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ESTABLISHING SMALL GROUP DISCIPLESHIP  
AT HILLABEE BAPTIST CHURCH IN  
ALEXANDER CITY, ALABAMA

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

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

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by  
Jimmy Joshua Sammons  
December 2019

**APPROVAL SHEET**

ESTABLISHING SMALL GROUP DISCIPLESHIP  
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To God, who gave me the opportunity and ability to glorify Him with this work.

To my wife and family, who endured many hours of Daddy's  
being away from home and studying.

To Hillabee Baptist Church, who gave me their blessing to pursue this project. It is my  
prayer that it is a useful tool that yields fruit for years to come.

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## PREFACE

Many people have been gracious in helping me complete this project. First, I would like to thank God, who has saved me by His grace and allowed me to continue my education at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. My time studying at Southern has been an awesome privilege, and it has been an honor to sit under godly professors who challenged me intellectually and academically. I would especially like to thank Dr. John David Trentham for supervising this project. Dr. Trentham provided critique, robust content, and much needed encouragement during the whole process. I would also like to thank Dr. Joseph Harrod for his input and instruction.

I am equally thankful that God has given me the opportunity to serve Him as the pastor of Hillabee Baptist Church in Alexander City, Alabama, for the last five and a half years. The congregation at HBC graciously granted their permission to pursue this project and continued their support with prayers and encouragement. This project has been a challenge, and I could not have persevered without the prayers of the congregation at HBC. It is my goal that this project will benefit Hillabee Baptist Church and the kingdom of God for years to come.

I would like to also say a special thanks to two ladies who were instrumental in the completion of this project. Mrs. Misty Bishop, read over many drafts and helped with grammar and punctuation; and Mrs. Rhonda Lankford, made copies, created surveys, helped with computer problems, and provided a listening ear throughout the whole process.

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Josh Sammons

Alexander City, Alabama

December 2019

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Christians are called, commissioned, and commanded by Jesus to make disciples (Matt 28:18-20). Jesus mandated disciple making, but He also modeled it. Jesus exhorted his disciples to follow Him and He would make them fishers of Men (Matt 4:19). The disciple making model displayed by Jesus was a combination of teaching and engaging in everyday life with his followers. This simple strategy of making disciples is God's way of expanding the kingdom of God. Unfortunately, the modern church has misplaced and misapplied this call to make disciples. William Mofield wisely observes, "Often the commission of 'making disciples' has been replaced with mass evangelism and discipleship classes."<sup>1</sup> A return to the discipleship model employed by Jesus would result in kingdom growth. A ministry project that establishes small group discipleship would benefit the family of faith at Hillabee Baptist Church and enlarge the kingdom of God.

#### **Context**

This ministry project took place in the context of Hillabee Baptist Church (HBC) in Alexander City, Alabama, which is located in east central Alabama. HBC was organized in 1952, with 84 charter members. It is a traditional Southern Baptist church in its worship style, meaning that the service consists of hymns led by a Minister of Music and played on a piano.

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<sup>1</sup> William Edward Ashpern Mofield, "Developing a Disciple Making Program at White House First Baptist Church in White House, Tennessee" (DMin project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018), 1.

The demographic data confirms that the ministry area of HBC is predominantly retirees and striving families. The age make-up of the church is predominately senior adults, with individuals ranging in age from 55 and up as roughly 43 percent of the church, with the other prevalent group being the baby boomers at 15 percent. Youth and young adults (ages 12 to 34) combined comprise only 19 percent of the church with three age groups combined to form that percentage.<sup>2</sup>

Around 35 percent of HBC's membership (around 190 of approximately 537 members) attends Sunday services. While the congregation typically meets its financial goals for missions offerings, the church lacks a regular, intentional outreach within the community, focusing instead on a single annual outreach event each fall. Further, while a good number of young families have joined HBC in the past two years, the church's procedures for membership are unclear and unfocused. In sum, HBC is an aging congregation that has lost sight of its mission to make disciples.

The education structure of HBC is program based. Any biblical instruction or discipleship is done through traditional, program-based educational avenues. The programs entail Sunday school classes, missions education, one discipleship training class, and a midweek prayer meeting and Bible study, in addition to a traditional Sunday morning worship service. No discipleship process demanded accountability or replication in the ministry context of HBC. The lack of disciple-making emphasis exhibited by the congregation of HBC can be attributed to the lack of education on the subject of disciple-making in the past, which culminated in a perceived lack of spiritual growth and maturity among some members. The traditional forms of "doing church" have not fostered an environment that has been conducive to spiritual growth.

The overall morale of HBC is good, and people are encouraged by the addition

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<sup>2</sup> Church demographic information was gathered from Mickey Crawford from the Alabama State Board of Missions on November 14, 2014.

of several new members to the church. HBC is a friendly church with many endearing qualities, but the need for a strategic discipleship process was paramount for the church to be a Great Commission church that is growing for God's glory.

Establishing a discipleship process was necessary to foster a new generation of leaders that are intentional about making disciples and serious about carrying out the Great Commission. A discipleship process that champions small groups would create a new culture of motivated believers that foster a disciple-making mindset. HBC must reach out and make disciples to secure its future. This project was needful to cultivate a disciple-making culture that allows HBC to be effective for the kingdom and impact the community for Christ.

### **Rationale**

The need for a discipleship process at HBC was three-fold. First, a discipleship process was needed to foster a culture of disciple-making. HBC has been blessed with a number of young, energetic believers who have a desire to make an impact for the kingdom. Positively, these new additions to the HBC family were reached through mutual relationships with existing church members. The new members exhibit a zeal to learn more about Christ and share his love with others, but their lack of basic biblical knowledge and confidence in sharing their faith limits their effectiveness. A discipleship process is needful for newer members of HBC to establish a foundation for the future.

A discipleship process would not only benefit the newest additions to the HBC faith family but would also enhance the existing members. Over the past twenty years, many churches have placed an emphasis on engaging and inviting lost people but have left off the discipleship of the church member. HBC is no exception to this scenario. A discipleship process that emphasizes the need for intentional disciple-making would help reshape that mindset.

A discipleship process that emphasizes small groups would also expose the entire congregation to a biblical disciple-making model that focuses on the individual

through disciple-making relationships in lieu of older institutional models that utilize discipleship training classes. A new culture of discipleship was introduced through a sermon series from the Pastoral Epistles outlining the eight attributes of a disciple that makes disciples.

The second need for a discipleship process at HBC was to forge new leaders. For a new culture of discipleship to have lasting impact, it must have strong leadership. New leaders were developed by the pastor prayerfully selecting a group of three men and introducing them to an intentional small group relationship. The objective of this pastor-lead group was to develop future leaders who would then replicate the process.

The third reason a discipleship process was necessary was to ensure future growth. Disciple making and evangelism go hand in hand. Disciple making has an evangelistic element that ensures future growth when expressed intentionally. A discipleship process encourages those involved to be intentional about reaching the lost. A discipleship process that emphasizes small groups also employs an exponential element that allows each person to have a greater impact in reaching the lost than that of one-on-one evangelism. Disciple making grows the kingdom through multiplication.

A discipleship process is vital to the long-term growth and health of HBC. The statistics show<sup>3</sup> that without a discipleship process that is intentional about making disciples, the future of HBC looks bleak. This project was vital and took prayer, preparation, and persistence. Nevertheless, it was a project that had to be pursued.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to establish a small group discipleship process among the members of Hillabee Baptist Church in Alexander City, Alabama.

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<sup>3</sup> See “Context” section at the start of this chapter.

## Goals

Several necessary goals guided this ministry project. These goals reflect a progression of the steps taken to grow the members of HBC in their understanding of biblical disciple-making.

1. The first goal of this project was to assess the knowledge and practice of disciple making among adult members of HBC.
2. The second goal of this project was to increase the knowledge of the adult HBC members in biblical discipleship by preaching an eight-week sermon series from the Pastoral Epistles.
3. The third goal of this project was to engage a small group of pastor-selected men from HBC to make disciples through leading small groups.
4. The fourth goal of this project was to develop a four-year strategic plan outline<sup>4</sup> that sought to implement an ongoing effort to build and sustain a culture of small group discipleship at HBC.

## Research Methodology

The first step in assessing the disciple making knowledge of the members at HBC was performed by administering a discipleship assessment survey to the adult members of HBC.<sup>5</sup> The pre-sermon series discipleship survey was distributed to all of the adult Sunday school classes two weeks prior to commencement of an eight-week sermon series on disciple-making from the Pastoral Epistles (see goal 2). The survey was completed and turned in on the same day. Each survey was coded for identification for comparison to the post-survey completed after the sermon series. The survey was conducted to gain insight into the disciple-making knowledge of participants. The goal

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<sup>4</sup> The Strategic Plan Outline was modeled after a format developed by the University of Kansas and utilizes the acronym “VMOSA,” which represents (1) vision, (2) mission, (3) objectives, (4) strategy, and 5) action plan. The action plan phase of the plan outlines the steps required to reproduce small group discipleship and seeks to answer five questions: (1) what action or change will occur, (2) who will carry it out, (3) when will it take place, and for how long, (4) what resources are needed, and (5) who should know what. University of Kansas, “Developing an Action Plan,” accessed April 25, 2019, <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/strategic-planning/develop-action-plans/main>.

<sup>5</sup> The survey used in this project was adapted from the research project of Mark Gainey, “Developing a Disciple-Making Strategy for Deerfoot Baptist Church, Trussville, Alabama” (DMin project, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018), 115-25.

was considered successfully met when the survey results were analyzed, yielding a clearer picture of the disciple-making knowledge among the HBC adult members.

The second goal was to increase the discipleship and disciple making knowledge of the adult members at HBC by presenting an eight-week sermon series from the Pastoral Epistles. The Pastoral Epistles provide a clear picture of the disciple-making mandate. The eight-week sermon series from the pastoral epistle coincided with the Transformational Discipleship Assessment (TDA) curriculum, which focused on eight areas of concentration: biblical engagement, obeying God and denying self, serving God and others, sharing Christ, exercising faith, seeking God, building relationships, and transparency. Although the delivery of the sermon series was not a goal of this project, critique was measured by an evaluative rubric at the conclusion of the sermon series. At the conclusion of the eight-week sermon series, a post-sermon series discipleship assessment survey was conducted to gauge the change in knowledge in disciple-making for the members of HBC.

The post-sermon series discipleship survey was assessed in the same manner as the pre-sermon series discipleship survey but with the addition of a question to determine the attendance of the member completing the survey. The post-sermon series discipleship survey was administered to provide valuable data as to the effectiveness of the sermon series based on the number to sermons attended. For the post-sermon series discipleship survey data to be included in the overall assessment, a member would need to be present for six of the eight weeks of the sermon series. The second goal was considered successfully met when the sermon series was completed, and the post-sermon series discipleship survey was conducted to determine a statistical difference between the pre-sermon series discipleship survey and the post-sermon series discipleship surveys. An independent t-test was utilized to analyze statistical data.<sup>6</sup>

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



The third goal of this project was to train a small group of pastor-selected men from HBC to be a disciple who helps others become disciples. A group of three men, who were prayerfully selected by the pastor, were engaged in a twelve-month discipleship relationship. The group met with the pastor weekly.<sup>7</sup> The small group discipleship relationship ran concurrently to the eight-week disciple-making sermon series. Although the entire discipleship relationship with the small group of men was twelve months in length, due to time constraints and evaluation purposes, only twelve weeks were measured as to the effectiveness of the small group relationship.

To assess the effectiveness of the small group discipleship relationship, the small group participated in the post-sermon series discipleship survey with the remainder of the HBC membership at the end of the eight-week sermon series. The small group of men identified their individual survey by labeling it with an asterisk on both the pre- and post-sermon series discipleship survey. Identification of the small group allowed data to be collected and analyzed as to the effectiveness of the sermon series for the small group in comparison to the remainder of the congregation. The data collected from analyzing those who only attended the sermon series versus the data collected from the small group participants demonstrated the effectiveness of the sermon series as compared to the small group relationship. Administering the post-sermon series discipleship survey to the small group at the end of the twelve weeks also showed the net gain in discipleship and disciple-making knowledge when a disciple is exposed to expository preaching in combination with being connected to a small group relationship.

The third goal was considered successfully met when the results of the t-test for the surveyed HBC small group demonstrated a significant statistical difference

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ministry project.

<sup>7</sup> The *Dlife* Bible study was used as the curriculum for the pastor-selected small group. See appendix 6 for sample weekly worksheet.

between the pre- and post-sermon series discipleship surveys. The t-test that was utilized for statistical data for this particular part of the project was a dependent t-test.

The fourth goal of this project was to develop a four-year strategic plan outline that seeks to implement an ongoing effort to build and sustain a culture of small group discipleship at HBC. This goal was measured by developing a strategic plan outline and presenting it to three disciple-making pastors for critique and endorsement, as well as a one professor who is considered an expert in the field of discipleship.<sup>8</sup> This goal was considered successfully met when approval to proceed with the implementation of the strategic plan outline was given by the deacon body at HBC.

### **Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations**

The following definitions of key terms are used on the project:

*Discipleship.* Discipleship is the process by which individuals are transformed into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 12: 1-2; Rom 8: 29; 2 Cor 3: 19). Michael Wilkins defines *Discipleship* as the “ongoing process of growth as a disciple”<sup>9</sup> In this project, *discipleship* is defined in the context of a personal walk with Christ, whereas *disciple making* is relational in that it aids others in their walk with Christ.

*Disciple making.* Wilkins states, “*Disciple-making* implies the responsibility of disciples helping one another to grow as disciples.”<sup>10</sup> In the New Testament, the word for

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<sup>8</sup> The three pastors chosen to provide feedback, critique, and endorsement were Marc Hodges of Thorsby First Baptist Church in Thorsby, AL; Mark Gainey, pastor of Fultondale First Baptist in Birmingham, AL, and founder of INCITE ministries; and Bill Wilks of Northpark Baptist Church in Birmingham, AL. Wilks is also the developer of the Dlife discipleship curriculum that was utilized in this project.

<sup>9</sup> Michael J Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 41.

<sup>10</sup> Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 41. In this text, Wilkins uses the term *discipling* instead of *disciple-making*.

*disciple* is a Greek word that can also be translated *pupil* or *apprentice*. *Disciple* simply means “learner or student.”<sup>11</sup>

*Strategic plan outline.* A *strategic plan outline* is defined as a “plan that consists of a number of action steps or changes to be brought about in your community or organization.”<sup>12</sup>

Limitations and delimitations applied to this project. First, the small group disciple-making portion of the project consisted of a twelve-month duration, but this project only describes and reports twelve weeks of the small group relationship. Second, the group survey was delimited to adult members of HBC. Third, the sermon series on disciple making was delimited to the Pastoral Epistles, which illustrates the attributes of discipleship and disciple-making. Lastly, the small group discipleship group was delimited to a triad of prayerfully selected men.

### **Conclusion**

The day of the Lord is near! Our Lord Jesus Christ said, “And this gospel of the Kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matt 24: 14). The members of HBC have a wonderful opportunity to take part in the coming kingdom of Christ by making disciples. Chapter 2 elaborates on the biblical imperative for making disciples.

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<sup>11</sup> Mike Miller, “Discipleship Strategies” (class lecture, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, November 2014).

<sup>12</sup> Community Tool Box, “Section 5. Developing an Action Plan,” accessed April 25, 2019, <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/strategic-planning/develop-action-plans/main>.



## CHAPTER 2

### THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR ESTABLISHING SMALL GROUP DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship and disciple making are clearly demonstrated throughout the New Testament. In *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship*, Michael J. Wilkins writes, “The consensus in the history of the church—ancient and modern—is that the concept of discipleship is apparent everywhere in the New Testament, from Matthew through Revelation.”<sup>1</sup> This chapter will demonstrate the biblical imperative given to all Christians: to make disciples. Various New Testament Scriptures will be examined to develop a robust understanding of the disciple-making imperative.

#### **Matthew 28:16-20: The Great Commission**

The first text addressed is commonly known as the Great Commission, found in Matthew 28:16-20, and is the source for the New Testament command to “go and make disciples.” Matthew 28:16-20 illustrates that followers of the Lord Jesus Christ have power, purpose, and a process for making disciples.

The words in this text are some of the last words that Jesus articulated to his eleven disciples. Last words are memorable and noteworthy. These last words by Jesus were spoken to his disciples and summarize what he had accomplished and what he intended his followers to carry out after his departure back to the Father.

The Lord Jesus Christ first speaks of the power available to His disciples as they set out to continue His mission of seeking and saving the lost. Believers can be

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<sup>1</sup> Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 293.

confident that they have all power and authority to do God’s work when they seek to continue in the mission that Christ set forth. Verse 18 demonstrates that followers of the Lord Jesus Christ have the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit to carry out the mission of making disciples.

In Matthew 28:18, Jesus gives a verbal affirmation concerning His deity by declaring that “all authority in heaven and on earth” had been given to Him. Jesus had previously affirmed His status of deity in Matthew 11:27 when he stated that all things had been handed over to Him by the Father. In these claims of deity, Christ echoes Daniel 7:14, which states, “To Him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his Kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”<sup>2</sup> Matthew 28:18 assures the disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ that they have power and authority to do what God has called them to do. D. A. Carson writes, “Because of that authority, Christ followers may go in confidence that their Lord is in sovereign control of ‘everything in heaven and on earth.’”<sup>3</sup>

The disciples needed reassuring that they had a power beyond themselves to do the Lord’s work because they were apprehensive, anxious, and confused about the events surrounding the resurrection of Jesus. Verse 17 says that the disciples were worshipping Christ, but still some doubted. The “doubters” could have been followers other than the original eleven.<sup>4</sup> Most commentators see this doubt as more of a hesitation on the part of the original eleven. *Distazo*, the Greek word for doubt, refers to more of a hesitation than to unbelief.<sup>5</sup> R. T. France writes that this hesitation “most likely indicates that they did

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<sup>2</sup> All Scripture quotations are from New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>3</sup> D. A. Carson, *Matthew 13-28*, in vol. 2 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 595.

<sup>4</sup> *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 1888.

<sup>5</sup> Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville:

not know how to respond to Jesus in this new situation, where he was familiar and yet now different.”<sup>6</sup>

Some of the disciples were hesitant and needed reassurance. Sensing this hesitation, Jesus sought to rest all their fears by declaring in verse 18 that all power and authority had been given to him. Jesus commissioned them to go in His power and seek to make disciples. It is as if Jesus was saying, “In light of my authority, go!”<sup>7</sup> Christ’s followers have power and authority by the connection they have with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not only do Christians have the power to do the Lord’s work, but they also have a purpose. The purpose is found in verse 19 where Jesus commands His disciples to go and make disciples. There is one imperative verb in Matthew 28:19—“make disciples”—and it is surrounded by three participles: going, baptizing and teaching.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the main command of Christ’s commission is “make disciples,” which is translated as the word “teach” in the King James Version. A disciple is defined as a “learner” and carries the implication that a disciple is someone being instructed or taught. To disciple a person to Christ is to bring him into the relation of pupil to teacher, taking his yoke of authoritative instruction, accepting what he says as true because he says it, and submitting to his requirements as right because he makes them.<sup>9</sup> John A. Broadus concurs by stating, “To disciple is to bring a person into the relation of pupil to teacher.”<sup>10</sup>

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Broadman, 1992), 430.

<sup>6</sup> R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007), 1112.

<sup>7</sup> David Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville: B & H, 2013), 374.

<sup>8</sup> Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, 375.

<sup>9</sup> Carson, *Matthew 13-28*, 595.

<sup>10</sup> John A. Broadus. *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society, 1886), 593.

The purpose of all Christ followers is to go and make disciples. To “make disciples of all nations” does not require all people to leave their homelands, but Jesus’ main focus remains on the task of all believers duplicating themselves wherever they may be.<sup>11</sup> The Lord Jesus Christ is commanding his disciples that as they are on their journey through life, to make disciples wherever they go. Carson reminds that this command is “binding on all Jesus’ disciples to make others what they themselves are—disciples of Jesus Christ.”<sup>12</sup>

The phrase “go make disciples” is central to the message of Matthew’s Gospel and tantamount to the mission of the church. Christ commissions the church to make disciples of “all nations.” The aim of Jesus’ disciples, therefore, is to make disciples of all men everywhere, without distinction.<sup>13</sup> “All nations” denotes the area of the disciples’ future activity. One can see this coming to fruition as the book of Acts chronicles the gospel being taken to the “utter most parts of the world” (Acts 1:8).

Christ is not saying that the disciples are actually to “make” disciples in the salvific sense—only God can give new life and “make” all things new. However, Christ is charging His disciples to be used as instruments of the gospel to engage the lost and shine the light of Christ in order to penetrate the darkness.

In *Transformational Discipleship*, Geiger, Kelley, and Nation speak to this purpose of engaging the lost as one is making his way on life’s journey to make disciples:

Your role is not to transform people. You cannot, and it is offensive to God if you believe you can. Your role is to place people in the pathway of God’s transforming power. Your leadership, preaching, teaching, investing and counseling are to be instruments God uses for His holy endeavors to transform people. Those sacred

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<sup>11</sup> Blomberg, *Matthew*, 431.

<sup>12</sup> Carson, *Matthew 13-28*, 596.

<sup>13</sup> Carson, *Matthew 13-28*, 596.



practices must be used to show people how attractive Christ is so that people are positioned for transformation.<sup>14</sup>

Jesus continues in Matthew 28:19 by giving His disciples the process to use as they are going through life making disciples. The process for making disciples is spelled out in two participles: baptizing and teaching. Baptism is a once-for-all, decisive initiation into the Christian community. Teaching proves a perennially incomplete, life-long task.<sup>15</sup>

The baptism of disciples speaks to the physical immersion of a person and is symbolic of their initiation, identification, and inclusion into the kingdom of God as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 19 says that disciples are baptized “in the name,” meaning to declare allegiance to or become associated with the power and authority of Jesus.<sup>16</sup> Baptism is a part of making disciples because baptism symbolizes identification with the person of Christ and inclusion in the body of Christ.<sup>17</sup> Baptism is also part of the process that involves connecting a believer to a body of Christ, which is the church. Those who become disciples are to be baptized into (*eis*) the name of the Trinity and as a sign both of entrance into Messiah’s covenant community and of pledged submission to his lordship.<sup>18</sup>

In the process of disciple making, baptism speaks to identification and inclusion into the body of Christ, and teaching speaks to the instruction in the ways of Christ. Baptism is a mere ceremonial and initial act of obedience to Christ, which should be followed by a lifelong obedience to all his commandments.<sup>19</sup> Teaching obedience to all of

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<sup>14</sup> Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation, *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow* (Nashville: B & H, 2012), 58.

<sup>15</sup> Blomberg, *Matthew*, 431.

<sup>16</sup> Blomberg, *Matthew*, 432.

<sup>17</sup> Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, 376.

<sup>18</sup> Carson, *Matthew 13-28*, 597.

<sup>19</sup> Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 596.

Jesus' commands forms the heart of disciple making.<sup>20</sup> Carson admonishes, "Failure to disciple, baptize, and teach the peoples of the world is already itself one of the failures of our own discipleship."<sup>21</sup> John Broadus writes, "The person who is disciplined and baptized is only started in a course of Christian living. Notice that it is not simply teaching them the commandments of Christ but teaching them to observe his commandments. They who disciple and baptize men must teach them the duty of obeying Christ in all things."<sup>22</sup>

Verse 20 closes the Great Commission with Christ reassuring His disciples of His presence. Verse 20b forms an *inclusio* with verse 18 and indicates once again the authoritative presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. The final words of Matthew's Gospel link back to the presence of Christ previously alluded to at the beginning of the book where Matthew proclaims, "God is with us" (1:23). Matthew is showing all Christians that, as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, they can be comforted with the presence of "God with us" as they seek to fulfill the Great Commission.

Matthew 28:20 also admonishes that all followers of Christ are to be making disciples of all nations. The Great Commission applies, not merely to the apostles, but to disciples of every period, even to the end.<sup>23</sup> The disciples represent everyone in the church to which Matthew writes and, derivatively, everyone who professes to follow Christ in any age. The Lord is now risen! He calls his people to become disciple makers, and he promises to be with them irrespective of their success or failures.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Blomberg, *Matthew*, 433.

<sup>21</sup> Carson, *Matthew 13-28*, 599.

<sup>22</sup> Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 596.

<sup>23</sup> Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 597.

<sup>24</sup> Blomberg, *Matthew*, 433.

