also available to buy online in a book if parents prefer.

Many parents often overlook the final resource that was reviewed. However, it was used as a homework component in sessions 3-6. This resource was the take-home sheet included in their child's Sunday school lesson each week. These take-home sheets give parents one devotional each week that corresponds with what their children are

learning in Sunday school. In addition, if the parent's Sunday school class is using the adult version of the same curriculum, it matches what they are studying. This resource allows parents to reinforce what their children and youth are learning on Sunday mornings.

After presenting the resources, parents were asked if they had any questions. Next, they were asked to fill out a the "Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey" so I could gauge how their perceptions and habits on family discipleship had changed since the first session. After parents finished survey, they were presented with their final homework assignment: they were encouraged to continue discipling their children at all cost. They were told that family discipleship is not a class or seminar they take for seven weeks. It is a lifestyle that they must make a priority. I thanked them for being a part of the class and we dismissed in prayer.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate this project's effectiveness and to determine if its purpose was fulfilled. The purpose of this project was to equip parents of children birth through eighteen years of age to be the primary disciplers of their family at Pickens First Baptist Church in Pickens, South Carolina. The project had four goals. The first goal was to assess the discipleship practices among PFBC parents by utilizing the "Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey" from *Family Ministry Field Guide* by Timothy Paul Jones. The second goal was to develop a seven-week curriculum to educate and train parents to be the primary disciplers of their children. The curriculum was developed throughout the course of this doctoral program, primarily during the writing of chapters 2 and 3. The third goal was to equip parents for family discipleship using the seven-week curriculum and through one-on-one interactions facilitated by a leader in a discussion group. This component was executed during the implementation phase of the project. The final goal was to develop a long-term plan to increase family discipleship practices among member families. This goal was emphasized to parents throughout the implementation phase, with special attention given in session 7 of the curriculum.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

As mentioned, the purpose of the project was to equip parents of children birth through eleven years of age to be the primary disciplers of their families at Pickens First Baptist Church in Pickens, South Carolina. Biblical discipleship is the parents' responsibility, but it can only occur after a child has to come to faith in Christ. Thus,

parents' first duty to their child is evangelism, followed by a discipleship plan. An effective approach to both components is weekly family devotionals. Family devotionals allow parents to tailor family times to suit their children's age and spiritual needs. These devotionals can be as simple as reading a story from a Bible storybook and prayer. These books introduce children to the major stories of the Bible and begin to show how the Bible fits together. As children get older, parents can introduce worksheets from their child's Sunday school curriculum, catechisms, and memory verses. Indeed, some children will grow up thinking they are Christian since they will know nothing else. This consequence has positive and negative implications. The positive effect is that children are exposed to the gospel at an early age, making it easier for them to accept the truths of Christianity later in life. The downside is that no one is a Christian just because they grew up in a Christian home. Parents must make a concerted effort to explain the gospel to their children.

The purpose of this project was accomplished. Parents were taught, encouraged, and reminded that their children's discipleship is primarily their responsibility. It was also emphasized throughout the implementation phase that discipleship is done in partnership with the local church. Parents were given pertinent Scripture from the Old and New Testaments that clearly teaches their role. They were also taught how a complementarian view of biblical manhood and womanhood further emphasizes their responsibility to teach the Bible to their children. Finally, they were given valuable resources to aid them to accomplish this endeavor. Parents left the seven-week study with a biblical understanding of their role and how to apply it in an effective manner.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

Goal 1

As stated, the project's first goal was to assess the discipleship practices among church members of PFBC with children. To make this assessment, the "Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey" was utilized (see appendix 1). The survey

was given at the first and last sessions for research purposes associated with this project. To learn about family discipleship practices before the project was implemented, questions 1, 11, 12, and 13 were used from the first session’s questionnaire. A total of 21 families participated in the first pre-project survey. What follows below is a summary of the results.

Table 1. Parental Perceptions Pre-Project Survey responses for goal 1

Parental Perceptions	# of families that strongly disagree	# of families that disagree	# of families that somewhat disagree	# of families that somewhat agree	# of families that agree	# of families that strongly agree
01. I prioritize consistent family devotional or worship times in my family’s schedule.	3	7	2	6	1	2

Table 2. Parental Practices Pre-Project Survey responses for goal 1

Parental Practices	# of families choosing “never”	# of families choosing “once”	# of families choosing “a couple of times”	# of families choosing “three or four times”	# of families choosing “five or six times”	# of families choosing “seven or more times”
11. How many times in the past <i>month</i> have I read or discussed the Bible with any of my children?	1	0	7	4	3	6
12. How many times in the past <i>month</i> have I discussed any biblical or spiritual matters with any of my children while engaging in day-to-day activities?	1	1	4	4	5	6
13. How many times in the past <i>two months</i> has my family engaged in any family devotional or worship time in our home?	4	2	6	3	4	2

Over 50 percent of the families that participated in the first survey did not prioritize family discipleship. When parents were asked during session 1 about priorities for families today, academics and sports were at the top of the list. Parents' mismatched priorities coincided with their family devotionals results. When asked how many times in the last two months they had led family devotionals with their children, Over 50 percent of the families said two or less. However, parents were more likely to talk with their children about spiritual matters while engaging in day-to-day activities or read the Bible with them; 71 percent of the parents answered three or more times in the past month.

The results of this survey suggest that children were getting most of their discipleship from the church. This finding correlates with a society that compartmentalizes their children's activities: children go to school to learn, to the ball field to play sports, to the music teacher to learn piano, and the church to be disciplined. For parents to learn that they are the primary teachers of their children is antithetical to how society is structured. In fact, one parent asked during session 1 why they had never heard that parents are the primary disciplers of their children. This observation illustrates why the family-equipping philosophy of church ministry is so important. As Jones stated, parents must be "acknowledged, equipped, and held accountable for the discipleship of their children."¹ Family-equipping ministry is one of the ways the church can teach parents to fulfill their God-given roles. Finally, this data agrees with what Jones discovered in his survey: 1 in 5 parents had never read or even discussed the Bible with their children.² Given the data collected and the interpretation thereof, the first goal of this project was accomplished.

¹Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011), 144.

²Ibid., 28-29.

Goal 2

The second goal of the project was to develop a seven-week curriculum to educate and train parents to be the primary disciplers of their children at PFBC. This goal was executed throughout the course of this doctoral program. As I read books, researched, and presented papers within the doctoral seminars, I collected information to develop the seven-week curriculum. The curriculum was written to define family discipleship, exegete pertinent passages from the Old and New Testaments, teach biblical manhood and womanhood, and present current resources available to parents to disciple their children. Furthermore, half of session 6 was spent surveying contemporary family ministry history to show parents how the church arrived at its current practices. Finally, parents were given homework after each session to ensure family discipleship was taking place during the implementation phase.

To evaluate this goal, the “Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey” was used before and after the project was implemented. Emphasis was placed on questions 3, 6, 7, and 8 of the survey. As seen in table 3, most families do not believe the church is where children should receive most of their Bible teaching. In fact, 90 percent of the parents said they either disagreed strongly or disagreed that their child’s discipleship is primarily the church’s responsibility. In addition, 95 percent of parents did not believe that church leaders were responsible. Finally, 75 percent of the participating parents reported that PFBC had helped them develop a clear path for their child’s spiritual growth.

To evaluate the effectiveness of goal 2, the “Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey” was used in the last session to see if the parents’ perceptions had changed. Nineteen families participated in the post-project survey. Table 4 shows the results after project implementation.

Table 3. Parental Perceptions Pre-Project Survey responses for goal 2

Parental Perceptions	# of families that strongly disagree	# of families that disagree	# of families that somewhat disagree	# of families that somewhat agree	# of families that agree	# of families that strongly agree
03. The church is where children ought to receive most of their Bible teaching.	7	12	0	2	0	0
06. Parents, and particularly fathers, have a responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children.	0	0	0	1	5	15
07. Church leaders are the people primarily responsible for discipling my children and teaching them to share the gospel with others. [REVERSE SCORED]	8	12	0	1	0	0
08. My church has helped me to develop a clear plan for my child's spiritual growth.	1	2	2	8	7	1

Table 4. Parental Perceptions Post-Project Survey responses for goal 2

Parental Perceptions	# of families that strongly disagree	# of families that disagree	# of families that somewhat disagree	# of families that somewhat agree	# of families that agree	# of families that strongly agree
03. The church is where children ought to receive most of their Bible teaching.	10	6	0	3	0	0
06. Parents, and particularly fathers, have a responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children.	0	0	0	0	4	15
07. Church leaders are the people primarily responsible for discipling my children and teaching them to share the gospel with others. [REVERSE SCORED]	9	10	0	0	0	0
08. My church has helped me to develop a clear plan for my child's spiritual growth.	0	0	0	5	9	5

As can be seen in table 4, most parental perceptions were positively influenced by the curriculum. Eighty-four percent of parents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the idea that their children should receive most of their Bible teaching from the church. This decreased 6 percent from the pre-project survey. There is no clear explanation for this decline since this point was emphasized to parents throughout the implementation of the project; however, I will propose the following possibilities. First, parents may have filled out the survey in haste. Some people tend to fill out paperwork they deem unimportant without fully reading each question. Also, not all parents were present at every session. Thus, they did not hear the Bible's teaching on this topic. Finally, some parents may disagree with the research. They may not have found the information convincing. However, 100 percent of the parents agreed or strongly agreed that they were the primary disciplers of their children. In addition, more parents felt like the church had helped them develop a clear plan for their child's spiritual growth. One hundred percent of the parents somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed that the church had helped them develop a clear plan for their child's growth.

These results concur with the research detailed in chapter 3. Throughout the implementation of the project, parents were exposed to biblical teaching on manhood, womanhood, family, and church partnership. Fathers were held to the high standards of Scripture and taught Piper's definition of biblical manhood: "mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's differing relationships."³ Thus, parents began to view themselves and their roles through a biblical worldview. Overall, the seven-week curriculum positively influenced parental perceptions. Therefore, the second goal of this project was successfully accomplished.

³John Piper, "A Vision of Biblical Complementarity: Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 35.

Goal 3

The third goal of the project was to equip parents for family discipleship using the seven-week curriculum and through one-on-one interaction; this objective was closely related to the second goal. The primary purpose of the curriculum was to equip parents to be the primary disciplers of their children. This purpose was fulfilled naturally by parents going through the study. Parents not only received an understanding of what the Bible says on the subject, but also the conviction the Holy Spirit brings when His people do not surrender to and obey His Word. In addition, parents were given weekly family devotional assignments. These family devotional assignments were then discussed in the following session to address any questions that parents had. The assignments and discussions encouraged parents to utilize what they were learning in the class sessions. Parents that did the assignments found them encouraging.

To evaluate this goal, the “Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey” was used before and after the curriculum was taught. Emphasis was placed on questions 4, 5, 7, and 8 of the survey. Table 5 shows the results from the survey before project implementation.

As seen in pre-course survey, most parents felt confident answering spiritual questions their child may ask. This confidence may be linked to the percentage of families that felt like their church had helped them develop a clear plan for their child’s spiritual growth. Over 75 percent of the participants believed the church had helped them in this regard. In addition, 95 percent of the participants did not believe that church leaders are responsible for teaching their child to share the gospel. Finally, 86 percent of the parents said they would not substitute family meals for academic or athletic success.

Table 5. Parental Perceptions Pre-Project Survey responses for goal 3

Parental Perceptions	# of families that strongly disagree	# of families that disagree	# of families that somewhat disagree	# of families that somewhat agree	# of families that agree	# of families that strongly agree
04. When my child spontaneously asks a biblical or theological question, I really wish that my child would have asked a minister or other church leader instead of me.	7	10	1	3	0	0
05. I want to do whatever it takes for my child to succeed in certain sports or school activities— even if that means my family is too busy some weeks to eat any meals together.	8	10	2	0	0	1
07. Church leaders are the people primarily responsible for discipling my children and teaching them to share the gospel with others. [REVERSE SCORED]	8	12	0	1	0	0
08. My church has helped me to develop a clear plan for my child’s spiritual growth.	1	2	2	8	7	1

To evaluate the effectiveness of goal 3, the “Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey” was used at the last session to see if the parents’ perceptions had changed. Table 6 shows the results after project implementation. Parental perceptions differed before and after project implementation. When answering question 4 in the pre-project survey, 80 percent of parents felt confident in answering their child’s spiritual questions. However, after the project was completed, this number decreased to 70 percent. There is no clear explanation for this decline; however, I will propose the following possibility.

Table 6. Parental Perceptions Post-Project Survey responses for goal 3

Parental Perceptions	# of families that strongly disagree	# of families that disagree	# of families that somewhat disagree	# of families that somewhat agree	# of families that agree	# of families that strongly agree
04. When my child spontaneously asks a biblical or theological question, I really wish that my child would have asked a minister or other church leader instead of me.	5	8	5	1	0	0
05. I want to do whatever it takes for my child to succeed in certain sports or school activities—even if that means my family is too busy some weeks to eat any meals together.	10	6	3	0	0	0
07. Church leaders are the people primarily responsible for discipling my children and teaching them to share the gospel with others. [REVERSE SCORED]	9	10	0	0	0	0
08. My church has helped me to develop a clear plan for my child’s spiritual growth.	0	0	0	5	9	5

Throughout the project implementation, parents were introduced to theological concepts not commonly discussed. Topics such as Trinitarian inter-relations and how submission relationships impact families were reviewed. Some of these ideas are not usually reviewed in a Sunday school or discipleship class. Teaching these advanced theological topics were not necessary and might have served to confuse parents. Thus, parents may not have felt as equipped as I would have liked them to be. In addition, the volume of information shared in some sessions could have had a negative effect on the parents involved. These contributing factors may explain the 10 percent decline. Question 5 remained the same, as 86 percent of parents felt like family meals are more important than academics and sports. Furthermore, question 7 remained at 95 percent before and

after project implementation; parents did not believe church leaders were primarily responsible for discipling their child. Finally, question 8 revealed a drastic difference. Before project implementation, only 38 percent of the parents agreed or strongly agreed that the church had helped them develop a clear plan for their child’s growth. After project implementation, this number increased to 74 percent. This augment was a natural result of parents participating in the project. It is also the result a family-equipping ministry can have in the lives of parents. Overall, this goal was accomplished since many parents felt like the teaching they received equipped them in discipling their children.

Goal 4

The final goal of the project was to develop a long-term plan to increase family discipleship practices at home. This goal proved difficult. The families that participated in the study came from all walks of life. Some families had babies and others had little children. Other families had teenagers. Nevertheless, this goal was executed by presenting various resources available to help parents disciple their children. Curriculums, catechisms, storybook Bibles, and devotionals included in their child’s Sunday school curriculum were reviewed. After the presentation, parents were encouraged to use a resource(s) that best fit their family’s needs.

To evaluate this goal, the “Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey” was used before and after the curriculum was taught. Emphasis was placed on questions 8-14 of the survey. Tables 7 and 8 show the results from the survey before project implementation.

