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INCORPORATING SOUL CARE INTO THE MEMBERSHIP
PROCESS AT CLIFTON PARK BAPTIST CHURCH
IN SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND

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

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

by
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May 2020

APPROVAL SHEET

INCORPORATING SOUL CARE INTO THE MEMBERSHIP
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I dedicate this project in memory of my mother,
Novella Wilson (2005),
who showed me what faith in God can do,
in honor of my husband and discipler,
Douglas,
who, for 31 years, has given himself up for me
and led me by this same example of Christ,
and in celebration of our children,
Michael, Timothy, and Asha,
my three-strand unbreakable cord.

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PREFACE

For twenty-eight years God has knit me together with a special people called Clifton Park Baptist Church, where I am convinced that I have been the greater beneficiary of our fellowship and ministry partnership. In addition to the members themselves, special honor is due the pastor who hired me and taught me to serve, the late Gary K. Javens (2017), and the pastor who continually spurs me on in the work to reach higher and dream bigger, Pastor Essentino A. Lewis, Jr. A special thanks goes to my five seminary-trained panel (Including the pastor, they were Dr. Leslie Copeland-Tune, Minister Glenn Scott, Yinka Gardiner, and Cheryl Callahan), to my soul care trainees, to the five who said yes to the biblical counseling training, to the fifteen participants in the Starting Point sessions, and to my hands-on partners in those same sessions, Ayo Olakanye, Anne-Myriam Asumeng, and Linda Kgasi.

I am thankful for the prayer partnership of Carole Dorsey and for two who turned their prayers into hands-on support by serving as readers, Dr. Nadeene Riddick and the late Hampton Edwards (2018).

I needed the patience that my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Robert Jones, could afford a student who had been out of the classroom for so many years and who came into the biblical counseling arena as a novice. So, Dr. Jones, thank you for helping me catch up and for helping to shape the project paper into a document that could not only meet the seminary's requirements but also resource churches in their soul care efforts.

The influence and support of my first family remains with me and so I acknowledge the continuing impact of their love in this endeavor as well: my sister and friend, Margaret Harper; my brother and cheerleader, Dr. Jimmy L. Wilson; my true aunt,

Joyce Peoples; and my “twin” brother, my first friend, the late Phillip Wilson, Sr. (2017).

Finally, I weep with tears at the thought of God’s choosing me for His service and this venture. My whole heart belongs to Him, and I want to spend the rest of my days giving it to Him. His grace forever amazes me, and I cannot wait to finish in His presence! For the praise of His glory, I remain bowed down!

Janet Henley

Silver Spring, Maryland

May 2020

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Clifton Park Baptist Church in Silver Spring, Maryland, patterns its purpose after Jesus' bold claim about Himself in John 10:10 as the way, the truth, and the life. Clifton Park Baptist Church (CPBC), therefore, purposes to lead the way by impacting lives with the love of Christ in word and deed to the desired end that people and places are spiritually transformed, to teach the truth by equipping every member in the Word as to make them authentic disciples of Jesus, and to experience the life by living the Christ life together through shared growth experiences in the context of a healthy unified community. The ministry and programs of the church fit under one of these three categories: through its outreach ministries CPBC leads the way; through its Christian education and discipleship programs CPBC teaches the truth, and through its fellowship ministries (life situation groupings of men, women, couples, seniors, young adults, and youth) CPBC experiences the life.

Context

The purpose under which CPBC defines its existence demands the full participation of its increasing membership—heart, head, and hands. The fulfilling of its purpose, therefore, requires members to be disciples who love Jesus wholeheartedly, are growing up in their intellectual and experiential knowledge of Him, and serve Jesus out of a clear understanding of their self-denying calling/passion and gifting. Toward this end, CPBC must do more to retain and ready the new and prospective members the Lord is sending to join it in His mission. Too many are lagging or leaving, and both challenges

can no longer be ignored. This project, therefore, rose out of three factors related to the ministry context at CPBC.

First, CPBC has a long-standing reputation of being a warm and welcoming church, even before the formally created greeters' ministry, which is a testament to the church's commitment to being intentionally winsome. Much effort is put into welcoming first-time worshipers, inviting them to stand during the greeting, giving them welcome packets, and singing them a welcome song. Should anyone turn in his or her completed visitor card, the pastor sends a personal thank-you letter during the week of the visit. This attention gives the impression that CPBC is an easy place in which to connect and be known. Persons who are already spiritually healthy and focused will catch hold to the welcome rope and be pulled right in. However, there are many more whose hands, for a variety of reasons, need to be held to the rope. This project uncovered and addressed the why of this struggle and either caused CPBC to change how people are being pulled in or strengthened people for the journey or both. This project also gave prospective and new members an opportunity to be known, a desire for which this welcoming atmosphere leaves them hungry, as the trained team engaged them early in the membership process through soul care conversations among their fellow prospective members.

Second, the road to membership at CPBC is a well-thought out and well-executed process. Each step is given detailed attention from the point the person comes forward in worship to express his membership decision until the right hand of fellowship Sunday when he receives membership. It includes an immediate follow-up conversation regarding the public decision, a personal letter of congratulations from the pastor, and a three-part orientation session: part 1 with the pastor over breakfast, part 2 with the ministry placement team over lunch, and part 3 with breakfast on the day of membership with the Minister of Education and Discipleship. The sessions with the pastor and the placement team are done on the same Saturday. The steps toward the prospective member are carefully documented, and though the membership team does a stellar job of processing

membership candidates, the retention and engagement results do not match the effort. The ministry placement assessments are intended to connect persons to those of like interests, however, far too often this connection is not made despite the follow-up work of the placement team, who holds the leaders accountable to calling the new member, and who pleasantly find, more often than not, that leaders have done their part. Our welcome song says, “We’re so glad you’re here and so glad you came.” Perhaps CPBC needs to discover not why she wants them here but why they are here and why they have come, and to cease dealing with new and prospective members in a cookie cutter way, as though everyone is in the same place spiritually and are ready for the same level of church participation. This project proposes a series of soul care conversations that serve to uncover prospective members’ spiritual readiness levels and any present or potential barriers to their discipleship growth and membership connection. The project should also reveal how best to connect them to Clifton Park, namely from a discipleship perspective.

Finally, CPBC boasts of being a discipling church. This claim is not because CPBC has disciple making down to a science, but because her pastor and discipleship leadership are committed to it and because her Christian education programs are centered around it. In 2007 and 2010, CPBC made two bold moves toward discipling—first by creating a path to discipling and second by creating an intentional place for discipling. FAITH Foundations was launched in 2007 as a companion to an evangelism effort where persons were reached for Christ and follow-up Bible study. Here, persons are paired with spiritual coaches who walk them through foundational doctrines and disciplines of their newfound or rediscovered Christian faith. Today, FAITH Foundations is a series with two more levels added as persons are continually shaped and moved toward discipling and discipling. In 2010, the Great Commission Groups were formed as the place where seasoned believers could live out the command of Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20 and the admonition of the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2:2. These by-invitation-only groups, where two to three persons are partnered

with a discipler for 36 months of pre-selected studies, fellowship, and life journeying, require an upfront commitment to one day leading others through a similar process. Because the Great Commission groups are formed from persons within the congregation, it is vital that the church reaches, retains, and engages new and prospective members for future participation. Five first-generation disciplers were unable to be assigned their own groups in the now second-generation cycle because the few members from the congregation who were ripe for discipling turned down the invitation to be discipled and there were no others to ask. This project suggests that an important untapped key to retention and engagement for discipling readiness is through the formerly mentioned soul care conversations and soul care actions.

Rationale

The need for this project flowed first from what is gleaned from Scripture. The book of Acts chronicles the growth of the early church and attributes that growth to God. The apostles did their part in proclaiming Christ, but Luke makes it clear that it was “the Lord [who] added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). Since it is God who adds people to churches, it behooves churches to take seriously those who make decisions for membership. Their coming and then their leaving is no small matter. In addition, Paul’s correction to the Corinthian church serves as a reminder for churches that the work of spiritual growth is God’s work as well. In 1 Corinthians 3:1-9, Paul addresses a quarrel among the people regarding which workers were more impacting to the growth of believers. Paul puts things in proper perspective when he says, “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow” (1 Cor 3:6-7). As God’s fellow workers, Christians have their part to play, but it is God who adds to and grows the church.

Second, CPBC is an inspiring place to be on Sunday morning; people always present as though they are happy to see one another and happy to be in one another’s

company, because they truly are. People will stop what they are doing and pray with each other upon request. If someone is in a health crisis or bereavement situation, there are plenty who will come to their aid. The weakness, however, especially for those who are new, is in the depth of knowing and connecting. CPBC's warm and welcoming environment brings them to desire membership, to an initial commitment to joining the ministry, but once in there is little to satisfy their need to be known and to belong. Though there are fellowship ministries for most life situations (married, seniors, etc.), many new members do not readily find themselves into these groups, and even there, the depth of knowing is not an intentional component of their programs. A series of sessions prior to the one-day membership orientation class will add more time in which prospective members are in a group setting, getting to know one another and being known, and in that setting they will move together toward membership and toward being "devoted to one another in brotherly love" (Rom 12:10). This early bonding with others will serve to strengthen their bond with the church.

Third, CPBC's current membership process has proven well its value in being able to put the net down and catch the fish but is sorely lacking in keeping much of the caught fish. Despite best efforts, far too many members do not stay, and because the process is practically flawless, it is obvious that something is being missed. The membership process is essentially designed to explain who CPBC is and how prospective members can fit into what is already in place. It does not take into account who and where they are in relationship to Christ, that is, their spiritual maturity level and any present or potential barriers to their discipleship. It is a one-size-fits-all process, which unwittingly assumes that all are the same and that all are at the same growth and commitment levels. Time and space are needed to hear from them, discern their hearts and the Spirit's work in them, and direct the soul care conversations to address where they are torn down and where they need to be built up. This project also considers the fact that persons come to Christ and join churches for a variety of reasons. Once these reasons

are known, persons can be met where they are and moved strategically and systematically to where the Lord would have them to be.

Finally, CPBC has implemented and worked for two generations a disciple making plan that draws its prospects from the church's membership pool, as CPBC's disciple making leaders understand well that many who come into churches come not having been discipled and ignorant of the mandate to disciple others. From its inception, the Great Commission Groups was intended to be a program through which the entire membership would matriculate. As sometimes with anything new, seasoned members are not embracing the program as they should, so the retention of new members increases the pool of prospects for these discipling groups. The membership process, therefore, was reformatted with this future discipling and disciple making in view.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to incorporate soul care into the membership process at Clifton Park Baptist Church in Silver Spring, Maryland, through soul care conversations and soul care ministry actions and programing, in order to reach and engage prospective members and retain new members for fulfilling discipleship and fruitful membership.

Goals

Incorporating soul care into the membership process at CPBC was stirred by five goals. These goals guided the church in her efforts to reach and engage prospective members and retain and disciple new members based on where they were spiritually.

1. The first goal was to assess the membership interest of prospective members who entered the membership process within the last eighteen months.
2. The second goal was to develop a four-part Heart Assessment Questionnaire as a guide for individual and group soul care conversations.
3. The third goal was to equip the leaders who would engage the prospective members during the membership process in how to use the Heart Assessment Questionnaire for soul care conversations.

4. The fourth goal was to develop and conduct three pre-membership group sessions where soul care conversations would take place among prospective members.
5. The fifth goal was to develop a plan to train five persons in biblical counseling for more intensive soul care needs.

The satisfactory completion of these goals was based on specific research methodology. The following section describes this methodology in detail.

Research Methodology

The research methodology for this project included the development of a phone survey script, a four-part Heart Assessment Questionnaire (HAQ), a training seminar, three four-week soul care conversation sessions for prospective members, and a plan to recruit and train a biblical counseling team.¹ This project was guided by five goals.

The first goal was to assess the current interest for membership of prospective members who entered the membership process within the last eighteen months. Prospective members are those who have made a public decision for membership during a worship service but have not completed all the requirements for membership. Those requirements include completing a three-part orientation session and being baptized by immersion, if needed. This goal was measured by conducting a phone survey among prospective members asking them to indicate “yes,” “undecided,” or “no” to their continued interest in membership.² This goal was considered successfully met when 90 percent of the prospective members rendered a response to the phone survey. The “yes” and “undecided” responses were retained as viable prospects for the new soul care approach.

¹ All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

² See appendixes 1 and 2 for the phone survey script and chart for recording the results of the survey. The caller invited the interested or undecided prospective member to a soul care conversation group. The development of this group came under the third goal. The caller had a chart of an assigned list of members to call. On that chart, the caller noted the prospective members’ continued interest in membership.

The second goal was to develop a four-part HAQ as a guide for individual and group soul care conversations.³ This assessment was based on Jesus' answer in Matthew 22:37-39 to the question of the Pharisees of what the greatest commandment is. In His response, Jesus tells them who their hearts are to love, the order in which they should love them, and the degree to which they should love God. They are to love God first with all of their heart, mind, and soul and love others as they love themselves. Soul issues can arise out of a faulty view of God, others, and self. This goal was measured by a panel of seminary-trained lay leaders (2) and staff (3) within CPBC, including the pastor. The panel utilized a rubric to evaluate the usefulness and effectiveness of this questionnaire in getting at heart issues.⁴ This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level. Had the initial feedback yielded less than 90 percent, the assessment questionnaire would have been revised until the criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level.

The third goal was to equip leaders who would engage the prospective members during the membership process in how to use the four-part HAQ for soul care conversations. Those persons included decision counselors (who speak with prospective members immediately after their public decision for membership), FAITH Foundations teachers and coaches (who lead the class on the foundations of relationship with Christ), and spiritual gifts consultants (who work with prospective members at the first orientation session on their completed gifts and passion discovery worksheets to help them discern and decide on a good place to start serving in the church). The training was formed around instruction and role play based on real life case studies and scenarios. Each participant took turns being in the role of the prospective member and soul care

³ See appendix 3. The four-part HAQ was the instrument used to guide the soul care conversations during The Starting Point sessions that interested and undecided prospective members were invited to during the phone survey.

⁴ See appendix 4 for the four-part HAQ Evaluation rubric, which the panel used to evaluate the viability and effectiveness of the questionnaire for revealing and addressing soul issues.

facilitator. This goal was measured using an evaluation rubric.⁵ The rubric was administered by the trainer as she observed leaders in role play. This goal was considered successfully met when leaders displayed a minimal of 90 percent competency in having these prefabricated soul care conversations in either one-on-one or group settings. If a leader had not reached the 90 percent competency, then they would have received individual training until the 90 percent competency was reached.

The fourth goal was to develop and conduct three pre-membership group sessions where soul care conversations would take place among prospective members. These four-week sessions allowed for longer soul care conversations and bonding in the context of a Bible study setting. It was hoped that any barriers to discipleship would be uncovered and addressed. The prospective member participated in these sessions prior to their attendance in the membership orientation class. Referrals for one-on-one biblical counseling came out of these groups. This goal was measured by the completion of the four-week conversation plan based on the four-part HAQ. This goal was considered successfully met when 90 percent of the prospective members participated over a twelve-week period and when 70 percent of those same participants gave the program a rating of three or higher on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being the highest, on the post-session evaluation rubric.⁶ Revisions were made to the format of the sessions and to the questionnaire based on this feedback from the participants.

The fifth goal was to develop a plan to train five persons in biblical counseling for more intensive soul care needs. Some soul care issues require a higher level of training and expertise; therefore, five leaders were selected to be trained toward these deeper conversations. This goal was measured by identifying persons within the congregation

⁵ See appendix 5 for the Soul Care Conversations Role Play Training Evaluation rubric. This rubric was used by the trainer to evaluate how well the leaders performed as soul care conversation facilitators in the role play training sessions.

⁶ See appendix 6 for the evaluation form that participants used to share the degree to which the sessions were beneficial or lacking.

who could be fit to be biblical counselors and by forming an outline for the biblical counseling training. This goal was considered successfully met when the plan was developed and then approved by the panel of seminary-trained lay leaders (2) and staff (3) within CPBC, including the pastor, and when at least five of the twenty invited persons made a commitment to this future training.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

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

Biblical counseling. The project looked to Paul Tautges' detailed definition and description of biblical counseling in his book *Counseling One Another: A Theology of Interpersonal Discipleship*. He states,

Authentic biblical counseling is nothing more, and surely nothing less, than the fulfillment of the Great Command to make disciples of Jesus Christ by the delegated authority of God and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. God's vision of discipleship requires that we view any and every ministry we may call "counseling" as an essential part of the overall means of shepherding people toward submissive faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and training them to walk in daily obedience to His Word. Therefore, we must consciously use the terms *counseling* and *discipleship* interchangeably, or even together (*discipleship counseling*), in order to communicate that counseling is not merely the specialized ministry of a few professionals, but rather an intensely focused, personal aspect of the discipleship process for all believers. That is, it is disciplemaking targeted at specific areas of a person's life where biblical change is needed for that follower of Christ to move forward toward the goal of being fully remade into His likeness.⁷

Membership process. The membership process at CPBC begins with the decision counseling that takes place immediately following the prospect's public decision for membership. From there, two mailings are sent out, a letter of congratulations from the pastor and a letter explaining next steps along with the documents necessary for the orientation class. This membership packet includes a completion guide, workbook, skills inventory, and passion and spiritual gifts assessments. In the meantime, the New Members Administrator, who also receives a copy of the decision card, follows up with

⁷ Paul Tautges, *Counseling One Another: A Theology of Interpersonal Discipleship* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2015), 23.

the prospect to confirm receipt of the packet and their attendance at the next membership orientation class. Two weeks prior to the class, the Administrator is ready to email the names of those confirmed for the class. This email is sent to the placement team coordinator (who enlists the right number of consultants for the gifts and passion discovery consultations), the staff representative (who generates the attendance sheet, ascertains mode of baptism by immersion, and collects the attendees' completed documents for the consultation team), hospitality leader (who prepares the breakfast and lunch) and greeter (who helps the attendees get to the right classroom). Once prospective members attend the teaching and consultation sessions, they are ready for the Right Hand of Fellowship Sunday. On that Sunday, they meet with the Minister of Education and Discipleship, who speaks with them about discipleship at Clifton Park. Following this 9:30 a.m. breakfast session, they are received into membership during the 11 a.m. service.

New members. New members refer to those who have been members of CPBC twelve months or less.

Prospective members. Prospective members are those who have made a public decision for membership in response to the invitation given during a worship service.

Soul care. In his chapter "A Counseling Primer from the Great Cloud of Witnesses," in *Scripture and Counseling: God's Word for Life in a Broken World*, Bob Kellemen uses the phrase "biblical soul care."⁸ He defines biblical soul care as "the Scripture-directed, prayer-shaped ministry that is devoted to persons singly or in groups, in settings sacred and profane."⁹ This project relies on Kellemen's definition and also

⁸ Bob Kellemen, "A Counseling Primer from the Great Cloud of Witnesses," in *Scripture and Counseling: God's Word for Life in a Broken World*, ed. Bob Kellemen and Jeff Forrey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 127.

⁹ Kellemen, "A Counseling Primer," 127.

borrowed from Garrett Higbee's "Counseling in Community or CIC" approach.¹⁰ Higbee defines the CIC approach as the "care of souls from intentional to intensive discipleship. It is an every-believer ministry"¹¹ that employs the one-another Scriptures.

Soul care actions. Soul care actions are any actions generated out of a response to a prospective or new member's identified soul care needs. The action is either initiated by the member or the soul care provider. These actions could include praying with them or having additional conversation with them through emails, phone calls, or face-to-face meetings. These actions could also include making referrals for biblical counseling, foundations studies, Bible study, ministry involvement, or informing them of other enrichment opportunities beyond Clifton Park. In addition, these soul care actions might involve connecting them with another member who has life or ministry experience in their area of need.

One primary limitation applied to this project. This limitation centered upon the effectiveness of the four-week soul care conversations. The true effectiveness of these conversations depended upon the transparent feedback and interaction of each participant.

Two delimitations were placed on this project. First, the focus of this project was limited to prospective members. Second, this project was limited to thirty weeks, which provided an adequate amount of time to complete all stated goals; however, the long-term effects of the soul care approach could not be known in this timeframe.

Conclusion

People come to the church because they believe that they can get the help they need. The church, therefore, must be made ready to offer that help. Incorporating soul care into the membership process at CPBC enabled the church to discover and address

¹⁰ Garrett Higbee, "Biblical Counseling and Soul Care in the Church," in *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God's Care through God's People*, ed. Bob Kelleman and Kevin Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 52.

¹¹ Higbee, "Biblical Counseling," 58.

prospective members' needs that could have been potential barriers to their growth in discipleship (their life in Christ) and to their fulfilling and fruitful assimilation into membership (their life in the body of Christ).

CHAPTER 2
THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL
BASIS FOR SOUL CARE

Introduction

In Matthew 9:35-36 and in Luke 5:31-32, Jesus demonstrates and declares that the ones in need of care need a caregiver. Matthew 9:35 provides a summary of the work Jesus had been doing in a variety of places; namely, teaching, evangelizing, and healing. Matthew 9:36 provides the motivation behind Jesus' caring actions, which includes the desperate plight of peoples and His own compassion for them. In Luke 5:30, Jesus is criticized by the self-righteous Pharisees for His association with tax collectors and sinners, and in Luke 5:31-32, Jesus responds to the criticism by telling them that only the sick need a doctor and that only sinners need to be called to repentance.

Throughout the Gospels, the reader finds Jesus caring for persons in a variety of life situations. This chapter explores a few of those instances then turns to the example Jesus left for His disciples to extend care to one another without limits. Particularly, this chapter looks closely at Jesus' encounters and soul care actions and responses toward the Samaritan woman, the woman with the issue of blood, and Zacchaeus, the tax collector. This chapter ends by examining the soul care point Jesus makes in washing the feet of His disciples and by embracing the mandate Jesus gives for the disciples to do what He has done.

**Jesus Converses with a Samaritan Woman and
Convinces Her of the Truth (John 4:1-42)**

In Jesus' classic encounter with a Samaritan woman in John 4:1-42, Jesus first teaches the disciples that soul care knows no boundaries. He demonstrates that soul care

disregards social and religious norms to reach people in need.

Jesus' Need to Go through Samaria (John 1:1-4)

Jesus moved from Judea to Galilee by way of Samaria, because He “had to.” While Gerald L. Borchert reads John’s use of “had to” (εδει) as pointing to a divine appointment,¹ J. Ramsey Michaels reads it as a geographical necessity. Michaels begins by asking,

Did Jesus “have to” (*edei*) go through Samaria for the same reason a person “must” (*dei*) be born from above (3:7), or the Son of man “must” be lifted up (3:14), or Jesus must grow and John diminish (3:30)? Or did he “have to” go there simply because it was the most direct route? Was it a matter of God’s will or geographical convenience? Some commentators are quick to introduce the theological factor, but the reference should probably be read simply as a geographical observation, carrying forward the story line by explaining how a journey to Galilee brought Jesus to a well in Samaria.²

On the other hand, D. A. Carson points out that Jesus could have taken another route to get from Judea to Galilee without going through Samaria. This alternate route was longer but was a more common route for Jewish travelers who wanted to avoid Samaritan territory.³ Whether having to go through Samaria was divinely or geographically driven, Jesus did not miss the opportunity to dialogue with this Samaritan woman. He had to speak with her about a more excellent way to live and believe.

The Significance of the Sixth Hour (John 4:5-9)

Jesus arrived at the well at the “sixth hour” (ἕκτη ὥρα) and His time of arrival was significant for two reasons. First, the sixth hour is believed to be about noon, during

¹ Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1-11*, The New American Commentary, vol. 25a (Nashville: B & H, 1996), 199.

² J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 234-35.

³ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 215-16.

the hottest part of the day. Jesus, therefore, would have been hot, physically spent from His journey, and understandably thirsty. His need for water was not only a great discussion starter, but also a real need of His humanity.⁴

Second, women came in groups to draw water and they came during the coolest part of the day. Curiosity is aroused. The Samaritan woman came to the well during the hottest part of the day and she came alone.⁵ These two facts set up the reader to understand further that Jesus had to go through Samaria to close not only a cultural gap, but also a moral one. The reader later deduces that her lifestyle (formerly had five husbands and is now with a man that is not her husband) was probably the subject of gossip at the well and in town.⁶ In the ancient world, two divorces were acceptable, three permissible, but five were unacceptable, as well as living with a man to which one was not married.⁷

Shock was the appropriate response of the Samaritan woman when Jesus approached her with His request for water. First, there was a gender divide: Jewish men did not even speak with their own wives in public nor would they have ever considered having a conversation about religion with a woman.⁸ Second, immediately after Jesus' request for water, the Samaritan woman brought up their religious divide: He was a Jew; she was a Samaritan.

The Samaritans were a mixed race, which resulted from certain Jews intermingling with their Assyrian overseers while they were under Assyrian rule. They accepted only the Pentateuch as the authentic writings of Moses while rejecting the

⁴ Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 217.

⁵ Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, rev. ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1995), 228.

⁶ Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 228.

⁷ George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 36 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 61.

⁸ Borchert, *John 1-11*, 202.

Writings and the Prophets espoused by the Jews. They boasted that Mount Gerizim was the proper place to worship. Along with these tightly held beliefs, the Samaritans also saw themselves as the rightful heirs of God's promises to Israel.⁹

The Jews had a great disdain for the Samaritans and considered them unclean. In addition to Jesus' audacity to converse with the woman, His request to drink from the same cup as that of a Samaritan proved even more shocking.¹⁰ These two social and cultural taboos were what the surprised disciples had in mind when they came upon Jesus speaking with the Samaritan woman.

Jesus' Offer and the Samaritan Woman's Need of Living Water (John 4:10-26)

Jesus did not entertain the division of gender and religion, which the Samaritan woman so passionately pointed out. Instead, He took the conversation back to water, toward the living water He was prepared to give her, if only she had known to ask for it. What was pressing for her, the division between Jews and Samaritans, was not at all pressing for Jesus. He knew that the Samaritan woman had a greater need for this living water, which she had yet to understand.¹¹ Carson explains the rich meaning of water as it relates to spiritual matters: "The [water] metaphor speaks of God and His grace, knowledge of God, life, the transforming power of the Holy Spirit; in Isaiah 1:16-18; Ezekiel 36:25-27 water promises cleansing. . . . In this chapter, the water is the satisfying eternal life mediated by the Spirit that only Jesus, the Messiah and Saviour of the world, can provide."¹²

⁹ Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel according to John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 154.

¹⁰ Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Encountering John: The Gospel in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 73.

¹¹ Ridderbos, *The Gospel according to John*, 154-55.

¹² Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 219.

Jesus, however, being determined to make Himself known, seemed to change the subject abruptly when He asked her to go and get her husband, a husband He knew she did not have and, in fact, the husbands He knew she no longer had. This revealed truth by Jesus about her past and present marital status began to open her eyes to Jesus' identity.¹³ Then, the Samaritan woman changed the subject back to what had been most pressing to her, the Jew and Samaritan divide. Her identifying mark for the Messiah would be His ability to tell her the location of the right place of worship, Jerusalem or Mt. Gerizim. Jesus, instead, told her the right way to worship and unapologetically told her that the Jews do have something over the Samaritans in that salvation comes from the Jews.

Finally, Jesus plainly revealed Himself to be the Messiah for whom she had been waiting.¹⁴ When the Samaritan woman's eyes were opened, she ran back into town with the invitation to "Come, see a man who told me everything that I ever did" and not with the invitation to "Come, see a man who answered my question about the right place to worship." Jesus had captured and addressed her real need.

