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TRAINING SMALL GROUP LEADERS AT
EASTRIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH
IN KENT, WASHINGTON, TO
COUNSEL BIBLICALLY

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Ryan Matthew Trzeciak
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TRAINING SMALL GROUP LEADERS AT
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Ryan Matthew Trzeciak

Read and Approved by:

Robert K. Cheong (Faculty Supervisor)

Robert D. Jones

Date _____

To my beloved bride, Jen.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>JBC</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Counseling</i>
<i>MSJ</i>	<i>The Master's Seminary Journal</i>
NAC	New American Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NTC	New Testament Commentary
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentary
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

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PREFACE

It was John the Baptist who said, “A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven” (John 3:27). This project is the result of many blessings poured out by our gracious heavenly Father, for which the only proper response is thanksgiving and gratitude. First and foremost, I am grateful to the Lord Jesus Christ, who not only is my Savior, but also the Wonderful Counselor, the perfect man, our greatest example, and the true goal of all counseling.

Second, I would like to thank my family. Words do not exist to show my gratitude for my loving wife, Jen. She has walked with me every step of my scholastic career, starting with college. She has been my greatest supporter and my chief editor. It has been a joy to partner with her in ministry, and I look forward to many more years of joint service to our King. I would also like to thank our children, Jacob, Warren, Aubrey, Daniel, and Elise, for the joy they have been from their first breath. In addition, I thank my parents, Dennis and Catherine, for their sacrificial love and constant support of my education from before I could read. Last but not least, I want to thank my wife’s parents, Cliff and Julie Hammond, for their encouragement and prayers.

Third, I am thankful for the joy of serving the body of Christ at Eastridge Baptist Church. Our Senior Pastor, John LeProhon, has been a faithful minister of the gospel and a gracious friend and mentor. Pastor Andrew Craig has been a blessed friend and ministry companion. I am grateful for the support of our elders, and I greatly appreciate our small group leaders who patiently learned along with me in this project.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks for the academic and ministerial investment I received both at The Master’s Seminary and The Southern Baptist

Theological Seminary. Dr. Keith Essex and Dr. Greg Harris helped me to see the grandeur of Scripture and the nuggets of gold within its pages. Dr. Stuart Scott, Dr. Jeremy Pierre, and Dr. Robert Jones have sharpened my skill at taking the great truths of the Bible and applying them to the contexts of life. Dr. Robert Cheong, my doctoral supervisor, has mercifully guided me through the writing process and given me a greater vision of how to minister the Word of God and how to train others to do the same.

Above all, it is my prayer that this project bring glory to God by equipping the servants of Christ to counsel biblically. I leave it in his sovereign hands to choose how far beyond the congregation of Eastridge he takes this material, to the praise of his glorious grace.

Ryan Matthew Trzeciak

Covington, Washington

December 2018

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Eastridge Baptist Church (EBC) seeks to glorify God by fulfilling the Great Commandment (Matt 22:36-40)¹ and the Great Commission (28:18-20) through the process of discipleship. This process takes place in a myriad of formats, whether it be meeting one on one for coffee, in a Sunday school class, or the preaching in the main service, all is done is for the purpose of growth in Christlikeness. One of the greatest areas for potential growth in fulfilling this mission at EBC is through the biblical counseling ministry and its connection with the small group ministry. Biblical counseling and small groups are two of the main ways that discipleship takes place at EBC. Therefore, it is imperative that small group leaders have the training necessary to effectively counsel biblically as part of the overall discipleship ministry of EBC.

Context

Eastridge Baptist Church is located on the east hill of Kent, Washington, a suburb about 30 miles southeast of Seattle. The church was planted on Easter Sunday in 1981 by Grace Community Church of Auburn, Washington, and is part of the Conservative Baptist Churches of the Northwest. The church grew out of home Bible studies that eventually began to meet in a local elementary school, then moved to its current location in 1987. Though historically conservative, there was a time under the previous pastor where the church drifted from the plain teaching of the Bible. Under the leadership of the current pastor, John LeProhon, EBC made great strides in the last

¹All Scripture references are from the English Standard Version, 2007.

decade toward greater biblical fidelity. During that time, the church has seen a return to expository preaching, the establishment of a biblical eldership, a more strategic effort in missions, and a renewed emphasis on biblical counseling.

Although the leadership desires the congregation to receive counsel from the Bible as opposed to secular or integrationist sources, biblical counseling has never been an official ministry of EBC. The recent development of the biblical counseling emphasis involves a number of individuals including each of the three pastors who counsel by pointing people to the Scriptures,² one woman who is certified by the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC), and one former elder and his wife who are also certified through ACBC. These individuals pursued certification on their own initiative with the intent of using their training within the church. Others within the congregation also are currently pursuing ACBC training, with some engaged in master's level education in biblical counseling. What this means is that there are several individuals with the desire and the training necessary to counsel biblically; however, only recently has there been an effort to unify and take advantage of the skills and training of these individuals.

This developing ministry needs direction and support so that it can effectively minister to the congregation of EBC and its surrounding community. Given the size of the church, the current growth patterns, and the number of people requesting counseling, it is increasingly necessary for EBC to have a designated counseling team that can provide more in-depth and long-term counsel than what the pastors are able to include in their schedules.

In connection with the development of the biblical counseling ministry is the further development of the small group ministry. The small groups of EBC have gone

²Though each of the pastors of EBC has taken courses and has experience in biblical counsel, I am the only one who is pursuing a degree in biblical counseling in an effort to officially coordinate the ministry as part of the overall mission of EBC.

through some significant transitions recently. In the past, small groups functioned more as book studies and social groups with no proactive elder oversight with each group studying whatever it wanted. The elders and pastors made necessary changes, and now provide more guidance and direction. Three of the main changes include (1) a higher standard for those who can serve as a small group leader, (2) a focus on studying books of the Bible rather than books about the Bible and Christian living, and (3) providing a list of approved curricula from which the leaders can choose. Even though small groups are improved, there is still a need for training the leaders to counsel those who are actively engaged in these groups.

Wedding biblical counseling and small groups makes perfect sense for EBC. Biblical counseling training will enable the small group leaders to aid each participant in their spiritual maturation in a way that has not been possible in the past. The congregation evidences a need for this type of intentionality as families face interpersonal conflict, others struggle with finances, pornography remains a constant battle, to name just a few concerns.

The necessary pieces are now in place to take the next step toward unifying these two ministries to better disciple the congregation. Other churches use this model of ministry with tremendous spiritual benefit for their congregation. Two pastors in Kentucky share, “Unifying small groups and biblical counseling together has been a tool God has used to transform our people.”³ This project will focus on the small group leaders as a vital link in the chain to bring about growth in Christian maturity of the congregation of EBC.

³Brad Bigney and Ken Long, "Tools to Grow Your Church: Uniting Biblical Counseling and Small Groups," in *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God's Care Through God's People*, ed. Bob Kellemen and Kevin Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 90-91.

Rationale

The universal church has been given the divine commission to make disciples (Matt 28:19), and small groups and biblical counseling are ways that the Lord has provided for his church to accomplish this goal. Given the situation noted above, a synergistic relationship between the biblical counseling and small group ministries can be an effective element to the discipleship of our congregation. The elders of EBC desire the church to be known as a biblical, disciple-making church, and they want to ensure that all ministries are effectively working toward that end.

When evaluating the overall congregation, one main concern is that there are so many who simply come to the service on Sunday morning with little or no interest outside of their attendance. Others seem content in their sin with little or no desire to make the changes necessary for holiness. Small groups can provide an opportunity for people in need of change to receive general discipleship within a small community of believers who will love and support them on their path of sanctification. EBC is a well taught church and that which is learned must be obeyed, otherwise there is a danger of pride in one's knowledge (1 Cor 8:1).

Regarding the connection between small groups and biblical counseling, each ministry is involved in the process of discipleship by teaching believers the Scriptures and training them to apply it to their lives. The small group ministry provides a safe, loving environment for a group of believers to encourage and exhort one another as they grow in Christ together through the various joys and sorrows of life. Biblical counseling is a more individualized and personal discipleship relationship with a focused agenda addressing particular issues or struggles, with the counsel typically lasting for a more specific amount of time.

The relationship between biblical counseling and small groups has been described by using the analogy of a person floating down a river in a boat, representing a believer's growth toward Christ-likeness. The further a person progresses down the river,

the more Christ-like he or she becomes. The river is the environment of small groups that allows for constant progress in Christian maturity. Yet, occasionally, the boat gets trapped in an eddy, prohibiting movement downstream. The eddy represents a life-dominating sin or a situation of continuous suffering that prohibits the believer from advancing in their walk with Christ. Biblical counseling is the help that comes to free the person from the eddy, enabling them to get back in the flow toward Christ-likeness.⁴

This relationship at EBC will be built on the training of the small group leaders. To ensure that small groups and the biblical counseling ministries accomplish the same goals of Christ-likeness in their disciples, it will be important for them to have knowledge of the same material. The biblical counselors at EBC already possess training in biblical counseling principles and practices. The next step is to initiate an introductory level of training to the small group leaders. The goal is not that they would be equally equipped as counselors, but that the message of biblical hope and soul care one receives in the small group matches that which would be received in the counseling office. Thus, the desired end result is continuity, not necessarily equal competency.⁵

Thus, training the small group leaders in the principles of biblical counseling would mean that more believers would be counseling others biblically and those who need counsel will receive it sooner within their current discipleship relationships. Also, if a situation arose that was beyond the ability, training, and/or time availability of the small group leader, then the biblical counselor would be a resource to help address the particular struggles of sin and suffering while the counselee continued on with the small group in the process of sanctification with the support of a loving community that desires growth in that person as well. It is imperative for EBC to move forward in maximizing

⁴Bigney and Long, "Tools for Growing Your Church," 95-96.

⁵The small group leaders will not be expected to read as broadly, be evaluated as strictly, nor have the experience level as those trained and certified in biblical counseling. The goal of this project was to provide them with an introductory framework for bringing about biblical change that can be used both in the small group setting and for those engaged in more formal counseling.

the small group ministry structure by equipping the leaders with the knowledge and skills to biblically counsel as it seeks to mature its members.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to train the small group leaders of Eastridge Baptist Church in Kent, Washington, to counsel biblically.

Goals

With this purpose in mind, the following four goals reflect the process by which this project was accomplished:

1. The first goal was to assess the current understanding of biblical counseling principles among the small group leaders of EBC.
2. The second goal was to develop a twelve-session curriculum on the principles and practices of biblical counseling.
3. The third goal was to equip EBC small group leaders with the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to counsel biblically by utilizing the developed curriculum.
4. The fourth goal was to develop a plan to use the curriculum to train future leaders in the small group ministry in order to counsel biblically.

The research methodology and instruments used to measure the success of each goal will be detailed below.⁶

Research Methodology

These four goals determined the effectiveness of the project. The first goal was to assess the current knowledge of the small group leaders in the area of biblical counseling principles and practices. This goal was measured by administering a pre-

⁶All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

course Biblical Counseling Inventory (BCI) to the current small group leaders.⁷ This pre-course assessment gauged each leader's biblical knowledge and competency in biblical counseling.⁸ This goal was considered successfully met when the small group leaders complete the BCI and the results were analyzed for a clearer picture of their level of understanding in the area of biblical counseling.⁹

The second goal was to develop a twelve-session curriculum on the principles and practices of biblical counseling. This course was to establish a framework for biblical change,¹⁰ emphasize a biblical understanding of the heart, and cover the topics of anger, fear/anxiety, depression, along with marital and parenting concerns. It took place in a classroom setting with ninety minutes of teaching and interactive discussion along with the completion of outside reading. This goal was measured by an evaluation panel consisting of the senior pastor of EBC, two local pastors, and the three ACBC certified members of our congregation. The panel utilized a rubric to evaluate the course material for biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, and applicability of the curriculum.¹¹ This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion meet or exceed the sufficient level and the elders adopted the curriculum for use at EBC. Should the initial feedback yielded less than 90 percent, the curriculum would have been revised until it met or exceeded the sufficient level.

⁷See appendix 1.

⁸The process by which the small group leaders of EBC are approved for the ministry is by evaluating them on the character qualifications for deacons (1 Tim 3:8-13) as well as having an ability to teach and lead a group in the discussion of God's Word. Select pastoral staff and elders are responsible for this evaluation and the current small group leaders successfully received this approval.

⁹There are currently fifteen small group leaders/couples, including two men's groups, four women's groups, and six mixed groups. The number of attendees is approximately 100-125 individuals.

¹⁰The framework for biblical change was based on Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change: How Christ Changes us by His Grace (Study Guide)* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2005).

¹¹See appendix 2.

The third goal was to equip a minimum of ten of the current small group leaders/couples who participated in the pre-course survey with the knowledge and skills of biblical counseling by utilizing the developed curriculum.¹² This process included teaching, as well as observation of and feedback concerning the participants' knowledge and skills. The former related to measuring the increase of knowledge and was accomplished by re-administering the BCI. The latter related to assessing the participants' counseling skills as measured by the facilitator and the ACBC certified counselors in our congregation who utilized an evaluation rubric during role play scenarios.¹³

This goal was considered successfully met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre and post course results from the BCI. A t-test for dependent samples was chosen since this statistic “involves a comparison of the means from each group of scores and focuses on the difference between the scores.”¹⁴ Additionally, this goal was considered successfully met when participants were rated on the counseling skills evaluation rubric.

The fourth goal was to develop a plan to utilize the developed curriculum to train future small group leaders as the ministry expands. This goal was measured by a panel of the pastors of EBC and three current elders who will use a rubric to evaluate the plan's content, scope, and action steps.¹⁵ This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of all rubric evaluation indicators meet or exceeded the sufficiency level and the plan adopted by the elders of EBC. If the initial feedback were

¹²Ideally, all fifteen current leaders/couples would volunteer for the training. However, the recruitment of ten leaders was a more realistic expectation and would provide an acceptable group for the initial implementation of this program.

¹³See appendix 3.

¹⁴Neil J. Salkind, *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2008), 189-91.

¹⁵See appendix 4.

less than 90 percent, the plan would have been revised until it meets or exceeds the sufficient level.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

Several key terms used throughout the project are defined below in order to aid the reader's understanding of the subject:

Discipleship. A disciple is known as someone who follows a teacher, leader, or type of philosophy. Discipleship then is the process of becoming like the teacher, leader, or adhering to a philosophy. Regarding Christian discipleship, Mark Dever succinctly states, "Discipling is deliberately doing spiritual good to someone so that he or she will be more like Christ."¹⁶ In other words, discipleship is the process of Christians helping Christians be more like Christ. This definition broadly encompasses everything from the Sunday morning sermon to the one-on-one, biblically-based conversation over coffee.

Biblical counseling. As part of the discipling process, biblical counseling is understood as "long-term . . . personal intensive discipleship."¹⁷ *Intensive* means that it focuses on a specific issue of sin or suffering. It is long-term in that the counsel focuses on that issue for a designated period of time. A fuller definition is provided by Robert Kelleman:

Christ-centered, church based, comprehensive, compassionate, and culturally-informed biblical counseling depend upon the Holy Spirit to relate God's Word to suffering and sin by speaking and living God's truth in love to equip people to love God and one another (Matt 22:35-40). It cultivates conformity to Christ and communion with Christ and the body of Christ, leading to a community of one-another disciple-makers (Matt 28:18-20).¹⁸

¹⁶Mark Dever, *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 13.

¹⁷Bigney and Long, "Tools to Grow Your Church," 95.

¹⁸Robert W. Kelleman, *Equipping Counselors for Your Church: The 4E Ministry Training Strategy* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011), 35. As explained by Stuart Scott, biblical counseling sees the truth of the Bible, when rightly understood, as relevant to all of life and can be graciously and practically applied to every heart and every circumstance of difficulty to bring about real and lasting change. Stuart Scott, "A Biblical Counseling Approach," in *Counseling and Christianity: Five Approaches*,

Small groups/Small group leaders. The Small Group Ministry of EBC consists of groups of five to twenty people who gather together for Bible study, prayer, and mutual edification. There is a total of twelve groups: two men's group, four women's groups, and six mixed groups. The women's and men's groups have individual leaders, while the mixed groups are led by a husband and wife team, and in a few cases, two couples. These are the official advertised adult groups, but there are other groups that meet within various ministries, such as college-age small groups, and separate groups for the young men and ladies within the youth ministry.¹⁹ The focus of this project was on the official advertised adult groups and their leaders.

Several limitations and delimitations were related to this project. One limitation was that the accuracy of the pre and post-series surveys were dependent upon the willingness of the respondents to answer to the best of their ability as to their knowledge and understanding of biblical counseling principles and procedures. To mitigate this limitation, the respondents were promised that their answers would remain anonymous. Two delimitations were placed on the project. First, this project was limited to the small group leaders of Eastridge Baptist Church. Second, the project was limited to twenty weeks. This timeframe was adequate to achieve the stated goals.

Conclusion

Discipleship is a necessary part of the life of the church and the maturation of the believer. Biblical counseling and small groups represent two ways to accomplish that responsibility. By training the small group leaders of EBC to counsel biblically, they will be better equipped to disciple their participants and more Christians will receive better soul care. Chapter 2 focuses on the biblical foundation for this model of discipleship

ed. Stephen P. Greggo and Timothy A. Sismore (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012), 158.

¹⁹These individuals were also invited to attend.

while chapter 3 explores the practical outworking of this model as seen in other congregations. Chapter 4 provides details of what was taught in the course at EBC, while chapter 5 evaluates the course.

CHAPTER 2
THEOLOGICAL EXPECTATIONS OF DISCIPLESHIP
AND BIBLICAL COUNSELING

“Oh! Great is our God, so we should worship greatly!”¹ These lyrics exemplify the fact that the Lord is to be the all-consuming focus of the believer. God has made himself known and desires his people to know him, and he has instituted a system by which that knowledge is to be passed on. It was God’s desire that Abraham “command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord” (Gen 18:19). The psalmist declared that God “commanded our fathers to teach their children . . . so that they should set their hope in God” (Ps 78:5-7). The Thessalonians were imitators of Paul and his ministry companions and became an example of gospel living to others (1 Thess 1:6-7). When one examines the biblical evidence, what is crystal clear is that God desires his people to learn truth and righteous living from those who have come before. This is the process of discipleship, and from Genesis to Revelation the biblical expectation is for all of God’s people to be so engaged. The following explains the commission Jesus gives to discipleship, the character of those involved in discipleship, the call given to church leaders to disciple the saints, and the necessary commitment to a practical working belief in the sufficiency of Scripture in the process of discipleship.

The Commission of Discipleship

Primary among the biblical texts on discipleship is Matthew 28:16-20, often referred to as the Great Commission. In this passage, Jesus summoned the eleven

¹Citizens and Saints, “Oh! Great is Our God!” *Join the Triumph*, recorded November 11, 2014, BEC Recording, May 4, 2015, CD.

disciples to a mountain in Galilee (28:16).² When they saw Jesus, they worshiped him (28:17).³ In the following verses, Jesus declares the universal nature of his authority and the world-wide focus of the commission by repeating the word “all” four times. He has been given “all authority” (28:18), his disciples are to go into “all nations” teaching “all that I have commanded” (28:19), and Jesus promises to be with them “always” (28:20), or “all the days until the consummation of the age.”⁴

When Jesus claims, “All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me” (28:18), he is not saying that he is more divine or more authoritative now in his post-resurrected state than before. From eternity past and prior to his incarnation, he shared in the divine glory (John 17:5), being co-equal and co-eternal with the Father (1:1). During his life on earth, Jesus’ words carried divine authority (Matt 24:35). He had the authority to forgive sin (9:6), showing his authority over the spiritual realm and the physical world as he walked on water and calmed the sea (14:22-33), cast out demons (17:18), healed the sick and raised the dead (Mark 5:21-43).

Yet, something changed regarding the nature of his authority. No longer is he submissive to the limitations of his self-emptying (Phil 2:7-8), but now possesses

²Judas committed suicide in the previous chapter (Matt 27:5). As to the mountain, although not specified, some scholars mention possible locations. Donald A. Hagner suggests that this is the same location as the Mount of Transfiguration. Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, WBC, vol. 33B (Dallas: Word Books, 1995), 884. John Nolland writes that it is fitting to see the mountain mentioned in the present context as the same location where the Sermon on the Mount took place since Jesus instructs his disciples to teach all that he commands (Matt 28:20). John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 1261-62.

³A peculiar phrase closes out this verse as Matthew writes “but some doubted.” The original phrase *διστασαν* has more to do with hesitation than disbelief, and commentators are divided as to the identity of those who doubted. One possible understanding is that the “some” points to a smaller contingent within the eleven who were unsure about the meaning of Christ’s appearance. Though all the disciples previously interacted with him, they were still at a loss for how to respond in the transition from their cowardice in Gethsemane, to their despair over the crucifixion, to joy over his resurrection. See R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 1112. A second possibility is that the “some” identify a larger group outside of the eleven who are also present for this meeting. While the eleven already met Jesus and were expecting to meet him on the mountain (28:7), there were others for whom this event marks their first experience with the risen Christ. Hendriksen believes that this event most likely coincides with the appearance of Jesus to the five hundred (1 Cor 15:6). See William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel of Matthew*, NTC (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1973), 997.