Table 7. Parental Perceptions Pre-Project Survey responses for goal 4

Parental Perceptions	# of families that strongly disagree	# of families that disagree	# of families that somewhat disagree	# of families that somewhat agree	# of families that agree	# of families that strongly agree
08. My church has helped me to develop a clear plan for my child’s spiritual growth.	1	2	2	8	7	1

Table 8. Parental Practices Pre-Project Survey responses for goal 4

Parental Practices	# of families choosing “never”	# of families choosing “once”	# of families choosing “a couple of times”	# of families choosing “three or four times”	# of families choosing “five or six times”	# of families choosing “seven or more times”
09. Other than mealtimes, how many times in the past <i>week</i> have I prayed aloud with any of my children?	4	2	3	7	3	2
10. How many times in the past <i>week</i> has my family eaten a meal together with television, music, and other similar media turned off?	0	2	5	4	3	7
11. How many times in the past <i>month</i> have I read or discussed the Bible with any of my children?	1	0	7	4	3	6
12. How many times in the past <i>month</i> have I discussed any biblical or spiritual matters with any of my children while engaging in day-to-day activities?	1	1	4	4	5	6
13. How many times in the past <i>two months</i> has my family engaged in any family devotional or worship time in our home?	4	2	6	3	4	2
14. How many times in the past <i>two months</i> have I talked with my spouse or with a close friend about my children’s spiritual development?	6	2	7	2	1	3

As seen in the pre-project survey, parental perceptions and practices varied greatly. Therefore, to evaluate the effectiveness of goal 4, the “Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey” was used at the last session to see if the parents’ perceptions had changed. Next are the results after project implementation.

Table 9. Parental Perceptions Post-Project Survey responses for goal 4

Parental Perceptions	# of families that strongly disagree	# of families that disagree	# of families that somewhat disagree	# of families that somewhat agree	# of families that agree	# of families that strongly agree
08. My church has helped me to develop a clear plan for my child's spiritual growth.	0	0	0	5	9	5

Table 10. Parental Practices Post-Project Survey responses for goal 4

Parental Practices	# of families choosing "never"	# of families choosing "once"	# of families choosing "a couple of times"	# of families choosing "three or four times"	# of families choosing "five or six times"	# of families choosing "seven or more times"
09. Other than mealtimes, how many times in the past <i>week</i> have I prayed aloud with any of my children?	0	0	6	4	6	3
10. How many times in the past <i>week</i> has my family eaten a meal together with television, music, and other similar media turned off?	3	2	3	4	1	6
11. How many times in the past <i>month</i> have I read or discussed the Bible with any of my children?	0	0	5	3	3	8
12. How many times in the past <i>month</i> have I discussed any biblical or spiritual matters with any of my children while engaging in day-to-day activities?	0	0	3	5	4	7
13. How many times in the past <i>two months</i> has my family engaged in any family devotional or worship time in our home?	0	2	2	4	2	9
14. How many times in the past <i>two months</i> have I talked with my spouse or with a close friend about my children's spiritual development?	0	1	7	4	3	4

As seen in table 10, the parental perception for question 8 increased 24 percent. On the pre-project survey, 76 percent of parents either somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed that the church had helped them develop a clear plan for their child's spiritual growth. On the post-project survey, 100 percent of the parents somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed. As mentioned in goal 3, this increase is the likely outcome of the parents participating in the project.

Consequently, all the parental practices increased in 7 out of 8 areas. When asked, other than meal times, how many times they had prayed aloud with their child, 57 percent of parents said either 3 to 4 times, 5 to 6 times, or 7 or more times. On the post-project survey, this number increased to 69 percent. When parents were asked how many times they had read or discussed the Bible with their children, this number also increased from 62 percent to 74 percent. When asked how many times in the past month they had discussed any biblical or spiritual matters while engaging in day-to-day activities, this number increased from 71 percent to 85 percent. When asked how many times in the past two months their family had engaged in family devotionals or worship time in the home, this number increased from 43 percent to 80 percent. Finally, when asked how many times in the past two months they had talked with their spouse or close friend about their child's spiritual development, this number increased from 29 percent to 58 percent. The only area where parental practices declined was in regard to eating a meal together with television, music, and other media turned off. This number decreased from 67 percent in the pre-project survey to 58 percent in the post-project survey. This decline may be the result of modern-day technology. Smartphone, tablets, and other multimedia devices have so inundated the culture that many people have a difficult time not using them. Some parents may be operating these devices for entertainment, communication, work, or a combination of the three while spending time with their family.

Overall, it appeared that parents were beginning to form a pattern of family discipleship. However, it cannot be assumed that parents were going to develop a long-

term plan for family discipleship. While the parental perceptions and practices did increase, it is ultimately up to the parents to take what they learned in the project and make it a part of their family's life. Thus, it is impossible to say that goal 4 was accomplished in the long-term. While parents were motivated to disciple their children during the project, they must have the discipline to continue in the days and months ahead.

Strengths of the Project

One of the strengths of the project was that it was embedded in the biblical truth of parental roles. God designated parents as the primary disciplers of their children. This truth was expounded in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Psalm 78:1-8, Ephesians 6:1-4, and Matthew 28:18-20. Parents are not allowed to delegate this responsibility to the church, pastor, or Sunday school teacher, no matter how eager they may be to do so. Due to parents' tendency to compartmentalize roles and responsibilities when it comes to raising children, the church is sometimes viewed as children's spiritual training ground. During this project, I showed parents from God's Word the responsibility they have to teach their children about spiritual matters. I also encouraged them on a weekly basis through discussion and assigned homework that family discipleship was not a difficult or intimidating task.

This project also challenged parents on their assumptions of biblical manhood and womanhood. Families today have many presuppositions regarding gender roles. This is a topic where discussion is practically avoided in fear of offending another person. Many fathers today have a hands-off approach when it comes to providing any kind of biblical instruction to their families. Fathers were reminded throughout this project that they have been given the primary role in the family as a teacher. They must teach with their words, lifestyle, and priorities. Mothers were also reminded that they too must be involved in their children's discipleship, but the father is primarily responsible.

A practical outcome of the two strengths mentioned is that parents were exposed to biblical truth. Many parents throughout the project mentioned that they had

never heard that they were the primary disciplers of their children. One parent of two teenage boys was irritated because she wished she had learned this biblical truth sooner. After the first session, she asked how the church arrived at the way it currently does family ministry. I briefly answered the question but assured her that question would be answered in greater detail in session 6. It did not take long to convince parents that something was wrong with how the church programs.

A final strength of the project was how it contrasted complementarianism and egalitarianism. Due to the current social norms that exist in the United States, complementarianism can sometimes be seen negatively. There are several reasons for this view outside of the church, but inside the church, there is just a misunderstanding of how complementarianism truly works. Out of all the topics discussed, I expected to be questioned and challenged most on affirming complementarianism. However, I received positive feedback from both husbands and wives. I emphasized that men and women are created in God's image; thus, they are equal in value, worth, and dignity. I explained that men and women bring a different set of skills to the table when it comes to raising children. The skills that men have complement the skills that women have, and vice-versa. I used the Trinity as an example of complementarianism. I clarified that all three members are completely God and equal, but they have different roles that complement one another.⁴ This explanation helped parents view complementarianism biblically.

Weaknesses of the Project

Even though the project had some very helpful features, it did have a few weaknesses. First, the curriculum was too long. Just like many short-term discipleship classes at PFBC, attendance was high for the first few weeks. Around session 4, attendance started to decline. Various reasons could be given, such as illnesses or

⁴Andreas J. Kostenberger and David W. Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Foundation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 26.

weather, but I could sense that many parents lost their excitement about the topic around week 5. Thus, the project should have been at least one or two weeks shorter. I could have combined weeks 6 and 7 because these sessions did not take as long to review.

Another weakness of the project was the age range of the parents. Parents with children of all ages were encouraged to attend, though I should have limited the project to parents with children birth through 11 years of age. There were a few compelling reasons for not limiting the age. First, the pastoral staff felt strongly that parents of all ages needed to attend the study. Second, given the context of PFBC, some parents would not have appreciated being told they could not attend a parenting class. Based upon the size of the group that attended, family discipleship was obviously a topic of concern for many of the families. Finally, the pastoral staff was concerned that many millennial families would either not register at all or only attend a couple sessions. For the most part, we were wrong. Many younger families did register and came to over half of the sessions.

Finally, parents were not given a plan on how to disciple their children at the end of project. Even though parents were taught topics like biblical manhood and womanhood, complementarianism, and pertinent Scripture on family discipleship, they were expected to create a plan of discipleship for their family on their own. This limitation was unavoidable. In the final session, we had roughly 25 families. It would have been impossible for me to create a discipleship plan for every family. Thus, at the final session we reviewed various resources available to help them to disciple their children. I explained that they could contact me directly if they needed assistance with developing an individualized plan.

What I Would Do Differently

One adjustment I would make would be to limit the age range of the parents. Originally I was only going to offer this class to parents with children in elementary school. However, I was concerned that this limitation would be too restricting and not provide sufficient participation to conduct the project. This concern was shared by the

entire pastoral staff. Thus, the decision was made to open the project to parents with children of all ages. Even though more families signed up than expected, I was still able to conduct the project as planned.

In addition to limiting the age-range of parents, I would have also video recorded each session. While this project was being conducted, our county experienced the worse outbreak of influenza in history. Therefore, many people missed at least one session. Some of these families asked me to email them my notes and PowerPoint presentation. It would have been nice to have each session recorded and uploaded onto the church's website.

Finally, I would have budgeted for a small breakfast at each session. This may not be essential for implementing the project, but I had one family graciously cook breakfast for the first and last sessions of the project. Surprisingly, attendance was higher at both sessions. In addition, there was a lighter mood overall during those sessions and parents were more willing to discuss the topic.

Theological Reflections

The project was written from a conservative and biblical worldview. The Bible is inerrant, infallible, and authoritative in everything that it teaches. Thus, this project was not concerned about contemporary understandings of parenting or a postmodern understanding of gender roles. This project also did not accept modern culture's understanding of manhood and womanhood. Therefore, this project challenged some of the accepted norms of the twenty-first century. While most parents who participated in this study were conservative Christians, some twenty-first century standards were accepted as a way of life.

One standard I challenged was the notion that the spiritual welfare of their children was the responsibility of the church. Today's society has a professional for every realm of life—schoolteachers that specialize in academics, coaches who concentrate on one sport, and pastors who are seen as the spiritual experts. So, people naturally think, “Who

better to teach my child the Scriptures and to live a good moral life than him?” This humanistic worldview conflicts with the biblical worldview. While having a math teacher explain trigonometry to a child or a coach show how to execute specific football plays makes sense, the Bible does not allow this for spiritual upbringing. Thus, if the Bible is the Christian parent’s authority in life, then mothers and fathers must submit to its command. Christian parenting must be rooted in a right understanding of Scripture.

Another barrier I experienced in this project was with parents who did not do the homework associated with the curriculum. The purpose of these assignments was to help parents implement what they were learning. I wanted parents to begin discipleship during the curriculum in case they had any questions. These questions could have then been addressed at a following session. Parents may have also received advice and encouragement from the other parents who may have had similar concerns.

PFBC still has a lot of work to do when trying to equip its people. Conflicting worldviews, laziness, pride, and idolatry have crept into the thinking of the members. To overcome these vices, church leadership will need to patiently teach and shepherd its members. Apathy did not sneak in overnight; this mindset took years. In the same way, it will take some time to help members rethink the way they are raising their children in light of God’s commands.

Personal Reflections

During the implementation phase, I was surprised by how many families do not disciple their children. I was not expecting family discipleship to be the norm, but it was obvious that the vast majority of parents did almost nothing. The parents that participated in the project represented the congregation and community well. Deacons, Sunday school teachers, active church members, and a couple of families from other churches wanted to be a part of the project. Out of everyone that participated, only 5 to 10 percent of the attendees truly disciplined their children.

I also realized there was a misunderstanding of what family discipleship entails. Some parents thought family discipleship was simply bringing their children to church, while others thought praying a couple times a week with their children was enough. Most parents knew that family discipleship meant teaching their children the Bible, but they were not doing it. So, that begged the question: if most parents knew family discipleship involves teaching their children Scripture, why were they not doing it? Several reasons can be given to answer this question. For example, maybe the church was not adequately equipping them. Perhaps they were not aware of the resources available to help them with this important task. Also, they may feel unprepared or inadequate for the task. Whatever the reason, I could not help but think that their explanations were invalid. Our church has historically equipped, resourced, and trained parents in family discipleship. This topic was not new. Also, we live in a digital age. Most things we could ever want to do can be learned beginning with a Google search or YouTube video. Maybe I was being unrealistic, harsh, or unsympathetic. However, if something like family discipleship was really important to parents, why were they not doing something about it?

During the project, I was able to interact with families in a way I had never experienced. Each session incorporated a discussion time over the homework assignments. These homework assignments encouraged parents to pray and teach their children the Bible. Some of the feedback that parents gave was encouraging overall. Most parents that did the homework, and were willing to discuss it, described their family devotionals as “precious” and “good.” It was rewarding to see parents truly disciple their children for the first time have positive experiences.

However, not all parents had positive experiences, and many did not do the homework. Parents of youth tended to struggle more. One parent described their

devotional time as “awkward” and “difficult.” This mother admitted that they never had family devotionals before and her boys were not agreeable with praying and reading the Bible in front of them. Another parent of a youth said her son just refused to pray. These negative reactions demonstrate the need for starting family devotionals early in a child’s life. Parents with younger children that did the homework had a more positive experience than parents with older students. Interestingly, older teenage girls were more open to having family devotionals than older teenage boys. Also, older teenage boys that had involved fathers were more open to family devotionals than their counterparts.

Personally, this project affirmed the main presupposition I had before implementing the project. The biggest influencer in the family was the father. When fathers were involved in the church and placed a priority on Christ in the home, these families tended to have less resistance from their children regarding family devotionals. Also, each of these families seemed to be healthier and each family member tended to be more open about their faith.

Conclusion

Family discipleship in the twenty-first century can seem like an overwhelming task for parents and vocational pastors. With the pressures of academics, athletics, extra-curricular activities, work, and other responsibilities, many parents do not think there is time to personally disciple their child. Also, the social norm of having a “professional” to care for almost every area of our children’s life creeps its way into the church. Thus, many parents believe that discipleship becomes the job of a ministry professional. These two hurdles must be overcome. Parents must be reminded of Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Psalm 78:1-8, Ephesians 6:1-4, and Matthew 28:18-20. Parents will need reminders from the church that the task of discipling their children is their responsibility. Furthermore, the church must do a better job at resourcing, equipping, and training parents for this task.

God's church has been told to go and make disciples, and this includes helping parents raise their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. When the family and church partner together to disciple children and youth, they can have a greater impact on families, communities, and the world for God's glory. Amen.

APPENDIX 1

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP PERCEPTIONS AND SURVEY

Parental Perceptions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
01. I prioritize consistent family devotional or worship times in my family's schedule.						
02. I would like to do regular family devotions or Bible reading in our home, but my family is just too busy for that right now. It will probably be that way for quite a while.						
03. The church is where children ought to receive most of their Bible teaching.						
04. When my child spontaneously asks a biblical or theological question, I really wish that my child would have asked a minister or other church leader instead of me.						
05. I want to do whatever it takes for my child to succeed in certain sports or school activities—even if that means my family is too busy some weeks to eat any meals together.						
06. Parents, and particularly fathers, have a responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children.						
07. Church leaders are the people primarily responsible for discipling my children and teaching them to share the gospel with others. [REVERSE SCORED]						
08. My church has helped me to develop a clear plan for my child's spiritual growth.						