Jesus Points the Disciples to the Spiritual Harvest (John 4:27-42)

After Jesus won over the Samaritan woman to the reality of who He was, He used the harvest metaphor to win over His disciples to the need this woman represented. Leon Morris explains Jesus' use of waiting for the crop harvest as a contrast to the soul harvest, for which no waiting is required, nor needed, nor can be afforded:

There is evidence . . . that the agricultural year was divided into six two-month periods, seedtime, winter, spring, harvest, summer and the time of extreme heat. Thus four months elapsed between the end of seedtime and the beginning of harvest. This might well have given rise to a proverbial saying indicating that there is no hurry for a particular task. The seed may be planted, but there is no way of getting around the months of waiting. Growth is slow and cannot be hurried. But Jesus did not share

¹³ Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 235.

¹⁴ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 61-62.

this view when applied to spiritual things. He had an urgent sense of mission and these words convey something of it to the disciples.¹⁵

When Jesus called for the disciples to open their eyes to see that the fields were already ripe for harvest, the people from the town were likely coming toward Him in response to the urging of the Samaritan woman.¹⁶ The harvest was not four months away but had arrived with His coming. People needed the Messiah's care, the forgiveness of and the freedom from sin that only He provides; they needed true answers to their questions about God, about how to know and worship Him.

This soul care encounter with Jesus left the Samaritan woman transformed to the point of sharing with others what she had experienced, a desired outcome of encountering Christ. The people with whom she shared were likely the same people she had sought to avoid. Her guilt and shame were removed and, initially, because of her testimony, many came to believe in Christ. Again, her declaration that "He told me all things that I ever did" spoke to the fact that her pressing need was not knowing the right place of worship. Instead, she needed to know how to be right personally to worship God in the way Jesus had described.

As the church seeks to administer soul care, it must first understand that people's greatest need is for Jesus and the life He provides by His Spirit. Those called to administer soul care must do so without regard for the racial, cultural, or religious differences they may have with the person needing care. The best soul care efforts will help people connect and relate rightly to the one true God through His Son and the only Savior, Jesus Christ. People who are without the Savior, who bear the guilt, shame, and penalty of their own sin, demonstrate those of high priority and highest need. Just as Jesus needed to go through Samaria, the church too must minister soul care to spiritual outcasts with the same urgency.

¹⁵ Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 246-47.

¹⁶ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 63.

Jesus Responds to the Faith of an Economically and Emotionally Spent Woman (Luke 8:40-48)

The scene is set up for the unnamed woman with the issue of blood, who wishes to remain anonymous. An enthusiastic crowd has gathered in anticipation of Jesus' return. And in their frantic desire to see Him, they press against each other and against Him.

Bleeding, Unclean, and Isolated for Twelve Years (Luke 8:40-43)

The woman with the issue of blood knew she ought not to be in the crowd that day since she was bleeding and, consequently, was ceremonially unclean. But she was desperate and therefore joined the large crowd of people who were touching Jesus. Unlike the crowd, however, she had a hidden agenda, or so she thought.¹⁷ Darrell L. Bock describes the woman's predicament this way:

She has a flow of blood, a condition she has endured for twelve years. The reference is probably to a uterine hemorrhage, a condition that would make her continuously unclean and that would be the source of continual embarrassment, affecting her ability to live normally with others, since to touch her would make one unclean. She is shut out from fellowship and religious life. Van Der Loos (1965:511) mentions some of the remedies applied to this condition: a glass of wine mixed with rubber, alum, and garden crocuses, or a glass of wine mixed with onions.¹⁸

The woman was isolated from people. She was financially spent after using her monies to search for a cure to no avail.¹⁹ Her situation seemed hopeless considering how long she had been ill, and that no physician could cure her. The length of her illness and her inability to be cured served to amplify the power of Jesus.²⁰ Jesus asked, "Who touched me," not because He did not know,²¹ but He asked for her sake and for the sake of the crowd.

¹⁷ David E. Garland, *Luke*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 367.

¹⁸ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 793.

¹⁹ Garland, *Luke*, 367.

²⁰ Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, The New American Commentary, vol. 24 (Nashville: B & H, 1992), 261.

²¹ The following commentators take the position that Jesus knew who touched Him and offer

The reader would do well to remember that Jesus was on His way to an urgent assignment to heal a dying girl. Jairus, the dying girl's father, had fallen on his knees before Jesus and in front of the crowd begging Him to go to his house to heal his daughter. However, his open and public request, also made in faith, took a back seat to the hidden woman's touch. Jesus was needed right away with no time to lose, but He gave the same immediate attention to the woman even though her physical healing had already occurred.²² Jesus, knowing the urgency of the first request, allowed the interruption anyway. The reader will find out later that Jesus did not have to choose between the two requests. He addressed both.

Luke uncovers the compassion of Jesus while setting out to reveal the all-encompassing power of Jesus. In the woman's situation, Jesus' power over sickness was on display. Through the death of Jairus' daughter, His power over death would be on display. Prior to these two miracles, Luke revealed Jesus' power over nature and the demonic.²³ Yet, for Jesus Himself, each miracle was about the people in need of His touch.

similar reasons why Jesus asked the question, "Who touched me?" Walter L. Liefeld says that Jesus asked the question to single out the woman. Walter L. Liefeld, *Luke*, in vol. 8 of *The Expositor's Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gæbelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 916. John Nolland bases his conclusion on the way the Gospel writer Luke presents Jesus. "The Lukan Jesus," Nolland writes, "will not be unaware of the woman's situation as she comes to him in her need." He goes on to say that Jesus asked the question for the woman to "own her action" and for the crowd to be let in on what had just occurred. John Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 35a (Dallas: Word, 1989), 420. David E. Garland agrees that Jesus' question was intended to force the woman to self-identify, for He knew who had touched Him. Garland considers her coming forward as "the real test of her faith." Garland, *Luke*, 368. Alfred Plummer upheld that Jesus was not asking for information purposes, because He needed to know, but He was asking for the woman's sake, so that she might confess her action. Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), 236. Finally, Darrell L. Bock concludes, "Given the general prophetic portrait of him, it seems unwise to hold that he did not know." Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 795.

²² Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 785.

²³ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke (I-IX)*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 28 (New York: Doubleday, 1979), 744.

Determined to Touch the Garment of Jesus for Healing (Luke 8:44)

Touching Jesus' garment was the woman's last attempt at a cure. Her faith captured Jesus' attention, for it caused power to go out from Him. Her healing and Jesus' knowing that she had touched Him captured her own attention to the point of fear and trembling. Many were pressing against Jesus, but her touch was distinguished from the other touches. Her touch had drawn power out of Him. She needed something from Jesus and believed that He could supply it. He did not disappoint her. David E. Garland compares the stopping of her bleeding to the ceasing of the winds and waves at Jesus' command.²⁴ Her blood flow stopped at once.

The woman was determined to touch Jesus' garment, perhaps, because of the widespread belief that the power of a sacred person was in what they wore or touched.²⁵ She was careful, however, to touch Jesus from behind, so as not to be seen by Him or draw attention to herself.²⁶ The part of the garment that the woman touched receives attention for the insight it gives. Alfred Plummer expresses his belief that the woman touched the tassel of Jesus' garment rather than the hem. Two tassels hung in the front and two hung in the back. He states that it "was easy to touch the latter without the wearer feeling the touch."²⁷ Nonetheless, Jesus associated the woman's touch not with His garment but with Himself.

Jesus' Question and the Woman's Answer (Luke 8:45-48)

Jesus always seemed to amaze the disciples. In this case, Peter found himself quite bewildered with Jesus' question regarding who was touching Him. Perhaps Peter

²⁴ Garland, *Luke*, 368.

²⁵ Garland, *Luke*, 367.

²⁶ Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 794.

²⁷ Plummer, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke*, 235.

thought a better question would have been, “Who is not touching you?” Bock notes that the “verbs used for the crowd’s pressure are descriptive: *synechō* [συνέχω, crowding against] is also used of holding prisoners in jail or of being locked in a siege and *apothlibō* [αποθλιβω, pressing] can refer to pressing grapes.”²⁸ These descriptive verbs magnify the significance of the woman’s touch because, despite the pressing of the crowd, Jesus felt her touch and called her out.

The woman wanted to remain anonymous, but she had been found out. Bock writes, “Her sensitive condition also might explain her hesitancy to ask Jesus publicly for help.”²⁹ Now everyone would know that she had been bleeding for twelve years—hardly the kind of information anyone would want to share publicly. Jesus already knew her story.³⁰ Still, He insisted that she tell it, not just to Him but to everyone.

She of course had to share her story; otherwise, no one would have ever known about the miracle nor the distinction of her touch, and she, herself, would have never truly known Jesus. Had Jesus not called her out, she would have missed His personal touch; she would have missed His calling her “Daughter” (θυγατηρ), an intimate relationship term. She also would have missed His applause of her faith, which He declared, “has healed” her—a faith identified in her touching Jesus, in her confessing to the touch, and in her telling her story of why she touched Him.

Finally, when Jesus told her to go in peace, He “[bestowed] on her the peace of restoration, well-being, and salvation.”³¹ Jesus was not just concerned with her physical healing, but knew she needed spiritual healing much more. Because His blood would be

²⁸ Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 795.

²⁹ Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 793.

³⁰ See n21 in this chapter.

³¹ Garland, *Luke*, 368.

shed for her too, His daughter, she would never be unclean again, with or without the flowing of blood.³²

People in the world and in congregations are hiding their hurt. They too have scars and wounds that are no fault of their own. Some may even be embarrassed about their issues. Perhaps they have sought help but found themselves repeatedly disappointed, or perhaps they have invested in sources that have not delivered the desired cure. They need what only Jesus can provide—a tailored-made care that meets them where they are to lead them where they need to be. The church, therefore, must broadcast Jesus and the soul care He offers to draw the hurting out of their closets of despair and into the presence of a compassionate, loving Savior, who desires to call them sons and daughters.

Jesus Sees a Man Who Is Trying to See Him (Luke 19:1-10)

Jesus, accompanied by a crowd, has back-to-back encounters with two men in need—one as He approaches Jericho and another as He enters Jericho. News about Jesus has spread, so the crowd follows while those at a distance either cry out to Him or seek other ways to see Him. Following the healing of the blind beggar, Jesus and the crowd soon stumble upon Zacchaeus. Identified as a chief tax collector, Zacchaeus is Jesus' last one-on-one encounter recorded by Luke.

Zacchaeus and the Error of His Ways (Luke 19:1-2)

As a tax collector, Zacchaeus was a sinner in the eyes of the Jewish crowd. Due to the excessive taxes the tax collectors extorted from the people and due to their willingness to work for the Gentile oppressive Roman regime, tax collector and sinner were synonymous for the Jews. Tax collectors contracted with the Roman government for one amount but collected from the people additional monies to pad their own pockets.

³² Stein, *Luke*, 176, 262.

As a further insult to the people, Zacchaeus was wealthy and had likely gained his wealth through these immoral means and by conducting his business in Jericho's lucrative customs center.³³

Garland takes note of the interjection, "behold" (ἰδοῦ), and interprets it as Luke's way of saying that special attention needs to be given to Zacchaeus's position. Thus, Garland offers the following regarding Zacchaeus's occupation: "The Romans auctioned off the collection of indirect taxes (tools, tariffs, and customs) to the highest bidders, which may have been an individual or a group of individuals. By farming out the collection of these taxes, the Roman governor could count on receiving a fixed sum from the beginning of the year and reduce overhead expenses."³⁴ Zacchaeus was a willing participant in his trade. He was not assigned to it nor forced into it. In fact, he sought after it out of his own free will and with his eyes wide open, being clearly aware of the deal he was making.

Garland goes on to offer insight into why tax collectors in general and Zacchaeus in particular, as a chief tax collector, were so disdained by the people:

Because the tariffs were unfixed, this arrangement opened the door to fraud and extortion. The lessee could charge whatever he wanted to cover expenses and make a profit, but he would also have to bear any losses. The term "chief tax collector" (ἀρχιτελωνῆς) appears only here in Greek literature and may denote that Zacchaeus is either the head of a group of partners who joined together to obtain the contract, the sole owner of the contract, or someone hired by the partners to supervise the operation.³⁵

At the expense of others, Zacchaeus amassed great wealth. He was rightly tagged a sinner because of the unethical and self-serving way he acquired his wealth. Garland continues with his description of Zacchaeus's economic status and the great price he paid to attain it: "He is rich, presumably because he has raked in big payoffs since

³³ Liefeld, *Luke*, 1007.

³⁴ Garland, *Luke*, 747.

³⁵ Garland, *Luke*, 747.

Jericho was a significant import and export post. As a chief tax collector and a rich man, he represents “the sinner supreme.” Despite his riches, he remains on the margins of society—disdained, if not hated, as a despicable, greedy, and laughable character.”³⁶ Zacchaeus was steeped in the stench of his sin and he bore the results of it; namely, a great contempt from his own people—a contempt he earned each time he received from his people more money than was required. He had become rich, to be sure, but his wealth was his only close companion.

Zacchaeus’s Desperation to See Jesus (Luke 19:3-4)

Zacchaeus knew he was contemptible to his people. If he were an honored and respected man, a clear path would have been given him to see Jesus, but because he was not, he dared not even ask them for it.³⁷ Instead, Zacchaeus ran ahead of the crowd and climbed a tree. The reader first sees his desperation in his running to the tree, for it was considered undignified and shameful for a Hebrew man to run.³⁸ His running was like the unguarded running of the prodigal son’s father upon seeing, from a distance, his prodigal son returning (Luke 15:20).

Second, Zacchaeus was short in stature. For him to see Jesus amid the crowd he had to get himself above the crowd, so he climbed a tree. The sycamore tree that he climbed was a large evergreen that was easy to climb.³⁹ The tree’s large leaves and low-hanging branches allowed Zacchaeus to be well hidden.⁴⁰ No hint is given that either

³⁶ Garland, *Luke*, 747.

³⁷ Garland, *Luke*, 747.

³⁸ Stein, *Luke*, 467.

³⁹ John Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 35c (Dallas: Word, 1993), 905.

⁴⁰ Garland, *Luke*, 748.

Jesus or the crowd's attention was turned toward him as he climbed the tree. Zacchaeus literally placed himself in the path where Jesus would walk.

Why Zacchaeus wanted desperately to see Jesus is not clearly known as Luke offers no explanation for this desperation. Robert H. Stein does not conclude that Zacchaeus sought to see Jesus out of curiosity or to witness Jesus perform a miracle. Stein argues that it would take more than curiosity for Zacchaeus to stoop to the indignity of running.⁴¹ On the other hand, Darrell L. Bock contends that Zacchaeus is curious about Jesus because “he does not yet know Jesus (as indicated by the phrase *τις εστιν, tis estin*, who he is).”⁴²

Zacchaeus could have been drawn by Jesus' reputation for compassion, as was recently displayed toward the blind man on the side of the road who had shouted out for mercy from the Son of David. At this point in his gospel, Luke has established Jesus as a “friend to tax collectors and sinners” (Luke 5:30). Zacchaeus could have heard about that as well. In pondering why Zacchaeus so desired to see Jesus, Garland agrees that Zacchaeus could have heard about Jesus' compassion for the outcast. Garland writes, “Beyond the text, we might imagine that he had experienced social ostracism, isolation, and contempt and had heard (Luke 4:14, 37) that Jesus received sinners and tax collectors (Luke 5:27-32; 15:1-2).”⁴³ Whatever the reason he came, Zacchaeus appeared only to want and expected only to see Jesus from a distance.

Jesus' Desperation to See Zacchaeus (Luke 19:5-7)

Jesus was continually aware of His mission and the divine appointments that He encountered as part of His mission. John Nolland comments, “Luke's Jesus has an

⁴¹ Stein, *Luke*, 467.

⁴² Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 1518.

⁴³ Garland, *Luke*, 747.

uncanny knowledge of the secret affairs of others,”⁴⁴ for Jesus stops at the exact spot where Zacchaeus is and, not accidentally, but intentionally, looks up. Two things are immediately noteworthy about this moment. First, Jesus knew that Zacchaeus was above Him in the tree; second, Jesus knew Zacchaeus by name.⁴⁵

Zacchaeus, like the woman with the issue of blood, was not expecting a close encounter with Jesus. Nonetheless, Jesus traveled with His own agenda and on “today” (συνερον) it included Zacchaeus’s coming down from the sycamore tree and Jesus staying at his house. In addition to Luke’s use of the term “today,” Luke’s use of the term “hurry” (σπεῦσας) further hints at an urgency to Jesus’ request.⁴⁶

Both the responses of Zacchaeus and the crowd shed light on this urgency from Jesus’ perspective. At Jesus’ gesture and invitation, Zacchaeus was overjoyed while the crowd was infuriated. Jesus remained well-acquainted with the fickle nature of crowds—for Him one moment and against Him the next moment. In the past, the Pharisees and the scribes had expressed disapproval over Jesus’ eating with tax collectors and sinners. Now, He would go a step further to “lodge” (καταλυσαι) with the tax collector and to invite Himself to his house in full view of everyone.⁴⁷ Jesus never allowed the popular vote to sway Him. He knew that He was the one with the lesson to teach. Furthermore, because of His compassion for Zacchaeus and others like him, Jesus gladly risked criticism from the religious leaders to care for him and the many others who needed the salvation He came to bring.

⁴⁴ Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, 905.

⁴⁵ Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1518.

⁴⁶ Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, 905.

⁴⁷ Garland, *Luke*, 748.

Zacchaeus's Change of Heart (Luke 19:8)

Fruit follows repentance; visible signs of turning from sin and self should be as well-known as one's bad reputation. Zacchaeus responded to Jesus with acts of repentance. These repentant acts captured the attention of the crowd because, as they should have been, these acts were the extreme opposite of a tax collector's usual way of being. Because Zacchaeus had earned his wealth through ill-gotten means, the people had counted Zacchaeus unworthy of Jesus' attention. Now, this ill-gotten wealth would be returned to the people with the greatest need for it and to those from whom he extorted it.

Zacchaeus called Jesus "Lord" in keeping with his new attitude toward his wealth. His wealth no longer belonged to him. With Luke's use of the present tense verbs "give" (δίδωμι) and "restore" (αποδίδωμι), Zacchaeus broadcasted his repentance with a pledge to do better.⁴⁸

Garland takes note of Zacchaeus's choice of "if" (εἰ) in the passage. He does not take it as an attempt by Zacchaeus to claim possible innocence or ignorance toward his past behavior. Indeed, this seeming attitude of innocence goes against the reason Zacchaeus had to climb the tree to see Jesus. The crowd would not have given him a clear passageway to Jesus because they considered Zacchaeus a sinner.⁴⁹ To explain further his position regarding Zacchaeus's use of "if" as proof of his repentance, Garland quotes historian and theologian I. Howard Marshall: "The conditional clause is to be translated 'From whomsoever I have wrongfully exacted anything,' and thus does not put the fact of extortion in doubt, but rather its extent."⁵⁰ Jesus' pronouncement of the salvation that had come to Zacchaeus's house serves as additional proof that Zacchaeus's "if" is not a plea of possible innocence. Zacchaeus was changed by this salvation and everything he pledged to do bore testimony to it.

⁴⁸ Garland, *Luke*, 748.

⁴⁹ Garland, *Luke*, 748-49.

⁵⁰ Garland, *Luke*, 749.

Jesus' Mission Made Clearer (Luke 19:9-10)

Jesus' purpose statement of coming to seek and to save the lost points the reader back to why staying at Zacchaeus's house was a necessity.⁵¹ This purpose statement also helps the reader to link the "today" of verse 5 to the "today" of verse 9—Jesus had to stay today because salvation was needed today, which Jesus would never delay. Furthermore, Zacchaeus's own actions spoke to his readiness for the salvation that would come that day.

The critical, unforgiving, self-righteous posture of the crowd gave Jesus the occasion to reemphasize His mission "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). Walter L. Liefeld sees verse 10 as the key verse in Luke's gospel, noting that Luke treats "the lost" theme throughout his gospel. Luke records the parables of the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the lost son. He also often records Jesus speaking about the lost or records religious folk looking down on the lost. Liefeld states that "this whole incident is the epitome of the messianic mission described in Luke 4,"⁵² where Jesus stood in the synagogue and read from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and then transferred the prophet's words into His mission toward those in need.

The church must be on the lookout for those who are seeking Jesus. Those looking for Jesus could include first-time visitors to the worship service, those who respond to the sermon invitation by making salvation, rededication, or membership decisions, and those outside the walls of churches, whom Christians might dare to engage on an as-they-are-going basis. If people are looking for Jesus, then Jesus is looking for them. Through the work of the Spirit and proper soul care practices of the church, persons can find Jesus, come to see the error of their ways, and make the necessary changes to be better for themselves and for others whom they may have sinned against or neglected.

⁵¹ Stein, *Luke*, 467.

⁵² Liefeld, *Luke*, 1008.

Jesus Passes on to His Disciples His Ministry of Care (John 13:1-17)

The disciples had witnessed the care giving ministry of Jesus to the crowd and, particularly, to individuals. In the context of these ministry moments, the disciples were often astonished by Jesus' actions toward or words to either the ministry recipients or to them. Now, in John 13, Jesus will hand over to the disciples a ministry of caring that reflects the heart and humility of their "Lord" and "Teacher."

The Ministry Setting and Climate (John 13:1-3)

Jesus' words carry their own weight and impact, but here in John 13 Jesus was strategic not only about the words He spoke but also about the timing of those words. John tells three common things about the setting: The Passover Feast was near; Jesus was aware that His return to the Father was near; and, to Jesus' great disappointment, Jesus was aware that the one who would betray Him was near. Knowing the timing of all things in His own redemptive drama, Jesus focused Himself even more toward the disciples, who would soon have to play their parts without Him.⁵³

John 13 began the farewell discourses with two significant actions—Jesus washing the disciples' feet, which foreshadowed the cross, and Jesus calling out Judas as the betrayer, which set in motion the Passion events. At this point, Jesus' public ministry had come to an end and His full attention was now turned to His own disciples, those who were committed to following Him. With love always being the chief aim of Jesus' life and ministry, through the foot washing event and all that would follow it, Jesus would now show His disciples "the full extent of" (εἰς τέλος) His love.⁵⁴

⁵³ Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 545.

⁵⁴ Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 542-45.

The Foot Washing (John 13:4-11)

Jesus' foot washing was symbolic of the spiritual cleansing He spoke about with Peter in verses 8-10 and of the humble service He directed His disciples to follow in verses 12-17.⁵⁵ However, before Jesus gave foot washing these meanings, foot washing was an act of practical hospitality. People wore sandals and traveled on dusty roads, so a host would arrange for his guests' feet to be washed upon their arrival. Andreas Köstenberger explains, "Water was poured over the feet from one vessel and caught in another."⁵⁶

The act of foot washing itself was a menial task that was not even performed by Jewish slaves. In fact, it was usually reserved for Gentile slaves, wives, or children. Jesus' act of taking off His outer clothing and wrapping a towel around His waist was a signal that He was taking the position of a slave.⁵⁷ Morris invites readers into the scene:

The present tense, "rises" (*NIV* changes to the past, "got up"), is vivid: the writer sees the scene taking place before his very eyes. The preparations are detailed: the rising from the table, the putting off of the clothing, the taking of a towel, the girding of himself, and the pouring of water into the basin. Then Jesus began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel about his waist.⁵⁸

No doubt silence filled the room at the disciples' astonishment of their Lord performing this task that was not befitting of Him, and perhaps in their thinking certainly not befitting of them.

The foot washing, writes Morris, is "more than a reaction to the petty-mindedness of the disciples,"⁵⁹ who had spoken earlier of having a place of prominence in the kingdom. The foot washing was a prelude to the cross, with both the foot washing and the cross being lowly acts that would provide cleansing and also provide the disciples

⁵⁵ Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 458.

⁵⁶ Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 404.

⁵⁷ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 233.

⁵⁸ Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 547.

⁵⁹ Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 544.

with an invitation to follow the way of the Christ.⁶⁰ Readers hear hints of the cross in Jesus' words to Peter when Jesus informed him that if He did not wash his feet, Peter would not belong to Him. Readers also hear hints of the cross in Jesus' telling Peter that he did not need a bath since he was already clean. In addition, Jesus took the opportunity to interject a word about Judas' uncleanness, since Judas stood ready to betray Jesus by helping those who would send Him to the cross.⁶¹

The Explanation of the Foot Washing and the Instruction to Follow Jesus' Example (John 13:12-17)

Jesus' shocking act of foot washing did beg for an explanation.⁶² Given the time in which they lived and who Jesus was, Peter's refusing to let his Lord wash his feet was an appropriate response. This act was something that the disciples themselves would likely not have thought to do for Jesus, so they were rightly perplexed.

A variety of interpretations have existed and do exist to the meaning and use of foot washing to the life of the church. Some churches give it little to no weight at all and so ignore it all together, while other churches practice foot washing as part of their observance of the Lord's Supper. Still, some churches, although not many, even see foot washing as symbolic to baptism. In his research on foot washing, Gerald L. Borchert unveils the thinking of Lutheran theologian Oscar Cullman. Borchert writes that Cullman sought to elevate foot washing to sacrament status by "linking the foot washing with a cleansing from sin in the Lord's Supper."⁶³ Borchert calls this elevation attempt misguided and Cullman's view strange. Borchert deduces that the underlying concept of John's

⁶⁰ Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 544.

⁶¹ Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 544.

⁶² Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 405.

⁶³ Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12-21*, The American Commentary, vol. 25b (Nashville: B & H, 2002), 83.

entire Gospel of beholding “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,” lends no support to Cullman’s thinking.⁶⁴

For Jesus, foot washing was first and foremost a gesture and act of love. The disciples had seen Jesus love people, but not to the degree to which He was expressing His love to them. This act of humiliation was personal and private, reserved for their eyes only.⁶⁵ Because Jesus was returning to the Father, the mission would depend upon a unified front. Köstenberger writes that the disciples would need to be “drawn into the unity, love and mission of Father, Son, and Spirit.”⁶⁶ Jesus was seeking to prepare His disciples for the event that was about to occur, namely, His death.

George R. Beasley-Murray also attests to the theme of love as the thread woven throughout the foot washing act and believes that this love must find expression beyond the washing of people’s feet. He writes,

It is not to be overlooked that the foot washing is more than a simple parable of the greater act of cleansing achieved by Jesus through his death; it is itself an act of love to the limit, as the Evangelist recognized (13:1). Whereas its suitability to represent the love that gave itself on the cross is evident, the act may also be viewed as representative of all the actions of the love of Jesus in his ministry. . . . It is precisely because it is a concrete embodiment of the love that gave itself to people and for people that we must not limit the “example” to acts of literally washing people’s feet. Such a mode of obeying the injunction of vv 14-15 has admittedly been carried out by groups of Christians through the centuries, and is done by some to this very day, regardless of the unsuitability of the action in lands outside the Middle East and for people wearing different clothing from that of first-century disciples. The example of “love to the limit” calls for love in action that expresses itself in limitless ways.⁶⁷

Jesus told His disciples that He was giving them an example to follow.

Beasley-Murray explains, “The Greek word ὑπόδειγμα (*hypodeigma*) can denote both an ‘example,’ be it good or bad, and a ‘pattern.’”⁶⁸ Jesus accepted and received their

⁶⁴ Borchert, *John 12-21*, 83.

⁶⁵ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 239.

⁶⁶ Köstenberger, *John*, 395.

⁶⁷ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 239-40.

⁶⁸ Köstenberger, *John*, 408.

designation of Him as their Lord and Teacher. Now, they were obligated to follow His example as any good student should. The disciples, no doubt, did not completely understand what Jesus had done, but they would in time. When Jesus would die for their sins, this act of foot washing would have an even weightier meaning, as His dying on the cross for the sins of the world would be an even greater act of humiliation.⁶⁹

Soul care should be a way of being for the church as the body of Jesus Christ. The greatest expression of soul care must be among the family of God, both locally and universally. The apostle Paul expresses this idea in 1 Corinthians 12, where he speaks of the interdependence within the body of Christ and the value of each individual member of the body. He says, “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it” (12:26). Soul care actions toward one another are part of Jesus’ strategy to help people see Him. In John 13:35, Jesus says, “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Conclusion

The compassionate Christ saw people and He knew people. No matter what their presenting issue, Jesus always dealt first with their primary need, which was and is salvation.