⁴Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 880.

preeminence as the firstborn from the dead and head of the church (Col 1:18). A new age has dawned in redemptive history where Jesus is the focal point (Heb 1:1-4). The Father gave the Son universal authority over his kingdom (Dan 7:13-14) where Christ now rules as king over heaven and earth. As Carson writes, “The Son becomes the one through whom *all* God’s authority is mediated.”⁵

In using the connective “therefore,” οὖν, Jesus insists that it is upon this universal authority that he now commissions his disciples to their world-wide ministry (Matt 28:19). The main verb in the commission is the imperative “make disciples,” μαθητεύσατε, which is supported by three subordinating participles that take on an imperatival force in connection to the main verb.⁶ The term “go,” πορευθέντες, has commonly been understood as “wherever you go,” implying that the disciples are to make disciples in whatever location they find themselves. While this may be part of his intention, the implication is that Jesus does desire for the disciples to go to all nations.⁷ In the New Testament, the term “nations,” ἔθνη, typically identifies those who are non-Jewish. However, “all nations” in the present passage means an expansion of the mission that includes both Jew and Gentile (Rom 1:16). Thus, the disciples are to make disciples of all people without distinction.

What is a disciple? A disciple is a learner, a pupil and follower of a teacher, and the Christian disciple takes Jesus as their teacher, learning from and following him.⁸ Jesus commands the original disciples to make disciples of him, not of themselves. Jesus gives two means by which disciples are to be made: baptism and teaching. He mentions

⁵Donald A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 8 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank Gaebelein and R. P. Polcyn (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 594-95.

⁶Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 886.

⁷Carson, *Matthew*, 595.

⁸Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 746.

baptism first since it is a one-time event whereas teaching is an ongoing process.

To baptize, βαπτίζοντες, means “to dip, immerse, or sink,”⁹ and was practiced in Scripture by John the Baptist (Matt 3:16; Mark 1:5) and the early church (Acts 1:41; 8:12, 38; 10:47-48) by immersion into water. The distinction is that John’s was “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Mark 1:4). Not that his baptism forgave sins, but the application of his message was acted upon by the repentant sinner who sought to turn from the sins from which they were forgiven and live righteously as they bore fruit in keeping with their repentance (Luke 3:8-14). Baptism was the outward expression of their repentance and the forgiveness they received from God. In the church, baptism is an act of obedience to Christ’s example and instruction (Matt 3:15; 28:19) and symbolic of the believer’s union with him in his death, burial, and resurrection (Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:12). Jesus said that baptism is to be in “the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 28:19) indicating a disciple’s loyalty, solidarity, and submission to the godhead.¹⁰

The second essential element of making disciples is “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded” (28:20). There are three key components to this phrase. First, the teaching is to consist of what Jesus commanded. The disciples are not to pass on their own thoughts and opinions but to make learners of Christ. Second, they are to teach the entirety of what Jesus commanded. They cannot pick and choose but must declare the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). Third, what is taught is to be obeyed. “Observe,” τηρεῖν, means “to watch over, guard, keep, preserve,”¹¹ indicating that Jesus does not want his disciples to merely pass on information; he is concerned about a way of life.

⁹G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 74.

¹⁰Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1268-69.

¹¹Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon*, 445.

Along with the instruction for baptism, Jesus is not calling for simple decisions or conversions, but for a definitive, life-long commitment to him.¹²

The commission that Jesus gives is a monumental task. These disciples were responsible for initiating a global ministry. However, immediately following his command to make disciples of all nations, he promises his never-ending presence with his disciples to empower them as they go out to fulfill their mission. The one who was Immanuel in the beginning of Matthew's gospel (1:23), who promised to be among those gathered in his name (18:20), now commits to be with his disciples continuously, "to the end of the age" (28:20). In this promise, Jesus is not temporarily committing to the first generation of disciples but pledges his presence among his followers to the end of time.¹³

This primary text on discipleship establishes God's priority for ministry. Jesus called the original twelve to be his disciples, to follow him, learn from him, and live like him. He then commissioned them to go make more disciples, teaching others how to obey all that he commanded. This is a worldwide task given to all disciples of Christ that is to continue to the end of the age, and thankfully the Lord provided the necessary resources by promising to be with his disciples at every step of their journey. However, what kind of people are to be involved in this process of discipleship? What are the character qualities needed for those who will become disciples who make disciples?

The Character of Discipleship

The commission of Christ to go and make disciples was a new application of an old practice. God always desired his people to worship, learn from, and follow him, while calling others to do the same. While Jesus called for this to be the process by which

¹²In regard to counseling, "The Standards of Doctrine" for ACBC state, "The Great Commission necessitates that all faithful counseling conversations must have Jesus Christ as their ultimate goal." Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 335.

¹³Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 749.

his church is built, it is a process that is seen both in the New and Old Testaments. Though there are numerous examples, a single scenario from each Testament will show how Moses and Paul engaged in discipleship, highlighting the character of those involved in the process, which becomes the example to follow for the leaders in the small group ministry of EBC.

Moses' Able Men in Exodus 18

Shortly after the people of Israel left Egypt and before they received the Law of God written on the tablets of stone,¹⁴ Moses led the people to Sinai, “the mountain of God,” (Exod 18:5) and engaged in a conversation with his father-in-law Jethro that impacted the religious, social, civil, and military practices of the nation. It was a joyful encounter as Moses recorded all that the Lord had done to free Israel from slavery and deliver them from the difficulties so far in their journeys (18:8). Jethro rejoiced at the news, blessed the Lord, and offered sacrifices for his goodness (18:9-12).

The next day, Moses returned to his responsibility of mediation as the people stood around him all day (18:13). Jethro observed this event and questioned Moses, “Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning till evening?” (18:14). Moses responded by informing Jethro that the people “come to inquire of God” concerning their disputes, and he makes judgments in those cases, letting them know the statutes and laws of God (18:15-16). Upon hearing this explanation, Jethro counters that what Moses is doing is not good, and that he and the people will grow weary. One commentator discusses that verse 23 implies that the people would take the law into their

¹⁴Exodus 16:1 refers to “the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt,” and Exod 19:1 record that it was “the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt. Thus, the interaction between Jethro and Moses took place sometime in that second month after leaving Egypt. There are some questions about the chronological placement of Exodus 18; see Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary*, The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975), 321-22. Kaiser says that the chapter is in its proper place since portions of the law were already known by this time and the practice of sacrifices was present since the early parts of Genesis. See Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Exodus*, in vol. 2 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 411.

own hands, a practice that will undermine the well-being of the community.¹⁵ Jethro said this task was too heavy for Moses to do alone (18:18).

The humble counsel he gave was two-fold. First, Moses was to continue to act as mediator for the people and communicator of God's laws and expectations. In relation to God, he was to represent the people and bring their cases before the Lord (18:19). God designated Moses as leader of the people and the only acceptable individual who could approach him (19:24). In relation to the people, Moses was to warn them about the laws of God and teach them how to apply it to their lives (18:20). Second, Jethro instructed Moses to "look for able men . . . and place such men over the people as chiefs" so that "they will bear the burden with you" (18:21-22). In the proposal, Jethro identified four necessary character qualities for those who would help Moses (18:21).

The first quality was that these were to be able men, אֲנָשֵׁי־חַיִל, a term that lends itself to "soldierly" men,¹⁶ men who possessed strong leadership qualities, high morals, and men who acted with purpose and efficiency.¹⁷ Second, they were to have a great fear of God, "men deeply impressed with the conviction that there is a God above them, whose eye is upon them, to whom they are accountable . . . they are controlled by a holy awe of heaven."¹⁸ Third, they were to be trustworthy, אֲנָשֵׁי־אֱמֻנָה, meaning men of integrity, who possessed a sincere fidelity to what was true. Fourth, they were to be known as men who hate a bribe, not covetous and possessing no desire for dishonest gain. Thus, their moral qualifications mattered more than their intellect or performance. The qualities to be found in these men were like the qualities to be found in church leaders as identified in

¹⁵C. F. Keil, "The Second Book of Moses (Exodus)," in vol. 1 of *Commentary on the Old Testament*, trans. James Martin (1866; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001), 377.

¹⁶R. Alan Cole, *Exodus: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973), 141.

¹⁷William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew And Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 102-3.

¹⁸George Bush, *Commentary on Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1993), 228.

the New Testament (Acts 6:3; 1 Tim 3:2-12; Titus 1:7-9).¹⁹

Once these men were identified, they were to be placed in a hierarchical structure of authority as “chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens” (Exod 18:21, 25). They were responsible for judging the people “at all times,” handling the smaller matters of justice themselves while bringing the greater and more difficult matters to Moses (18:22, 25). The greater matters were those that were more complex and unique, whereas the smaller matters were the ones for which there was a precedent, something routine. Thus, the wise leader needed to know the precedent, understand the judgment, and apply it without prejudice.²⁰ This process brought about greater endurance for Moses and the opportunity for the people to return home in peace (18:23).

Jethro suggested this structure in humble submission to the Lord (18:23). God used him to establish a process of disseminating his Word to a greater number of people through the process of delegating responsibility. Men were chosen based upon their moral qualities and knowledge of the truth and tasked with informing the people of God’s requirements. These men handled the routine matters while the greater issues were brought to Moses who took them to the Lord. Through this process, more people knew God’s requirements in a relatively shorter amount of time that brought about increased peace among the people. This example aids in the process of training small group leaders at EBC to counsel biblically by pointing out the character, biblical knowledge, and practical application needed for counseling in that context.

Paul’s Faithful Men in 2 Timothy 2:1-2

Imprisoned in Rome, Paul wrote to Timothy, his son in the faith and closest ministry companion. Second Timothy is the last divinely inspired letter from the hand of Paul, and in this letter, he expressed his devotion to the Lord and his desire for the

¹⁹Kaiser, *Exodus*, 414.

²⁰John I. Durham, *Exodus*, WBC, vol. 3 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 251.

continuation of gospel proclamation. Paul reminds Timothy, “God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control” (2 Tim 1:7), therefore “do not be ashamed...but share in suffering for the gospel” (1:8). Later, Paul instructs him, “Follow the pattern of the sound words that you heard from me” (1:13). Beginning in chapter two, he gives clear guidelines on how this ministry model is to be implemented.

What Paul says in 2:1-2 contrasts the unfaithful conduct of Phygelus and Hermogenes, who turned away from Paul and the gospel (1:15). After warning about the apostates, Paul addresses Timothy as “my child,” indicating their close relationship and the personal nature of this letter. His desire is for Timothy to “be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2:1). “Be strengthened,” *ἐνδυναμοῦ*, is a present passive imperative, thus a command for him to be continually empowered by a strength that does not come from within but is divine in origin. One commentator writes, “The sense of the imperative is really ‘yield yourself to divine empowerment.’”²¹

The power is drawn from the grace of God that is found in being in Christ Jesus. Grace is a main theme in Paul’s writings, often starting his letters with a prayer for grace to be upon his readers (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; Gal 1:3). Paul experienced empowering grace when the Lord told him “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12:9). He identified how God saves based upon “his own purpose and grace” (2 Tim 1:9). Paul made clear that God’s grace empowers the gifts for service (Eph 4:7), and believers are to be avenues of grace to others (4:29). This grace is found “in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 2:1), meaning that empowerment comes by having faith in, through obedience to, and having fellowship with him as Lord and Savior.²²

In reliance upon grace, Timothy was to obey the second command Paul gives, “what you have heard from me . . . entrust to faithful men” (2 Tim 2:2). Paul was an

²¹Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 489.

²²Ibid.

instrumental agent whom God used to bring about Timothy's growth in grace (Acts 16:1; 2 Tim 3:10). Timothy soon became Paul's disciple and ministry partner, often assigned significant responsibilities (Acts 17:13-14; 19:22; 1 Tim 1:3). From Paul, he learned "sound doctrine" (1 Tim 1:10) and "sound words" (2 Tim 1:13). This teaching was in addition to what Timothy received from his mother and grandmother (1:5), and now Paul commands Timothy to take the good deposit entrusted to him (1:14) and entrust it to others.²³

Then Paul gives the qualifications of those who are to be entrusted.²⁴ The first qualification is that they are to be "faithful," πιστοῖς, which can also be translated as "trustworthy," "reliable," or "sure."²⁵ This word does not simply refer to men who have faith but men who are loyal to Christ, committed to the gospel, and can be trusted to fulfill their responsibility. The second qualification is that they possess the ability to teach. "Able," ἱκανοί, indicates a person who is sufficiently qualified, possessing a certain level of competency, one who is fit for the task.²⁶

These men would possess the spiritual gift of teaching (Rom 12:7), and combined with their dependable character, they were to be approved workers "rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15). Those entrusted with truth possessing the

²³This process is not establishing a system of apostolic succession, but a dissemination of truth from one generation to the next. Quinn and Wacker imply that the image here is of a father passing on an inheritance to his son. Jerome D. Quinn and William C. Wacker, *The First and Second Letter to Timothy: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary*, ECC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 636.

²⁴Even though the word ἀνθρώποις can be used as a reference to "mankind" to include both men and women, in the context of 2 Timothy 2, Paul desires men to fulfill this position since he used masculine pronouns in the remainder of the verse, and the teaching role indicates that Paul most likely had in mind the qualifications for elders in 1 Timothy 3. However, the biblical principle of passing on God's truth to others can be expanded to include both men and women. The justification for the expansion of this principle can be seen in the "one another" passages such as Romans 15:14, "instruct one another," Ephesians 5:19, "addressing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs," Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom," and 1 Thessalonians 5:11, "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up." This principle is the understanding and application used for the small group ministry at EBC.

²⁵Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon*, 362.

²⁶Ibid., 215.

ability to teach are to instruct others. Though Paul does not specifically say that this process is to continue indefinitely, this passage helps establish the continuation of disseminating truth through the process of discipleship. What Paul says is in line with the process established by Moses and the Great Commission spoken by Jesus.

Exodus 18 and 2 Timothy 2:2 presents a generational perspective that those entrusted with truth are to pass on truth to those who will be faithful to continue the process. These passages not only highlight that process but also the character and giftedness of those involved. When applied to the specific situation of training EBC small group leaders, their faithful character will be evidenced through their commitment to the church through membership, longevity of service in other ministries, and godly influence upon others as evaluated by the elders of EBC. Their ability to teach will also be evaluated by the elders. In the context of this project, the truth to be passed on are the elements of biblical counseling.

The Call to Discipleship

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians extolling the greatness of Christ who is the head of the church (1:22), the sovereign work of God in salvation (1:3-14), and commanded believers to live a life worthy of those truths (4:1). He wants his readers to understand that this way of living can only be accomplished as believers practice humility and patience (4:2), working to maintain the unity that already exists because of the Holy Spirit (4:3-16). Yet within this unity there is diversity as “grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift” (4:7).²⁷ In addition to the gifts given to individuals, Paul informs that there are certain individuals who are themselves gifts given to the church by Christ (4:11) to bring about spiritual maturity in the church

²⁷These “grace gifts” are also understood as the individual spiritual gifts that are given in different combinations and in different measures and are found in Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:8-10, 28; 1 Pet 4:10.

(4:13). As O'Brien writes, "Christ now sets out to accomplish the goal of filling all things by supplying his people with everything necessary to foster the growth and perfection of the body."²⁸

The Gifts Given to the Church in Ephesians 4:11

Verse 11 begins with, "And he gave," *καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν*, which picks up the thought of gifts given by Christ from verse 7. Paul then provides a list of five leadership roles that were gifts given to the church. The first role is that of apostles. These apostles are distinct from those who were the foundation upon which the early church was built and previously mentioned by Paul (2:20; 3:5). The distinction between the two is that those discussed earlier consist of the original disciples and Paul, those who followed Christ, witnessed his death and resurrection (Acts 1:21-22), and were commissioned by him to an authoritative position, the office of apostle (Luke 6:13). The apostles mentioned in Ephesians 4:11 make up the ongoing structure of the church, those who have the spiritual gift of apostleship, not holding the office of apostle, individuals such as Barnabas (Acts 14:14), James, the Lord's brother (Gal 1:19), Apollos (1 Cor 4:6, 9), and others (Rom 16:7; Phil 2:25). Though they lack the authoritative position, they were gifted by Christ to carry his authoritative message. Many scholars agree that these individuals were sent out into new areas to proclaim the gospel and establish churches in locations where there was no gospel witness.²⁹

Second, prophets are given to the church. This term is also used to describe those who made up the foundation of the church (Eph 2:20; 3:5) and not the prophets of the Old Testament. Much like the apostles, there is a distinction between the titles

²⁸Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 297.

²⁹Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 256. Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 542. Ernest Best, *Ephesians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 389.

contained in these passages. This gift is mentioned both in Romans 12:6 and 1 Corinthians 12:28, and includes an element of foretelling (Acts 11:28; 21:10-11; 1 Thess 3:4; 4:14-18). In the early days of the church when the canon was incomplete, this gift was necessary for the revelation of truth and the establishment of authority. However, as time wore on, it mostly referred to those who have been gifted to proclaim the mysteries of God to instruct, exhort, comfort, and strengthen the church (1 Cor 14:1-4; Eph 4:12).³⁰

The third group are evangelists. This term is only used twice more in the New Testament. Philip was identified as “the evangelist” (Acts 21:8), and Paul instructed Timothy about the pastoral duty of performing “the work of an evangelist” (2 Tim 4:5). While the apostles were sent into new areas, evangelists were specially gifted by Christ to proclaim the gospel locally. Many scholars indicate that these individuals ministered in the local church, preaching the gospel to their congregation and to those who had not heard of Christ living within their home towns.³¹

Fourth, God gave to the church shepherds, also known as pastors.³² Paul also used this term, *ποιμένας*, when speaking to the elders in Ephesus, where he said, “the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for (shepherd) the church of God” (Acts 20:28). Peter calls elders to “shepherd the flock of God” (1 Pet 5:2). Jesus is described as “the good shepherd” (John 10:11) and “the great shepherd of the sheep” (Heb 13:20), making Christ the supreme example of what a shepherd’s service is to look like. Theirs is to be a ministry of leadership through nurture, protection, and supervision. No doubt,

³⁰Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 542.

³¹Ibid.; Arnold, *Ephesians*, 259; O’Brien, *Ephesians*, 299.

³²Scholars debate these last two roles. Some scholars write that pastors and teachers are to be understood as two functions of the same individual. See John MacArthur, *Ephesians, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1986), 143, and F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 348. However, this is a misuse of the Granville Sharp rule, and thus this passage represents two distinct offices with overlapping responsibilities. See F. David Farnell, “Fallible New Testament Prophecy/Prophets? A Critique of Wayne Grudem’s Hypothesis,” *MSJ* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1991): 163-69, and Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 284.

Paul had in mind the qualifications of elders in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, which includes the ability to teach, indicating that there is some overlap with the next gift to the church.

The fifth and final gift mentioned in Ephesians 4:11 is that of teachers. The way in which this role overlaps with the role of shepherd is that all shepherds were to teach but not all teachers were considered shepherds. Since the canon was not completed yet, their teaching was drawn from three main sources: (1) the Old Testament, (2) the oral traditions of life of Christ, and (3) the confessional and ethical traditions of the early church. Not only were teachers concerned with the transmission of truth, they also applied the truth, exhorting their listeners to live in conformity to what they taught.³³

The Gifts' Work in the Church in Ephesians 4:12

Those gifted to the church by Christ operated within their functions to accomplish certain goals identified by the three prepositional phrases of verse twelve. The main verb of this verse is “he gave” (4:11), ἔδωκεν, and though there are numerous views on how to interpret the prepositional phrases that follow, the accepted view sees the first preposition as the purpose of the main verb, and the second and third prepositions as the goals of that purpose. Thus, the purpose Christ gave these individuals to the church was “to equip the saints.” The word “saints,” ἁγίων, identifies the members of the Ephesian church specifically (1:1), and all believers in general. The verb “to equip,” καταρτισμὸν, has a wide range of meaning such as setting a broken bone, reconciling political parties, mending fishing nets, or training, equipping, and making someone adequate for a task.³⁴ Paul is not attempting to fix a problem in the church, therefore the context points to the preparation and training of the believing members of the church. What follows is the desired result of the training.

³³Arnold, *Ephesians*, 261.

³⁴Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 549-50.

The second and third phrases are subordinate to the first prepositional phrase and identify the goal for the equipping and training of the saints. First, they are to be equipped “for the work of ministry.” “Work,” ἔργον, indicates that the saints are to be engaged in continuous activity and effort, while “ministry,” διακονίας, which can also be translated as “service,” and is closely associated to the noun “servant,” describes the view they are to have of that work. They are not simply to be busy, they are to put forth effort that brings a spiritual benefit to those in the church. Thus, the saints are to be trained to engage in work that is to be a ministry, a spiritual service, to others.³⁵

The second and final goal of their training is “for the building up of the body of Christ.” The “building up” refers to the process of construction, and that which is being constructed is the “living and growing organism composed of living believers.”³⁶ This “body” belongs to Christ; thus, Paul is referring to the building up of the church (1:22). In the following verses, Paul envisions what the church is being built into, namely to attain to the unity of faith and the fullness of Christ, so that the entire body works properly to continue to build itself up in love (4:13-16).