Parental Practices	Never	Once	A couple of times	Three or four times	Five or six times	Seven or more times
09. Other than mealtimes, how many times in the past <i>week</i> have I prayed aloud with any of my children?						
10. How many times in the past <i>week</i> has my family eaten a meal together with television, music, and other similar media turned off?						
11. How many times in the past <i>month</i> have I read or discussed the Bible with any of my children?						
12. How many times in the past <i>month</i> have I discussed any biblical or spiritual matters with any of my children while engaging in day-to-day activities?						
13. How many times in the past <i>two months</i> has my family engaged in any family devotional or worship time in our home?						
14. How many times in the past <i>two months</i> have I talked with my spouse or with a close friend about my children's spiritual development?						
15. How many times in the past <i>year</i> have I intentionally participated with one or more of my children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church?						
16. How often in the past <i>year</i> has any church leader made any contact with me to help me to engage actively in my child's spiritual development?						

Survey adapted from Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011), 202-3. Used by permission.

APPENDIX 2

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP PERCEPTIONS AND SURVEY:
PRE-PROJECT RESULTS

Table A1. Pre-project results for parental perceptions

Parental Perceptions	# of families that strongly disagree	# of families that disagree	# of families that somewhat disagree	# of families that somewhat agree	# of families that agree	# of families that strongly agree
01. I prioritize consistent family devotional or worship times in my family's schedule.	3	7	2	6	1	2
02. I would like to do regular family devotions or Bible reading in our home, but my family is just too busy for that right now. It will probably be that way for quite a while.	4	3	2	5	5	2
03. The church is where children ought to receive most of their Bible teaching.	7	12	0	2	0	0
04. When my child spontaneously asks a biblical or theological question, I really wish that my child would have asked a minister or other church leader instead of me.	7	10	1	3	0	0
05. I want to do whatever it takes for my child to succeed in certain sports or school activities— even if that means my family is too busy some weeks to eat any meals together.	8	10	2	0	0	1

Table A1 continued

06. Parents, and particularly fathers, have a responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children.	0	0	0	1	5	15
07. Church leaders are the people primarily responsible for discipling my children and teaching them to share the gospel with others. [REVERSE SCORED]	8	12	0	1	0	0
08. My church has helped me to develop a clear plan for my child's spiritual growth.	1	2	2	8	7	1

Table A2. Pre-project results for parental practices

Parental Practices	# of families choosing “never”	# of families choosing “once”	# of families choosing “A couple of times”	# of families choosing “three or four times”	# of families choosing “five or six times”	# of families choosing “seven or more times”
09. Other than mealtimes, how many times in the past <i>week</i> have I prayed aloud with any of my children?	4	2	3	7	3	2
10. How many times in the past <i>week</i> has my family eaten a meal together with television, music, and other similar media turned off?	0	2	5	4	3	7
11. How many times in the past <i>month</i> have I read or discussed the Bible with any of my children?	1	0	7	4	3	6
12. How many times in the past <i>month</i> have I discussed any biblical or spiritual matters with any of my children while engaging in day-to-day activities?	1	1	4	4	5	6
13. How many times in the past <i>two months</i> has my family engaged in any family devotional or worship time in our home?	4	2	6	3	4	2
14. How many times in the past <i>two months</i> have I talked with my spouse or with a close friend about my children’s spiritual development?	6	2	7	2	1	3
15. How many times in the past <i>year</i> have I intentionally participated with one or more of my children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church?	10	4	3	1	0	3
16. How often in the past <i>year</i> has any church leader made any contact with me to help me to engage actively in my child’s spiritual development?	10	3	4	1	1	2

Survey adapted from Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011), 202-3. Used by permission.

APPENDIX 3

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP PERCEPTIONS AND SURVEY:
POST-PROJECT RESULTS

Table A3. Post-project results for parental perceptions

Parental Perceptions	# of families that strongly disagree	# of families that disagree	# of families that somewhat disagree	# of families that somewhat agree	# of families that agree	# of families that strongly agree
01. I prioritize consistent family devotional or worship times in my family's schedule.	0	0	1	8	7	3
02. I would like to do regular family devotions or Bible reading in our home, but my family is just too busy for that right now. It will probably be that way for quite a while.	3	3	4	5	4	0
03. The church is where children ought to receive most of their Bible teaching.	10	6	0	3	0	0
04. When my child spontaneously asks a biblical or theological question, I really wish that my child would have asked a minister or other church leader instead of me.	5	8	5	1	0	0
05. I want to do whatever it takes for my child to succeed in certain sports or school activities—even if that means my family is too busy some weeks to eat any meals together.	10	6	3	0	0	0

Table A3 continued

06. Parents, and particularly fathers, have a responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children.	0	0	0	0	4	15
07. Church leaders are the people primarily responsible for discipling my children and teaching them to share the gospel with others. [REVERSE SCORED]	9	10	0	0	0	0
08. My church has helped me to develop a clear plan for my child's spiritual growth.	0	0	0	5	9	5

Table A4. Post-project results for parental practices

Parental Practices	# of families choosing “never”	# of families choosing “once”	# of families choosing “A couple of times”	# of families choosing “three or four times”	# of families choosing “five or six times”	# of families choosing “seven or more times”
09. Other than mealtimes, how many times in the past <i>week</i> have I prayed aloud with any of my children?	0	0	6	4	6	3
10. How many times in the past <i>week</i> has my family eaten a meal together with television, music, and other similar media turned off?	3	2	3	4	1	6
11. How many times in the past <i>month</i> have I read or discussed the Bible with any of my children?	0	0	5	3	3	8
12. How many times in the past <i>month</i> have I discussed any biblical or spiritual matters with any of my children while engaging in day-to-day activities?	0	0	3	5	4	7
13. How many times in the past <i>two months</i> has my family engaged in any family devotional or worship time in our home?	0	2	2	4	2	9
14. How many times in the past <i>two months</i> have I talked with my spouse or with a close friend about my children’s spiritual development?	0	1	7	4	3	4
15. How many times in the past <i>year</i> have I intentionally participated with one or more of my children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church?	9	2	6	0	0	2
16. How often in the past <i>year</i> has any church leader made any contact with me to help me to engage actively in my child’s spiritual development?	2	3	5	2	1	6

Survey adapted from Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011), 202-3. Used by permission.

APPENDIX 4

SEMINAR SYLLABUS

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

PICKENS FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
PICKENS, SOUTH CAROLINA



Facilitator

Mike Sterlachini
Student and Family Pastor
Pickens First Baptist Church
Email: mike@fbcpickens.org
Cell Phone: 864-395-5880

I. Course Description

This seven-week seminar will explore the foundations of family discipleship by focusing on the theory, importance, and methods of being the primary disciplers of your children.

II. Course Goals

1. To understand what the Bible teaches about parents discipling children.
2. To understand the importance of being the primary disciplers of your children.
3. To understand how the family and church partner together in the discipleship of your children.
4. To understand the methods you can use at home to disciple your children.
5. To understand the resources available so that you may disciple your children effectively.

III. Course Sequence

Week 1: What is Family Discipleship?
Week 2: Biblical Foundations for Family Discipleship – Old Testament
Week 3: Biblical Foundations for Family Discipleship – New Testament
Week 4: Biblical Foundations for Manhood
Week 5: Biblical Foundations for Womanhood
Week 6: Church and Family Partnership
Week 7: Resources for Discipling Your Children

APPENDIX 5

SESSION 1

What Is Family Discipleship?

⁴“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

1. Understand What Family Ministry Is Not
2. Understand What Family Ministry Is
3. Understand Why Family Ministry Is Important

Ice Breaker

- Pass out and Family Discipleship Questionnaire.
- Show “Kid Snippets Math Class” video.
 - Ask, “Have any of you tried to teach children or youth? How did it go?”
 - If you have ever tried to teach children or youth, it may have gone something like that. They look at you like they just don’t get it.
 - How can teaching children and youth be so rewarding but also so frustrating at the same time?
 - The other night during our family devotional time, I was going over with my kids how Jesus fed over 5,000 people and noticed my son was picking his toes the whole time. Half way through the story I asked my son, “Michael, who is the main character in this story?” He looked at me dumbfounded and said, “Umm...God!” So I asked, “And who is God?” He replied, “Jesus!” “So what did Jesus do in this story?” I asked. Michael, knowing he was busted said in such a defeated tone, “I don’t know dad. I was picking my toes.” So I said, “We are going over the story of how Jesus fed over 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish. He looked at me like he had never heard that before.
 - It’s funny how we can teach our kids biblical principles and stories over and over and over again, and they act like they have never heard any of it before. Do any of you ever have that problem?

- When you hear the phrase “family ministry” or “family discipleship,” what do you think of?
 - In order to answer this fundamental question, I want to spend some time talking about what family ministry and discipleship is not.

What Family Discipleship/Ministry Is Not

- How many of you are not busy at all and have time to spare throughout the week?
- Families are busier than ever! The last thing families need today is more stuff to do.
- Family discipleship/ministry is not another church program or event added to your very busy family calendar.
 - Many times when hear about new things in the church, we will sometimes assume that this will require me to volunteer more, attend another Bible study, or get involved in another discipleship series. Let’s be very real: families are busy! We don’t need something else taking up more of our time and energy. We also don’t need someone at the church trying to make us feel guilty because we are not showing up to the new study. As you will see later, family discipleship/ministry requires us to actually take things off of the calendar and realize that not doing everything is ok and probably best.
- Family discipleship/ministry does not require you to hold family church services in your living room where you sing music, take up an offering, and dad gives a 35-minute sermon.
 - While singing songs to praise Jesus during your family devotionals is a great thing to do, that’s not necessarily what family discipleship is. Also, if you are taking up an offering and dad is preparing 35-minute sermons to preach to the family every night, we probably need to talk at the end of today’s study!
- Family discipleship/ministry does not require you to be at church every time the church doors are open.
 - Closely related to the first point, I want you to know that it is ok to not come to every church function, program, and activity. Some folks think that they must be at church every time the doors are open. While this commendable, if you family is already crazy busy from other responsibilities that life requires, this can quickly lead to burn out. With that being said, gathering with your church family should one of the highest priorities in your family. Sunday morning worship and gathering with your Sunday school class/small group should not be avoided.

What Is Family Discipleship/Ministry?

- First and foremost, family ministry is a family’s partnership with the local church with the purpose of making disciples of their children and youth.
- Therefore, family ministry has two parts: what the family does and what the church does. Let’s review what the church’s role is first.

- Dr. Timothy Paul Jones at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is the leading family ministry guru in the Evangelical Church generally and the Southern Baptist Church specifically. He happens to be my supervisor in this doctoral program.
- In his book “Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples,” Dr. Jones gives the following definition of family ministry:
 - Family ministry is “the process of intentionally and persistently coordinating a ministry’s proclamation and practices so that parents are acknowledged, trained, and held accountable as primary disciple-makers in their children’s lives” (pg. 33).
 - Family ministry is not something that only the preschool, children’s, and youth ministries do. This is a church-wide commitment. It is embedded into the church’s DNA.
 - This means that in everything the church does, we are making sure parents are championed at the primary disciplers of their children.
 - The adult Sunday school classes are focusing on teaching godly parenting.
 - The men’s ministry will emphasize accountability and the importance of fathers being the spiritual leaders of their families.
 - The women’s ministry will highlight the importance of wives supporting, loving, and submitting to their husbands’ leadership.
 - The children and youth ministries will involve parents in leadership, provide them with the resources they need to lead their family, and equip them on godly parenting through classes and occasional seminars. These classes and seminars can be offered at times that families are already at church.
 - Senior adult ministries can stress the importance that grandparents have on raising grandchildren.
 - The Senior Pastor is regularly communicating from the pulpit the church’s conviction that parents are the primary disciplers of their children, while offering occasional classes on how to do it with excellence.
 - The church’s educational and discipleship ministries should offer short-term, small-group studies to ensure that parents are resourced and equipped to carry out their God-given roles.
 - The mission’s ministry can offer family mission trips and stress the importance of families doing missions together.
 - Every ministry within the church should champion the family and stress the importance of the Great Commission starting within the family unit.

- On the surface, what are some things that PFBC is currently doing that fits this description?
- What are some things that PFBC is not currently doing or doing well?
- As I said, family ministry/discipleship is a partnership between the family and church; thus, there are two parts: what the church does and what the family does. Let's review the family's role.
 - Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Psalm 78:1-8, and Ephesians 6:1-4 clearly lays the responsibility of discipleship onto the parents. This is a responsibility that cannot be delegated to the church, a pastor, or ministry professional. Thus, simply bringing your child to church is incomplete discipleship.
 - In the same way that you help partner with your child's school to help them succeed, or partner with you child's coach by tossing the ball around in the back yard to help him or her understand the basics of the game, parents must partner with the church to reinforce biblical truths.
 - It's hard for children to grasp biblical truths if they only come to church three hours per week! And it's only three hours per week if your family is here every Wednesday night and Sunday.
 - Many families don't do that. So realistically, the average time per week that families spend worshiping at church is about 1-½ hours of a 168-hour week. Think about it . . .
 - Children and youth go to school roughly 35 hours per week, not including homework.
 - Youth can spend up to 15 hours per week playing sports.
 - Older youth can spend up to 20-30 hours per week working a part-time job.
 - According to a recent CNN poll, teenagers are spending up to 6-9 hours per day consuming media.
 - All of these factors are influences in our childrens' lives. In these environments they are bombarded with conflicting worldviews and negative peer influence. We are fooling ourselves if we think 1 ½ hours per week at church is going radically impact our kids for Christ!
 - We as parents must step up because our children are going to be influenced by something and/or someone. I don't know about you, but I want that influence to be Christ.
 - According to recent research on teenagers, involved parents are the primary influencers of their children. Let's leverage that influence.
- What are some things parents can do to disciple their children?
- We will talk about these more in detail in future sessions, but let's quickly list some ways that discipleship can take place in the home.
 - Catechism – sometimes seen as something that only Catholics or Episcopalians do, this form of question/answer discipleship is extremely useful in helping kids understand theology and biblical concepts.
 - You ask, “Who made you?” Your child responds, “God made me.” Or you ask, “Where do we learn how to love and obey God?” Your child responds, “In the Bible alone.”