The Samaritan woman lived an immoral life and yet held tightly to her Samaritan place of worship. The woman with the issue of blood faced ostracism, poverty, and sickness for twelve years. Zacchaeus, the tax collector, was in an occupation that cost him community relations, and, though a man of great wealth, he was short, not just in stature but in reputation as well. The community, the crowd, and, perhaps even the disciples saw these people as immoral, unclean, and greedy, but Jesus saw them as people in need of care.

Jesus was not concerned for personal cost nor His own reputation as He broke the protocols of His day. In each of these three cases, the crowd as well as the disciples

⁶⁹ Borchert, *John 12-21*, 81-86.

would discover repeatedly Jesus' mission to save lost people. The crowd would not always agree, and the disciples would not always understand. Instances that were deterrents for others—sinful lifestyle, different cultural background, conflicting religious beliefs, ceremonial uncleanness, and an immoral occupation—were soul care opportunities for Jesus. Situations that others saw as obstacles, Jesus saw as indicators of need.

Regardless of the risks, Jesus did not minister to people at a distance. He was not satisfied to let them receive their healing and be on their way. He sat down and talked with the woman at the well and engaged in intentional conversation with her, knowing full well the interaction would be looked down upon. Amidst a great crowd, Jesus was determined to come face-to-face with the woman who had touched Him in faith, knowing that she would have been regarded as ceremonially unclean by the crowd. Zacchaeus would have been content to stay in the tree. Nonetheless, Jesus insisted that He not only dine at his house, but also spend the night with him, knowing that the crowd would turn on Him because of it.

In drawing them close, Jesus heard their stories. Jesus became well acquainted with the Samaritan woman as her recorded story shows. The woman with the issue of blood was given opportunity to tell Jesus about her years of searching for a cure for her bleeding and about how she had spent all her money to no avail. Perhaps she told Him how lonely and isolated she felt for twelve years because she was regarded as ceremonially unclean. In turn, Jesus was given the opportunity to look her in the face and call her His daughter. Zacchaeus spent the beginning of his time with Jesus repenting of his sin and pledging to be better and to do better; and because Jesus spent the night with him, there was likely more unrecorded conversation between the two of them.

By taking on the position of a slave in washing His disciples' feet, Jesus taught the twelve that no task should be beneath them as they seek to serve one another and others. He fulfilled for them a real need of their day. As the gathered disciples of Jesus today, the

church is tasked by its Lord and Teacher to do likewise—to be other-centered and to meet the real needs of its day: “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you” (John 13:14-15).

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL, PRACTICAL, AND HISTORICAL
ISSUES RELATED TO SOUL CARE

Introduction

The thesis of this chapter is that living in a fallen body and in a fallen world can be unusually hard for anyone at any given time, and during these unusually hard times, people expect the church to be able to help. This thesis statement acknowledges humanity's fallen nature and fallen world and the unbearable brokenness that can result from both. This brokenness is caused not only by what is within man but also by what is outside of man, whether people or circumstances beyond one's control. Christians agree with Scripture regarding humanity's (therefore their own) sin condition (Rom 3:23), the death penalty that sin has incurred (Rom 6:23), and sin's impact on all creation (Rom 8:20-22). The statement further acknowledges that the impact of this brokenness, whether self-inflicted or others-induced, can be so difficult that one might need to call on the church and/or other fellow Christians for help. The church, then, must be made ready to render caring and competent help to meet these broken people where they are to move them to where they can be in Jesus, whether delivered from or still amid the hard time.

Chapter 2 gave attention to the soul care actions of Jesus toward three well-known Bible figures with three different presenting issues: the woman at the well, the woman with an issue of blood, and Zacchaeus, the tax collector. If today's Christians were in Jesus' position, which they are and should be, and they were the ones who encountered the sinful woman or the sick woman or the seeking man, what would guide them in their ministry to her, him, or them? As Christians seek to model Jesus' compassionate, open-arms, soul care way, this chapter will look at the why of soul care

and how the church administers that care. Specifically, this chapter looks at humanity's greatest problem, sin, the suffering that comes along with humanity's fallen nature and fallen world, and the ministry of the church, both pastor and people, in seeing the heart of sinners and sufferers, pointing them to Jesus, teaching them the Word, and gathering them in caring communities.

The Problem of Sin

There are two primary reasons why people need soul care. First, people need soul care because of their nature, because of what is within them. The root of people's problems is sin. Sin is humanity's condition. It is so pervasive that man does not have to decide toward some things because sin is just in man. It is the state of the natural self. Since the fall, it is who humans are. Sin is also humanity's choice, both active and passive. No matter the sinful influences around man, one is responsible for his own choices to sin.¹ People need soul care because they are sinful by nature and by choice. Sin as condition and sin as choice has its own history. It is an inherited problem that goes back to the beginning.

Sin's Introduction

The origin of sin is recorded in Genesis 3, where Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate of the tree of which He told them not to eat. A careful investigation of this garden scene uncovers the origin of humanity's sin tendencies. Early in the scene one can see that sin involves not just one's actions but one's thoughts, motives, emotions, and desires as well.² Robert Kellemen lays out all that went on with Eve's exchange with the serpent. He uses the word *seduction* in his explanation and description of Eve's encounter

¹ Robert Jones and Brad Hambrick, "The Problem of Sin," in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling: Changing Lives with God's Changeless Truth*, ed. James MacDonald, Bob Kellemen, and Steve Viars (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 139-45.

² Paul Tautges, *Counseling One Another: A Theology of Interpersonal Discipleship* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2015), 41.

with the serpent and the fall that would ensue. *Seduction* implies that many persuasively deceptive words have been spoken to which one has given contemplative thought and ultimately succumbs. In the chapter that bears the word in the title, “Exploring Serpentine Seduction to Sin: Our Spiritual Adultery,” Kellemen seeks to uncover “the depth and malignity” of humanity’s sin while revealing one’s desperate need of a Savior.³ The term *spiritual adultery* hints at a broken covenant relationship with God.

First, Satan launched an all-out attack on Adam and Eve’s relationship with God, as he sought to change how they saw God: “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat?’” (Gen 3:1). “You will not surely die” (Gen 3:4). The serpent presented himself as an authentic and authoritative voice in Eve’s ear. He began by creating doubt in what God had said and in what was meant by what God had said, the reason behind the prohibition to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He caused Eve to question God’s motives in withholding the fruit from them: “God knows that when you eat of it, you shall be like Him, knowing good and evil” (Gen 3:5). The seduction deepened as Eve continued to listen and not call for help from Adam or God.⁴

Second, Satan went a step further to create doubt in God’s goodness. He questioned God’s generosity and kindness, attempting to make God appear restrictive and territorial, as one not wanting to share His wisdom. Satan wanted Eve to distrust God or at least wonder if she could trust God. Despite Eve’s prior experience with God’s goodness and her simplistic dependence on Him, Eve’s curiosity was peeked, and her desires were awakened toward that from which God kept her and Adam. Eve “saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom” (Gen 3:6). Eve became convinced that she could have good experiences that she had not known, both physical and intellectual, experiences that God had appeared

³ Robert W. Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling: How Christ Changes Lives* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 132.

⁴ Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling*, 134.

to be withholding from them. As Satan worked to diminish Eve's view of God, he sought to elevate Eve's view of herself. She was seduced into believing that she could be her own counselor and free to make her own wise choices.⁵ Again, this closer look at Eve's enticements helps persons to understand where they and others can be persuaded. Eve did not set out to make God second place, but she did. Kellemen writes, "Desire itself was not the problem. Desiring anything more than God was the problem."⁶ A conflict that had never existed within her was now present and full blown.

Finally, Kellemen's view of Adam's seduction is that Adam chose Eve over God. "And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner" (1 Tim 2:14). Eve was a gift of companionship and helpmeet from God. Adam chose the gift over the giver. Eve's voice took priority over God's voice as well as her desires over God's desires. It was not a matter of deception for Adam but a matter of choice, not between God and the serpent but between Eve and God. Both Adam and Eve declared their independence from God, and in so doing broke fellowship with God.⁷ As their descendants, humanity's natural hearts toward God were forever altered.

A careful investigation of the garden scene also uncovers the origin of one's own feelings of and dealings with shame. The deed was done. Their nakedness was exposed. They knew that things had changed and that they had done it. They knew they had caused something that God would not call good. Instead of rushing to a quick fix, Edward T. Welch walks his readers through "shame's long history."⁸ That history, of course, begins with Adam and Eve as recorded in Genesis 3:6-10, where both ate of the forbidden fruit, with eyes wide opened, saw their nakedness, and sought to cover it up

⁵ Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling*, 134-35.

⁶ Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling*, 136.

⁷ Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling*, 136-37.

⁸ Edward T. Welch, *Shame Interrupted: How God Lifts the Pain of Worthlessness and Rejection* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2012), 45.

from themselves and from God. This transferred shame has many sides. Welch writes, “Hiding. Covering up. Self-protection. Feeling exposed. They are telltale signs of shame.”⁹ Either persons are driven to blame themselves solely or blame others solely, either taking it all upon themselves or removing it all from themselves.¹⁰ Adam blamed Eve and God (Gen 3:12); Eve blamed the serpent (Gen 3:13).

Shame latches on to persons when they are noticeably different from others, physically (overweight or underweight) or intellectually (learning or mental challenges). Shame finds persons in their financial (bankruptcy), relational (divorce), and vocational (fired or downsized) failures. Shame shows up when persons are mercilessly mistreated (labeled or rejected), suffer undue criticism (broken parenting), and unimaginable racism (racial profiling), or are grossly violated (sexual assault or sexism).¹¹ The sin of Adam and Eve birthed shame, a shame that can be and has been removed (Rom 8:1) and replaced (Rom 5:8).

Sin as Condition

Heath Lambert defines sin as “a disposition of human beings that leads to a failure to conform to the moral law of God.”¹² He uses the word *disposition* to highlight sin as humanity’s condition, which means that the old nature is opposed to God. Lambert goes on to list the seven effects of Adam’s sin on humanity with the first effect being the loss of man’s standing before God.¹³ Once created in the likeness and image of God, to reflect God, Adam and Eve traded that in, not just for themselves, but for all humankind,

⁹ Welch, *Shame Interrupted*, 46.

¹⁰ Welch, *Shame Interrupted*, 53.

¹¹ Welch, *Shame Interrupted*, 14-16.

¹² Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of a Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 217.

¹³ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 220.

notes Elyse Fitzpatrick.¹⁴ Because Adam represented humanity, man inherits his nature, his guilt, and his penalty (Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:22). This inherited state is called original sin.

Second, sin affects humanity's motivations; that is, man's will, choice, and desire are compromised. Apart from grace, man's desires are now more toward himself or herself than God. The motives of humanity's hearts are twisted so that man desires what he or she ought not desire.¹⁵ Third, as Lambert explains, "sin impacts how our minds work. . . . Because of our sinfulness, we do not think as we should."¹⁶ As a result, man justifies his or her moral choices and calls good bad and bad good. Fourth, sin has man's emotions completely out of order. Persons hate what they should love and love what they should hate. Lambert continues, "In a sinful world we can experience emotions that are misplaced, emotions that are out of proportion to the occasion, and emotions that are wrong."¹⁷ In addition, sin birthed the emotion of sorrow, especially as people live contrary to God.¹⁸

These latter three effects of sin speak to the inner workings of humanity. The fifth effect of sin moves one from the inner to the outer part of humanity, the physical body. Sin puts man's body in a state of decay, for in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 Paul describes the body as perishable, dishonorable, and weak. Humanity, therefore, does not know perfect health, but are met with weaknesses (blindness, paralysis, deafness, muteness, and so on), disease, and eventually death.¹⁹

¹⁴ Elyse M. Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart: Learning to Long for God Alone* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2001), 142.

¹⁵ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 221-22.

¹⁶ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 222.

¹⁷ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 223.

¹⁸ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 222-23.

¹⁹ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 223.

Sin has strained not only man's relationship with God, but also man's relationship with one another. This sixth effect of sin is a reminder of what persons know too well—that their relationship with one another is not what it was meant to be. Unfortunately, persons wish ill-will on others and they covet what others have. And, these feelings are reciprocated; others wish the same ill-will toward them (Titus 3:3). Finally, as it awaits rescue, creation groans because of sin (Rom 8:20-22). The natural world's decaying is seen in the hostile ways of the animal world, in the devastations on the land and property by fires, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, and tornados, and in car accidents, all of which create pain and hardship.²⁰

Total depravity is the term coined by theologians to sum up sin's effect on everything related to man's existence. Jay Adams uses the word *corruption* to sum up sin's effect:

The Bible teaches that by Adam's sin the human race became both guilty and corrupt. This corruption (or depravity, as theologians have called it) is total. But when we speak of total depravity, we must make it clear that this does not mean that every person is as bad as he might be. Rather, the idea behind the word *total* is that *in all parts and aspects of his life he is depraved*—no area has escaped sin's blighting effects.²¹

With the backing of Ephesians 2:1-3, where the natural man is described as “dead in trespasses and sins” and “children of wrath,” John MacArthur speaks of this depravity using such words as *estrangement* and *hate* to describe man's relationship with God. MacArthur states that every aspect of humanity is contaminated, and that this contamination puts man in a state of enmity with God. Man is estranged, separated from God. Man does not know better, so he or she hates God. Considering this depravity, man

²⁰ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 225.

²¹ Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling: More than Redemption* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 140-41, emphasis original.

is unable to please God and man is unable to know God apart from His intervention.²²
Humans are sinful by condition.

Sin as Choice

Because sin is man's natural condition, man's natural disposition, he or she can want things that are sinful and he or she can behave in ways that are sinful.²³ Fitzpatrick picks up on three words in the Genesis seduction scene: good, delight, and desirable. She sees these words as speaking to what motivated Eve's act. Eve chose what she believed to be good, delightful, and desirable. By comparison, Fitzpatrick argues that persons also make their choices based on what they consider to be what is best at the time: "Sin never proclaims itself to be sin. It always masquerades as righteousness."²⁴ One's purposeful disobedience is often in pursuit of what is best, no matter how ill-advised.²⁵ All persons can be deceived toward the sinful choices they make.

Paul Tautges describes sin as "willful independence from God."²⁶ Adam and Eve's intimate fellowship with God, he says, depended on their obedience to God's commands. Their sin was a choice to be in opposition with God; they willfully acted independent of what God had set forth.²⁷ The prophet Isaiah confirms this willful turning when he says that "each of us has turned to his own way" (Isa 53:6).

²² John MacArthur, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 67-68.

²³ Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling*, 218.

²⁴ Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart*, 91.

²⁵ Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart*, 91.

²⁶ Tautges, *Counseling One Another*, 43.

²⁷ Tautges, *Counseling One Another*, 43.

Tautges also describes sin as “selfish cruelty, self-centeredness.”²⁸ In one’s momentary or long-term blindness, one’s choosing to sin does not consider others and it makes him or her cruel. This self-centered cruelty is most especially seen in Cain’s murder of his brother Abel in Genesis 4:4-8. Cain hated Abel and God’s favor toward Abel because his own deeds were evil. Since humans are made in God’s image, whether they shed blood (Gen 9:6) or curse with their tongues (Jas 3:9), this choice to attack other human beings is also a choice to attack God.²⁹ Sin as choice is a relationship interrupter in two ways, between God and the sinner and the sinner with his fellow man.

When persons’ hearts are not toward God, in any given moment, they can find themselves choosing to sin in a variety of ways. Tautges gives examples of commonly practiced sins that Christians need help in overcoming, in making godly choices toward. The first four are against the body and the last three are inner workings of the heart. Those sins against the body include the three sexual sins of fornication, adultery, and homosexuality. Fornication is sex outside of marriage that includes cohabitation and pornography; adultery is sex with someone other than one’s spouse; homosexuality is sex with persons of the same gender. Each offender in these instances chooses to step outside of the boundaries of God’s plan for sexual union. The other commonly practiced sin against the body mentioned by Tautges is drunkenness. Drunkenness is a selfish, sinful lifestyle that dulls one’s spiritual senses and destroys one’s relationships and livelihood (Prov 23:21).³⁰

The last three sins of choice, whether committed out of ignorance or willful disobedience, flow from within a person. They include idolatry, greed, and verbal abuse. Idolatry, which will be covered in detail later in this chapter, refers to anything that is put

²⁸ Tautges, *Counseling One Another*, 43-44.

²⁹ Tautges, *Counseling One Another*, 44.

³⁰ Tautges, *Counseling One Another*, 44.

above God, whether people, things, or thoughts. Greed is the excessive desire for things, and whether acquired honestly or dishonestly, God hates greed (Exod 20:15 and 1 Tim 6:17-19). Verbal abuse, the last sin identified, is tagged as an inner problem sin because, as Scripture confirms, what comes out of the mouth reveals what is inside a man (Matt 15:10-11). Sins such as pride, anger, and hatred, which the tongue expresses, must be exposed and addressed.³¹

Sin as choice is passive as well as active. Active sins, called sins of commission, those mentioned previously, are those sinful acts that persons commit, those things that persons do that they ought not to do. Passive sins, called sins of omission, are those righteous acts that persons omit, those things that persons ought to do that they fail to do. Each includes words as well as actions, as pointed out by Robert Jones and Brad Hambrick. Jones and Hambrick go on to give contrasting and comparative examples of passive and active sins in words and actions by using the husband/wife relationship, which is often filled with things that ought not to have been said or done and things that ought to have been said or done. Words involving the sin of commission is when a husband is being verbally abusive to his wife. Words involving the sin of omission is when “a husband fails to ask his wife how her day has been going.”³² A sin of commission act is when a husband is physically abusive toward his wife. A sin of omission act is when “a husband forgets to give his wife a birthday gift.”³³ All chosen sins, both active and passive, outer and inner, in word or action, must be put off and replaced with God honoring choices (Eph 4:20-32). Humans are sinful by choice.

³¹ Tautges, *Counseling One Another*, 53.

³² Jones and Hambrick, “The Problem of Sin,” 147.

³³ Jones and Hambrick, “The Problem of Sin,” 147.

The Challenge of Suffering

The second primary reason people need soul care is because of their nurture, because of what is outside of them. In other words, people need soul care because they experience suffering, not just from their own choices, but because of the choices of others, because of diseases that attack their body, and because of natural disasters that threaten their life and livelihood. Adam’s sin produced “a world of profound pain.”³⁴ This world is broken; it is fallen and everyone gets to feel it. Because of this corruption, trouble is guaranteed. David Powlison agrees,

Each day will bring you “its own trouble” (Matt. 6:34). Some difficulties are light and momentary—in your face today and forgotten tomorrow. Other hardships last for a season. Some troubles recur and abate cyclically. Other afflictions become chronic. Some woes steadily worsen, progressively bringing pain and disability into your life. And other sufferings arrive with inescapable finality—the death of a dream, the death of a loved one, your own dying and death.³⁵

Categories of Suffering

Lambert puts Powlison’s summary of difficulties into six categories of suffering. They include the suffering people bring on themselves, as already alluded to, and the suffering they experience because of the sin of others, like the betrayal of a spouse or the abuse of parents. A second category of suffering unveils a world system that is opposed to God and His righteous standards. The world, as this ungodly world system is referred to in 1 John, embraces an “anything goes” mentality and a practice reminiscent of the book of Judges where “everyone did what is right in their own eyes” (Jdgs 17:6; 21:25). Christians struggle to live pure lives amongst a sexually loose society. Any opposition Christians express toward non-Christian values and practices will be met with attacks of being narrow-minded and judgmental. Jesus told Christians there would be days like this (John 15:18-19).³⁶

³⁴ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 248.

³⁵ David Powlison, *God’s Grace in Your Suffering* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 15.

³⁶ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 248-51.

A third category identified by Lambert is suffering and the devil.³⁷ He is the adversary who prowls around seeking to devour (1 Pet 5:8) and who goes out to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10a). Job's suffering was a direct attack of Satan, who wanted to bring Job to the point of cursing God. He accused Job of being faithful to God because of all the blessings and protection God had provided Job. Satan suggested that if God took it all away, Job would turn away. However, Job proved Satan wrong by remaining loyal to God through it all (Job 1:6-22). "There really is an enemy in our world," states Paul David Tripp, "a trickster and a liar who divides, destroys, and devours. He tempts us with things that promise to give life but actually destroys it."³⁸ Jesus called out Satan's false promises right away in the temptation scene (Matt 4:1-11). Later Jesus would contrast His own purpose with that of the enemy: Jesus says the enemy has come to destroy life; He, on the other hand, has come to give life, abundant life (John 10:10b).

The next category considers the suffering persons do on behalf of others.³⁹ What parent has not hurt when their child has been hurt or hugely disappointed? The desperate plight of the homeless child in America or the undernourished child in a third world country tugs at persons' hearts and causes them to act. Persons give to and participate in rescue efforts and rebuilding projects for those devastated by natural disasters. Paul had great sorrow and unceasing anguish in his heart for his people who rejected their own rich spiritual heritage by rejecting Christ. His sorrow was so deep that he preferred to be cursed rather than to see them perish (Rom 9:2-3).

Lambert calls the fifth category "suffering and confusion," which refers to humanity's struggle to make the right and best decisions. The agony or suffering surfaces

³⁷ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 248-51.

³⁸ Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 144.

³⁹ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 252.

in the struggle.⁴⁰ Should I marry or stay single? Should I divorce or stay married? Should I leave him on life support or take him off? The sinful world of humanity produces these choices that have persons perplexed and puzzled regarding the right and best decision.

The final category is suffering and death. In this category Lambert references the sicknesses that lead to death and the weaknesses that plague the body.⁴¹ These weaknesses include blindness, paralysis, sickle cell anemia, congestive heart failure, diabetes, kidney disease requiring dialysis or a kidney transplant, and the list goes on. These bodily weaknesses do not escape even the best of humanity. In his book *Kiss the Waves: Embracing God in Your Trial*, Dave Furman includes the sufferings of well-known Christians. Renowned English preacher and pastor Charles Spurgeon suffered from gout, rheumatism, and inflamed kidneys. Perhaps his greatest bodily challenge was his battle with depression, with which he battled his whole life, right up until his death at age 57. Regarding his depression, Spurgeon wrote, “My spirits were sunken so low that I could weep by the hour like a child, and yet I knew not what I wept for.”⁴²

Prolific Christian writer J. I. Packer also knows of bodily weakness. As a child he suffered an accident that left a hole in his head and an indentation in his skull. Those injuries caused him to isolate himself even more as he had to wear a patch around his injury. This chosen isolation meant that he would miss out on having a proper childhood. Knowing that any fall could prove deadly, his parents did not get him the bicycle he desired for his eleventh birthday; instead, they purchased him a used typewriter, which he eventually came to cherish.⁴³

⁴⁰ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 252-53.

⁴¹ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 253-54.

⁴² Dave Furman, *Kiss the Waves: Embracing God in Your Trial* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 18.

⁴³ Furman, *Kiss the Waves*, 100-101.

Responses to Suffering

Persons respond to suffering in a variety of ways. Adams paints an unfavorable picture of the unbeliever's response to suffering. He says that the unbeliever whines and is wrought with self-pity, denial, and relief-seeking at whatever the cost (such as tranquilizers and other numbing drugs).⁴⁴ Unfortunately, those who know God can also fall prey to the same responses. Recall King Hezekiah's response to Isaiah's news from the Lord that he was going to die from his illness. Hezekiah did not take the news in stride; instead, he "turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord," then "wept bitterly" (2 Kgs 20:1-3). The Israelites repeated often their "It would have been better to stay in Egypt" chant, when things became difficult. "If only we had died in Egypt," they would cry (Exod 16:3; Num 14:2; 20:3).

In *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, Lambert tells the following real-life husband/wife story to illustrate the dilemma of being sinners living in a fallen world. The story also illustrates the improper response to suffering. It is the story of a married couple who lost their three-year old son in the worst way. His dad was backing out of the garage not knowing that his son was behind the SUV. He hits him and the child is fatally wounded. Though neither of them blamed the other for the accident, they blamed themselves. In response to his grief, the husband withdrew from his wife and began drinking heavily. As a result, the wife battled her grief alone. She began to accept more responsibility at work to escape her home situation, a drunk and emotionally absent husband. Then, a relationship at work began as two friends enjoying dinner after work and time away on business trips; it evolved into a full-blown affair. Despite the husband's promise to be better, the wife leaves him for this other man. This husband and wife lost their son and, in response, made sinful choices that resulted in divorce.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, 272.

⁴⁵ Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 214-17.

Regarding suffering—can there be a better response to the suffering persons face than self-destruction or self-pity, no matter how difficult (Rom 8:18; 1 Pet 2:19)? Can more be done with suffering than just enduring it or burying one’s head in the sand (2 Cor 12:8-10)? Regarding sinful choices—can persons experience the grace that out abounds sin (Rom 5:15, 20-21) and the love that covers over a multitude of sins (1 Pet 4:8; Jas 5:20)? Is there any real help and lasting hope? Persons are sinners who suffer because of their nature and their choices, because others sin against them, and because the fallen world in which they live offers its own challenges by way of diseases and disasters. Nonetheless, help is available, and it is available through the church of Jesus Christ.

The Church’s Ministry to Sinful and Suffering People

“Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love.” The songwriter captured well the Christian’s plight with this verse of the great hymn of the faith, “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing.” Christians’ hearts can move away from the God they love. In Romans 7:24, Paul asks, “Who can rescue me from this body of death?” In so asking, Paul is admitting that the human body is compromised both spiritually and physically. His question is a rhetorical one, for in the next breath he answers it. Peter has his own question in Matthew 18:21: “How many times must I forgive my brother when he sins against me?” Peter asks because he must have known how one can suffer at the hands of others and be conflicted in the heart regarding the right response. Considering these and many more potential struggles that come with sin and suffering, the church must be made competent to administer the needed soul care because church is the place where the Spirit will lead those who are hurting. This competency begins with an understanding of the heart and its propensity to sin.

The Church Looks at the Heart

The heart is the place where Satan attacks and sin germinates. In Acts 5:3, Peter asked Ananias, “How is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit?” In Luke 6:43-45, Jesus explains that good and evil come out of a person based on the good or evil stored up in their heart. According to Jesus, people do what they do and respond to their experiences based on the condition of their heart. As a matter of apples and oranges, a good tree bears good fruit and a bad tree bears bad fruit and this fruit bearing cannot be reversed. “People,” says Jesus, “do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briars.” In other words, a good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. In this metaphor, “fruit equals behavior.”⁴⁶ Specifically addressing the words that come from our mouths, Jesus wants His disciples to know that the character of those words (fruit) have their origin in the heart and thus reveal the condition of the heart (tree); the words reveal whether the heart is good or whether the heart is bad.⁴⁷ Jesus, consequently, addresses the hearts of people because He sees the heart as the inner self.⁴⁸ Therefore, in soul care ministry the heart is the target and the church would do well to better understand it.

Understanding the heart. Theologians have wrestled with how to describe the functioning of the heart. One of the most common, and the one the writer uses here, is to think of the heart in terms of the mind, the affections, and the will. Jeremy Pierre categorizes the heart under these three functions as well— “cognition, affection, and volition” or “the thinking heart, the feeling heart, the intentional heart.”⁴⁹ The heart functions are the human experience and Pierre argues well the interconnectedness of the

⁴⁶ Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, 60.

⁴⁷ Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, 60.

⁴⁸ Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart*, 104.