In a letter in which Paul praises the gracious work of the Trinity, and describes the expectations for believers, Christ is shown to have given individuals to the church for training the saints to continue building the body of Christ. In so doing, Paul virtually eliminates the gap between the clergy and the laity. The leaders are not the “professionals” who do all the work, nor are the church members simply attending spectators. Ephesians 4:11-12 calls those in leadership positions who have been given to the church to train believers so that all Christians are engaged in spiritually edifying work that brings about the growth of the church. This calling will be applied in the context of EBC as the small group leaders are trained to give biblical counsel to the participants of

³⁵O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 303.

³⁶Hoenher, *Ephesians*, 551.

their groups, thus establishing discipleship communities.

The Commitment for Discipleship

In each case of discipleship above, from Moses, to Jesus, to Paul, it is the Law of God, the words of Christ, and the truths of Scripture that are to be used as the tools in the process of discipleship. Therefore, a working knowledge of and belief in the sufficiency of Scripture is a necessary commitment for discipleship.

Sufficiency Defined

Wayne Grudem provides a comprehensive definition when he writes, “The sufficiency of Scripture means that the Scripture contained all the words of God he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly.”³⁷ Writing from a biblical counseling perspective, Heath Lambert’s definition of sufficiency says, “The Bible contains all that we need to know God’s will and live a life pleasing to him.”³⁸ He goes on to write that the sufficiency of Scripture is “the doctrine on which the biblical counseling movement will succeed or fail.”³⁹

The Bible attests to its own sufficiency and provides the believer with everything necessary for life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3). Even though many passages can be brought forth to support the Bible’s claim to sufficiency, two will be highlighted; one from the Old Testament (Ps 19:7-11) and one from the New Testament (2 Tim 3:1-17). Based upon exegetical evidence, the significance for sufficiency in counseling will be investigated.

³⁷Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Bible Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 127.

³⁸Lambert, *Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 37.

³⁹Ibid.

Old Testament Sufficiency

Psalm 19 declares the glory of God's self-revelation, both generally in creation (19:1-6) and specifically in his Word (19:7-11). Verses 7-10 make assertions about the description of the Bible, along with its function and value. In these verses, Scripture is given many different titles. It is identified as the law (v. 7), the commandments (v. 8), and the rules of the Lord (v. 9). It is also the testimony and precepts of the Lord (vv. 7b, 8a), meaning that they are the declarations of what is true about him.⁴⁰ The Bible is also how one learns about the fear and reverence of God (v. 9a).

From its titles, David describes the Scripture as perfect (v. 7a), meaning complete, faultless, and blameless as it manifests the perfections of God.⁴¹ The Bible is sure (v. 7b), "firm, sure, faithful, i.e., raised above all doubt."⁴² His precepts are right (v. 8a), "straightforward and just . . . not perverse or crooked."⁴³ God's Word is pure and clean (vv. 8b, 9a), "like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times" (Ps 12:6), free from error, sin, and corruption.⁴⁴ They are true (v. 9b), meaning that it is certain, faithful, and dependable.⁴⁵ Finally, the Scripture is altogether righteous (v. 9b), every part of it reflects the righteousness of God. As one commentator writes, "no reproach of inappropriateness and sanctioned injustice or wrong clings to them,"⁴⁶ and it is through obedience to the Scripture that the believer matures in righteousness. The

⁴⁰John Goldingay, *Psalms 1-41*, vol. 1, *Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms*, ed. Tremper Longman III (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 292.

⁴¹Willem VanGemeren, *Psalms*, in vol. 5 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaeblein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 182.

⁴²C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Psalms*, vol. 5 of *Commentary on the Old Testament*, trans. Francis Bolton (1866; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001), 179.

⁴³VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 182.

⁴⁴William S. Plumer, *Psalms: A Critical and Expository Commentary with Doctrinal and Practical Remarks*, Geneva Series Commentary (1867; repr., Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2016), 257-58.

⁴⁵R. Laird Harris, Gleason Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 52.

⁴⁶Keil and Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 179.

names and the description of the Bible are significant. However, the main emphasis for sufficiency is bound up in what Scripture accomplishes through its functions.

Regarding the Bible's function, David writes that it revives the soul, מְשִׁיבַת נַפְשׁ. This phrase means that the Scripture restores and brings newness of life to quicken the lost soul.⁴⁷ Paul writes in Ephesians 2 that those without Christ are dead in their trespasses and sins (2:1). However, by the gracious gift of God, he grants life to the dead soul through faith (2:8), and this faith comes through hearing the word of Christ (Rom 10:17), which is the power of God for salvation (1:16). Once quickened, the word continues to nourish believers as they learn to grow in their faith being equipped by the Word for good works (Eph 2:10; 2 Tim 3:16-17).

The Word of God makes wise the simple, מְחַכֵּימַת פְּתִי. As one commentator explains, the simple are “the untaught . . . the open person, one whose mind has not yet been occupied by insight and is therefore in a vulnerable, dangerous position.”⁴⁸ Thus, “the simple” is the one with an open mind that allows anything to enter in without discernment or discretion. An open mind leaves one tossed by every wind of doctrine (Eph 4:14) and unstable in all their ways (Jas 1:8). The Bible makes one wise because the Bible informs about Christ (2 Tim 3:15) who is the wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:23-24), and in whom “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3).

David continues in Psalm 19 to say that the Scripture can cause the heart to rejoice, מְשַׂמְחֵי לֵב. Sin and suffering are a constant reality. Whether it is personal sin choices, the results of being sinned against, or the suffering so evident in this broken world, believers can turn to the Bible which is able to bring delight and joy to the heart (Pss 119:14, 111). Jesus teaches the commandments of his Father so that his disciples may experience the fullness of his joy (John 15:11). Thus, Tautges and Viars affirm,

⁴⁷Ibid., 178.

⁴⁸Goldengay, *Psalms 1-41*, 292.

“Scripture has the ability to sanctify our hearts’ affections.”⁴⁹

The commandments of the Lord enlighten the eyes, *מְאִירַת עֵינַיִם* (Ps 19:8), for “the commandment is a lamp and teaching a light” (Prov 6:23). Paul prayed for the Ephesians that “the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened” (Eph 1:17-18). With the Bible as a lamp to one’s feet (Ps 119:105), there is focus, direction, and hope. One author says the Scripture is “able to bring light into man’s chaos and confusion, to replace man’s ignorance and lack of understanding with clear direction, perspective, and insight.”⁵⁰

Finally, the Word of God endures forever (19:8), *עוֹמֶדֶת לְעַד*. The prophet Isaiah proclaimed, “the word of our God will stand forever” (Isa 40:8). Peter speaks of the Bible as “imperishable . . . living and abiding” (1 Pet 1:23). Jesus said that nothing from the Law will pass away as long as the earth remains (Matt 5:18). The enduring nature of the Bible means that it transcends time, being perfectly relevant in every age and keenly applicable in every situation.

Due to the powerful effectiveness of the Bible, it possesses tremendous value. In Psalm 19:10, David writes how the Scripture is to be treasured more than gold and that it is more desirable than the sweetest honey from the comb (19:10). Other Old Testament writers indicate that the Word of God is to be valued higher than daily food (Job 23:12). Moses taught, “Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord” (Deut 8:3).

Back in Psalm 19, David highlights that the Bible also possesses value both for

⁴⁹Paul Tautges and Steve Vairs, “Sufficient for Life and Godliness,” in *Scripture and Counseling*, ed. Robert Kelleman and Jeff Forrey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 50. Wayne Mack writes that to rejoice is “to experience a sense of well-being, serenity, tranquility, and peace.” Wayne Mack, “What Is Biblical Counseling?” in *Totally Sufficient: The Bible and Christian Counseling*, ed. Ed Hindson and Howard Eyrich (Fearn, Scotland: Christians Focus, 2004), 42.

⁵⁰Mack, “What Is Biblical Counseling?” 44.

protection from sin and blessing for obedience. “Moreover, by them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward” (19:11). Elsewhere, the psalmist writes “I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Ps 119:11). It is the Scripture that helps train one to discern between good and evil (Heb 5:14). Moses (Deut 28:1-14), Joshua (Josh 1:8), and David (1 Kings 2:3) each spoke about the blessings that come through obedience to the Law of God, and the Bible closes by declaring blessings on those who read, hear, and keep what is written in it (Rev 1:3).

Thus, the Bible is perfect, sure, and true. It provides the believer with strength, wisdom, joy, hope, transcendent truth, and equipping righteousness. It has inestimable value as it protects and blesses those who submit themselves to its authority.

New Testament Sufficiency

In 2 Timothy 3, Paul informs his son in the faith how the world will continue to decline from bad to worse (3:13) as the coming of Christ draws near. Paul describes these as “times of difficulty” (3:1) and then chronicles how people will increasingly be

. . . lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. (3:2-5)

Paul’s simple warning is “Avoid such people” (3:5).⁵¹

What is Paul’s answer to these problems? He simply points Timothy to the pages of Scripture. He reminds Timothy “You, however, have followed my teaching” (3:10). His exhortation is to “continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed . . . and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings” (3:14-

⁵¹When commenting on these verses, Wayne Mack says, “Many people who require counseling do so because they are struggling with difficulties that stem from one or more of the sinful attitudes, desires, and actions that Paul mentions in this rich passage. . . . People need counseling because they are personally experiencing and manifesting sinful attitudes, desires, and behaviors; or they are personally suffering from the influence of people who manifest the sinful patterns depicted in this passage.” Mack, “What Is Biblical Counseling,” 45.

15). Since boyhood, Timothy learned the Scripture from his grandmother and mother (1:5). Now under the tutelage of Paul, his confidence in the Bible has grown exponentially. The reason Paul points Timothy back to the Scripture is because he believed “all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (3:16-17).

Paul states, “All Scripture is breathed out by God” (3:16).⁵² The original Greek term, *θεόπνευστος*, is a word only used here in the NT and is the combination of the word for “God” (*θεός*) and the word “to blow, breathe on” (*πνέω*). This passive verbal form indicates that the source of the Scripture is the very breath of God.⁵³ It is not that the Scripture breathes out God, or that God breathed on the words once written, nor that the writers themselves were inspired, but “the Holy Spirit . . . exhaled the mind of God in written form.”⁵⁴ Paul wants his readers to envision God speaking as they read the Bible. Just as humans must use their breath to speak to one another, God is speaking through His Word. Thus, the Bible contains the authority and truthfulness of God, because when the Bible speaks, God speaks.

Paul then says that this God-breathed Scripture is “profitable,” *ὠφέλιμος*, which could also be translated “useful,”⁵⁵ indicating that there is tremendous benefit for the reader. The following phrases list four beneficial functions of the Scripture. First, Paul says that it is profitable for “teaching,” *διδασκαλίαν*, which according to one commentator “is a technical term in the PE for the doctrinal formulation of Scripture.”⁵⁶

⁵²The NASB translates it “inspired,” NIV says “God-breathed,” and the NKJV “given by inspiration.”

⁵³George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 446.

⁵⁴Tautges and Viars, “Sufficient for Life and Godliness,” 53. Emphasis in original.

⁵⁵As translated by the NIV and NRSV.

⁵⁶Williams D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC, vol. 46 (Dallas: Word, 2000), 570. “PE” represents Pastoral Epistles.

In other words, the Bible gives the true and necessary information about God, his world, and how people are to live under his authority. Peter proclaims, “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him” (2 Pet 1:3), and that knowledge comes through the Bible.

The second profitable function of Scripture is that it reproveth, or rebukes, ἐλεγμόν. “The Scriptures convict us when we sin. . . . they accurately point out when and where we have stepped off God’s good path of obedience.”⁵⁷ Wayne Mack writes, “Scripture is useful for reproof; the Holy Spirit uses it to convict us of sin and show us when we are wrong in our thinking, motives, desires, attitudes, feelings, values, and reactions. It is the instrument the Holy Spirit uses to bring us under conviction and motivate us to want to repent and change.”⁵⁸ The Bible shows the believer where he or she has gotten off the path of submission to God’s rule.

Third, the Scripture is profitable for “correction,” ἐπαώρθωσιν. Not only is the Bible beneficial in pointing out what is wrong, it also helps in returning to what is right. Negatively it convicts, pointing out how one has gotten off the righteous path. Positively it corrects by pointing back to the right path. The greatest example is found in salvation as the Bible convicts the sinner over his or her lost state, then gloriously presents Christ as the only Savior. This conviction/correction cycle continues through the life of the believer in the putting off of sin and putting on of righteousness (Eph 4:22-24).

Fourth, the Scripture is profitable for “training in righteousness,” παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ. “Training” has as its root the word for “child,” indicating that it originally meant the rearing of children.⁵⁹ Scott and Lambert agree when they write “the believer is

⁵⁷Tauges and Viars, “Sufficient for Life and Godliness,” 54.

⁵⁸Mack “What Is Biblical Counseling?” 47.

⁵⁹Ralph Earle, *2 Timothy*, in vol. 11 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 410.

‘train[ed] in righteousness.’ We grow up. The Scriptures are critical to help us grow.”⁶⁰ Thus, believers are to “grow up” in righteousness. They are given the imputed righteousness of Christ at the moment of salvation (2 Cor 5:21), but the ongoing life of the believer is a continual pursuit of a life of righteousness (Prov 15:9; 1 Tim 6:11).

The purpose of these four profitable functions of the Bible are for making the believer (“man of God”)⁶¹ “competent, equipped for every good work.” The word ἄρτιος, “competent,” carries the idea of being thoroughly capable, proficient, able to meet all demands.⁶² When combined with the perfect passive participle ἐξηρτισμένος, “having been equipped,” the man of God has been completely equipped, given everything he needs to accomplish the task given to him. What has he been equipped to do? “Every good work,” πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν, or as one commentator writes, “every aspect and task of the Christian life.”⁶³ God created Christians for good works (Eph 2:10) and calls them to be ready and zealous for good works (2 Tim 2:21; Titus 2:14). Therefore “he has given scripture to instruct them so that they may know in principle what God expects of them and thus be equipped to do that particular ‘good deed’ called for in each situation”⁶⁴

Every word in the Bible is the direct result of God speaking, and as such carries the authority of God to teach, reprove, correct, and train the believer. These functions completely and sufficiently equip one to live faithfully before the Lord. In other words, the Word of God is sufficient because “it tells us what’s right (doctrine), what’s not right (reproof), how to get right (correction), and how to stay right (training).”⁶⁵

⁶⁰Stuart Scott and Heath Lambert, eds., *Counseling the Hard Cases: True Stories Illustrating the Sufficiency of God’s Resources in Scripture* (Nashville: B&H, 2012), 11-12, emphasis in original.

⁶¹As above, the context is pastoral leadership, thus Paul uses “man of God.” However, there is biblical warrant to expand the principle to include all believers.

⁶²Earle, *1 & 2 Timothy*, 410.

⁶³Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 450.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Harvest Bible Chapel, *Uncommon Leadership 101: Leader’s Guide* (Chicago: Harvest Bible

The Meaning of Sufficiency

Given the definition and the exegetical evidence from the Old and New Testament passages on sufficiency, it comes time to understand what is meant by the sufficiency of Scripture. The Bible is sixty-six books written almost 2000 years ago by forty authors in three languages over a period of 1500 years in the area surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. Thus, the Bible contains literary, linguistic, cultural, and historical limitations. Not only that, the Bible attests to its own limitation in the information it provides. Deuteronomy 29:29 says, “The secret things belong to the Lord,” meaning that there is information that God has withheld for his gracious purposes. Thus, the Bible is not exhaustive in its content; it does not give information on every subject one might want to know. However, the Bible is comprehensive in the revelation it provides; it gives everything that is needed to live faithfully before the Lord.

Scott and Lambert claim that biblical counselors have argued that the Scriptures possess comprehensive resources for counseling rather than exhaustive ones. For them, the Bible contains “God’s understanding of what is wrong with us, what he thinks should be right with us, and how he intends to redeem us and repair us through the precious blood of Jesus.”⁶⁶ They go on discuss how every counseling system operates out of a worldview as it seeks to help individuals make positive changes consistent with that worldview, and that no system can claim exhaustive sufficiency.⁶⁷ Biblical counseling, based upon the closed canon of Scripture, can claim comprehensive sufficiency since it operates from the perspective that the Creator has communicated himself in his Word providing everything necessary to live a consistently biblical worldview. As David Powlison writes, “He [God] speaks profoundly and comprehensively to the conditions of

Chapel, 2017), 54.

⁶⁶Scott and Lambert, *Counseling the Hard Cases*, 21.

⁶⁷Ibid., 23.

every person's life."⁶⁸

In a similar vein, Jeremy Pierre speaks of sufficiency as it pertains to authority, acknowledging that the Bible does not provide the exhaustive knowledge possessed by God, but that the Bible's comprehensive sufficiency reveals God's intentions for the priorities of knowledge.⁶⁹ In other words, God has not communicated everything he knows, but what he has communicated should draw our careful attention and complete submission. He goes on to write that the Scripture has both an encyclopedic authority and an emphatic authority.

Encyclopedic authority means that every topic the Bible discusses is spoken with the ultimate authority of God, thus men and women are to submit to the specific information contained within the Bible. Emphatic authority means that the words of the Bible "demand a priority of perspective on information *not* contained in the Bible."⁷⁰ All information not spoken of in the Bible must be interpreted through the authoritative lens of the Bible; the God-ordained perspective of the biblical worldview. God's Word does not have information about every nuance of every situation, but it does provide every person with the Godward perspective needed to live rightly in every situation. To put it another way, God's Word teaches us to think God's thoughts about God's world. Again, to quote Powlison, "Learning the gaze of God, we come to weigh life aright."⁷¹

Sufficiency does not mean that the Bible gives all information on every subject that people might want to know, nor does it give all that God knows. Sufficiency means that the Bible gives everything that is needed to live faithfully according to the biblical

⁶⁸David Powlison, *Speaking the Truth in Love: Counseling in Community* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2005), 167.

⁶⁹Jeremy Pierre, "Scripture Is Sufficient, but to Do What?" in *Scripture and Counseling: God's Word for Life in a Broken World*, ed. Bob Kelleman and Jeff Forrey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 98.

⁷⁰Pierre, "Scripture is Sufficient," 98.

⁷¹David Powlison, *Seeing with New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition through the Lens of Scripture* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2003), 9.

worldview and interpret life from God's perspective. This commitment is necessary for everyone involved in the discipleship process that points people to Christ.⁷²

Conclusion

God desires all his people know him and his truth so that they can apply it to all aspects of their lives. The process by which this expectation is accomplished is through discipleship. Moses and Paul provide a generational focus as well as the character of those who are to be involved. Jesus, in his grace and mercy, promised to be with his people, empowering them to fulfill this comprehensive calling. To effectively fulfill this calling, those involved in the process must have knowledge of and belief in the sufficiency of Scripture as the sole authority from which counsel is given and under which all information is evaluated. Not only does God give the command, he provides examples to follow, sufficient tools to use, and the power to obey. Praise the Lord for his limitless grace!

⁷²As Steve Viars and Rob Green say, "It doesn't matter if we have helped a person feel better emotionally or improved some aspect of their situation if they are no closer to Christ when the process is concluded." Steve Viars and Rob Green, "The Sufficiency of Scripture," in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling: Changing Lives with God's Changeless Truth*, ed. James MacDonald, Bob Kelleman, and Steve Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 93.

CHAPTER 3

THE CULTURE OF DISCIPLESHIP

From the beginning, God's expectation is that those who are mature in the faith would help those who are less mature. Adam instructed Eve (Gen 3:2-3), Abraham was to instruct his children (Gen 18:19), the nation of Israel was to pass down the great things of the Lord to successive generations (Deut 6:4-9), the psalmist said he will declare to the coming generation "the glorious deeds of the Lord" (Ps 78:4), Jesus commands his disciples to make disciples (Matt 28:19), and Paul trained up men like Silas (Acts 15:40), Timothy (Acts 16:3), and Titus (Titus 1:4). What the Bible does not provide is the exact, step-by-step methodology for how to accomplish this process. Therefore, it is incumbent upon churches to wisely formulate a plan for their ministry context. What follows is an explanation of the continuum of discipleship that ranges from comprehensive to contextual, an investigation of how several churches apply this continuum, all the while addressing the application of the continuum in the context of EBC.