- Bible storybooks – There are a number of great Bible storybooks out there.
 - The Jesus Storybook Bible and The Biggest Story are two popular storybook Bibles.
- Parent pages from your child’s Sunday school curriculum – Most Sunday school curriculums come with worksheets for parents to use with their children at home during the week. This allows you to talk about and reinforce what they have already learned.
- Prayer – Never underestimate the power of prayer. Pray as a family. Praying a prayer before a meal does not count.
- Miscellaneous opportunities throughout the day – Look for ways to shed the light of the Gospel into your child’s everyday life: school, sports, extracurricular activities, and stressful situations they are going through.
 - Show them how what they are learning fits into real life.
 - When my daughter started the third grade, she was overwhelmed. She came home from the forth day of third grade in tears. She didn’t get in trouble and she didn’t fail a test. She was stressed out about the volume of work that was expected of her. As she sat and did her homework, tears flooded the paperwork as she wrote. Something that should have easily taken her an hour took her all night. As a father who can be sometimes rough around the edges, I felt like saying, “Get over it! You are in third grade.” But I said, “Sweetheart, everyone goes through this and makes it. You are a smart girl and you will make it too.” Now, that may have seemed like something every parent would have said to his or her child; it’s true and a comforting statement. But, just leaving it at that would be incomplete. I had to assure that Jesus promises us to be with us in midst of these trials. Just as Jesus is walking with us through the good times, Jesus also carries us through the hard times. It was very simple and quick. It didn’t require me to prepare a Bible study or even open the Bible. I simply took a real-life situation and applied the Gospel to it.
 - Our children need to see that. Our children must see how what they are learning applies to their daily live.
 - We as parents are responsible for making that happen.
- All that we have gone over is just something to introduce what we will be reviewing over the next six weeks.
- Homework: At least once this week, gather your entire family to pray together. Make it a special time where God can be glorified, requests can be made, and your family can grow together. Encourage each family member to pray out loud as you (the parent) opens and closes the prayer.

APPENDIX 6

SESSION 2

Biblical Foundations for Family Discipleship – Old Testament

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6).

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand what the Old Testament teaches about family discipleship
2. To understand that generational faith is passed down to children

Review Homework and Last Week's Session

- Ask, “How did the homework go this week?” Have each parent comment if time permits.
- Last week we looked at what family discipleship is not and what it is. We saw that . . .
 - Family discipleship/ministry is not another church program or event added to your busy family calendar.
 - Family discipleship/ministry does not require you to hold family church services in your living room where you sing music, take up an offering, and dad gives a 35-minute sermon.
 - Family discipleship/ministry does not require you to be at church every time the church doors are open.
 - Family ministry is a family's partnership with the local church with the purpose of making disciples of their children and youth.
 - Family ministry has two parts: what the family does and what the church does. Let's review what the church's role is first.
 - We also briefly reviewed some of the resources available to do family discipleship.
 - Today we are going to look at the main passages in Scripture that supports family discipleship.

Ice Breaker

- Show “Regrets You Will Never Have” video.

- Words can never emphasize enough how much influence you have in lives of your children.
- Parents are still the number one influencers in their kids lives.
- Knowing this, how high of a priority should family discipleship be to a parent?"
- Ask, "It is said that less than 10% of families in the church do discipleship in the home. What is the cause for this low percentage?
 - There are many reasons for the low percentage: lack of time, busyness of families, not knowing how, it's intimidating, laziness, etc.
 - In order to tackle this question and fully grasp what the Bible teaches on this subject, we have to ask ourselves, "How high is my trust in God's Word? Do I have a high regard for Scripture?"
 - I believe the Bible is inerrant in the original manuscripts and infallible in everything it teaches because it's author is God.
 - If God is the Bible's primary author, then everything it teaches is authoritative for my life.
 - 2Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work."
 - 2Peter 1:20-21 says, "Know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."
 - We must remember that Scripture was written by men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, everything in God's Word is binding and authoritative.
 - With that being said, let's jump into two Old Testament passages and two New Testament passages on family discipleship.
 - Let's divide the class up into four groups: Groups one and two will take Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and groups three and four will take Pslam 78:1-8. You will have about five minutes to come up with some points on family discipleship from your passage.

Old Testament – Deuteronomy 6:4-9

⁴“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

- After teaching the belief in monotheism, Moses commands the Israelites to love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

- I want to emphasize that the Israelites were commanded to worship the one true God, Yahweh, the Lord they had entered into a covenant relationship with.
- So the people were called to love the triune God with all of their heart, soul, and might. Moses was explaining that the Israelites' total being must be devoted to the Lord. In everything, God must be at the center of their lives and their children must see this trait in their parents.
- Children learn a great deal from watching mommy and daddy. And despite what parents may think, teenagers say that mom and dad are their biggest influencers.
- Thus, setting the best possible biblical example is what we as parents want to do. Because when we do not walking closely with the Lord, they see it. If we are not spending daily time with the Lord, then neither will our children. If we do not have a love for the church, then neither will our children. If we don't place a priority on corporate worship, neither will our children. If we are not teaching our children through our lifestyle and words, someone or something else will teach them. If we are not loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, they will see it!
- **Verse 7** *You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.*
 - Teach – Comes from the a Hebrew word that . . . can be translated “pierced; sharpen; teach diligently”
 - The NIV translates it as “impress”
 - The image is much like an engraver who carefully and meticulously takes a hammer and chisels a piece of art or writing into a piece of granite. And the process is a long one, but once it is complete it is there forever.
 - This is what teaching our children the Bible in the home is like. It's a long process that can be meticulous at times, but it pays dividends in the end. However, we don't just teach our children the Scripture, but we're to talk of them.
 - Talk – The difference between “teaching” and “talking” about the Scripture is that teaching is the parent's responsibility to impress the words of covenant faith into the thinking of his children, whereas, talking could denote constant repetition to aid with memory.
 - So as we are sitting around the house, driving to a ball game, walking to and from, before we go to bed, and after we get up in the morning, the Word of God should be a topic discussion.
 - This will help impress into the minds of our children what they have been taught.
- **Verses 8-9** ⁸ *You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.* ⁹ *You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*
 - So what does it mean to bind God's commands on your hands, between your eyes and why do God's commands need to be written on our doorposts and gates?

- Well, originally it meant that the Israelite should meditate on God's commands all hours of the day and obey them. Thus, these verses may have had a degree of symbolism behind them. However, later Jewish leaders took these verses literally and the people tied phylacteries (boxes containing Deut. 6:4-9) to their hands and foreheads with straps of leather. In addition, the people literally attached these verses to their doorposts.
- I believe verses 8-9 have a degree of symbolism in them. The Word of God should be so prevalent in your life and your family's, that they are a constant guide to how you live.

ILLUSTRATION: Not too long ago I was reminded how my kids are watching and learning from me. There are few things that drive me crazier than when I'm driving down the road and someone cuts in front of me and goes slow. It seems to happen more here in Pickens than anywhere else I have lived. I don't know if I'm getting more sensitive the older I get or it really is just worse. Anyway, I was going down Highway 178 towards Liberty and the speed limit is 55mph. I was doing 55-60mph. No one was in front and no one behind me. Just as I get to the airport at the top of the hill, this person in a pickup truck pulls out in front of me going 35mph. He could have waited just 5-8 seconds and let me pass (I did have the right of way), but no! He pull out in front of me and I'm stuck behind him all the way to Liberty. When this happen, I didn't curse, but I called him a jerk. Well, Michael was in the back seat and heard what I said. A few days later this happens again with Michael in the back. And before I say a word, Michael says, "What a jerk!" Let me just say I'm glad Karen was not there. This illustrates the fact that our kids are watching and learning from us. We have a certain amount of influence over them that no one else has. Let's use it for good and for the Lord.

Old Testament – Psalm 78:1-8

¹ Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth! ² I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, ³ things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. ⁴ We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. ⁵ He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, ⁶ that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, ⁷ so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; ⁸ and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.

- In combination with Deuteronomy 6:4-9 mentioned above, the Old Testament is clear about parental responsibility when it comes to discipleship. In this passage, the psalmist commands the Israelites to pay close attention to what he has written.
- He exhorts them to "give ear" and to "incline your ears to the words of my mouth." The phrase 'give ear' comes from the Hebrew word "שָׁמַע" which means to listen, to hear, or to give heed.

- The phrase “הִטֵּן” can be translated “stretch out, spread out, extend, or bend.” Altogether, the psalmist wants his readers to hear and understand the very important things he is getting ready to say.
- In addition, the words he speaks in verse two are not new; they are teachings that God’s covenant people have always had in the pages of Scripture.
- The important words that the psalmist wants to communicate under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit are described as “dark sayings from of old” and “things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us.”
 - The psalmist likely had the Shema in mind as he penned these words. In addition, he tells the Israelites, “We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.”
 - It is important for the children to be taught all that God has done for His covenant people so that it will not be forgotten.
 - This shows the significance of parental discipleship as faith is passed down to succeeding generations.
- The passing down of the divine oracles to succeeding generations was important to Israel’s relationship with God. Each generation needed to know about the covenant relationship that the Lord had entered into sovereignly and graciously.
- The primary way children in the Old Testament were to learn about God’s testimonies and oracles was from their parents.
 - The psalmist says that God “commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children”
 - One cannot overlook the importance of parental responsibility. The psalmist says that God commands fathers to teach their children “the Word of God.”
 - The word “command” comes from the Hebrew word “צִוָּה,” which can also be translated as “command” or “order.”
 - It would be inherently sinful for a father to not teach his children the Scriptures, as he would be disobeying God while doing a disservice to his family.
 - However, the Israelites were not to just follow God’s testimonies as a means of external conformity, but to embrace His Law “so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.”
 - God is not interested in simple behavior modification; He is after heart change. In fact, the Shema is explicit when it says to love God “with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”
 - God’s people were to receive His covenant externally and embrace it with their hearts. Parents have a duty to pass this down to their children.
 - Parents do this through TEACHING and LIVING God’s Word
 - When children see a love for God that manifests itself in apathy and despondency, they will likely follow suit.

- That's what the psalmist communicates in this passage when he calls the fathers stubborn and rebellious, "whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God."
- The fathers were simply living out and passing down what they saw in their parents' lives.
- Generational faith begins with a faithful parent that loves God with all their being, seeks to live their faith out every day, teaches it to their children, and puts it on display for them to see.
- Homework: At least TWICE this week, gather your entire family to pray together. Make it a special time where God can be glorified, requests can be made, and your family can grow together. Encourage each family member to pray out loud as you (the parent) opens and closes the prayer.

APPENDIX 7

SESSION 3

Biblical Foundations for Family Discipleship – New Testament

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6).

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand what the New Testament teaches about family discipleship
2. To understand how family discipleship is part of the Great Commission

Review Homework and Last Week's Session

- How did the homework go this week? You were to pray together as a family twice this week. Have each parent comment if time permits.
- Last week we looked at what the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6 and Psalm 78) teaches on family discipleship. This week we will survey some New Testaments passages on the topic. But before we do so, let's review a few key points from last week.
 - Children learn a great deal from watching mom and dad. And despite what parents may think, teenagers say that mom and dad are their biggest influencers.
 - We looked at the difference between “teaching” and “talking” about the Scripture. Teaching is the parent's responsibility to impress the words of covenant faith into the thinking of his children, whereas, talking denotes constant repetition to aid with memory.
 - So as we are sitting around the house, driving to a ball game, walking to and from, before we go to bed, and after we get up in the morning, the Word of God should be a topic discussion.
 - This will help impress into the minds of our children what they have been taught.
 - God commands Scripture to be on your hands, between your eyes and written on our doorposts and gates. This is a somewhat symbolic example of how the Word of God should be so prevalent in your life and your family's life that it is a constant guide to how you live.
 - We explored the importance of children being taught all that God has done for His people so that it will not be forgotten – faith is passed down to succeeding generations.

- The primary way children in the Old Testament were to learn about God’s testimonies and oracles was from their parents – primarily from their fathers.
- God commanded fathers to teach their families. Therefore, it would be inherently sinful for a father to not teach his children the Scriptures, as he would be disobeying God while doing a disservice to his family.
- Parents have a duty to pass this down to their children and they do this through TEACHING and LIVING God’s Word
- Generational faith begins with a faithful parent that loves God with all their being, seeks to live their faith out every day, teaches it to their children, and puts it on display for them to see.

Ice Breaker

- Show “Parenting 101” and “Parent Pep Talk” videos
 - These videos illustrate (in a comical way) our influence as parents.
 - However, this influence must be exercised all through our kids lives
 - From the terrible twos throughout the dreaded teen years, our children must be disciplined by us. They learn through formal periods of instruction and watching us.
 - Our children are learning from us whether we like it or not. They at a very early age discern what our priorities are and how important Jesus is in the life of the family.
 - We touched on the Word of God being completely inerrant, infallible, and authoritative on everything it teaches last week. So, we won’t go over that again.
 - But with that being said and understood, let’s jump into two New Testament passages on family discipleship.
 - Let’s divide the class up into four groups: Groups one and two will take Ephesians 6:1-4 and groups three and four will take Matthew 28:18-20. You will have about five minutes to come up with some points on family discipleship from your passage.

New Testament – Ephesians 6:1-4

¹Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³“that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” ⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

- Ephesians 6:1-4 is the longest treatment on family discipleship found in the New Testament. It serves to reinforce what has already been taught in the Old Testament.
- Paul addresses the role of children in relation to their mother and father. He also emphasizes the importance of fathers raising their children in the Lord.

- In Ephesians 6:1-4, Paul says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph 6:1-4).
- After giving a treatment on marriage and the responsibilities of husbands and wives in chapter five, Paul commands children to obey their “parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise), that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”
- But how old were these children that Paul was speaking of in this text? Also, are children obligated to obey their parents into adulthood? The word for “children” in verse one is the Greek word “τέκνα.” Paul is likely referring to children who live in their parents’ home.
 - However, a couple points must be explained. First, the children Paul is referring to in verse one are able understand their parents’ instruction.
 - Second, these children are old enough to choose to obey. This can be argued since Paul commands the children specifically and not their parents.
 - This would also imply that the children are present when the church comes together to worship, hear the Word, and receive teaching.
 - Third, such a command presupposes that their parents are still raising them. These are not children that are married and have left home. Thus, a likely age-range for the children being mentioned in verse one would be early elementary to the late teens or early twenties.”
- Children have a responsibility to obey and honor their parents. It could be argued that honoring parents is also taught from mom and dad through their love and example.
 - Paul reinforces this command in Colossians 3:20 when he says that children are to obey their parents “in everything.”
 - The Greek word for “obey” is “ὑπακούω.” It means to follow instruction, follow, obey, or to be subject to someone. Just as the husband is to be surrendered to Christ and the wife is to be submissive to her husband, children are to obey their parents.
 - Honoring one’s parents meant obeying them, while dishonoring them was disobedience. Both parents are addressed in this commandment.”
- In addition, this is the only commandment in the Ten Commandments that has a promise. Paul says in verse two, “This is the first commandment with a promise.”
 - There is not a consensus among commentators regarding the application of this promise to the church, as this was originally addressed to Israel.
 - One commentator said that it “is more likely that Paul wished to emphasize that in obedience to their parents, children will live to prove that their true welfare (“that it may go well with thee”) depends on God (Deut.5:10).”
 - However, another commentator believes that this passage should be spiritualized since there is no reference to the land of Israel. Therefore, this passage is speaking of this present earthly life.

- Therefore, this clause may be interpreted in the following manner: when children obey their parents, they are blessed and God is glorified.
- In verse three, Paul says that when children honor their parents, they will live long in the land. While this passage alludes to God’s promise to the Jews, it also has New Covenant realities.
 - “In the New Covenant the promise of the land is not physical land on earth but eternal life, which begins when one is regenerated here and now and comes to full reality in the age to come The obedience of children is evidence that they know God, and it results in receiving blessings from God.” When Christian children honor and obey their parents, it serves as evidence that they know the Lord. They will receive the salvation promised through faith in Christ.