⁴⁹ Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2016), 17-21.

heart's three functions. For example, he says that thinking and feeling go hand in hand. The thinking heart acquires knowledge and perceives truth, which the feeling heart processes through emotions. In other words, one feels about what one thinks about, and the intentional heart makes choices based on both one's thoughts and one's feelings. Clearly stating the interrelatedness, Pierre puts it this way, "Emotions require beliefs. . . . When people are sad, they feel sad about something. . . . There is cognitive content to their emotion, and these influence the choices they make."⁵⁰

Pierre and Fitzpatrick agree regarding the three functions of the heart as mind, affections, and will. In her work, Fitzpatrick provides the following descriptors of each. The heart, in reference to the mind, includes one's "thoughts, beliefs, understandings, memories, judgments, conscience, and discernment."⁵¹ These descriptions are confirmed in Scripture, where the reader finds verses that refer to the heart as wise and discerning (1 Kgs 3:12), dull (Matt 13:15), reasoning (Mark 2:6), doubting (Luke 24:38), foolish and darkened (Rom 1:21), and pure (1 Tim 1:15).⁵²

The heart, in reference to affections, includes one's "longings, desires, feelings, imaginations, and emotions."⁵³ This use of heart is the dominating meaning in today's culture as persons speak of having a broken heart, which means that feelings are hurting, or with loving someone with all their heart, meaning that they care deeply for that someone. The Bible, however, presents feelings and desires as one function. The heart can know joy and gladness (Deut 28:47), fear (Josh 14:8), sadness (1 Sam 1:8), desire (Ps 20:4), anger (Eccl 7:9), anxiousness (Isa 35:4), despair (Heb 12:3), and jealousy and

⁵⁰ Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 25.

⁵¹ Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart*, 104.

⁵² Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart*, 104.

⁵³ Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart*, 104.

selfishness (Jas 3:14). Also, the heart has imaginations (Ps 73:7) and impulses (Eccl 11:9).⁵⁴

Lastly, the heart, in reference to the will, “chooses and determines actions.”⁵⁵ The will acts upon the conclusions of the mind and the affections.⁵⁶ For example, Israel was admonished to choose life (Deut 30:19) and choose whom they would serve (Josh 24:15). One’s general knowledge and fear of God also inform one’s choices (Isa 7:15; Ps 25:12).⁵⁷

Confronting other allegiances of the heart. God’s will is that persons know truth unwaveringly with their mind, desire Him passionately with their affections, and choose Him deliberately with their will. However, there are barriers to God’s will being accomplished perfectly in and lived out through persons’ lives. Fitzpatrick states the issue well: “We have a major heart problem against which we will have to struggle our entire lives.”⁵⁸ Pierre and Fitzpatrick also agree that sin has done its work on the human heart—that which persons were originally designed to think, believe, feel, and do has been altered from its God-focused, other-centered design. Instead, the fallen human heart is bent inward, toward itself.⁵⁹ And, as previously mentioned, “our heart trouble is hereditary; it has its origin at the Fall. Ever since Adam, all people have had this problem—we all have a sin nature, as the Bible teaches.”⁶⁰ Scripture concurs: “Every intent of the thoughts of [man’s] heart was only evil continually” (Gen 6:5). David confesses, “I was brought forth

⁵⁴ Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart*, 105-6.

⁵⁵ Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart*, 107.

⁵⁶ Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart*, 107.

⁵⁷ Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart*, 107.

⁵⁸ Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart*, 110.

⁵⁹ Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 64.

⁶⁰ Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart*, 110.

in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me” (Ps 51:5). Solomon concludes, “The hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives (Eccl 9:3).⁶¹

The default position of humanity’s infected heart is against Godly thinking, feeling, and being. Even Christians who have new hearts by the rebirth of the Spirit struggle with the default position of their hearts. Fitzpatrick writes, “We must continually battle the competing loves in our hearts. Every day we have to choose whom we will love most: God or ourselves (and the gods we create).”⁶² It is these competing loves to which this section now turns. Idols is one of the terms used to identify these competing loves that have become settled, committed, formed loves that arouse God’s jealousy and create a Pandora of spiritual inconsistencies in Christians’ life and work with Christ. The struggle is with the sinful heart.

In each of the facets or dimensions of the heart, idolatry finds its entry point and settles in place. Pierre states, “Idolatry occurs when the heart’s dynamic functions are used to worship self instead of God. . . . Like all sin, the sin of idolatry is fundamentally a failure to believe that God is God.”⁶³ Because the heart must worship, it seeks out substitutes. Fitzpatrick begins her idolatry investigation with the mind, since, she says, that is where the sin of idolatry starts. Because persons think wrongly about God, they imagine God to be someone other than who He is and to act in ways contrary to what He does. In so imagining, persons create a false god, an idol. This false thinking about God moves them to believe that their source of happiness lies somewhere else, so they slip into worshipping that which they believe will make them happy, their idol.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart*, 111.

⁶² Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart*, 111.

⁶³ Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, 65.

⁶⁴ Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart*, 129.

Tripp adds to the idolatry conversation when he says that sin is idolatrous, and that the idolatry is born out of one's desire for something other than God. This idol worship is subtle; the turning of one's heart toward the object of one's desire comes in slowly, not in an obvious way, as one believes little by little that the thing that one desires is more satisfying than God. To make matters worse, persons are unaware of the idol's existence and continue with their external faith duties. However, in their hearts, deep down inside, they are far from God.⁶⁵

So, how does the heart find its way back to the one it was meant to love truly and stay true to Him? The church must point persons to Jesus, teach the Word, and bring persons together in caring, transformational communities.

The Church Points to Jesus

“The Word was made flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14). “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him” (John 3:17). The church must point people to Jesus as not only the author of their faith but also the perfecter, finisher of their faith. Regarding Jesus, Robert Jones points the reader to Paul's ministry, which had Christ as its central focus. Paul spoke of proclaiming Christ and presenting everyone perfect in Christ (Col 1:28-29), upholding Christ as the one who holds wisdom and knowledge (Col 2:2-3), and not mixing Christ in with any human philosophies as He stands complete within Himself (Col 2:9-10).⁶⁶

Jones goes on to highlight five ways in which the biblical Jesus is to be brought into the soul care arena. First, Jesus is the climax of God's redemptive drama. Through His life and ministry, Jesus brought the Old Testament sacrificial and sanctification practices into sharper focus, connecting His ultimate and perfect sacrifice for sin to the

⁶⁵ Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, 64, 66-67.

⁶⁶ Robert Jones, “The Christ-Centeredness of Biblical Counseling,” in *Scripture and Counseling: God's Word for Life in a Broken World*, ed. Bob Kellemen and Jeff Forrey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 110.

need of all humanity to be cleansed from sin and reconciled to God. The Scriptures, said Jesus to the Jewish leaders, point to me (John 5:39-40). No matter where Christians go in Scripture to offer soul care, they find Jesus. For example, the Psalms point to the sufferings of Christ while the Proverbs point to the wise living of Christ.⁶⁷

Second, Jesus is the perfect model and mentor in how to live a life of love. As is illustrated in the Gospels, Jesus “refreshed burdened hearts, comforted grieving hearts, rebuked proud hearts, and assured refreshed hearts,”⁶⁸ all because He loved. In addition, Jesus’ silent and calm posture during His sufferings to and on the cross teaches persons how to face their own sufferings.⁶⁹ And, His suffering was for all humanity.

Third, the death and resurrection of Jesus was also for mankind. Persons, then, should be captured by the love that made possible their freedom from sin and reconciliation to God and seek to offer their lives in kind. The motivation “to grow and change in practical ways”⁷⁰ comes from Christ’s compelling love. Before the reader can ask, Jones asks the question and then tells what this directive toward growth and change looks like. He writes,

What does this look like in counseling? It means bringing Jesus to counselees by using the Scriptures, inviting them to trust in Him in fresh ways, and urging them to live for the One who died and rose for them. It means reviewing God’s love for them and Jesus’ death and resurrection for them, and then exploring what it means to live as died-for and raised-for people. The fact that someone *needed* to die for us reminds us of our sinfulness and helplessness; the fact that Jesus *did* die for us reminds us that he loves us. And the fact that Jesus rose from the dead assures us that the Father accepted His sacrifice and that Jesus is a living and active Savior who is with us by His Spirit to help us to follow Him.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Jones, “The Christ-Centeredness of Biblical Counseling,” 111-13.

⁶⁸ Jones, “The Christ-Centeredness of Biblical Counseling,” 115.

⁶⁹ Jones, “The Christ-Centeredness of Biblical Counseling,” 115.

⁷⁰ Jones, “The Christ-Centeredness of Biblical Counseling,” 117.

⁷¹ Jones, “The Christ-Centeredness of Biblical Counseling,” 117.

Persons are empowered and motivated toward change because of what Christ has done. Any call to change should begin with the One who made it possible and desirable. Then, the particulars of how to change are introduced and worked through. Persons are to live for Jesus and apply the gospel to every area of their life and during every season of their life—in their marriage relationships, in their sin struggles, and in their suffering moments.⁷²

Fourth, Jesus gives the power to do what He commands and requires (Phil 4:11-13). Jesus remains present to strengthen Christians during difficult times (2 Tim 4:16-17) and makes intercession for them (Heb 7:24-25). Prayer is how Christians invoke God’s presence and power in their lives and situations.⁷³ Praying the Word assures that persons pray in keeping with His will so that they can have what they ask of Him (1 John 5:14-15). Jones explains, “Biblical counseling [soul care] connects people to an actual Person who transforms them.”⁷⁴

Finally, all human problems will be solved upon Jesus’ return. In the meantime, sufferings and situations will continue, but the Morning is coming. Then, Christians will have a perfect heart (1 John 3:2), a perfect body (1 Cor 15:42-49), and a perfect place (Rev 21:1-2).⁷⁵ This hope is the ultimate hope that the dispersed church brings into every counseling setting. Sin and suffering are temporary for those who have entrusted their heart and lives to the Savior Jesus. The church does well to remember and remind its counselees “that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory

⁷² In *Scripture and Counseling*, 118-19, see Robert Jones’ illustrations of this principle in the marriage relationship, where couples are given practical guidelines for their roles in Eph 5:22-33 but must also be directed to Eph 1:1-14 to find the motivation for following the Eph 5 instructions. Jones also shows how this principle works with those struggling with habitual sins. He directs these persons to Matt 5-7 for practical instructions and to Matt 1-4 for what should move persons to follow those instructions.

⁷³ Jones, “The Christ-Centeredness of Biblical Counseling,” 120-22.

⁷⁴ Jones, “The Christ-Centeredness of Biblical Counseling,” 122.

⁷⁵ Jones, “The Christ-Centeredness of Biblical Counseling,” 122-24.

which shall be revealed in us” (Rom 8:18). When the suffering is great, counselees can know that the glory is greater.

Persons with heart struggles, whether due to sin or suffering, have help from the Savior Himself. Jesus is the example in how to live righteously and how to face suffering gracefully. He modeled perfect love through His sacrifice and that love should compel counselees’ own hearts toward love, growth, and change. Speaking of change, transformational help is also provided through God’s Word.

The Church Teaches the Word

God has addressed people’s brokenness, fed by their own nature and their nurture, through His written, inspired, living, and active Word (Heb 4:12), which is sufficient for all that people’s souls need. Peter said it this way in 2 Peter 1:3-4:

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

God’s Word is sufficient for broken life in a broken world.

Paul Tautges and Steve Viars expand on Peter’s assertion regarding Scripture’s sufficiency for addressing life’s challenges, for moving persons toward victorious living through biblical outlooks and responses. Specifically, they uncover and discuss four key passages that give four distinctions of the Word’s usefulness to the hearts of those who would believe and apply its truth.⁷⁶

Based on Psalm 19:7-11, the first description of the Word is “desirable law.”⁷⁷ As desirable law, Scripture is characterized as follows. Scripture revives the soul, because

⁷⁶ Paul Tautges and Steve Viars, “Sufficient for Life and Godliness,” in Kellemen and Forrey, *Scripture and Counseling*, 47-49.

⁷⁷ Tautges and Viars, “Sufficient for Life and Godliness,” 49.

it brings salvation and spiritual life. Scripture “makes simple-minded people wise”⁷⁸—it moves persons from being naïve, accepting of every wind of doctrine, to having God’s wisdom from the Proverbs. Scripture brings joy to the afflicted, saddened heart, no matter the source of the sorrow. Tautges and Viars write, “Scripture has the ability to sanctify our hearts’ affections.”⁷⁹ Next, Scripture gives light to the eyes of the heart, enabling persons to discern spiritual things. It lasts forever and is always relevant. It leads persons toward godliness and proves its own value through its transforming work. Scripture comes with its own warning labels as the consequences of disobedience are laid out. Finally, regarding it being desirable law, those who keep the Scriptures and who live according to them, reap rewards.⁸⁰

According to 2 Timothy 3:10-17, Scripture is “the direct trainer,”⁸¹ the second label provided by Tautges and Viars to further explain and explore Scripture’s sufficiency. Scripture teaches persons core beliefs about God and man. It reproves Christians to get them back on the path of righteousness and then trains them to live righteously as it prepares them for every ministry assignment.⁸²

Capturing the metaphor of Scripture’s work in the heart, Tautges and Viars tag this description of Scripture’s sufficiency as “the divine scalpel.”⁸³ According to Hebrews 4:12-13, Scripture is like a surgical tool that cuts in the places where real change is needed. It does so because “the Bible is a divine book [that] speaks with divine authority.”⁸⁴ The

⁷⁸ Tautges and Viars, “Sufficient for Life and Godliness,” 50.

⁷⁹ Tautges and Viars, “Sufficient for Life and Godliness,” 50.

⁸⁰ Tautges and Viars, “Sufficient for Life and Godliness,” 49-53.

⁸¹ Tautges and Viars, “Sufficient for Life and Godliness,” 53.

⁸² Tautges and Viars, “Sufficient for Life and Godliness,” 53-55.

⁸³ Tautges and Viars, “Sufficient for Life and Godliness,” 56.

⁸⁴ Tautges and Viars, “Sufficient for Life and Godliness,” 57.

Bible is alive and life-giving, able to change hearts from the inside out. The Holy Spirit uses Scripture to produce spiritual results; it is active. Scripture pierces the heart, exposing what is there and cutting it out, which requires the truth to be spoken and to be spoken in love. As a discerning book, the Bible unveils one's idols; one's real objects of worship. Whether they involve incorrect thinking or wrongful desiring, the Bible will find persons out.⁸⁵

Finally, the fourth passage related to Scripture's sufficiency is 2 Peter 1:16-21, which speaks of Scripture's "definitive authority."⁸⁶ This authority enables persons to have complete confidence in the Scripture because of its origin. The Holy Spirit communicated and preserved the words of God as He passed them along to men. Scripture can be trusted to remold and reshape hearts toward the likeness of Jesus. Tautges and Viars summarize: "What God wants us to know about living for Him, He has revealed in words, which are recorded for us as Scripture. The authoritative revelation of God in the Scriptures is sufficient to lead us to Jesus Christ, Lord and Redeemer, and train us in all things pertaining to life and godliness."⁸⁷

The Church Gathers Persons for Soul Care

Jeremy Pierre and Deepak Reju give pastors a basic framework in which to approach their counseling responsibilities. Among their final instructions to pastors is a strong encouragement to not labor alone in their counseling ministry, but to bring the church on board. The care of any member, they say, has a broader setting that should support the change process. As mentioned, that broader setting is the church and the

⁸⁵ Tautges and Viars, "Sufficient for Life and Godliness," 56-58.

⁸⁶ Tautges and Viars, "Sufficient for Life and Godliness," 59.

⁸⁷ Tautges and Viars, "Sufficient for Life and Godliness," 60.

pastor prepares the church for its role by building a culture of discipleship.⁸⁸ They rightly state that “the deepest part of a pastor’s value system”⁸⁹ is to make disciples. Pastors should cultivate a discipling culture in their church.

Creating a culture of care and change. This discipling culture requires members to be intricately involved in each other’s lives. The one another ministry is the outflow of this culture.⁹⁰ Love-laboring and truth-speaking flourish in this environment of mutual trust and accountability. This culture of discipleship brings along with it the expectation that people will be concerned in up-close ways for the spiritual good of one another, pursuing one another in love.⁹¹ Pierre and Reju say,

A culture of discipleship means that members don’t have to sign up for anything or get permission to love one another. It is a church culture where it is normal for the members to take initiative to love one another and do each other spiritual good. This church culture is not a program, but something that flows in the lifeblood of the church. As the pastor, you cannot *make* members actively pursue one another in love, but you can set expectations that will promote it.⁹²

The three expectations that promote a discipleship culture, cited by Pierre and Reju, are membership, equipping, and connecting. Membership must be a covenant commitment as in marriage, and like marriage, membership should be a lasting commitment of mutual love and sacrifice, a commitment to one another’s spiritual good.

⁸⁸ Jeremy Pierre and Deepak Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling: The Basics of Shepherding Members in Need* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 103-4.

⁸⁹ Pierre and Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling*, 105.

⁹⁰ Edward Welch has written a book for equipping members for one another ministry. Titled *Side by Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love*, the book is Welch’s attempt at presenting both sides of the soul care coin. Part 1 is about one being able to share his need and part 2 is about that same one being able to help someone else in need. Part 1 speaks to the hard realities of sin and suffering, hearts being challenged, and help being needed from God and people. Part 2 moves to the how of caring. With the help of the Spirit, a ministry presence is maintained in both good and bad times. There is meaningful conversation, laughter during good times, compassion during bad times, and dialogue about sin when necessary. Edward Welch, *Side by Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015).

⁹¹ Pierre and Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling*, 105-6.

⁹² Pierre and Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling*, 107.

Individualism is signed away and the Christian/member on Sunday-only mentality becomes unacceptable and out of place. Early in the membership process they understand that disciples are who Christians/church members are and discipling is what Christians/church members do. In addition, church discipline and counseling are introduced and understood as soul care entities, with church discipline being held up as the strong deterrent toward living in sin and rebellion and with counseling being understood as part of the restoration piece in cases of sin and rebellion and the support piece in times of unbearable suffering.⁹³

Next, people should expect to be equipped for discipling by precept and example. People act on what they believe, and their belief is fed by repeated instruction to live what they believe. Though pastors communicate these instructions over the pulpit, pastors must also set the discipling example by “personally discipling men in [their] congregation to live as godly husbands, fathers, and workers.”⁹⁴ The culture will be further infused by real-life discipling stories, both the successes and the failures, having regularly designated times for these discipling testimonies to be shared.⁹⁵

The final expectation is connecting with one another, which should happen at the initiation of both pastor and member. Members seek out prayerfully bathed, Holy Spirit-directed relationships with one another. Pastors will also regularly connect those in need with persons within the congregation who can meet that need through their knowledge of the Word and life experience.⁹⁶

Bringing the pastor back to the major theme of the book, Pierre and Reju tell the pastor that it is in the context of this discipling culture that their counseling work

⁹³ Pierre and Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling*, 108-10.

⁹⁴ Pierre and Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling*, 111.

⁹⁵ Pierre and Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling*, 110-12.

⁹⁶ Pierre and Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling*, 112-13.

can be expanded. Lay counseling ministry can be born where selected members are formally trained to do biblical counseling. That training would include both teaching and modeling.⁹⁷

Pierre and Reju began their instructions to pastors on not doing it alone by strongly advocating for the creation of a discipleship culture over creating programs. Though programs are needed, they cannot create or drive the culture, they would say. Instead, the culture drives the programs. Once the discipling culture is created, what programs need to be in place as the means to the discipling through soul care end?

Organizing for care and change. Churches usually organize people into groups for optimum care and discipleship. Pastors and congregations who operate out of a discipleship culture have an added advantage of knowing the groups' purpose within their church context and organize accordingly. Settings must be created where people can multiply their lives through discipling and where people can be cared for in community in the company of others. Jesus disciplined twelve men, not individually, but in company, in community (Mark 3:13-14). In that community, Jesus instructed them to love and serve one another (John 13:14, 34). The early church gathered in groups to house to house for worship, teaching, and fellowship (Acts 2:46-47). Members today would benefit from gathering in intentional transformation groups as well, and two group types particularly support soul care, small groups and Redemption Groups.

Brad Bigney and Ken Long begin their article on "The Transformational Tie Between Small Group Ministry and Biblical Counseling" by illustrating why small group leaders must be trained in biblical counseling, in soul care. They tell the story of a couple who hung around after the group sessions until others had left because they wanted to talk with their leaders about some marital issues they were facing. The leader couple dismissed them by saying that their issues needed to be taken up with another group. Provided that

⁹⁷ Pierre and Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling*, 113-15.

small group leaders are not equipped to address intensive soul care needs, Bigney and Long's strong admonition is to not start up a small group ministry without having in place a biblical counseling ministry.⁹⁸

In addition to the suggestion to have a viable biblical counseling ministry before starting a small group ministry, the purpose of the small group ministry must be understood by all, especially the small group leaders. Unless the primary ministry of the church is known, the purpose of the small group ministry cannot be known. According to Ephesians 4:11-15, "a primary purpose of the church, depending on one's theology, is for the whole church to participate with the Spirit in the transformation of God's people to be more like Christ."⁹⁹ Bigney and Long continue,

So, if spiritual formation is the purpose of the church, then personal transformation should intentionally be the purpose of the small group ministry. Bible study is great. Fellowship is wonderful. Evangelism is essential. But changing and growing to be more like Christ should be the purpose of the small group ministry. And believe it or not, it's possible to focus on Bible study and still not arrive at personal transformation unless the leaders are trained and reminded to be pointed in that direction.¹⁰⁰

Pastors and churches, therefore, should gather members in small groups where care and transformation will be possible. Concerning how small group leaders introduce members to their small groups, Garrett Higbee says that the small group members begin soul care training upon entry into the groups by studying an in-house curriculum on the six specific one-another Scriptures. This focus, he says, helps every member understand the privilege and responsibility of being in a small group. In addition, small group leaders are chosen from existing small groups (true discipling).¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Brad Bigney and Ken Long, "The Transformational Tie Between Small Group Ministry and Biblical Counseling," in MacDonald, Kellemen, and Viars, *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, 271-72.

⁹⁹ Bigney and Long, "The Transformational Tie," 273.

¹⁰⁰ Bigney and Long, "The Transformational Tie," 273.

¹⁰¹ Garrett Higbee, "Biblical Counseling in Uncommon Community," in *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God's Care through God's People*, ed. Bob Kellemen and Kevin Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 129-30.

Abe Meysenburg and Mike Wilkerson introduce the second group type, Redemption Groups. They explain the need for Redemption Groups:

Pain is God's megaphone, as C. S. Lewis has taught us. It gets our attention. A moment of captured attention is an opportunity to reorient: to help us see God, ourselves, our relationships, and the world differently. The pain that grabs our attention could be any form of sin or suffering: a besetting sin about which we've grown discouraged and feel unable to change, a broken relationship, financial turmoil, or wounds from past hurts.

Such painful times are prime opportunities to gain a new understanding or a fresh experience of God's redeeming and transforming love. Redemption Groups seize that opportunity by inviting participants to go deep into God's story, deep into the work of Christ, deep into their own hearts, and deep into redemptive relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ.¹⁰²

These gender-specific groups consist of five participants, two co-leaders, and one apprentice, a total of eight persons, and run for twelve weeks, with one three-session weekend, then eight weekly sessions, and a celebration service.¹⁰³

In the book used to facilitate the Redemption Groups, Wilkerson defines the groups:

A Redemption Group is an intense small group where participants experience the love of God shining into some of life's darkest areas of sin and suffering. It is a form of gospel-based biblical counseling, which is based on the belief that the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ is effective for helping people with how they think, behave, and feel in many areas of life.¹⁰⁴

Each participant comes with stories and challenges that are different from one another. Though some may come with one presenting issue, which they are required to name among their group members, other issues are likely in play of which they are unaware, which also get unpacked. Meysenburg and Wilkerson state, "Sometimes people enter a group focused on a presenting issue and find that it is merely the tip of an iceberg. . . . A Redemption Group does not focus on a specific presenting issue, but helps participants

¹⁰² Abe Meysenburg and Mike Wilkerson, "Biblical Counseling and Redemption Groups," in Kellemen and Carson, *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, 104.

¹⁰³ Meysenburg and Wilkerson, "Biblical Counseling and Redemption Groups," 108, 110.

¹⁰⁴ Mike Wilkerson, *Redemption: Freed by Jesus from the Idols We Worship and the Wounds We Carry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 13.

understand potentially a variety of issues in their lives in light of God’s story and to experience His love.”¹⁰⁵

Redemption Groups work best as part of a whole system or culture that lends itself to transformation through transparency and accountability. These groups can feed a church’s discipleship culture and promote a soul care mentality, as everyone responds to the sharing of each participant. Even the leaders share; in fact, they lead off in sharing. These group leaders are trained with biblical counseling courses and are identified from among participants to be apprentices, who will eventually be leaders of groups.¹⁰⁶

Redemption Groups are short-term groups designed to equip Christians to live victoriously and choose righteously amidst the sin and suffering challenges that come from living in a fallen body and in a fallen world. Participants are also equipped to address the competitors to their heart’s loyalty to Christ and His cause. Meysenburg and Wilkerson note, “Redemption in the Bible is about movement from slavery to freedom; it’s about the cost of purchasing that freedom; and it’s about the renewal and flourishing that freedom makes possible (Col 1:13; Eph 1:7-10; 1 Pet 1:18-19).”¹⁰⁷

As mentioned, Wilkerson’s *Redemption* book is the curriculum used to take participants on their own wilderness journey from bondage to freedom. The book is centered around the exodus story where Wilkerson likens Israel’s journey from bondage to the Christian’s journey of redemption in Christ. They too have been set free. The Wilderness Travel Plan is the participants’ steps toward change and has three components: pillars, provision, and people. Each commitment carries its own questions that the participants answer and plan toward: The pillar question is: What actions will you take to follow where God is calling you toward? The provision question is: How has God

¹⁰⁵ Meysenburg and Wilkerson, “Biblical Counseling and Redemption Groups,” 108.

¹⁰⁶ Meysenburg and Wilkerson, “Biblical Counseling and Redemption Groups,” 105-12, 115-17.

¹⁰⁷ Meysenburg and Wilkerson, “Biblical Counseling and Redemption Groups,” 105.

provided through His grace and empowering for this journey of change? The people question is: Who will walk with you on your journey? The “who” is usually the person’s new or existing small group members.¹⁰⁸

As explained and illustrated, life-changing groups, such as small groups and Redemption Groups, are necessary companions to any biblical counseling, soul care ministry. In these transformational community contexts, the church can continually address the issues of sin and suffering while focusing the gospel of Jesus Christ on the heart.

Conclusion

The problem of sin and the challenges of suffering remain. Sin is humanity’s condition, the condition of the natural self, as its origin rests in the fall. Sin is also humanity’s choice because, like Adam and Eve, persons can find themselves seduced toward the things and ways of the world, choosing their way instead of God’s way and experiencing the shame and consequences of going after their own sinful thoughts and desires. In addition to persisting in doing what they ought not, persons can find themselves failing to do what they ought and experiencing the backlash of those choices. Because others’ sinful acts can sometimes be toward them and because the world in which they live is also fallen, suffering is inevitable, unescapable, and comes in a variety of ways, such as betrayal, abuse, and abandonment, incurable diseases and long-term sicknesses, mental illness, devastating natural disasters, and more.

The soul care ministry that Jesus practiced while on earth and made possible through His life and finished work before returning to heaven now belongs to the church.

¹⁰⁸ Meysenburg and Wilkerson, “Biblical Counseling and Redemption Groups,” 107, 113-15. Meysenburg and Wilkerson recommend Redemption Groups to churches only after assessing the health of their preaching ministry, small group leaders’ training, and one-on-one or Triad groups (a place where a “graduate” of a Redemption Group can land). Though mentioned briefly in the article, it is instructive to note that Meysenburg and Wilkerson believe that, with properly trained leaders, these micro-groups or Triads of two to five persons can help facilitate soul care as a common practice for the church and its members. Two resources are recommended for these micro-groups: Jonathan Dodson, *Gospel-Centered Discipleship* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012); and Robert H. Thune and Will Walker, *The Gospel-Centered Life* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2016).