The Continuum of Discipleship

Moses, Jesus, and Paul provide the biblical expectation for discipleship. This expectation exists on a continuum that spans from a broad definition of discipleship to a narrow definition.¹ The continuum that will be used for the purposes of this project sees

¹Marshall and Payne provide a helpful understanding, "Disciple-making, then, refers to a massive range of relationships and conversations and activities—everything from preaching a sermon to teaching a Sunday school class; from chatting over the proverbial back fence with a non-Christian neighbor to writing an encouraging note to a Christian friend; from inviting a family member to hear the gospel at a church event to meeting one to one to study the Bible with a fellow Christian; from reading the Bible to your children to making a Christian comment over morning tea at the office." Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine: The Ministry Mind-Shift that Changes Everything* (Sydney: Matthias Media, 2009), 154.

the gathering of the entire congregation for worship on one end of the continuum and the focused discipleship of biblical counseling on the other. Along the continuum is an increasing intimacy of groups as the congregation divides between Sunday School classes, small groups, and finally to the intensified discipleship of biblical counseling. Kevin Carson describes it as the more public to the more private ministry of the Word.² Thus, the continuum is based both upon numbers of people involved and the intensity of issues discussed. In the following discussion, the broad understanding of discipleship will be addressed under the heading of comprehensive discipleship, while the more focused, intensified discipleship of biblical counseling will be understood as contextual discipleship. Yet, we must first understand what is meant by the term “discipleship.”

The Meaning of Discipleship

In the ESV, the use of the word “disciple” is applied to the followers of the prophet Isaiah (Isa 8:16),³ John the Baptist (Matt 9:14), the Pharisees (22:16), Paul (Acts 16:1-3), the followers of Christ, especially the twelve apostles (Luke 6:12-13), and is a prominent name used for members of the early church. In Acts 11, as Paul and Barnabas ministered in the church at Antioch, the author informs, “in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians” (11:26). This passage provides the foundation for seeing these terms as interchangeable when used in Acts. In chapter 6, the apostles called together the full number of the disciples, all the members of the church in Jerusalem, to deal with the distribution of food (6:2). As the word of God continued to increase, the number of disciples/Christians multiplied in in the city (6:7). Saul tried to join the disciples in Jerusalem after his conversion, but they were apprehensive because they did not believe

²Kevin Carson, “The Personal, Private, and Public Ministry of the Word,” in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling: Changing Lives with God’s Changeless Truth*, ed. James MacDonald, Bob Kelleman, Steve Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 264-69. Even though in this chapter he includes the personal ministry of the Word as the responsibility each believer has to personally grow in Christ through self-counsel, this project focuses on the levels of interpersonal interactions of discipleship.

³John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 236.

that he was a disciple/Christian (9:26). Later in the ministry of Paul, as he was returning to Jerusalem, some of the disciples/Christians from Caesarea traveled with him (21:16).

The term “Christian” is seen twice more in the New Testament (Acts 26:18; 1 Pet 4:16), neither of which are used as a term of endearment. The grammar of Acts 11 and the narrative of Acts 26 indicate that it was a descriptive term used by those outside the church. Peter was the only biblical author to use the word as a reference to the followers of Christ (1 Pet 4:16). In addition, the name was used initially, not to distinguish believers from unbelievers, but Jews from Gentiles, since the church grew increasingly Gentile in population and distanced itself from the Jewish religion.⁴

The expression is a combination of the Greek word, Χριστός, and the Latin ending *ianus*, meaning “belonging to” or “identified by.”⁵ English words ending in “-ian” identify something as belonging to or characteristic of the root word (e.g., a comedian is one who practices comedy).⁶ A Christian then is an individual who belongs to and is characteristic of Christ, which makes a disciple of Jesus an individual who learns from and follows Christ in an effort to become like him.

Therefore, discipleship in the New Testament sense can be characterized as the process of learning from, following, and imitating Christ. This practice was initiated by Jesus during his earthly ministry. He approached Matthew at his tax booth and said, “Follow me” (Matt 9:9). He called to Peter, James, John, and Andrew and said, “Follow me” (Mark 1:16-17). When Jesus issued this call, he did not simply want these men to fall in line and go where he went, but to learn from and be like him. Marshall and Payne provide a clarifying understanding of discipleship with the following statement:

⁴Derek W. H. Thomas, *Acts*, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2011), 323.

⁵John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, vol. 26 (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 1992), 273.

⁶*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v. “an,” accessed January 7, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/-an>.

But in the case of Jesus' disciples, the outcome of this learning was not simply the mastery of a certain body of knowledge—what we would today associate with classroom or academic learning. What the 'learners' were learning from Jesus was a way of life based upon an understanding of certain truths about reality... The goal was for them not only to know what their teacher knew, but also to be like their teacher, to walk in his ways. They weren't learning a subject; they were learning a person.⁷

As the rest of the gospels unfold, the disciples are seen sitting and eating with Jesus, living with and learning from him, and engaging in similar ministry. Thus, Jesus was the initiator of Christian discipleship.

This practice continued in Acts as seen in the expansion of the early church as the apostles carried out Jesus' commission (Matt 28:18-20). Peter preached "Repent and be baptized . . . everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself" (Acts 2:38-39). Soon after, those baptized "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (2:42). In chapter four, as the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of Christ, the truth resulted in godly living among the church (4:32-37). Likewise, Paul, in his missionary journeys, preached the gospel (9:28), planted churches (18:1-11), established leadership, and strengthened disciples (14:19-23).

When continuing into the New Testament epistles, no one is identified by the title "disciple." However, this does not mean that discipleship stopped since all New Testament authors highlight the process of discipleship. The verb form of "disciple," μαθητεύω, "to learn" appears often in the writings of Paul. He tells the Philippians "What you have learned and received and heard from me—practice these things" (4:9). The Ephesians learned the truth of Christ and were taught to put off the old self and put on the new self (Eph 4:19-24). The Colossians learned the truth of God from Epaphras (Col 1:7). Titus was to let the people learn to devote themselves to good works (Titus 3:14).

In addition, the concept of imitation took shape among the biblical authors, expressed in words such as μιμέομαι, "to model, imitate, emulate," μιμητής, "one who

⁷Marshall and Payne, *The Vine Project*, 65.

imitates someone else,” and *συμμιμητής*, “one who joins with others in following an example.”⁸ Paul called the Corinthians to “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1). He instructed the Ephesians to “be imitators of God, as beloved children” (Eph 5:1). The writer of Hebrews told his audience to imitate the faith and patience of those who inherit the promises (Heb 6:12). Also, John, wrote “do not imitate evil but imitate good” (3 Jn 11).

In close association with the idea of imitation is the emphasis on following an example. After washing their feet, Jesus said to the twelve “I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you” (John 13:15). Paul told the Philippians to “walk according to the example you have in us” (Phil 3:17). James points to the OT prophets as examples of suffering and patience (5:10-11). Peter wrote that elders are to be an example to the flock (1 Pet 5:3).

All of these different terms indicate that discipleship is to encompass the entirety of the Christian life. It begins with becoming a follower of Jesus Christ through salvation and continues through the progress of sanctification as one learns from and imitates the example of Christ and other godly individuals. All Christians are to be involved in the discipleship process, learning to be like Christ and teaching others to do the same. Along these lines, Marshall and Payne encourage

Christians [are to be] prayerfully bringing the truth of God to other people. It can happen at home, at work, over the fence, at church, in small groups, in a coffee shop—anywhere. But that it happens is vital, because this is the “work of the Lord”; this is the Great Commission in action; this is the vine work that all Christians can and should be engaged in.⁹

⁸James G. Samra, “A Biblical View of Discipleship,” *BSac* 160, no. 638 (April-June 2003): 223.

⁹Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine: The Ministry Mind-Shift that Changes Everything* (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias Media, 2009), 55-56. Included in this section of their book, Marshall and Payne provide some helpful examples and a chart on speaking God’s truth in the context of one to one conversations, small groups, and to larger groups.

Comprehensive Discipleship

Moses taught the Law of God to the people of God (Exod 19:3, 7-9, 25). Jesus commissioned his apostles to go into all the nations and teach all he commanded (Matt 28:18-20). Paul instructed Timothy to “preach the word. . . in season and out of season (2 Tim 4:2). He also wrote to the Ephesians that the leaders of the church were gifts given by Christ for the training of the saints and the building up of the entire body of Christ both in truth and in godly living (Eph 4:11-12).

The common thread that runs through each passage is that the truth of God is to be taught to all his people in order that they might know how to live. The nature of discipleship means that all God’s people are to learn all God’s truth and apply it to every aspect of their lives, and that all disciples are to be engaged in the process. The context which provides the opportunity to ensure that the greatest number of people will be involved in broad-based discipleship at one time is the preaching that takes place to the entire congregation as they gather for worship. Therefore, comprehensive discipleship occurs when all God’s people are gathered to hear the preaching of his Word.

Further along the continuum is the location of small groups. Based upon the exegetical work above, Moses and Paul give the biblical justification and expectation for dividing the people of God into smaller components for effective dissemination of God’s truth, and the environment for greater application through the one-anothers of the Bible. The discipleship that happens through preaching engages a larger number of people with a wide variety of social demographics and personal situations. Thus, the application of truth is more general in nature and the opportunity for interpersonal interaction is low. Small groups provide a context for those with similar life stories to engage in deeper study of the Word and allows for more personal application of truth through the increased personal nature of that community.¹⁰

¹⁰The phrase “similar life stories” is used to describe how at EBC there exists men’s and women’s groups, college and youth aged groups, young married as well as older-aged coed groups.

In the context of EBC, small groups play a part in accomplishing the goal of discipleship in the overall focus of adult ministries. Currently the emphasis of our small groups is to gather for Bible study, prayer, and fellowship. However, through the efforts of this project, the goal is to equip the small group leaders with the tools and skills they need to counsel biblically by engaging in more heart-searching questions and deeper application of the truths they are learning from Scripture. Small groups provide a good blend of both comprehensive and contextual discipleship in the sense that there is a group of gathered to hear from God's Word, yet at the same time the intimacy of the group allows the opportunity for more personal application of truth.

Contextual Discipleship

Contextual discipleship is located on the opposite end of the spectrum from comprehensive discipleship. To begin, it is important to identify what contextual discipleship is not. Even though Jesus calls his followers to go into all the nations and make disciples (Matt 28:19), evangelism is not being discussed under this heading.¹¹ The focus is not upon a specific country or people group.¹² Also, this term does not reference any specific ministry distinction that may be found within a local church (i.e. children's ministry, youth ministry, men's and women's ministry, etc.).

Contextual discipleship is that which arises out of a specific life situation of the disciple, specifically the one who seeks/needs biblical counseling. Bigney and Long describe this as individuals battling life-dominating sins and significant struggles that need long-term personal intensive discipleship.¹³ There is a sense in which all Christians

¹¹Issues of context such as culture, language, and socio-economic structures need to be considered when reaching the nations with the gospel. However, the message of the gospel must never be altered simply to be more palatable for the receiving audience.

¹²Janice Fareed-Hardy, "Implementing a Contextual Discipleship Curriculum to Impact Biblical Knowledge and Application for Women in a Large Church in Ghana" (D.Min. diss., Nyack College, Alliance Theological Seminary, 2014), accessed March 29, 2017, <http://gradworks.umi.com/36/29/3629059.html>.

¹³Brad Bigney and Ken Long, "Tools to Grow Your Church: Uniting Biblical Counseling and

need some form of contextual discipleship since everyone's life story is unique and discipleship looks different from person to person. However, there may be times in the life of a believer when they need more personalized and focused attention on a specific struggle.

There are several similarities along the continuum of discipleship. Primary is the fact that the Scripture is seen as the authoritative tool to bring about change, and there is complete dependence on the work of the Holy Spirit as the agent of change.¹⁴ As such, all points along the continuum require a solid biblical theology that has a correct view of Christ, man, sin, salvation, and sanctification. They have similar desired results; growth in Christ-likeness (Phil 1:6). In other words, "The good work begins in relationship with Jesus and is brought to completion within an ever-deepening union with him."¹⁵ In essence, all of what is true about discipleship in a general sense is true of discipleship in the specific sense of contextual discipleship. However, the distinction is that contextual discipleship is a temporary endeavor that addresses a certain situational context in the life of an individual who seeks the intensified discipleship of biblical counseling.

Small Groups," in *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God's Care through God's People*, ed. Bob Kellemen and Kevin Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 95. Bigny and Long write from the perspective that biblical counseling is happening at all levels within the church, specifically within the small group ministry. However, those who need the long-term "personal intensive discipleship" are referred to the church's counseling ministry since there is not enough time available for a small group leader to provide that kind of care. They refer to Viars' river analogy to explain the discipleship of small groups and the discipleship of the counseling ministry.

¹⁴A complete discussion of the role of the Holy Spirit in the counseling process is outside the scope of this project. However, it is necessary to mention that the Holy Spirit comes to permanently indwell the believer at the moment of salvation until the day of redemption (Acts 2:38; 1 Cor 3:16; Eph 1:13). Through this indwelling, the Holy Spirit functions as the believer's helper (John 14:16), teacher (14:26), and sanctifier (2 Thess 2:13) for the purpose of transforming the believer into the image of Christ (2 Cor 3:18). As Ferguson writes, "The purpose for which the Spirit is given is, therefore, nothing less than the reproduction of the image of God, that is transformation into the likeness of Christ who is himself the image of God. To receive the Spirit is to be inaugurated into the effects of this ongoing ministry." Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 92. Since all believers are predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29), Christ-likeness is the goal of all biblical counseling, and it is the job of the Holy Spirit to bring this to fruition. Simply put, "The Holy Spirit will be our personal friend who will help and encourage us throughout our Christian life." Larry D. Pettegrew, *The New Covenant Ministry of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), 68.

¹⁵Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2008), 47.

Like the boat analogy referenced earlier, Deepak Reju writes that the connection and distinction between general discipleship and the discipling of biblical counseling can be viewed as battle lines of an army. The front lines of the battle are where general efforts of discipleship take place daily at the dinner table, over coffee, in the Sunday school classroom, and conversations after church. For Reju, the front lines are not so focused on the numbers involved but the general nature of the topics discussed. The second line is the generals and captains, the wise and godly older men and women of church who can direct and speak wisdom into the life of younger believers. The final line of the battle is where the biblical counselors would be located, the M.A.S.H. Unit as Reju calls them. These are the ones who help believers who have been beaten, bloodied, and maimed to the point that they cannot continue in the battle any longer since their problems have gotten out of hand. This is meant to be a temporary time as the counselor helps treat the wounded soldiers to get them back to the front lines of discipleship.¹⁶

Frameworks of Discipleship

Several frameworks exist that can be applied to the process of discipleship. The first is what is known as the “big picture,” as presented by Timothy Lane and Paul David Tripp. They point to Jeremiah 17:5-10 to summarize their model and describe it as “an aerial view of daily life that informs, motivates, convicts, and guides us.”¹⁷ Their model involves four key elements:

1. Heat – A person’s situation in their daily life.

¹⁶Deepak Reju, “Counseling and Discipleship,” 9Marks Ministry, February 25, 2010, accessed April 2, 2017, <https://www.9marks.org/article/counseling-and-discipleship/>. In this same article, Reju says that the river analogy is more of a defensive perspective on biblical counseling, whereas his battle analogy is offensive and is part of establishing a culture of discipleship within the whole church.

¹⁷Lane and Tripp, *How People Change*, 83.

2. Thorns – A person’s sinful responses to those situations.
3. Cross – The recognition of the presence of God in the grace found in Jesus Christ.
4. Fruit – A person’s new godly response to the situation because of the work of God upon his or her heart.¹⁸

This model represents a theology of sanctification, a system of how to approach an individual to bring about biblical change, which can be used at all points along the continuum of discipleship. Lane and Tripp present a way to look at the daily life situation of a believer (heat), evaluate the sinful responses (thorns)¹⁹ which manifest in their thoughts, words, and deeds, and show how Christ enters that context and provides the power to change (cross). The final step is counsel on what a biblical response looks like so that the disciple knows how to respond rightly in the future (fruit). This model will provide the basis of the training for the small group leaders of EBC.

A second framework that can be used at all levels of the discipleship continuum is known as the dynamic heart, put forth by Jeremy Pierre, who uses the term “heart” to represent the entirety of a person who is responsible to God whether they realize it or not. He writes, “The biblical authors understand human experience as flowing from one, unified heart” and that the heart is what makes people “moral agents who conduct themselves from a singular response system for which they are responsible before their Creator.”²⁰ He continues to describe the heart as functioning three-

¹⁸Lane and Tripp, *How People Change*, 83.

¹⁹Lane and Tripp do not imply that a person will always respond sinfully. However, since man is by nature a sinner, their responses to their situation tend to be sinful. This model is intended to address their sinful responses and the heart issues behind those responses, and work to bring about biblical change by God’s grace. Their model is based on the hope of change so that the believer can learn to respond in godly ways to similar situations they once responded to sinfully.

²⁰Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience*

dimensionally as it engages with God, self, others, and the circumstances of life.²¹ Pierre describes the three dimensions as follows:

The human heart responds cognitively, through rational processes based on knowledge and beliefs. It also responds affectively, through a framework of desires and emotions. It also responds volitionally, through a series of choices reflecting the willful commitments of the heart. Thinking, feeling, and choosing are complex, dynamic heart responses.²²

These dimensions are intertwined and help to understand the heart motivations behind why a person thinks, feels, and acts in a certain situation and how those dimensions can be addressed biblically to bring about appropriate biblical responses. Pierre's material will also be used at various points of the training program to provide a biblical understanding of the heart.

Third, Wayne Mack's eight "I's" of the counseling process provide a model for intentional effort to engage with a disciple in the counseling context with the goal of returning him or her back to the stream of comprehensive discipleship. Mack's model represents a system that is more applicable in the intensified discipleship of counseling. The eight "I's" are as follows:²³

1. Involvement – Building a relationship with the disciple to help them grow in Christ-likeness.
2. Inspiration – Instilling hope in God and the power of the gospel to bring about real change.
3. Inventory/Investigation – Gathering information about the life context of the disciple.

(Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2016), 15.

²¹Ibid., 103.

²²Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart*, 16.

²³Wayne Mack, "The 8 I's of the Counseling Process," *Methods of Biblical Change Syllabus* (The Master's College, Santa Clarita, CA, May 5, 2006), 11-12.

4. Interpretation – Coming to a biblical understanding of the information.
5. Instruction – Biblical teaching that leads to faithful action.
6. Intention/Inducement – Garnering commitment from the disciple.
7. Implementation – Assignment of homework that facilitates practice.
8. Integration – Transitioning the disciple back into the life of the church to continue to observe truth and pass it on to others.

What this model represents is the involvement of a counselor to build a relationship with the disciple/counselee to understand his or her situation from a biblical perspective, and to provide specific instruction and application of the truth that will lead to godly living so that the disciple will in turn disciple others.

Qualitative Research

Proverbs 24:6 says, “In abundance of counselors, there is victory.” Thus, in developing of the culture of discipleship at EBC, there is benefit in looking to other ministry models. Four church ministry models were investigated, each representing a different congregation which implemented its own continuum of discipleship. Given the number of churches investigated, a qualitative approach to research was used as opposed to a quantitative approach. What follows is a description of the qualitative research methods used in the investigation of specific ministry models.

Aspects of Qualitative Research

To begin, it is important to identify some of the basic distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research. An obvious distinction is found within the names themselves; qualitative research is focused on the quality of what is researched, it’s nature and essence, whereas quantitative focuses on quantity (how much, how many). Qualitative research involves a small, purposefully nonrandom sample size, as opposed to quantitative, which employs a large, random representative group. Qualitative research

tends to be more flexible and evolving with the changing conditions of the study process. Quantitative is predetermined and structured in its format. In qualitative research, the investigator is the primary means of data collecting and analyzing, whereas quantitative researchers rely on the use of inanimate instruments such as scales, tests, and surveys.²⁴

The specific qualitative research approach employed in this project is best described as the multiple-case design, which can also be understood as comparative studies.²⁵ A case study is defined as “a qualitative strategy in which the researcher explores . . . a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. The case(s) are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures.”²⁶ Multiple case study design replicates the research and investigation methods in each case study to compare and contrast the findings of the research in the different cases.²⁷ In other words, case study investigation seeks to understand a program, group, or process by collecting qualitative data, and the multiple case study design seeks to compare and contrast that data. By studying multiple cases, the four churches used in this project, we will see how each one applies their understanding of the continuum of discipleship.

Types of Qualitative Methods Used

There were two main ways of collecting data from the representative churches. The first means was through qualitative in-depth interviews. Although there are various types of interviews, those conducted in this study are “more like conversations than

²⁴Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 5-9.

²⁵Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2014), 56.

²⁶John W. Criswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2009), 227.

²⁷Yin, *Case Study Research*, 63.

formal events with predetermined response categories. The researcher explores a few general topics to help uncover the participant's main perspective . . . the participant's perspective on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it."²⁸ In other words, the comments of the interviewee determines the direction of the conversation rather than a set pattern established by the interviewer.