ILLUSTRATION: I sometimes say to my kids, you better do what I tell or you will not go outside, watch TV, or play video games later...I promise! Karen and I have entered the phase of life with our kids where all they do is fight. I mean, sometimes it’s like they look for reasons to argue, aggravate, and provoke each other. Everything is a competition, race, and a see who can be the best. Something as simple as being told to go upstairs, brush your teeth, put your jammies on, and use the bathroom to get ready for bed can create World War III. About a year ago, Karen implemented the “ticket system” in order to ease tensions. We were at Chuck Cheeses one day and I saw how obsessive my kids were for these tickets. They would play a game all day in order to win game tickets. So we thought, what if we buy a role of these tickets and use them for special privileges like watching TV, playing video games, or using the iPad. Each morning, if the kids get through their morning routine on time without fighting, they earn four tickets. Likewise, in the evening and they can ear two tickets. They can then use those tickets to buy special privileges: four tickets to watch 30 minutes of TV, four tickets to play 30 minutes of video games, or four tickets for 30 minutes of iPad. As long as Karen and I are consistent, it works beautifully. But every now and then I have to remind our kids how it works. And I usually say something like, “If you don’t get through the routine, I promise you will lose tickets!” Maybe this is what Paul meant in verse three!

- Finally, when Paul gets to verse four, he addresses fathers specifically. He says, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”
 - Teenagers like to use this verse against their parents. This is their defense when things don’t go their way.
 - In order to properly understand what Paul is communicating, it is helpful to examine the word “provoke” and understand the phrase “discipline and instruction of the Lord.”
 - The word “provoke” comes from the Greek word “παροργίζω,” which means “to anger.” It is also an imperative in the present tense. Thus, a father’s discipline should always be fair and just. A father should never discipline his child with wrong motives or intentions.
 - Furthermore, Paul is specific about who is to do the disciplining; the father has been charged with this aspect of childrearing. Therefore, in a home where the mother and father are present, the man is the primary correcting agent.

- Above all else, he warns fathers against goading their children into a state of perpetual resentment. He is not thinking of extreme instances like disinheritance, but the everyday tensions of family life. Fathers must not make unreasonable demands. Otherwise children, being overcorrected, may lose heart.”
- In the next clause of verse four, Paul tells fathers to “bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”
 - The word “discipline” in this verse comes from the Greek word “παιδεία,” which is the act of providing guidance for responsible living.
 - It also relates to upbringing, training, and instruction, that is mainly attained by discipline or correction.
 - In regards to the word “discipline,” This word is used commonly in the sense of “raising” or “bringing up” children which includes the idea of nurturing care but goes beyond that to refer to all that goes into raising children to maturity.
 - This word can be used to describe the entire training process of child rearing that extends into adulthood.
 - In conclusion, Paul lays on the shoulders of the fathers not only the responsibility of raising their children to be decent and responsible people (which is likely assumed here as part of the cultural expectation), but training and instructing them in the ways of the Lord.
 - Thus, fathers are primarily responsible for the Christian education of their children.
- However, not only are fathers responsible for bringing their children up in the discipline of the Lord, but also “the instruction of the Lord.”
 - The word “instruction” comes from the Greek word “νουθεσία.” It means to give counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct. It can also be translated “admonition” or “instruction.”
 - This word refers to “verbal counsel, including exhortations to proper behavior, warnings, and even rebukes.” Thus, This appears to be the beginnings of Christian education in the home.

ILLUSTRATION: I take this role in our family. About five days a week we have periods of formal instruction through the use of catechisms and memory verses. I will sit down with each of our kids separately and review their catechisms and memory verses for the week. It is very rote and some parents don’t like it because of that. But rote is used in public and private education. We learn to read, write, spell, math, the alphabet, etc. all through rote. So I dismiss the argument against rote religious education. Why would religious education be any different? I often find that those who argue against this method are not using any formal method religious education at all. I can’t begin to tell you how much Scripture my kids have memorized and learned through this method. Do they remember everything they memorize? No. But they do learn and I see them connecting the dots later on down the line. However, we also have periods of informal education. About five nights a week, we have family devotionals utilizing a storybook Bible and prayer. This will sometimes spark interesting conversations and teaching moments. I tell you this (especially the dads in this room) to say, “You are responsible for your children’s religious education. You can’t delegate this to a ministry, church, or

professional. Is it easy? No! My kids are often bouncing off the walls, standing on their heads...being kids. But this is too important to not do. Do not allow the busyness of life to interfere with this. God will hold you accountable for this. In the end, God is not going to care about how many times you went deer hunting or fishing. God is not going to care if you worked 60 hours last week. God is not going to care if your kids made all the ball practices and games last season. He is going to care if you were faithful in what He has called you to do.

New Testament – Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ 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.”

- Just before He ascended, Jesus gave them what many people consider to be the establishment and mission of the church. This is known as the Great Commission.
 - Jesus said, "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" (Mat 28:18-20).
- The church is not only commanded to take the Gospel to every nation, tribe, and tongue, but to make disciples. In addition, if the church’s mission is to make disciples and Christian parents are part of the church, it logically follows that parents are to make disciples. Christian families need to look no further than the people living under their roofs as a starting point.
- In addition, Luke records Jesus’ commission to His disciples a little differently in Acts 1:8 when he writes, “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.” Jesus’ blueprint for making disciples did not just include going to people in foreign lands, but also teaching people that live around and even with us. For parents, that would be their children. It would be irresponsible to think that the Great Commission does not apply to teaching those who are living in our home. Thus, it would seem like Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Psalm 78:1-8, and Ephesians 6:1-4 are intricately linked to Matthew 28:18-20.
- In Matthew 28:18, Jesus tells His disciples that “all authority has been given to me.” The reason the church and parents make disciples is because Jesus commanded it.
 - The word “authority” comes from the Greek word “ἐξουσία.” It means to have the right to command or control something. It can also mean to govern, exercise power, or have the capability to regulate.
 - Jesus has the power, capability, and right to command Christians to make disciples.
- Based upon this authority that Jesus has received, Jesus tells His followers to “go therefore and make disciples . . .”

- Jesus' command to "go and make disciples" is not simply relegated to making converts. The process of making disciples is much more intimate than that.
- To disciple like Jesus means that the disciple-maker would not only share the Gospel, but also teach the new believer how biblical principles are lived out in life.
- This should impact the individual's worldview, intellect, and habits. In addition, Christians do not have to go overseas to be obedient to Jesus' command.
- While not denying that some are called to go overseas, the Great Commission does not require a person to sell all that he has and move to a third-world country. Believers are called to make disciples right where they live, work, worship, etc.
- But that begs the question: if believers are called to make disciples where they live, would not that include members of their family who are living under their roof?
- In addition, a major component of discipleship is establishing a relationship with the person you are discipling. What deeper and more intimate relationship exists than the connection between a parent and his child?
- Furthermore, what does making disciples of our children look like? Should parents simply aim at converting their children and leave the primary discipleship up to the church? A study into the word "disciple" is necessary to understand what is involved.
- The Greek word for "disciple" in this verse is "μαθητεύω" and it is in the imperative mood. "Disciple" means to become a pupil or to teach.¹ Parents are commanded to share with their children the great truths of the Bible.
 - They should share the Gospel and explain their need for a Savior. However, disciple making is much more than simply sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.
 - Parents must model and live out the Gospel for their children to see everyday. Thus, parents not only have an obligation to teach their children about Jesus, but to also disciple them in the Christian faith.
 - Mom and dad are a child's biggest influencers, so they will be looking to them for authenticity. In order to be obedient to the Great Commission, parents must ensure they are displaying the Gospel in their everyday lives.
- However, parents should also teach their children the Bible and show them how Gospel-centered living is manifested in every aspect of their lives. If the word "disciple" means to teach or to become a pupil, then there should also be consistent times of formal Bible teaching in the home.

¹Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick W. Danker, 3rd ed., BibleWorks, vol. 10 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. "μαθητεύω."

- Parents should be prepared on a regular basis to teach the Scriptures and doctrine to their children with a focus on life application.
- In fact, Jesus commanded His followers to teach the Scriptures in verse twenty. He said, “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” But what does it mean to teach biblically and what does that entail?
- In order to understand discipleship, a proper definition of “teaching” is needed. The word “teaching” comes from the Greek word “διδάσκω,” which means teach in a formal or informal manner.
- Teaching was one of Jesus’ most pertinent ministries. In fact, everything that Jesus did had a teaching element in it. From the Sermon on the Mount to miracles He performed, everything was meant to disciple His followers.
- Jesus’ command to His church to make disciples is to teach the Bible in such a way that it results in heart change and obedience in the life of the disciple. But how does this translate to the home and family discipleship?
- There should be no dichotomy between making disciples of those who live in your home versus anywhere else. All Christians are commanded to share the Gospel and make disciples wherever they find themselves.
- In fact, parents have a duty to teach their children God’s Word at a very early age as seen in the passages exegeted above. This would include formal teaching at home and in partnership with the local church.
- However, some parents will object to discipling their children or bringing them to church because they are not yet Christians or they find church boring.
 - This argument claims that a child must be converted or find church fun before being taught the Scriptures. This objection fails at two levels: biblically and logically.
 - Biblically, there is nothing in Scripture to validate the claim that a parent must wait to disciple their child until they become a believer. In fact, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Psalm 78:1-8, and Ephesians 6:4 mention nothing about the child making a profession of faith. Rather, these passages are commands to parents to teach and raise their children up in the Lord.
 - From a logical standpoint, this objection fails because this is not how society is structured.
 - For example, parents do not wait for their children to want to do what is morally right before teaching them how to make good decisions.
 - Also, mom and dad do not allow children to stay home from school simply because they do not like studying. There is an expectation in society that parents will raise their children to be upright contributors to society.
 - Therefore, it could be argued from a logical standpoint that Christian parents have a duty to teach, correct, and apply biblical principles simply because they are good parents.
 - Therefore, the argument of not teaching biblical values to children because they are not yet believers or find church boring is void.
 - Parents should ensure that ongoing instruction in the Bible is a priority in their home. When parents are consistently teaching,

modeling, and living out the Gospel for their children, they are being obedient disciples of Jesus Christ.

- Homework: At least once this week, gather your entire family to pray together AND do a small devotion. You may use a family devotional sheet from Sunday school, personal devotional, or just read a passage of Scripture like Matthew 28:18-20. Make it a special time where God can be glorified, requests can be made, and your family can grow together. Encourage each family member to pray out loud as you (the parent) opens and closes the prayer.

APPENDIX 8

SESSION 4

Biblical Foundations for Manhood

The God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Genesis 1:26).

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand what the Bible teaches about biblical manhood
2. To understand the differences between complementarianism and egalitarianism

Review Homework and Last Week’s Session

- Ask, “How did the homework go this week?” Have each parent comment if time permits.
- Last week we looked at the biblical foundations of family discipleship from the New Testament. We saw that . . .
 - The New Testaments affirm that the primary disciplers of children are parents, primarily the father. This complements what the Old Testament teaches about family discipleship.
 - The Bible does not allow parents to disregard or delegate this responsibility.
 - The church is called to partner with parents in the discipleship of their children.
 - In no way is the church allowed to assume the parental responsibility of discipling their children.
 - Discipling our children is part of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20.

Ice Breaker

- Do the foods that compliment one another activity for five minutes.
 - *Coffee and donuts, spaghetti and meatballs, hummus and pita, tomato soup and grilled cheese, mild and cookies, hot chocolate and marshmallow, pancakes and syrup, peanut butter and jelly, biscuits and gravy, macaroni and cheese, bacon and eggs, buffalo chicken wings and blue cheese dip.*
 - Each of these foods when combined are equally important. I love bacon and I love eggs, but rarely do ever just sit down and eat bacon. I rarely drink milk, but when I do it’s with cookies. And

come on...who eats macaroni with cheese? The macaroni is not more important than the cheese and vice-versa. I know this illustration breaks down some, but you get the point. When something complements another thing, it does not make it inferior. I would even argue that it improves it. I mean, what makes a hot, homemade chocolate chip cookie better? A glass of milk!

Biblical Manhood

- The topic of manhood and womanhood has become a very controversial topic in today's society. Since the LGBT revolution, the United States has never been more divided over this topic.
- Does biology determine the gender of a child? What qualities define a man and a woman? Should an individual affirm complementarianism or egalitarianism? Can a person be born as a boy, but identify as a girl, and vice-versa? Should a person's worldview influence the way he answers these questions or should society determine the answers for them?
- Most of these questions were not asked 20 years ago. Today, American culture has shifted their views on manhood and womanhood.
- Fortunately, God's view of manhood and womanhood has not changed, as it is rooted in the immutable nature of God. In addition, God's purpose for biblical manhood and womanhood is directly linked to parenting, as their children's spiritual development is affected by it.
- The purpose of the next two sessions is to define and elaborate on biblical manhood and womanhood in order to further understand parents as the primary disciplers of their children. In doing so, the topics of complementarianism and egalitarianism will also be addressed.
- To define biblical manhood, John Piper is helpful when he says, "At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's differing relationships."
 - Piper's definition of manhood is helpful because it communicates what the Bible teaches, which will be expounded upon later in this session. But before biblical manhood can be explored, some key issues regarding complementarianism and egalitarianism must be examined.
- Some people will argue that a conservative view on biblical manhood and womanhood devalues women. The assumption is that complementarianism views men as superior. This is not only wrong, but also unbiblical.
 - Genesis 1:27 says that "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." The emphasis in this verse is on "in his image."
 - Both man and woman are created in God's image and thus of equal worth. To be made in God's image means that human beings are like God and represent him. No other creature ever created has been given this status. Therefore, man and woman are of equal worth, value, and importance to their Creator.
 - In addition to the creation account, further evidence for equality is found in the New Testament church. In Acts 2:17-18, Peter preaches his great

sermon on Pentecost. Peter says, “And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit and they shall prophesy.”

- What is important in this narrative is that the Holy Spirit will be “poured out on all flesh,” male and female. Both men and women will be baptized into the body of Christ and receive spiritual gifts to use in the church.
- Furthermore, the Apostle Paul reminds the church that they should not be divided into factions. He says in Galatians 3:28 that “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” This passage indicates that no group or sex in the church should view themselves as superior to other members.
- Men and women have equal value, worth, and dignity; however, God has given men and women different roles in marriage as part of the created order. This is known as complementarianism.
- Regarding the equality of men and women and their God-given differences, the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 is helpful:
 - The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.
 - As can be seen by the above statement on biblical manhood and womanhood, complementarians believe men and women have equal worth, but different roles in the created order.
 - However, egalitarians do not affirm the above position. Egalitarians believe that men and women are created equally, but do not affirm the difference in roles. The following quotations comes from the “Statement on Men, Women and Biblical Equality” published by the Christians for Biblical Equality. The numbers represent the original article numbers:
 - 1. The Bible teaches that both man and woman were created in God’s image, had a direct relationship with God, and shared jointly the responsibilities of bearing and rearing children and having dominion over the created order
 - 5. The Bible teaches that the rulership of Adam over Eve resulted from the Fall and was, therefore, not part of the original created order
 - 10. The Bible defines the function of leadership as the empowerment of others for service rather than as the exercise of power over them.
 - These articles from this statement of faith demonstrate that egalitarians deny the different functions of men and women and

see the authority of Adam over Eve as a result of sin. This understanding of biblical manhood and womanhood has a number of implications on the doctrines of the Bible, God, man, redemption, the church, and eschatology. It also introduces hermeneutical and exegetical problems to the Bible generally, and Genesis 1-3 specifically, as it clearly denies the differing functions of men and women in the creation account.