The church, therefore, must have a soul care plan and process for the life-altering sins that persons commit, the hard suffering that they face, and their responses to both. The church should look at the heart to determine its condition concerning other loves and wrong motives, thinking, and desires. Once the church has done its investigation with the heart, it can point persons to Jesus in specific ways; namely, to the perfecting power in His sacrifice and the model He left in how to live and face adversities victoriously. Next, the church meets the beliefs and feelings of the heart and the actions that grow out of sinful heart choices with the Word of God. The Word speaks to hearts, reveals sin, cuts through and cuts out the stuff that does not belong, and offers Christ-like replacements. Finally, being the church means that this Christian life is not lived in isolation. The church gathers persons in transformational caring groups for shared journey experiences where they can be open about their struggles, be transparent about who they are and where they really are in life and faith, be embraced without judgment or condemnation, have the Word applied to their hearts and circumstances, and be given the truth through thoughtfully, prayed-through loving dialogue from trained leaders and fellow sojourners. It is in the context of such groups, of being lovingly attentive to the issues of persons' souls, that the church will find itself imitating the soul care heart and practice of Jesus.

CHAPTER 4
THE DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF
THE SOUL CARE PROJECT

The Preparation Period

The proposed timeframe for the preparation period was seven weeks. Prior to week 1, the panel had been secured and had received the four-part HAQ and its evaluation rubric. During this period, I decided on the project leaders, revised the HAQ as needed, sketched the outline for conducting the telephone survey, wrote the soul care group and training lessons, and conducted the project information meeting. The outline for the lesson plans for the group and training lessons were borrowed from the book *Creative Bible Teaching* by Lawrence O. Richards and Gary J. Bredfeldt.¹ An explanation of Richards and Bredfeldt's four elements of a lesson plan—hook, book, look, took—is included in the introduction to appendix 8. The details and description of the preparation period are below.

**The Selection of the Panel
and Soul Care Leaders**

In the Gospels, Jesus modeled soul care, and from Genesis 3 and beyond, all of Scripture speaks to the need for it. Through the implementation of this project, CPBC would be made ready to practice soul care in its membership process. Two sets of leaders were secured, a panel of seminary-trained church staff and lay leaders who assessed key instruments and plans and a team of persons who used the instruments and submitted to the plan. The team of persons were the six members of the Christian Education

¹ Lawrence O. Richards and Gary J. Bredfeldt, *Creative Bible Teaching* (Chicago: Moody, 1998), 162-65.

Committee and one non-committee member—those already on the front lines of discipleship and care.

The Development of the Telephone Survey Training Plan

The target audience for this project was prospective members—those who had made decisions for membership within the previous eighteen months yet remained nonmembers. Those eighteen months spanned from August 2017 to February 2019. Though not originally planned, the telephone survey callers and soul care leaders were one and the same. Therefore, I knew that these callers would become well acquainted with the purpose, goals, research methodology, and biblical basis of the project and the theoretical issues related to it. Because the callers would have been trained toward the need for soul care, the actual preparation for the telephone surveying involved highlighting for the callers the directives on the already created telephone script, and, as part of the script, determining an exact starting date and meeting place for The Starting Point sessions, securing from the New Members Administrator the names, decision dates, and contact numbers of the targeted prospective members, assigning those prospective members to callers, and setting a deadline for the return of the survey results.

The Development of the Soul Care Group Lessons

How does one get at the heart needs of people and, once discovered, what does one do about it? How does one respond to their presenting heart issues in the proposed group setting? Also, where does this four-part HAQ really fit in, the questionnaire which seemed to have been created so long ago? It is a good thing that I asked myself these questions because reviewing the four-part HAQ was the place to begin formulating the soul care group lessons.²

² See appendix 8 for the soul care lesson plans for the four Starting Point sessions.

The HAQ is based on Matthew 22:34-40, where Jesus names the greatest commandment and the second greatest commandment. All of the lesson's headings were borrowed from the headings of each questionnaire, "Love of God," "He Wants It All," "View of Self," and "Love of Others." For four weeks, with Matthew 22:34-40 as a backdrop, participants unpacked supporting Scriptures as God's response to their responses on the HAQ.³

Lesson 1: "Love of God." What participants first needed to understand was that the command to "love the Lord your God" is a command to respond to God's love. It is not a command without foundation and history. A quick stop at Deuteronomy 6:5 would serve as an eye opener for the command being a love response, for when Moses gives this command to Israel, Israel had come to experience God's love and care for them in dramatic ways in the midst of dire circumstances. In fact, in the book of Deuteronomy, Israel is at the end of their fortieth year of wilderness wandering (Deut 1:3).

The Starting Point participants would know of God's passionate love for them through the historical events surrounding the sacrificial death of Jesus, which begins in Genesis 1-3. Their dire circumstance would be slavery to sin. Lesson 1 was a reminder of the love that met their greatest need: salvation from sin. Therefore, the supporting scriptures selected to instruct or remind participants of their need for God's love were Romans 5:12, 3:23, and 6:23. The passages selected to reveal or recap for participants God's love response to their greatest need were Romans 5:6-8, 1 John 4:10, John 3:16-18, and 15:13.

Lesson 2: "He Wants It All." Jesus not only tells the inquirers and hearers that they are to love God but also quantifies that love by use of the word "all," not just once but three times. In this lesson I would further explore the meaning of "all" and

³ See appendix 3 for the four-part HAQ.

concluded that one's response to God's love for humanity in Jesus is to love Him with everything one has from the inside out, with heart, soul, and mind. The supporting scriptures clarify Jesus' use of "all" in His "first and greatest commandment." In these Scriptures Jesus noted four truths about what is required to fully follow Him: (1) one cannot love anything more than Jesus (Matt 19:16-30); (2) one cannot love anyone more than Jesus (Luke 14:25-27); (3) the decision to follow Jesus is a well-considered one (Luke 14:28-33); and (4) one follows Jesus with complete abandon to self, things, and others, as is understood at the point of the call of the original disciples to follow Him (Matt 4:18-22). Matthew 16:24 and its companion Scripture Luke 9:23 record Jesus telling His disciples that following Him requires denying self and living sacrificially as they take up their own cross to do so.

To focus the heart as the place of surrender, participants would bring back the *My Heart, Christ's Home* book, which would be given to them the previous week to read and reference Robert Boyd Munger's likening the rooms in a house to the rooms in one's heart. Each room represents a putting off and putting on choice to be made for Christ and in the end the owner would turn the title of the entire house (his heart) over to Jesus because trying to manage it himself proved unsuccessfully overwhelming.⁴ As the book portrays and its title implies, this self-denying, sacrificial surrender required to follow Jesus comes to life in the believer's heart.⁵

Lesson 3: "View of Self." Jesus continues, "The second is like it. Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 22:39). The first of three points gleaned from this command would come from commentator Craig Keener, who writes, "Jesus here assumes rather

⁴ See appendix 8 for the "Look" section of lesson 2 and for the summary and meaning of the rooms.

⁵ Robert Boyd Munger, *My Heart, Christ's Home* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986).

than commands self-love.”⁶ Commentator R. T. France concurs: “The text assumes, surely realistically, that it is normal to love (i.e., to be concerned for the interests of) oneself, and that such love generally takes precedence over the interests of others.”⁷ The implication is that the natural posture of humanity is toward self.

Second, one’s perspective of self begs for God’s viewpoint. This viewpoint would be borrowed from the first three chapters of Jack Kuhatschek’s Bible study on self-esteem, which carries the subtitle, “Seeing Ourselves as God Sees Us.” Those three chapters and the supporting Scriptures state that humanity is (1) “Wonderfully Made” (Ps 139:13-16) because God’s works are wonderful; (2) “Deeply Fallen” (Rom 3:9-20), for “there is no one righteous, not even one”; and (3) “Fully Forgiven” (Heb 10:1-18) by the once for all sufficient sacrifice of Christ.⁸

The third point would direct participants Godward toward a biblical view of self, which is coupled with an other-centered expression. Philippians 2:4 signs off on one looking to his or her own interests as long as he or she is also looking to the interests of others.⁹ In addition, we considered two other passages that focus on others in the way

⁶ Craig S. Keener, *Matthew*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 330.

⁷ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Commentary on the New Testament Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 846.

⁸ Jack Kuhatschek, *Self-Esteem: Seeing Ourselves as God Sees Us* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 9, 13, 18.

⁹ The author acknowledges the differences among translators, commentators, and theologians in the proper translation of Philippians 2:4 as noted in Robert D. Jones’s unpublished paper, “Whose Interests Should a Believer Pursue? Reconsidering Our Translation of Philippians 2:4.” His research along with others found that the original manuscript does not contain Greek words for the “not only but also” contrast, that *kai* “need not carry the sense of ‘also’ and can be understood as emphatic or intensive,” and thus the verse does not call one to consider one’s own interests but to focus solely on the interests of others. Along with other arguments, Jones’s point is well made. However, his research also acknowledges that there are others who argue that in Paul’s writings *kai* is used as a contrast and so should read, “not only, but also.” In addition, a number of the major translations such as the NASB, NKJV, ESV and NIV1984 (the translation used for this paper), interpret the verse using “not only . . . but also.” For the purposes of this project, the author retains the popular translation of Philippians 2:4, especially since the verse is used in the soul care sessions to bend the participants toward being other-centered.

spiritual gifts are understood and used in the body of Christ. Romans 12:3 urges believing church members to think well of and rightly about themselves but not to let it get out of hand. This right thinking is required for the proper functioning of the body of Christ as is clearly expressed in 1 Corinthians 12, which says one has been given gifts but so have others and that one is valuable and needed but so are others.¹⁰ Therefore, the work in the body of Christ is best done when one's view of self is in its proper, healthy biblical place, not one of thinking too highly of self.

Lesson 4: “Love of Others.” Finally, lesson 4 would look at the desired end of the second greatest commandment, which is loving others (remember, self-love is assumed; loving others is not; it is commanded¹¹). Lesson 4 would begin with participants reflecting on Jesus as the one who modeled perfectly love for others and who continually pointed the twelve disciples toward His example (Luke 22:24-27; Matt 20:20-28; John 15:2-17). Jesus, addressing the disciples' efforts toward self-elevation, said, “I am among you as one who serves (Luke 22:27) and “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve” (Matt 20:28). The parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) answers the question, “Who is my neighbor?” The expert who asked the question deduced that being a neighbor—loving others—is showing mercy to anyone and everyone at whatever personal cost to self, whether time, materials, money, or more. Adele Calhoun in her handbook on spiritual disciplines gives suggestions on what to do

¹⁰ When time permitted or when needed, the “View of Self” conversation could include a reminder of Jesus' prerequisite for following Him in Luke 9:23-25, to deny self; a command and promise from Jesus in Matt 6:25, 33 where He says that His followers do not have to be concerned for themselves when they make God's kingdom their priority—for He will see to it that those seeking the kingdom of God first will have all they need; a warning from Jesus in Luke 12:16-21 from His parable of the rich fool, who kept all his stuff for himself but would not live to enjoy it because he had no concern for others; an exhortation from Jesus in Matt 23:1-12 and Luke 14:1-11 to take the liberty of humbling self so that He Himself can do the exalting and so that others do not have to do the humbling, as is illustrated in His parable of the banquet, and a testimony from Paul in Phil 3:1-11, where he shares his journey from boasting about self to boasting about Christ.

¹¹ Keener, *Matthew*, 330.

for neighbors who are in need and how to love brothers and sisters in Christ on a regular basis. Two handouts would be referenced from this resource that would yield practical exercises toward love of others.¹²

The Development of the Soul Care Training Lessons

“Soul care” was not a commonly used phrase around CPBC. In fact, it was nonexistent until the introduction of this ministry project. Therefore, I naturally considered how to introduce this term to the trainees in a way that could be easily understood and readily embraced. After all, they would become partners and tagged as the soul care team. It made sense to take them on my journey of being made aware of and burdened by the need to minister to God’s people in this intensive intentional way. I knew I needed to begin with the trainees’ surveying the presenting need for soul care within CPBC and end with the team experiencing a soul care session, all of which were housed in and would be gleaned from chapters 1-3 and the appendices of this project.¹³

A syllabus was created to give clear thought to the objectives of the training, to state the expectations of the trainees, to name the project paper as the required curriculum, and to develop a course schedule for navigating the topics and assigning the correlating chapters and appendices for reading. The training would consist of five sessions and the course would be entitled, “Introduction to Soul Care.”¹⁴

Session 1: “Introduction of and Biblical Basis for Soul Care.” Again, in an effort to get the trainees to see what birthed the project, I would begin the introduction to soul care not with someone else’s definition of soul care, but with the presenting need for

¹² Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 167-70, 313-17.

¹³ See appendix 11 for the soul care training lesson plans.

¹⁴ See appendix 10 for the syllabus.

soul care within CPBC's membership process. The three objectives of session 1's lesson would be for trainees to (1) develop a working definition of soul care, (2) appraise the need for soul care within the membership process at CPBC, and (3) study three of Jesus' soul care encounters to analyze and embrace His soul care approach to people in need of Him.

From their reading of chapter 1, the lesson plan for session 1 called for the trainees to note first the factors that brought the soul care need to light, which were the church's low retention and poor assimilation of new members. A careful look would reveal that the weakness in the process was that prospects were getting to know CPBC but CPBC was not getting to know them. The "look" exercise would allow trainees to identify and empathize with prospective members as they put themselves in their shoes by recalling and sharing their own membership decision stories. The concern for retention is based on the life-giving work of Jesus (John 10:10) by which God adds people to churches (Acts 2:47) and Jesus commands that the church make them His disciples (Matt 28:18-20). CPBC's membership work, therefore, is driven primarily by the mission and mandate of Jesus and the ecclesiological work of God.

Part 2 of session 1's lesson would require trainees to read chapter 2, which offers the biblical and theological basis of soul care. Specifically, the reading allowed them to observe Jesus' soul care encounters with the Samaritan woman, the woman with the issue of blood, and Zacchaeus, the tax collector. The "took" section, the application piece of the lesson plan, would require trainees to declare an "Intentionality Day" where they moved about like Jesus, seeking to see people the way Jesus saw them, as sheep in need of a shepherd.

Session 2: "Theoretical Issues Related to Soul Care." In this second session's lesson, I would move from defining soul care and identifying soul care actions to fully unveiling the culprit of soul care: sin and suffering. In preparation for the session, trainees would read pages 37-51 of chapter 3. The lesson aims included (1) understanding

the problem of sin and the challenge of suffering; (2) analyzing the impact of sin on humanity; and (3) making the correlation between the effects of sin and suffering and the need they create for soul care. The passages that support these findings include Genesis 2-3 for the historical look at sin, and Romans 5:13-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 for the clearly delineated impact of Adam's sin and Christ's sacrifice. Deuteronomy 30:19-20 served as a reminder that humanity is still presented with a choice between life and death and is still urged to choose life.

In the "look" section, trainees would begin considering how to apply the lesson. I thought the trainees would benefit from hearing a dramatization of Genesis 2 and 3 to get a feel for God's passion for created man and His sunken heart at man's fall. This dramatization was also meant to serve as a magnifier in understanding the weight of Adam and Eve's sin choice and, subsequently, the weight of humanity's sin choices ever since.

As a result of this lesson, trainees would be challenged to continue looking through the eyes of Jesus to see differently both sin (sin as utterly sinful with all its trappings and chains) and sinners (as victims either of their own choices and/or the choices of others, or the fallen world in which they live). They would continue with their "Intentionality Day" exercise but would look deeper and listen more intently for sin's effect. Matthew 9:36 enabled participants to internalize the commentary about Jesus' soul care view: "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

Session 3: "The Practical Issues Related to Soul Care." The six Christian Education Committee team members and the one non-committee member would continue to be the focus of training preparations. In session 2 they would grasp the utterly sinfulness of sin and in session 3 they would become acquainted with sin's target: the heart of humanity. The trainees needed to understand that, because sin has entered the world, the heart of humanity is compromised and conflicted. The heart chooses sin and is impacted

by the sin choices of others. The heart also experiences suffering simply because of the fallen world in which humanity lives. Therefore, the aims set for this lesson included leading trainees to (1) understand the functions of the heart and the heart's struggle, which is idolatry, loving something or someone more than God; (2) examine the impact that besetting sins and lingering suffering can have on the heart; (3) investigate the church's role in addressing sin and suffering issues; and (4) make sense of part 1 and 2 of the four-part HAQ, the instruments used to jump start the conversations in the soul care sessions with prospective members.

To meet the aims and be ready for the mini discussion, trainees would be assigned to read the second half of chapter 3, pages 51-69, where they were clued in on the spiritual functions of the heart, the unhealthy and unholy allegiances that the heart can form, and the church's role in pointing to Jesus, teaching the Word, and gathering persons for soul care. Two focal Scriptures were chosen for this study: Luke 6:43-45, where Jesus emphasizes that actions, what comes out of people, reveal the heart's condition, and Matthew 19:16-22, the account of the rich young ruler who could not take Jesus up on His invitation to follow Him because his heart was divided; he loved his wealth more than Jesus.

Trainees would also need to become acquainted with the instrument used in The Starting Point to open up the soul care conversations and to discern the hearts of the prospective members; therefore, the second part of this lesson would introduce trainees to parts 1 and 2 of the four-part HAQ, "Love of God" and "He Wants It All." This introduction to the HAQ was the trainees' first look at the guiding Scripture of The Starting Point, Matthew 22:34-40, the first and second greatest commandments. Trainees would be challenged and moved to open their eyes wider to the soul care needs around them as they considered the people they "saw" on their "Intentionality Days." Like the rich young ruler, it was necessary that trainees be conscious of their own heart struggles in surrendering to Jesus to the degree that allowed them to see other people. Thus, they

had to be challenged to do whatever it takes, no matter the cost, to meet a need of one they identified as “harassed and helpless.”

Session 4: “The Practice of Soul Care, Part One.” As the soul care team, the team would be entrusted with discerning the spiritual heart condition of prospective members and making spiritual growth recommendations accordingly, these trainees needed me to give detailed attention to the framework for making the proper assessments. Therefore, I borrowed from two resources previously used in discipleship programs at CPBC, George Guthrie’s video dramatization of the parable of the sower¹⁵ and a chapter from Daniel Meyer’s book on witnessing entitled, “Investigate and Invest in the Soil.”¹⁶ The primary Scripture for session 4 was Jesus’ parable of the sower from Mark 4:1-20. In addition, 1 Corinthians 3:6 was added as a cautionary reminder of who provides the growth. Trainees would do well to remember that, though they have their part to play, God is the one who causes things to grow.

In addition to investigating the soils and knowing their own parts in harvesting, trainees would turn to the last two parts of the HAQ, parts 3 and 4, “View of Self” and “Love for Others.” To continue to put the practical spin on what would be their assignment, I daringly called the trainees’ attention toward the second greatest commandment. The self-centeredness of sinful nature could not be ignored, so I decided to use commentator Craig Kenner’s quote,¹⁷ who in pointing out that self-love is assumed, highlights the fact that love of others needed to be commanded. Continuing toward producing a living faith, I would charge the trainees with assessing the type of soil they were before coming to Christ and recalling how their own hearts were massaged toward Jesus. I also determined

¹⁵ George Guthrie, “Session 1: Reading the Bible for Life DVD,” in *Read the Bible for Life Leader Kit* (Nashville: LifeWay, 2010).

¹⁶ Daniel Meyer, *Witness Essentials: Evangelism That Makes Disciples* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 69, 104-20.

¹⁷ See n6 of this chapter for Kenner’s quote and its context.

that the trainees must keep considering their “harassed and helpless” friend, to take their ministry to that “friend” to the next level by determining their soil type and discerning God’s work in their heart. Based on their initial findings, they were assigned to take the matter to prayer before striking up their first spiritual conversation with the person.

Through part 3 of the session 4 lesson I would lay before them the recruiting plan for getting participants, prospective members, in The Starting Point, the soul care conversation sessions. At this point in the training, the trainees would have been won over to the need for the soul care sessions. I was also confident that they would be at ease in extending an invitation to prospective members for their participation. All they needed to move forward with the invitation was a few props, such as the telephone survey script, which was already written, and the date, time, and place of the sessions. Even in these invitational conversations, I expected the trainees to be listening in a soul care way, that is, discerning where the person’s heart is, as they gleaned their continued interest for membership and received their reaction and response to the invitation to participate in my project.

Session 5: “The Practice of Soul Care, Part Two.” All the other training sessions led up to this final one; therefore, I had it well planned. Trainees would have grasped the rationale of the specific need for soul care within CPBC’s membership process, witnessed Jesus’s soul care actions on three occasions, considered the general need for soul care due to the impact of sin and suffering on the heart of humanity, and embraced a framework for discerning the heart’s need and determining the next steps to remedy that need. The trainees would be ready to gather for their own soul care session where they would be both the receivers and givers of soul care.

The aims of this lesson call for trainees to (1) dramatize the first session of The Starting Point by engaging part 1 of the HAQ, studying the guiding Scripture, Matthew 22:34-40, and receiving God’s response to their questionnaire by way of the supporting

scriptures;¹⁸ (2) record and share their responses to the questions on the assessment; (3) record and analyze the responses of their fellow trainees to the questions on the assessment; (4) record their overall evaluation of the leader and the session, and (5) report the results of the telephone survey. Following the dramatized experience, I thought it would be wise to bring them back to their “harassed and helpless” friend, whom they identified after the first training session and had been their “took” focus throughout the training. Regarding this friend, I would challenge the trainees to consider how that friend might respond to the “Love of God” assessment questions, the guiding scripture, and the teaching of the supporting Scriptures. They would be further challenged to use the questions in impromptu or even planned conversations with them.

The Project Information Meeting

Both the teaching and training lessons had been prepared and I was ready to invite the essential players to the soul care conversation to secure their participation and partnership. In preparation for the meeting, the prospective trainees were given select pages to read from chapter 1, which included the project’s purpose, goals, research methodology, and limitations and delimitations. For the targeted group, the six members of the Christian Education Committee, the project had already been a topic of discussion and the invitation to participate was much anticipated. Also, the additional non-committee member was not ignorant of my matriculation and the project’s title and purpose.

During the meeting, a course syllabus was provided and reviewed, and the dates of the sessions were discussed and agreed upon. Much discussion centered around their roles during the session as clarity needed to be given regarding their reading of the first three chapters. Because the first three chapters had gone through the hands of readers and the supervising professor, the prospective trainees were assured that they were not

¹⁸ See appendix 8, lesson 1, for the supporting Scriptures.

solicited as editors though I welcomed any obvious grammatical and syntactical errors. All seven persons committed to the soul care learning journey.

The Implementation Period

The implementation period was slated for weeks 8 through 27. During this period, goals 1, 3, and 4 were accomplished. The telephone survey was conducted (goal 1); the leaders underwent five weeks of training (goal 3); and three, four-week soul care group sessions were held (goal 4). In addition, the soul care leaders and I met to share our evaluations of the participants and sessions and review the participants' evaluations of the sessions.

The Soul Care Leaders' Training Sessions

The training sessions were fresh as both the team and I were treading on new waters. They were exciting waters, not tumultuous or overwhelming, but waters that peeked in these sojourners waves of interest in knowing what soul care is and how to administer it. There were four teaching sessions; the final lesson was the practicum, an actual Starting Point soul care session.

Session 1. The first training session required the trainees to read chapters 1 and 2 of this project paper. The team was immediately won over by the need of the project presented in chapter 1, especially as they recalled their own membership decision stories. Their responses to the "hook" question, "What images come to mind when you think of or hear the term, soul care," proved that they were already embracing soul care as something intensive, targeted, and deep digging. As trainees contemplated the theological and biblical basis of soul care, they were revived by the new soul care way of looking at three familiar encounters of Jesus presented in chapter 2. As a result, they were charged to begin walking in the way of Jesus, stopping and seeing people on purpose, an exercise they would build on (under "Took" in the lesson plans) throughout the training.

Session 2. In this session trainees got a taste of the theoretical and historical issues related to soul care by reading the first fifteen pages of chapter 3. Through the opening exercise, the “hook,” trainees put themselves in the place of the three persons who encountered Jesus—the woman at the well, the woman with an issue of blood, and Zacchaeus, the tax collector. They were instructed as follows: “Imagine your own encounter with Jesus. What does He already know about you? Imagine how the conversation would go. Would He address an issue of sin, suffering, salvation/discipleship in your life? Experience His ministry to you and share what you can.” Once they grappled with the damage that sin has done to humanity, they were ready to receive their next “took” assignment: “Begin to see the people you began looking at in session one as ‘harassed and helpless,’ the way Jesus saw people. Pray for an opportunity for conversation, to get closer, in order to look and listen deeper for sin’s effect.”

Session 3. The last nineteen pages of chapter 3 were read for a discussion of and introduction to the church’s response to sin and suffering; how the church can provide soul care. An unfortunate news story came at the right time and would be used to “hook” trainees into one of the lesson’s primary aims—understanding the heart and its functions. The breaking news was a school scandal where well-known parents from the acting community paid for illegal favors to guarantee their children’s admission to desired colleges. Either SAT scores were revised, or a sports admission was fabricated. Its relevance to the lesson came from an article quoting one of the parents involved in the scandal who said, “My Heart Was in the Right Place.” The trainees were invited to share their responses to that statement and discuss its implications. After this discussion I directed the trainees to one of the main passages of the lesson, Luke 6:43-45, to aid them in drawing the conclusion that one’s actions reveal whether one’s heart is in the right or wrong place; a tree produces the fruit that it is.

In the second part of this lesson trainees were introduced to parts 1 and 2 of the HAQ and their guiding Scripture, Matthew 22:34-40. The “took” exercise called for them

to look inward and consider their own “harassed and helpless” state. They were to consider what might be competing and maybe winning their hearts away from Jesus, looking again at the story of the rich young ruler (Matt 19:16-22).

Session 4. Coming into session 4, I was certain that the trainees understood and agreed with what prompted the look at soul care within the membership process at CPBC, were inspired by the soul care practices of Jesus, were burdened by sin and suffering’s effect on humanity, understood the heart’s functions and its competing loves, and embraced the church’s responsibility to care in specific ways. Four things remained to be done, three of which would happen in this session: (1) understand the types of soil they will encounter as they seek to discern a person’s spiritual heart condition and to record their findings on an evaluation chart, which also includes next step recommendations, (2) receive parts 3 and 4 of the HAQ, and (3) review the telephone survey script and its accompanying documents and make calling assignments.

I showed a video clip of the parable of the sower, where the Bible study leader was in his own backyard demonstrating the sower casting seeds and explaining what each soil type meant regarding its receptivity to the seeds and what it could or could not produce.¹⁹ Trainees were also primed by their reading of chapter 6, “Investigate and Invest in the Soil,” in Meyer’s book *Witness Essentials*,²⁰ which allowed them to add much to the discussion. Their “took” for this portion of the lesson asked that they go back and think about their “harassed and helpless” persons to determine their soil type and God’s work in their heart. Of course, such an assignment called for an attempt at talking with the person.

Parts 3 and 4 of the HAQ confirmed the need for this other-centered focus they had been charged with doing from the start of the training sessions as these parts covered

¹⁹ Guthrie, “Session 1: Reading the Bible for Life DVD.”

²⁰ Meyer, *Witness Essentials*, 104-18.

the second greatest commandment, “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:39). Again, the trainees agreed with how these questions were heart telling as they continued toward this practical bend toward soul care.

Session 5. There was nothing left undone except to experience a Starting Point soul care session. On a Sunday afternoon, following the 11 am service, the trainees and I gathered around a meal to set an atmosphere conducive to intimate sharing. I followed the plan for the first Starting Point lesson on “Love of God.”²¹

The Telephone Survey

The first goal of the project was to determine the membership interest of prospective members, the Starting Point prospects, who entered the membership process within the last eighteen months, which was configured around the time the development and implementation periods began. Therefore, as previously mentioned, the date range was from August 2017 to February 2019. These membership prospects were persons who came forward in a worship service in response to the invitation to become members of CPBC.