## **Second Timothy 2:1-7: Passing the Torch**

The second biblical imperative for making disciples is found in 2 Timothy 2. In this epistle, Paul is writing from prison to young Timothy, who is ministering to the church at Ephesus. Paul is writing to Timothy to encourage him and to “pass the torch” to Timothy as he continues the work of ministry that Paul has started. In these verses, Paul charges Timothy with the task of making disciples by replicating what has been “entrusted” to him as he has shadowed Paul for the last fifteen years.

Paul emphasizes to Timothy the difficulties that will arise from the disciple-making process. Paul stresses to Timothy that as he goes forward making disciples, he will have to depend on the strength of the Lord to fulfill his mission. Second, Paul stresses that Timothy will have to deal with many hardships. Last, Paul relates that dedication is paramount to fulfill the mission to which God has called him. Paul understands that for the gospel to continue to go forward, replication must take place.

Paul starts with “you therefore,” referring to the previous statement in chapter 1 where Paul expresses his disappointment over the lack of commitment from Phygellus and Hermogenes and “all those in Asia.” With this discouragement in mind, Paul directs Timothy to stay the course and “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 2:1).

Paul also affectionately addresses Timothy as his “son,” showing that Paul considers himself Timothy’s father in the ministry, and thereby, Timothy is the heir who is to carry on Paul’s gospel work. Paul tells Timothy to “be strong” in grace that is Christ Jesus. Gordon Fee explains that the “imperative be strong is present tense, passive voice, whose proper force is that one is being strengthened by God.”<sup>25</sup> In verse 1, Paul is stressing the importance of depending on the grace of God for strength in the ministry. Paul always depended on the Lord for his strength (1 Cor 15: 10), and this is his wish for Timothy also. Fee contends that Paul “wanted Timothy to be strengthened by God himself as he

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<sup>25</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), 239.

stands in the grace that he has received.<sup>26</sup> J. N. D. Kelly suggests, “The whole expression can be paraphrased as ‘the grace of which we are recipients through fellowship with Christ Jesus.’”<sup>27</sup> Kelly continues, “Timothy is to show manly resolution, but the real strength of his efforts will come from the grace Christ freely gives.”<sup>28</sup>

Paul is not only encouraging Timothy to be strong in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, but he is also exhorting Timothy to “commit” or “entrust” the teaching of Paul to others. The Greek word is *paratithēmi*, and can be translated “to deposit as a trust.” Paul is entrusting the special message of the gospel to his chosen servant, Timothy.

Phillip H. Towner writes,

The church leadership ranks were being depleted, and the itinerant Pauline mission was in danger of grinding to a halt. The command is therefore designed primarily to ensure the continuation of the churches and the mission’s ministry in Asia Minor. “Entrusting” the gospel was not simply a matter of a tap on the shoulder; it would require Timothy to teach and to model the faith.<sup>29</sup>

These “things” to which Paul is referring in the second verse are the gospel message that was paramount to the message of Paul. Paul’s one message was “Christ and Him crucified” and that was the message he entrusted to Timothy to pass on to others. Paul reminds Timothy that this is the message he has observed Paul communicate many times since Timothy had joined him on his second missionary journey (Acts 16: 4).

Paul emphasizes to Timothy the importance of committing the gospel teachings to faithful men who are able to teach others. Here Paul stresses the importance of replication by implementing the Great Commission command of making disciples. Paul

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<sup>26</sup> Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 240.

<sup>27</sup>J. N. D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Black’s New Testament Commentary Series, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009), 172.

<sup>28</sup> Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 172.

<sup>29</sup> Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2006), 490-91.

uses two words to describe the caliber of men to be sought out as fellow and future disciples: faithful and teachable.

First, Paul advises to seek men who are “faithful.” The Greek word is *pistos*, which can be translated as someone who is trustworthy and reliable. In this text, the soundness of biblical faith is assumed, but the quality has more to do with dependability in relation to the apostolic teaching, loyalty, and commitment to fulfill what one has promised to do.<sup>30</sup> Fee writes,

Those to whom he (Paul) entrusts those teachings are to be reliable or trustworthy people. The same adjective in the Pastoral Epistles often means “believing,” but here, as with its usage in the phrase “here is a trustworthy saying,” the emphasis is on their reliable character, not their status—although the genuine elders of 1 Timothy 3: 1-7 and 5: 17-18 are probably in view.<sup>31</sup>

Faithfulness is absolutely essential for the replication of disciples. Those not willing to “stick to it” cannot be counted on when trials come. Later in this text it will become evident why faithfulness is absolutely essential for the replication of disciples.

The second trait necessary for the replication is that a disciple should be able to teach others.<sup>32</sup> This is an important qualification in the process of making disciples. It can be argued from the text that Paul is speaking specifically to ministers of the gospel from other comments in his writings to Timothy (1 Tim 3:2; 2 Tim 2:24). Granted, all persons are not gifted in the same manner, but all are called to search the Scriptures diligently.

Starting in verse 3, Paul warns Timothy about the hardships that come with making disciples. In this section, Paul uses three analogous characters from real life to emphasize the fortitude required for making disciples. These three personalities stress the detachment, strict training, and unremitting toil required to make disciples.<sup>33</sup> Paul illustrates

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<sup>30</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 491.

<sup>31</sup> Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 240.

<sup>32</sup> The NIV translates this quality as someone who is “qualified to teach others.”

<sup>33</sup> Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 174.

“enduring” hardships by referencing a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer. The word “endure,” which can mean “to be afflicted” or “to suffer troubles,” gives the idea that Paul is informing Timothy that disciples will have to “take their share of rough treatment.”<sup>34</sup> Paul is emphasizing this truth for Timothy to pass on to future disciples. All of these personalities illustrate a different technique for dealing with hardship that is consistent to the mission of a disciple.

Paul first draws Timothy’s attention to the soldier. The soldier is someone who trains and brings his body into subjection in order to obey commands regardless of the circumstances. Not only are soldiers disciplined, but they are not easily distracted by worldly passions. In verse 4, Paul describes a soldier as one who avoids entanglement in the world’s affairs. The discipline of a soldier is necessary for a disciple who makes other disciples. Kelly refers to this discipline as a form of “detachment” that is required for someone who gives his life in service to Christ.<sup>35</sup> This detachment prevents the disciple from being distracted by mundane matters related to everyday living. Towner suggests that Paul used the indictment of Demas later in his letter as an example of what happens when someone fails to take heed of his advice in regard to detachment from worldly attractions (2 Tim 4: 10).<sup>36</sup> A soldier’s goal is to please his commanding officer. Paul exhorts Timothy to foster in himself and future disciples the discipline necessary to make disciples even in the midst of a hostile environment that is adversarial to the cause of Christ. Fee summarizes, “Paul’s concern is singular: Timothy must give himself, even to the point of great suffering, to wholehearted devotion to his divine commanding officer.

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<sup>34</sup> Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 174.

<sup>35</sup> Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 174.

<sup>36</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 497.

Indeed, it should be his desire to please him. Such a desire will mean obedience to the call to service, including suffering.”<sup>37</sup>

Paul continues in verse 5 to give Timothy examples of how to handle the hardships that encompass making disciples. He does so by referring Timothy to the field of athletics. An athlete is someone who competes by the rules not only in competition but also in training. Sports were a prominent in the Graeco-Roman world. Warren Wiersbe writes,

In the Greek games in particular, the judges were most careful about enforcing the rules. Each competitor had to be a citizen of his nation, with a good reputation. In his preparations for the event, he had to follow specific standards. If an athlete was found defective in any matter, he was disqualified from competing. If, after he had competed and won, he was found to have broken some rule, he then lost his crown.<sup>38</sup>

Paul is demonstrating to Timothy that a disciple engaged in the ministry of making disciples will have to practice self-control and stay focused on the goal. Fee further explains how believers who engage in making disciples must possess “wholehearted devotion to the task, as well as full compliance with the rules of the contest, which in this case includes suffering.”<sup>39</sup> Paul further exemplifies this mindset in Philippians 3:14, where Paul exhorts to “press-on” toward the goal in the upward call of God.

In verse 6, the illustration of the farmer finishes up Paul’s instructions to Timothy about how to endure hardship in making disciples. Paul uses a farmer as an example of one who toils. Just as farming is hard work, Paul makes the correlation that making disciples is hard work. Not only is making disciples hard work, it is also rewarding. Just as a farmer is able to partake of the first fruits from the crop, a minister is able to rejoice in the spiritual fruit produced by those he has discipled. Fee points out that the

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<sup>37</sup> Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 242.

<sup>38</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2007), 776.

<sup>39</sup> Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 242.

eschatological imagery behind the illustration in verse 5 “accents the promise that the farmers should be the first to receive a share of the crops.”<sup>40</sup>

Paul continues in verses 8-10 by drawing Timothy’s attention to the sufferings of Christ and a reminder that a disciple of Christ must die to self in order to impart life to others. In verse 8, the word “remember” is written in the Greek tense present active, which means it is an action completed in the past having present results. Paul takes Timothy backward to things he has already learned, inviting him to relive their significance.<sup>41</sup> Paul here reminds Timothy that the truth of the gospel is motivation and inspiration to endure in the ministry of making disciples.

Paul finishes this exhortation of encouragement by informing Timothy that God is faithful even when disciples are faithless. In these words of encouragement, Paul is reminiscent of Jesus and His final words to His disciples where He exclaimed, “Lo I am with you always” (Matt 28:20).

Second Timothy 2: 1-13 emphasizes the biblical imperative of replication in disciple making by encouraging disciples to depend on the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, seek to disciple faithful men who are able to teach others, deal with the hardships that are sure to follow, and die to self as in keeping with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Next, this chapter will examine the biblical imperative that disciple making requires commitment from Matthew 4:17-22.

### **Matthew 4:17-22: Following Jesus**

The call of Peter, as found in the book of Matthew, will be examined to further establish the biblical imperative for making disciples. Peter is arguably one of the most colorful characters in all of the Bible. Peter was used greatly by the Lord, particularly in

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<sup>40</sup> Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 243.

<sup>41</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 499.



the area of disciple making. Before Peter multiplied his ministry, he had to learn to follow Christ himself. Wilkins advises, “Even though it is probable that Jesus’ disciples memorized much of his teachings and passed it on as the tradition of the church, the disciples were committed to his person.”<sup>42</sup> Matthew 4: 17-22 demonstrates the commitment involved in being a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Carson shares that Christ “followers were not just ‘hearers’; they actually followed their Master around and became, as it were, trainees.”<sup>43</sup>

The commitment required to be a follower of Jesus Christ involves loving the Lord with all of the “heart, soul, strength, and mind” (Luke 10:27). This text reveals that the head, heart, and hands are at work in the making of a disciple. To establish the commitment required to be a follower of Christ, we will look at three truths that encompass disciple making. A total commitment to disciple making requires desertion of the old life, a dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ, and a determination to disciple others.

Verse 17 begins a new transition for the book of Matthew as seen in the phrase “from the time Jesus began.” Previously, Jesus had been ministering in and around Nazareth and now he transitions to Capernaum where he will perform the majority of his earthly ministry. The phrase “from the time Jesus began” is used again in verse 16:21 as Jesus transitions in preparation for his crucifixion and resurrection.

Verse 17 also highlights the fact that much of Jesus’ ministry involved preaching. In Luke 4:43 Jesus said, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.” Jesus came preaching, “repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mark 1:15). These words are identical to those of John the Baptist in Matthew 3:2.

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<sup>42</sup> Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 124.

<sup>43</sup> D. A. Carson, *Matthew 1-12*, in vol. 1 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 119.

Verse 19 is a pivotal verse in the call to disciple making. Verse 19 can be broken down into three phrases. First, the phrase “follow me” shows the desertion of self that is required to be a fully devoted follower of Christ. Following Christ requires disciples to die to any selfish ambitions they might have. A disciple is one who has counted the cost, made a commitment of faith, and then “followed” Jesus.<sup>44</sup> Peter and his companions who were called by Jesus were fishermen by trade. They were not amateur anglers enjoying a day off by the lake. Fishing was their livelihood. Fishing was all they knew; therefore, abandoning their career to follow Jesus would have meant a serious economic blow to the well-being of their family. This would have also entailed a “sudden and complete change in lifestyle” for Peter and the men’s families.<sup>45</sup>

The life that Jesus was calling Peter and his companions to was foreign to their way of thinking. Following Christ would have also meant leaving their families. Jesus’ call challenged the priority of family and was, therefore, scandalous to the culture of that day. These first disciples were walking away from their wives and children, but also away from their father and the family business. In that society, honoring of parents was highly stressed. This decision to follow Christ would have more than likely brought scorn and disdain by other family and friends.<sup>46</sup>

Not only would the first disciples be walking away from their families and their futures, but they would have also been walking into fiery trials. David Turner writes, “For the first disciples, the following of Jesus entails both literally traveling with him and ethically obeying his teaching and modeling of God’s will, which leads to

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<sup>44</sup> Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 125.

<sup>45</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 146.

<sup>46</sup> Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 153.

hardship and peril.”<sup>47</sup> Most fishermen of that day were not the socially elite, but because their trade was at times prosperous, they were afforded some of the comforts of life that others did not have. Following Christ meant leaving what comforts they did have behind. Luke 9:58 explains how Jesus categorized his amenities: “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”

In this first phrase of Matthew 4:19, “follow me” is an unconditional, unexplained demand, not a polite, reasoned invitation to die to any self-ambitions that these men might have had in order to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>48</sup> This call has not changed for current disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Disciples are called to die to self and take up their cross and follow Christ daily (Luke 9:23). This call to “follow me” is a complete “abandonment” of self that requires total commitment. Later, Matthew records Peter exclaiming, “we gave up all to follow you” (Matt 19: 27). Jesus is worthy of far more than church attendance and casual association.<sup>49</sup> A disciple is called to die to selfish ambitions in order to be a fully devoted follower of Christ. In the call to “follow me,” selfish ambitions are deserted, but in the phrase “I will make you” it is evident that the requirement of depending on the Savior is paramount.

Not only were the disciples dependent on the Lord Jesus for their livelihood, but they were also dependent on the Lord for learning how to be a disciple. The first disciples were not trained scribes or rabbis, conversely, they were not illiterate, stupid, or destitute.<sup>50</sup> The word disciple means “learner,” and even though these men were skilled at fishing, they needed to be taught how to be “fishers of men.”

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<sup>47</sup> David L. Turner, *Matthew*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 136.

<sup>48</sup> Turner, *Matthew*, 136.

<sup>49</sup> Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, 80.

<sup>50</sup> Carson, *Matthew 1-12*, 120.

The phrase “I will make you” reminds the Christian that God makes a disciple; people are just called to follow. Here in this phrase the doctrine of sanctification comes into view. Sanctification is the process whereby God forms a person into the image of His Son Jesus Christ. God does this by providentially guiding lives as they live for Him. Wilkens concurs, “Discipleship was not simply a program through which Jesus ran the disciples. Discipleship was life. That life began in relationship with the Master and moved into all areas of life. Discipleship was not just development of the religious or spiritual dimensions, discipleship was directed toward the whole person.”<sup>51</sup>

It was no accident that God showed up on the same beach that day with the disciples. Actually, it was probably not the first time the disciples had heard of Jesus or encountered Him. Simon Peter and Andrew had already encountered Jesus when Andrew was a disciple of John, so Jesus’ call was not as abrupt as it might appear.<sup>52</sup> God was doing a work in the hearts of the first disciples and Jesus saw something in these disciples that endeared Him to them. God used these men to change the world with the gospel, but before they could change the world, God had to change them.

How did Jesus go about changing these men into fully devoted disciples? Jesus made disciples out of these misfit fishermen by what He exposed them to, allowed them to engage in, and allowed them to endure. A brief survey of the book of Matthew gives a demonstration as to the method Jesus used in making disciples.

First, Jesus exposed the disciples to his teaching. Immediately after the call of the disciples in chapter 4, chapter 5 and going through chapter 7 chronicles the Sermon on the Mount. It is in the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus exposes the disciples to his teaching. The Sermon on the Mount was not given as the way of salvation for the lost, but as the way of life for true children of the kingdom. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones explains in

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<sup>51</sup> Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 124-25.

<sup>52</sup> Blomberg, *Matthew*, 90.

his work on the Sermon of the Mount that Christians are reminded, “Because you are Christian live like this. This is how Christians ought to live; this is how Christians are meant to live.”<sup>53</sup> It was instruction for those who had responded to Jesus’ invitation to “repent.” The disciples were probably confused as to the true nature of righteousness and God’s kingdom. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus lays out both the heart of the law and the nature of true religion in God’s kingdom.

Jesus not only exposed the disciples to his teaching, but also to His miracle and healings. At the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, starting in chapter 8, Jesus comes down from the mountain with a great multitude following him, and he begins to heal those in need. The disciples witnessed and stood in amazement at the power of Jesus, all the while learning what it meant to be a disciple of Christ.

After the disciples had walked with Christ for a period, like apprentices, they began to engage in the ministry of Christ rather than just examine it. In Matthew 10, the disciples are sent out with the power of the Spirit to do God’s work. The disciples’ mission is an extension of Christ, and what He could do they are given the power to do too.<sup>54</sup> Mark’s gospel also records this event but states that the disciples were sent out two by two (6:7). Nevertheless, Jesus challenged the disciples to move from a point of examining to actually engaging in the work of ministry.

The last method that Jesus used to train the first disciples was to teach them endurance. Jesus allowed the disciples to experience trials that taught them to depend on Christ while cementing their commitment to be a disciple. Matthew 14 entails one of the first tests for the disciples. In Matthew 14:22-33 is the story of Jesus walking on the water. This particular storm was a time of testing for Peter and the other disciples. Whenever

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<sup>53</sup> D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Studies on the Sermon of the Mount* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1959), 1:17.

<sup>54</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 383.

Peter took his eyes off Jesus, he began to sink, but when he focused on Jesus, he could walk on water. The wording used in the text suggests the idea of trying to go in two different directions at once or of serving two different masters simultaneously.<sup>55</sup> Events such as this storm taught the first disciples to depend on the Savior and Him alone. France declares, “Jesus’ walking on water is recorded rather as a spectacular instance of his supernatural power, which evokes a suitably awed and theologically loaded response from his disciples.”<sup>56</sup> This is also a strong lesson for disciples today by displaying the necessity of depending on Jesus while growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (Col 1:10).

In addition to requiring that a disciple abandon selfish ambition and depend completely on the Lord for his substance and sanctification, Matthew 4 also proves that disciples must possess a determination to serve. The last phrase found in verse 4:19 is “fishers of men.” Craig Blomberg points out that Jesus is not implying anything seductive, deceitful, or harmful, but that just as fisherman try to gather fish from the sea, his disciples, too, will be gathering together individuals who are willing to follow Jesus in radical obedience.<sup>57</sup>

It takes great patience and determination to be a fisherman, and these same traits are required when seeking to make disciples. This determination is not a legalistic determination, but a determination to live in obedience to the Great Commission, and a determination to fight through the frustrations of “fishing for men,” all while showing the patience to deal with sinful, imperfect people. A disciple who seeks to make more disciples has a determination to follow Jesus with an urgent obedience to His mission.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Blomberg, *Matthew*, 235.

<sup>56</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 566.

<sup>57</sup> Blomberg, *Matthew*, 91.

<sup>58</sup> Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, 86.

## The Pastoral Epistles

The Pastoral Epistles provide a different perspective on discipleship than that of the Gospels and exemplified by Jesus. Nonetheless, the Pastoral Epistles provide a robust understanding of what it means to be a disciple and are perforated with practical aspects of being a disciple. By examining some key terms found in the Pastoral Epistles and analyzing eight distinctive characteristics of a disciple, the practical aspects of disciple making emerge.<sup>59</sup>

The Pastoral Epistles lend themselves nicely to the discipleship discussion due to the disciple making context in which they were written. In 1 and 2 Timothy, Paul is writing to his disciple Timothy in an effort to encourage, instruct, and advise Timothy regarding doctrinal issues in Timothy's new ministry at Ephesus. In the book of Titus, Paul is writing for a similar purpose but with a more practical emphasis. The Pastoral Epistles demonstrate disciple making by chronicling a more experienced spiritual leader encouraging, instructing, and entrusting a younger leader in his new ministry setting. The "passing of the torch" element is seen clearly in the Pastoral Epistles. F. Alan Tomlinson writes, "The emphasis throughout the letter is on reminding Timothy, Paul's spiritual son in the faith, to follow the role and model of 'the father.' Timothy is to follow the pattern established by Paul as a 'loyal man of God' who did indeed guard the deposit and entrust it to faithful men like Timothy. Timothy is to do the same."<sup>60</sup>

The Pastoral Epistles commonly use four verbs to illustrate the task of disciple making. These four verbs can be translated in the form of "follow," "remind," "teach," and "commit." The first of these verbs is the word "followed" and is found in 1 Timothy

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<sup>59</sup> Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 59.

<sup>60</sup> F. Alan Tomlinson, "The Purpose and Stewardship Theme within the Pastoral Epistles," in *Entrusted with the Gospel: Paul's Theology in the Pastoral Epistles*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Terry L. Wilder (Nashville: B & H, 2010), 63.

4:6 and 2 Tim 3:10 and means to “follow beside of persons or of ideas and things.”<sup>61</sup> As Timothy’s mentor in the faith, Paul is affirming young Timothy for his dedication in following and his commitment to Paul’s “manner of life.”

The use of this verb “followed” helps to clarify what it means to be a disciple. Timothy “carefully followed” Paul for fifteen years in the ministry. In his commentary on 2 Timothy, John R. W. Stott writes, “For over 15 years, since he had first been recruited in his hometown Lystra, Timothy had been Paul’s faithful missionary companion. He had traveled with him throughout most of the second and third missionary journeys and had been sent during them as a trust apostolic delegate on several special missions to Thessalonica and Corinth.”<sup>62</sup>

Timothy had “carefully followed” Paul and had learned Paul’s doctrine and manner of life. In 1 Timothy 4: 6, Paul again refers to the “good doctrine” Timothy had experienced in accompanying him in ministry and encourages him to instruct others in the same. These Scriptures relay the truth that discipling someone requires doing ministry together and modeling a life that is exemplary of a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Next, “remind” is a term Paul uses in 2 Timothy 1:6, which states, “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” Paul is making an appeal to Timothy for a continual, vigorous use of his spiritual gifts.<sup>63</sup> Fee contends that Paul is not referring to a “wavering or dying faith on Timothy’s part, but it does urge with very strong language that he fan into flame the gift that God gave him long ago at the time of his call, through the laying on of Paul’s hands.”<sup>64</sup> This term

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<sup>61</sup> Archibald Thomas Robertson, *The Epistles of Paul*, Word Pictures of the New Testament, vol. 4 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1931), 579.

<sup>62</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Message of 2 Timothy*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1973), 18.

<sup>63</sup> Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy and Titus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 188.

<sup>64</sup> Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 226.



evidences that a disciple who makes disciples is continuously seeking to encourage and admonish those whom he is discipling.

Similar verbiage, with a slightly different meaning, is also found in 1 Timothy. The word is translated “teach or instruct” and is found in a previously mentioned verse, 1 Timothy 4:6. The word for “teach or instruct” in the Greek can be translated “to point these things out.” By “pointing these things out,” Timothy will be fulfilling his own ministry.<sup>65</sup> Here again, one can see an instructional facet to disciple making in that gentle reminders are necessary to bring along a brother or sister in the faith.<sup>66</sup>

Thus far it has been established that a disciple is one who first follows then is instructed to take what he has learned and pass it on to other disciples by instructing and entrusting. The last term found in the Pastoral Epistle and is foundational to understanding the practical aspects of disciple making is the word “commit.” One place this word is found is in 2 Timothy 2:2. As stated, this term can be translated to “entrust,” which evidences passing on something valuable to another person who will value it. With these key terms defined, the primary role of a disciple begins to emerge. A disciple, as demonstrated in the Pastoral Epistles, is one who first follows, then instructs, and lastly entrusts. Next, the eighth distinctive of a disciple found in the Pastoral Epistle will be reviewed to further clarify the practical aspects of discipleship and disciple making.

The next paragraphs highlight the eight distinctives found in the Pastoral epistle regarding the life of a disciple. The eight distinctives of a disciple are Bible engagement, obedience, serving others, sharing Christ, exercising faith, seeking God, building relationships, and transparency.<sup>67</sup> These eight distinctives are traits that a

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<sup>65</sup> Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 102.

<sup>66</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy and Titus*, 133.

<sup>67</sup> Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 59.

disciple should, to some measure, albeit imperfectly, exhibit. These eight distinctives are areas of focus for the discipleship process to foster spiritual growth.