This distinction between the unfolding of the participant's perspective versus the "predetermined response categories" established by the researcher is delineated by Sensing, who discusses how in a formal interview, "An interviewer often prepares 8-10 questions . . . and runs down the list of questions regardless of the answers"²⁹ In contrast, "A conversation is not scripted. As the interviewer, you ask the first question. That question is based on your homework. . . . Your second question depends on what they say. . . . However, your second question is not just a flow of consciousness but again will be informed by your homework and by the intent you have for the interview."³⁰

Using this conversational type of interview, the questions asked centered around three basic categories. The first category concerned a philosophy of ministry as it pertains to the biblical counseling, discipleship, and small group ministries of the individual churches. The second category of questions revolved around training for both small group leaders and those within the biblical counseling ministry. The third category concerned the process of soul care regarding the connection between the small group and

²⁸Catherine Marshall and Gretchen B. Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995), 80. These authors describe four types of in-depth interviewing. The first is ethnographic interviewing, which pays attention to cultural data collected that guides a participant's worldview. The second is phenomenological interviewing, which focuses on how the life experiences of the participant shaped their worldview. The third type of interview, which was employed in this study, was the elite interviewing, which focuses on the influential, the prominent, and well-informed people of an organization. The fourth type of interviewing employs the use of focus groups where questions are asked to encourage discussion and the expression of differing opinions and points of view.

²⁹ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 102.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 103.

biblical counseling ministries.

The second means of collecting data was through the gathering of ministry documentation.³¹ Each church investigated provides documentation on their websites for general information about how the counseling process works and how church goers can get involved in small groups. Also, those interviewed provided further documentation about training processes and materials used to equip leaders in both the small group and counseling ministries. In addition, key individuals from each ministry have written books, chapters in books, and journal articles explaining their philosophy and application of discipleship.

Ministry Models

As indicated above, the biblical command and expectation is for discipleship, but there is freedom in Christ for each church to decide how they will best accomplish this mandate. What follows is an investigation through interviews with key ministry personnel in different church settings and how each one implements this continuum of discipleship. In each case, the discussion was limited to how the small group leaders were trained in the more focused discipleship of biblical counseling.

Harvest Bible Chapel, Elgin, Illinois

On October 17 and 20, 2017, I conducted telephone interviews with Dennis Gruening, who is an endorsed counselor of the Biblical Soul Care Ministry at Harvest Bible Chapel in Elgin, Illinois, and executive assistant to Garrett Higbee. His responsibilities at Harvest include counseling, being a counseling coach, and developing curriculum. Biblical Soul Care is the title for their counseling ministry.

As stated on Harvest's website, "We aren't just a church with small groups,

³¹Criswell identifies the benefits of this method of data collecting as ease of access, and thoughtfully presented wording. Criswell, *Research Design*, 180.

we're a church of small groups. Small groups are the heartbeat of our church . . . the place where you'll experience uncommon community, the place vital to growing in your relationship with Jesus."³² Small groups form a major part of their ministry, including their counseling ministry. Their philosophy is "counseling in community," and they say "the growth of the believer . . . happens primarily through life-on-life discipleship in small groups," which is why they "strive for 100% participation."³³

Harvest operates on a discipleship continuum that ranges from the intentional to the intensive.³⁴ The intentional side of the continuum is where the small group ministry is located. On the intensive side is where the formal counseling ministry is found, which involves Biblical Soul Care Staff (BSC) and pastors. Along the continuum are small group leaders, small group coaches, non-BSC elders and pastors, and trained BSC counselors (both lay and staff). This approach seeks to partner the biblical counseling ministry with other discipleship avenues within the church, focusing on "prevention as well as the power of the 'one-anothers' . . . the priesthood of all believers."³⁵ Gruening explained this focus as their attempt to "leverage relationships already in existence."

The goal of this continuum is to eliminate "silo ministries"³⁶ by seeking to equip everyone in the church at all levels of involvement to know how to minister to one another by turning to Scripture. Small groups members are expected to intentionally live

³²Harvest Bible Chapel, "Small Groups," Biblical Soul Care, Harvest Bible Chapel, Chicago, accessed November 14, 2017, <http://www.harvestbiblechapel.org/ministries/smallgroups/>.

³³Harvest Bible Chapel, *Uncommon Leadership 101: Leadership Guide* (Chicago: Harvest Bible Chapel, 2017), 9.

³⁴This process is explained in a document emailed to me by Gruening, Harvest Bible Chapel, "Building a Church of Disciple-Makers," Biblical Soul Care, Harvest Bible Chapel, Chicago, 2015.

³⁵Garrett Higbee, "Biblical Counseling and Soul Care in the Church," in *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God's Care through God's People*, ed. Bob Kelleman and Kevin Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 58.

³⁶"Silo ministries" being understood as seeing the biblical counseling ministry as completely separate from the other ministries of the church. Higbee sees this as the false dichotomy of counseling God's Word and ongoing discipleship. Higbee, "Biblical Counseling and Soul Care," 58.

out the biblical one-anothers.³⁷ Small group leaders are viewed as the first responders when problems arise; the front lines in the process of soul care. Were problems to escalate, the small group coaches are consulted, and if issues continue to intensify, then those who need further counsel are seen by the trained BSC staff. At every level of discipleship then, those who need counsel will be receiving counsel. First through the one-another ministry of every believer, then in the context of their discipleship community of their small group, and finally through the more intensive discipleship of the BSC ministry as one moves further down the seamless continuum of discipleship and care.³⁸

The training that all leaders receive is through their *Uncommon Leadership* curriculum. There are six levels of this training, and for those who are to be small group leaders, they are required to go through levels 101 and 201. The six lessons of level 101 provide the foundational training for leaders in any discipleship role, especially in the small group ministry, in order “to be a fruitful and uncommon leader, effectively making disciples for the glory of God.”³⁹ These lessons provide the vision for discipleship, the elements of a healthy small group, and how to speak the truth in love within the small group setting. Level 201 builds on that training and focuses on the sufficiency of Scripture, the believer’s identity in Christ, and growing in sanctification. The goal of this training is to have small group leaders who are “a teacher who discipled by applied instruction, a shepherd who counsels biblically, and a leader who influences by example.”⁴⁰

³⁷Garrett Higbee, “Biblical Counseling and Uncommon Community,” in *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God’s Care through God’s People*, ed. Bob Kelleman and Kevin Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 127.

³⁸Higbee, *Biblical Counseling and Uncommon Community*, 128.

³⁹Harvest Bible Chapel, *Uncommon Leadership 101*, 7.

⁴⁰Higbee, “Biblical Counseling and Uncommon Community,” 122.

**Grace Fellowship Church,
Florence, Kentucky**

On Wednesday, October 18, 2017, I conducted a telephone interview with Bob Greenwood, who is the Counseling Pastor of Grace Fellowship Church (GFC) in Florence, Kentucky. Their ministry model is similar to Harvest Bible Chapel in that they have a strong emphasis on biblical counseling and small groups and seek to have these two ministries work together. In fact, their senior pastor, Brad Bigney, has written, “These two ministries should work hand in hand together. . . . we go so far as to say don’t start a small group ministry without an equally vital biblical counseling ministry.”⁴¹

A GFC church document states, “It is our conviction that followers of Christ need to be in a small group in order to experience the loving care provided for us in Christian community.”⁴² It is their belief that God created people for community, and for Grace the best expression of community is found in small groups. Thus, their philosophy is for the people of their congregation to be engaged in life-on-life discipleship in the small group setting to bring about personal, spiritual transformation.⁴³ This philosophy is directly connected to how they run their counseling ministry, which Greenwood describes as “intensified discipleship.”

Their emphasis upon small groups is seen in that when an individual or couple come in to their counseling center for help, one of the first questions they are asked is whether they are in a small group. If not, the first homework assignment given out is for the counselee to plug into a small group. According to Greenwood, one of the main reasons why people are having problems is because they are living in isolation. If the counselee does not make any effort to find a small group after the second meeting with

⁴¹Brad Bigney and Ken Long, “The Transformational Tie between Small Group Ministry and Biblical Counseling,” in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling: Changing Lives with God’s Changeless Truth*, ed. James MacDonald, Bob Kelleman, and Steve Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 272.

⁴²Grace Fellowship, “Small Group Ministry FAQ,” Small Group Ministry, Grace Fellowship Church, Florence, KY, n.d.

⁴³Bigney and Long, “Transformational Tie,” 274.

the counselor, this lack of effort is taken as a sign that the counselee really is not interested in the counsel offered or following through with the homework that will be assigned, thus counsel will be put on hold until further notice. The counseling center will provide help for someone suffering a major difficulty without the emphasis on joining a small group initially. However, because they believe so firmly in the spiritual transformation found in the small groups, they really push people to be involved in that type of community.

Regarding training, they assert, “The small group leader needs to be equipped to carry out the vision of pushing beyond Bible information and on to life transformation.”⁴⁴ As such, GFC has extensive guidelines for becoming a small group leader.⁴⁵

1. A member of GFC (1 Pet 5:2-7)
2. Served as an apprentice for a GFC small group and recommended by the small group leader, who has completed a Ministry Referral Form (2 Tim 2:2)⁴⁶
3. Completed the Fundamentals of Biblical Counseling training (Rom 15:14; 2 Tim 2:15)⁴⁷
4. Has participated in Joshua’s Men (JM) or Women of the Word (WOW) leadership training in the church (1 Tim 4:16)⁴⁸
5. Demonstrated being “spiritual” and used by God to “restore others in a spirit of gentleness” in the transformational process (Gal 6:1-2)⁴⁹

⁴⁴Bigney and Long, “Transformational Tie,” 278.

⁴⁵Each of these steps was explained in general during the interview, but a detailed explanation is provided in Bigney and Long, “Transformational Tie,” 279.

⁴⁶The apprentice program allows for an already established small group leader to disciple a potential leader both spiritually and in the skills needed for shepherding people.

⁴⁷GFC is a Certified Counseling Training Center for ACBC, and the training they offer is based on their 30 hours of Counseling and Discipleship Training (CDT) program. Advanced CDT is required for all small group leaders.

⁴⁸JM and WOW are two-year programs in which those involved read through Wayne Grudem’s *Systematic Theology* the first year; the second year is devoted to reading at least nine other theological books written by authors such as Jerry Bridges, J. I. Packer, and Lou Priolo. This training program is not limited to the small group ministry. Everyone in leadership must complete this training.

⁴⁹Greenwood understands “spiritual” as producing the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) as explained in the interview.

6. Completed the Small Group Written Interview to be accepted by the director of small groups and/or elders
7. Interviewed and endorsed by the director of small groups

**Sojourn Community Church,
Louisville, Kentucky**

On November 6, 2017, I conducted a Zoom interview with Robert Cheong, Pastor of Care at the Midtown Campus of Sojourn Community Church in Louisville, Kentucky. The vision for the church is “to reach people with the gospel, build them up as the church, and release them into the world.”⁵⁰ The two primary ways they accomplish this vision is through their Sunday morning services and their weekly Community Groups.⁵¹ Thus, small groups provide one of the main vehicles for discipleship in their church as their people live in gospel community.

To better understand gospel community, Cheong points to Matthew 18, which he believes helps provide a context for living with others in the body of Christ. Cheong writes,

He [Christ] calls us to live with a *radical life of intentionality*, where sin is fought with vigor and where we deal seriously with those who cause others to stumble in gospel community (vv. 6-9). . . . He calls us to a *radical life of community* where we encourage and challenge one another to live out the gospel as a scattered and gathered body. . . . When we live together in such a way, we demonstrate a practical knowledge of the gospel and of our identity as the bride of Christ, since God made us to live and grow in community as His body.⁵²

Thus, it is in these scattered, smaller community groups where sin is addressed, and believers are strengthened in their role as part of the church.

Since the desire is to help people grow in Christ through gospel community, a specific area where this is practiced is in Sojourn’s Restore Ministry, which is part of

⁵⁰Sojourn Church, “Our Vision,” Sojourn Church Midtown, Louisville, KY, accessed November 25, 2017, <https://sojournchurch.com/about/gospel-church-world/>.

⁵¹Sojourn Community Church, “Our Vision,” Midtown Community Life, Sojourn Church Midtown, Louisville, KY, accessed November 25, 2017, <http://www.midtowncommunitylife.com/vision/>.

⁵²Robert Cheong, *God Redeeming His Bride: A Handbook for Church Discipline* (Fearn, Scotland; Christian Focus, 2012), 31-33.

their care ministry where attendees receive counseling in a small group setting.⁵³ Since there is such a strong belief in the sanctifying value of community groups, Cheong prefers not to refer people to individual counseling, although if a person is in crisis, any one of the pastors of the church or a leader in the Care Ministry will spend up to six weeks stabilizing them in the gospel before directing the individual to Restore.

This program is described as “a weekly ministry that helps God’s people to know and experience God’s love as we connect God’s story with our story. Restore is for anyone who wants to grow as a disciple or who is overwhelmed by life.”⁵⁴ The ministry meets on Wednesday nights for two hours where there is a time worship, teaching, and gathering into smaller open or closed groups. The distinction between open groups and closed groups is that open groups are for those who join Restore and are in the process of evaluating their commitment to a closed group. It is here that individuals begin to see God working in their struggles through his Word and with other believers.

Closed groups are for those who have begun the twelve-week program of Restore where they “will experience how God’s story gives meaning and hope to your story—past, present, and future.”⁵⁵ God’s over-arching story consists of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Consummation, and Restore is about helping strugglers understand their story in light of God’s story. A main focus is for the strugglers to know that God is the author of their story and wants them to know him through their life experiences.⁵⁶ In short, the Restore program seeks to help those who struggle with various issues in life

⁵³During our discussion, Cheong indicated that ministry emphasis at Sojourn has changed in the sense that there is no longer such a close connection between community groups and counseling. However, the Restore program is based on the small group model.

⁵⁴Sojourn Church Midtown, “Restore—FAQ,” Restore: Discipleship and Care Group, Sojourn Community Church Midtown, Louisville, KY, accessed November 25, 2017, <http://sojournchurch.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2017.8.29.RestoreFAQ.pdf>.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Robert K. Cheong, *Restore: Knowing and Experiencing God through Story* (Louisville, KY: Sojourn Community Church, 2017), 7.

and who are suffering its consequences understand how through communion with God and others they can receive comfort from God, deepen in faith, and learn how to respond rightly to their situation. It is not a program that is issue specific, although men, women, and couples are divided into specific groups so that they can share more openly within the group.

Restore is not to be in place of a community group, although attendance in a community group may be put on hold for the time the individual is engaged in Restore. One of the goals of the program is that the individual learns to live in community more effectively so that when they return to their original group, they are better equipped to live in community. Restore is also the training program that is used to develop leaders in the Restore ministry.

Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington DC

On November 8, 2017, I conducted a telephone interview with Deepak Reju, the associate pastor over biblical counseling and family ministries at Capitol Hill Baptist Church (CHBC) in Washington, DC, and President for the Board of Directors for the Biblical Counseling Coalition. Their application of the discipleship continuum is different than the previous churches in that they do not have such a strong emphasis on the connection between small groups and biblical counseling. Though they have a small group ministry, that is not the main vehicle for establishing a culture of discipleship.

The basis for their view of discipleship comes from *The Trellis and the Vine*, which presents a ministry model that moves “away from erecting and maintaining structures, and towards *growing people who are disciple-making disciples of Christ.*”⁵⁷

⁵⁷Marshall and Payne, *Trellis and the Vine*, 17, emphasis in original. Another strong influence for their philosophy of ministry is Dever and Dunlop, who write, “We should aspire for many relationships that exist only because of the gospel. . . I want us to aim at community characterized by relationships that are obviously supernatural. And by *supernatural* I don’t imply the mystical, vaguely spiritual sense in which pop culture uses the term. I mean the very biblical idea of a sovereign God working in space and time to do what confounds the natural laws of our world.” Mark Dever and Jamie Dunlop, *The Compelling*

The emphasis at CHBC is to see people branching out into all areas of the church and not limited to a certain ministry context. They seek to create a culture of discipleship through church membership. Reju's desire is to see the members of his church offering counsel that is biblical through the life-on-life relationships throughout their church.⁵⁸ In that sense there really is no difference between discipleship and biblical counseling, since at all levels of ministry, Reju would like to see all people be equipped to care for others by giving counsel from the Bible.

However, at CBHC they do make a distinction between discipleship and biblical counseling, but that has more to do with nomenclature than philosophy of ministry. In a chapter co-written with Mark Dever, they explain counseling as being a subset of discipleship:

Discipling is a broader term that applies to the one-on-one Christ-centered mentoring that older Christians do with younger believers (cf. Titus 2). *Counseling* is a subset of discipleship and deals with the more problematic and difficult aspects of life to handle, like marital conflict, depression, eating disorders, addictions, self-harm, and suicidal thinking.⁵⁹

Thus, the broad category of discipleship is what they would like to see accomplished throughout the church as each member cares for one another biblically and the biblical counseling ministry is part of that discipleship. For them, "The culture of counseling is built on the backbone of our commitment to membership and discipling."⁶⁰

When it comes to Reju's understanding of the continuum of discipleship, the distinction has more to do with level of training than numbers of people. As he explains

Community: Where God's Power Makes a Church Attractive (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 22.

⁵⁸A church course on discipleship discusses how in one sense, everything they do is about making disciples; from the songs they sing, prayers they pray, and the Sunday morning sermon. However, their focus is more on individual relationships and their desire is to see "intentional encouragement of Christians on the basis of deliberate, loving relationships and training in God's Word." "What Is Discipleship?" Care and Counseling, Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington DC, September 7, 2016, accessed April 27, 2018, <http://www.capitolhillbaptist.org/sermon/class-1-what-is-discipling/>.

⁵⁹Deepak Reju and Mark Dever, "The Health of the Church and Biblical Counseling," in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling: Changing Lives with God's Changeless Truth*, ed. James MacDonald, Bob Kelleman, and Stephen Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 251.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 253.

it, their continuum runs from the one-on-one type of general discipleship relationships to the more difficult problems of life addressed in the counseling ministry. They push their members to be involved in Bible study, prayer, and the life-on-life type of discipleship relationships that can mutually speak truth to one another. They train their people and expect that each member will seek to be in this type of relationship. When it comes to their counseling ministry, the efforts there are invested in the harder issues of life.

The analogy he used to describe this system is to see discipleship as three tiers or shelves. Shelf one covers the general life and guidance issues. Shelf two covers areas of conflict and other sin issues of people who are stuck. During our discussion, he gave the example of a married couple he just counseled who were in a rough spot. There was no major sin issue, no immorality or anything major, they had just come up against some conflict with each other that they needed help working through. The third shelf is focused on the rough cases, such as suicide, eating disorders, infidelity, divorce, and major addictions. The members of their biblical counseling ministry and their paid pastoral staff spend most of their time counseling those on the third shelf.

Reju explains that he endeavors to spread biblical counseling throughout the church so that the members of their congregation are equipped to be more involved in the problems of the Christian life. Their training consists of three levels.⁶¹ The first level is offered to anyone in the congregation who wants to be better equipped to help others within the body. They use the small group workbooks of *How People Change*⁶² and *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*⁶³ along with a series of case studies that allow for

⁶¹This information about the training at CHBC comes from an emailed document from the church, but the information can also be found on the Biblical Counseling Coalition website, Deepak Reju, "Equipped to Counsel, Part 1; How We Do Biblical Counseling Training in Our Congregation," Care and Counseling, Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington DC, accessed November 22, 2017, <https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/2011/12/19/equipped-to-counsel-part-one-how-we-do-biblical-counseling-training-in-our-congregation/>.

⁶²Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change: How Christ Changes Us by His Grace (Study Guide)* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2005).

⁶³Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: How to Help Others Change (Study*

the application of what was learned in the workbooks. Level 2 seeks to take a smaller crowd through more in-depth training which covers observation and listening skills and more in-depth counseling cases that present students with further opportunities to apply what they have learned. The third level focuses on more specialized training that covers more difficult problems found in the church, such as depression, marital conflict, struggles with internet pornography, and suicide.

All of this training is an effort to “(1) Get biblical counseling into the blood stream of our church; (2) To better equip our church members to be more involved with the ‘difficult’ problems in the Christian life; (3) To eventually have a team of biblical counselors . . . who can come alongside our elders to help them do counseling.”⁶⁴ Even though CHBC does not emphasize the connection between small groups and biblical counseling as much as the other churches, Capitol Hill still provides a helpful model for training members of the church in counseling biblically and creating that culture and expectation for discipleship.

Eastridge Baptist Church, Kent, Washington

Based upon the above investigation into various church models, it comes time to identify which model best suites the ministry context of EBC. Ideally, I would like to see Eastridge adopt a model that follows the close connection between the small group and biblical counseling ministries. Grace Fellowship, Harvest, and Sojourn provide tremendous examples of the potential for heart change within the community of small groups. These three models engage in a great training process for both counselors and small group leaders, and they possess seamless continuity and transition in the care one receives in their community and when meeting with one of the counselors. I also

Guide) (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2010).

⁶⁴Reju, “Equipped to Counsel, Part 1.”

appreciate the fact that all three are committed to the process of change within a smaller community by having counselees attend a small group as part of the counseling process. However, this model is not feasible in the life of EBC at this time. The path forward for Eastridge is to engage in a process that follows that of Capitol Hill Baptist, seeking to spread a culture of discipleship within the congregation through membership so that all members are equipped to counsel biblically.⁶⁵

There are two main reasons why the Capitol Hill model currently suits EBC. First is the fact that the small group ministry is not part of my role as associate pastor; my primary responsibilities include youth ministry and biblical counseling. Growing up in church, I have always heard about the value of small groups and how they can help individuals create a closer connection to the church body. It was when I began my studies at Southern that I saw the significance of utilizing small groups as a conduit for people to receive biblical counsel. This was the main reason why I chose this topic for my project and I am thankful that the leadership of EBC allowed me to engage in this process, even though it is outside my job description.