- To refute egalitarianism, Wayne Grudem gives ten examples from Genesis establishing male headship and differing gender roles: Adam was created first, Adam represents the human race, Adam named the woman, the naming of the human race, the primary accountability of Adam to God, Eve's purpose as a helper to Adam, sin's distortion of gender roles, the restoration of the created order at Christ return, the relationship between Christ and his church, and the parallel with the Trinity.
- A plain reading of the biblical text supports a complementarian view of biblical manhood and womanhood.
- As mentioned at the beginning of this lesson, John Piper says that "at the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's differing relationships." This is the definition he uses to explain manhood. What follows below is an explanation of this definition and how it aligns with a biblical understanding of manhood.
- First, Piper says that men are to exhibit mature masculinity. There is to be an emphasis on the word "mature." A man can be masculine without being mature.
 - For example, a man can be fully-grown and sexually capable but irresponsible. If he is not a benevolent and responsible leader that provides and protects his family, then he would not be described as exhibiting mature masculinity.
 - Piper says, "Mature means that a man's sense of responsibility is in the process of growing out of its sinful distortions and limitations, and finding its true nature as a form of love, not a form of self-assertion."
- However, a mature masculine male will also have a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide, and protect. Men should have a sense or awareness within them to be compassionate and servant leaders. The Bible calls men to lead their families and churches.
 - In fact, Paul says 1 Timothy 3:4-5 that the pastor must ". . . manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church." Leadership in the family is paramount when being a leader in the church.
- Furthermore, the man is directly called to lead his family. In Ephesians 5:22 Paul says, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior."
- Also, in Colossians 3:18-19 Paul says, "Wives, submit to you husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them."
- Moreover, this sense of leadership should always be benevolent. Piper again is helpful when he says that benevolent "is intended to show that the responsibility

- of manhood is for the good of the woman. Benevolent responsibility is meant to rule out all self-aggrandizing authoritarianism.”
- Men are not to lead with an iron fist. This type of leadership is not only hurtful towards his family, but also sinful to God. When Jesus’ disciples were arguing over authority and who would be the greatest, Jesus said to them in Matthew 20:26-28, “. . . whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
 - In 1Peter 3:7, the apostle reminds husbands to “ live with your wives in an understand way, show honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers might not be hindered.” Therefore, husbands are called to lead, but to do so in a loving and understanding way.
 - The husband is to be the responsible shepherd of his household; this is a charge given by God. He is responsible for leading his family. However, the word “lead” can sometimes have negative connotations.
 - Many people believe that leading requires complete submissiveness to the authoritarian control of another person, as words carry many different nuances and implications. Nonetheless, the husband’s leadership should never be domineering. The man’s leadership is to express itself in the strength to serve and to sacrifice for the good of woman.
 - However, the man should be ready to make the final decision when the husband and wife cannot come to a resolution in a disagreement. These instances should be rare and not involve any sinful action or selfish desire on the part of the husband, as his responsibility to lead requires the man to protect and provide for his family.
 - Homework: At least TWICE once this week, gather your entire family to pray together AND do a small devotion. You may use a family devotional sheet from Sunday school, personal devotional, or just read a passage of Scripture like Matthew 28:18-20. Make it a special time where God can be glorified, requests can be made, and your family can grow together. Encourage each family member to pray out loud as you (the parent) opens and closes the prayer.

APPENDIX 9

SESSION 5

Biblical Foundations for Womanhood

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).

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand what the Bible teaches about biblical womanhood

Review Homework and Last Week's Session

- Ask, "How did the homework go this week?" Have each parent comment if time permits.
- Last week we looked at the biblical foundations of manhood. We also touched on complementarianism and egalitarianism. We saw that . . .
- To define biblical manhood, John Piper says, "At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's differing relationships."
- Men and women have equal value, worth, and dignity; however, God has given men and women different roles in marriage as part of the created order. This is known as complementarianism.
- To refute egalitarianism, Wayne Grudem gives ten examples from Genesis establishing male headship and differing gender roles: Adam was created first, Adam represents the human race, Adam named the woman, the naming of the human race, the primary accountability of Adam to God, Eve's purpose as a helper to Adam, sin's distortion of gender roles, the restoration of the created order at Christ return, the relationship between Christ and his church, and the parallel with the Trinity.
- Furthermore, the man is directly called to lead his family. In Ephesians 5:22 Paul says, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior." Moreover, this sense of leadership should always be benevolent.

Ice Breaker

- Play Biblical Manhood/Womanhood Jeopardy Game

Biblical Womanhood

- The Bible has a lot to say about God's purpose for men and women. They are created in his image and for his glory. Human beings are the pinnacle of his creation and are equal in worth, dignity, importance, and respect. God did not create Adam better than Eve or vice-versa.
- However, God did give men and women different roles or functions within the created order. What are those differing functions? What are some of the differences between men and women and why does it matter?
- As we talked about, the man is considered the leader of the family and has ultimate responsibility before God. However, his function as the head of the household does not denigrate or depreciate the woman's purpose in life or family. The woman's role complements that of her husband.
- Biblical womanhood begins in the opening pages of the creation account. In Genesis 2:18, God says, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." What does it mean to be a helper? How does a helper complement man's function as leader?
- What does it mean to be a "helper fit for him?" A contextual reading of the expression in its original setting suggests that, on the one hand, the woman is congenial to the man in a way that none of the animals are, and, on the other hand, that the woman is placed alongside the man as his associate or assistant."
- Thus, the woman's role in the creation account as a partner who helps the man fill and subdue the earth. She also fills the man's need for companionship, partners with him in procreation, and submits to his leadership.
- It is at this point that some people will object and claim that the role of helper diminishes the woman's self image and worth. They believe that being a helper makes her somehow less valuable than the man.
- There are many places in the Bible where a helper or the act of subordination is a blessing. One supreme example of a person becoming a helper is found in the God-Head.
 - In the Father, human beings see a God who subordinates himself and his own interests by caring and providing for them.
 - Also, Jesus' divinity is not compromised by the incarnation, leaving his heavenly dwelling, and submitting himself to the Father's will.
 - Furthermore, working in and through sinful human beings to bring about regeneration and sanctification does not diminish the Holy Spirit's divinity. All three members of the Trinity remain completely divine while becoming helpers to their creation.
- So what does the woman's function as her husband's helper look like? If the man is called to provide, protect, and lead his family, what is the woman's role? While the Old Testament gives the reader descriptive elements of the woman's role during biblical times, they should not be considered prescriptive in a 21st century context.
- Also, the New Testament does not contain a lot of information on the topic; however, it is not silent. The New Testament does have some specific teaching on biblical womanhood. Therefore, the Bible allows a certain amount of freedom in

- the woman's role as man's helper. What follows below is a brief survey on biblical womanhood from the Old and New Testaments.
- In the Old Testament, the wife had three primary duties: provide her husband with children, manage the household, and provide companionship.
 - In Old Testament times, people primarily got married to have children, particularly boys. Giving her husband a child was considered one of the noblest things a wife could do. Failure to do so resulted in disgrace as seen in the narrative of Rachel and Jacob.
 - Also, in the Old Testament era the wife managed the household by cooking, sewing, tending the garden, and harvesting grain. A great example of this is found in Proverbs 31.
 - Most importantly, she provided companionship to her husband. As seen today, the wife was her husband's confidante and trusted friend. This mutual intimacy, trust, and friendship are seen all throughout the Song of Solomon.
 - So the wife in Old Testament times had children, managed the household, and provided companionship to her husband.
 - Now, the New Testament does not have as many specific examples of the woman's function within the marriage. However, a few passages give insight into what is taught in the Old Testament.
 - In Matthew 19:6, the religious leaders confronted Jesus about his understanding of marriage. Interestingly, Jesus affirmed what had already been taught in the opening pages of Genesis by quoting Genesis 1:27 and 2:24. Thus, Jesus understood the Old Testament teachings on marriage and personhood as binding.
 - In 1Peter 3:17, the apostle gave his readers instruction on the same topics. He reminded the wives that they are to be subject to their husbands. Likewise, the husbands are encouraged to live with their wives in an understanding way and show them honor.
 - The Apostle Paul also had much to say on marriage and biblical manhood and womanhood. In 1Timothy 2:15 and 4:1-4, Paul affirmed virtuousness of marriage since God created it. Everything created by God is good and should not be rejected.
 - In Ephesians 5:21-22, Paul gave the longest treatment on marriage found anywhere in the New Testament. In this passage, a very important parallel was given between the church, Christ, and marriage. Christ's relationship with the church provides the pattern for a Christian marriage, in which the husband is appointed as the head (as Christ is the head of the church) and the wife is called to submit to her husband (as the church is to Christ).
 - In conclusion, the Bible is consistent and comprehensive in its teaching on biblical womanhood. The woman, although created equal with man, has a different role in God's creation. Her function is to be a helper, supporter, and faithful spouse to her husband. Her calling is to her children and home, which does not necessarily rule out a job or career outside the home. When men and women seek to live God's ordained way, marriages are happier, children are effectively disciplined, and life is more fulfilling.
 - Homework: At least twice this week, gather your entire family to pray together AND do a small devotion. You may use a family devotional sheet from Sunday

school, personal devotional, or just read a passage of Scripture like Matthew 28:18-20. This week, the husband and wife should take turns. Make it a special time where God can be glorified, requests can be made, and your family can grow together. Encourage each family member to pray out loud as you (the parent) opens and closes the prayer.

APPENDIX 10

SESSION 6

Church and Family Partnership

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. (Matthew 28:19-20).

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

1. To survey the contemporary history of family ministry
2. To understand why the Family-Equipping Model is necessary
3. To understand how the family and church can work together to disciple the next generation

Review Homework and Last Week's Session

- Ask, "How did the homework go this week?" Have each parent comment if time permits.
- Over the last two weeks we looked at the foundations for biblical manhood and womanhood. We saw that . . .
 - God created both man and woman in His image.
 - Men and women have equal value, dignity, and worth.
 - Though equal in value, dignity, and worth, God has given men and women different roles in creation. This is known as complementarianism.
 - The man has been given the responsibility to lead his family, which means that family discipleship is primarily his responsibility.
 - Discipling our children is part of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20.

Ice Breaker

- - Show "Covenant Seminary's Partnering with Parents" video
 - What are your thoughts on what was said in this video?
 - Over the last almost 15 years of doing family ministry, I can tell you that having three hours a week with a child or student is wishful thinking. I wish I had three hours a week with the children and youth in our ministries. The fact of the matter is most families are not here every Sunday morning, every Sunday night, and

every Wednesday night...they just aren't. In reality, the average child and student is at church about two hours per week. For example, some families come to Sunday school and church service, but not Wednesday night or Sunday night. Some families don't come to Sunday school at or Sunday night at all; they just come to service. Some families come to all three, but don't bring their kids for one reason or another. It is simply impossible for me or anyone else to make a lasting impact on children and youth with such a short amount of time. Not to mention that I'm only one person in the midst of 40 youth and 30 children. It's like sending your kids to school and not being involved in their school and homework. I hate to be a downer this morning, but it is a sobering truth. If you are not discipling your children...if you are not bringing them to church, you are really doing a disservice to them and their spiritual development.

- However, when parents partner with the church, together we can make an impact that would otherwise not be possible. Families need the church. Christ died for His church. The two institutions that God ordained were the church and the family. When we partner together, we can make a lasting impact through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- That brings us to the topic at hand today: Church and family partnership. How is it done? What does it look like? And just as importantly, why all of sudden in the 21st century is this coming up? To answer these questions, we will review contemporary history of family ministry. The reason we need to do that is to understand where the church was misguided. We will then look at the "family equipping" model of ministry and I will explain why it is a superior model to the way we have done children and youth ministry over the last 50 years, and then we will talk about some ways the church and family can partner together. Any questions?

Contemporary History of Family Ministry

- In order to fully understand how a family ministry functions, a basic understanding of its recent history must be explored.
 - Children and youth ministries did not occur in a vacuum. The challenges that people faced throughout the ninetieth and twentieth centuries helped to develop and shape the various programs that ministered to families.
- Family ministry throughout the ninetieth and twentieth centuries took on many different forms. It was in the early ninetieth century that Sunday school began.
 - The Sunday school movement played a vital role in the development of youth ministry.
 - As the country expanded west, social societies brought youth together. Due to the perceived evils of that day, societies such as "the Cadets of Temperance originated in 1843 for the purpose of maintaining the good moral character of young person of either sex between the ages of twelve and twenty-one."
 - These societies, even though not directly affiliated with the church, desired to instill Christian values into its membership. One pertinent society of this time was the Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.).

- In 1861 the Civil War began, and it drastically affected family life. Perhaps the Civil War's greatest impact on children was to family life. Like the American Revolution, the Civil War produced huge numbers of orphans and impoverished fatherless families."
- Due to the conditions of many families after the Civil War, the landscape of the American family drastically changed. The role of the father diminished and families began to shelter their children.
- In reaction to wartime disruptions, postwar parents strengthened and intensified family bonds. Middle-class parents responded to the war's traumas through an intensified commitment to a protected, prolonged childhood.
- When surveying the history of youth ministry, one would be remiss not to mention the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor. Organized by Francis E. Clark, this society impacted youth in ways that no other society ever did.
 - This society's characteristic features were the prayer-meeting pledge, the consecration meeting, and the committee work. Due to the work of this society throughout the United States, youth were impacted for the cause of Christ and the propagation of the Gospel.
- As the 1800's came to a close, youth ministry began to change again. Churches and denominations began to develop their own youth programs. Many of these programs mimicked the societies that preceded them.
- This is when America saw the beginnings of the Epworth League, the Baptist Young People's Union, the Walther League, and the Presbyterian Youth Fellowship.
 - Denominational youth ministry allowed churches to partner together to impact more students. This is also when youth ministry began to be professionalized.
 - Activities in which denominational youth workers participated were effective. Camps, conferences, and area-wide meetings were too great an effort for volunteer youth workers to accomplish themselves, so into this vacuum stepped professional youth workers.
 - It was during this time that denominations began to build retreat centers and campgrounds to accommodate large gatherings of youth from multiple churches. Two of these centers were located "in North Carolina, Montreat for Presbyterians and Ridgecrest for the Southern Baptists.
- In the later half of the twentieth century, the family dynamic began to change. During the 1960s widely held presuppositions about authority, family, life, gender, race relations, sexuality, and proper behavior were contested.
 - At first many of the emerging values and behavior patterns were widely rejected, even by a majority of the young. It was in this environment that youth ministry began to grow and many parachurch organizations began.
 - The United States saw the beginnings of Young Life, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Youth for Christ, and Youth Specialties. As the twentieth century came to a close, the professionalization of youth ministry grew and the church saw the beginnings of formal youth ministry training, national youth ministry networks, and paradigms like seeker-

driven and purpose-driven youth models. Youth ministry had become an industry.