### **Second Timothy 3:14-17: Disciples Engage the Word**

The first distinctive that exemplifies the practical aspect of a disciple is Bible engagement. Biblical engagement is a nonnegotiable in the life of a disciple. Paul stressed the importance of biblical engagement in 2 Timothy 3:14-17. Starting in verse 14, Paul tells Timothy that he, “must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of.” Paul is referring to the instruction in the Holy Scriptures that Timothy had received from an early age by his mother and grandmother (2 Tim 1: 5). Paul is thus urging Timothy’s continued loyalty to the Scriptures and its teachings.<sup>68</sup> Bible intake is as necessary for the disciple as food is for the body. Man does not live by bread alone (Matt 4:4). In this text, Paul gives three reasons why biblical engagement is indispensable in discipleship.<sup>69</sup>

First, Scripture is reliable. Paul says in verse 15 that the Word of God is “able to make one wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Two scriptural references reinforce Paul’s point. Romans 10:17 reminds, “Faith come by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.” Hebrews 4:12 states, “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Paul emphasizes that the Scriptures are necessary for people to be converted and become disciples. Stott agrees, writing, “Scripture is the chief means which God employs to bring ‘the man of God’ to maturity.”<sup>70</sup> Paul wanted Timothy to depend on and trust the

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<sup>68</sup> Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 279.

<sup>69</sup> Outline obtained from Ryan Whitley, “Pastoral Ministry II” (class lecture, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, Spring 2014).

<sup>70</sup> Stott, *The Message of 2 Timothy*, 103.

Scriptures, not only for spiritual growth but for leading others to Christ. Knowing God's Word is indispensable in that a disciple cannot grow "in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus" if he does not study and feast on God's Word.

Second, not only are the Scriptures reliable to make one wise unto salvation, but the Scriptures are profitable. Paul shares with Timothy four reasons why the Scriptures are profitable to him and his ministry. First, the Scriptures are profitable for teaching. The teaching is used here in reference to doctrine. All of Scripture should be studied to form a solid biblical theology. Kent Hughes explains that all of Scripture must be studied, not just the Gospels, but all the didactic, poetic, narrative, apocalyptic, proverbial, and epical sections as well.<sup>71</sup> Paul continues by saying that Scripture is profitable for teaching and rebuking. Teaching and rebuking go together in the series as "those who are true to the scriptures cannot escape the duty" of rebuking those who wander off the path of sound doctrine.<sup>72</sup> It is important that a disciple who is seeking to disciple others be well versed in the Scriptures to show himself approved (2 Tim 2: 15).

The Scriptures are also profitable for correction. The word "correcting" comes from a Greek word that means to "straighten." This is the only place this word is used in the New Testament and is companion to the word "rebuking." In this context, "correcting" emphasizes the behavioral, ethical side of things.<sup>73</sup> Correction is the means God uses to restore people to the spiritual positions they have forfeited.<sup>74</sup> It could be said that the Scriptures are profitable for "straightening out" a misguided believer. Last, Paul uses the phrase "training in righteousness." This phrase denotes a system of discipline used by a

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<sup>71</sup> R. Kent Hughes and Bryan Chapell, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: To Guard the Deposit* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000), 239.

<sup>72</sup> Hughes and Chapell, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 239.

<sup>73</sup> Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 280.

<sup>74</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy and Titus*, 237.

parent to develop Christian character in a child. Here it is described as a system found in Scripture that leads to a holy lifestyle.<sup>75</sup> All four of the attributes show the profitability of Scripture in the process of disciple making.

Biblical engagement is important because the Bible is reliable and profitable, but lastly, because it is indispensable. In verse 17, Paul explains why biblical engagement is indispensable for a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Word of God makes the disciple “complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:17).<sup>76</sup> Biblical engagement adequately prepares the disciple to be a leader in the kingdom of God and to thoroughly prepare him to become perfectly adapted to his task so that he can face his responsibilities squarely.<sup>77</sup> Fee adds, “By continually nurturing his own life in the Scriptures that he is to use in the ministry, Timothy will be thoroughly equipped (“able to meet all the demands”) for every good work, which here means not only Christian behavior but the ministry of the gospel as well.”<sup>78</sup> The next disciple distinctive, obedience, is observed by unfolding Titus 2 through 3:10.

### **Titus 2:11-14: Disciples Are Obedient**

In the book of Titus, Paul is speaking to Titus about his leadership role in ministering to the churches at Crete. In this letter, Paul touches on a number of different subjects ranging from doctrinal issues to more practical aspects of conduct in the church. In chapter 2, Paul addresses the qualities of a sound church and what that looks like in the

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<sup>75</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy and Titus*, 237.

<sup>76</sup> Towner points out, “The implication of the is for all of God’s people” and that the scriptures usefulness is here applied to all believers. Arguments can be made that Paul was referring only to Timothy as the “man of God” in this text. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 594-95. Kelly asserts, “The phrase ‘man of God’ could designate Christians in general, but the context and the deliberate use of the singular confirm that, as in I Tim. 6: 11, Paul is thinking specifically of the Christian leader.” Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 204.

<sup>77</sup> Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 204.

<sup>78</sup> Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 280.

life of its members. In Titus 2, starting in verse 11, Paul outlines the patterns for obedience to be found in a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those patterns of obedience to the commands of Christ are manifested in a disciple by his witness, walk, and works. Jesus exhorted in John 14: 15: “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

Titus 2:11 explains that a disciple manifests obedience to the commands of Christ by the way he lives his life—by his witness. Paul appeals that the same grace that makes salvation available to all should instruct God’s people in proper behavior.<sup>79</sup> Paul writes “for the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.” Fee writes, “Although the whole passage reflects Paul’s theology of salvation as a past-present-future reality, the structure reveals that Paul’s chief concern is to advise God’s people about what salvation means for their present behavior.”<sup>80</sup>

Paul reiterates this truth in Titus 3:1 when he writes, “remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work.” Paul is reinforcing the idea that a disciple is called to live a life of obedience to God and a life of self-control with respect to the authority God has placed over him. Last, obedience is manifested in the life of a disciple by his witness, his walk, and his works. Jesus declared that a disciple will be known by the fruit that he bears (John 15: 8). Disciples show that they are seeking to live a life holy and pleasing to the Lord when they are “zealous to do good works.” Fee posits, “The concern throughout has been with these “good works,” but they are to be seen as the proper *response* to God’s grace revealed and made effective in the saving death of Jesus Christ.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 193.

<sup>80</sup> Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 193.

<sup>81</sup> Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 197.

### **Titus 3:1-2: Disciples Serve**

A third distinctive of a disciple is also revealed in the book of Titus. A disciple is not only a person engaging God's Word on a regular basis and a person seeking to live a life of obedience to the commandments of Christ, but a disciple is also a servant. Disciples are called to serve God and others. Jesus demonstrated this trait when He said in Mark 10:45, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." This attitude exemplified in Christ is to be echoed in the life of His disciples. Paul writes to remind Titus that a Christian is subject to "rulers and authorities." Part of being a servant is to be subject to the God-ordained authority in one's life. A disciple cannot lead unless he first understands how to follow.

Next, a disciple who serves God and others is someone who seeks peace. Titus 3:2 says, "To speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle and showing all humility to all men." A disciple serves others by showing them the love of Christ and pointing them to the gospel. Disciples are required to be submissive for the good of others in all of their relationships.<sup>82</sup> Disciples are to live life in such a "way that causes no offense to other people."<sup>83</sup> By submitting to others, a disciple serves God by "denying to self" for the upbuilding of the kingdom. Serving God and others requires being subject to authority, seeking peace, and serving with gladness.

Previously, in chapter 2, Paul had established that God's people are to be zealous for good works. This idea is further reinforced as he concludes his letter to Titus by encouraging, "Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing. And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful." Paul emphasizes that disciples are to be servants who help others in times of need. By serving others, disciples serve God.

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<sup>82</sup> Hughes and Chapell, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 357.

<sup>83</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 773.

Matthew 25:40 says, “Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.”

### **First Timothy 4:1-11: Disciples Share Their Faith**

The fourth distinctive of a disciple is sharing Christ. Sharing Christ is an integral part of the disciple making process. Disciples are called to share Christ with their lives and “as they are going through life.” First Timothy 4:1-11 shows the importance, implications, and imperative of sharing Christ. Verses 1-5 lay out the darkness of the “latter times,” which emphasizes the importance of shining the light of Christ. The implications of sharing Christ are that the disciple grows in faith and understanding of the gospel while others are exposed to the promises of eternal life found in the gospel message. The imperative of sharing the gospel is found two times in this text: at the beginning in verse 6 and again at the end in verse 11. Paul instructs Timothy to “teach these commands.” Paul stresses that the gospel is a “faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance”; therefore, disciples are to share the good news of the gospel. Fee writes, “The result is life, now and forever, not only for those of us who have put our hope in the living God, but for all those who will believe.”<sup>84</sup>

### **Second Timothy 2:1-13: Disciples Exercise Faith**

The fifth distinctive of a disciple is one who exercises faith. What does it mean to exercise faith? Insight on what exercising faith as a disciple looks like can be found in 2 Timothy 2:1-13. In this text, Paul utilizes three illustrations that portray faithfulness: a soldier, athlete, and a farmer. Each of these characters teaches a facet of faithfulness needed in the life of a disciple. Towner shares, “Timothy’s path was leading to Rome and suffering. It was a hard path in every way.”<sup>85</sup> Paul is emphasizing to Timothy, his

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<sup>84</sup> Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 106.

<sup>85</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 498.

disciple, that to fulfil his ministry, he must depend on the Lord, “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,” and exercise faith. Second, Paul is emphasizing that a disciple will have to endure hardships like a “good soldier of the Christ.”

### **Second Timothy 2:14-26: Disciples Seek after God**

The sixth distinctive of a disciple is one who seeks after God. This distinctive is evidenced from the word of Paul to Timothy found in 2 Timothy 2:14-26. Three truths are noteworthy pertaining to a disciple. A disciple who is seeking God diligently seeks the truth, stands on the truth, and is set apart by the truth. The context in which Paul speaks is that of false teachers that were infiltrating the early church and sought man’s approval as opposed to true disciples who seek after God.<sup>86</sup> Paul tells Timothy to “be diligent” to present himself approved (v. 15). This is the second of three imperatives used to encourage Timothy to “do his best” and to work in such a way that he will stand approved before God.<sup>87</sup> Paul goes on to inform Timothy that seeking after the truth also means to “shun profane babblings and youthful lust.” Paul counters with another imperative with the use of the word “pursue” (v. 22). The function of “pursue” in this context is to contrast behavior to be shunned with behavior to be embraced. Timothy is to flee from “the evil desires of youth.”<sup>88</sup> A contrast to a disciple who seeks after God can be seen in the lives of Hymenaeus and Philetus who “strayed from the truth” and sought after the things of the world (v. 18).

### **Second Timothy 4: 9-12: Disciples Build Relationships**

Building relationships is an important attribute of being a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul demonstrates this distinctive in 2 Timothy 4. Paul demonstrates the

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<sup>86</sup> Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 254.

<sup>87</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 519.

<sup>88</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 543.



importance of relationships in disciple making by the fact that he desired Christian fellowship and words of encouragement from Timothy, the one he had trained in the faith. Lea and Griffin explain that Paul called for Timothy to come quickly, “indicating that he was alone and eager for the solace of faithful friends.”<sup>89</sup> In contrast, Paul also draws attention to Demas, who had abandoned him in the work of ministry. Paul stresses to Timothy the importance of disciples fostering relationships and fellowship with other disciples for encouragement and the advancement of the kingdom. Paul requests that Mark be brought to him because of his usefulness in the ministry (v. 11). Knowing the background of the relationship between Paul and Mark is helpful and shows how forgiveness is necessary in any relationship, even more so between two followers of Christ (Acts 15:36-41).

### **First Timothy 4: 12: Disciples Are Transparent**

Transparency is the last distinctive of a disciple found in the Pastoral Epistles and is illustrated in 1 Timothy 4:12. In that text, Paul tells Timothy to be an “example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, and in purity.” Kelly posits, “This is truly a Pauline touch; the Apostle expected the Christian leader to be a model to others.”<sup>90</sup> Transparency in the life of a disciple means that one is approachable, vulnerable, and is an example to other believers. Towner remarks, “Paul calls Timothy to display a balanced and authentic Christian life-style.”<sup>91</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has laid out the biblical imperative for the necessity of making disciples. By way of the Great Commission, Christians have the responsibility to make

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<sup>89</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy and Titus*, 251.

<sup>90</sup> Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 104.

<sup>91</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 316.

disciples as they live out their Christian lives in society. Second Timothy 2 calls disciples to replicate their lives in the lives of others who are faithful and teachable in an effort to enlarge the kingdom of God. Matthew 4 reminds disciples that making disciples requires unwavering commitment to the cause of Christ. Last, the Pastoral Epistles provide a robust understanding of disciple making by giving definition to key terms, such as following, instructing, and entrusting. The Pastoral Epistles also outline what a disciple looks like by highlighting eight distinctives that should be reflected in the life of a disciple. The next chapter examines how discipleship that produces life-change focuses on transformation, replication, and accountability.

## CHAPTER 3

### PRACTICAL AND THEORETICAL ISSUES RELATING TO SMALL GROUP DISCIPLESHIP

Various models and approaches are used in the small group discipleship process. Chapter 2 demonstrated the biblical imperative to make disciples; this chapter will disseminate the various approaches and models used to execute discipleship in the local church.<sup>1</sup>

All disciple making models emphasize replication, transformation, and relationships, but vary on approach. Some models favor a mentoring (one-on-one) approach, while others employ small groups made up of three to five people. The emphasis of this project was on small group discipleship, while also drawing insight from the mentorship approach. Both of these approaches to discipleship are profitable, but some are more efficient and effective based on certain settings.

#### **Various Models**

One such approach to discipleship that emphasizes disciple making is the “D-group” approach propounded by Robby Gallaty in *Growing Up: How to Be a Disciple Who Makes Disciple*. Gallaty states that for optimum results a D-group should consist of four people. A group of more than five people is too large, and any less than three is too

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 41. Wilkins clarifies the terms “discipleship” and “discipling” (disciple making) by stating that discipleship is the ongoing process of growth as a disciple. “Discipling” (disciple making) implies the responsibility of disciples helping one another to grow as disciples. These definitions will aid in guiding a discipleship process that champions disciple making. Also see “Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations” in chap. 1.

small.<sup>2</sup> Gallaty illustrates his premise by referencing the core group of Peter, James, and John that Jesus disciplined for much of his ministry. Gallaty gives further scriptural credence to his approach by referencing Ecclesiastes 4:12, which states that a “threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

In *4 Chair Discipling*, Dann Spader seems to concur with a group approach by citing four people as being the perfect size for a disciple-making group. Spader’s approach differs from other popular models in that he fills each of the “chairs” with people who are at different levels of spirituality, one of those being an unbeliever. Nonetheless, the size of the group is still four people.<sup>3</sup>

Greg Ogden’s *Transforming Discipleship* also suggests that disciple making is best done in what he terms “microgroups” consisting of triads (3) or quads (4). Ogden outlines that groups consisting of three or four people promote an environment that is conducive to spiritual growth.<sup>4</sup> Ogden contends that microgroups foster “life-change accountability while engaged in God’s mission and is the Holy Spirit’s hothouse of transformation.”<sup>5</sup>

Robert Coleman’s *Master Plan of Evangelism* also agrees that the making of disciples is best done in a small group setting such as what Jesus modeled throughout his ministry. Coleman relates that “the more concentrated the size of the group being taught,

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<sup>2</sup> Robby Gallaty, *Growing Up: How to Be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples* (Nashville: B & H, 2013), 47.

<sup>3</sup> Dann Spader, *4 Chair Discipling: Growing a Movement of Disciple-Makers* (Chicago: Moody, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016), chap. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 145.

the greater the opportunity for effective instruction.”<sup>6</sup> Coleman goes on to remind the reader that Jesus “devoted most of his remaining life on earth to these few disciples.”<sup>7</sup>

The small group approach is also referenced in Mike Breen’s *Building a Discipling Culture*. Breen reminds his readers that “Jesus chose three within an intimate group of twelve and poured his life into them.”<sup>8</sup>

The previous references illustrate that the small-group approach is not only a biblical approach but a practical approach to discipleship. Small group discipling is the most popular approach to disciple making, but it is not the only approach used in evangelicalism today. Others prefer and promote a mentoring approach.

Greg Ogden refers to the mentoring approach as the method exemplified by the apostle Paul. Ogden makes the keen observation that separates the two different approaches to disciple making by noting the difference between Jesus’ method and Paul’s method. Ogden writes in regard to Paul’s disciple-making model:

We must first note that the language running throughout the Gospels and the book of Acts is absent in Paul’s writings. Whereas the terms *make disciples* dominate Jesus’ vocabulary and the historical account of the early church in Acts, they are nowhere to be found in Paul’s letters. In fact, Paul never speaks of having disciples! Paul shifts away from discipleship terminology to what we have come to call “spiritual formation” language, because of the post-Pentecost focus on the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. His efforts were directed toward helping the church understand that Christians are “in Christ” and vice versa (Christ in you). This does not mean that the concept of discipleship is absent in Paul’s thought. Being a self-initiating, reproducing, fully devoted follower of Christ is as much present in Paul’s thought as it is in Jesus’ thought. It is just stated in spiritual formation terms.<sup>9</sup>

Mark Dever is also a proponent of the mentoring approach to disciple making. In *Discipling*, he delineates a succinct definition of disciple making with strong leanings

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<sup>6</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1993), 25.

<sup>7</sup> Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 25.

<sup>8</sup> Mike Breen and Steve Cockram, *Building a Discipling Culture* (Pawleys Island, SC: 3 Dimension Ministries, 2009), 16.

<sup>9</sup> Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 95.

toward a mentoring approach. He writes, “discipling means helping others follow Jesus. Discipling is a relationship in which we seek to do spiritual good for *someone* by initiating, teaching, correcting, modeling, loving, humbling ourselves, counseling and influencing.”<sup>10</sup> Dever further adds, “Bible is full of discipling relationships where one person teaches another.”<sup>11</sup>

Dever, along with other leading authors, appears to derive his model from the Paul/Timothy relationship, which favors a mentoring approach. Jesus also valued mentoring relationships as a way of raising up future leaders to carry on the mission of the Church. Scott Morton in *Down to Earth Discipling* makes a clear case for the prevalence of mentoring in Jesus’ ministry. Morton observes, “Though He taught large groups and small groups, He(Jesus) knew the value of personal attentiveness with one person at a time.”<sup>12</sup> Morton gives several scriptural examples where Jesus separated disciples to give them one-on-one attention. For instance, in John 21: 15 Jesus separates Peter from the other disciples to commission him to “tend my lambs.”<sup>13</sup>

LeRoy Eims also emphasizes that the mentoring approach is best suited to help new and young believers feed themselves. He writes in *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*, “When a person comes to Christ, he needs someone to help him learn how to feed himself.”<sup>14</sup> The emphasis of disciple making is aiding in the development of strong believers who can aid others in their development as fully devoted followers of Christ. At

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<sup>10</sup> Mark Dever, *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 74.

<sup>11</sup> Dever, *Discipling*, 28.

<sup>12</sup> Scott Morton, *Down to Earth Discipling* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2003), 13.

<sup>13</sup> Other biblical examples that give credence to one-on-one disciple making are found in such relationships as Jethro and Moses, Moses and Joshua, and Jonathan and David.

<sup>14</sup> LeRoy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 65.

the very heart, disciple making is a disciple pouring his or her life into another person with the goal of that person repeating the process.

No matter which approach to small group discipleship is employed, one-on-one disciple making as exemplified by Paul in the Epistles or the small group approach modeled by Jesus in the Gospels, both share three common traits that are paramount to the development of fully devoted disciples: replication, transformation, and relationships. The following paragraphs evaluate each of these traits as they relate to disciple making.

### **Replication**

Disciple making has an aim, and that is replication. Replication is one of the key traits that must be emphasized in any disciple making process. Eims shares an illustration from the corporate world that has biblical application to disciple making. Eims proposes that a company that is in the business of making shoes sets a goal of producing as many shoes as possible. Eims challenges the reader to think about how absurd it is to surmise that a shoe company in the business to make shoes does not make shoes. Eims applies this logic to the church.<sup>15</sup> Jesus Christ left his church with a command to make disciples, and that should be the aim of the church—to make disciples. A discipleship process that does not champion disciple making is educational but fails to achieve replication. How unthinkable it is for church not to make disciples.

### **Process or Programs**

This same thought process can be observed in the sports world. Take for instance, football. Why is it that the most successful college football programs seem to produce championship-caliber teams year after year? The reason is that they have a *process* in place that consistently produces championship-caliber players. These teams

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<sup>15</sup> Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*, 59-60.

specialize in replication. If replication is important in sports and in the shoe business, then it should be implemented in the kingdom of God.

The church has abandoned the process put forth by Jesus for making disciples and replaced it with an emphasis on tradition-riddled pragmatism and programs, all to the detriment of the Great Commission. Marshall and Payne describe the perils of pragmatism: “Churches inevitably drift towards institutionalism and secularization. The focus shifts from the vine to the trellis—from seeing people grow as disciples to organizing and maintaining activities and programs.”<sup>16</sup>

Michael J. Wilkins concurs, but also imagines what churches would be like if “all Christians lived out the message of discipleship found in the Gospels.” Wilkins further explains, “Jesus wants a church full of disciples who dare to go out into the world and make a difference and to live a life that is Christ like.”<sup>17</sup>

Why is replication so important to the disciple-making process? Replication takes place when one disciple makes another disciple. It was Christ’s plan for multiplication. The fundamental goal is to make disciples who make other disciples, to the glory of God.<sup>18</sup> In *Bold Assurance*, Craig Etheridge suggests that Jesus had replication in mind as He reflected on the work the Father had sent Him to accomplish. Etheridge writes of the passage in John 17 where Jesus is sharing the Passover meal with his disciples that the work that the Father had given him to do was the work of making disciples who would reproduce.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine* (Waterloo, Australia: Matthias Media, 2009), 152.

<sup>17</sup> Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 46-47.

<sup>18</sup> Marshall and Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine*, 152.

<sup>19</sup> Craig Etheridge, *Bold Moves: Lead the Church to Live Like Jesus* (Colleyville, TX: discipleFIRST, 2016), 216.



Jesus also instructed his disciples in John 15:8 to bear fruit. Later Jesus says, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain” (John 15:16). Bill Hull contends that the fruit Jesus is referring to in this text is reproducing disciples. Jesus expected his disciples to reproduce—make other disciples.<sup>20</sup> Spader echoes that the goal of any disciple should be to reproduce.<sup>21</sup> Spader writes, “My goal is not to make a single disciple but to multiply disciple-makers. We invest in such a way that asks that we invest in to turn around and invest in others. We make disciples who can make disciples. This is the principle and process of multiplication.”<sup>22</sup>

As noted, in 2 Timothy 2, Paul instructed Timothy to seek out faithful men who could teach others. Paul was emphasizing the importance of replication to the disciple-making process. Replication is an important aspect of the disciple-making process because of the evangelistic implications it carries. Replication is instrumental to the mission of God. Replication is where evangelism and discipleship mesh together to fulfill the Great Commission. Replication is nonnegotiable from the standpoint that the disciple’s goal should be to reproduce him or herself for multiplication to take place. Replication was demonstrated in the lives of Jesus and the apostle Paul and ensures multi-generational growth of the church.

Jim Putnam in *Discipleshift* relates a story that illustrates the importance of replication in disciple making. One of the stories is about a man named Jim who came

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<sup>20</sup> Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor: Leading Others on the Journey of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 88.

<sup>21</sup> Dann Spader uses the term “multiplication.” “Multiplication” and “replication” are being used describe the same general trait that is critical to any successful discipleship process. Spader, *4 Chair Discipling*. Some authors differentiate replication and multiplication by defining replications (reproduction) as the act of adding disciples one at a time while multiplication is explained as one disciple make two, who make four, who makes sixteen and so on.

<sup>22</sup> Spader, *4 Chair Discipling*, 126.

forward during a church service broken and repentant. Jim desired change but needed help from godly men to mentor him. Jim was disciplined by a man in the congregation. Putnam writes, “Because of the efforts of mentors who poured into Jim, he is now campus pastor at one of our locations and has reproduced himself over and over.”<sup>23</sup>

Putnam asserts that when multi-generational disciples emerge it is indicative of a discipleship process engaged in replication. One of the measurements to look for in any discipleship process is multi-generational growth.