The New Members Administrator gave me the names of twenty-eight prospective members, including their membership decision dates, phone numbers, email addresses, and her notes from previous efforts to invite them to the membership orientation class. In session 4 of the training session I handed out and reviewed with the callers the telephone survey script and the survey results recording sheet. The primary purpose of the call was to garner participants in one of the three four-week Starting Point (soul care) sessions. Before that invitation could be issued, however, the callers needed to ask prospective members about their continued interest in membership. If they were still interested, the caller proceeded to explain what The Starting Point is, invited them to

²¹ See appendix 8 for the lesson plan for Starting Point session 1, “Love of God.”

it, and received their “yes” or “no” response. If they were not interested in participating in the Starting Point, then they would be asked about their interest in attending the next membership orientation class and that “yes” or “no” response would be recorded as well. After questions were answered, the calling assignments were given, averaging five persons per caller.

The Soul Care Group Sessions

Three four-week group sessions were conducted from April to July 2019. I began each session thanking the group for their participation followed by a brief explanation of the project and its purpose. Prayer was offered and opening personal introductions commenced. The required “Agreement to Participate” statements were read before participants wrote their answers to the HAQ questions and offered their evaluations at the last session. Light breakfast refreshments were available. The 1984 NIV Bibles were placed at each seat, as this was the version upon which the HAQ questions were based. The guiding Scripture, Matthew 22:34-40, was presented and read with participants reading in unison beginning at verse 37. Then, the HAQ was introduced with a “hook” and afterwards participants were released to consider and write their responses to the questions with the clear expectation of each person sharing something of what they wrote. Following the sharing, by way of the supporting Scriptures, I gave what I called God’s response to their heart assessments.

Lesson 1: “Love of God.” In lesson 1, I began as follows:

You know what something looks like when it is boiling. The heat is up! When it is simmering, the heat was up but now it is turned down; still, it has a slight bubbling. When food is lukewarm, it has been off of the fire for a while; the pot could still be on the burner, and though the burner is off, some heat continues to touch the pot. Of course, the burner itself will go back to its nonuse state, unable to heat at all. Finally, food that was once hot gets cold when it has been stored in a cold place, away from any heat at all. On the HAQ entitled “Love of God,” using these cooking terms, cold, lukewarm, simmering, and boiling, rate your relationship with God from the perspective of self, family, friends, and God. After each rating, write why you chose that rating. Once everyone has finished, we will take turns sharing our responses, two questions at a time.

The point driven through the supporting Scriptures was that the command to love God is a command to respond to His love.

Lesson 2: “He Wants It All.” I hooked the participants by introducing the HAQ as follows:

You and I know the myth of the genie—whoever rubs his lamp and lets him out of the bottle gets to command three wishes from him, though there are some restrictions. The recent remake of the movie ‘Aladdin’ and the classic television show, ‘I Dream of Jeannie’ show the finders of the bottle having anything they want at their disposal. If you had a genie, what would you ask for? What would be your three wishes? Today’s HAQ seeks to get at what occupies you the most in regard to your wants, thoughts, time, and money. So, consider and write your responses to those four questions, and, after everyone is finished, we will each share our responses, two questions at a time.

The bottom line derived from the supporting Scriptures and the *My Heart Christ’s Home* booklet is that Jesus must be one’s heart’s greatest desire.

Lesson 3: “View of Self.” Participants caught on to the routine. Their Bibles were opened to Matthew 22:34-40 and their folders were ready to receive the next HAQ and the lead into it. So, I began by telling my own story about a high school teacher who asked the class to share what they wanted to be and, when I said, “airline stewardess,” he told me that I could never be that because I was too soft spoken. Those words could have been devastating were it not for my mother who had already instilled in me that I could be whatever I wanted to be. Following the story, participants were given the “View of Self” HAQ and instructed “to consider, write, and then share with the group your opinion about yourself, who helped shape that opinion, what you like most and least about yourself, and what you think God sees when He looks at you.” I drew from their other-centered responses to question 3 as I led them by way of the supporting Scriptures to conclude that a biblical view of self releases one to be concerned for others as is commanded.

Lesson 4: “Love of Others.” Delighting at the ease in the air, I began hooking participants into the “Love of Others” focus this way:

Greg Ogden's book, *Discipleship Essentials*, is a guide to the basic doctrines and practices of the Christian faith. In his chapter on biblical justice, he challenges his readers with the Scriptures that speak to the evidence of saving faith, which is to care for the least of these. To convince his readers of Jesus' heart for the poor, Ogden points out Jesus' humble earthly birth and life. He writes,

“We are called to identify with and stand for the poor, because the One we claim to follow as Lord did so. Jesus was born in a small, insignificant province of the Roman Empire. The first visitors at his birth were poor shepherds, the rogues of society. His parents, too poor to bring the normal offering for purification, offered two pigeons in sacrifice instead of a lamb. Jesus was a refugee from political oppression; his family fled to Egypt and then migrated back to Galilee. As a rabbi he received no fees for his teaching and had no regular means of income. Having no home of his own, he said, ‘Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head’ (Matt 8:20). So complete was his identification with those on the fringes of life that he said to his followers, ‘Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me’ (Matt 25:40).”²²

So, today's HAQ asks that we consider, write, and then share our thoughts about how well we think about, pray and care for others.

Throughout the sessions I continuously pointed to Jesus as their example and I ended the sessions by doing the same. Specifically, the other-centered nature of Jesus was highlighted from His teachings and His own sacrificial life. Before dismissal, the participants completed the “Participants' Evaluation” form.

The Follow-Up Period

I breathed a sigh of relief as the implementation period was over and turned my attention to thinking about the sessions and the participants, and in remembering both, I was humbled by what God had done. The sigh of relief did not last long because the panel awaited the biblical counseling training plan as I was even more convinced of the need for the church to be prepared for one-on-one intensive soul care conversations. In addition, the five persons who initially agreed to undergo the biblical counseling certification training needed to be reconfirmed.

²² Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2018), 149.

The Biblical Counseling Training Plan

I was reasonably certain that this training would come through the Association of Certified Biblical Counseling (ACBC) because of my own affiliation with the agency through my seminar work. Other agencies were researched and considered, including the Biblical Counseling Center of Winfield, Illinois (BCC), the Association of Biblical Counselors (ABC), the International Association of Biblical Counselors (IABC), and the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation (CCEF). The letter to the panel gives a detailed introduction to ACBC and the financial commitments required of the church and/or the recruits.²³ As the letter indicates, the packet sent to the panel included documents detailing ACBC's three-phase training process and their approved reading list and the "Biblical Counseling Training Plan Assessment" form, on which the panel would submit their feedback.²⁴

The Biblical Counseling Recruits

Five persons agreed to submit to certified biblical counseling training in order to birth a biblical counseling ministry at CPBC. They include three members of the Christian Education Committee, all of whom are participants in the Great Commission Groups, the church's highest level of discipleship. One of those three currently works with me in the church's grief care ministry. One of the biblical counseling recruits has had her own unspoken call to counseling for some time and was the non-committee member who was an active partner in the Starting Point sessions. The last recruit is a CPBC member who has had a longstanding burden for those dealing with substance abuse, both the abuser and their loved ones.

²³ See appendix 11 for the letter to the panel.

²⁴ See appendix 12 for the "Biblical Counseling Training Plan Assessment."

CHAPTER 5
THE EVALUATION OF THE SOUL CARE PROJECT

Introduction

I, along with fellow doctoral students, followed the project proposal instructions in considering the strengths and weaknesses of our churches or ministries and zooming in on a weakness we wished to strengthen. It did not take long to land on CPBC's membership process as the weakness to be strengthened for the work was always before me and the new members team. I knew that the desired results, retention, and assimilation, were too often unrealized, and in reviewing the process noted that it was one sided—the prospective members were knowing CPBC in some detail, but CPBC was not knowing the prospective members to an acceptable degree. This thought was fed further by the instructive but brief introductions made at the beginning of the one-day membership orientation class where the pastor asked what brought the prospective members to Clifton Park, and they would answer with heartfelt stories of their journeys to Christ and the church. More needed to be known and more lasting connections needed to be made early between the prospective members and CPBC and the prospective members with one another. The solution, therefore, was to create a space where this initial sharing could be expanded, and more could be known and discerned. In particular, I led the trained soul care team to be on the hunt for potential barriers to the prospective members' growth in Christ and with His church. This chapter details the results of the project.

Evaluation of the Soul Care Project's Purpose

The project's purpose was to incorporate soul care into the membership process at CPBC through soul care conversations and soul care ministry actions and programing,

in order to reach and engage prospective members and retain new members for fulfilling discipleship and fruitful membership. That purpose was achieved and is being achieved. The Starting Point, the four-week soul care conversation sessions, was incorporated as the first phase of CPBC's membership process. Though the "Agreement to Participate" statement made it clear that participation was voluntary, it was not treated as such by the participants or the soul care team. Through the use of the four-part HAQ, soul care conversations took place as people approached the questions reflectively and answered honestly. Though the questions were deemed low risk, one group felt otherwise, which I took as their being new to such spiritual introspection. However, one person from that group desired more private conversations, as indicated on her anonymously completed evaluation sheet.

The soul care ministry actions came by way of follow-up phone calls, which were made to encourage and ensure continued participation. If participants missed a session, they were called. These phone calls also served to remind participants to bring back their folders and to read a small booklet given out at the first session, which would be referenced at the second session. The soul care programming would be the forthcoming biblical counseling ministry, the place where persons will be referred for more intensive soul care as needed.

Evaluation of the Soul Care Project's Goals

Goal 1: The Soul Care Participants

The target audience of the project was prospective members, who, for unknown reasons, had not completed the membership process. Perhaps the soul care conversations could unveil those reasons, but first the prospective members needed to be identified and their continued interest in membership needed to be determined. Therefore, the project's first goal was to assess the membership interest of prospective members who entered the membership process within the last eighteen months.

A telephone survey was the means by which the prospective members were contacted to determine their continued interest in membership and whether they would participate in The Starting Point (they were told what The Starting Point was during the conversation) or the next membership orientation class. The telephone survey results were received at the final training session. The comments section on the reporting sheet included notes about the time called, the content of the conversation, and whether the callers were able to leave a message if they did not reach the person. Through the survey the team uncovered a variety of information: parking was an issue for one; a few were relocating or had relocated; at least three had work conflicts (one with a work conflict was excited about the call); one had recently been hospitalized; and one thought she was already a member.

Of the 28 called, 19 responded to the survey, which was 20 percent less than the desired 90 percent success rate. Of the 19 who responded, 10 were still interested in membership, 8 said “yes” to attending The Starting Point, and of that 8, 5 actually attended from these efforts. Beyond receiving the desired information and gleaning some prospects for The Starting Point, the team prayed with and for persons regarding the special circumstances that inhibited their moving forward toward membership. An unstated goal, however, was reached—through the telephone calling, people felt cared for.

Goal 2: The Soul Care Instruments

Once the prospective members were gathered, the conversations needed to have direction. Thus, the second goal was to develop a four-part HAQ as a guide for individual and group soul care conversations. Before it could be used, the HAQ had to be approved by the six-member seminary-trained panel.

Results of the panel’s review before implementation. The panel was given two weeks to review the HAQ. Along with the four questionnaires and the evaluation form, the panel, for context, received the pages from chapter 1 that speak to the purpose,

goals, research methodology, and limitations/delimitations of the project. In addition, the panel's packet included the "Agreement to Participate" statements and the telephone survey script and results sheet. On the provided "Heart Assessment Questionnaire Evaluation" form, the panel assessed the effectiveness of the questionnaire in generating soul care conversations and revealing soul care needs. Specifically, they considered the usefulness of the instrument in getting the soul care conversation started, enabling peer interaction, setting an atmosphere for transparency and connection, getting at heart issues, and aiding the experience to benefit participants. They rated the aims under each of the categories named above from "1" to "4" with one being lowest. The criteria were as follows: 1 = insufficient, 2 = requires attention, 3 = sufficient, and 4 = exemplary.

Overall, the panel agreed that the questionnaire would achieve its desired end of creating conversation and revealing heart concerns. The "Conversation Starter" category received a 95 percent exemplary rating as 1 panelist deemed the other-centered nature of the questions as sufficient. The "Peer Interaction" category received 93 percent sufficient rating as the struggle with most panelists was the subjective nature of a person's comfort level in sharing. The "Atmosphere" category received a 100 percent sufficient rating from the 4 out of 5 who responded; absent the assessment of the 1 panelist, the collective sufficient rating was 80 percent. Finally, the "Content" category received a 100 percent sufficient rating. Commenting on whether the questions get at the heart issues of the participants, 1 panelist stated that this result would depend on the participants' willingness to be transparent while the other panelist stated that it depended on whether an authentic atmosphere had been created. Goal 2 of creating a HAQ as a guide to be used in individual and group soul care conversations successfully met the desired 90 percent sufficient rating with an overall sufficient rating of 92 percent.

General results during implementation. This questionnaire was developed two years before its actual use but became an invaluable guide to bringing to life the soul

care lessons and in jumpstarting the soul care conversations in The Starting Point sessions. Some questions generated tip-of-the tongue answers while others required a little more thought. Because the participants had to answer the questions in session and also have time for sharing, one's first thought generally had to be and usually was the "right" thought. Only once did someone feel unable to answer a question. The sharing benefited both the speaker and the listener and created the desired atmosphere of trust and transparency. One participant privately admitted that this sharing was outside of his comfort zone, but he did it anyway and his responses were rich and often affirmed by the group by verbal response or nodding of the head.

Specific results during implementation. On part 1 of the HAQ, most persons chose between "lukewarm" and "simmering" as their description of their relationship with God. If they chose lukewarm, God's rating for them would be lukewarm. No one chose "cold" for any description. However, if they chose "simmering" as their rating for their relationship with God, they tended to choose a lower rating for God's view of their relationship, which was "lukewarm." In addition, their ratings of their relationship with God from the perspectives of family or friends would go higher if family or friends were not Christians or Christians living in disobedience. From the supporting Scriptures, I was all too elated to remind these participants that God's response to their relationship with Him is always one of redemptive love, because His command to love Him is a command to respond to the love He demonstrated toward them in Jesus.

The majority of the responses to part 2 of the HAQ bent toward one's personal ambitions. A few participants were sold out to God and all things pertaining to Him. Everyone laughed at question 4, "On what do you spend most of your money," because nearly everyone's easy answer was "bills." A few added "supporting family back home," which was not a surprise either as CPBC is an international congregation whose families abroad often live in oppressed conditions. In the last four-week session, multiple people

named “achieving balance” as the thing they wanted most. This great desire was a natural lead into God’s response from both the guiding and supporting Scriptures. “Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, and with all of your soul, and with all of your mind,” Jesus stated. I explained that the balance they were seeking required God to have His rightful first place. He is not desiring to fit in or to be on an equal level with anyone or anything in their lives. Instead, the call to be His disciples is a call to deny self and to “hate” everyone, having no one above Him, not even self. He is to be Lord of all.

On part 3 of the HAQ, “family,” “mom,” “grandma,” and “God,” were the most popular responses to the question of, “Who or what has shaped your opinion of yourself.” The responses to what persons liked most about themselves ranged from courage and resilience to having a calm nature and being a genuine person. Much of those responses tended toward how they faced challenging situations or how well they related to other people. What they liked least about themselves had more to do with their relationship with self and not others. All were positive in their thoughts about what God sees when He looks at them. They were confident that God saw them as His child, whether struggling or striving to be who they thought He wanted them to be.

On part 4 of the HAQ, those who had been examples of God’s love to participants were parents, spouses, and friends, the intimate persons in their lives. However, participants shared that they had been examples of God’s love to those not always deemed as intimate, such as neighbors and co-workers (they had to give examples of those outside of family for whom they have been examples of God’s love.) Not surprisingly, participants’ prayers tended to be toward those with whom they were intimately acquainted, such as brothers, friends, and spouses (the important thing was that they were praying for others). The people group they cared about the most put them outside of their intimate zones as they named caregivers, youth in general and underprivileged youth, and youth in difficult home situations in particular, women, patients, and social organizations.

Revisions noted from the implementation. Four revisions were noted for the soul care instruments. First, at the first session, the team quickly realized that they needed to record the participants' responses on the actual HAQ form the participants were using and following the session to record and evaluate the responses on the leader's assessment forms. In the next session, leaders would have the needed amount of forms for each participant and themselves. By the last round of The Starting Point I put the participants' names on the forms prior to the session, which enabled the team to be more present during the sharing. Second, the ratings for the "Love of God" HAQ would be reversed from "high to low" to "low to high." Third, on the "He Wants It All" HAQ, the response to the question, "What do you spend most of your time doing?" was always "work," so the question would be changed to read, "Other than work, what do you spend most of your time doing?" In addition, the response to the question, "On what do you spend most of your money," was always "bills," so the question would be changed to read, "Other than bills, on what do you spend most of your money?"

Fourth, the "Assessment of Participants" forms required three changes. First, the box where the participant's name is written needed to be larger and/or typed for ease in identifying who the assessment is about; at present, the name that stands out on the form is the leader's name. Second, at the bottom of the sheet the instruction to "provide comments on the back of this sheet" will be changed to read, "Provide additional comments on the back of this sheet," as comments can be given in the blank boxes to the right, which are designated for "explanation/comments." Third, the "View of Self" assessment questions need to be rewritten to match the desired responses from its corresponding HAQ.

Goal 3: The Soul Care Leaders

"Who will go for us and who can we send?" Thank God some said, "Yes, train me, send me." Those persons would be the members of my Christian education team and

one non-committee member who brought to life the third goal to equip the leaders who would engage the prospective members during the membership process in how to use the HAQ for soul care conversations. To reach this goal a five-week training course was developed where these trainees realized what soul care is, how Jesus did soul care, and why soul care is needed—information they would deduce from reading the first three chapters of this project paper.

The last training session allowed them to experience soul care with one another as they completed part 1 of the HAQ (they too had to share their responses and offer feedback on the responses of their fellow trainees) and received the teaching of lesson 1. It was an authentic session, making introductions as if for the first time and being unguarded in recording and sharing real responses from part 1 of the four-part HAQ. Trainees were both receivers and givers of soul care: while they shared, they were being recorded and assessed and while others shared, they were recording and assessing. This written and verbal exchange allowed for the measurement called for in goal 3, which required leaders to display a minimal of 90 percent competency in having these prefabricated soul care conversations in either one-on-one or group settings. The goal was successfully met, and the group emerged from the experience knowing one another's hearts, the triumphs and the struggles. The examination was so thorough that the question was thrown around as to whether the leaders should be so raw in the actual Starting Point session with prospective members. All had to wait and see what the Spirit would be saying and doing.

Three of the seven leaders were available to assist in conducting the sessions and assessing participants, as the other four were leading discipleship groups during the same time as The Starting Point was held. Through their participation, sharing, and listening, those three were the ones who became further equipped in making soul care assessments and recommendations.

Goal 4: The Soul Care Sessions

The participants. The fourth goal was to develop and conduct three pre-membership group sessions where soul care conversations would take place among prospective members. The effectiveness of these soul care sessions depended on my preparedness and the degree of transparency allowed by all of the participants, including the soul care team. The question of whether the leaders would share remained unanswered at the first round for the first two sessions. At the third session of the first round, the team agreed that their sharing would allow for a sense of being in the journey together, which is a reality of church life. The team's sharing also aided in cementing the relationship being sought between the prospective member and Clifton Park; both parties were being known. On average, participants attended three out of the four sessions, enabling goal 4 to reach the 90 percent desired participation rate over the twelve-week period, all three four-week soul care gatherings.

Once the soul care sessions were completed, two evaluations were considered—that of the soul care team concerning the participants and that of the participants concerning the team and the sessions. Two soul care leaders, including myself, were a constant in all three four-week rounds of The Starting Point. Two of the other leaders attended two out of the three rounds. A few of the other leaders were able to sit in on occasion, but other Christian education responsibilities required their attention during the same time. Therefore, those three gathered to review both evaluations.

The evaluations of participants. Three leaders gathered to evaluate the sessions where all three leaders were present. The real test of this evaluation process was that of the leaders—testing their ability to recognize present and/or potential barriers to the participants' growth in Christ and with His church. In parts 1 and 2 of the HAQ, "Love of God" and "He Wants It All," the team had two concerns. First, the team rated participants' relationship with God lower than participants rated their relationship with God. The lower rating was due to the testimony of half of them, who once were very vibrant in church life

but were laxed at present. Second, the team recognized clear competitors in their relationship with God; namely, work, wealth, and possessions.

In parts 3 and 4 of the HAQ, “View of Self” and “Love of Others,” participants appeared healthier. They had a healthy view of self and therefore were not blinded to their shortcomings. Parents and friends helped shaped their good opinion of themselves. They had known the love of God through those closest to them, though they seemed unsure of concrete ways they had been an expression of God’s love in other people’s lives. Though they lacked in this expression, they had strong desires toward helping others, wanting to be more and do more.¹ For each participant, two bottom line questions were to be answered: (1) What appears to be their soil type? and (2) what are the appropriate next steps? Their soil type ranged between thorny and good. There was evidence that the word that is in them lay dormant due to inactivity. The next step recommendations were that they be invited to discipling groups and serve in one ministry that is nearest to how they desire to care for others.²

The evaluations from participants. According to three categories, “Introductions,” “Content,” and “Interactions,” the participants rated the sessions as insufficient = 1 point; requires attention = 2 points, sufficient = 3 points, or exemplary = 4 points.³ Out of a total of 15 participants in all three four-week sessions, 9 were present on the last day to complete evaluations. Each class averaged 5 participants; the presence of 3 leaders for each session added to desired numbers.

The “Introductions” section required two responses: (1) how helpful it was to know something about one another; and (2) if the overview session gave clarity to the

¹ See appendix 6 for the “Assessment of Participants, Sessions 1-4.”

² See appendix 6 for the “Assessment of Participants Soil Type.”

³ See appendix 7 for the “Soul Care Conversations Participant’s Evaluation.”

session agenda. The overall rating for the Introductions was 94 percent. One responder marked “N/A” for the helpfulness of the getting-to-know-you introductions. In the “Content” section, respondents rated the degree to which the Scriptures shared and the memory verse exercise were beneficial, the presence or absence of useful feedback from the leader, and whether they identified something they needed to work on. The overall rating for the “Content” section was 97 percent. One respondent gave the memory verse assignment a “N/A” rating, while another respondent gave it a “sufficient” rating. The other “sufficient” rating was given to “receiving useful feedback from the leader” with the following note: “I would like more feedback but not in open group.” Then, another respondent gave the “requires attention” rating to identify something that he needed to work on, citing that he needed to “read more and have more time.” Finally, the “Interactions” section covered the degree to which they felt heard by the leader, the leader made them feel at ease, they connected with group members, felt helped by group members, and felt they helped a group member. The overall rating for this category was 96 percent. Two respondents gave a “sufficient” rating to “the leader making them feel at ease.” One respondent gave a “requires attention” rating to feeling he helped a group member and provided the following note, “I would have liked to connect more.” The same respondent gave a “sufficient” rating to connecting with, being helped by, and helping group members. The majority of the ratings for all three categories was “exemplary.”

The participants gave the program a 97 percent rating on the post evaluation rubric, 27 percent above the required rating of 70 percent. Beyond the numbers, however, participants sufficiently shared about themselves through the introductions and the HAQ, which permitted leaders to discern a great deal about their level of spiritual maturity and potential competitors to their relationship with Christ and His church. The third round of The Starting Point was the most transparent round simply because participants were unguarded in sharing where they really were in life and what they most needed from God.

This sharing gave the team the best picture of the desired experience of The Starting Point—a safe space for being known and getting the needed support from one another and from God by His Spirit and His Word.

Goal 5: The Plan for More Intensive Soul Care

When people share to the degree that the HAQ calls for, much could be uncovered that requires more intensive attention through formal counseling. That is why the fifth and final goal was to develop a plan to train five persons in biblical counseling for more intensive soul care needs. Those five persons have been secured. The plan was developed following the training track of the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) and presented to the panel along with related costs for the church and participants.

On the assessment form, the panel’s feedback included their questions, comments, concerns, and suggestions. The panel asked questions related to demographics training, personal liability insurance, maintaining enough counselors as people come and go, the selection of potential counselors, making counseling recommendations, and addressing LGBTQ issues. In the comments section, two members affirmed what is offered through ACBC while another member offered a strong encouragement to include self-care in the training. Cultural consideration was a concern and a suggestion, which included recommended African American resources, which they felt were lacking on the ACBC reading list. Other concerns were about maintaining confidentiality, community accessibility to counseling services, the recognition and treatment of depression and anxiety, and knowing when to refer to medical personnel. Other suggestions were to encourage ACBC to be more diverse in their reading list, have the church pay annual membership fees, and add a book that speaks about generational curses. Overall, the panel appreciated my efforts in pursuing certified biblical counseling training. The plan was approved by the panel with a few modifications; namely, adding counseling books from the African American experience.

Strengths of the Soul Care Project

The project proposed to do three things: (1) get to know prospective members as they get to know Clifton Park; (2) have prospective members get to know and connect with one another; and (3) discern their spiritual condition for proper next steps, noting potential barriers to their growth in relationship with Christ and the church. New ground was being broken at CPBC where, in a group setting, participants were required to be transparent, not closed but open to share about themselves, and the sharing was nonnegotiable. The soul care leaders decided early that they too needed to be a part of this transparency, reflecting on the questions and using wisdom in their unguarded responses, for they realized that their sharing was part of the prospective members connecting to Clifton Park. These sharing exercises required also that participants be reflective, to consider things about themselves and their relationship with God which they would not have considered otherwise. The four-part HAQ proved its worth for this reflective thinking and sharing. Participants also had opportunities to affirm one another, find common ground, and connect out of this authentic sharing.

Besides providing a place of transparency and connection, the teaching from the Word of God was rich. Each week leaders and participants read Matthew 22:34-40 and completed each HAQ based on an understanding of the context and words of Jesus in that passage. They became well acquainted with the context and would hide the two commandments in their hearts by way of memorization. In addition, my use of the supporting Scriptures as God's response to their responses on the HAQ proved ingenious, undoubtedly Spirit-directed. The command to love God is a command to respond to His love (lesson 1); God wants our all as He calls us to love no one or nothing more than Him (lesson 2); a biblical view of self frees one up to focus less on self and more on others (lesson 3); and we love others the way God has loved us, the way we desire to be loved (lesson 4). It was as if the Lord had them to exhale faulty thinking and inhale the truth from His Word for righteous thinking, believing, and being.

Finally, listening to and recording the participants' responses on the HAQ by the team leaders provided the content for the behind the scenes reflections regarding the depth of their relationship with the Lord, their soil type, and recommended next steps. The soul care team was often in agreement with one another's commentaries and recommendations, being no more than an inch off in assessing spiritual maturity levels. The degrees of maturity marked as 1, 2, or 3 on the leader's evaluation form yielded a more accurate assessment. The leaders' recall of the responses was clear and accurate with team members rarely, if ever, not hearing the same things.

Weaknesses of the Soul Care Project

It often takes time for persons to warm up to one another and the four weeks they spent together did that, but the warming starting at the third week, which meant that persons had only one more week together. I would not recommend that the time be extended in The Starting Point, but that the transparency, sharing, and warm safe atmosphere created through it continue in a different space with the same people. The desired connection was achieved, a cohort formed, but it was too short-lived by way of having an intentional space similar to what was just experienced to keep the transparent, honest conversations going.

Another weakness of the project is that I assumed that the lack of retention and assimilation solely falls with the new members team, that the one remedy is to put prospective members together for four weeks around authentic conversations and they would stay. This faulty blame neglected the responsibility of other players; in fact, it did not give room to ponder what role other ministry partners need to play in bringing these persons along. Much of the work, even the follow-up, is through Christian education; surely, the affinity fellowship and serving ministries are important. These retention and assimilation efforts require that the essential ministries be identified with each essential ministry owning and doing its part.