- What can be said about how youth ministry has evolved over the years? First, youth ministry had very humble beginnings. They did not have the resources in the 1800s as they do today.
 - A person would think that the twenty-first century church could effectively reach more youth than it did 200 years ago. Through technology, formal training of volunteers and professionals, to student ministry networking, the Gospel has the potential to reach more students. The church of today has more means at her disposal than ever before.
 - However, the church is reaching fewer students than it did 50 years ago. A variety of reasons can be given to why this is happening. However, I believe the chief reasons for the decline are the secularization of society, a church that primarily ministers to the comfortable middle-class, and the mismatched priorities of today's families.
 - These issues have caused churches and youth ministries to plateau. Churches, parents, and youth ministry leaders have become content with "doing church." The landscape of the United States has changed drastically over the last 25 years and youth ministry must change with it.

Family-Equipping Model

- As we get started on this topic, I want you to know that if you are a parent, no matter how old your child is, you are making disciples. Your child is watching and learning from you, whether you like it or not and if it's good or bad. Also, your children are learning from you what is important and what is not important... what is a priority and what is not.
- The ministry model that will be explored is called family-equipping ministry; this is my preferred model.
 - There is the family-based (which aims to add "family events" to the church calendar)
 - There is the family-integrated (which gets rid of all age-segregated ministry so that family members are never separated... ever).
 - The family-equipping model is a recent development within evangelical churches to champion parents as the disciplers of their children and is a medium between family-based and family-integrated.
 - This model's core belief is that parents are the primary Bible teachers and the church partners with them in this endeavor. Family-equipping is more of a shift in ministry philosophy than it is a program.
 - It is also a philosophy that should impact every ministry within the church, not just the children and youth ministries. Jay Strother says, "Family-equipping churches retain some age-organized ministries but restructure the congregation to partner with parents at every level of ministry so that parents are acknowledged, equipped, and held accountable for the discipleship of their children."

- So what does a family-equipping church look like? How does this model practically work itself out in the life of the local church? In order to answer this question, you must discuss what the Family-Equipping model does not do.
 - First, family-equipping ministry is not another event on the calendar. The family-equipping ministry does not try to make families busier by adding more activities to the church calendar.
 - Rather, the family-equipping model sometimes does the opposite. If an event does not fulfill the purpose of equipping, involving, or resourcing parents, then that activity is cancelled.
 - Second, the family-equipping model does not abolish age-graded ministries. Family-equipping ministry retains children, youth, and adult ministries. However, it restructures those ministries so that parents are taught and held accountable to disciple their children.
 - Finally, the family-equipping ministry is not a radical shift in how the church programs. Instead, it asks the question, “How does this event, activity, Bible study, sermon series, etc. better equip families?”
- In order to carry out a family-equipping ministry, church leaders must ensure that their ministries involve, resource, and equip parents.
 - Therefore, adult Sunday school classes focus on teaching godly parenting.
 - The men’s ministry will emphasize accountability and the importance of fathers being the spiritual leaders of their families.
 - The women’s ministry will highlight the importance of wives supporting, loving, and submitting to their husbands’ leadership.
 - The children and youth ministries will involve parents in leadership, provide them with the resources they need to lead their family, and equip them on godly parenting through classes and occasional seminars. These classes and seminars can be offered at times that families are already at church.
 - Senior adult ministries can stress the importance that grandparents have on raising grandchildren.
 - The Senior Pastor regularly communicates from the pulpit the church’s conviction that parents are the primary disciplers of their children, while offering occasional Wednesday night Bible study classes on how to do it with excellence.
 - The church’s educational and discipleship ministries should offer short-term, small-group studies to ensure that parents are resourced and equipped to carry out their God-given roles.
 - The mission’s ministry can offer family mission trips and stress the importance of families doing missions together.
 - Every ministry within the church should champion the family and stress the importance of the Great Commission starting within the family unit!
- So how does the family-equipping model manifest itself within the children and youth ministries in particular? Does a family-equipping model of youth ministry look different than a family-based or purpose-driven youth ministry?
 - The answer to this question is yes and no. As I mentioned, the family-equipping model of ministry is not about adding a program to the calendar or completely abolishing age-segregated ministries.

- The family-equipping model is more of a shift in ministry philosophy than anything else. However, there are some changes that a family-equipping youth ministry will make to programming to align with its new philosophy.
- First, the youth ministry leaders may want to select curriculum that corresponds with what the children and adult ministries are studying. This means that each member of the family will be studying similar topics and passages in their Sunday school classes.
 - However, each age group may approach the study a little differently. This allows for more fruitful discussion among family members later as parents seek to reinforce the biblical truths taught during the week.
- Youth leaders will also want to ensure that parents are given a resource that will help them discuss the lesson at home.
- In addition, children and youth leaders will want to have plenty of resources available to help parents lead family worship at home during the week. Resources can include catechisms, songs, lessons, and suggested Bible stories.
- One overlooked element in partnering with parents is involving them in leadership. Parents must be included in decision making when it comes to youth ministry programming.
 - The wise children and youth leader will develop and regularly meet with a leadership team that consists of children and youth parents. Working with parents is an essential aspect of successful family-equipping children and youth ministries.
 - This is especially true if the leader does not have children that are youth age. A seminary-trained youth pastor may be able to articulate a theology on the family, but if he does not have a teenager of his own, he has no idea what it is like to live with one.
 - Therefore, the parents on the leadership team bring a unique perspective. A parent leadership team can help the leader by praying, discussing, planning, executing, and evaluating a successful family ministry.
 - If the children and youth ministry desires to come alongside of parents in the discipleship of their children, parents' voices must be heard in leadership meetings.
- The function of youth ministry has greatly changed over the years. Many models and philosophies have been developed so that youth ministries can operate at the local church level.
- However, a person does not have to look any further than Scripture to see where God intends discipleship to primarily take place.
- Wayne Rice spoke truth when he said, "If I were reinventing youth ministry (again), I don't think I'd have to look too much further than Deuteronomy 6 for a game plan."
- God intends for the discipleship of children and youth to take place within the home, in partnership with the local church.

- Homework: At least three times this week, gather your entire family to pray together AND do a small devotion. Choose a passage of Scripture that is applicable to something going on in your family's life right now. Make it a special time where God can be glorified, requests can be made, and your family can grow together. Encourage each family member to pray out loud as you (the parent) opens and closes the prayer.

APPENDIX 11

SESSION 7

Resources for Discipling Your Children

¹ You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, ² and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also (2Timothy 2:1-2).

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

1. To survey some of the resources that are available for family discipleship
2. To understand how to use these resources
3. To develop a plan on how to disciple your children

Review Homework and Last Week's Session

- Ask, "How did the homework go this week?" Have each parent comment if time permits.
- Over the six weeks we have reviewed a lot information. We have looked at various biblical texts that teach parents (not the church) as the primary disciplers of their children. We have looked at complementarianism, egalitarianism, biblical manhood, biblical womanhood, the history of children and youth ministries, and defined family equipping ministry. Hopefully, everyone understands dire situation we are in in this day and age and why it is so important to do what God has called us as parents to do.
- To finish things off, this week I want to review some of the resources that are at your disposal to disciple your kids. I will show you what my family uses and how we use it and show you other resources that you could use if you prefer to use something else. But before we do that, take a look at this last video.

Ice Breaker

- Show "Family Discipleship Defined" video
- That's a two-and-a-half minute video summing up what we have been going over. Today, I want you to leave here knowing the resources that are available to you to create that teaching and immersive environment in your home.

Truth & Grace Memory Books from Founder's Press

- This is a resource that we use in our home. This is a three-book series that contains age-appropriate catechisms, memory verses, hymns, and creeds that your child and/or teen would memorize.
- One of the things I really like about this resource is that it comes from a Reformed Baptist Perspective. Its philosophy on parents being the primary disciplers of their children is paramount in these books. I would like to read to you a short paragraph from the introduction.
 - “The responsibility to teach children foundational, eternal, life-changing truth from God’s Word is laid squarely upon the shoulders of parents by the Lord Himself. Consider the charge that He has given to moms and dad (he then quotes Deut. 6:4-7). The primary responsibility for teaching your children about God does not belong to the Sunday school or the pastor or any program in the church. God has entrusted this important work to you, dear parent. If you do not invest your time and effort to teach your children about God, be assured that someone else will. The television and theater will teach them that God, if he exists at all, is an irrelevant, indulgent being that is little more than a nice, kindly old man. If you do not teach your children truth and righteousness, be assured that there are a multitude of teachers in this world who would deceive them into thinking that ‘truth’ and morality are relative ideas that can be shaped to fit anyone’s beliefs or standards.”
- By the time you go through this series, your child has gone through the New Testament twice, the four Gospels three times, Proverbs five times, and the book of Psalms twice. They will memorize the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, the Lord’s Prayer, 1 Corinthians 13, various Psalms (including Psalm 119), and the order of all the books of the Bible. This does not even include the catechisms and hymns.
- Overall, Karen and I have been very happy with it. There is no perfect curriculum. If you teach Sunday school, you know that. However, every curriculum must be tailored for your context. I have seen bad curriculums taught well and great curriculums taught poorly. It’s all a matter of how you use it.
- Some of the pros that we have found with Truth and Grace are . . .
 - It’s pretty comprehensive.
 - It’s a one-stop shop. Everything you need from age three through 18 years of age is spelled out for you.
 - It’s straightforward. It literally takes zero preparation on the parent’s part.
 - It’s great for younger kids. Even though it looks really intense, kids are memorizing machines! By the time Ava and Michael were four, they had memorized chunks of the Bible (Psalm 23, the Lord’s Prayer, about 30 catechisms). Michael just memorized the entire Christmas story from Luke.
 - It works well as a “homework” component. Our kids come home from school, have a snack, and immediately do their homework. They know that the Bible is part of their schooling that Karen and I teach. Their memory verses and catechisms are part of their homework.
 - It doesn’t take a long time. I spend about 10 minutes with each of my kids about 4-5 days per week teaching and then reviewing their catechisms and memory verses.

- It sparks biblical conversations. As you teach them the catechisms and memory verses, new words appear and interesting concepts arise which you will need to explain. Many times children will simply ask what it means.
- You can do it as a family.
- However, Truth and Grace is not perfect. It does have its cons . . .
 - I think it would be difficult to implement later on in child's life. The sooner you can get your child on the program the better. This is even addressed in the introduction. I imagine that teenagers may push back a little. However, children are easier when it comes to this, especially if they don't really ever remember a time when they didn't have to memorize Scripture. Remember this starts at three years of age.
 - There's a lot of information. Sometimes I see how much needs to be memorized and I'm shocked. However, you can tailor it to your family. Remember, curriculums are not perfect.
 - Some parents may not like rote memorization. We talked about this in one of the previous sessions. We learned by rote all through school. It is a tool used in education.

Jesus Storybook Bible

- Probably one of the best storybook Bibles on the market! This book goes over every major Bible story and shows how Jesus fits into each story, even in the Old Testament.
- If you are unfamiliar with what a storybook Bible is, it's a book that takes all of stories of the Bible (the narratives) and rewrites them in ways that children can understand. Not all storybook Bibles are created equal and not all storybook Bibles are biblical. There are some really bad storybook Bibles out there.
- One of my other concerns about storybook Bibles is that each story reads almost like an independent story. It breaks the Bible up into multiple little stories and fails to give children the big picture of the entire Bible: Christ! The Jesus Storybook Bible does not do that. Every single story has Jesus in it in some way.
- My family has used this storybook Bible for years. It's beginning to fall apart we use it so much. We have read through it so much that Ava has some of it memorized. The main reason we are still using it is because of Michael. Being younger, I feel like he needs to hear the stories more.
- We use this storybook during our family devotional time at night. This is separate from the catechisms and memory verses, which are done at homework time. Depending on the time of year, we have family devotionals about 4-6 times per week. We will use the storybook Bible about 2-4 of those times.
- Our devotional time is very simple. We will get together in one of the kids' rooms, sit in a circle and I will read the story or do the lesson. Afterwards, we will do prayer request using a notebook to write the requests down, and pray together. Each person in the family takes turns praying. Some nights I will pray, Karen will pray, or the kids will pray. All of this usually takes about ten minutes.
- Storybook Bibles are an excellent way to teach your kids the great narratives of the Bible in words they can understand. Most of them have quality pictures to go along with the story.

- The pros of the Jesus Storybook Bible are . . .
 - Just about any story from the Bible you can think of is in it.
 - It's a fairly good size. You are not going to go through the Jesus Storybook Bible in a week. This book will easily take you at least a couple months.
 - The illustrations are well done. They are not just cartoonish. Many times Ava has asked me to explain the picture because wasn't quite sure what it meant. This could be seen as a con, but it sparked conversation that she could contribute to.
 - Jesus is in every story. This storybook Bible does an excellent job at showing how the smaller stories fit into the big picture of the Bible. All of the stories point to the central person of the Bible: Christ!
 - Due to the size of the book, you can go through it multiple times. This book will take you 2-3 months to go through.
- The cons of the Jesus Storybook Bible are . . .
 - This book will be hard for children under the age of four or five. The book says it is for ages three and up. Karen and I tried using it with both of our kids at that age and we were unsuccessful. They could grasp the ideas or sit still long enough to listen to the story. I would introduce this book to kids that are around 4 ½ years of age.
 - The lengths of the stories are a little long. Some nights the kids are just out of control and they just won't and can't sit still for the stories. Sometimes they will space out while you are reading. The average length of each story is about 6-8 pages. I wish they were about 4-6. Your mileage will vary.
 - The quality of the book is not the best. It is a thick and heavy book. I wish it was put together better or offered in a leather bound version that would hold up better.
 - It may require a little preparation on your part if your child asks the right questions. For example, if you are unsure on how the Old Testament sacrifices point to Jesus or how God asking Abraham to give his son Isaac as an offering is a reference to Jesus' substitution, then you may want to do a little homework before getting to those stories.
 - It reads awkwardly in a lot of places. I find that I need to replace some of the wording as I read to make it flow better and more understandable for my kids.

The Biggest Story by Kevin DeYoung

- Another favorite of mine is "The Biggest Story" by Kevin DeYoung.
- This storybook's premise is that the Bible is full of exciting stories that fill children with awe and wonder. But kids need to know how all those classic stories connect to Scripture's overarching message about God's glorious plan to redeem his rebellious people.
- The description of this book reads "in *The Biggest Story*, Kevin DeYoung—a best-selling author and father of six—leads kids and parents alike on an exciting journey through the Bible, connecting the dots from the garden of Eden to Christ's death on the cross to the new heaven and new earth. With powerful illustrations by award-winning artist Don Clark, this imaginative retelling of the Bible's core message—how

the Snake Crusher brings us back to the garden—will draw children into the biblical story, teaching them that God's promises are even bigger and better than we think.”