Disciples faithfully living out the gospel and reproducing themselves in the lives of others was the evangelistic method instituted by Jesus. A replicable disciple-making process may seem like a feeble approach to the evangelism of the masses, but it is exactly what the Lord Jesus Christ did. Jesus invested in a few to reach the multitudes.

### **A Chosen Few**

Jesus helped the multitudes but devoted himself primarily to a few men, rather than the masses, so that the masses could at last be saved.<sup>24</sup> Jesus replicated his ministry in the lives of his disciples so that they would “preach the gospel to all the nations” (Mark 16: 15). In *Master Plan of Evangelism*, Robert Coleman addresses this evangelistic anomaly of a few reaching the masses by stating that most of the modern churches evangelistic efforts center on reaching the masses with the assumption that the “church is qualified to preserve what good is done.”<sup>25</sup> This type of focus results in an emphasis on numbers while lacking genuine concern toward spiritual growth of the individual. In essence, the modern church’s approach to evangelism is opposite of what Jesus displayed

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<sup>23</sup> Jim Putnam and Bobby Harrington, *Discipleshift: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 36-37.

<sup>24</sup> Coleman, *Master Plan of Evangelism*, 29.

<sup>25</sup> Coleman, *Master Plan of Evangelism*, 30.

with his disciples. Jesus poured his life into a select few who then ministered to others. The disciple's spiritual growth eventually leads to church growth.

Replication of disciples leads to church growth. When disciples reproduce themselves in the lives of other disciples, they are not only being obedient to the Great Commission, but they are being faithful to the church. A disciple-making church must intentionally train people to walk with God and reproduce.<sup>26</sup>

In *Rediscovering Discipleship*, Robbie Gallaty addresses replication by stating that replication takes place best in small groups (3-5 disciples). Gallaty also suggests that small group discipleship provides the best opportunity for exponential growth as compared to mentoring relationships. One person replicating himself as compared to an evangelist who focuses on reaching the masses helps to demonstrate the growth potential of disciple making with a focus on replication. Gallaty writes,

Numbers will radically change with the passing of time. In the next year, as the second-generation group splits up and form new groups, the disciple-maker's influence will spread to twenty-seven. In the following year, it will hit 243, then 2187. The next, 19,683. After six years, the disciple-maker's influence has reached over 19,000 people. The evangelist has had steady pattern of reaching a total of 6,000.<sup>27</sup>

Bill Hull in *The Complete Book of Discipleship* sums up the emphasis of replication while also highlighting the transformational element entailed in the disciple-making process:

The principle behind discipleship does involve one person influencing another, which does result in a change in heart and mind. The success of discipleship does not depend on soldiering forward in a mechanical strategy of reproduction and multiplication. And discipleship does not involve developing a well-trained, elite sales force. Rather discipleship occurs when a transformed person radiates Christ to those around him/her. It happens when people so deeply experience God's love that they can do nothing other than effect those around them.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Etheredge, *Bold Moves*, 95.

<sup>27</sup> Robby Gallaty, *Rediscovering Discipleship: Making Jesus' Final Words Our First Work* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 149.

<sup>28</sup> Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2006), 28.

## Transformation

Discipleship should have an element of replication, but it should also be transformational. The discipleship process should seek to foster a life of transformation through intentional relationships with the goal of replication. The following paragraphs review the marks, measurements, and methods of transformation in the life of a disciple.

A disciple is a believer being transformed into the image of Christ and being changed by Christ.<sup>29</sup> Paul emphasized the importance of the transformation in the Christian life when he prayed that the believers at Colossae would “grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ” (Col 1:9-10). Discipleship is not simply a program—it is a partnership. Discipleship is to become like Jesus while walking with him in the real world.<sup>30</sup>

Life transformation is exemplified throughout the Bible as one observes the characters God used in ministry. Men like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Peter, and Paul were all flawed men, but even a cursory observation of their lives portrays that they were men being changed as God worked in and through them to accomplish His mission. Michael J. Wilkins observes in *Following the Master* that the disciples were men who still needed spiritual development. The disciples call to follow Jesus was a call to embark on a lifelong spiritual journey that required single-minded devotion to the Master. Wilkins contends that the disciples had weaknesses and failures but were “common folk who responded to Jesus’ call and who grew into the role planned for them.”<sup>31</sup>

God never intends for believers to stay the same spiritually. Christianity is not a spectator sport. God intends for his children to grow—to graduate from the milk to the meat of the Word. Just as it is comical to think of an adult sitting in a high chair eating a

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<sup>29</sup> Jim Putnam, *Real-Life Discipleship* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2010), 30.

<sup>30</sup> Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 123.

<sup>31</sup> Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 175.

meal, it is just as egregious for a Christian who has been in church for decades to have never matured in Word or deed. A discipleship process that emphasizes disciple-making aids in transforming babes in Christ to mature followers of Christ.

### **Marks of a Disciple**

What are the marks of a disciple? In *Following the Master*, Wilkins identified three marks of discipleship as outlined in the gospel of John. These distinguishable marks characterize the life of a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first mark of discipleship is “abiding in His Word,” and is found in John 8:32-32. Those who say they believe in Jesus as their Savior will evidence that belief clearly by abiding in Jesus’ Words. The word “abide” means “to continue or remain.” As a disciple abides in the Word of God he is transformed by the “washing of the water of the Word” (Eph 5: 26).

Second, “loving other disciples” is a mark of a disciple. John 13: 34-35 says, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” A true believer will love others because he or she has been born of God, whose very nature is love. The third mark of a disciple is to “bear fruit.” John 15:8 says, “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” Those who are born of the Spirit will bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:18-23).<sup>32</sup>

What is meant by life transformation, and how is that measured? God transforms disciples through the Holy Spirit’s work of sanctification, but God also uses a number of instruments to shape the life of a disciple, including the living Word of God, the home and family, other believers, life situations, and spiritual exercises.<sup>33</sup> Brad House, in his robust

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<sup>32</sup> Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 303, 357-59.

<sup>33</sup> Barry Sneed and Roy Edgemon, *Transformational Discipleship: Your Church Helping People Be Like Jesus* (Nashville: LifeWay, 1999), 30-31.

treatment of small group discipleship, contends, “When the gospel is lived out in community, we find our identity in Jesus; we are compelled to worship God, love one another, and have compassion for the lost. As we are transformed by the gospel, our communities become places we want others to experience.”<sup>34</sup>

### **Disciple Distinctives**

Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation give eight biblical attributes that consistently show up in the life of a disciple who is being transformed by the power of God. These attributes that evidence life transformation are identified as Bible engagement, obeying God and denying self, serving God and others, sharing Christ, exercising faith, seeking God, building relationships, and being unashamed.<sup>35</sup> Geiger, Kelley, and Nation admonish that these qualities are not a model for disciple making, but merely attributes of a maturing believer—someone who is being transformed into the image of Christ. The following paragraphs briefly elaborate on these attributes.<sup>36</sup>

Bible engagement is the act of a believer intentionally reading and studying God’s Word with the goal of gaining a deeper knowledge of the God of the Word.<sup>37</sup> This mindset is contrary to those who read the Bible simply to be checking off a box and engaging in a legalistic exercise. Bible engagement is essential for proper spiritual nourishment of the believer. Donald Whitney explains that those becoming more like Christ will increasingly seek to live “by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”<sup>38</sup> Those who are maturing in Christ and experiencing transformation faithfully

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<sup>34</sup> Brad House, *Community: Taking Your Small Group off Life Support* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 61.

<sup>35</sup> Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation, *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow* (Nashville: B & H, 2012), 59.

<sup>36</sup> Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 59.

<sup>37</sup> Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 59.

<sup>38</sup> Donald S. Whitney, *Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health* (Colorado Springs:

engage in Bible intake with the intention of understanding God's story and seeking to prayerfully discern how they fit into it.

The second attribute of a person being transformed into a fully devoted follower of Christ is that he/she obeys God and denies self.<sup>39</sup> A maturing believer is not a perfect person but a person being perfected by the power of God in his/her lives. This power manifests itself in actions that glorify God. Disciples being transformed are increasingly obedient to God. Dietrich Bonhoffer writes in *The Cost of Discipleship*, "For faith is only real when there is obedience, never without it, and faith only becomes faith in the act of obedience."<sup>40</sup> Disciples being transformed are also submissive to the authority of God in their lives. A mature believer seeks to glorify God with his/her life in lieu of gratifying the flesh.

The third attribute of transformation in a disciple is serving God and serving others.<sup>41</sup> Maturing believers not only deny self, but also show deference to others by putting other people's needs above their own. An attitude of servanthood is a common denominator among believers being transformed everyday by the power of God in them. Serving God and serving others also have a contributing effect to the spiritual maturity of believers because believers are most like their Savior when they are serving others. True Christian faith is not lazy, and it does not look out only for itself, but works so that others might be presented mature in Christ when the Lord returns.<sup>42</sup> Transformation takes place in the life of a believer when he/she is increasingly living out the Scriptures by serving God and serving others. Maturing believers find no greater pleasure than serving God by

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Navpress, 2001), 34.

<sup>39</sup> Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 59.

<sup>40</sup> Dietrich Bonhoffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: MacMillan, 1963), 69.

<sup>41</sup> Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 59.

<sup>42</sup> Dever, *Discipling*, 34.

-serving His people. The maturing believer display this attribute by being willing to serve in positions that are menial in nature without any thought that a task is beneath him/her.

The fourth attribute of a disciple being transformed is sharing Christ.<sup>43</sup>

Believers who have been changed by the good news of the gospel have a desire to share their faith with others. Disciples care about the things God cares about, especially lost people.<sup>44</sup> A disciple finds no greater joy than to see others come to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. This attribute comes to fruition in disciple-making relationships where one disciple makes another disciple. Sharing Christ not only exemplifies that a person has been transformed, but the act of engaging in evangelism has a transforming effect on a believer that acts as a catalyst to the spiritual growth of a believer.

The fifth attribute of a disciple experiencing transformation is exercising faith.<sup>45</sup> Exercising faith takes place in everyday life situations where disciples live out their faith. Exercising faith often comes in the form of leaving a lucrative job to answer the call to ministry, or it could be as simple as walking across the road to share the love of Christ with a curmudgeon neighbor. Exercising faith is living by faith and not by sight. Exercising faith is a life that is counterintuitive to the culture but is reflective of a disciple who has been and is being transformed by the gospel.

The sixth attribute of a disciple being transformed is that he/she is seeking God.<sup>46</sup> Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they will be filled” (Matt 5:6). A maturing believer has a hunger that drives him/her to seek after God. A true disciple has an appetite that has been radically changed by God. Hence,

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<sup>43</sup> Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 59.

<sup>44</sup> Jim Putnam and Bobby Harrington, *Discipleshift: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 50.

<sup>45</sup> Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 59.

<sup>46</sup> Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 59.



a disciple has a transformed heart and transformed affections.<sup>47</sup> Obviously, seeking God manifests itself in the other attributes, such as Bible engagement and exercising faith, but it is an undeniable quality of a disciple who has experienced life transformation.

The seventh attribute is building relationships.<sup>48</sup> A transformed believer actively engages in relationships with others. The statement is cliché but true in that Christianity is a relationship and not a religion. Engaging relationships reflects the heart of Christ followers as they seek to imitate Christ by initiating relationships with believers and non-believers alike. David Platt in *Radical* sums up the relational aspect of disciple making:

Making disciples is not an easy process. It is trying. It is messy. It is slow, tedious, even painful at times. It is all these things because it is relational. Jesus has not given us an effortless step-by-step formula for impacting the nations for His glory. He has given us people, and he has said, “Live for them. Love them, serve them, and lead them. Lead them to follow me, and lead them to lead others to follow me. In the process you will multiply the gospel to the ends of the earth.”<sup>49</sup>

The eighth and final attribute of a disciple who has experienced transformation is the quality of being unashamed.<sup>50</sup> Unashamed is described by Paul in Roman 1:16 when he exclaims, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” Disciples are not afraid to share their life and the source of their new life with others. Christian discipleship is not just about displaying strengths, it is about displaying weakness too.<sup>51</sup> Transformed disciples are eager to share their testimony in an effort to glorify God.

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<sup>47</sup> Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 29.

<sup>48</sup> Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 59.

<sup>49</sup> David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2010), 93.

<sup>50</sup> Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 59.

<sup>51</sup> Dever, *Discipling*, 36.

The previous eight attributes are descriptive of a disciple of The Lord Jesus Christ who has been changed by the power of the gospel and is currently being changed by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit as he works out his faith with fear and trembling (Phil 2: 12).

In *Real-Life Discipleship*, Putnam views life change (transformation) as taking place in a believer's head, heart, and hands. The head refers to a believer who has accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior and has surrendered to his authority in his/her life. The heart refers to a believer who has experienced life change and shows evidence by the fruit that he/she bears. Last, the hands of a disciple acknowledge that Jesus saved him for a purpose, and he seeks to be on mission with God.<sup>52</sup>

Transformation could also be described as taking place in a believer who shares, seeks, and serves the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>53</sup> A believer who has been transformed by the power of God will not be ashamed of the gospel and will be willing to share the good news of the gospel with others. A believer being transformed by the gospel of Christ will also be eager to share his/her time, talents, and treasures for the upbuilding of God's kingdom. People who are transformed also seek out the goodness of God and the riches of His glory. Anyone who is alive has an appetite; therefore, disciples being transformed seek God to "know Him more and the power of the resurrection" (Phil 3:10). Dever affirms that a transformed believer has an appetite: "Spiritual growth is not optional for the Christian; it indicates life. Things that are truly alive grow. Dead things do not grow."<sup>54</sup>

Last, a disciple who has been transformed by the power of God unto salvation also serves God. A disciple who has a new life in Christ wants to serve Christ's church in

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<sup>52</sup> Putnam, *Real-Life Discipleship*, 32-33.

<sup>53</sup> This is the mission statement for Hillabee Baptist Church.

<sup>54</sup> Dever, *Discipling*, 67.

whatever capacity he/she is needed. Henceforth, a disciple who has experienced a life-changing transformation shares, seeks, and serves the Lord Jesus Christ.

One cannot overstate the fact that transformation is a work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. Etheredge states, “We can invest in a person’s life, but only the Spirit can take that investment and bring transformation.”<sup>55</sup> Even though transformation is wrought by the Holy Spirit, God does use other disciples to grow his people into mature disciples. This relational influence is part of the “make disciples” that Christ commanded.

### **Jesus’ Method of Transformation**

Jesus demonstrated a method by which to facilitate the growth of disciples that would eventually transform the disciples from common fishermen to leaders of the greatest movement in history. Jesus taught his disciples, but he also took them with him as he ministered to the people. Jesus educated his disciples, but also encouraged engagement. Mike Breen and Steve Cockram in *Building a Discipling Culture* observe that Jesus had a four-step process for developing his disciples and encouraging transformation.<sup>56</sup>

The first step was the “follow and observe” stage. This stage was just as the name indicates. Discipling is 90 percent modeling what the Christian life looks like to other men, and that is what Jesus did.<sup>57</sup> The disciples initially followed Jesus wherever he went and watched how he healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and fed the hungry. The disciples watched and observed how Jesus ministered to the masses.

The second step in the transformation process of the disciples was the “I’ll do, but you help” stage of the process. At this juncture, Jesus was still doing the majority of the ministering, but he also allowed the disciples to help with some of the ministry needs

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<sup>55</sup> Etheredge, *Bold Moves*, 82.

<sup>56</sup> Breen and Cockram, *Building a Discipling Culture*, 77-94

<sup>57</sup> Etheredge, *Bold Moves*, 123.

of the people, which gave the disciples their first taste of growing the kingdom.

The third stage Jesus utilized to transform his disciples was the “you do it, I’ll help” phase. This is where Jesus turned his disciples loose to go out into the highways and hedges and actually do ministry while He observed. The final stage to Jesus’ method of transforming disciples into leaders was the “you do, I will watch.” In this last step, Jesus commands his disciples to “go and do what I have done—make disciples.”<sup>58</sup> Jesus finishes this command to his disciples by reminding them that He is with them always—always watching. Jesus never wasted an opportunity and He had a definite process that He enacted to transform his disciples into disciple-makers.

The above observation of Jesus’ method of transforming His disciples demonstrates a couple of applications. Transformation of disciples is physical. Disciples grow by engaging in ministry. Jesus modeled an apprenticeship program with his disciples that required “hands-on” participation. The process was “hands on” because Jesus, knowing the heart of man, understood that for people to be transformed required action on their part. Could it be that the reason so few Christians ever develop spiritually is because they never engage in ministry themselves?

### **Transformation Requires Engagement**

Transformation in the life of a disciple is physical, but it is also relational. Jesus poured his life into His disciples, thus reinforcing how important establishing relationships is to a disciple’s transformation. People need others to help them grow and mature in the faith. Transformation results when the Word of God and the Spirit of God work together with the people of God.<sup>59</sup> This is why small groups provide the richest environment for a believer to be transformed into a fully devoted follower of Christ.

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<sup>58</sup>Breen and Cockram, *Building a Discipling Culture*, 77-94.

<sup>59</sup> Putnam and Harrington, *Discipleshift*, 140.

Group settings provide relational opportunities that guard young believers from doctrinal error. More than one person being present provides a safeguard against heresy and error that can stunt growth instead of enhancing it. Not only do group settings aid in transformation, they also help to develop young believers through the challenge and encouragement that come from a group. Just like in any event that requires endurance, people need others to spur them on and “press on” for the glory of God.

Group settings provide protection, encouragement, and accountability. Group settings foster an environment that holds people accountable for their conduct and commitment, two traits that are nonnegotiable for a growing disciple. The following paragraphs transition from the transformational life of a disciple to the relational environment that galvanizes life change among disciples.

### **Relational**

The disciple making door swings on three hinges: the transformation hinge, the replication hinge, and the relational hinge. The relational hinge emphasizes that discipleship is a process, not a program. Programs champion information, while in contrast a relational process emphasizes relationships. Programs are impersonal while a process is relational. People are built with relational needs, and they grow only when they are engaged in relationships with other believers.<sup>60</sup> As has been demonstrated, Jesus modeled a relational disciple-making process by investing in the lives of his disciples to grow them into effective disciples. A disciple-making process based on relationships has four elements that make it superior to growing disciples in a traditional programmatic method. A relational discipleship process with an emphasis on disciple making fosters intimacy, responsibility, individuality, and accountability. The following paragraphs flesh out these elements.

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<sup>60</sup> Putnam and Harrington, *Discipleship*, 142.

## **Intimacy**

A relational disciple-making process fosters intimacy.<sup>61</sup> One of the misconceptions that has plagued modernity is the notion that the distribution of information leads to transformation—the idea that if a preacher can preach doctrinally-correct, biblically-faithful, and dynamic expositions of Scripture then congregants will automatically grow in the faith and be fully devoted followers of Christ. Preaching is, without a doubt, essential to the life of the body of Christ, but people need more than preaching to grow as a disciple.

Jesus modeled the importance of intimacy in that He preached to the masses and multitudes, but He devoted the majority of his time and effort developing and specifically teaching His core group. A cursory reading of the gospels reveals that Jesus often had to “re-preach” his sermons and parables to help his disciples understand. Jesus had a close relationship with his disciples, which helped the disciples grow spiritually. Disciples grow best in intimate relationships with other disciples. Granted, this intimacy often is riskier and messier, but it is how people grow. Church programs that favor informing over investing are often less effective.<sup>62</sup>

## **Responsibility**

A relational discipleship process with an emphasis on disciple making fosters responsibility.<sup>63</sup> One of the main problems with program-based discipleship is that it does not require any “skin in the game” on the part of the participant. The participant has no responsibility; therefore, he/she is not challenged. In program-based discipleship the facilitator does all the homework and the participant just has to show up. Tragically, in this scenario the participant is rarely challenged, and growth is miniscule. It could be

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<sup>61</sup> Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 119.

<sup>62</sup> Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 119.

<sup>63</sup> Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 119-120.

suggested that the reason so many people in today’s church are spiritually immature is because of the programmatic structure of traditional church. Colin Marshall and Tony Payne suggest, “Not nearly enough one-to-one personal work is happening in the most traditional church structures. Structured activities and group events have taken over, and those on the pastoral team spend their time organizing and managing rather than chasing and discipling and training people.”<sup>64</sup>

Wilkins addresses this concern in what he labeled “institutionalism”:

Institutions are designed to promote individuals, to minister to individuals so that the individuals are equipped to handle life on their own. Institutions are a means to an end, and the end is a person who is equipped to walk with God through life. But what often happens is that our institutions become so important to that goal that sometimes we turn things around and our institutions become more important than the individuals, and the individual is then made to serve the institutions. In this case the institutions become the end, that the individual is the means to the end of serving the institution.<sup>65</sup>

In *Rediscovering Discipleship*, Gallaty chronicles the historical differences that have changed the way churches in the West approach teaching as opposed to the way teaching was done in the Bible. Gallaty explains that the Hebraic teaching model was based off a relational and apprenticeship model rather than lecture-type instruction. He attributes this difference in teaching style to that of the Greeks as opposed to the Hebraic culture of the Jews.<sup>66</sup>

The relational discipleship process requires participants to share equal responsibility for preparation, self-disclosure, and an agenda of change. Every believer in the group may be at differing levels of maturity, but all participants have equal roles and

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<sup>64</sup> Marshall and Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine*, 153. This text uses the metaphor of the trellis and vine to view the church. The trellis being the structure of the church and the vine being the people—where the fruit actually grows.

<sup>65</sup> Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 353-54.

<sup>66</sup> Gallaty, *Rediscovering Discipleship*, 44.

rotate facilitating and leading the sessions. The relational process averts passivity and requires responsibility, which in turn encourages growth.

### **Individuality**

Not only does a relational discipleship process that emphasizes disciple making foster intimacy and responsibility, but also individuality.<sup>67</sup> Every believer is different and has had different life experiences and has been molded by different environments. Each member comes into the discipleship process with individual needs. The relational process gives the group leverage and flexibility to address each individual need while still ministering to each person in the group. Although a curriculum is utilized to create structure, the difference between a relational discipleship process versus a program is that a program emphasizes the curriculum while a relational process emphasizes the relationship.

### **Accountability**

Fourth, a relational discipleship process that emphasizes disciple making fosters accountability.<sup>68</sup> Accountability is one of the key elements to any disciple-making process. Accountability is important because as the Holy Spirit enables a believer to pursue holiness, accountable relationships become the lifeblood for personal growth.<sup>69</sup> Accountability is achieved most effectively in small, relational groups. Again, program-based discipleship that implements an instructor with numerous attendees does not lend itself to accountability.

In *Growing Up*, Gallaty elaborates on accountability by depositing four requirements that a relational disciple-making process encourages: compassion,

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<sup>67</sup> Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 120.

<sup>68</sup> Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 121.

<sup>69</sup> Gallaty, *Growing Up*, 39.



confidentiality, confrontation, and confession. Many in today's church culture bristle when accountability is mentioned because they often fear being exposed or have an aversion toward someone questioning them in regard to more personal issues of their life. Geiger, Kelley and Nation write, "Transformation flourishes when a disciple is in an interdependent posture; therefore, discipleship leaders must slaughter individualism rather than celebrate it."<sup>70</sup> Accountability, when implemented properly, is an act of compassion. Accountability encourages compassion on the part of the whole group.

Compassion has been defined as "your hurt in my heart." Compassion should be the response of believers to their brother or sister in Christ who is struggling with an area of sin. Accountability requires believers to remind themselves of the admonition of the apostle Paul as he decries, "But by the Grace of God, I am what I am" (1 Cor 15:10). Disciple-making relationships should avoid being judgmental; conversely, disciple making should not avoid confrontation.

Confrontation is necessary for a healthy discipleship process. Accountability, with the liberty of confrontation, spurs a believer on to holiness in their walk with Christ. One biblical character for illustration of this point is David when God restored him after he was confronted in his sin by courageous Nathan. Conversely, program-based discipleship provides an environment that enables people to be living in egregious sin and hide without ever being confronted. Within a relational discipleship process, the leader must assume the responsibility of teaching others about confrontation and confession from Scripture, carefully setting boundaries for how they will operate within the group.<sup>71</sup>

On top of compassion and confrontation, confession is also a necessary facet of accountability in the discipleship process. Confession by definition means to say the same

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<sup>70</sup> Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 159.

<sup>71</sup> Gallaty, *Growing Up*, 45.

thing or to agree with.<sup>72</sup> Thus, confession is encouraged for a healthy relationship with the Heavenly Father. Putnam and Harrington assert that a biblical church has an “authentic and healthy transparency that repeatedly points people back to the gospel.”<sup>73</sup> First John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Sin disrupts a believer’s fellowship with the Father; therefore, it is imperative that disciples keep short accounts with God by confessing sins.