A third weakness of the project was realized immediately following the first round of The Starting Point: There were no participants for the second and third rounds; no consideration was given to where they would come from. All but three of those contacted through the telephone survey who said “yes” to participating in the sessions actually participated. Without panicking, I had to consider where the prospects would come from for the next two rounds. Certainly, I re-invited the three who said yes but did not come, yet, as already proven, they were no guarantee. Thankfully, two Sundays prior to the start of the second round, I held a discipleship orientation at 9:30 a.m. with those who received membership at the 8:00 a.m. service. Because I knew that I would be explaining my school project and issuing an invitation for their participation in the project, I also invited a recent prospective member to sit in on this new member discipleship orientation. All three agreed to participate; two were asked to join the second round while the one was asked to be a part of the third round. Along with the two from the discipleship session (one a new member and the other a new prospective member), three others (members) from the same age bracket were invited to join in that second round. Similar recruiting was done for the third round, which included five prospective members (one of those prospective members was contacted through the telephone survey), the one new member previously mentioned, and two members who were in their second year of membership, whom I felt could use a reboot.

Finally, as mentioned, soul care is new language around Clifton Park, which means that what prospective members experienced in The Starting Point was unique, not common, and not likely to be experienced in group settings anywhere else in the church, at least not immediately. The spirit of sharing in kind that was fostered at The Starting Point will desire expression and will assume that it is commonplace. Therefore, I am moving all Christian education spaces to carry this transparent flair as teachers are trained to be transformational in their lesson aims and activities and more conversational in their teaching style.

What I Would Do Differently

Three revisions were noted for the soul care conversation sessions, one of which was corrected during implementation. First, the team should have started off sharing from their own HAQ's along with the participants. Instead, the team began the first round of The Starting Point not sure whether they should share their own responses to the HAQ, but by the third session I decided that the desired connection between CPBC (represented by the team) and the prospective members could not take place without it. However, when lack of time was an issue, either the team as a whole did not share or only I shared. By the third round of The Starting Point, instead of the group sharing their responses one question at a time, time was saved when they shared their responses two questions at a time.

Second, I also realized that two critical things were unknown about the participants—their salvation relationship with the Lord and their relationship with God's Word. So, a post card sized short survey will be taken at the beginning of session 1 for the salvation relationship question—finding out if their faith is in Jesus alone for their hope of eternal life. Then, at the beginning of session 3, a post card sized survey will be taken regarding their relationship with the Word, asking if they have a daily quiet time and, if yes, to share what devotional book or Bible book they are reading. Finally, a memory verse card with Matthew 22:37-40 written on it was added to the folders to place a clear emphasis on memorizing these two commandments, something that was not clear in the first round according to a participant's evaluation.

Theological Reflections

The pivotal Scripture in biblical counseling is 2 Peter 1:3: "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness." Therefore, it was fitting that the questions on the four-part HAQ were informed by the words of Jesus in Matthew 22:34-40 and that the instructions in the four sessions were derived from the teachings of both Jesus and the

apostles. Jesus says that the greatest commandment is to love God with all, and the second is like it—to love others as yourself. There is nothing to argue here; instead, the readers and hearers of these words have the awesome privilege and responsibility to flesh out Jesus’ words, and that is what happened in the four lessons as leaders and participants reviewed the commandments one piece at a time in regard to God, self, and others.

I have often wondered, when, in sharing the gospel—in inviting persons to receive Christ—if one also invites persons to consider the cost of following Christ as Jesus did with both the crowd and those already committed to following Him. Also, along with that wondering, I have often thought that rather than the traditional four points to the gospel presentation there needed to be four gospel conversations not only about what Jesus is offering but also about what Jesus is requiring. The Starting Point became the place for those four conversations as in lesson 1 the gospel was shared, in lesson 2 the general cost to following Jesus was counted, and in lessons 3 and 4 the specific costs to following Jesus were made clearer. A look at the command to love God in the “Love of God” lesson was an opportunity to see again His love that was “demonstrated toward us” through the death of Jesus while we were unworthy of it, “still sinners” (Rom 5:8). The response to this sacrificial love, as noted in the “He Wants It All” lesson, is to love God with our whole hearts, to love Him more than anyone or anything. In the “View of Self” and “Love of Others” lessons, the examples in the other-centered and sacrificial life of Jesus were the guide to admonish both leaders and participants to “look not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others” (Phil 2:4).⁴ The application for lesson 3 was priceless, having to, at least three times in the coming week, do for someone else what they did for themselves and coming back the next week and telling the group about one thing that they did (what a way to live!). In that same other-centered spirit, the application for lesson 4 brought participants back to question 4 of part 4 of the HAQ,

⁴ See n9 in chapter 4.

which asked them to identify a people group they most care about and how they have shown that care. If all they have done is to feel about this people group, through this lesson they were admonished and propelled to start acting on their love for these others.

Personal Reflections

Years ago, on the first Sunday of the month, the designated minister would invite persons who had birthdays in that month to come and stand in front of the pulpit and state their name and the date of their birthday. Once everyone had shared, the congregation stood and sang to them saying, “We’re so glad you’re a part of the family of God. You’ve been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood. Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod, for you’re part of the family, the family of God.” My reflections begin with two sets of people within the family of God called CPBC, those who graciously participated in the project and those who were trained to assist with executing the project.

The persons who “agreed” to the training were a team of persons with whom I have co-labored in Christian education for over ten years with one or two exceptions. To have been given the chance to take them on this soul care discovery journey was life-changing for them and for me. They were the first to read the first three chapters for information, for edification, for being trained by them, and in turn, were the first to affirm the usefulness of the information contained therein.

Much joy was experienced in seeing the project come to fruition and the recruited participants being blessed by being a part of it. The authentic sharing moved the project from being an experiment to being an experience—a transformational experience by way of truth, trust, and transparency. The participants were not only thirsty for God’s voice by way of the teaching from Scripture but also were thirsty for the voices of fellow participants as they shared in kind through the HAQ. I took the assessments three times, and each time one of the responses would be different, more fleshed out, and more thought through because the desired end also became my experience—a transformed heart.

Throughout this project I was reminded that the call to follow Jesus is an intentionally thought-through response—this transformation that the Spirit causes one’s soul to long for happens as one simply does what Jesus did. I was particularly convicted and blessed by the lesson plan exercises that caused participants and the team, including myself, to see others as Jesus did and does, “helpless and harassed,” to live and act in the other-centered way of Jesus. When one’s life’s work is to lead others to live as disciples and disciple makers, one’s own discipleship can become neglected. This project brought me back to the feet of Jesus, like Mary, to choose what is always better and that which cannot be taken away (Luke 10:42).

Conclusion

This soul care project was birthed out of a concern for CPBC’s low retention of new members despite what appeared to be a well-thought through, well-planned, and nearly flawlessly executed membership process. A careful review of the work revealed that the church’s process focused prospective members toward who CPBC is, allowing them to know the church (its beliefs and practices) and, from that knowing, determining whether this church is the place for them. I recognized that people are moved to join churches for a variety of reasons (not necessarily because they want to discover their spiritual gifts, be in Bible study, serve, and tithe). I concluded, therefore, that the flaw in the process could be that it does not allow the pastor and ministering team to know the prospective member personally and spiritually, why they really have come, and the condition of their hearts upon arrival. As they are getting to know Clifton Park, CPBC must be getting to know them and seek to discern the work of the Spirit in their hearts and lives. The project, therefore, proposed that CPBC create a space within the membership process where this soul caring, heart-level knowing can begin. I believed that this knowing would help the ministering team discern where the prospective members are in relationship with the Lord with more personal and effective plans to move them

where the Lord wants them to be in Him and among His people, the church, ministering to them from a heart level and not a cookie cutter, one-size-fits all perspective.

In the quest toward this coming alongside plan, the project did two things: (1) it looked at the soul care practices of Jesus, who is always the church's example, and (2) it looked at the struggle of the human soul, which is humanity's sin nature and tendencies that compete with one's relationship with God and His church, and the impact of these struggles upon the heart. A look at Jesus confirmed that He saw people, met them where they were, and ministered to them out of knowing the general human condition of the heart and then the specific issue that plagued their hearts and lives. Because Jesus calls and empowers His church to imitate His soul care practices, a look at humanity's sin struggle proved appropriate and instructive. Being sinful by nature and by choice causes two things to happen—sinning against God, self, and others and being sinned against. In addition, because the world is fallen, disasters and diseases can befall humanity. Sin's impact from without and within can put wear and tear on the heart, the target of soul care. Any of these ailments can be to such a degree that persons become particularly wearied and broken and, because of it, help is needed not only from God but also from the people of God, the church. This help from the church can be administered in a variety of ways and spaces. The place this project proposed that CPBC begins addressing issues of the heart is to incorporate soul care in the way the church brings persons into membership—getting to know prospective members on a heart level (in the Jesus kind of way).

Armed with the aim of the project, the example of Jesus, and the knowledge of the heart's sinful compromised condition, the soul care team set out to walk as Jesus did, intentionally seeing people and hearing the cries of their competed for hearts. The project gave participants a space to search their own hearts through the HAQ, to connect with CPBC leaders and fellow participants through sharing their HAQ responses and listening to the responses of others, and, to receive God's response to their HAQ responses through

the carefully chosen and strategically delivered supporting Scriptures. And, the soul care conversations will continue.

APPENDIX 1

MEMBERSHIP INTEREST PHONE SURVEY SCRIPT

The Membership Team used the following script in conducting a phone survey with prospective members to glean their continued interest in membership at Clifton Park Baptist Church. The conversation took into consideration the yes, undecided, or no response to the question of interest. The caller was also encouraged to be sensitive to whether they had called at a good time. Callers were given names of persons who came forward during the invitation within an eighteen-month period.

MEMBERSHIP INTEREST PHONE SURVEY SCRIPT

“Good afternoon Ms. Womble. This is Janet Henley from Clifton Park Baptist Church. How are you today?” [WAIT FOR THEIR RESPONSE, THEN REPLY APPROPRIATELY.] “That’s good or I’m sorry to hear that, etc.” [BE SENSITIVE TO WHETHER OR NOT YOU HAVE CALLED AT A GOOD TIME. IF IT IS NOT A GOOD TIME, ASK WHEN WOULD BE A BETTER TIME TO CALL BACK.] “I am calling on behalf of the Membership Ministry, and I promise not to take much of your time. Do you have about 15 minutes?” [IF YES, PROCEED.] We noticed that you came forward on August 21 of last year to indicate your desire for membership but have not attended the orientation classes and/or scheduled baptism” [WHICHEVER FITS THEIR SITUATION]. “Are there any questions that I can answer for you?” AFTER QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED TO THEIR SATISFACTION SAY, “Are you still interested in becoming a member of Clifton Park?” IF YES, THEN SAY, “That is great news! I have some good news too! We have created for persons like yourself, who are still in the process of becoming members, a setting and sessions we call, ‘The Starting Point.’ It is an environment where we are led in conversation that will help us to get to know one another and hopefully to become connected to one another. There will be a Scripture thought that will guide us in our conversation, one for each of the four sessions. The first gathering will be held on Sunday, January 22, at 9:45 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall with light refreshments served. Mrs. Henley will lead the conversations and it promises to be well worth your time. Does this sound like something that you could do?” IF YES, SAY, “That’s wonderful! If you have questions before The Starting Point sessions, feel free to give me a call. Do you need my number?” [PROVIDE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION, IF NEEDED.] “We’ll look to see you on the twenty-second. “Enjoy the rest of your day or have a good evening.”

[IF THEY ARE NOT INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN THE CAFÉ SESSIONS, THEN ASK ABOUT THEIR ATTENDANCE AT THE NEXT MEMBERSHIP CLASS.] Since you are still interested in membership, “Can I schedule you for the next orientation class that is coming up on February 18?” Remember you need to finish the spiritual gifts and passion assessments, that were sent to you and you will need to bring them with you to the class?” IF THERE ARE NO FURTHER QUESTIONS SAY, “Thank you for your time, Ms. Womble. We will look forward to seeing you on Saturday, February 18, at 8:45 a.m. Remember to enter the building from the rear parking lot at the ramp entrance. If you have questions before the class, feel free to give me a call. Do you need my number? [GIVE A CALL BACK NUMBER IF REQUESTED.] Have a great day or a good evening. [BESIDE THEIR NAME ON THE LIST OF NAMES TO BE CONTACTED, CHECK THE YES COLUMN.]

IF THE PERSON IS UNDECIDED ABOUT MEMBERSHIP, ASK, “Are there any questions that I can answer for you?” THEN INVITE THEM TO THE STARTING POINT SESSIONS. IF THEY SAY NO, THEN ASK, IF THERE IS SOMETHING YOU CAN BE PRAYING ABOUT WITH THEM. IF YES, PRAY WITH THEM BEFORE YOU HANG UP AND COMMIT TO KEEP PRAYING FOR THEM. “If I can answer any questions or help in any way, please do not hesitate to call. Do you need my number? [GIVE A CALL BACK NUMBER IF REQUESTED.] Have a great day or a good evening.”

IF THE PERSON IS NO LONGER INTERESTED IN MEMBERSHIP ASK, “Are there any questions that I can answer for you?” END THE CONVERSATION BY PRAYING FOR THEM, THAT GOD WOULD DIRECT THEM TO THE CHURCH WHERE HE WANTS THEM TO BE. “Take care, Ms. Womble. Goodbye.”

APPENDIX 2

PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS' PHONE SURVEY RESULTS

Callers used the following chart to record their survey results. These charts were sent to the Minister of Education and Discipleship and the New Members Administrator for next step actions.

Name of caller: _____

PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS' PHONE SURVEY RESULTS			
Name	Interested in Membership?	Will Attend SPS?	Will Attend MOC?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Comments:			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Comments:			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Comments:			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Comments:			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Comments:			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Comments:			
SPS=Starting Point Sessions and MOC=Membership Orientation Class			

APPENDIX 3

HEART ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Matthew 22:36-38 records what has come to be known as the Great Commandment: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law? Jesus replied, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ And the second is like it, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” The four-part Heart Assessment Questionnaire is patterned after Jesus’ directing persons in who they are to love: God and others. The questionnaire was used to guide facilitators in conducting soul care conversations with prospective members in a group setting. The purpose of the sessions was two-fold: to connect prospective members with Clifton Park through one or more session leaders and with one another through a shared experience and to know the prospective members better to discern more accurately their spiritual health and maturity/readiness level for appropriate next steps.

HEART ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE: PART 1

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

CATEGORY 1: LOVE OF GOD Lesson Title: "Love of God"
QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES
1. On a scale of 1 to 4 with 4 being highest, how would you rate your relationship with God? <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – cold <input type="checkbox"/> 3 – lukewarm <input type="checkbox"/> 2 – simmering <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – boiling hot
Tell why you gave this rating:
2. How do you think God would rate your relationship with Him? <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – cold <input type="checkbox"/> 3 – lukewarm <input type="checkbox"/> 2 – simmering <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – boiling hot
Tell why you gave this rating:
3. How would your family rate your relationship with God? <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – cold <input type="checkbox"/> 3 – lukewarm <input type="checkbox"/> 2 – simmering <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – boiling hot
Tell why you gave this rating:
4. How would your friends rate your relationship with God? <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – cold <input type="checkbox"/> 3 – lukewarm <input type="checkbox"/> 2 – simmering <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – boiling hot
Tell why you gave this rating:

HEART ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE: PART 2

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

CATEGORY 2: HEART, MIND AND SOUL

Lesson Title: "Heart Mind and Soul"

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

1. What do you want more than anything?

2. What do you think about more than anything?

3. Other than work, what do you spend most of your time doing?

4. Other than bills, on what do you spend most of your money?

HEART ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE: PART 3

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

CATEGORY 3: VIEW OF SELF Lesson Title: "View of Self"
QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES
1. Who or what has shaped your opinion of yourself?
2. What do you like most about yourself and why?
3. What do you like least about yourself and why?
4. When God looks at you, what do you think He sees?

HEART ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE: PART 4

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

CATEGORY 4: LOVE OF OTHERS

Lesson Title: "Love of Others"

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

1. Whose love toward you has been an example of God's love? Share how.

2. Outside of family, for whom have you been an example of God's love? Share how.

3. Name one person that you are praying for? For what are you asking God on their behalf?

4. What people group do you care about the most and why? How have you shown your care?

APPENDIX 4

HEART ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE EVALUATION

The following evaluation was sent to the two seminary-trained lay leaders and the three seminary-trained staff, which included the pastor of Clifton Park Baptist Church. This panel evaluated the effectiveness of the questionnaire in generating soul care conversations and revealing soul care needs.

Name of evaluator: _____

Date: _____

Heart Assessment Questionnaire Evaluation					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Conversation Starter					
The questions are open-ended.					
The questions are thought-provoking?					
The questions are sufficiently probing.					
The questions are of a nature that the participants will be interested in one another's responses.					
Peer Interaction					
The participants will feel comfortable affirming the responses of the one sharing.					
The participants will be prompted to respond by sharing from their own experience.					
The participants will feel at ease with disagreeing with the one sharing.					
Atmosphere					
A safe space can be created.					
Transparency can take place.					
Authentic connection can happen.					
Content					
The questions will get at the heart issues of participants.					
The participants will benefit from the exercise.					

Please include any additional comments below:

APPENDIX 5

SOUL CARE CONVERSATIONS ROLE PLAY TRAINING EVALUATION

The following evaluation was used by the author to assess the trainee's listening and interpersonal relationship skills.

Name of evaluator: _____

Date: _____

Soul Care Conversations Role Play Training Evaluation					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Introductions					
Participants introduced themselves.					
The leader introduced herself.					
The leader gave an overview of the session.					
Content					
Scripture was applied appropriately.					
The responses were solid and sound.					
The needed advice was given.					
The leader spoke the truth lovingly.					
Interpersonal Skills					
The leader connected with the group members.					
The group members connected with the leader.					
The leader was at ease and put the participants at ease.					
The leader showed genuine interest.					
Listening					
The leader listened well.					
The leader discerned well.					
The leader heard what was not said.					
The leader's summary of the interaction was accurate.					

Please include any additional comments below:

APPENDIX 6

SOUL CARE CONVERSATIONS LEADERS' ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

The leaders were provided a spiritual readiness/maturity level assessment to evaluate each of their group members' participation in the soul care conversation sessions. The assessment was based on the prospective members' responses to the questionnaire and on their spiritual contributions to the group discussions. The soul care team used the leaders' assessments to map out next steps for the prospective members' spiritual growth and body life connections.

ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANT: SESSIONS 1 AND 2

LEADER: _____ DATE: _____

PARTICIPANT'S NAME: _____	
<p>SESSION 1: LOVE OF GOD</p> <p>1. Knows Jesus as Savior <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear</p> <p>2. Their rating of their relationship with God: <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – cold <input type="checkbox"/> 3 – simmering <input type="checkbox"/> 2 – lukewarm <input type="checkbox"/> 4 – boiling hot</p> <p>3. Your rating of their relationship with God: <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – cold <input type="checkbox"/> 3 – simmering <input type="checkbox"/> 2 – lukewarm <input type="checkbox"/> 4 – boiling hot</p> <p>4. Spiritual maturity level <input type="checkbox"/> Infancy 1•2•3 <input type="checkbox"/> Basic 1•2•3 <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate 1•2•3 <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced 1•2•3</p>	<p>EXPLANATION/COMMENTS:</p>
<p>SESSION 2: HEART, MIND, SOUL</p> <p>1. Are their desires Christ-centered? How or how not? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear</p> <p>2. What are/could be the competitors for their heart? <input type="checkbox"/> Money <input type="checkbox"/> Possessions <input type="checkbox"/> Relationships <input type="checkbox"/> Dreams <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p> <p>3. Do they give their time to the Lord? How or how not? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear</p> <p>4. Does God have their heart? How or how not? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear</p>	<p>EXPLANATION/COMMENTS:</p>
<p>PROVIDE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE BACK OF THIS SHEET! *Comments required for all "Unclear" assessments.</p>	

ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANT: SESSIONS 3 AND 4

LEADER: _____ DATE: _____

PARTICIPANT'S NAME:	
<p>SESSION 3: VIEW OF SELF</p> <p>1. Did they have a positive influence on their development? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear</p> <p>2. Does what they like most about themselves generate concerns? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear</p> <p>3. Does what they like least about themselves generate concerns? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear</p> <p>4. Is their opinion of God's view of them biblical? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear</p>	<p>EXPLANATION/COMMENTS:</p>
<p>SESSION 4: LOVE FOR OTHERS</p> <p>1. Have they known God's love through others? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear</p> <p>2. Have they been an example of God's love to others? Do they know how to show love? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear</p> <p>3. Are they praying for someone else? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear</p> <p>4. Do they have a heart for others? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear</p>	<p>EXPLANATION/COMMENTS:</p>
<p>PROVIDE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE BACK OF THIS SHEET! *Comments required for all "Unclear" assessments.</p>	

APPENDIX 7

SOUL CARE CONVERSATIONS PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATION

The prospective members who participated in the soul care conversation group sessions evaluated the helpfulness of the sessions to them. The soul care team used their evaluation to further shape the conversations and sessions.

Name of evaluator (optional): _____ Date: _____

Soul Care Conversations Participant's Evaluation					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Introductions					
The introductions were helpful.					
The session overview was clear: I knew what we would be doing during the session.					
Content					
The Scriptures that were shared were beneficial.					
The memory verse assignment has kept the lesson fresh for me.					
I received useful feedback from the leader.					
I identified something that I need to work on.					
Interactions					
I felt heard by the leader.					
The leader made me feel at ease.					
I connected with my group members.					
My group members helped me.					
I felt that I was able to share and help a group member.					

Please include any additional comments below:

APPENDIX 8
SOUL CARE LESSON PLANS

The following soul care lesson plans were used to conduct the four lessons in The Starting Point and include the four elements of a lesson named in *Creative Bible Teaching* by Lawrence O. Richards and Gary J. Bredfeldt. Those four elements are the hook, book, look, and took. The hook is intended to reel in the learner—to get his attention and serve as a natural transition into what follows next. The book element leads the student to receive and understand the biblical passage through a variety of teaching methods, such as buzz groups, video clips, or a good lecture. The look element moves the student to the implications of the Bible passage, what it can look like lived out. Finally, the took is the actual living out of the passage.¹

¹ Lawrence O. Richards and Gary J. Bredfeldt, *Creative Bible Teaching* (Chicago: Moody, 1998), 154-58.

Lesson One: “INTRODUCTION AND LOVE OF GOD”

Matthew 22:37

EXEGETICAL IDEA: The command to “love the Lord your God” is a command to respond to God’s love. It is a command not without foundation and history.

LESSON AIMS – Participants will:

- (1) Understand The Starting Point as the first leg of their journey to membership at Clifton Park Baptist Church.
- (2) Consider, write, and then share from part one of the HAQ their thoughts about their relationship with God.
- (3) Investigate and identify the evidence of God’s love for them from the Scriptures.
- (4) Understand that the command to love God is their responding to the love of God expressed to them through Jesus, who died for their sins and who was buried and raised for them.

(1) Welcome and Introduction to The Starting Point

“Welcome to The Starting Point, “the place where the connection begins between us and God for salvation/discipleship, between us and God’s word for going deeper, and between us and CPBC for body life.” Thank you for being here to make the connection, the connection that will happen in three ways: (1) through a guiding Scripture, which is Matthew 22:34-40, which we will read together weekly; (2) a four part-heart assessment questionnaire, through which we will respond with authentic sharing; and (3) supporting Scriptures, which we will receive as God’s response to our heart assessment.

(2) Introduction to the Guiding Scripture Matthew 22:34-40

Much of the teaching that we have from Jesus in the Book of Matthew comes in Jesus’ responding to an attempt by religious groups to trap Him as they saw Jesus as one who taught and acted contrary to the teachings/laws of Moses and to their traditions. They did not see nor receive Jesus as their long-awaited Messiah, so they sought to discredit Him before the people. Still out of those exchanges came the teachings of Jesus that guide us in our relationship with God, self, and others. The verses we will look at for the next four weeks, Matthew 22:34-40, also grow out of confrontation. How is it introduced in verses 34 and 35? **HAVE SOMEONE READ THE VERSES.**

Earlier the Sadducees tried to trap Jesus; instead they ended up amazed by Him. And since the Sadducees were silenced by Jesus, the Pharisees thought they would give it a try. So, they ask Him, what? **READ MATTHEW 22:36.** Jesus responds to the expert in the law by reciting the law found in Deuteronomy 6:5. His response reflects two things: (1) That the laws fall under two categories (love of God and love of others); and (2) Jesus is moving them from a focus on laws and rules and traditions to a focus on relationship. Now let us read Matthew 22:34-40. In the next four weeks, we will peel back these two commandments piece by piece as today we begin to uncover the command to “love the Lord your God.”

HOOK: Heart Assessment Questionnaire, Part 1

You know what something looks like when it is boiling (the heat is up), simmering (the heat was up but now it is turned down; it’s bubbling), lukewarm (the pot is still on the stove but has been sitting for a while), or cold (the food has been put in the refrigerator and needs to be reheated). In your folder, you have received the first of four Heart Assessment Questionnaires. It is entitled “Love of God” and is based on the Matthew

Lesson One: “Love of God” (page 2)

HOOK (continued)

22:37 command of Jesus to “love the Lord your God.” Using the cooking terms cold, lukewarm, simmering, and boiling, you are being asked to rate your relationship with God from your own perspective and from the perspective of God, family, and friends. After each rating, write why you chose that rating. After everyone is finished, we will each share our responses, two questions at a time.

BOOK:

Guiding Scripture: Matthew 22:37

Supporting Scriptures: Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31; 3; Romans 5:12; 3:23; 6:23; 5:6-8; 1 John 4:10; John 3:16-18; 15:13; 1 John 4:16b, 19

T.S. After responses have been shared and affirmed where possible/needed, the mini lecture begins as follows: The command to love God does not start with the command, but it follows repeated demonstrations and declarations of God’s love for us. It is not a command that comes out of nowhere and certainly does not originate with us. Instead, the command to “love the Lord your God” is a command to respond to God’s love.

So, WHAT REASONS DO WE HAVE TO LOVE GOD?

Let’s go back to the beginning - throughout His created acts, six times, God pronounced that what He had made in each day was “good.” And, on the last day of creation God looked over all He had made and said that it was “very good” (Gen. 1:31). It appears, however, that the good does not last for very long for in Genesis 3, sin and death enter the world because of the disobedience of Adam in eating of the tree of which God said not to eat. Sin enters the world.

The following Scriptures speak to our sinful condition and need and God’s response to our sinful condition and need.

First, our need: We are sinful by condition and by choice: Romans 5:12; 3:23; and 6:23. Second, in spite of our sinful condition and choices, God’s response to us is love! See Romans 5:6-8; 1 John 4:10; John 3:16-18, and John 15:13. Third, God is love and we only love Him and others, because He loved us first as is stated in 1 John 4:16b and 4:19.

LOOK:

The first response of love to God is to believe in and receive His love!

John 1:12 – “Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.”

TOOK: What will you do with the lesson?

Receive Him or rededicate/recommit yourself to Him and walk confidently in God’s love for you.

Lesson Two: “Heart, Mind and Soul”

Matthew 22:37

EXEGETICAL IDEA: To love God with all means to live in complete abandon. Nothing or no one is more important than Jesus. He is to be our greatest desire; our identity is wrapped up in Him, and our devotion and service to Him is a deliberate act of our will.