However, to establish a closer connection between the small group and biblical counseling ministries would require a significant change in the leadership structure of our church that we are not prepared to make. Currently, one of our lay elders oversees small groups and one of our associate pastors evaluates the curriculum those groups use, and these men do a fantastic job. To follow the model of GFC or Sojourn would require a change in my role at the church to accommodate the increase in leadership, coordination, training, and involvement in the small group ministry, which would take time and attention away from my current position. There is a need to focus on the establishment

⁶⁵Grace Fellowship, Harvest, and Sojourn also desire each participant of their congregations to learn how to counsel biblically so that everyone becomes an effective disciple-making disciple. Their focus for accomplishing that desire is on their small group ministry. Capitol Hill does have a vital small group ministry, but that ministry is not the driving force behind their disciple making process as it is in GFC, Harvest, and Sojourn. Capitol Hill focuses on church membership to create a culture of discipleship so that each member sees themselves as a disciple-making disciple within the entire body of CHBC.

and growth of the biblical counseling ministry in general since it is a relatively new ministry within our congregation. As EBC grows in its awareness of biblical counseling and sees the value in counseling one another from the Bible, perhaps in the future EBC can transition to a ministry model where the intensive discipleship of biblical counseling can be pressed further into the small group ministry with greater intentionality.

The second reason why the CHBC model fits our ministry context is that EBC shares a similar focus when it comes to encouraging the congregation to be disciple-making disciples. Currently, the elders of EBC are growing in our understanding of discipleship by reading through *The Trellis and the Vine*.⁶⁶ As noted above, this book is foundational to the ministry at CHBC and their desire to create a culture of discipleship through church membership. The emphasis in this book is not so much on ministry structure as it is on growing people and helping each person within the congregation to see themselves as part of the disciple making process. The goal at EBC is for each elder to grasp the principles taught in *The Trellis and the Vine* and to apply those principles within their circles of influence at the church.

It is my prayer that this understanding of discipleship can be leveraged to increase the awareness and value of biblical counseling throughout our church. The goal is not for each member of the congregation become an official counselor but that everyone possesses a fundamental belief in the sufficiency of the Bible and the basic skills needed to point others to the truth. May each person of our congregation see themselves as a Christian who has the responsibility of helping other Christians be more like Christ.

Conclusion

The Bible expects the disciples of Christ to be disciple-makers. Therefore, it is

⁶⁶Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine: The Ministry Mind-Shift that Changes Everything* (Sydney: Matthias Media, 2009).

incumbent upon churches to create an environment that fosters the accomplishment of this mandate. The continuum of discipleship ranges from the comprehensive to the contextual, from the gathering of the entire congregation on Sunday morning to the intensified discipleship of the biblical counseling ministry. Several frameworks for discipleship can be used at all points along the continuum, and we have researched how four churches apply their understanding of the continuum to best minister to their people and develop disciple-making disciples. Finally, I explained which one of those models best suits the current ministry context of EBC so that our congregation is equipped to help others be more like Christ to the glory of God.

CHAPTER 4
TEACHING A FRAMEWORK FOR
COUNSELING BIBLICALLY

In the winter of 2018, EBC offered a course to equip the small group leaders with a framework for counseling biblically. This course was presented to and approved by the elders of EBC. The duration of the course was twelve weeks, and classes were held on Sunday mornings which provided the greatest opportunity for the maximum amount of people to attend with the least amount of scheduling conflicts. The goal of this chapter is to describe the material covered in the course.

Invitation to the Small Group Leaders

Two months prior to the class, I initiated conversations, either in person or over the phone, with the small group leaders. Most of them were very receptive, indicating excitement over the material, showing great interest in learning how to counsel biblically. There was one gentleman who was hesitant, but graciously accepted the invitation. There were a few who declined to attend, mainly due to scheduling conflicts and family concerns. After the personal interactions, an email invitation was sent to all the small group leaders, inviting them to the course and explaining in further detail what the course would cover.¹ My current role as associate pastor does not include direct involvement with the small group ministry, but my desire is to see the increase of biblical counsel in personal discipleship throughout our congregation. This project is a step in that direction, beginning with the small group leaders who have tremendous influence among a significant number of individuals in our church.

¹See appendix 2.

Week-by-Week Course Instruction

The main text book used for the course was *How People Change: How Christ Changes Us by His Grace (Study Guide)*, by Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp,² along with other presented materials.³ Each week, participants were responsible for reading the assigned section, answering the questions in the study guide, and working on their Personal Growth Project (PGP). The PGP is an assignment given in Lesson 6 of *How People Change*,⁴ however this project was assigned in week one to bring about a greater impact on the students by working for twelve weeks as opposed to six. As part of the PGP, the students worked through the “Discovering Problem Patterns” worksheet,⁵ and “The Six-Box Version of the Three Tree Model.”⁶

Each class was ninety minutes long. The first fifteen to twenty minutes included prayer, an opportunity for participants to share about their PGP, and a review of the previous material. The next forty-five to fifty minutes consisted of interactive teaching and discussion. The final twenty to thirty minutes involved either a discussion about a case study or a role play scenario which gave participants an opportunity to apply what was learned.

The class was divided into five table groups of six to eight members that remained constant throughout the course. These table groups were to imitate the context

²Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change: How Christ Changes Us by His Grace (Study Guide)* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2005).

³Each resource is highlighted in the description of the weekly lessons.

⁴Lane and Tripp, *How People Change (Study Guide)*, 85-87. This assignment was for the purpose of self-examination to bring about biblical change and allowed the students to have personal interaction with the material so that they might be familiar with the process that can be used to bring about change in the lives of others.

⁵Stuart Scott, “Discovering Problem Patterns,” *One-Eighty Counseling and Education*, Louisville, KY, accessed January 4, 2018, <http://d344mmx2cxiiivy.cloudfront.net/docs/discovering-problem-patterns.pdf>. This worksheet helped to establish patterns for sinful behavior, looking for common themes in times, days of the week, and situation where one may be more tempted to sin and give in to those temptations.

⁶Robert D. Jones, “The Six-Box Version of the Three Tree Model (adapted from David A. Powlison)” (Introduction to Biblical Counseling Class Lecture Notes, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, July 2017), 7.

of a small group to show how the material covered in class can be applied in that context. These groups examined case studies in weeks three through eight. From weeks nine to twelve they engaged in role play scenarios. Certain individuals played the part of those needing counsel while one individual was identified as the small group leader. The rest of those at the table were to act as members of the small group and were encouraged to provide counsel as they saw opportunities. Each table also included me or one of our church's ACBC certified counselors to act as evaluators and coaches for the group. The remainder of this chapter briefly describes what was covered in each week.

Week 1

This initial lesson was entitled "Introduction to Counseling Biblically in Small Groups." Eastridge Baptist Church has long supported biblical counseling, so it was not necessary to convince the participants about the need for or the legitimacy of this ministry. Thus, the first lesson focused on why teach a class on BC for small groups, how BC is focused discipleship, and that BC requires a commitment to the sufficiency of Scripture. The teaching time was altered due to the fact that there was a delay in the shipment for our text books. This turned out to be a gracious delay since there was a significant amount of material to be covered in order to lay a foundation for the rest of the course. We began by discussing the process of the PGP, which the homework for this first week was simply to identify an area of struggle/sin to work on for the remainder of the twelve-week course. I also administered the Biblical Counseling Inventory (BCI).⁷

I initiated the lecture by explaining why I chose to do a project on teaching small group leaders to counsel biblically. It is my conviction that small groups can be a powerful force for change in the life of the church in general, and at EBC specifically, because of the well-established discipleship community already in place. By adding an

⁷See appendix 1.

increased ability to counsel biblically, these groups can be leveraged more effectively to bring about greater Christ-likeness in those who attend the groups. The ultimate goal was not to make the leaders counselors, but to bring about continuity in the message that one would hear in the small group as well as when meeting with one of our counselors.

Next, we discussed how biblical counseling is focused discipleship and is not reserved for a special class of Christians. Throughout the course, we repeatedly came back to the truth that discipleship is a biblical expectation for all followers of Christ by constantly reviewing our definition of discipleship, “Christians helping Christians be more like Christ.” This definition was based on the passages of Exodus 18, 2 Timothy 2:1-2, Matthew 28:16-20, select passages from the book of Acts, and Romans 15:14, which establish the model and expectation for God’s truth to be dispersed amongst God’s people.

Last, we discussed the necessity for the commitment to the sufficiency of Scripture. Lambert’s definition of sufficiency served as a basis for our understanding, “The Bible contains all that we need to know God’s will and live a life pleasing to him.”⁸ We spent time looking at Psalm 19:7-10 and 2 Tim 3:16-17, which represent Old Testament and New Testament teachings on sufficiency. These passages make it clear that the Bible provides everything necessary for the Christian to know God rightly, to live for him appropriately, and to understand God’s world according to his perspective.

Week 2

Week 2 was the first of two lessons entitled “Biblical Understanding of the Heart.” The books for the class arrived, and I gave an overview of the material and the format for each lesson. We also covered the first two lessons of *How People Change* and began our study on the biblical understanding of the heart. The students were also given

⁸Heath Lambert *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 37.

the “Discovering Problem Patterns” worksheet as the next phase in their PGP.

Lesson 1 of *How People Change* introduced what is commonly known as “The Three Tree Model,” which is conveniently diagrammed in the back of the text.⁹ This first lesson emphasized that God is intent on changing his people. This hope for change comes as believers maintain an eternal focus, applying that eternal focus in such a way that it makes an impact on present thoughts, words, and actions. The main passages used are Philippians 1:3-6, Revelation 7:13-14, and 1 John 3:1-3, which teach that God began and will complete his work in the life of the believer, and that this hope leads the believer to purify himself as Christ is pure.

Lesson 2 emphasized that change comes in a relationship with Christ.¹⁰ The Bible provides many metaphors to describe the believer’s relationship to Christ, with marriage being most vivid. Ephesians 5:32 and 2 Corinthians 11:1-3 are used in this lesson to highlight the intimacy and devotion of marriage and how Christ is to be the ultimate object of the Christian’s affection. This preeminence in affection and devotion changes the heart of the believer in conformity to the heart of Christ. The class was to catch up in their reading of these two lessons as part of their homework for this week.

In introducing the topic of the biblical understanding of the heart, the main resource used was Jeremy Pierre’s book *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*.¹¹ The chart, “The Dynamic Heart: Functions” was also presented.¹² These resources provided a clear

⁹Lane and Tripp, *How People Change (Study Guide)*, 182. These men clearly acknowledge that the contents of their curriculum and their presentation of “The Three Tree Model” grew out of a material taught by David Powlison on the dynamics of heart change, and they are very thankful for his insight, leadership, and influence in their lives. Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2008), vii.

¹⁰Ibid., 18.

¹¹Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2016).

¹²Jeremy Pierre, “The Dynamic Heart: Function” (Problems and Procedures in Biblical Counseling Class Notes, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, July 19-22, 2016).

understanding of the thinking, feeling, and acting functions of the heart. A correct understanding of the heart is necessary, as John Henderson writes, “What rules our heart rules our life.”¹³

Week 3

Week 3 was the second lesson on “Biblical Understanding of the Heart.” The lecture focused on Lesson 3 in our text, which teaches “God’s work of personal transformation is intended to take place within the community of God’s people.”¹⁴ God created us for community as part of what it means for men and women to be made in the image of God. God dwells in perfect community in the Trinity (Eph 1:3-14), God condescended to live in community with people (John 1:14), and he desires his people to live in community with each other (Eph 4:1-6). The main passage of Hebrews 10:19-31 highlights that it is within the community of God’s people that believers clearly see their sinfulness and their need for grace and are to encourage one another in gospel living. Among their table groups, the class went through an exercise on learning how to speak truth to one another.¹⁵

Then we continued the discussion on the biblical understanding of the heart by taking a closer look at the heart’s functions: cognition (thinking, believing, and interpreting), affection (feelings, desires, and values), and volition (willing, committing, and acting). Genesis 3 and Romans 1 were used to show how these functions are corrupted by sin.¹⁶ First Peter 1:13-16 is an example for how these functions are restored

¹³John Henderson, *Equipped to Counsel: A Training Program in Biblical Counseling* (Association of Biblical Counselors: Fort Worth, TX, 2008), 172.

¹⁴Lane and Tripp, *How People Change (Study Guide)*, 33.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁶Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart*, 57-61.

by faith in Jesus Christ.¹⁷

To close out our time, we simply read through the case study on Angela, a twenty-three-year-old woman struggling with fear and anxiety.¹⁸ Since this was the first interaction with case studies for many in the class, this case was used as an example of what was to come in the remainder of the course. I also gave instruction on how to use “The Problem Patterns Worksheet,” and how the students were to use this worksheet for their homework this week to identify times and situations where they are tempted or give in to the sin issue they chose for their PGP. They also were to interact with Lesson 3 in the study guide of *How People Change*.

Week 4

Week 4 was entitled “Methodology of Care,” and provided an overview of the model in *How People Change* and a method for biblical change. The model works through the categories of Heat, Thorns, Cross, Fruit, which is based on Jeremiah 17:5-10.¹⁹ “Heat” represents the life situation facing the believer. “Thorns” represents the sinful responses that flow from sinful heart desires. “Cross” points to the person and work of Christ and the resources he makes available for change. “Fruit” represents the new biblical responses that flow from the changed heart that is devoted to Christ. The biblical case study of Job and his wife present a great example of how two different individuals respond differently to the same situation based upon their heart desires and their devotion the God.²⁰

¹⁷Ibid., 84-86.

¹⁸John Henderson, “Case Study 2: Angela,” in *Equipped to Counsel: A Training Program in Biblical Counseling: Resource Handbook* (Bedford, TX: The Association of Biblical Counselors, 2008), 9-10.

¹⁹Lane and Tripp, *How People Change (Study Guide)*, 47-50.

²⁰Robert Jones, “Biblical Case Study: Mr. and Mrs. Job in Job 1:6-2:10” (Introduction to Biblical Counseling Class Lecture Notes, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, July 18-21, 2017) 11.

This week's lesson also began the process of providing a methodology of care based on Paul Tripp's *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*.²¹ Tripp identifies four ways to function in personal, biblical ministry in order to bring about heart change. These functions are given the titles of Love, Know, Speak, Do, all of which look to Christ as the example and highlight the need for loving relationships where followers of Christ speak truth to one another and encourage each other to apply truth to their life situations.

The first function of "Love" is very similar to the lesson in Week 3, both of which teach that personal change happens in the context of relationships. Here, Jesus is the example as he enters into a relationship with his people. He entered into this world (Phil 2:6-7), sympathizes with the human experience (Heb 4:15), identifies with suffering (Heb 2:10-11), all for the purpose of changing his people (Titus 2:11-12). Thus, the believer's relationships with others is to mirror their relationship with Christ as they put on Christ (Col 3:12-14), comfort as they have been comforted (2 Cor 1:3-11) and help others "do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col 3:15-17).

The case study of Angela was reintroduced, and the class had the opportunity to make observations about her situation. The table groups discussed these questions: "What is her situation?" "How is she responding?" "What passages might you use to encourage her?" "What actions should she take based on those new heart desires?" For homework, the class continued for a second week filling out another Problem Patterns worksheet to help them get a better understanding of their struggle. They also read Lesson 4 of *How People Change*.

Week 5

Week 5 was the second class entitled "Methodology of Care," and began by covering Lesson 5 of *How People Change*, "Heat 1: The Real God in the Real World."

²¹Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002).

Beginning with Lesson 5, each element of the model for biblical change, Heat, Thorns, Cross, Fruit, are broken up into two lessons that provides both God's perspective and the believer's perspective on each element of change. Lesson 5 reveals God's purpose in trials from Psalm 88 and James 1. Psalm 88 is used to teach that God wants the believer to bring their suffering to him because he gives help in time of need (Heb 2:17-18). James 1:1-18 shows that trials are God's plan for bringing about maturity in the believer.

Next, we covered the "Know" function of *Instruments*.²² This function focuses on the importance of knowing people, breaking through the casual understanding to know their heart struggles. This is done by asking good questions, which according to Tripp, is doing the work of change since good questions help uncover where change is needed.²³ Tripp stresses the importance of asking open-ended questions that seek to understand the situation of the struggler, how they are responding, and what were their thoughts and motivation in the situation.

Finally, the case study on Angela was used once more, this time to apply what we learned about asking good questions. Each table group was challenged to come up with a list of what, how, why, where, and when questions that might uncover Angela's heart struggles. For homework, along with reading Lesson 5, the class moved on to the second phase of their PGP, which was to begin to fill out "The Six Box Version of the Three Tree Model,"²⁴ a tool to work in tandem with the *How People Change* "Three Tree model." This model helps students identify the struggles, their sinful responses, Christ's provisions in their struggles, and what their godly responses should be.

²²Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002) 161-97.

²³Ibid., 173.

²⁴Jones, "Introduction to Biblical Counseling Class Lecture Notes," 7.

Week 6

Week 6 was the third lesson entitled “Methodology of Care,” and began with a discussion of Lesson 6 of *How People Change*, “Heat 2: The Real You in the Real World.” Lesson Six teaches that believers are always responding to the situations of life, regardless of whether those situations are good or bad. Since people are sinful, they commonly respond sinfully, and these sinful responses uncover where God calls the believer to personal change.²⁵ This world is broken (Rom 8:20-22), but God wants the believer to maintain her allegiance to him. The children of Israel are used as an example of those who responded sinfully to a situation (Num 11, 14, 20) where God was humbling them and teaching them to trust solely on him (Deut 8:2-14).

The lecture continued to discuss the third element of the methodology of care, “Speak,” which involves bringing the truth of the Word to bear on the person in the situation. This element entails rebuke, which as Tripp defines, “Rebuke is the word the Bible uses for bringing truth to where change is needed.”²⁶ Those struggling with sin need to be lovingly and graciously brought to a place where they are confronted with how God wants them to change.

Third, the class interacted with the case study of Janet and Perry, a Christian couple in their early forties who are having marital difficulties.²⁷ Perry believes their marriage is fine, but Janet paints a different picture. In their table groups, the class went through the process of identifying the Heat of their situation, their sinful responses, what passages could be used to refocus this couple on Christ, and what might change look like for them. The table groups also identified some questions they might ask to uncover some of this information. For homework, the class was to continue to work for a second week

²⁵Lane and Tripp, *How People Change (Study Guide)*, 80.

²⁶Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, 92.

²⁷Jay E. Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Casebook: Applying the Principles of Nouthetic Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 64. This original case study was modified so that this couple was part of a small group and those in the class would counsel them accordingly.

on filling out their six-box diagram and read Lesson Six of *How People Change*.

Week 7

Week 7 was the fourth and final lesson on “Methodology of Care,” and first covered Lesson 7 in *How People Change*. Lesson 7, “Thorns 1: What Entangles You?” looks at behavior; the thoughts, words, actions, and emotions that reveal what is inside a person’s heart. Luke 6:43-45 makes clear, “out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” Lane and Tripp emphasize, “We will face the reality that although we *are* FRUIT trees by the grace of God, we still have thorn bush responses to life.”²⁸ Though the believer is a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17), the desires of the flesh are constantly at war with the desires of the Spirit (Gal 5:17). Thus, the believer must constantly ask God to expose sin so that, by his grace, he or she can change.

Second, the class learned about the fourth aspect of personal ministry taught in *Instruments*, “Do,” which emphasizes the application of truth to daily life, or as Tripp identifies, “Christ-centered, biblically informed living.”²⁹ He goes on, “God’s primary goal is not changing our situations and relationships so that we can be happy, but changing us through our situations and relationships so that we can be holy.”³⁰

In their table discussions, the class interacted with the case study of Brad and Liz, a young couple who are at odds on how to discipline their five-year-old daughter, Tina.³¹ They were challenged to come up with questions that might uncover the heart issues involved, and how each spouse might respond differently to each other. For homework, the class moved on to the next phase of the PGP, formulating a plan for personal change. They also read Lesson 7 in *How People Change*.

²⁸Lane and Tripp, *How People Change (Study Guide)*, 90, emphasis in the original.

²⁹Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 241.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 243.

³¹Adams, *The Christian Counselor’s Casebook*, 130. This original case study was modified so that this couple was part of a small group and those in the class would counsel them accordingly.

Week 8

Week 8 covered the eighth lesson from *How People Change*, “Thorns 2: Why Do You Get Entangled?” This lesson focuses on the inner man, and the main point is summed up in the phrase, “All ungodly behavior grows out of a heart that has been captivated by something other than Christ.”³² Romans 1:18-25 and James 1:13-15 are key passages that explain the truth that hearts captivated by sin or sinful desires will not honor Christ. Robert Jones’ “Throne-Staircase Diagram” was used to visually teach this concept.³³

Beginning this week, our class began to look at a series of counseling topics; anger being the first topic discussed. The two main resources used were *Uprooting Anger* and *Good and Angry*.³⁴ Jones gives a helpful definition, “Anger is a whole-personed active response of negative moral judgment against perceived evil.”³⁵ Both resources aided our understanding of the dangers of sinful anger (James 4:1-3), and how anger can be expressed in godly ways to minister to others. Christ exemplified this in Mark 10:13-16, when he rightly reacted against the disciples’ sin and continued to minister to others.