Not only are disciples to confess sins to the Heavenly Father, but James encourages believers to confess sins to one another. James 5: 6 says, “Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” The confession of sin that takes place when believers hold each other accountable in a relational disciple-making process guards believers and in turn strengthens the church.

Because confession of sin and struggles are encouraged in disciple making groups, confidentiality is of utmost importance. Awareness of deep-seated sins in others’ lives is a holy stewardship. No single action will destroy a disciple making relationship built on discretion and trust faster than a breach of confidentiality.<sup>74</sup> Breach of confidentiality also has the potential to hurt believers and turn them away from the church altogether. Woe to the one who breaks confidentiality. Confidentiality adds an element to accountability that has the ability to forge lasting relationships that instigate spiritual growth and confidence within members of the group.

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<sup>72</sup> Gallaty, *Growing Up*, 43.

<sup>73</sup> Putnam and Harrington, *Discipleship*, 104.

<sup>74</sup> Gallaty, *Growing Up*, 42.

## **Conclusion**

An effective small group discipleship process endeavors to emphasize relationships that foster spiritual transformation and in turn spurs on replication and kingdom growth. Chapter 4 will chronicle the implementation of the eight-week sermon series that sought to increase the discipleship knowledge of the members at Hillabee Baptist Church.

## CHAPTER 4

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MINISTRY PROJECT

This chapter details the implementation of the four project goals required to establish small group discipleship at HBC. The four goals required assessing the disciple-making knowledge and practice of the members of HBC, increasing the knowledge of the congregation by preaching an eight-week sermon series from the Pastoral Epistles, engaging a small group of pastor-selected men in a discipleship relationship to make disciples through leading small groups, and developing a three-to-five year strategic plan outline that sought to implement an ongoing effort to build and sustain a culture of small group discipleship at HBC.

#### **Pre-Sermon Series Discipleship Survey**

The first goal was to assess the knowledge and practice of disciple making among the adult members of HBC. At the time of the project, the subject of making disciples had already been discussed for nearly two years. The goal was accomplished by conducting a pre-sermon series discipleship survey composed of forty questions covering eight specific distinctive areas of discipleship and disciple making. The eight areas of focus were Bible engagement, obeying God, serving God and others, sharing Christ, exercising faith, seeking God, building relationships and displaying transparency.<sup>1</sup>

I administered the survey to determine the congregation's disciple making knowledge before the eight-week sermon series on November 11, 2018, by distributing the five-page paper survey among the adult Sunday school classes at HBC. Because of

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 1 for survey.

the demographic makeup of the adult membership, I chose a hand-written method of assessment. The three factors that contributed to this decision were availability of, aversion to, and acquaintance with technology. Many aging adults either do not have access to a computer or are not familiar enough with computers to perform an electronic survey. I concluded that participation would be greater if a mechanical method of survey was administered in lieu of a computer-based survey.

The assessment tool utilized in this project was initially chosen because of its effectiveness in assessing the disciple making knowledge on a similar project in size and scope.<sup>2</sup> The discipleship survey was developed with a parallel emphasis on the eight attributes of a mature disciple previously outlined.

I assigned each pre-sermon series discipleship survey with a code based on the Sunday school room number and the initials of the participant. This identification system provided anonymity while also aiding in post-survey analysis. Specific instructions were given to each Sunday school teacher as to how to administer the survey. The surveys were analyzed using a five-point Likert scale that ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The congregation filled out the survey in Sunday school and the surveys were collected on the following Monday morning. Participation in the pre-survey yielded forty-seven usable surveys.<sup>3</sup>

The pre-sermon series discipleship survey showed that the congregation's perception of their knowledge in areas such as Bible engagement and obedience to God to be strong, while sharing Christ, serving God and others, and building relationships were weak. The most telling piece of data from the pre-sermon series discipleship survey came from question 38, which addressed the frequency that each church member shared

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<sup>2</sup> The survey used in this project was adapted from the research project of Mark Gainey, "Developing a Disciple-Making Strategy for Deerfoot Baptist Church, Trussville, Alabama" (DMin project, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018), 124-28.

<sup>3</sup> Useable surveys were those that had been filled out correctly and had been properly coded.

his/her faith in Christ. The survey showed that 37 percent of the church population shared their faith zero times in the last six months, with another 44 percent only sharing Christ one to two times in the same measured period. These numbers show that 81 percent of the church has shared their faith in Christ two times or less in the last six months. The numbers are discouraging, but not surprising. Actually, these numbers are probably optimistic due to the fact that some people may have chosen not to mark “zero” on the survey, but in actuality do not share their faith at all.

Two conclusions were garnered from the pre-sermon series discipleship survey. First, the majority of the responses to the pre-sermon series discipleship survey (see appendix 4) were fours and fives, indicating a level of contentment among the HBC congregation as to their overall discipleship knowledge. Second, the results showed that the congregation felt confident of their biblical knowledge but had not grasped the concept of making disciples.

After analyzing the pre-sermon series discipleship survey, the results were entered into an Excel spreadsheet to be later compared in a t-test for dependent samples analysis. At this point, the two-week preliminary survey process was completed and the first goal was deemed successful.

### **Sermon Series**

The second phase of establishing small group discipleship at HBC was to preach a series of sermons from Paul’s Pastoral Epistles that highlighted the distinctive traits of a disciple who seeks to build disciples. The sermon series began on November 25, 2018. The goal of the preaching series was to increase the congregation’s biblical knowledge of discipleship and disciple making. I delivered the sermon series during the Sunday morning worship service, which consisted of eight sermons that corresponded with the eight areas of discipleship outlined. The sermon series highlighted the eight areas of concentration that are pivotal to the discipleship process and spiritual growth. The preaching series titles were as follows:

1. “The Disciple and Bible and Engagement,” November 25, 2018
2. “The Transformed Life,” December 2, 2018
3. “Serve the Lord with Gladness,” December 9, 2018
4. “Disciples are Evangelist,” December 16, 2018
5. “Shining Through,” January 6, 2019
6. “Longing to Belong,” January 13, 2019
7. “Exercising Faith,” January 20, 2019
8. “Seeking God,” January 27, 2019

In addition to increasing the congregation’s knowledge about discipleship and making disciples, the sermon series also sought to challenge any preconceived notions regarding discipleship and to encourage the congregation to engage in disciple making.

### **Sermon 1: Biblical Engagement**

In an effort to increase the disciple-making knowledge of the congregation at HBC, I presented an eight-week sermon series focusing on eight distinctive traits of a disciple. All of the sermons were taken from the Pastoral Epistles, emphasizing the disciple-making dynamic of Paul and Timothy’s relationship. The first sermon dealt with the subject of Bible engagement and also introduced the sermon series. To set the tone as to the direction the series of messages, I began the first sermon by sharing a quote about disciple making from Marshall and Payne’s work *Trellis and the Vine*:

The aim of Christian ministry is not to build attendance on Sunday, bolster the membership roll, get more people into small groups, or expand the budget (as important and valuable as all of these things are!). The fundamental goal is to make disciples who make other disciples, to the glory of God. We want to see people converted from being dead in their transgressions to being alive in Christ: and, once converted, to be followed up and established as mature disciples of Jesus; and, as they become established, to be trained in knowledge, godliness, and skills so that they will in turn make disciples of others.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine* (Waterloo, Australia: Matthias Media, 2009), 152.

The quote encapsulates the argument as to why disciple making is of paramount importance. The text for the first sermon was 2 Timothy 3: 14-17 as Paul is exhorting Timothy to continue in his study of the Scriptures. The text emphasizes the importance for disciples to stay engaged in the Word of God.

First, Paul emphasizes that the Scriptures are reliable. The Scriptures are reliable because they are given by the inspiration of God and are God-breathed. The Greek word *theopnustos* is translated as “God breathed.” The Scriptures bring life to Christians as they study God’s Word. Tony Merida summarizes, “All scripture is Truth; therefore, we can’t pick and choose parts that we like, which commands we wish to obey, and which doctrines we will believe. All of it is from the Spirit of God and therefore, all of it is good, binding, and true.”<sup>5</sup>

The second observation from Paul’s letter to Timothy as to why Bible engagement is important to the disciple is that the Scriptures are profitable. The word “profitable” means helpful or advantageous. Paul gives four ways the Scriptures are profitable for the disciple: doctrine, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness. These four traits demonstrate that the Scriptures not only point sinners to salvation, but also direct believers in sanctification. The goal of disciples is to be transformed into the image of Christ. God does that through the work of the Holy Spirit in conjunction and cooperation with the Word of God.

The final observation from 2 Timothy 3 is found in verse 17, which notes that the Scriptures are indispensable. The word “indispensable” in this verse points to the fact that the man of God is “thoroughly equipped” when he engages and immerses himself in the Word of God.

The first sermon on Bible engagement concluded by sharing that with each

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<sup>5</sup> David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville: B & H, 2013), 200.



passing year, Americans think that the Bible is just another book written by men increases. This sermon sought to challenge disciples to engage the Word of God and to be a disciple who makes a disciple in an age of skeptics.

## **Sermon 2: Disciples Are Obedient**

The second week of the sermon series focused on disciples and their obedience to the commands of Scripture. The life of a fully devoted disciple is characterized as a transformed life. The sermon began by sharing about the life of Cameron Underwood, a man who underwent a twenty-five-hour surgery to receive a transplanted face.<sup>6</sup> Underwood experienced a total life transformation as a result of his surgery. The surgery, which was performed at NYU's Langone Health, enabled him to experience life like he never imagined prior to the surgery. I pointed out in the sermon that people who place their faith in the Savior Jesus Christ can experience an even greater life transformation.

Titus 3: 1-8 was the text for the second sermon in the series. Paul instructs Titus on how the Christians at the Crete churches should conduct themselves. Paul notes that disciples who are obedient to the commands of Jesus respect authority, are obedient, and are ready for every good work.

Submission to the authority of Scripture demands submission to human authorities. Paul reiterates an exhortation previously voiced to the Roman church in Romans 13 and with Peter's writings found in 1 Peter 2: 13-17. Disciples are called to obedience in regard to respecting authority, but also in restraining their actions. Paul calls Titus to speak evil of no one and to avoid quarreling. Paul reinforces the idea that obedience is the result of a transformed heart and reminds Titus that believers once walked in foolishness and disobedience, but when the goodness and loving kindness of

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<sup>6</sup> Marina Pitofsky, "Calif. Man on Face Transplant: 'It's Important to Share My Story to Help Inspire Others,'" *USA Today*, November 29, 2018, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/11/29/26-year-old-cameron-undergoes-face-transplant/2153841002/>.

God appeared, He saved them by His grace.

### **Sermon 3: Disciples Are Servants**

Week 3 of the discipleship series dealt with how disciples are called to be servants. The text was 1 Timothy 4: 6-11, where Paul exhorts Timothy to be a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this third sermon of the series I asked, “What motivates a disciple to serve?” This sermon offered six factors as motivation for service: obedience, gratitude, gladness, forgiveness, humility, and love.

Disciples serve out of obedience to the commands of Scripture. Deuteronomy 13: 4 says, “You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him, and keep His commandment and obey His voice; you shall *serve* Him and hold fast to Him.” To the disciple, service is a matter of obedience. Paul also exhorted Titus to be “obedient and to be ready for every good work” (Titus 3: 1). Disciples are also motivated by a sense of gratitude for God’s goodness and grace. First Samuel 12:24 says, “Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things he has done for you.”

Disciples not only are motivated to serve out of a call to obedience and gratitude, but also *gladness*. Psalms 100:2 calls disciples to “serve the Lord with gladness.” God is not glorified by service if it is done begrudgingly. A disciple who serves the Lord with gladness views serving the Lord as a privilege and not a burden. Disciples serve the Lord with gladness.

In addition, disciples serve with a sense of forgiveness. Isaiah 6: 6-8 illustrates the heart of believer who serves out of forgiveness:

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal *which* he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth *with it*, and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged.” Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here *am I!* Send me.

The last two factors that motivate a disciple to serve are humility and love. Both of these traits are seen in Christ as He humbled Himself to the point of a servant and became obedient to the Father’s commands, even to the point of death on a cross. Last,

disciples serve out of a deep sense of love. Love is at the heart of service for a disciple. Second Corinthians 5: 14-15 reminds disciples that the love of Christ compels believers to serve. Mark 10: 45 exclaimed that Jesus came not to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.

#### **Sermon 4: Disciples Share Christ**

The fourth sermon of the sermon series focused on evangelism and how disciples share Christ. First Timothy 4: 12-16 was the Pastoral Epistle text used to demonstrate how disciples are called to share Christ. This sermon displayed that disciples share Christ by the words they say, the way they live, and by the friends they make. Paul tells Timothy to set an example in speech, suggesting that the words disciples speak should be Christ honoring. Jesus commands his disciples in Mark's version of the Great Commission to "go into all the world and preach the gospel." Acts 1: 8 reminds disciples that when disciples are faithful to share Christ, their words are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Disciples also share Christ by the way they live. Paul says that disciples are to set an example in speech and conduct. Disciples that model Christ-like behavior are a witness to the transforming power of God. Paul shares the same thought with Titus by exhorting Titus to show himself as a model for good works because in doing so he will silence those who seek to speak evil of disciples. The life of a disciple is to be a sweet-smelling aroma that draws others to the Savior.

Disciples share Christ by the words they say and the life they live, but also by the friends they make. Earlier in Paul's letter to Timothy, Paul wrote for Timothy to "entrust" the truths of the gospel to other faithful men who would be able to teach others. Paul emphasizes the importance of making friends and building relationships. This sermon also emphasized the importance of making friends with lost people. To illustrate the

principle of befriending unbelievers with the intent of sharing Christ, Dann Spader's book on *4 Chair Discipling* was referenced.<sup>7</sup>

### **Sermon 5: Disciples Are Transparent**

The fifth sermon sought to display how disciples are to be transparent. Transparency in disciples is important to the unity and harmony of the body of Christ, while superficiality and haughtiness only leads to polarization. In 1 Timothy 1: 15 Paul says that he is the "chief of sinners," which demonstrates the type of transparency to be present in life of a disciple.

This sermon identifies accountability, availability, and being approachable as the three factors that demonstrate transparency in a disciple. A disciple's accountability deals with his/her accountability to God and to fellow disciples. I illustrated the necessity for accountability in disciples' lives by quoting authors such as Robby Gallaty, who states, "Accountable relationships become the lifeblood for personal growth."<sup>8</sup>

Disciples also demonstrate transparency by being available for others to share their struggles. Disciples need other believers who make themselves available and invest time with them. The life and ministry of Christ was used to show that Jesus never saw people as an interruption or inconvenience but made Himself available to minister to people in various situations.

Last, disciples are approachable, meaning that they are to receive other disciples with a spirit of gentleness and forgiveness. Paul states in Galatians 6:1-3, "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's

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<sup>7</sup> Dann Spader, *4 Chair Discipling: Growing a Movement of Disciple-Makers* (Chicago: Moody, 2014), 53-65.

<sup>8</sup> Robby Gallaty, *Growing Up: How to Be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples* (Nashville: B & H, 201), 39.

burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.”

This sermon concluded by defining the word transparency as “shining through.” I made the point that when disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ are transparent, they let the light of Christ and His gospel shine through their lives.

### **Sermon 6: Disciples Build Relationships**

The sixth distinctive of a disciple discussed was the subject of building relationships. I chose 2 Timothy 4: 9-16 as the text for this sermon. The premise of the sermon was that a disciple should be actively engaging in relationships with other disciples with the intent to make disciples. To introduce the sermon, I quoted from David Platt’s *Radical*: “God has not given us an effortless step-by-step formula for impacting the nations for His glory. He has given us people.”<sup>9</sup>

Sermon 6 of the series outlined the need for relationships, neglect of relationships, and importance of nurturing relationships. Today’s world is more connected than ever before, but also more disconnected relationally. I shared Mike Breen’s *Building a Disciple Making Culture* to emphasize the point that “we are a society of disconnected people longing for connections.”<sup>10</sup>

Jesus’ relationships with his disciples emphasize the necessity of healthy relationships for the growing disciples. When relationships are valued, it leads to restoration with the implications for kingdom growth. I demonstrated from the book of Acts how the relationship between Mark and Baranbas restored Mark’s usefulness for ministry and eventually aided in the restoration of his relationship with Paul. Sermon 6

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<sup>9</sup> David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2010), 93

<sup>10</sup> Mike Breen and Steve Cockram, *Building a Discipling Culture* (Pawleys Island, SC: 3 Dimension Ministries, 2009), 73-75.

concluded with a story from Breen’s work that illustrated the point that people “long to belong.”<sup>11</sup> Disciples miss out on opportunities to be involved in kingdom growth when they fail to foster healthy relationships with other disciples.

### **Sermon 7: Disciples Exercise Their Faith**

The aim of sermon 7 of the series was to demonstrate how disciples exercise their faith. The sermon noted in the introduction that the word “faith” is found in the NKJV of the Bible on 389 occasions. I shared a quote from O. C. S. Wallace that defined faith as “more than an impulse of emotion, a direction of thought, a fleeting preference of the will; it [faith] is a relation to Jesus Christ in which the spirit of obedience has taken possession of the citadel of the soul.”<sup>12</sup>

The Pastoral Epistle text was from 2 Timothy 2: 1-13 and developed the point that disciples exercise faith when they trust God when life is difficult, when life is indefinite, when life is dependent. In 2 Timothy 2, Paul uses metaphors of a soldier, farmer, and an athlete to illustrate the faith of disciples. The soldier, farmer and athlete demonstrated how a disciple is to live a life of faith.

Paul is emphasizing that a disciple will have to endure hardships like a “good soldier of the Jesus Christ” (2 Tim 2: 3). I shared a quote from Philip Towner’s commentary on the Pastoral Epistles to remind the congregation that “Timothy’s path was leading to Rome and suffering. It was a hard path in every way.”<sup>13</sup> Paul emphasized to Timothy, his disciple, that to fulfill his ministry, he must exercise faith in God and fulfill his ministry.

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<sup>11</sup> Breen and Cockram, *Building a Discipling Culture*, 73-75

<sup>12</sup> O. C. S. Wallace, *What Baptists Believe* (Nashville: The Sunday School Board of SBC, 1934), 41.

<sup>13</sup> Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2006), 490-91.

Disciples exercise faith by trusting God when life is indefinite. The athlete continues to compete even though he does not know the outcome. Exercising faith means that the disciple continues to follow God totally believing in the promises of God. The illustration was used of an African impala, which is able to jump to a height of ten feet and cover a distance of thirty feet yet can be contained in an enclosure with a solid three-foot-high wall. The impala will not jump if it cannot see where it will land. Hence the case with many believers, fear prevents them from exercising faith.

Last, I used the character of the farmer to show that disciples who exercise faith depend on God. Paul's metaphor shows how a disciple's life of faith is likened to a farmer who tills the land and plants the crop but relies completely on God for the increase. A life of faith is encapsulated in the verse found three times in scripture: "The just shall live by faith" (Gal 3: 11).

### **Sermon 8: Disciples Seek after God**

The last sermon of the series dealt with how disciples seek the truth, strive to live out the truth of God's Word, and invite others to do likewise. I took sermon 8 from 2 Timothy 2: 15-26 and endeavored to synthesize much of what had been shared in the previous series of sermons. I reminded the congregation that discipleship has been defined as "helping someone find and follow Jesus."

I approached sermon 8 from the three standpoints of the information, transformation, and replication. Disciples seek information in the truth of God's Word by studying God's Word. I pointed out that just as the teaching of the truth of God's Word was important in Timothy's day, it is also important in our day of misinformation and false information. Paul exhorts Timothy to "be diligent to rightly divide the word of truth" and pursue faith, love, and peace with the people of God (2 Tim 2:15). Seeking God as a disciple means seeking the truth of God's Word, but also entails being transformed by the truth. Transformation means that God progressively changes people from the inside out as they live out the truth of God's Word. Discipleship is not just

informational, it is transformational.

I also emphasized replication as the way in which disciples multiply and reproduce their lives in others. As disciples seek God and grow as disciples, they are to also help others grow. I challenged and encouraged the congregation to replicate their lives in others. To illustrate how absurd it is for a church not to make disciples, I used the hypothetical scenario from Leroy Eims in *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*. Eims proposes that a company that is in the business of making shoes sets a goal of producing as many shoes as possible.<sup>14</sup> Eims challenges the reader to think about how absurd it is to surmise that a company in the business to make shoes does not make shoes. I shared this scenario to demonstrate how untenable it is for the church not to make disciples.

The preaching series phase of this project was completed on January 20, 2019. At the conclusion of the sermon series, a post-survey was administered on February 3, 2019. The second goal of the project was deemed complete at the end of the post-survey. The results of the post-survey determined the effectiveness of the preaching series and is discussed in a chapter 5.

### **Preparing Future Leaders**

The third goal of the ministry project entailed training a group of three pastor-selected men by engaging in a twelve-month discipleship relationship. The discipleship relationship began in June of 2018, ran concurrently with the sermon series, and was in progress past the completion of the series. I met with the small group each week on Sunday afternoons for one-hour sessions. Each session consisted of prayer, Bible study, scripture memorization, and accountability.<sup>15</sup>

Each of the three participants took lead roles on alternating Sundays to foster

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<sup>14</sup> LeRoy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 59-60.

<sup>15</sup> Dlife Bible study was used as the curriculum for this pastor-selected small group. See appendix 6 for sample of the curriculum.



leadership characteristics and responsibilities. The small group structure allowed each member to engage the Word of God and learn while also giving each participant a responsibility in each session. The structure prevents “just showing up” for a Bible study and requires each participant to be prepared to contribute. The three small group participants were punctual, and participation was consistent. The success of the third goal was determined by the results of the post-survey and is discussed in the evaluation section found in chapter 5.

### **Post-Survey**

I conducted the post-survey on Sunday, February 3, 2019, during the Sunday school hour by paper survey. The format of the post-survey was the same as the preliminary survey with the addition of a final question to determine if the participant had attended at least six of the eight sermons of the sermon series.

Participation in the post-survey decreased as compared to the preliminary survey and resulted in some of the surveys not being used for the post-survey analysis. The post-survey yielded twenty-four useable surveys from the forty-seven preliminary surveys previously collected from which to analyze data. The post-surveys were grouped and analyzed, and the data was entered into an Excel spreadsheet to determine the change in disciple making knowledge from the pre-survey. The pre- and post-surveys were matched up based on codes marked on the surveys.

Although the initial findings of the post-survey analysis showed that the preaching series did not increase the disciple-making knowledge of the general population of the congregation, the post-survey did reveal an increase among the young adult Sunday school class. The data analysis also showed that the pastor-selected small group showed an increase in their disciple-making knowledge as a result of attending the discipleship preaching series and engaging in a small-group discipleship relationship. Upon completion of the post-survey and analysis of the results, goals 2 and 3 were deemed completed. More details regarding the data are discussed in the evaluation portion of the project

found in chapter 5.

### **Plan for Reproducing Disciples**

The fourth goal of the project was to develop a four-year strategic plan outline that sought to implement an ongoing effort to build and sustain small group discipleship at HBC. A strategic plan outline was needed to ensure that a culture of small group discipleship would continue and advance at HBC.

The strategic plan outline required defining the overall vision and mission of HBC and outlining a plan that worked within the framework of the discipleship strategy currently in place. The strategic plan outline was modeled after a format developed by the University of Kansas and uses the acrostic “VMOSA,” which represents (1) vision, (2) mission, (3) objectives, (4) strategy, and (5) action plan.<sup>16</sup> The following paragraphs overview each of these positions in relation to HBC and the strategic plan outline.

The development of a strategic plan outline to establish small group discipleship required working in conjunction with the overall vision of HBC. The vision of HBC has been in place since 2015, and states that “Hillabee Baptist Church is to *intimately experience* and then *intentionally express* the grace of Jesus Christ in our community, our country and our world.”<sup>17</sup> The vision statement emphasizes discipleship, evangelism, and missions in that as believers intimately experience the grace of God in their personal walk with Christ, believers are, in turn, intentionally expressing God’s grace in the community, country and world (Acts 1: 8).

The mission of HBC seeks to guide the church toward achieving the vision by sharing, seeking, and serving the Lord Jesus Christ. The mission of HBC begins with

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<sup>16</sup> University of Kansas, “Developing an Action Plan,” accessed April 25, 2019, <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/strategic-planning/develop-action-plans/main>.