- Karen and used this bought and used this book over the summer. We were really impressed with it. The storybook has good illustration and is written well. Although not as well as the “Jesus Storybook Bible,” this storybook shows children how the stories of the Bible fit into one big narrative about Jesus.
- This storybook is endorsed by people like Rick Warren, Matt Chandler, and Randy Alcorn to name a few.
- This book is ten chapters long at about 125 pages. This sounds big but in reality it is not. There’s not a lot of writing on the pages, as the pictures take up a lot of space.
- Some of pros about “The Biggest Story” are . . .
 - It’s very biblical. Although a storybook Bible, it communicates the Word of God in a conservative and accurate way.
 - The stories are just the right length. Unlike the Jesus Storybook Bible, I personally felt like my kids were able to follow better because they didn’t have to sit still for long. However, this is also a con, which we will get to in a moment.
 - The pictures are well done.
 - It’s written so kids around 4-5 years of age can understand.
 - It doesn’t require a lot of knowledge on the reader’s part. If you child asks questions about the story, you will very likely be able to answer their questions. Kids can ask tough questions sometimes!
- Some of the cons about “The Biggest Story” are . . .
 - Maybe a little difficult for a child under four years of age to understand. For younger children, I would recommend something like “The Beginner’s Bible: Timeless Children’s Stories.”
 - It’s too short. We were done with this book in about two weeks. We went through it a few times over the summer, but it just seemed repetitive since it was so short.
 - This is just a preference thing, but compared to the “Jesus Storybook Bible,” it’s rather large.

New City Catechism App

- This is a fairly new and free app by Tim Keller that provides 52 catechisms (questions and answers) just like “Truth and Grace Memory Books.”
- It is also available in print form. This free app not only includes the catechisms, but also comes with a devotional on each catechism written by contemporary authors and pastors like John Piper, Timothy Keller, and Kevin DeYoung (author of “The Biggest Story”), and historical figures, such as Augustine, John Calvin, and Martin Luther.
- I have very little experience with it. However, some of the guys in my cohort used this with their kids and really liked it.
- The big reason I have not tried it out is because my family was already using “Truth and Grace.” We have been using that for almost seven years now.
- However, I do have the app and have reviewed it. One thing I really like about the app is that it has a “children’s mode.” What this does is it cuts down the

- answers to the catechisms to a much easier length to memorize. Then as your kids get older, you can put in regular mode and they can learn the longer answer. So it's almost like having 104 catechisms instead of only 52.
- I like the idea of having a devotional/commentary for each catechism so you can go a little more in depth if you would like.
 - Some of the pros of “New City Catechisms” are . . .
 - It comes in an app. This is huge for me. I can't tell you how many times I have misplace “Truth and Grace.” Knowing I can use my phone or iPad is a big plus.
 - It's free, at least the app is. There is really no excuse to not use it if you are not using something else.
 - There are only 52 catechisms (this is also a negative). “Truth and Grace” has 122, which is quite large.
 - This may be something youth-aged children may be willing to try.
 - Children's mode is very helpful. Sometimes “Truth and Grace's” answers are very long. However, this keeps them from having to repeat the same catechisms later on.
 - Having a devotional is nice to have. This allows you to tie everything together in your family devotionals. You are having devotionals on what you are studying.
 - Some of the cons of “New City Catechisms” are . . .
 - There are only 52 catechisms. If you start this at a young age, you will get done pretty quickly. You many actually like that though.
 - There are no memory verses, church creeds, and important passages of Scripture laid out that everyone should know (think Psalm 23, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, etc.).
 - In the devotionals, the author chose to retain some archaic wording from the older authors like Martin Luther and John Calvin.
 - The devotionals are quite long. This may not work well with younger children.

Sunday School Take-Home Sheets

- Some of the most overlooked free resources you can use are the Sunday school take home sheets. They are given to you or your child when you pick them up from Sunday school. The youth version is emailed every Tuesday.
- These take-home sheets is one family devotional on what was taught in Sunday school that week.
- For the youth, the take-home sheet is on what was taught in Sunday school and Wednesday night since my Wednesday night lessons complement the Sunday school lesson.
- Thus, if the youth are using their personal devotional sheet that goes with the Sunday school lesson and you are using the family devotional sheet, the youth are being saturated with the Sunday school topic on Sunday morning, Wednesday night, in their quiet times, and your family devotional every week!

- I don't think the children's version does not come with a child's quiet time sheet.
- Also, depending on what Sunday school curriculum you are using in your adult classes, the children and youth are going over the same topic as you. Thus, this cuts down your preparation time since you just went on the lesson that Sunday.
- Some of the pros of the Sunday school take-home sheets are . . .
 - They are biblical. It's from a trusted source that was chosen by either Jeff, your teacher, your class, etc. It's usually LifeWay.
 - There's very little preparation, if any since you just went over it in Sunday school.
 - It's free!
 - It's very straightforward. Even if you are not a teacher, anyone can read from the sheet and make it applicable to their children/youth.
- Some of cons of the Sunday school take-home Sheets are . . .
 - It's usually just one lesson.
 - It might be a little redundant.
 - Sometimes there is not a lot of content. However, if you just did the lesson, you can supplement that easily.
 - It gets easily lost.

Homework: Disciple your kids! The resources that are available to you are abundant. We have simply skimmed the surface. Close in prayer.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Albright, W. F., and C. S. Mann. *Matthew*. Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries, vol. 26. New York: Doubleday, 1971.
- Anthony, Michael, and Michelle Anthony. *A Theology for Family Ministries*. Nashville: B & H, 2011.
- Arnold, Clinton E. *Ephesians*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010.
- Barna, George. *Revolutionary Parenting: What the Research Shows Really Works*. Carol Stream, IL: Barna, 2007.
- Baucham, Voddie. *Family Driven Faith: Doing What It Takes to Raise Sons and Daughters Who Walk with God*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007.
- _____. *Family Shepherds: Calling and Equipping Men to Lead Their Homes*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011.
- Bauer, Walter. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Edited by Frederick W. Danker. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. BibleWorks. v.10.
- Bengtson, Vern L., Norella M. Putney, and Susan Harris. *Families and Faith: How Religion Is Passed Down across Generations*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Blomberg, Craig L. *Matthew*. The New American Commentary, vol. 22. Nashville: Broadman, 1992.
- Bruce, F. F. *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984.
- Carson, D. A. *Matthew*. In vol. 8 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Frank E. Gabelein, 3-599. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.
- Christensen, Duane L. *Deuteronomy 1-11*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 6A. Dallas: Word, 1991.
- Clark, Chap, ed. *Youth Ministry in the 21st Century*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015.
- Cope, H. F. *Religious Education in the Family*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1915.

- Craigie, Peter C. *The Book of Deuteronomy*. New International Commentary. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976.
- Currid, John. *A Study Commentary on Deuteronomy*. Evangelical Press Study Commentary. Webster, NY: Evangelical Press, 2006.
- Dahood, Mitchell. *Psalms II 51-100*. Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries, vol. 17. New York: Doubleday, 1968.
- Dean, Kenda Creasy. *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- DeClaissé-Walford, Nancy L., Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth LaNeel Tanner. *The Book of Psalms*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014.
- Devries, Mark. *Family-Based Youth Ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994.
- Dunn, Richard R., and Jana L. Sundene. *Shaping the Journey of Emerging Adults: Life-Giving Rhythms for Spiritual Transformation*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012.
- Erb, F. O. *The Development of the Young People's Movement*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1917.
- Elmore, Tim. *Generation iY: Secrets to Connecting with Today's Teens & Young Adults in the Digital Age*. Atlanta: Poet Gardener, 2015.
- Farley, William P. *Gospel-Powered Parenting: How the Gospel Shapes and Transforms Parenting*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2009.
- Fernando, Ajith, and R. Kent Hughes. *Deuteronomy: Loving Obedience to a Loving God*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- France, R. T. *The Gospel of Matthew*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.
- Goldingay, John. *Psalms*. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament, vol. 2. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.
- Grudem, Wayne, "The Key Issues in the Manhood-Womanhood Controversy, and the Way Forward." In *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood*, edited by Wayne Grudem, 19-70. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002.
- Grudem, Wayne, and Dennis Rainey, eds. *Pastoral Leadership for Manhood and Womanhood*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003.
- Hagner, Donald A. *Matthew 14-28*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 33b. Dallas: Word, 1995.
- Haynes, Brian. *Shift: What It Takes to Finally Reach Families Today*. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2009.
- Hemphill, Kenneth S. *Parenting with Kingdom Purpose*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005.

- Hess, Richard S., and M. Daniel Carroll R, eds. *Family in the Bible: Exploring Customs, Culture, and Context*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003.
- Hoehner, Harold. *Ephesians*. An Exegetical Commentary. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.
- Holeman, Mark. *Church + Home: The Proven Formula for Building Lifelong Faith*. Ventura, CA: Regal, 2010.
- _____. *Faith Begins at Home*. Ventura, CA: Regal, 2005.
- _____. *Impress Faith on Your Kids*. Nashville: Randall House, 2011.
- Hughes, R. Kent. *Disciplines of a Godly Family*. Rev. ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004.
- Joiner, Reggie, and Carey Nieuwhof. *Parenting Beyond Your Capacity: Connect Your Family to a Wider Community*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.
- Jones, Timothy Paul. *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples*. Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011.
- _____, ed. *Perspectives on Family Ministry: 3 Views*. Nashville: B & H, 2009.
- Kalland, Earl S. *Deuteronomy*. In vol. 3 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelin, 3-235. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.
- Kidner, Derek. *Psalms 73-150*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 16. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1975.
- Koehler, Ludwig, and Walter Baumgartner. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Edited by Johann Jakob Stam. Translated by M. E. J. Richardson. BibleWorks, vol. 10. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1994.
- Kostenberger, Andreas J., and David W. Jones. *God, Marriage, and Family*. 2nd ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.
- Kraus, Hans-Joachim. *Psalms 60-150*. Continental Commentaries. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989.
- Lincoln, Andrew T. *Ephesians*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42. Dallas: Word, 1990.
- Lutz, Stephen. *College Ministry in a Post-Christian Culture*. Kansas City, MO: House Studio, 2011.
- Mahaney, C. J. "How to Encourage Men to Lead and Wives to Follow." In *Pastoral Leadership for Manhood and Womanhood*, edited by Wayne Grudem and Dennis Rainey, 203-4. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002.
- Melton, Alan, and Paul Dean. *Disciple Like Jesus for Parents: Following Jesus' Method and Enjoying the Blessings of Children*. Amityville, NY: Calvary Press, 2009.
- Merrill, Eugene H. *Deuteronomy*. The New American Commentary, vol. 4. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994.
- Mintz, Steven. *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life*. New York: Free Press, 1988.

- _____. *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2004.
- Mounce, William D. *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.
- O'Brien, Peter T. *The Letter to the Ephesians*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
- Peace, Martha. *The Excellent Wife*. Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 1998.
- _____. *The Faithful Parent: A Biblical Guide to Raising a Family*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2010.
- Piper, John. *The Dangerous Duty of Delight*. Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2001.
- _____. *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006.
- _____. "A Vision of Biblical Complementarity: Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible." In *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem, 35. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006.
- _____. *What's the Difference? Manhood and Womanhood Defined according to the Bible*. Trade paper ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001.
- Rice, Wayne. *Reinventing Youth Ministry Again*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010.
- Rienow, Rob. *Visionary Parenting: Capture a God-Sized Vision for Your Family*. Nashville: Randall House, 2009.
- Sailhammer, John H. *Genesis*. In vol. 2 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelin, 3-284. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990
- Scott, Stuart. *The Exemplary Husband*. Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2002.
- Senter, Mark. *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*. Youth, Family, and Culture Series. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010.
- Smith, Christian. *Lost in Transition: The Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Stinson, Randy, and Dan Dumas. *A Guide to Biblical Manhood*. Louisville: SBTS Press, 2011.
- Stinson, Randy, and Timothy Paul Jones. *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011.
- Strauch, Alexander. *Equal Yet Different*. Littleton, CO: Lewis & Roth, 1999.
- Tate, Marvin E. *Psalms 51-100*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 20. Dallas: Word, 1990.
- Thielman, Frank. *Ephesians*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010.

- Thompson, J. A. *Deuteronomy*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentary. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1974.
- Thompson, Tad. *Intentional Parenting: Family Discipleship by Design*. Lexington, KY: Cruciform, 2011.
- Tripp, Paul David. *Age of Opportunity*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2001.
- Tripp, Tedd. *Shepherding a Child's Heart*. Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 1995.
- Turner, David L. *Matthew*. Baker Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.
- VanGemenen, William A. *Psalms*. In vol. 5 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelin, 3-880. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991.
- Weinfeld, Moshe. *Deuteronomy 1-11*. Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries, vol. 5. New York: Doubleday, 1964.
- Wilson, Rodney. *The Parent Adventure: Preparing Your Children for a Lifetime with God*. Nashville: B & H, 2008.
- Witmer, Timothy Z. *The Shepherd Leader at Home*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- Wood, A. Skevington. *Ephesians*. In vol. 11 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelin, 3-92. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.
- Wright, Steve. *ApParent Privilege: That the Next Generation Might Know*. Wake Forest, NC: InQuest, 2008.
- _____. *reThink: Is Student Ministry Working?* Wake Forest, NC: InQuest, 2008.

ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING PARENTS AT PICKENS FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN PICKENS, SOUTH CAROLINA TO BE THE PRIMARY DISCIPLERS OF THEIR CHILDREN

Michael Timothy Sterlachini, Jr.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Timothy P. Jones

This project included a seven-week curriculum designed to equip parents to be the primary disciplers of their children. This curriculum utilized the “Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey” from the book *Family Ministry Field Guide* by Timothy Paul Jones before and after the project was implemented to gauge the parents’ understanding of family discipleship in the home. The curriculum placed an emphasis on fathers discipling their children while also equipping the mothers. At the end of the seven-week curriculum, parents received guidance to develop a long-term discipleship plan and resources from the church to help them continue the discipleship process.

Chapter 1 of this project includes the ministry context of PFBC, along with the rationale, purpose, goals, research methodologies, definitions, limitations, and delimitations of the project. Chapter 2 exegetes four texts on family discipleship: Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 78:1-8; Ephesians 6:1-4, and Matthew 28:18-20, providing the biblical foundation for the project. Chapter 3 analyzes biblical manhood and womanhood, the family-equipping model of ministry, and historical foundations related to family discipleship. In chapter 4 of this project, the development and implementation of the curriculum is surveyed, while chapter 5 gives an overall evaluation.

Parents' perceptions and practices of family discipleship were positively influenced throughout the course of this project. Before project implementation, only 43 percent of parents prioritized family discipleship. At the conclusion of the project, that number increased to 95 percent. In addition, parental practices increased in 8 out of the 9 areas measured. For example, family prayer and Bible reading increased 12 percent, discussion of spiritual matters increased 14 percent, and family worship time at home increased 37 percent. Finally, when asked how many times in the past two months they had talked with their spouse or close friend about their child's spiritual development, this number also increased from 29 percent to 58 percent.

VITA

Michael Timothy Sterlachini, Jr.

EDUCATIONAL

A.S., Tidewater Community College, 2005

B.A., The College at Southeastern, 2007

M.Div., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010

MINISTERIAL

Associate Pastor and Minister to Students, Wakefield Central Baptist Church,
Zebulon, North Carolina, 2006-2012

Associate Pastor to Students and Families, Good Hope Baptist Church, Cary,
North Carolina, 2012-2014

Student and Family Pastor, Pickens First Baptist Church, Pickens, South
Carolina, 2014-

ORGANIZATIONAL

Association of Christian Schools International

Evangelical Theological Society