The case study for this week looked at the experience of Sarah and Andy, sister and brother in their mid-twenties, both of whom struggle with anger.³⁶ Their anger stems from bad relationships with their parents, sinful choices in their past, and the fact that life has not turned out as they hoped. Each table group thought through some of the sinful

³²Lane and Tripp, *How People Change (Study Guide)*, 103.

³³Robert D. Jones, *Pursuing Peace: A Christian Guide to Handling Our Conflicts* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 65-66.

³⁴Robert D. Jones, *Uprooting Anger: Biblical Help For A Common Problem* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005), David Powlison, *Good and Angry: Redeeming Anger, Irritation, Complaining, and Bitterness* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2016). Another resource that provided some helpful insights was Lou Priolo, *Keeping Your Cool: A Teen’s Survival Guide* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006).

³⁵Jones, *Uprooting Anger*, 15.

³⁶John Henderson, *Equipped to Counsel*, 23-24.

desires at the root of Sarah's and Andy's anger, and how they could provide care through the Love, Know, Speak, Do process from *Instruments*. For homework, the students were to read Lesson 8 and continue to implement their PGP.

Week 9

Week 9 covered Lesson 9 of *How People Change*, "Cross 1: New Identity, New Potential." The main passage of this lesson is Galatians 2:20 and teaches believers they have everything necessary to respond in new ways to their daily struggles because of Christ's indwelling presence.³⁷ This lesson also confronts the reader with the question, "In what ways are you failing to let the cross shape your situations and relationships?"³⁸ The class also went through an exercise of observing Ephesians 1-2 in order to highlight the believer's position and identity in Christ as a result of salvation.

Fear, worry, and anxiety was the second in the series of counseling topics examined in class. The main resource used was *Running Scared* by Ed Welch.³⁹ The lecture identified a number of similarities between anger and fear. Both are the result of a desire for control; one fights, the other frantically grasps. As Welch explains, "Fear and anger can be the same words spoken with a different attitude."⁴⁰ Counsel comes from showing compassion, helping the struggler understand the connection between fear and unbelief, and teaching godly responses in the midst of fearful situations; a response that

³⁷Lane and Tripp, *How People Change (Study Guide)*, 120.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Edward T. Welch, *Running Scared: Fear, Worry, and the God of Rest* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2007). Also included at points within the lecture were Steve Mawhorter, "Lesson 19: Overcoming Fear and Worry," Cornerstone Class Lecture Notes, Northcreek Church, Walnut Creek, CA; Stuart Scott, *Anger, Anxiety, and Fear: A Biblical Perspective* (Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2009); Robert D. Jones, "Getting to the Heart of Your Worry," *JBC* 17, no. 3 (Spring 1999); Brian S. Borgman, *Feelings and Faith: Cultivating Godly Emotions in the Christian Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009); Elyse Fitzpatrick and Laura Hendrickson, *Will Medicine Stop the Pain? Finding God's Healing for Depression, Anxiety, and Other Troubling Emotions* (Chicago: Moody, 2006).

⁴⁰Welch, *Running Scared*, 34.

seeks to love God and love others, for love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). The experience of Peter walking on water exemplifies the need to look to Christ in the midst of difficult and fearful circumstances (Matt 14:22-33).

The case study examined in class looked at the experience of Brian and Meredith, a married couple concerned with Meredith's struggles with anxiety and panic attacks.⁴¹ This case was used as a role play scenario and each table group identified individuals to play Brian, Meredith, and one to act as the leader of the small group. Each person had a certain script to read but were encouraged to provide more information and ask more questions than what was scripted. For homework, the class was to read Lesson 9 and continue the implementation of their PGP.

Week 10

Week 10 covered Lesson 10 of *How People Change*, "Cross 2: The Cross and Daily Living." The main idea is that even though the believer possesses the indwelling presence of Christ and their new identity is found in him, the change process happens slowly. Thus, there is a daily need for faith and repentance in order to fight sin and grow in Christ.⁴² First John 2 and 3 highlight the need for faith in Christ for justification and adoption while Luke 15, the story of the prodigal son, emphasizes the need for living a life of repentance.

The counseling topic discussed this class was depression with Charles Hodges' *Good Mood, Bad Mood* providing the basis for understanding this issue.⁴³ Robert Smith

⁴¹Henderson, *Equipped to Counsel*, 55-62. Even though this resource is suited for a formal counseling situation, those engaged in the roles were to identify themselves as being part of a small group.

⁴²Lane and Tripp, *How People Change (Study Guide)*, 135.

⁴³Charles D. Hodges, *Good Mood, Bad Mood: Help and Hope for Depression and Bipolar Disorder* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2012). Materials used in addition for the class discussion included Robert D. Jones, "Depression" Introduction to Biblical Counseling Course Notes, Summer 2017, 8; Edward T. Welch, *Depression: Looking Up from the Stubborn Darkness* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2011); Borgman, *Feelings*; and Fitzpatrick and Hendrickson, *Medicine*.

gives a helpful definition: “Depression is a debilitating mood, feeling, or attitude of hopelessness, which becomes a person’s reason for not handling the important issues of life.”⁴⁴ Charles Hodges’ book presents a clear, biblical understanding of God’s gift of sadness as part of what it means to be made in the image of God, how it opens the door for change, and by God’s grace, equips the believer for service.⁴⁵ The Apostle Paul and his experience in 2 Corinthians 4 was used as a biblical case study. Included in the class discussion were some of the medical aspects that surround depression; how it is not necessarily an illness but that there can be medical issues involved.⁴⁶

The table discussion and role play scenario involved the case of Anthony, a 35-year-old married man with two children.⁴⁷ Once again, the table groups identified someone to play the role of Anthony and someone to play the role of small group leader while the rest of the table provided counsel when appropriate. The main topic of the scenario involved the use of medication, but the table groups were instructed to focus more on the need for godly responses and not on Anthony’s decision about medication. For homework, the class read through Lesson 10 and continued working on their PGP.

Week 11

Week 11 covered Lesson 11 in *How People Change*, “Fruit 1: Real Heart Change.” The main point of this lesson is that whatever is in the heart determines how one responds in life. Thus, God is concerned with the heart (1 Sam 16:1-13), not simply external conformity to his law.⁴⁸ This is the hope of the gospel, that the believer has been

⁴⁴Robert D. Smith, *The Christian Counselor’s Medical Desk Reference* (Stanley, NC: Timeless Texts, 2000), 205.

⁴⁵Hodges, *Good Mood, Bad Mood*, 73-93.

⁴⁶I emphasized that I am not a medical doctor and by no means understand all there is to know about this topic. However, I did make known the need for godly responses regardless of what the medical world says about this topic.

⁴⁷Henderson, *Equipped to Counsel*, 65-72.

⁴⁸Lane and Tripp, *How People Change (Study Guide)*, 146.

given a new, transformed heart (Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 36:24-28; Eph 1:15-19, 4:1-3) that can produce new and godly fruit. Believers, then, are to sincerely pray the prayer, “Your kingdom come, your will be done” in their lives (Matt 6:9-10).

The counseling topic for this class was marriage. The discussion began by giving a biblical defense of marriage defined by God as one man, one woman, in a one flesh union for one lifetime, ultimately pointing to the gospel (Gen 1:28, 2:18; Eph 5:32). Following that was a look at the main text for the discussion, *When Sinners Say “I Do,”* by Dave Harvey.⁴⁹ This book highlights the importance of dealing with personal sin first (Matt 7:3-5), Harvey even says, “I am my biggest marital problem.”⁵⁰ Once personal sin is addressed, only then should a husband or wife deal with their spouse by extending mercy (Rom 2:4) and forgiveness (1 Pet 4:8).

During the table discussions the groups engaged in a role play scenario, the story of the Robinsons.⁵¹ Toby and his wife Linda are in their mid-forties with four children, two boys and two girls, ages 16, 14, 11, and 10. This was the first of two interactions with this family, initially focusing on the marriage. In week 12, the role play moves on to the parent-child relationship. Once the groups identified the players, they read through the script and evaluated where mercy and forgiveness are lacking in the marriage and how they might bring gospel hope to this couple. The class then was to work on Lesson 11 in HPC and continue implementing their PGP.

Week 12

Week 12 began with a discussion on Lesson 12 of *How People Change*, “Fruit 2: New and Surprising Fruit.” God wants his children to change and has provided in

⁴⁹Dave Harvey, *When Sinners Say “I Do”: Discovering the Power of the Gospel for Marriage* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2007). Additional material was drawn from Stuart Scott, *The Exemplary Husband: A Biblical Perspective* (Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2002), and Martha Peace, *The Excellent Wife: A Biblical Perspective* (Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 1999).

⁵⁰Harvey, *When Sinners Say “I Do,”* 12.

⁵¹Henderson, *Equipped to Counsel*, 85-92.

Christ the means for their hearts to be radically transformed. This internal transformation is to manifest itself in specific and concrete ways. Psalms 3 and 4 give insight into the life of David as he struggles with a difficult situation, yet he finds rest, possesses great joy, and ministers to others because his trust is in the Lord. David is living out the challenge Paul gives in Galatians 5 and 6; do not live in sinful self-indulgence but serve others out of the resources God has given. The point is that in Christ, believers already possess this “fruit tree” identity and potential (Gal 5:22-24), and that God’s purpose is not protection or deliverance from difficulty but change in Christ-likeness in the midst of difficulty.⁵²

Parenting was the counseling topic discussed this week, with Tedd Tripp’s *Shepherding a Child’s Heart* guiding our thoughts.⁵³ Even though Tedd Tripp does not specifically use the Three Tree model, much of what he says uses the same principles, giving many opportunities to connect his thoughts with the material from *How People Change*. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Ephesians 6:4 give parents two basic responsibilities when it comes to raising their children; teaching and disciplining them in the Lord. Leviticus 19:3 and Ephesians 6:1-3 teach that children are to honor and obey their parents. Tripp instructs parents to focus on the heart of their child with the overall objective of teaching children to glorify God and enjoy him forever.⁵⁴

Then, the table groups engaged in the second session of the role play scenario with the Robinsons, this time focusing in on the parent’s interaction with their children, particularly the relationship between Toby and his oldest son Charlie.⁵⁵ The groups read through the script, highlighting the examples of forgiveness based on the gospel, and how this could lead to greater communication and respect between father and son. The class

⁵²Lane and Tripp, *How People Change (Study Guide)*, 175.

⁵³Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*, 2nd ed. (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd’s Press, 2005).

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 4, 56.

⁵⁵Henderson, *Equipped to Counsel*, 93-100.

was then encouraged to continue to work on their PGP even though the course was completed, and to use and pass on what they learned about biblical change to those in their small groups.

At the conclusion of this class, the students were instructed to retake the BCI and complete a post-course evaluation and return them the following week. We also had a time to celebrate the completion of the course.

Conclusion

A class in learning how to counsel biblically was helpful for all involved, both for me and the students. *How People Change* provided us a helpful framework for understanding biblical change, and the students now possess the knowledge and skill of how they can bring about new and godly responses in their own lives and in the members of their small groups. Each of the counseling topics addressed gave biblical clarity on some common struggles people face. The following chapter will provide an evaluation of this project.

CHAPTER 5
EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

All believers are to be engaged in discipleship, being able to give and receive counsel from the Bible so that each person grows in Christ. In other words, discipleship is the process of Christians helping Christians be more like Christ. Therefore, in order to disciple well one must be able to counsel biblically. The leadership of Eastridge Baptist views all the church's ministries as part of the process of discipleship whereby everything is done for the purpose of growth in Christlikeness. This project focused specifically on the small group ministry, training those leaders to be better equipped to give counsel from the Bible within that discipleship context.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The preceding chapters indicated that the specific purpose of this project was to train the small group leaders of EBC to counsel biblically, equipping them with a basic understanding and framework of biblical counseling principles and practices. The purpose was not to equip them to be biblical counselors in an official sense, but to provide continuity between the counsel one would receive from a small group and from one of EBC's counselors. Since all believers are to be engaged in discipleship, and all EBC's ministries exist to make disciples, and biblical counseling is focused discipleship, it makes sense for the message to be the same across all ministries even though the intensity of the communication of that message may vary.¹ Ideally, every individual in

¹A helpful parallel can be seen in the message of the gospel and the efforts of evangelism. The message of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior must be the same no matter where it is

the congregation would be exposed to this material, and this class is a step in that direction.

This purpose was fulfilled based upon three criteria. First was the overall positive feedback from the students. In the post-course evaluations, many students mentioned how they enjoyed the material which gave them resources that provided biblical understanding to the struggles people have. Also, in follow-up conversations, many students indicated that they now have more questions than answers, which at first gave me concern. However, these questions let me know that the students were thinking about what they learned, and that the course increased their desire to want to know more and continue the equipping process.

Second, the students walked away with a firm grasp on a process for biblical change as taught in the *How People Change* material. In each class for the twelve-week course, we reviewed the Heat, Thorns, Cross, Fruit diagram, and many students appreciated the review. By the end of the course, the questions and comments from the students indicated that they clearly understood that situations do not cause sin but reveal a sinful heart, and that the heart needs biblical values and motivations in order to respond in godly ways.

Third, many students indicated on the post-course evaluation how helpful this class was to their personal walk with Christ. The PGP exercise helped them identify specific areas in need of growth and this class gave an opportunity to work on a sin issue they might not have addressed otherwise. Since many of the students personally engaged in the process of biblical change, they are better equipped to help others change.

Since there is a strong emphasis on discipleship at EBC, there must be an equally strong emphasis on the entire congregation of EBC to be trained to counsel biblically. The completion of this project was a step closer in spreading this emphasis

spoken, but that message may be communicated differently when given in different contexts (i.e., to a first-grade class, an adult Bible study, or to those engaged in street evangelism).

throughout the church. As was said in this project and multiple times throughout the class, biblical counseling is not a ministry reserved for a select few but a responsibility of all believers, since all believers have been called and equipped for this ministry (Rom 15:14).

Evaluation of the Project’s Goals

The first goal of the project was to assess the current understanding of biblical counseling principles and practices among the small group leaders at EBC. The measurement used for this goal was to administer the pre-course Biblical Counseling Inventory (BCI) survey to those enrolled in the class.² This goal was considered successfully met when the students completed the pre-course BCI survey and the results tallied to provide analysis of the students. The results of the general Christian activity questions from this survey are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Results from the pre-course BCI general questions

Category	Average Results
Years as a believer	34.5
Years in attendance of EBC	11
Hours of Bible reading per week	3.9
Received counseling (percent)	52
Received counseling training (percent)	36

The second goal was to develop a twelve-session curriculum on the principles and practices of biblical counseling. Content for this course focused primarily on the text *How People Change (Study Guide)*.³ Supplemental understanding came from *The Dynamic Heart*,⁴ which gave a biblical understanding of the heart, and *Instruments in the*

²See appendix 1.

³Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change: How Christ Changes Us by His Grace (Study Guide)* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2005).

⁴Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience*

Redeemer's Hands,⁵ which provided a methodology for biblical change. In addition to the framework provided by the previous resources, the course curriculum also covered select counseling topics: anger, fear/worry, depression, marriage, and parenting.

This goal was measured by a rubric utilized by an evaluation panel consisting of the senior pastor of EBC, an associate pastor of EBC, two local pastors, and three ACBC certified members of our congregation. The rubric evaluated the course material for biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, and the applicability of the curriculum. This goal was considered successfully met since 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the level of sufficient, and the elders approved the curriculum to be used at EBC.

The third goal was to equip the small group leaders of EBC with the skills and knowledge of biblical counseling by utilizing the developed curriculum. The projected number of minimum participants for the class was ten, but forty individuals enrolled in the class. By the end, as a result of conflicting schedules and other matters, a total of twenty-five persons attended a sufficient number of classes during the twelve-week course. This goal was measured at the conclusion of the course when the BCI was re-administered to the twenty-five students.⁶

This goal was regarded as successfully met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre and post course results of the BCI. The results of the t-test indicates that the training of the small group leaders made a statistically significant difference, resulting in their increased

(Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2016).

⁵Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002).

⁶Of the forty who originally signed up, some students dropped out of the class completely, others did not attend a sufficient number of classes, and others declined to take the post-course evaluation. However, the twenty-five surveys provide enough material to adequately evaluate the course.

knowledge and confidence to counsel biblically ($t_{(24)} = 5.73, p < 0.05$).⁷ The possible results from the BCI survey ranged from a minimum score of 30 and a maximum score of 180. The average pre-course score was 140.8, while the average post-course score was 150.2, indicating an average increase of over nine points per student. The highest score on the pre-course survey was 168, while the highest score at the completion of the course was 174. The lowest scores on the pre and post course surveys were 113 and 118, respectively. The greatest increase of an individual score was 29 points, while the greatest decrease in an individual score was a nine-point drop. Table 2 depicts these results.

Table 2. BCI results comparison

Category	Pre-Course BCI	Post-Course BCI	Difference
Average Score	140.8	150.2	9.4
Highest Score	168	174	6
Lowest Score	113	118	5

The fourth goal was to develop a plan to utilize the developed curriculum to train future small group leaders as the ministry expands. This goal was measured by a panel of the senior pastor and associate pastor of EBC, and three current elders who used a rubric to evaluate the plan's content, scope, and action steps.⁸ This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficiency level and the plan has been adopted by the elders of EBC.

Strengths of the Project

One main strength of this project was the content. Personally, I enjoyed the study and preparation for each class because it gave me the opportunity to understand to a

⁷See appendix 7.

⁸See appendix 5.

deeper level the material I was taught during my time at Southern Seminary. Also, the *How People Change* material was clear and helpful, providing an understandable process for biblically evaluating sinful actions and heart attitudes. Throughout the course and in the post-course evaluations, I received many positive comments about how helpful this material was in the personal lives of the students and how some of them began to use it to help others.

Another strength was the teaching methodology which utilized lecture, whole group discussion, smaller group discussion, and role-play situations. One element in particular was the fact that the whole group was divided up into table groups of about six to eight people to simulate a small group, and these individuals remained together throughout the class. When it came time for discussions or case study evaluations or role-play situations, the table groups replicated a small group environment so that they could see how the material can be fleshed out in that context.

A third strength was the unity created and strengthened among the small group leaders. Interestingly enough, this class was the first time in about a decade that all the leaders were brought together. Eastridge Baptist assigns an elder over this ministry, and the current individual does a fantastic job at communicating with the leaders, coordinating curriculum, location, times, and any other needs they might have. Yet no attempt has been made in recent years to have them all together at the same time. Prior to this class, there was little knowledge as to the identity of the other leaders, and this class allowed for new relationships to be started and others to be strengthened. The elder over small groups has plans to create more opportunities for the small group leaders to get together as a whole on a more regular basis. This unity was also strengthened because of the material taught in the class, giving all the leaders a basic framework so that each group possesses knowledge on the process of biblical change.

Finally, the personal growth in the students, in my opinion, was the greatest strength of the project. Throughout our time together, the students were reluctant to share

their progress on the PGP with the rest of the class. There were a few bold enough to share how God was convicting them through this process and how they could see change taking place in their lives. However, through personal conversations and from the comments on the post-course survey, many students appreciated being asked to do the hard work of personal, biblical, self-evaluation and going through the steps to bring about real, biblical change in their lives.

Weakness of the Project

The first area of weakness was that there was too much material covered in the time allotment for the class. This was my personal experience throughout the course as well as a comment that I received from many of the students at the completion of our time together. They enjoyed the information we covered and the increased understanding of biblical counseling, and I definitely enjoyed the preparation, the teaching, and the interaction with the students. However, I constantly felt that there was so much that could be said and tried to include as much material as possible, which led to an overload of information, and a few of the students voiced that it was too much for an introductory class.

The amount of information in the class led to the second weakness, that there were not enough opportunities to practice the counseling principles. In the post-course evaluation, this was the criticism voiced by the most students. Even though part of the class schedule was to look at case studies and to engage in role-play scenarios, I did not allot enough time for this portion, or the lecture discussions ran longer than expected. It was important to cover the material as thoroughly as possible, and there were some good questions asked by the students along the way, but that did not leave as much time to engage in practical implementation of the principles. In particular, the role-play scenarios seemed rushed and impersonal, with many students feeling like they were just reading a script with no real connection to what they were learning.

The third area of weakness was the time constraints of the class, which also contributed to the first two weaknesses. In the initial discussion on the time and location for the class, it seemed best to teach the class on Sunday mornings, during second service in EBC's youth center. The pros of this situation were that this space was large enough to hold all those who signed up for the class, the leaders were already at church, meaning that they would not have to take another night away from their families, which enabled more people to enroll in the class. However, ninety minutes was not enough time to fit in all the lecture, discussion, and practice originally desired.