<sup>17</sup> The vision and mission statements for HBC as established and voted on by the congregation in 2015.

sharing the love of Christ with others to build relationships that enlarge and glorify the kingdom of God. The word *share* emphasizes the evangelistic nature of the mission and encourages members to make disciples “as they are going” in fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matt 28: 18-20). The other word that guides members of HBC toward intimately experiencing and intentionally expressing the Grace of God in our community, country, and world is the word *seek*. *Seek* reminds members that they are to not only be sharing the love of Christ, but also be seeking Christ in their personal walk in order to be equipped in their faith. Last, the final facet of the HBC mission is to *serve*. *Serve* calls members to be faithful in using their time, talents, and treasures in the building up of the body of Christ.

The next phase in building and sustaining a small group discipleship culture at HBC consisted of identifying the objective. The objective of achieving the mission of HBC required a strategy to be in place to produce disciples who are actively sharing Christ, seeking to grow in their walk with Christ, and in turn serving Christ with their time, talents, and treasures. The objective gives clarity and focus in the endeavor of producing disciples.

The strategy to make disciples has a threefold approach composed of *reaching* out with the Gospel for Christ, *teaching* believers to be fully devoted followers of Christ, and *releasing* believers to go out and exalt Christ by sharing, seeking, and serving His kingdom. This strategy provides a reproducible process by which to make disciples who make disciples.

In Matthew 28: 20, Jesus commands His disciples to teach others His commandments. The second phase of the HBC discipleship strategy seeks to teach believers how to walk with Christ in an effort to develop mature believers who can be released out to make more disciples. The HBC strategy is contingent upon the teaching facet of the paradigm. Generational disciple-making cannot be achieved if small group discipleship is not implemented and emphasized. The goal of building and sustaining a reproducible process for making disciples involved working in conjunction with the

framework currently in place at HBC.

### **Action Steps**

A strategic plan outline was created to guide the process of making disciples who make disciples. The final phase of the strategic plan outline provides the action steps required for implementation and consists of (1) challenging the congregation, (2) calling the leaders to lead the small groups, (3) considering the curriculum, (4) coordinating the sessions, (5) and continuing the process.<sup>18</sup>

### **Challenging the Congregation**

The first step in implementing a plan for establishing small group discipleship will be to communicate to the congregation why the implementation of small group discipleship is needed. The foundation of establishing the need for small group discipleship has already been laid during the eight-week sermon series; therefore, challenging the congregation as to the direction the church needs to go entails reviewing research data collected during the implementation of goals 1 and 2 and reviewing the overall vision, mission, and strategy of HBC. The challenge will be to emphasize the necessity of implementing small group discipleship to ensure the future growth of the church and to reiterate that the small group sessions will not be another form of program-based Bible study. The challenge action step will begin in the summer of 2019 leading up to the launch of the small group session in the fall.

### **Call the Leaders**

The second step will be to select those who will lead the small group sessions. Initially, two groups will be selected: one male group and one female group. Each

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<sup>18</sup> The action step process was derived by using the University of Kansas paradigm for developing action plans which ask five questions: (1) What action or change will occur?, (2) Who will carry it out?, (3) When will it take place, and for how long?, (4) What resources are needed?, and (5) Who should know what? University of Kansas, "Developing an Action Plan."

member of the small group will be responsible for a portion of the study during each session. Group leaders will act mostly as facilitators of the groups in lieu of teachers. Nonetheless, the leader should be a mature believer who exhibits sound theology, consistency in the spiritual disciplines, and moral integrity. In addition to leading the small group, the leader will coordinate group mission projects and ensure proper communication among group members.

### **Coordinate the Sessions**

The third step was to coordinate a time for the small group sessions. Small group discipleship sessions will take place on Wednesday evenings at 6 p.m., starting September 2019.<sup>19</sup> Wednesday evenings will not require members to attend sessions in addition to regular church times. Also, the mid-week service time selection is in keeping with the framework already in place at HBC. Two small groups will be implemented initially and consist of one male and one female group. Each group will be made up of four to five participants.

### **Consider the Curriculum**

The curriculum used for the small group sessions is the *Dlife* Bible study.<sup>20</sup> *Dlife* promotes discipleship as a lifestyle and not just another Bible study. The *Dlife* Bible study is a four-year curriculum that guides disciples through the Old and New Testaments as well as emphasizes relational and transformational aspects of discipleship, while promoting replication. For example, the *Dlife* curriculum promotes replication by requiring each member of the small group to have a responsibility in the class from week to week. The *Dlife* curriculum also endorses other important aspects of discipleship that are essential to maturing and multiplying disciples, such as prayer, Bible engagement, missions,

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<sup>19</sup> This timeframe was selected because it corresponds with the beginning of new church year.

<sup>20</sup> See appendix 6 for sample *Dlife* lesson.

fellowship, and community.

### **Continue the Process**

The final action step will be to set up a process to ensure replication. The replication process will be encouraged by challenging group members to start new groups on a reoccurring basis. The curriculum is designed around a four-year matriculation, but also allows flexibility for those ready to start new groups on a yearly basis. Group members who exhibit the maturity to disciple others will be encouraged to do so at the end of each yearly cycle.

The strategic plan outline will be measured by presenting the plan to peer pastors and professors for review, critique, and endorsement. Three peer pastors were chosen to provide feedback based on their ministry philosophy in disciple-making strategies in addition to other ministry similarities, such as size, demographic, and worship style of their representative churches. Additional critique and endorsement will also be garnered from Bill Wilks, the developer of the DLife curriculum, as well as John David Trentham, professor at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and supervisor of the project. Meetings will be conducted with each advisor to discuss the plan and feedback given as to the viability of the plan. The meetings will be held to discuss the details of the plan either in person or by phone. Details regarding the nature of the feedback will be further outlined in chapter 5.

The strategic plan outline was presented to the deacon body at HBC on May 5, 2019, for approval and implementation of the plan. Approval for implementation of the plan was given and the estimated date to begin the implementation was discussed as to prepare the church for the transition.

### **Conclusion**

The four project goals were met and the overall the project was a success. I will continue to preach the Word and prayerfully seek other “faithful men who are able to

teach others.” The implementation of the project revealed that the overall purpose of establishing small group discipleship at HBC will require prayer and planning. The implementation of this project has been successful in establishing a language and creating a culture that is ready to accept the challenge of establishing small group discipleship. Portions of the congregation are very receptive to the disciple-making mandate, and because of that the future looks bright. This project is just the beginning of kingdom growth at HBC. I look forward to seeing God work in the lives of the congregation of HBC as they seek to be disciples who build disciples.

## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

This chapter outlines my evaluation of the ministry project. The following paragraphs evaluate the project's purpose, goals, strengths, and weaknesses. This evaluation also examines what could have been done differently in an effort to enhance the effectiveness of the ministry project. The evaluation concludes by reflecting on theological issues relating to discipleship in addition to highlighting areas of personal and spiritual growth.

#### **Evaluation of the Project's Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to establish a small group discipleship process among the members of Hillabee Baptist Church in Alexander City, Alabama. This project was successful in establishing a small group discipleship process by which HBC can continue to make disciples.

Historically, HBC had employed an institutional model for ministry with minimal success in multiplying disciples. I developed this project to influence that culture. The Bible is clear in its mandate to "make disciples" and this project attempted to establish a culture of discipleship that would comply with that biblical command. The Lord Jesus invested His life in a small group of men and then sent them out to do likewise. This project sought to return and reestablish the disciple-making culture exemplified by Jesus and demonstrated in Scripture. This project sought a discipleship process that focused on a biblical model of relationships, transformation, and replication over traditional programs that favored educational-type models. In accordance with 2 Timothy 2: 2, this project



attempted to establish a generation of leaders who aspired to be disciples and build other disciples.

The implications for this project are twofold. First, this project contributes to the spiritual growth of disciples by intentionally engaging disciples in disciple-making relationships. The second implication is kingdom growth. When disciples grow in their faith, they engage others with their faith and kingdom growth results. These implications have potentially exponential effects on the future of HBC and the surrounding community.

### **Evaluation of the Project's Goals**

The goals for this project entailed assessing the knowledge of the congregation, increasing the disciple-making knowledge, and engaging a small group of pastor-selected men in order to establish small group discipleship at HBC. The project goals were successfully carried out and the following paragraphs outline the details.

#### **Goal 1**

The first goal of the project sought to assess the knowledge of the adult membership at HBC. The goal was measured by using a paper survey developed specifically in correlation with the eight TDA discipleship distinctives outlined in the project. The pre-sermon series discipleship survey consisted of forty questions and was administered during the Sunday school hour. Each of the eight disciple-making distinctives was represented with approximately five questions. For instance, Bible engagement was measured by questions 2, 10, 18, 25, and 34.<sup>1</sup>

The first goal of the project was considered successful and revealed important information about the congregation. The data analysis of the pre-sermon series discipleship survey based on the eight discipleship categories confirmed that the congregation's perception of their knowledge in areas such as Bible engagement and

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 1 for Church Discipleship Survey.

obedience to God to be the strongest, while sharing Christ, serving God and others, and building relationships were the weakest.

The task of taking the pre-sermon series discipleship survey provided additional information pertaining to the spiritual health of the congregation. Upon reviewing the surveys, I found that some church members were convicted by questions on the survey. For example, question 30, which deals with how many times in the last six months members have invited an un-churched person to church, and question 31, which asks how congregants are involved in serving the community, yielded supplementary responses such as “that stings” and “ouch.”

The implementation of goal 1 revealed what I have observed over the past six years of serving as pastor of HBC, which was that the church has historically emphasized an educational type structure over a relational disciple making model. The institutional ministry model predominately employed in the past at HBC has produced a generation of believers who tend to focus more on the church structure and less on multiplying disciples. This exercise was profitable because it confirmed that the congregation needs to be continuously challenged as to their overall disciple making knowledge and future ministry emphasis should be in the area of small group discipleship.

## **Goal 2**

The second goal of the ministry project consisted of preaching a series of sermons to increase the disciple-making knowledge of the adult membership at HBC. The sermon series from Paul’s Pastoral Epistles was designed in correlation with the TDA, which outlines eight specific traits of discipleship. A thorough investigation of the Pastoral Epistles revealed the eight traits of discipleship and provided the structure in which to build the sermon series. The sermon series was biblical but not entirely expositional due to the fact that each of the focus categories of discipleship was demonstrated with other reference text found in the Pastoral Epistles. I delivered the

sermon series over an eleven-week period with a two-week intermission for the congregation to celebrate Christmas.

The act of preaching the sermon was extremely edifying for me as a pastor. The rigor of researching, preparing, and preaching the sermon series extended my working knowledge of exhorting others to “make disciples.” Much of the material found in chapters 2 and 3 of this project aided me tremendously in the administration of this goal. I found many of the illustrations for the sermons during the research phase of the project and they were included in the sermon series to demonstrate a clear mandate for discipleship in the church.

The post-sermon series discipleship survey analysis of the statistical data showed disappointing numbers for the congregation as a whole. Table 1 provides the results of the t-test for dependent samples for the congregation as a whole.

Table 1. Congregation t-test results

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	165.52	166.24
Variance	106.0933333	165.0233333
Observations	25	25
Pearson Correlation	0.716358677	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	24	
t Stat	-0.398665148	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.346832388	
t Critical one-tail	1.710882067	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.693664775	
t Critical two-tail	2.063898547	

The t-test for dependent samples analysis yielded a t-stat absolute value of .398, which is significantly less than the t Critical one-tail value of 1.71. The one-tailed test was used because there was a direction to the research hypothesis—the post-test score will be larger than the pre-test score. Since the t-stat of .39 was smaller than the Critical

one-tailed value of 1.71, the null hypothesis is the most attractive explanation.<sup>2</sup> These statistics show that there was *no* significant improvement from the preaching series. Although the congregation as a whole showed no significant improvement from the sermon series, others segments of the church population *did* show improvement. Table 2 provides the results of the t-test for dependent samples for the young adult Sunday school class.

Table 2. Young adult Sunday school class t-test results

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	169.5714286	176
Variance	119.952381	47
Observations	7	7
Pearson Correlation	0.743601387	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	6	
t Stat	-2.287478555	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.031079328	
t Critical one-tail	1.943180274	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.062158655	
t Critical two-tail	2.446911846	

The young adult Sunday school class, consisting of young married couples ranging in age from 25 to 45 showed improvement with a t-test analysis. Table 2 shows the means values increased from 169.571 to 176 and the t-stat of 2.28 > t-critical value of 1.94 and p value <.05. ( $t_{(6)} = 2.28, p = .031$ ). Since the t-stat value was more extreme than the critical value, the null hypothesis cannot be accepted. These numbers are indicative of an improvement in disciple-making knowledge among the young adult Sunday school class.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Neil J. Salkind, *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008), 193-94

<sup>3</sup> The analysis of improvement for the young adult Sunday school did not include the pastor-selected small group, although they are members of that particular class. The young adult Sunday school

The conclusion from the statistical data shows a distinction between those in the congregation who are ready to engage and embrace small group discipleship and those who are not. Much of the younger generation (50 and below) seems to grasp the small group discipleship model adumbrated in the Pastoral Epistles, while Baby Boomers and older adults seem reticent to move away from the discipleship training class institutional model.

I also analyzed the sermon series in accordance with the eight distinctive discipleship traits. I reviewed the post-survey to identify specific areas of improvement pertaining disciple-making knowledge. Several areas revealed mean scores that increased over the pre-survey results. Specifically, building relationships, serving God, sharing Christ, exercising faith, and Bible engagement all had increased post-survey mean scores. Seeking God, transparency, and obeying God had decreased mean values when compared to pre-survey results.

This data could be the result of a number of different variables, including effectiveness of a particular sermon in a certain area and/or the sermon series revealing weaknesses in a certain area of disciple-making knowledge, thereby causing a more critical review of one's knowledge during the post-survey. Nonetheless, the post-survey did reveal that the sermon series was effective in increasing the disciple-making knowledge for the young adult Sunday school class and was effective in increasing knowledge in five of the eight measured traits distinctive to discipleship.

Sermon delivery was not a measurable goal for this project, but a preaching rubric was also administered to validate the effectiveness of the preaching series. The rubric was completed by two retired pastors who are members of the congregation at

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class participants declared on the post-survey that they had attended at least six of the eight sermons in the series.

HBC. Both mentor pastors gave the sermons high marks but also provided encouragement and admonishment throughout the project's duration.<sup>4</sup>

### **Goal 3**

Goal 3 was to engage a group of three men in a small group relationship to demonstrate what small group discipleship entails with the intention of replication. This relationship started June 2018 and continued even past the duration of this project. The young men ranged in age from 25 to 37, and all possess the qualities needed to be a disciple who makes other disciples. I prayerfully selected these men because they displayed faithfulness, availability, and a teachable spirit. I met with these men each week on Sunday afternoon to study the Word, pray, recite memorized scriptures, and exercise an element of accountability. During the discipleship group relationship, the congregation observed the spiritual growth of these men. While meeting with the group over the last eight months, one of the men was ordained into the deacon ministry and the others have stepped up to serve in places of church ministry as well as in the community.

The small group of pastor-selected men showed improvement in their knowledge of discipleship as compared to the general population of the church. The post-survey analysis revealed that the small group did make a significant improvement from the pre-survey totals. Table 3 displays the small group improvement.

The small group growth can be seen by observing the t-stat of  $3.36 > t$ -critical value of 2.92 and p value  $< .05$ . ( $t_{(2)} = 3.36, p = .039$ ). The mean values also increased from 168.66 to 175.66. These numbers show that the sermon series was successful in encouraging growth among the small group in regard to disciple-making knowledge.

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<sup>4</sup> See appendix 2 for preaching rubric.

Table 3. Small group discipleship group t-test results

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	168.6666667	175.6666667
Variance	46.33333333	101.3333333
Observations	3	3
Pearson Correlation	0.982668823	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	2	
t Stat	-3.36269123	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.039101155	
t Critical one-tail	2.91998558	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.078202309	
t Critical two-tail	4.30265273	

Several observations come into focus after comparing the t-stat numbers from the young adult Sunday school class and the small group. First, the young adult Sunday school class appeared to benefit from the discipleship preaching series. Comparing the numbers of the two groups that showed growth (small group and young adult Sunday school class) from the preaching series, it appears that the small group grew more as a result of the preaching series than the young adult Sunday school class. The conclusion from the data points to the fact that preaching in combination with a small- group discipleship relationship provides the most fertile environment for increasing disciple-making knowledge.

#### **Goal 4**

The fourth goal was to develop a four-year strategic action outline that sought to implement an ongoing effort to build and sustain small group discipleship at HBC. The goal of building and sustaining a reproducible process for making disciples was derived by working in conjunction with the framework currently in place at HBC. A strategic plan outline was needed in order to guide the process of making disciples who make disciples. The final phase of the strategic plan outline entailed five steps that provided a procedure for introducing and implementing the small group discipleship and consisted of

(1) challenging the congregation, (2) calling the leaders to lead the small groups, (3) considering the curriculum, (4) coordinate the sessions, (5) and continuing the process. This goal was measured by presenting the plan to peer pastors who are currently implementing similar type discipleship strategies at their churches, and other leaders in the field of discipleship strategies. The fourth goal was considered successfully met when presented and approved by the deacon body at HBC.

Meetings that were held to discuss the implementation of the strategic action outline yielded beneficial discussion pertaining to the execution of the plan. Marc Hodges, pastor of Thorsby First Baptist Church, questioned the benefit of conducting the small group sessions during the mid-week service. Hodges shared that due to lack of participation he had avoided conducting discipleship groups during the mid-week service, instead opting for Sunday night small group discipleship. Hodges listed the main reason for selecting Sunday night over mid-week services as the transient nature of his congregation and the negative effect on mid-week service attendance. The congregation of HBC tends to be more locally situated and is already participating in mid-week services; therefore, Wednesday night services are a better option. Hodges also encouraged continued effort to preach discipleship and each week remind the congregation of the church's mission and objective in making disciples.

Bill Wilks provided positive feedback regarding implementation of small group discipleship. Wilks advised to champion small group discipleship from the standpoint of the overall mission of the church. Wilks added that small groups are essential to not only mature believers but are instrumental in reaching out to others in the community. Wilks encouraged that a small group discipleship process that is properly implemented will play a major role in the church's overall evangelistic endeavors. Wilks also agreed that the goal of twenty new small groups over a four-year period is an achievable goal.

The third peer pastor to provide measurement for the fourth goal was Mark Gainey, pastor of Fultondale First Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, and founder



of Incite Ministries. Gainey provided critique on session times and selected curriculum. Gainey takes a different approach in his ministry setting by conducting small group sessions on Sunday evenings off campus. Gainey also posited that his church does not use a curriculum but a process that he developed which gives the small group sessions structure and consistency.

Gainey suggested that in the future HBC could look at alternate ways of approaching small group discipleship such as different meeting times, locations, and studies. Gainey did endorse the proposed strategic action outline as a viable approach for HBC. In addition, Gainey added that the proposed strategic action outline provides the scope and sequence needed for initial implementation. Last, Gainey agreed that conducting the small group sessions during the mid-week service was viable for the demographic and cultural setting of HBC and provides a good way to introduce small group discipleship into the culture and working within the framework currently in place. Gainey agreed that the goal of twenty new small groups in four years was an achievable goal and would have substantial impact in “moving the needle” from an instructional model to a relational model of small group discipleship culture.

### **Strengths of the Project**

The quest to establish small group discipleship at HBC has several positive attributes. This project achieved its objective of establishing small group discipleship by spurring on the growth of new leaders, establishing a language of relational discipleship, and fostering a longing to learn more about God’s Word within a community of believers.

One of the most evident strengths of the project was the small group participants. The spiritual growth exhibited through their commitment, humility, and eagerness to grow in faith was refreshing to observe. They are being transformed by the Spirit of God and the Word of God into great men of God. The transformation displayed by these men is infectious to the remainder of the congregation and is helping to foster a new vision for HBC. One of the needs that spurred the initiative for this endeavor was the

need to develop new leaders at HBC. This project has been successful in forging new leaders for the kingdom. The small group of men possess the vigor and passion for the Lord Jesus Christ that is necessary for breaking generational barriers and challenging traditional methods.

Second, this project has not only forged new leaders but it has also fostered a new language. Prior to the implementation of this project, it was rare to hear the phrase “make disciples” used in a context other than preaching at HBC. As a result of this project, it is common to hear the phrase “make disciples” used in a variety of conversations around HBC campus. The preaching series also encouraged a new understanding in some about what it means to follow Christ. To some, following Christ now is not just about coming to church on Sunday or “checking off a box,” but is about being a disciple who makes other disciples.

This project also inspired a longing to learn in some members. New small groups are beginning to emerge as a result of this project. One group in particular includes the wives of the small group discipleship project participants. The ladies meet once a week and mirror the relational model exhibited by their husbands. In addition to new small groups being formed, there is also a new interest from others in the church to be a part of small group discipleship. A small group discipleship culture is beginning to emerge from the congregants as a result of this project.

An additional strength of this project is the potential for spiritual and numerical growth as a result of the implementation of building and sustaining a small group discipleship culture. The make-up and curriculum of each group will allow for each participant to mature and replicate on a yearly basis. The small groups consist of four to five participants in each group and provide a platform for disciples to grow deeper in their spiritual life while also providing greater opportunities to reach out to marginal church members and unbelievers. A goal of twenty new small groups forming over the next four

years is a reachable goal that will greatly increase HBC's impact in the community for the kingdom of God.

### **Weaknesses of the Project**

Some weaknesses did surface during the implementation of the project. Several problems arose during the pre- and post-sermon series discipleship survey portion of the project, and the most flagrant weakness had to do with collecting of survey data. I informed the congregation one week prior that they would be asked to fill out a discipleship survey pertaining to discipleship the following Sunday. The instructions for completing the surveys were attached to the surveys and placed in the classrooms so that the Sunday school teacher could give specific instructions in regard to completing the surveys. Many of the surveys were not completed properly. Out of the 100 surveys that were distributed for the pre-sermon series discipleship survey, only 47 came back properly completed. I found that many participants did not complete the whole survey, or they did not properly code the survey for future identification.

The results of the post-sermon series discipleship survey were even more discouraging. The accuracy of the statistical data depended on matching the pre-sermon series discipleship survey to the post-sermon series discipleship survey. Participation in the post-sermon series discipleship survey made collecting accurate data challenging. I also found that many people, when completing the post-sermon series discipleship survey, did not legibly encode their surveys. The surveys were encoded in a specific way so that only I would be able to determine the participant by looking at the code. Nonetheless, many participants scribbled their code making it difficult to match each post-sermon series discipleship survey with the pre-sermon series discipleship survey. Many post-sermon series discipleship surveys were not used because they could not be matched properly to pre-sermon series discipleship survey data.

Others completed the post-sermon series discipleship survey but did not check whether they had attended at least six of the eight sermons from the sermon series.

Ultimately, many problems arose during the project in an effort to collect useable data. Of the 47 pre-sermon series discipleship surveys completed correctly during the pre-survey, only 24 useable post-sermon series discipleship surveys were submitted. The conclusion was that only one fourth of the adult Sunday school population was measured.

The problems that surfaced during the survey process are indicative of deeper spiritual and ideological issues among some of the congregants at HBC. It appeared that some did not want the pastor to know who or what they had shared on the survey; therefore, they did not properly encode the survey. The discipleship trait of transparency is still a work in progress at HBC. One particular senior adult Sunday school class refused to participate in the post-sermon series discipleship survey because they said they had “already filled out the survey once and did not see the need in doing it again.” These types of issues made the collection of data for this project a challenge.

In all, the data that was collected was accurate and reliable, but greater insight could have been gleaned if an alternate method of data collection had been employed. In retrospect, more instructive leadership would have been helpful in outlining why the surveys were important and encouraging greater participation. I took for granted that the congregation would be eager to participate in something that was intended to be beneficial for the future of the church.

### **What I Would Do Differently**

Looking back on the project, I would utilize an alternate method of collecting data in lieu of using the manual surveys. Originally, I thought that doing the surveys by hand would be more conducive to the adult population at HBC and thereby yield better participation and results. That notion proved to be too optimistic.

In the future, I will utilize a computer-formatted survey for a number of reasons. First, computer surveys will save time and labor. I spent many hours sorting through surveys and evaluating answers. After evaluating, many more hours were spent sorting through mounds of data. Electronic surveys would help to streamline this process.

Second, I would utilize an electronic survey format to ensure accuracy. The handwritten surveys have an element of error because they are sorted and graded by hand. I could have eliminated a chance of error if I had done the surveys electronically. Third, electronic surveys would provide an element of anonymity that handwritten surveys do not. Many of the people surveyed failed to participate because they felt like someone would know their answers. This was an unfortunate oversight on my part that I did not anticipate.