Fourth, there was insufficient preparation for the teaching itself. I always felt that there was more that I could do to prepare for each class, but I needed to make sure that the other areas of my ministry responsibilities were taken care of. During the months that I taught this class, many aspects of my role as associate pastor prohibited me from devoting as much time and attention to preparation as I would have liked. As a result, some topics were covered in a summary fashion.

A fifth weakness was the lack of a strategic, specific plan for implementation in the small group ministry. This criticism was voiced by many in the post-course survey. The class was entitled "Counseling Biblically in Small Groups," and the purpose was to teach the leaders a framework for how to be more biblical in the counsel that they give to those in their groups. While the students enjoyed the class and growing in their understanding of these principles, there was little instruction given as to how this information would be specifically used in the small group setting. My intention was to teach the framework and allow the leaders to apply it in the different scenarios unique to their groups. However, their comments indicated that they would have appreciated more specific guidance on what was expected from this newly acquired training.

What I Would Do Differently

Since one of the main weaknesses had to do with the amount of material

presented within the time constraints, there are a couple of options on how to change this situation. The first option is to decrease the amount of information presented in the class. This option would allow for more focused attention on the *How People Change* material and the framework presented in that model. However, it leaves out some significant information from the other sections of the class. A second option is to extend the number of weeks for the class. This extension would provide greater opportunity for the students to grasp the information. One drawback is that it asks for a longer commitment from the leaders whose schedules are already full. One student made the helpful suggestion of conducting the class over two, eight-week sessions, with a break in between. Option two is my preferred choice.

In connection with the increased time, another aspect I would include in the future is a greater opportunity for questions and discussion. Each week, I had to cut short the time for questions, knowing that more students wanted further clarification on the topics we covered. This addition would be possible as long as the first issue of more time was sufficiently addressed.

A third aspect I would do differently is to add in the opportunity to observe counseling. This was a comment made by a number of students on their post-course evaluations, mentioning that seeing counseling in action would have helped them in their case study discussions and role-play scenarios. I know that Faith Ministries in Lafayette, IN, The Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship in Escondido, CA, and other biblical counseling ministries have numerous observation videos that provide helpful models for counseling biblically in numerous situations. I agree that observation would further the students' grasp of the concepts taught in the course.

Fourth, I would create more opportunity for case study evaluations and role-play. This too is connected with the increase of time. With more time we could devote more attention to the preparation, practice, and evaluation of those engaged in the roles. One possible solution is to have a separate class time for case study evaluation and role-

play situations distinct from the teaching and discussion class time. For example, twelve weeks of instruction followed by four to six weeks of case study and role-play.

Theological Reflections

In this project, there were numerous truths presented and discussed, and many theological convictions strengthened. Engaging in this process further solidified the necessity of connecting truth to everyday living. It is not enough for believers to simply know the right things. That knowledge must be put into action as an expression of faith in the One who gave that truth. Although I am thankful for the elements of truth contained in this project, there were four aspects that resonated both with me personally and with the class as a whole that helped all of us grow in our ability to counsel biblically.

One of the key theological elements of this project was the importance of the future aspect of faith, which came as a result of the *How People Change* material. Key passages such as Philippians 1:6, 11, 1 Peter 1:3-5, and Revelation 7:9-17 emphasize that God began the work of change, continues that process, and will bring it to completion when the believer stands before the throne, clothed in white robes, praising God for the salvation he accomplished. God is intent on changing his people into the image of his Son, and we get to cooperate with him in that process. The completion of salvation, this future hope, provides the motivation for godly living in the present. This theological truth was greatly helpful to many of the students as they engaged in their PGP.

A second key theological aspect of this project was the biblical understanding of the heart. The fact that the heart is central to our personhood was not new information, nor the fact that the believer needs godly motivations to live a godly life. However, hearing this information in a new and fresh way was very helpful to a number of students, particularly the interconnectedness of the thinking, feeling, and acting functions of the heart. In addition, many students experienced a breakthrough as they began to see how situations do not cause sin but reveal a sinful heart and the areas in which God wants a

person to change.

Third, I was pleased by the increased understanding of both discipleship and that every believer is responsible for and equipped to counsel biblically, even though not every believer will be a biblical counselor in a formal sense. Jesus commands his followers to make disciples (Matt 28:19), the book of Acts equates Christians with disciples (Acts 11:26), and Moses, Jesus, and Paul provide models and the expectation that God's people are to be engaged in the process of helping one another become like the Savior. This understanding helped to remove the stigma that biblical counseling is only for the "Super Christian," and that each believer must be biblical in they counsel the give, regardless of the situation.

Finally, I appreciated the opportunity for more clarity on the sufficiency of Scripture. If the students were asked if they believed in the sufficiency of Scripture, I do not believe that any one of them would say no. Our church endeavors to teach the Bible at all levels of ministry, and our senior pastor is unashamed in his commitment to the truth. However, prior to this course, the exact nature of sufficiency might not have been understood so concretely. Sufficiency does not mean that the Bible gives us everything, but that the Bible gives us all we need to know God, to understand his world, and to know how he wants us to live in his world. Sufficiency rightly understood enables the believer to truly submit themselves to the Scripture in the process of change.

Personal Reflection

It has been said that you learn best by teaching, and I am thankful that the Lord allowed me to engage in the preparation and implementation of this project. I am blessed to serve at a church that supported me in teaching this class, and I greatly appreciate all those who persevered with me through this process. There was much that I learned about myself and about biblical counseling, and this course solidified my conviction about the importance of ministering God's truth to God's people.

One of the most significant aspects of personal growth throughout this project was the increased conviction over the importance of future faith. This truth was not new information, having read about the hope of heaven many years ago and possessing a firm grasp of the doctrine of past, present, and future faith. However, by interacting with the *How People Change* material and preparing to teach the class, I came to a new understanding of how this hope makes an impact on today. Knowing that God is currently working in me (Phil 1:6) and sees his completed work (Rom 8:30) provides greater strength and motivation for godly living. A practical application in my own life is how these verses have become a constant theme in my prayers as I beseech the Lord to keep this hope ever before me throughout my day. I have also included this truth on a regular basis to provide hope to those I counsel.

This project has also helped me to see the strategic nature of pressing biblical counseling down to the small group level. I used to see biblical counseling as a separate ministry, much like children's and youth ministries, or adult Sunday school, and that those who struggle would come for counseling outside of whatever ministry they were involved in. However, through this process, I became aware of the continuity between biblical counseling and discipleship and how all followers of Christ need to grow in their ability to counsel one another from the Bible. This project focused on the ministry of small groups. At the beginning of my studies at Southern Seminary, I was exposed to the ministry model of the union between small groups and biblical counseling and saw this model as a strategic way to spread biblical counseling within the congregation. The numbers of those attending my class represent between 100-125 members and attendees of EBC, creating tremendous potential for growth in knowledge and skill in counseling others from the Bible. The hope is that those who attended the class would use and pass on what they learned to their group members.

Another personal reflection comes by way of something needed for our church as a whole, and that is the need for specific, intentional focus on sin issues and other

struggles among the people at EBC. Our church is a biblical church, and many who attend appreciate the good preaching and our devotion to truth. With that said, it is difficult on a Sunday morning to address specific struggles in the lives of people. Many of those who attended the class mentioned that they appreciated their personal attention to struggles in their lives and the changes they saw over the course of the twelve weeks. A few even made comments about never really going through a process like this before. This revealed an area which needs improvement within our congregation, and I pray that our leaders will encourage their groups to engage in this process.

In a final aspect of personal growth, I have begun to see aspects of biblical counseling in a multitude of areas. What I mean by that is that I am now more cognizant of how truth applies to daily life. More and more I am seeing biblical counseling themes and aspects of discipleship in sermons I hear, books I read, and conversations I engage in. One example came over this last year during the elder's meeting of our church. Our elder board read through and discussed *Devoted to God*, by Sinclair Ferguson,⁹ and even though he was not writing specifically from a biblical counseling perspective, he masterfully connected truth to life as he taught on various aspects of sanctification. As I read, I found myself making mental notes of how I could use this information in my own life as well as in the lives of those I counsel. This increased awareness came not just from engaging with this project, but as a result of my time studying at Southern.

Conclusion

I am extremely grateful that the Lord has led me to and through this program in biblical counseling at Southern Seminary. Engaging in this project specifically has been a rewarding time that has both challenged and encouraged me. The challenges came in the form of the time needed to prepare the lessons in addition to my ministry responsibilities,

⁹Sinclair Ferguson, *Devoted to God: Blueprints for Sanctification* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2017).

mentally wrestling to understand the various topics, and my own minimal experience in dealing with some of the counseling topics and small group ministry. However, these light and momentary afflictions were superseded by the encouragements. One encouragement is how my passion for biblical counseling has grown, and my conviction of its necessity has been solidified. A second encouragement comes from the students who were eager to learn and now have the basic skills to help others biblically. And finally, I am encouraged for the potential of how the Lord might use this material to spread effective discipleship throughout the congregation of EBC, all for his glory.

APPENDIX 1

BIBLICAL COUNSELING INVENTORY

The following instrument is the Biblical Counseling Inventory (BCI). Some general questions will be followed by a forty-six question survey with short answer questions and a six point Likert scale. The instrument's purpose is to assess each members' present level of understanding in the principles and practices of biblical counseling.

BASICS OF COUNSELING INVENTORY

Agreement to Participate

Eastridge Baptist Church seeks to glorify God by fulfilling the Great Commandment (Matt 22:36-40) and the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20). Two main ways of accomplishing this goal is through dedicated biblical counseling and the small group ministry. A cohesive bond between these two ministries will create a stronger discipleship environment within the small group community as well as one-on-one interaction. In light of this vision, our church is taking a serious look at our capacity to provide quality, distinctively Christian care for our congregation. This survey for Eastridge Baptist small group leaders will help assess the current competency to counsel biblically.

This research is being conducted by Ryan Trzeciak for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are providing informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Because ministry is relational, it is preferred that you include your name below, rather than completing the survey anonymously. If you prefer to be anonymous, however, please create a personal four-digit code that you will write down for your personal records in order to recall the number at a later time because this same survey will be administered at the end of the study as a means of evaluation.

Date: _____

Name (or 4-digit code): _____

Gender _____ **Age** _____

General Questions:

1. Do you consider yourself a Christian? _____ How long? _____
2. How long have you attended Eastridge Baptist Church? _____
3. Other than the small group ministry, are you involved in any other ministry? _____
If yes, please list: _____
4. How many hours a week do you read your Bible for personal study/devotions?

5. Is memorizing Scripture a current part of your Bible study plan? _____

6. How would you describe your prayer life? _____

7. How would you define counseling?

8. How would you define biblical counseling?

9. Have you ever received any type of formalized counseling training? If so, please explain: _____

10. Have you ever received any formal counseling? If so, please explain: _____

11. How often do people seek you out for counseling?
- a. Daily
 - b. 2-3 times a week
 - c. 4-5 times a month
 - d. Seldom

Directions: Circle the answer that best describes your opinion. The answers to the following questions use this scale:

- SD = Strongly Disagree
- D = Disagree
- DS = Disagree Somewhat
- AS = Agree Somewhat
- A = Agree
- SA = Strongly Agree

1. I consider myself to be well versed in the Bible. SD D DS AS A SA
2. I feel confident that I could share the gospel in such a way to lead a person to Christ. SD D DS AS A SA

3. Addressing a person's salvation is a priority in counseling before addressing their behavioral needs.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
4. Man is basically good.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
5. Sin is the ultimate source for man's problems.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
6. The pastors are the only ones responsible for counseling in the church.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
7. It is important for the church to have a counseling ministry.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
8. It is important for the church to have a small group ministry.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
9. Lay people can be equipped for counseling.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
10. Every Christian has sufficient spiritual resources to counsel others.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
11. I am an effective biblical counselor.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
12. The goals of counseling are set by the counselor.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
13. The goals of counseling are set by the counselee.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
14. The Holy Spirit is vital in biblical counseling.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
15. Prayer is one of the primary means which God uses to bring about change in the life of a believer.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
16. The Bible is sufficient and authoritative.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
17. The Bible addresses non-physical problems.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
18. Psychology and the Bible can be used in tandem.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
19. Secular psychological therapy can bring about lasting change.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
20. Many problems that people struggle with require a licensed professional counselor.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
21. Homework is valuable for biblical counseling.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

- | | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 22. Understanding a person's health history is necessary for biblical counseling. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 23. Understanding a person's life history is necessary for biblical counseling. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 24. How a person was raised determines how they respond to difficult situations. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 25. It is important to build a person's self-esteem. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 26. I know how to ask the kinds of questions that reveal a person's heart attitude. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 27. I am comfortable counseling someone who is depressed. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 28. I am comfortable counseling someone who struggles with anxiety. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 29. I am comfortable counseling someone who is experiencing marital problems. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 30. I am comfortable counseling someone who is struggling with pornography. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 31. I am comfortable counseling a parent who is having trouble with their teen. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 32. I am comfortable counseling a teen who is having trouble with their parent(s). | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 33. I am comfortable counseling someone who is prone to anger. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 34. I know how to apply the biblical instruction on repentance and forgiveness. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 35. The main goal in counseling is to help a person cope with their difficulty. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

APPENDIX 2

SMALL GROUP AND BIBLICAL COUNSELING CLASS INVITATION LETTER

The following letter was sent to the small group leaders of inviting them to participate in the class. A personal conversation, either face to face or over the phone took place prior to this letter being sent. This letter provides details about the class and what is expected of the students who participate.

SMALL GROUPS AND BIBLICAL COUNSELING CLASS INVITATION LETTER

Hello Small Group Leaders,

First, I want to say thank you for the invaluable ministry you provide to our church family. You have a vital role in the discipleship of the body here at Eastridge, so please know that your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Second, I want to say thank you for taking the time to talk with me and for receiving the invitation to join the class I will be teaching. Just your consideration is a huge blessing to me, and I pray that you will join us in January.

As you know, this class is for the purpose of being better equipped to counsel biblically within the small group setting. My prayer is that through this process, all of us will grow in the ability to connect God's Word to the everyday lives of those to whom we minister. You will also be helping me accomplish a project for my degree in biblical counseling, and for that I am especially grateful.

Here are the details for the class:

- We will begin on Sunday, January 7, 2018
- We will meet for twelve weeks, going through Sunday, March 25, 2018
- The class will take place during second service in the youth room
- Our main text will be the study guide for *How People Change*, by Timothy Lane and Paul David Tripp, among other materials
- The cost for the book is \$17, payable at the first class
- We will be covering topics like a biblical understanding of the heart, a theology for biblical change, anger, fear/anxiety, and much more
- There will be some homework assignments for you to complete during the week that will aid in the application of the material
- The class will consist of teaching, discussion, and cooperative activities that will allow us to practice what we learn
- There will also be a survey that you will take at the beginning and at the end of the course to gauge our progress

Since the class is taking place during second service, the expectation is that you will attend first service for church. I know this will mean a longer morning on Sundays for some of you, but this is only for a limited time. If you are unable to make this commitment, please attend church over coming to the class. I do not want this course to prohibit you from joining with your brothers and sisters in corporate worship.

Please respond to this email by December 15 to let me know whether or not you will be attending. If you have any questions or need clarification, please do not hesitate to let me know. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you,
Pastor Ryan

APPENDIX 3
BIBLICAL COUNSELING CURRICULUM
EVALUATION

The following evaluation will be sent to an expert panel consisting of the senior pastor of EBC, two local pastors, and the three ACBC certified members of the congregation of EBC. This panel will evaluate the course material to ensure it is biblically faithful, sufficiently thorough, and practically applicable.

Name of evaluator: _____

Date: _____

Biblical Counseling Curriculum Evaluation					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The content of the curriculum is clearly relevant to the issues of biblical counseling.					
The content of the curriculum is theologically sound.					
The content of the curriculum sufficiently covers the intended biblical categories.					
The subject of each lesson clearly supports the goals of the curriculum.					
The curriculum sufficiently addresses counseling methodology.					
The curriculum makes use of various learning approaches such as lecture, discussion, and homework.					
The curriculum includes opportunities to practice counseling principles.					
At the end of the course, participants will be able to counsel biblically.					

Please include any additional comments regarding the curriculum below:

APPENDIX 4

COUNSELOR EVALUATION FORM

Course participants will use the information they have learned to simulate counseling sessions with one another in role play scenarios. The instructor will then evaluate how well they apply the course material.

Name of evaluator: _____

Date: _____

Name of counselor: _____

Brief description of counseling situation:

Counselor Evaluation Form					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The counselor listens intently.					
The counselor shows compassion.					
The counselor offers gospel hope.					
The counselor prays with the counselee.					
The counselor seeks to discover the heart issue.					
The counselor provides the counselee with a greater understanding of the gospel.					
The counselor uses appropriate Scriptures.					
The counselor provides practical application.					

Please include any additional comments below:

APPENDIX 5

EVALUATION OF MINISTRY APPLICATION PLAN

The following evaluation will be sent to two pastors of EBC and three of the elders. This team will evaluate the plan to implement the developed curriculum for the future training and support of small group leaders as the ministry expands.

Name of evaluator: _____

Date: _____

Ministry Application Plan Evaluation					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The course plan is easy to understand.					
The course plan is simple to implement.					
The course curriculum is theologically sound.					
The course plan sufficiently addresses a discipleship methodology.					
The course plan accounts for the expansion of the ministry					
The plan involves continuity between the biblical counseling and small group ministries.					
The plan facilitates the practice of biblical counseling within the small group ministry.					

Please include any additional comments regarding the ministry application plan below:

APPENDIX 6

BIBLICAL COUNSELING COURSE EVALUATION

The following post-course evaluation will be completed by all participants who complete the course. They will evaluate whether the course is biblically faithful, sufficiently thorough, and practically applicable.

Name of evaluator: _____

Date: _____

How many sessions did you attend (maximum = 12): _____

Biblical Counseling Course Evaluation					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The content of the course is biblically and theologically sound.					
The course is presented at a level appropriate for most participants.					
The course sufficiently addresses counseling methodology.					
The course makes use of various learning approaches such as lecture, discussion, role play and homework.					
The course includes opportunities to practice counseling principles.					
The course addresses practical issues that participants face in everyday situations.					
At the end of the course, participants have the confidence to counsel others biblically.					
Participants have a strategic plan to implement counseling principles in their small groups.					

How has this training proved helpful to you?

What area of your personal life has been most challenged? What changes have you seen as a result?

How has your view of biblical counseling changed from the start of the course?

APPENDIX 7

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF T-TEST RESULTS

The following charts mark the results of the t-test from the information from the pre and post course BCI.

Table A1. Results of pre and post course BCI scores

Participant	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
1	124	141
2	149	160
3	132	145
4	166	174
5	168	172
6	120	139
7	138	151
8	122	151
9	159	150
10	124	131
11	113	118
12	140	151
13	145	157
14	149	162
15	159	172
16	153	164
17	156	149
18	120	135
19	129	137
20	153	157
21	165	168
22	141	150
23	127	126
24	142	148
25	126	146

Table A2. T-test of paired two sample for means

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	140.8	150.16
Variance	270.6666667	208.8066667
Observations	25	25
Pearson Correlation	0.868235741	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	24	
t Stat	5.732235932	
P(T<=t) one-tail	3.30252E-06	
t Critical one-tail	1.71088208	
P(T<=t) two-tail	6.60505E-06	
t Critical two-tail	2.063898562	

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ABSTRACT

TRAINING SMALL GROUP LEADERS AT EASTRIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH IN KENT, WASHINGTON TO COUNSEL BIBLICALLY

Ryan Matthew Trzeciak, D.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Robert K. Cheong

This project sought to equip the small group leaders of Eastridge Baptist Church in Kent, Washington to counsel biblically. Chapter 1 presents a brief history of Eastridge and its ministry context, as well as the goals for this project. Chapter 2 demonstrates the theological basis for discipleship through the exegesis of Matthew 28:16-20, Exodus 18, 2 Timothy 2:1-2, and Ephesians 4:11-12. It also discusses the necessity of a commitment to the sufficiency of Scripture in order to counsel biblically by looking at the passages of Psalm 19:7-11 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Chapter 3 discusses the culture of discipleship by looking at the continuum of discipleship which spans from the large-scale, comprehensive discipleship of the Sunday morning sermon to the contextual, intensified discipleship of biblical counseling. Also included is an investigation of various ministry models that connect biblical counseling with small group ministries. Chapter 4 records the resources, content, and teaching methodology used in the course. Chapter 5 evaluates the project based upon the completion of the specified goals, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the course.

Ultimately, this project seeks to equip Christians with a framework for counseling others toward biblical change, giving them increased confidence and competency in ministering God's Word to God's people for God's glory.

VITA

Ryan Matthew Trzeciak

EDUCATION

B.A., Speech Communication, California State University, 2004
M.Div., The Master's Seminary, 2008
Th.M., The Master's Seminary, 2009

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Associate Pastor, Castro Valley First Baptist Church, Castro Valley,
California, 2001-2004
Associate Pastor, Eastridge Baptist Church, Kent, Washington, 2009