I would also seek to do a better job of promoting the project. Many church members seemed confused about the nature and purpose of the project during the implementation of the project. If I had done a better job of informing the church of what I was doing and why I was doing it, perhaps more involvement and interest would have been observed. I was so busy trying to figure out how to implement the project that I forgot to include the people. This was a major leadership blunder on my part, and I pray that I will learn from my mistakes and in the future prayerfully request participation from the whole congregation.

Last, it would have also been beneficial if I had included sermon outline handouts in conjunction with the sermon series. Sermon outlines would have aided the congregation in learning about discipleship and perhaps would have helped some of the congregation to grasp more of the concepts being posited about discipleship.

### **Theological Reflections**

The rigor of this project required me to examine many scriptures and peruse many books and commentaries dealing with the subject of discipleship and disciple making. Resources pertaining to the subject of discipleship abound, but this study exposed me to theologically-rich material that has challenged me. The intense research revealed that my initial perception of the disciple-making mandate was not as strong as I believed. Overall, this project cemented my devotion to discipleship and forged my theological foundation in regard to ministry.

Three primary texts provided a theological foundation. The first is Matthew 28: 16-20, which commands believers to “go” under the authority of Christ and “make” disciples. For decades, this text has been the rallying cry for evangelism and the challenge to “go” and share the good news. Truly, the Great Commission is about going out into the lost world with the good news of the gospel, but the emphasis of the passage is not on the word “go” but on the imperative verb “make” disciples.<sup>5</sup> The thrust of the Great Commission text centers on the idea of duplication more so than transportation. The main task of all believers is to duplicate themselves wherever they may be.<sup>6</sup> Understanding this concept was eye opening for me and has changed the way I approach ministry.

Grasping the “teach” versus the “go” emphasis of the Great Commission has also changed the way I preach and engage in evangelism. The way I now share the gospel with unbelievers is more of a relational method than a confrontational one. Also, my approach to preaching centers on helping disciples grow in their faith by exposing the truth of God’s Word in lieu of topical sermons filled with stories. This is not to say that these methods do not have a place in preaching and sharing the gospel, but a proper theological understanding of the Great Commission now provides me with a more honed approach.

Matthew 4: 19 was another passage, which upon studying for this project, has aided in my development of a more robust understanding of discipleship theology. The call of Jesus to his disciples was not another program, but a life changing commitment; a commitment that involved the whole person.<sup>7</sup> In addition to calling disciples to a commitment, the context of Matthew 4: 19 underscores the importance of forging relationships in the call to discipleship. In researching Matthew 4: 19, I discovered that

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<sup>5</sup> The term “make disciples” is translated “teach” in the AV.

<sup>6</sup> Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 431.

<sup>7</sup> Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 124-25.

Christ did not just suddenly encounter the first disciples that day on the shores of Galilee but had crossed paths with the men before and had been observing them from afar. Understanding this truth emphasizes the importance of building relationships and seeking out men who are faithful, available, and teachable.

Second Timothy 2 is the final and most impactful text that I studied for this project. The previous discipleship passages found in Matthew's gospel provide believers with a commission and call to discipleship, but the Pastoral Epistles text of 2 Timothy 2:1-2 exemplifies the challenge of disciple making and the means by which to carry it out. In 2 Timothy 2:1-2, Paul exhorts Timothy to "entrust" or "commit" the teachings of the gospel to faithful men who will be able to teach others. The teaching of 2 Timothy 2 is replication. Understanding the concept of replication reminds me that ministry is not about me, but about me helping others grow in Christ, which in turn impacts the lives of others. The replication concept presented by Paul is the key to kingdom growth and embodies the definition stated earlier that discipleship is "following Christ while helping others follow Christ."

Exegesis of these texts demonstrates that discipleship is both relational and educational. A greater understanding of the passages has helped me develop a new approach to ministry; an approach now undergirded by the biblical call to make disciples.

### **Personal Reflection**

Personally, this project has been both challenging and rewarding. The challenges have come in the form of balancing time among family, church, and project. Finding time to work and write came at a premium; therefore, setting goals and planning ahead were required. The demands of pastoring a church made working without distraction almost impossible. Even as I wrote this section, I received a call about a senior adult who is in the nursing home and close to death. One of the biggest challenges of this project has been to persevere through all of the ups and downs and obstacles along the way. Also, while working on this project I had many personal issues to work through, including donating a

kidney. Overall, the whole process strengthened my prayer life and ability to persevere to the end. These qualities should only make me a more useful tool for the ministry in years to come.

The profits from this endeavor have been legion. First, one of the biggest blessings of this project has been the people I have encountered. One of the reasons I chose Southern Seminary and the doctoral program was because of the challenging curriculum and the caliber of faculty. I have had the pleasure of learning under some great professors and have benefited tremendously from their instruction. I have also had the pleasure of forming lasting friendships with the men in my cohort. These relationships have been encouraging as well as educational. I have learned a lot about ministry and discipleship from these men.

I have also profited from the material I have been exposed to over the course of the program. This project required me to read numerous books on discipleship and disciple making, all of which stretched my understanding and views regarding discipleship and ministry. Writings such as *Trellis and the Vine* and *Following the Master* have given me theological depth and balance to the litany of other works I read pertaining to this project. The seminars and the work associated with them also provided a rich and robust theological foundation that will anchor my future ministry endeavors.

This project has also been rewarding in that it has given me an opportunity to develop and improve my writing skills. I was called into the ministry when I was thirty-four and had never written on an academic level. Academic writing was not required in the commercial construction industry. I have relished the opportunity to improve my academic writing skills and resolve to do more writing in the future. Writing is so beneficial for pastors/teachers in order to articulate thoughts and communicate clearly.

Lastly, the most rewarding aspect of working on this project has been that it has cemented my passion to make disciples. I love to watch things grow and what a privilege it has been to watch others grow in their relationship with Christ. This project



provided an additional platform through which to experience and encourage believers as they grow into fully devoted followers of Christ.

This project has also changed the way I approach ministry and has solidified my ministry focus. Prior to engaging in this arduous endeavor, my primary focus was on preaching, but now I put a greater emphasis on small group discipleship relationships. This project has shown me that the best environment for growth comes from nurturing discipleship relationships coupled with a steady diet of sound biblical preaching. This model of expository preaching and engaging in small group discipleship relationships will guide me in the future.

### **Conclusion**

Establishing small group discipleship has fostered a new vision for many at HBC, and there is evidence that the culture is shifting to a healthier disciple making model. This project is not the end, but just the beginning. Establishing small group discipleship at HBC has fostered a new mindset among many at HBC; a mindset that will anchor the foundation to ensure future growth. Reproducing disciples is still in the infancy stage at HBC, but the building blocks are in place for kingdom multiplication to take place. These are exciting times at HBC, and I am thankful that God in His grace has given me an opportunity to take part in what He is doing. It is my prayer that this ministry project has planted the seed that in the future will yield thirty, sixty, or hundred fold (Matt 13: 8) for HBC and the kingdom of God.

APPENDIX 1

CHURCH DISCIPLESHIP SURVEY

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. You will be asked to respond to a series of questions. Each question contains a group of choices; select the one that best describes you.

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to assess your disciple-making knowledge. This research is being conducted by Josh Sammons for the purpose of developing a disciple-making program at Hillabee Baptist Church. In this research, you will be providing important data that will aid in the development of a disciple-making program that will enhance and enlarge the Kingdom of God. Any information that you provide will be held *strictly* confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

Please be honest! The goal is not a perfect score. No one will know your individual results and only an honest evaluation will produce an accurate picture of the state of discipleship in our church. When finished, please return to the Sunday School teacher.

Please circle your answer.

**Please fill out entire survey – front and back. Thank you!**

1. During difficult circumstances, I sometimes doubt that God loves me and will provide for my life.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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2. If I go several days without reading my Bible I find myself unfilled.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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3. I expect my Christian friends to challenge me if I make unwise choices.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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4. With reference to my values and priorities, I can honestly say that I try to put God first in my life.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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5. When I sing at church, my thoughts are usually focused right on God.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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6. While interacting with others on a normal daily basis, I seek opportunities to speak out about Jesus.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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7. I know what spiritual gift(s) the Holy Spirit has given me.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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8. I have been personally disciplined through a relational small group/discipleship group process.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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9. I believe that God has a purpose for all events in my life, regardless of whether I perceive each event as being good or bad.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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10. Reading and studying the Bible has not made a significant change in the way I live my life.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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11. I have developed a significant relationship with people at my church.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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12. When I realize that I have a choice between “my way” and “God’s way”, I usually choose my way.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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13. About how often, if at all, do you personally set aside time for prayer of any kind? Do not include any times that are part of a church worship service.

Every Day	A Few Times a Week	A Few Times a Month	Once a Month	Rarely/Never
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14. I intentionally spend time building relationships with non-Christians for the purpose of sharing Christ with them.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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15. I regularly use my gifts and talents to serve/help people in need who are not part of my church.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree Disagree Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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16. I intentionally spend time with other believers in order to help them grow in their faith (apart from Sunday School/Small Groups).

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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17. When things happen that I can't explain, I typically doubt that God is involved.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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18. Throughout the day I find myself thinking about biblical truths.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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19. I openly share difficulties I am experiencing when I talk with Christian friends.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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20. When I come to realize some aspect of my life is not right in God's eyes, I make the necessary changes.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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21. Many people who know me are not aware that I'm a Christian.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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22. I am intentionally putting my spiritual gift(s) to use serving God and others.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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23. It is important for me to be mentored in order to grow in my faith.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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24. I often express praise and thanksgiving to God for who He is and what He has done.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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25. About how often, if at all, do you personally read the Bible? Do not include any times that are part of a church worship service.

Every Day	A Few Times a Week	A Few Times a Month	Once a Month	Rarely/Never
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26. I intentionally try to get to know people I meet at church.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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27. When I realize my attitude does not please God, I take steps to try and fix it.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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28. About how often, if at all, do you personally confess your sins and wrongdoings to God and ask for forgiveness? Do not include any times that are part of a church worship service.

Every Day	A Few Times a Week	A Few Times a Month	Once a Month	Rarely/ Never
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29. About how often, if at all, do you personally pray for the spiritual status of people you know who are not professing Christians? Do not include any times that are part of a church worship service.

Every Day	A Few Times a Week	A Few Times a Month	Once a Month	Rarely/Never
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30. In the past six months, about how many times have you personally invited an unchurched person to attend a church service or some other program at your church?

10 or More Times	6-9 Times	3-5 Times	1-2 Times	Zero
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31. I am currently involved in ministries or projects that serve people in the community not affiliated with our church.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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32. I believe it is my personal responsibility to pour my life into other people in order to make disciples.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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33. I express praise and gratitude to God even in difficult circumstances.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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34. About how often, if at all, do you personally study the Bible (more-in-depth than just reading it)? Do not include any times that are part of a church worship service.

Every Day	A Few Times a Week	A Few Times a Month	Once a Month	Rarely/Never
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35. I hesitate to share with Christian friends about my own doubts and spiritual struggles.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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36. In the past six months, about how many times have you personally made a decision to obey or follow God with an awareness that choosing His way might be costly to you in some way?

10 or More Times	6-9 Times	3-5 Times	1-2 Times	Zero
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37. In the typical month, about how many times (if any) do you attend worship service at your church?

10 or More Times	6-9 Times	3-5 Times	1-2 Times	Zero
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38. In the past six months, about how many times have you personally shared with someone how to become a Christian?

10 or More Times	6-9 Times	3-5 Times	1-2 Times	Zero
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39. I currently have regular responsibilities at church serving (other than committees) in ministries like greeter, teacher, musician, etc.?

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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40. Participation in a local church is a necessity (not optional) for any believer who desires to be truly obedient to God.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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**Please complete: I have attended at least 6 of the 8 weeks sermon series on the Discipleship.**

**YES NO**

**Discipleship Survey Key**

Bible Engagement	2, 10, 18, 25, 34
Obeying God	4, 12, 20, 27, 36, 40
Serving God and Others	7, 15, 22, 31, 39
Sharing Christ	6, 14, 21, 29, 30
Exercising Faith	1, 9, 17, 24, 33
Seeking God	5, 13, 28, 37
Building Relationships	8, 16, 23, 32
Unashamed Transparency	3, 11, 19, 26, 35

APPENDIX 2

SERMON SERIES EVALUATION RUBRIC

Sermon Series Evaluation Rubric					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The Sermons were faithful to the Word of God					
The theme and content of the sermons were faithful to the Pastoral Epistles					
The sermons utilized other Scriptures, when available, to support the homiletical assertions					
The main ideas of the sermons were clearly stated					
The eight attributes of discipleship were addressed					
The sermons contained points of application					
The sermons were structured with simple clarity					
The subject matter and applications were contextualized and relevant to the audience					
The sermon series challenged incorporation of the eight attributes of a disciple					

APPENDIX 3

STRATEGIC PLAN OUTLINE EVALUATION RUBRIC

Strategic Plan Outline Evaluation Rubric					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The Strategic Plan Outline is clearly relevant to the issue of leading discipleship groups					
The Strategic Plan Outline follows biblical principles.					
The Strategic Plan Outline is clearly stated.					
The steps of the Strategic Plan Outline are clearly stated.					
The Strategic Plan Outline is thorough enough to be helpful if properly applied.					
The Strategic Plan Outline is attainable.					
Overall, the Strategic Plan Outline is clearly presented.					



APPENDIX 4

PRE- AND POST-SERMON SERIES DISCIPLESHIP  
SURVEY AVERAGES

Table A1. Pre- and post-sermon series discipleship survey averages

		Pre	Post
1	During difficult circumstances, I sometimes doubt that God loves me and will provide for my life.	4.44	4.28
2	If I go several days without reading my Bible I find myself unfilled.	4.4	4.64
3	I expect my Christian friends to challenge me if I make unwise choices.	4.6	4.4
4	With reference to my values and priorities, I can honestly say that I try to put God first in my life.	4.76	4.6
5	When I sing at church, my thoughts are usually focused right on God.	4.44	4.4
6	While interacting with others on a normal daily basis, I seek opportunities to speak out about Jesus.	3.96	4.2
7	I know what spiritual gift(s) the Holy Spirit has given me.	4.16	4.2
8	I have been personally discipled through a relational small group/discipleship group process.	4.4	4.56
9	I believe that God has a purpose for all events in my life, regardless of whether I perceive each event as being good or bad.	4.72	4.8
10	Reading and studying the Bible has not made a significant change in the way I live my life.	4.64	4.2
11	I have developed a significant relationship with people at my church.	4.6	4.72
12	When I realize that I have a choice between “my way” and “God’s way”, I usually choose my way.	3.8	3.52
13	About how often, if at all, do you personally set aside time for prayer of any kind? Do not include any times that are part of a church worship service.	4.84	4.64
14	I intentionally spend time building relationships with non-Christians for the purpose of sharing Christ with them.	3.4	3.64
15	I regularly use my gifts and talents to serve/help people in need who are not part of my church.	4.12	4.04
16	I intentionally spend time with other believers in order to help them grow in their faith (apart from Sunday School/Small Groups).	3.56	3.96
17	When things happen that I can’t explain, I typically doubt that God is involved.	4.24	4.28
18	Throughout the day I find myself thinking about biblical truths.	4.44	4.52
19	I openly share difficulties I am experiencing when I talk with Christian friends.	3.96	4

Table A1 continued

20	When I come to realize some aspect of my life is not right in God's eyes, I make the necessary changes.	4.52	4.52
21	Many people who know me are not aware that I'm a Christian.	4.36	4.12
22	I am intentionally putting my spiritual gift(s) to use serving God and others.	4.32	4.44
23	It is important for me to be mentored in order to grow in my faith.	4.08	4.08
24	I often express praise and thanksgiving to God for who He is and what He has done.	4.76	4.84
25	About how often, if at all, do you personally read the Bible? Do not include any times that are part of a church worship service.	4.36	4.52
26	I intentionally try to get to know people I meet at church.	4.32	4.2
27	When I realize my attitude does not please God, I take steps to try and fix it.	4.68	4.56
28	About how often, if at all, do you personally confess your sins and wrongdoings to God and ask for forgiveness? Do not include any times that are part of a church worship service	4.68	4.72
29	About how often, if at all, do you personally pray for the spiritual status of people you know who are not professing Christians? Do not include any times that are part of a church worship service.	4.24	4.32
30	In the past six months, about how many times have you personally invited an unchurched person to attend a church service or some other program at your church?	3	2.92
31	I am currently involved in ministries or projects that serve people in the community not affiliated with our church.	3.2	3.28
32	I believe it is my personal responsibility to pour my life into other people in order to make disciples.	4.16	4.28
33	I express praise and gratitude to God even in difficult circumstances.	4.72	4.72
34	About how often, if at all, do you personally study the Bible (more-in-depth than just reading it)? Do not include any times that are part of a church worship service.	3.36	3.6
35	I hesitate to share with Christian friends about my own doubts and spiritual struggles.	3.04	3
36	In the past six months, about how many times have you personally made a decision to obey or follow God with an awareness that choosing His way might be costly to you in some way?	2.92	2.84
37	In the typical month, about how many times (if any) do you attend worship service at your church?	4.6	4.64
38	In the past six months, about how many times have you personally shared with someone how to become a Christian?	1.8	2.04
39	I currently have regular responsibilities at church serving (other than committees) in ministries like greeter, teacher, musician, etc.?	4	4.12
40	Participation in a local church is a necessity (not optional) for any believer who desires to be truly obedient to God.	4.92	4.88

## APPENDIX 5

### DISCIPLESHIP SERMON SERIES

#### Week 1

1. Sermon Title: The Disciple and Bible Engagement
2. Text: 2 Timothy 3: 14-17
3. Subject: Bible Engagement

#### Introduction

Are you a disciple that builds disciples?

“The aim of Christian ministry is not to build attendance on Sunday, bolster the membership roll, get more people into small groups, or expand the budget (as important and valuable as all of these things are!). The fundamental goal is to make disciples who make other disciples, to the glory of God. We want to see people converted from being dead in their transgressions to being alive in Christ: and, once converted, to be followed up and established as mature disciples of Jesus; and, as they become established, to be trained in knowledge, godliness and skills so that they will in turn make disciples of others”. P.152 Trellis and Vine

The Christian life is about being transformed into the image of Christ and helping others on their Journey of transformation.

What does a disciple who build disciples look like?

Eric Geiger Transformational Discipleship

8 distinctives of a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Eight distinctive that make up the life of a fully devoted disciple are : Bible Engagement, obedience, serving others, sharing Christ, exercising faith, seeking God, building Relationships and transparency.

New Sermon Series on Discipleship. In this series we are going to plundering the Pastoral Epistles for clues as to what a fully devoted disciples looks like in effort to implement those practices in our own lives and then replicate them in the lives of others.

See Barna Research

Why are the Scriptures important in the life of a disciple? 2 Timothy 3 Paul dialogues with Timothy and this answers the questions as to why the Bible Engagement is so

important in the life a disciple.

2 Tim 3: 10-17 Read

Timothy was taught the scriptures at home as a child. 14 -15  
See vs. 5

I) The Scriptures are Reliable (16)

- a) “all” scripture
  - a. This includes OT and NT
    - i. Andy Stanley
- b) Given by the Inspiration of God
  - i. Theopneustos - God breathed
- c) All scripture is Truth therefore we “can’t just pick and choose parts that we like, which commands we wish to obey, and which doctrines we will believe. All of it is from the Spirit of God and therefore all of it is good, binding and true.” Christ-Centered Commentary p. 200

II) The Scriptures are Profitable

- a) Profitable = helpful or advantageous Paul gives Timothy a list of 4 ways the scriptures are profitable in that life a disciple.
  - a. Doctrine – teaching and instruction
    - i. Vs. 13 impostures infiltrating the church. How do we know how to spot heresy if don’t know scriptures.
    - ii. Vs. 15 – wise unto salvation
      - 1. The Scriptures not lead us Salvation, but they also learn us in Sanctification
        - a. We are never stop learning and Studying the Bible.
          - i. Dr. Miller Never stop studying the scriptures and theology. A disciple who builds disciples is a student of God’s Word.
  - b. Reproof – a thing by which something is proved or tested. Conviction
    - i. Reproof was for refuting error and rebuking sin.
    - ii. The scriptures are like a mirror and binoculars
      - 1. A mirror is for self examination and Binoculars are for looking at other objects.
      - 2. Mirror to look at self first.
    - iii. Our goal is to be transformed into the image of Christ. How does God do that? Through the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works in conjunction and cooperation with the Word of God.
    - iv. The Holy Spirit is the Power and the Word is the tool to shape our lives. In order to shape our lives sometimes this means cutting. At times the Word of God cuts – that is a good thing.
    - v. Our over sensitive society will not receive correction. We live with the mindset that God is always whispering sweet insinuations that inspire. That is not the God of the Bible. The bible at times is

- poetic but at times it is very plain. Gal. 6: 7-8
- c. Correction – restoration to upright state, or improvement of life and character
    - i. Reproof for Convicting then Correction is for Convincing – Convincing the Misguided or their errors and setting their feet back on solid theological ground.
  - d. Training in Righteousness – for constructive education in the Christian life p.204 Kelly

### III) The Scriptures are Indispensable (vs.17)

- a) So that the Man of God will be complete
  - a. Complete = perfect or fitted
- b) Thoroughly Equipped
  - a. R. Kent Hughes from Christ- Centered Exposition posits that the greek here implies that a Christian is not just equipped but Super Equipped.
    - i. John Stott says “ The scripture is the chief means which God employs to being “the man of God” to maturity.
    - ii. A disciple can’t be a disciple or make a disciple who does not engage the Word of God.

### Conclusion

How do we engage the Bible? Reading intently and intentionally. Observe!! Reading Prayerfully! Psalms 119: 18

Listening - Sitting under the preaching of the Word.

## Week 2

1. Sermon Title: Transformed Life
2. Text: Titus 3: 1-8
3. Subject: Disciples Obedience

### Introduction

A Transformed Man - Man who received a face transplant 26 yr. old Cameron Underwood

Paul instructs Titus on how Disciples who had been transformed by the gospel should act in their relationships with others

Jesus said John 14: 15 “If you love me you will keep my commandments?  
What are the commandments?

Matt 22: 37-39 2 great Commandments Love God and Love Others

1 John 2: 3-6

One of the ways we are obedient to the commandments of Christ is fleshed out in our relationships with others.

This is a consistent NT principle. It seen in the Pastoral epistles.

Today we will look at how obedience to Christ as it relates to others is teased out in Titus.

Titus is one of the 3 Pastoral Epistles. Paul is writing to his disciple - Titus. A young pastor who is leading a church on the island of Crete. Chp 1 gives his mission”set things in order”

In the Book of Titus Paul emphasizes How Christians are to conduct themselves in the midst of an unbelieving environment.

To the extent that Christians are obedient to Jesus command of “Love others” goes a long way in how successful the church is in their evangelistic efforts,

See Chp 1: 9 Chp 2: 5;8 Chp. 3: 8

Disciples who are obedient to the commands of Jesus to “Love others” exhibit 3 types of behavior. Obedient Disciples

- I) Respect Authority (3: 1)
  - a. Submission to authority of Scripture demands submission to human authorities
  - b. President George W. Bush feet on coffee table of George H. Bush and Barabara

- II) Restrain Actions (3: 2)
  - a. Speak evil of no one
    - i. Obedient Disciples Restrain their Tongue
      - 1. James
    - ii. Obedient Disciples Resolved against Temptation
      - 1. Titus 2: 11-14
  - b. Show all humility
    - i. Obedient Disciples are Self-Controlled
      - 1. Titus 2
- III) Responds Accordingly (3: 2)
  - a. To be ready for every good work
    - i. Good works evidence faith - James
    - ii. Good works not necessarily in church
      - 1. “cooperating in those matters that involved the whole community”
      - 2. Titus theme is concerned about how disciples relate to the unbelieving community.
        - a. When unbelievers see disciples loving others in the community and being obedient to the commandments of Jesus it is has an evangelistic effect.

Conclusions:

Obedient disciples exhibit three types of behavior: Respect Authority, Restrain their Actions and the Respond According.

A disciples Obedience has been transformed by the power of the Gospel in their lives.

J.D. Greear “The Power for Transformation comes from the gospel. We are changed not by being told what we need to do for God, but by hearing the news about what God has done for us.”

Eric Geiger “ When God’s love transforms the heart of a disciple, obedience follows.”

### Week 3

1. Sermon Title:        Serve the Lord with Gladness
2. Text:                1 Tim 4: 6 - 11
3. Subject              Disciples are Servants

#### Introduction

##### Pony Express

Before the days of UPS and Federal Express were the Pony Express. If you wanted to get a package from the East coast to the West coast you had to use the Pony Express. Serving in the Pony Express was a tough job. You had to ride 75 to 100 miles a day, change horse every 20 miles or so. They had only minimal provisions. A small medical kit and a little flour, mill and bacon. Wore only minimal clothes so they could ride fast. There was a constant threat of Indians and outlaws.

Here was the add for recruiting those to serve with the Pony Express: Wanted! Young, Skinny, wiry fellows not over 18. Must be an expert rider and willing to risk their lives daily. Orphans are preferred!

[Luke 9:23](#) <sup>23</sup>Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.

Disciples are called to Serve.

Timothy was disciple of Paul.

Paul was instructing Timothy on what it means to be a Good Servant - *diakonos*

Disciples mandate for Service in the Pastoral Epistles.

- 1 Tim 3: 13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.
- Titus 3: 1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,
- Titus 3:8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.
- Titus 3: 14 And let our *people* also learn to maintain good works, to *meet* urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

Disciples are those who are intentional about bible engagement, obedience to the commands of Christ, and are servants

Don Whitney Spiritual Disciplines of the Christian Life



Disciples are Motivated for Service by.....

1) Obedience

- a. Deut 13: 4 You shall walk<sup>[a]</sup> after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.
- b. John Newton Slave trader turned Pastor wrote - 2 Angels receive orders to sweep the streets or two cities: one a grand empire the other the meanest village. To the two angels it mattered not which lot fell. The joy of angels lies in obedience to God's will.
- c. To the disciple service is an matter of obedience. Not to serve is sinful.
- d. Titus 3: 1 to obey, to be ready for every good work.

2) Gratitude

- a. 1 Sam 12:24 Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.
- b. We serve out of a grateful heart and not based on the response of the people we are serving.

3) Gladness

- a. Psalms 100: 2 Serve the Lord with Gladness
- b. We are not to serve the Lord Grudgingly, but Gladly.
- c. God is not glorified by our service if it is done begrudgingly.
- d. Nehemiah 2: 2 If went to the presence of the King with bad attitude could have cost you your life.
- e. Something is wrong if we cant serve the Lord with Gladness. For the disciple, serving the Lord is privilege – not a burden.

Disciples are motivated to Service by obedience, gratitude, gladness

4) Forgiveness

- a. Isaiah 6: 6-8
- b. We serve not out of guilt, but because our guilt has been taken away!

5) Humility

- a. Mark 10: 45 Jesus came not to be served, but to Serve
- b. When a disciple serves he/she is most like Christ
- c. Christ Service showed great Humility John 13: 12-16
- d. Service to the Savior is not in an effort to exhibit how great we are but Great God is!

6) Love

- a. Gal 5:13
- b. Love is at the heart of Service
- c. Missionary to Africa
  - i. Don Whitney writes of two missionary in Africa. Do you like your missionary work. NO! my wife and I don't like dirt floors and goat refuse. We don't like crawling into vile huts. But is a man to do nothing for Christ he does not like? God Pity him, if not.

Liking or disliking has nothing to do with it. We have orders to Go, and we go! Love of Christ constrains us!

- ii. The love of Christ Constrains us.
- iii. 2 Cor 5: 14-15 <sup>14</sup>For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. <sup>15</sup>And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

Eric Geiger Transformational Discipleship “Service develops our love and refines our view of God’s work.”

## Week 4

1. Sermon Title: Disciples are Evangelist
2. Text: 1 Tim 4: 12-16
3. Subject: Sharing Christ

### Introduction

8 distinctives of a Disciple. Disciples read their bible seeking to be transformed, Disciples strive to be obedient to commands of Christ, Disciples are Servants, Today we will see how Disciples Share their faith.

Disciples are Evangelistic

Pilfering through the Pastoral Epistles focusing on the Paul and Timothy/ Paul and Titus relationship in order to gain insight on what a Disciples looks like.....What it means to be a disciple who makes disciples.

Paul/Tim relationship gives insight into how disciples evangelize.

The first step to making disciples is sharing Christ.

- I) Disciples Evangelize by the WORDS WE SAY
  - a) 2 Tim 4: 1-5
  - b) Our Words are empowered by the Holy Spirit(ACT 1: 8)
  - c) We should all be able to talk about Jesus has done for us and what He means to us.
    - a. Blind Man in John 9:25 I was blind, but now I see!
    - b. John Bunyan (Whitney)
  
- II) Disciples Evangelize by the WAY WE LIVE  
....be an example (NIV) Watch your life
  - a) Titus 2: 7-8
  - b) Paul tells Timothy to be “an example” in 5 areas. See vs. 12
  - c) Our life is to be a pleasing aroma
    - a. BBQ Restaurant
      - i. The aroma of our life should be such that it invites people to Christ.
    - b. 2 Cor 2: 14-17
    - c. Wes and April
  
- III) Disciples Evangelize by the FRIENDS WE MAKE
  - a) 2 Tim2: 2
  - b) Some gifted to share Christ speaking – Some gifted to share Christ by Serving. (1 Peter 4: 10-11)

c) Relationships with Lost People

a. Dann Spader – 4 Chair Discipling

- i. Neil –Gun Ethusiast. Spader was willing to “enter his world” make friends and eventually able to share the gospel and he came to Christ.
- ii. Important that we be looking for ways to befriend lost people in an effort establish relationship and introduce them to Christ.
  1. “God’s job is to prepare people’s hearts and to draw them to himself. The Holy Spirit role is to convict the world of sin. Our job is to find those people God has already prepared and to proclaim the truth to them. Our job is to cultivate, plant and pray for the Harvest.”

Conclusion

Disciples are called, commissioned and commanded to share Christ. To evangelize. Disciples evangelize by the Words we say, the Life we live and Friends we make!

Christmas is a great time to share Christ.

So many things of Christmas can become ways to gospel conversations.

Gifts – remind us that the best gift anyone could ever receive is forgiveness of sin

If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator; If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist; If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist; If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer; But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior.

Disciples will you commit to sharing Christ?

## Week 5

1. Sermon Title: Shining Through
2. Text: 1 Tim 1: 15 ; 4:12
3. Subject: Transparency

### Introduction

Some of the Distinctive we have looked at so far are Bible Engagement, Obedient, Servants, Share Christ,

Paul is instructing Timothy to live his life as an open book for others to see. Being Transparent

Being Transparent as a Disciple means that we are..... Accountable, Available and Approachable

- I) Accountable
  - a. To God
    - i. Heb 4: 13 <sup>13</sup> And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.
    - ii. Matt 10: 26 <sup>26</sup> Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.
  - b. To Fellow Believers
    - i. James 5: 16 <sup>16</sup> <sup>[a]</sup> Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.
    - ii. Heb 13: 17 <sup>17</sup> Obey those who <sup>[a]</sup> rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.
  - c. Accountability is crucial for the Spiritual Growth of a Disciple
    - i. “Accountable relationships become the lifeblood for personal growth” Robbie Gallaty
    - ii. “Personal development is accelerated through accountability questions” Robbie Gallaty
      1. Many people with never mature spiritually because they try to go it alone without accountability
      2. Many fail morally and end up destroying their witness and hurting people around them, including their church and their family because they don’t have someone in their lives that they are accountable to. Someone who can and will ask them tough questions.

- a. Word of Caution!!!!
  - i. Can't share everything in your life with everybody, but you need to have some Mature Christian in your life in which you can share everything.
  - ii. The Pride of our old man (Flesh) is reticent to yield to accountability in our lives. We want to go it alone.
  - iii. "Sin demands to have a man by himself. It withdraws him from the community. The more isolated a person is, the more destructive will be the power of sin over him" Dietrich Bonhoffer
    - 1. Giant Sequioa – California is the home of the Giant Sequia. A magnificent giant tree that stands 250ft tall and living for 1500 years. How could something stand that tall for so long? Through all the storms and trials? The answer is not in the depth of its roots, but its support structure. The Giant sequia has a root structure that only about 4 ft. deep and is interconnected (Interdependent) on the trees around it. Sequia grow in groves. Crhstians grow in community where Accountability is cherished and championed.

(TS) Being Transparent as a Disciple means that your are Accountable, but also Available..

## II) Available

- a. Christians need other believers who make themselves available and invest time with them.
- b. Life of Jesus - Jesus was available to minister to the people around
- c. Jesus was never in a rush. Jesus lived life fully on mission
- d. Jesus never saw people as interruptions, but as opportunities for ministry
  - i. Luke 8
    - 1. Being transparent as a Disciple means that you are AVAILABLE to share your struggles that God has brought you through in order to help others who are struggling with the same sin or situation.
    - 2. What often happens is that instead of being available to help other believers in their journey through the Christian life we are unapproachable.

### III) Approachable

- a. Gal 6: 1-3 Brethren, if a man is <sup>[a]</sup>overtaken in any trespass, you who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. <sup>2</sup> Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. <sup>3</sup> For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.
- b. Dann Spader " God has helped you endure challenges in your life. You did not face challenges by coincidence. Perhaps God wants to use you to help others who face similar problems.
- c. If we are reluctant about being transparent we will miss opportunities to disciple others.
- d. Often times we are unapproachable as believers because we give off this air that everything is and always has been perfect in our lives.
  - i. 1 John 1: 8-9 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

### Conclusion

The Strength of the Gospel is weakness.

2 Cor 12: 9 <sup>9</sup> And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Transparent means the act of "Shining Through"

When a Disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ is transparent we let the light of Christ and His gospel shine through our lives.

Let the light of Christ shine through you as you seek to be a disciple who makes disciples.

I challenge you in 2019 to Be a disciple who is accountable, available and approachable.

## Week 6

1. Sermon Title: Up-close and Personal
2. Text: 2 Tim 4: 9-16
3. Subject: Building Relationships

### Introduction

Zig Ziglar “ You can everything in your life you want, if you help other people get what they want”

Luke 16 Parable of Unjust Steward.

Vs. 9 Commended for Invest in Friends and others

The sixth distinctive of a disciple is building relationships. A transformed believer is actively engaging in relationships with others. The statement is cliché but true in that Christianity is a relationship and not a religion. Engaging relationships reflects the heart of Christ followers as they seek to imitate Christ by initiating relationships with believers and non-believers alike. David Platt in his book *Radical* sums up the relational aspect of disciple-making by stating;

“Making disciples is not an easy process. It is trying. It is messy. It is slow, tedious, even painful at times. It is all these things because it is relational. Jesus has not given us an effortless step-by-step formula for impacting the nations for His glory. He has given us people, and he has said, “Live for them. Love them, serve them, and lead them. Lead them to follow me, and lead them to lead others to follow me. In the process you will multiply the gospel to the ends of the earth.”<sup>1</sup>

Paul words to Tim reinforce the importance of Investing in others i.e. building Relationships for a disciple

I) Need of Relationships (vs. 9)

Why are relationships important for disciples?

Unjust Servant could not survive with relationships.

We cant survive – the Kingdom with not thrive without investing in other and Building relationships.

Mike Breen Building and Disciple making culture

“We are a nation fractured families, disenfranchised friends, and increasingly independent individuals. Realty TV lets us experience living life together by proxy. Many faith communities have become little more than gatherings of isolated individuals, while the number of online communities to grow. Loneliness has been described as “epidemic”. We are a society of disconnected people longing for connections

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<sup>1</sup> David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2010), 93.



Illustr: Watched couple at restaurant. Looking at Phone – Not communicating and Not Connecting

People need People “We long to belong”

Gen 1 Not good for man to be alone

Ecc 4: 12 Three-fold cord is not quickly broken.

Christianity is built on Community ( Brad House)

“When the gospel is lived out in community, we find our identity in Jesus, we are compelled to worship God, love one another, and have compassion for the lost. As we are transformed by the gospel, communities become places we others to experience. We want our friends and neighbors to be transformed by Jesus, and they become a source of missional growth for the church.”

Jesus placed importance on relationships

When Jesus sent out his disciples- He didn't send them out alone, He sent them in Pairs

Even when he sent them to fetch a donkey , two disciples were dispatched

Relationships encourage growth

Exercising Study– Partner encourages progress

Caveat – Exercise with some in better shape. When it comes to our Christian walk this reinforces the need for Mature Christians to build relationships with those who are younger in the faith.

## II) Neglect of Relationships (vs. 10 & 14)

### a) Dangers – What happened to Demas

a. Some people will disappoint you. Paul had worked with Demas,(Phil 24) invested in Him, but Demas deserted Paul for the cares of the world.

b. If we open ourselves up to invest our life in people we will sometimes get hurt.

- i. Paul had Demas
- ii. Joshua had Achan
- iii. Jesus had Judas

### b) Distance

a. Some people need to beware. Alexander

b. We rely on the gift of Discernment of the HS

## III) Nurturing of Relationships (vs. 11)

### a. Restoration

i. Mark and Barnabas

ii. Acts 13:5 Mark (AKA John Mark) was a fellow laborer

1. Acts 15: 36 Dispute between Paul and Barnabas over the reinstatement of John Mark.

2. Mark went with Barnabas and Paul went with Silas

- iii. Baranabas was an encourager. Continued to build a relationship with Mark and today we are blessed with Gospel of Mark . The fruit of a ministry that was salvaged and restored due God working through another believer investing and building a relationship with another believer.
- b. Implication
  - i. Kingdom Growth
    - 1. Cresens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia, Tychicus to Ephesus

## Conclusion

By investing our lives into others we offer them the great life they could ever imagine –  
A life with Christ

The importance of Investing in Others and Building Relationships is that the Kingdom of God is enlarge. The kingdom grows.

Join me as we seek to invest in other and build relationships for Cause of Christ and His Kingdom.

## Week 7

1. Sermon Title: Exercising Faith
2. Text: 2 Tim 2: 1-13
3. Subject: Exercising Faith as a Disciple

### Introduction

Faith is used 389 x in NKJV

What is Faith? Grk “Pistis” trust or firm persuasion.

Faith is not just knowledge – Faith is belief in Action. We demonstrate our trust in God when we act on the promised of God  
James 2: 19

Jesus Christ is the object of our faith and we put our trust in him wholly!

Faith is deciding to depend on Jesus to save me.

Faith is not just a one and done event. The Just shall LIVE by Faith.

“Faith is more than an impulse of emotion, a direction of thought, a fleeting preference of the will; it is a relation to Jesus Christ in which the spirit of obedience has taken possession of the citadel of the soul.” What Baptist Believe p.41

What does it mean to exercise faith?

Exercising faith in God simply means laying aside our human reasoning, understanding, wisdom, doubt, worry, fear, along with anything that can hinder us from fully embracing His promises.

Insight on what exercising faith as a disciple looks like can be found in 2 Timothy 2:1-13. To Inspire Timothy for faithfulness in ministry, Paul uses three simple but powerful images of faithfulness. Each one of these characters teaches a facet of faithfulness that is needed in the life of a disciple.

Exercising Faith is seen in the life all three of Paul’s illustrations: Soldier, Athlete and Farmer

James Faith without works is dead. James 2: 14

Exercising Faith as a Disciple means that you trust God when life is Difficult, life is Indefinite, and when you have to depend on the Lord.

- I) Trust God when life is Difficult
- a. Paul is emphasizing that a disciple will have to endure hardships like a “*good soldier of the Christ.*” Soldier endure hardships.
  - b. Disciples are to expect difficulties
    - i. Acts 14: 22
    - ii. John 16: 33
  - c. Disciples don’t lose hope just because life gets difficult.
    - i. John 6: 66-69
      1. God often allows hardships and trials in our life to test our faith. When God test our faith and we are put in a situation where we must exercise faith – that is how our faith grows.
  - d. Illustr: Preacher that Lost his job! (see McCauley)
  - e. il his ministry, he must depend on the Lord and “*be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*” and exercise faith.

- II) Trust God when life is Indefinite
- a. Athletes honorably compete even though they don’t know what the outcome will be.
    - i. Job 13: 15 “Though he Slay me, Yet I will Trust Him!
  - b. Faith means that you obediently step into the unknown.
    - i. The Unknown brings fear.
      1. Girls jumping in the water when they were little.
    - ii. Abraham
      1. Abraham didn’t know where he was going, but he believed in God.
        - a. Gen 12: 1 .....to a land that I will show you.....  
Heb 11: 8
      2. Heb 11: 1 evidence of things not seen.
  - c. Illustr: The African impala can jump to a height of over 10 feet and cover a distance of greater than 30 feet. Yet these magnificent creatures can be kept in an enclosure in any zoo with a 3-foot wall. The animals will not jump if they cannot see where their feet will fall. Faith is the ability to trust what we cannot see, and with faith we are freed from the flimsy enclosures of life that only fear allows to entrap us.

(TS) Disciples exercise faith when they trust God in difficulty, when they trust God in the indefinite, and Disciples trust God when they are Dependent on God.

- III) Trust God when life is Dependent
- a. Farmer is dependent on God for his increase
    - i. The farmer sows, but it is God who waters from the rain and gives the increase.
  - b. Noah Heb 11: 6-10
- IV) “Faith is trust or dependence on God based on the fact that we take him at this word and believe what he has said” Wayne Grudem

Faith is an essential element in the Christian's life, our lives start from salvation up to the final stage known as glorification are based solely on our faith in God through Christ Jesus. Our faith is the means through which we connect with God. Our faith in Him is what grants us access to His promises, and it is also what makes us reliable to Him. Our faith in Him is what sustains us through our trials.

TS) Disciples exercise faith when they trust God in difficulty, when they trust God in the indefinite, and Disciples trust God when they are Dependent on God.

“God our Father has made all things depend on faith so that whoever has faith will have everything, and whoever does not have faith will have nothing.” Martin Luther.

Noah never saw a flood, but he believed God

Abram didn't know where he was going but he believed God.

Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90, but Abraham believed God

As disciples I want to encourage you to exercise your faith.

## Week 8

1. Sermon Title: Seeking God
2. Text: 2 Timothy 2: 15-26
3. Subject: Seeking God

### Introduction

This sermon will synthesize much of what we have talked about over the last 8 weeks. DNA Test on a Disciple these traits should show up.

### Disciples Seek God.

Bible repeatedly commands us to Seek the Lord

1 Chron 22: 19 <sup>9</sup> Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God.

Isa 55: 6 <sup>6</sup> Seek the LORD while He may be found,

Call upon Him while He is near

Col 3: 1-2 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Matt 6: 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Seeking God as Disciples - Lived out means that as disciples seek the truth, they strive to live it out the truth, and invite others to do the same.

### D) Disciples Seek God by Seeking the Truth

Disciples seek God by Seeking the Truth. How?

How do we do that in today environment of misinformation and fake news?

Illustr: Trevor Lawrence Fake tweeter quote. "I never said that"!

How do we seek God in a day when there is so much misinformation & deliberate deception aimed at building a false narrative and polarizing propaganda?

- a. Be diligent to study the scriptures. vs. 15 Heb 11: 6 He (God) is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
- b. Pursue vs. 22
  - i. Faith, love and Peace
  - ii. People of God

Illustr: If you want to know what your next five years will look like, you can get a good idea by looking at the books you read, the people you surround yourself with, and how much you are influenced by social media.

(TS) Seeking God as a Disciple not only means seeking the Truth, but also striving to live out the Truth.

II) Disciples Seek God by Living out the Truth.

a. Phil 3: 10 to know and the power of his resurrection.

1. Power of Resurrection – Holy Spirit empowers us to live a changed life.

Discipleship is not just information, but it is transformation.

The distinguishing mark of Christian who is growing and maturing as a disciple is a transformed heart, and transformed affections.

Illustr: Edwards preached during the Great Awakening, the greatest Revival in American History. Several Years later Edwards became concerned that many who made professions of faith during the Revival were not truly converted. Why? There was no change, no transformation. Due to his concern he wrote “Treatise on Religious Affections” He wrote, “The supreme proof of a true conversion is holy affections, zeal for the things of God, longings after Holiness, desires for purity”

Paul confirms and contrasts the transformation.

Vs. 16, 19 and 21

When someone becomes a true disciple, Christ radically changes the person’s appetite.

Illustr about McDonalds Eric Geiger from Transformational Discipleship.

As a kid the reality of being able to go to McDonalds for every meal is comparable to describing the New Heaven and New Earth.

God sick one time on McDonalds and now has no appetite for McDonalds.

Same happens for a believer> We formerly craved the created things rather than the Creator. But because Christ has changed us we are being changed into to his likeness and this things of this world don’t taste as good.

(TS) “While one of the marks of transformation is thinking less about self and more about God and others, actively pursuing that posture is also one of the means by which people grow as disciples.

III) Disciples Replicate the Truth vs. 24-26

When disciples seek God they strive for replication.

Some things are caught more than taught.

As we seek God and grow as a disciple, we are help others grow.

“Someone has said that discipleships is simply helping someone find and follow Jesus.”  
What is replication?

2 Tim 2: 2 Don’t let Satan deter you by Telling you you are not ready to Disciple someone else.

We don't have to reach a certain spiritual level before we can disciple someone!

Paul did wait until he had sufficiently matured as a disciple to start preaching.

Acts 9: 19-20

We see earlier in Acts that the Disciple after received the Holy Spirit started building the church.

The pattern is not grow, then turn outward, but is grow by turning outward.

As a church that seeks God and be obedient to the Great commission must be making disciples.

Discipleship is about replication not just education.

Shoe illustration.

### **Conclusion**

God is calling us to be a Church that seeks the Truth, Strives to live the Truth and Call other to join us in the Journey.



APPENDIX 6  
DLIFE SMALL GROUP CURRICULUM  
SAMPLE LESSON



Why Study the Whole Bible? (Jesus and the Old Testament)

**Biblical Passage**

Matthew 5:17–20

**Supporting Passages**

Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 52:13–53:12; Luke 24:27; John 5:39; John 8:37–43; Romans 10:1–4; 2 Timothy 3:15–17

**Memory Verse**

Matthew 5:17

**Table Talk Question**

What will a study of the Old Testament do for my personal walk with the Lord?

**Biblical Truth**

Believers can have confidence in the promises of Scripture and assurance of salvation because Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament.

**Context**

An amazing relationship exists between Jesus and the Old Testament. Christ fulfilled the Law. He obeyed it perfectly. He fulfilled its prophecies. He paid the full penalty of the Law as the substitute for sinners. Christ is the One who completed God's work in redemptive history. God's plan has been unfolding since the beginning. Many people across many centuries wrote the 66 books that make up the Bible. Jesus Christ is the key to interpreting the whole Bible. He is Scripture's consistent and unified message. In beginning a 48-lesson journey through the Old Testament, the only appropriate place to start is with Christ. This lesson will look at what Jesus had to say about the value of the Old Testament.

## **Learning Goals**

- Learners will understand that the Old Testament finds its true, intended meaning in the person of Jesus Christ.
- Learners will make a commitment to serious study of the Bible, especially the Old Testament.

## **Prayer Suggestions**

As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray for those in your group.

- Pray that learners will stop trusting in their own ability to stand as righteous before God.
- Pray that learners will have a fresh perspective on the value of the Old Testament and a fresh hunger for every part of God's Word.
- Pray that learners will honor Jesus and focus on His ability to stand as righteous on their behalf.

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## ABSTRACT

### ESTABLISHING SMALL GROUP DISCIPLESHIP AT HILLABEE BAPTIST CHURCH IN ALEXANDER CITY, ALABAMA

Jimmy Joshua Sammons, DMin  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019  
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. John David Trentham

This project was designed to establish small-group discipleship at Hillabee Baptist Church in Alexander City, Alabama. The project development involved assessing the knowledge of the adult membership in regard to disciple-making. The project included an eight-week sermon series from the Pastoral Epistles intended to increase the knowledge of the membership about the biblical imperative of disciple making. The project also included a four-year strategic plan outline that sought to implement an ongoing effort to build and sustain small group discipleship at HBC.

Chapter 1 introduces the ministry context of Hillabee Baptist Church, along with the rationale, purpose, goals, research methodologies, definitions, and delimitations of the project. Chapter 2 provides the biblical and theological basis for disciple-making, looking at the biblical imperative for disciple-making from a variety of New Testament texts. Chapter 3 addresses the practical applications for disciple making and outlines the three models for disciple-making: transformation, replication, and accountability. Chapter 4 details the preparation and implementation of the project. Chapter 5 concludes with an overall evaluation of the project, with suggestions for improvement and further development.

## VITA

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