LESSON AIMS – Participants will:

- (1) Review the aims of The Starting Point, the first leg of the membership process.
- (2) Consider, write, and then share from part two of the HAQ their responses to the questions regarding the priority they place on their relationship with God.
- (3) Realize from the Scriptures what Jesus means by “all.”
- (4) Grasp what it means for them to love God with all their heart, soul, and mind.

REVIEW

See points one and two of page one of lesson one to review the introductions to the Starting Point and the Guiding Scripture, Matthew 22:34-40.

READING MATTHEW 22:34-40: I’ll begin reading and you join me at verse 37.

READING VERSE 37 AGAIN, THEN SAYING: Jesus quantifies the love we are to give God by use of the word “all.” In a moment we will allow the very words of Jesus to define what He means by “all.”

T.S. But, first, Part 2 of the HAQ.

HOOK: Heart Assessment Questionnaire, Part 2

You and I know the myth of the genie – whoever rubs his lamp and lets him out of the bottle gets to command three wishes from him, though there are some restrictions. The recent remake of the movie “Aladdin” and the classic television show, “I Dream of Jeannie” show the finders of the bottle having anything they want at their disposal. If you had a genie what would you ask for? What would be your three wishes? Today’s HAQ asks questions to get at one’s greatest desires and allegiances. So, consider and write your responses to the questions that can give a sense of the priority you place on your relationship with God. After everyone is finished, we will each share our responses, two questions at a time.

BOOK:

Guiding Scripture: Matthew 22:37

Supporting Scriptures: Matthew 19:16-30; Luke 14:25-27; 28-33; Matthew 16:24 and Luke 9:23, and Matthew 4:18-22

T.S. After responses from the HAQ have been shared and affirmed where possible/needed, the mini lecture begins as follows:

Lesson Two: “He Wants It All” (page 2)

BOOK: (continued)

The supporting Scriptures make four conclusions about “all.” (1) One cannot love anything more than Jesus. See Matthew 19:16-30 for Jesus’ conversation with the rich young ruler. (2) One cannot love anyone more than Jesus. See Luke 14:25-27 for Jesus call to hate father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters. (3) The decision to follow Jesus is a well-considered one, because it is a costly one. See Luke 14:28-33 for the illustrations of the consideration given to building and going to war. (4) One follows Jesus with complete abandon to self, things, and others, as is demonstrated by the disciples at the point of their call to follow Jesus. See Matthew 4:18-22 where the disciples left nets, boats, and a father to follow Jesus.

LOOK: “My Heart, Christ’s Home”

The command to love God with all comes to life in our hearts. Loving God with all means to consider whether or not your whole heart belongs to Him. Robert Boyd Munger helps us to do that in his allegory, “My Heart, Christ’s Home,” where he likens the “rooms” in our hearts to rooms in a house.

DISCUSSION: How many of you had a chance to read the booklet?” What were your thoughts about it?

PASS OUT THE HANDOUT WITH A LISTING AND SUMMARY OF THE ROOMS:

Munger challenges us to examine our hearts for Jesus by asking the following questions:

- (1) The Study = My Mind: What consumes and feeds my thinking, the world or the Word?
- (2) The Dining Room = My Appetites and Desires: Am I hungry for my own ambitions, dreams, desires or am I tasting and satisfied with knowing and doing God’s will?
- (3) The Living Room = My Quiet Place with Jesus: Am I keeping my daily appointments with Jesus?
- (4) The Workroom = My Gifts, Talents and Skills: How is my serve?
- (5) The Rec Room = My Fellowship and My Fun: Where do I go and who do I hang with?
- (6) The Bedroom = My Relationships with the Opposite Sex: Are they pure?
- (7) The Hall Closet = My Sin and Pain of the Past: Have I put them off? Have I cast all my cares on Jesus?

TOOK: What will you do with the lesson?

- (1) Rethink your quiet time and the consistency of it: Imagine Jesus is sitting across from you during your quiet time. Talk with Him. Let Him talk with you. Remember that He delights in the time just as much as you and allow the thought of His delight stir you toward greater anticipation and intimacy with Him.
- (2) Identify and reorder one of the following: faulty thinking, misplaced desiring, nonexistent or inconsistent quiet time, lack of serving, unholy recreation, impure relationships, or lingering guilt of past sins and/or lingering impact of past pain.

**Lesson Three: “View of Self”
Matthew 22:39**

EXEGETICAL IDEA: Loving self is not commanded but assumed; it requires God’s viewpoint, which shouts that we are wonderfully made but deeply fallen yet deeply loved and fully forgiven; it must be tamed so as to not think too highly or too lowly of self; and when we get it right, biblical self-love has an other-centered expression.

LESSON AIMS – Participants will:

- (1) Review the aims of The Starting Point, which is part one of the membership process.
- (2) Consider, write, and then share from part three of the HAQ their thoughts about themselves and what they think God’s thoughts are about them.
- (3) Examine God’s view of themselves.
- (4) Recognize the other-centered expressions of a biblical view of self.
- (5) Modify their view of themselves based on God’s views.
- (6) Practice looking also to the interests of others.

REVIEW

See points one and two of page one of lesson one to review the introductions to the Starting Point and the Guiding Scripture, Matthew 22:34-40.

READING MATTHEW 22:34-40: I’ll begin, and you join me at verse 37.

READING VERSE 39 AGAIN, THEN SAYING: You’ll find here that self-love is assumed and not commanded.

T.S. But, first, Part 3 of the HAQ.

HOOK: Heart Assessment Questionnaire, Part 3

Teachers are important in a child’s life. Their words carry great weight. They can encourage or discourage a child, giving confidence or eroding it. I remember that in one of my high school classes, we were on the topic of careers. And, I’ll admit that I have not been one of those persons who knew what they wanted to be when they grew up. At age 15, I had not been exposed to much and at that point had never been on an airplane; still I said I wanted to be an airline stewardess. My teacher’s response was this: “You will never be an airline stewardess because you are too soft spoken.” I thought to myself, whether then or later in life, “Why would you say that to a child?” I was more annoyed than devastated by his statement because, by that time, my mother had already instilled in me the assurance that I could be whatever I wanted to be. So, today’s HAQ asks that you consider, write, then share your thoughts about yourself and what you think God’s thoughts are about you.

BOOK:

Guiding Scripture: Matthew 22:39

Supporting Scriptures: Ephesians 5:28-29, 33; Psalm 139:13-16; Romans 3:9-20; Hebrews 10:1-18; 1 Samuel 1; 2 Samuel 13:18b-20; Jonah 4;1-3; 1 Kings 19:1-4; Philipians 2:1-11; Romans 12:3; 1 Corinthians 12:14-27.

Lesson Three: “View of Self” (page 2)

T.S. After responses from the HAQ have been shared and affirmed where possible/needed, the lecture/dialogue begins as follows: Let’s see what God has to say. There are three things to see from the Scriptures about one’s view of self. **First**, the commentator Craig Keener states that in the second greatest commandment, “Jesus assumes rather than commands self-love.” Commentator R. T. France concurs: “The text assumes, surely realistically, that it is normal to love (i.e., to be concerned for the interests of) oneself and that such love generally takes precedence over the interests of others.” We see this assumption also in Paul’s admonishment to husbands in Ephesians 5:28-29, 33. The **second point** is that one’s perspective of self begs for God’s viewpoint and we can get that viewpoint from the first three chapters of Jack Kuhatschek’s Bible study on self-esteem, which carries the subtitle, “Seeing Ourselves as God Sees Us.” Those three chapters and the supporting Scriptures state that humanity is: (1) “Wonderfully Made,” Psalm 139:13-16, because God’s works are wonderful; (2) “Deeply Fallen,” Romans 3:9-20, for “there is no one righteous, not even one”; and (3) “Fully Forgiven,” Hebrews 10:1-18, by the once for all sufficient sacrifice of Christ. On the HAQ you were asked to share your thoughts about God’s thoughts about you. (Maybe comment on a few, if appropriate.) No matter your responses God sees you through eyes of redemptive love. Amen! The **third point** directs us Godward toward a biblical view of self, which has an other-centered expression. Note that when the Scriptures speak of loving self it is always in contexts that bend toward others. Philippians 2:4 signs off on one looking to his or her own interests as long as he or she is also looking to the interests of others. See Romans 12:3 and 1 Corinthians 12:14-27, which focus self toward others in the way spiritual gifts are understood and used in the body of Christ. Romans 12:3 urges believing church members to think well of and rightly about themselves but not to let it get out of hand. This right thinking is required for the proper functioning of the body of Christ as is clearly expressed in 1 Corinthians 12, which says one has been given gifts but so have others and that one is valuable and needed but so are others. A biblical view of self requires us to be aware that we, who are the body of Christ, are a part of something bigger than ourselves, because each member of the body of Christ functions in concert, not independent but interdependent of one another as each part does its work (1 Cor 12:14-27). And, that work is best done when one’s view of self is in its proper, healthy biblical place, not one of thinking too highly of self.

LOOK:

We are to think biblically about ourselves. Therefore, examine your responses to questions 2 and 3 of the HAQ, Part 3. Thank God for what you like most; pray regarding what you like least and put it in its proper perspective. Let the change be motivated by a desire to be better for others as well as yourself.

TOOK: What will you do with the lesson?

Have a “Self and Other Week!” This week involves you doing for others whatever you do for yourself. For example, if you buy yourself an ice cream, buy one for someone else. Do at least three “self and others” activities. For one of those three activities, look only to the interest of others, which means do for someone what you would have done for yourself. Then, let these practices become at least a once-a-week way of being.

**Lesson Four: “Love of Others”
Matthew 22:39**

EXEGETICAL IDEA: Loving others is commanded and not assumed. That ought to tell us that our natural sinful bend is toward self. Jesus continues to offer Himself as our example of one whose life mission was other-centered, coming “to serve and not be served and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Matt 20:28). We are to live other-centered sacrificial lives as well.

LESSON AIMS – Participants will:

- (1) Review the aims of The Starting Point, which is part one of the membership process.
- (2) Consider, write, and then share from part four of the HAQ their thoughts about how well they think about and care for others.
- (3) Examine the other-centered nature of Jesus.
- (4) Interpret the actions of the Levite, priest, and good Samaritan in the parable of the Good Samaritan.
- (5) Identify with one of the characters in the parable as they examine their own hearts toward others.
- (6) Name those in or outside their lives in need of care, construct a response plan, and begin executing the plan the next day.

REVIEW

See points one and two of page one of lesson one to review the introductions to the Starting Point and the Guiding Scripture, Matthew 22:34-40.

READING MATTHEW 22:34-40: Let’s read the passage together one last time as you join me at verse 37.

READING VERSE 39 AGAIN, THEN SAYING: You’ll find here that love of others is commanded and not assumed!

T.S. But first Part 4 of the HAQ.

HOOK:

Greg Ogden’s book, *Discipleship Essentials*, is a guide to the basic doctrines and practices of the Christian faith. In his chapter on biblical justice, he challenges his readers with the Scriptures that speak to the evidence of saving faith, which is to care for the least of these. To convince his readers of Jesus’ heart for the poor, Ogden points out Jesus’ humble earthly birth and life. He writes, “We are called to identify with and stand for the poor, because the One we claim to follow as Lord did so. Jesus was born in a small, insignificant province of the Roman Empire. The first visitors at his birth were poor shepherds, the rogues of society. His parents, too poor to bring the normal offering for purification, offered two pigeons in sacrifice instead of a lamb. Jesus was a refugee from political oppression; his family fled to Egypt and then migrated back to Galilee. As a rabbi he received no fees for his teaching and had no regular means of income. Having no home of his own, he said, ‘Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head’ (Matt 8:20). So complete was his identification with those on the fringes of life that he said to his followers, ‘Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me’” (Matt 25:40), 149.

Lesson Four: “Love of Others” (page 2)

Heart Assessment Questionnaire, Part 4

Today’s HAQ asks that we consider, write, and then share our thoughts about how well we think about and care for others. After everyone is finished, we will each share our responses, two questions at a time.

BOOK:

Guiding Scripture: Matthew 22:39

Supporting Scriptures: Luke 22:24-27; Matthew 20:20-28; John 15:12-14; Luke 10:25-37.

T.S. After responses from the HAQ have been shared and affirmed where possible/needed, the lecture/dialogue begins as follows:

Take note of the other-centered declarations of Jesus: Read Luke 22:24-27, where Jesus is responding to His disciples’ debate over who among them is the greatest. Jesus’ response: “I am among you as one who serves.” Read Matthew 20:20-28, where a mother of two of the disciples asks for high positions for her sons. Again, Jesus reminds them that he came to serve and not be served. Read John 15:12-14, where Jesus declares the ultimate expression of His love will be giving up His life for His friends.

In Luke 10:25-37, Jesus is being asked by an expert in the law, “Who is my neighbor?” Here Jesus tells the parable of the good Samaritan and points out that being a neighbor is showing mercy to anyone who is in need.

LOOK:

In her book on spiritual disciplines, Adele Calhoun treats the parable of the good Samaritan under the discipline of service. In it she asks three reflection questions and offers seven spiritual exercises to practice the discipline. In one of those exercises she asks readers to meditate on the story of the good Samaritan by putting themselves in the place of the Levite, the priest, and the Samaritan. Consider her questions at point four and let us share what we come up with.

TOOK: What will you do with the lesson?

A second handout from Calhoun’s handbook is entitled “One Another.” You are being challenged to choose a one another that you want to become a hallmark of your life and commit to practicing it.

Also, seek to make the needed improvements to questions two, three, and four on the HAQ. Can you be a better example of God’s love to others? Can you do more than pray for the named person? Can you care more for those for whom the Lord allows your heart to be burdened?

Let us look one more time at Jesus from the teachings of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2:1-11. Let’s read it in unison.

APPENDIX 9

INTRODUCTION TO SOUL CARE SYLLABUS

The following syllabus was used to inform, guide, and track the training of the soul care leaders.

INTRODUCTION TO SOUL CARE
Spring Semester 2019

Instructor Information

Instructor	Email	Office Hours
Janet W. Henley, MDiv	jhenley@cpbc.net	By appointment only, ext. 2

Course Description

We are called to make “fully-devoted, self-initiating, reproducing” disciples of Jesus Christ. However, despite our best efforts, some persons have barriers to their growth in their relationship with Christ and the church. Perhaps, they cannot move forward because of soul care issues that have not been addressed biblically. This course is designed to be an introduction to the soul care way of addressing those issues. In this course trainees will be instructed in what soul care is, the need for it at Clifton Park Baptist Church, its biblical and theological basis, and the theoretical, historical, and practical issues related to it.

Learning Objectives

Trainees will:

1. Develop a working definition of soul care.
2. Appraise the need for soul care within the membership process at Clifton Park Baptist Church.
3. Study three of Jesus’ soul care encounters to analyze and embrace His soul care approach to people in need of Him.
4. Understand and analyze the problem of sin and the challenge of suffering.
5. Understand the heart and consider the impact that besetting sins and lingering suffering can have on the heart.
6. Restate the church’s role in addressing sin and suffering issues.
7. Understand the four-part Heart Assessment Questionnaire for the soul care conversation sessions and its guiding Scripture.
8. Interpret the four soil types in Jesus’ parable of the sower as they seek to identify those types in others.
9. Role-play soul care conversations for a group setting using the first part of the Heart Assessment Questionnaire.

Expectations

Trainees are expected to:

1. Do the assigned readings prior to the training sessions.
2. Conduct the telephone survey, where they invite those who are in the membership process and still interested in membership to participate in one of the three four-week soul care sessions called The Starting Point. (We will reach back 18 months to develop a list of these prospects.)
3. Display a minimal of 90% competency in conducting soul care conversations in role-play.
4. Participate in the soul care sessions as needed.

Required Texts

Henley, Janet Wilson. "Incorporating Soul Care into the Membership Process at Clifton Park Baptist Church in Silver Spring, Maryland," Chapters 1-3 and the Appendixes. Training Presentation, March 2019.

The Bible is the primary text which we are seeking to understand and obey; therefore, please bring your Bible to class with you.

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading
Session 1 (1-3)*	The Presenting Need for Soul Care within CPBC The Biblical & Theological Basis of Soul Care	Chapter 1, pages 1-13 Chapter 2, pages 14-36
Session 2 (4)	The Theoretical & Historical Issues Related to Soul Care	Chapter 3, pages 37-51
Session 3 (5-6)	The Practical Issues Related to Soul Care Heart Assessment Questionnaire, Parts 1&2 Read Matthew 22:34-40	Chapter 3, pages 51-69 Appendix 3, pages 13-16 The Bible
Session 4 (6-7)	The Practice of Soul Care, Part 1 of 2 Read the Parable of the Sower, Mark 4:1-20 Leaders' Assessment of Participants Heart Assessment Questionnaire, Parts 3&4 Read Matthew 22:34-40 The Telephone Survey	The Bible Appendix 6, pages 27-31 Appendix 3, pages 13, 17-20 The Bible Appendixes 1-2, pages 6-11
Session 5 (7-9)	The Practice of Soul Care, Part 2 of 2 Role-Play Training and Evaluating Participants' Evaluation of the Leader & Session	Appendix 5, pages 24-26 Appendix 7, pages 32-34

*Related Objectives

APPENDIX 10

SOUL CARE TRAINING PLANS

These lesson plans were used to train the six Christian Education Committee members and one nonmember in an “Introduction to Soul Care,” the title of the course. These lesson plans also follow the four elements (hook, book, look, took) used to develop the soul care lesson plans, the details about which are stated in appendix 8.

Introduction to Soul Care
Session 1: Introduction of and Need for Soul Care and the Biblical and Theological Basis of Soul Care
EXEGETICAL IDEA: God is the one who adds people to the church, so the church needs to do its part in retaining them. Jesus went beyond persons presenting needs to get at their soul care needs and He met those needs with compassion and precision, and He expects His disciples to do the same.
LESSON AIMS – Trainees will: (1) Develop a working definition of soul care. (2) Appraise the need for soul care within the membership process at CPBC. (3) Study three of Jesus’ soul care encounters to analyze and embrace His soul care approach to people in need of Him.
HOOK: What images come to mind when you think of or hear the term, soul care?
BOOK: Chapters 1 and 2 of the Ministry Project Paper Trainees will have read Chapter 1, pages 1-13, for an introduction to soul care and the presenting need for soul care at CPBC. Passages: John 10:10; Acts 2:47; Matthew 28:18-20 I. Factors that brought the soul care need to light II. Rationale of the project III. A Review and Explanation of the Goals of the Project IV. Definitions of Key Terms Trainees will have read Chapter 2, pages 14-36, for the biblical and theological basis of soul care. Here trainees considered three of Jesus’ soul care encounters and the implications of such encounters for Jesus through their own lives. Passages: John 4:1-42; Luke 8:40-48; Luke 19:1-10; John 13:1-17 I. Jesus engages the Samaritan woman. II. Jesus engages the woman with the issue of blood. III. Jesus engages Zacchaeus. IV. Jesus engages the Twelve in a foot washing lesson.
LOOK: Recall and share your story of coming forward at Clifton Park to announce your decision for membership. As you recall, seek to identify and empathize with those who have done the same and who will be sitting in the Starting Point sessions. Relive the emotions of that time as you put yourself in their place.
TOOK: What will you do with the lesson? Have an “Intentionality Day” where you move about like Jesus, seeking to see people then see them the way Jesus saw them as sheep in need of a shepherd. When appropriate say something or do something to meet their need.

Introduction to Soul Care

Session 2: The Theoretical and Historical Issues Related to Soul Care

EXEGETICAL IDEA: The wages of sin is death as sin impacts our relationship with God, ourselves, and others. Sin and its consequences are the reason people need soul care.

LESSON AIM – Trainees will:

- (1) Understand the problem of sin and the challenge of suffering.
- (2) Analyze the impact of sin on humanity.
- (3) Make the correlation between the effects of sin and suffering and the need they create for soul care.

HOOK:

- (1) Last week we looked at three encounters that Jesus had with a sinful woman, a sick woman, and a seeking man. Imagine your own encounter with Jesus. What does He already know about you? Imagine how that conversation would go. Would He address an issue of sin, suffering, salvation/discipleship in your life? Experience His ministry to you and share what you can.
- (2) Report on how your Intentionality Day went last week where we were seeking to be mindful of people the way Jesus did and is.

Transition: The initial need for soul care at Clifton Park grew out of a careful look at our membership process and its failure to retain new members. Our process assumes that people have come to our church because they are ready to give, serve, study, and worship. We fail to know why they have really come, and we fail to give them the most important thing – Jesus! We will step back from this narrowed view and look more broadly through the eyes of God, Eve, Adam, and Jesus as presented in Genesis and Romans, seeking to see what sin has done to us all but also how God has responded to it all through Jesus.

BOOK: Chapter 3 of the Ministry Project Paper

Trainees will have read Chapter 3, pages 37-51, for a deeper look at humanity's sin issues and the suffering resulting from sin and death having entered the world.

Passages: Genesis 2 and 3 (sin's introduction and immediate impact)

Romans 5:13-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 (the impact of Adam's sin and Christ's sacrifice spelled out); Deuteronomy 30:19-20 (always a choice between life and death).

Training Session 2 (page 2)

BOOK: (Continued)

I. The Problem of Sin

- A. Sin entered the world.
- B. We are sinners by condition.
- C. We are sinners by choice.

II. Sin Causes Suffering

- A. Suffering comes from a variety of sin sources.
- B. The sufferer usually responds in a variety of counterproductive ways.

LOOK:

Listen to “The Bible Experience” reading of Genesis 2 and 3 and discuss the text in light of the commentary from chapter 3 on pages 38-41. What do you see? What are the implications of Genesis 2 and 3? See the seduction and shame factors of the original sin scene and sin in general, pages 39-41.

On the activity sheet, contrast the impact of Adam’s sin and Jesus’ sacrifice as recorded in Romans 5:12-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:21-22.

Too often we underestimate sin and its impact on our nature (sin as condition and choice) and our nurture (the suffering it can cause).

TOOK: What will you do with the lesson?

Continue to see through the eyes of Jesus to see sin differently and to see sinners (all of humanity) differently. Continue with your intentionality day exercise but look deeper to listen for sin’s effect on family members, co-workers, and the world at large. Internalize the commentary about Jesus from Matthew 9:36: “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”

Introduction to Soul Care

Session 3: The Practical Issues Related to Soul Care: The Church's Response to Sin and Suffering

EXEGETICAL IDEA: Sin has entered the world, so the heart of humanity is compromised and conflicted. It chooses sin and is impacted by sin and the suffering that results from sin whether by one's own hand, the hand of others, or the hand dealt by living in a fallen body and a fallen world.

LESSON AIM—Trainees will:

- (1) Understand the functions of the heart and the heart's struggle, idolatry.
- (2) Examine the impact that besetting sins and lingering suffering can have on the heart.
- (3) Investigate the church's role in addressing sin and suffering issues.
- (4) Understand parts 1 and 2 of the four-part Heart Assessment Questionnaire and its guiding Scripture for the soul care conversation sessions.

HOOK:

- (1) Report on your efforts to see people as "harassed and helpless."
- (2) The school scandal has been all over the news. This scandal is about parents working with an outsider to get their children admitted to colleges to which they would not otherwise gain admissions. Some paid for favorable SAT scores while others fabricated a sports admission. An article reporting the scandal carries this title, "Lori Loughlin 'Believed Her Heart Was in Right Place' Helping Her Daughters."

When the heart calls to USC? [A pawn off of the Hallmark television show she was fired from due to the scandal, "When Calls the Heart."] Lori Loughlin "truly believed her heart was in the right place" when she allegedly arranged for her daughters to be admitted to the University of Southern California, a source reveals exclusively to *Us Weekly*. "Lori is a really great mom who is completely into her kids and family life," the source says. "She lives and breathes for her husband and children. ... Her intentions were pure." According to court documents, the couple allegedly "agreed to pay bribes totaling \$500,000 in exchange for having their two daughters designated as recruits to the USC crew team — despite the fact that they did not participate in crew — thereby facilitating their admission to USC." "In [Lori's] mind, the end result made everything she had to do worth it," the source tells *Us*. "And she really didn't even see it as being a huge deal" (Sarah Hearon, "Lori Loughlin 'Believed Her Heart Was in Right Place' Helping Her Daughters," 20 Mar. 2019).

What are your thoughts about her declaration that "My heart was in the right place"?

TRANSITION: This statement, "My heart was in the right place," is an often cited one to justify the wrong that we do. It seems to disassociate the root cause of the act with the act itself, but Jesus does not do that. He says that our actions reveal our heart condition. Let us explore the heart and the places it can find itself.

Training Session 3 (page 2)

BOOK: Chapter 3 of the Ministry Project Paper

Trainees will have read Chapter 3, pages 51-69, for an education on the spiritual functions or metaphors of the heart, the unhealthy and unholy allegiances of the heart, and the church's role in pointing to Jesus, teaching the Word, and gathering persons for soul care.

Passages: Luke 6:43-45. In the Luke passage Jesus makes the point that our actions reveal our heart's condition. Several supporting Scriptures are noted under the three functions of the heart as mind, affections, and will, and under the heart's need for the Word.

Matthew 19:16-22 is the story of the rich young ruler whose heart loved his wealth more than Jesus. Participants will be challenged to consider what their hearts may love more than Jesus.

PART 1

Show The Bible Project Word Studies online video on "Lev/Heart"

- I. The Heart's Functions and Struggle
- II. The Heart's Solution, Jesus
- III. The Heart's Guide, the Word of God
- IV. The Heart's Companion, One Another

PART 2

The Heart Assessment Questionnaire, Parts 1 and 2

Parts 1 and 2 ask questions to discern the participants' heart love of God and the priority of God in their lives. Its basis is "the first and greatest commandment," which Jesus states in Matthew 22:37: "Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, and with all of your soul, and with all of your mind." They are entitled "Love of God" and "He Wants It All." The Heart Assessment Questionnaire is the instrument used to start the soul care conversations and to discern the spiritual heart health of the responders. This look at the first two questionnaires aids trainees in the effort to put a practical spin on the soul care ministry, namely how we can begin to discern where people are and then begin moving them to where they need to be with God, self, and others.

LOOK:

Based on the lecture and having dived deeper into the Bible's teaching about the heart, how do you now respond to Lori Loughlin's statement, "My heart was in the right place"? Imagine having a soul care conversation with her. How could you help her to see that her illegal and ill-advised actions prove that her heart was not in the right place?

TOOK: What will you do with the lesson?

Read Matthew 19:16-22. Examine your own actions toward the people Jesus has allowed you to see the last few weeks, the ones you have been able to identify as "harassed and helpless." Are you willing to do whatever Jesus instructs you to do concerning them? Ask Him, then, obey Him by doing it. However, as you consider this kind of surrender, what is your heart saying? Does it want to run and hide? Is it becoming afraid of what Jesus might ask? Is your heart's response revealing other idolatrous loves, other priorities? Remember the rich young ruler went away sorrowful because he could not give away his great wealth to the poor as Jesus asked. Are you sorrowful or glad?

Introduction to Soul Care
Session 4: The Practice of Soul Care, Part 1 - The Parable of the Sower and the Four Soil Types
EXEGETICAL IDEA: The Word goes out to all people, but their response to the Word depends on their soil type.
<p>LESSON AIMS – Trainees will:</p> <p>(1) Investigate the parable of the sower for the types of soils they will encounter and must discern during the soul care sessions.</p> <p>(2) Understand parts 3 and 4 of the four-part Heart Assessment Questionnaire and its guiding Scripture for the soul care conversation sessions.</p> <p>(3) Review the telephone survey script and the response sheet and receive calling assignments.</p>
<p>HOOK: Show the <i>Read the Bible for Life</i> video clip on “The Parable of the Sower.”</p>
<p>BOOK: Passages: Mark 4:1-20 Supporting Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:6</p> <p>Trainees will have read and done the exercises in the study book, <i>Witness Essentials: Evangelism That Makes Disciples</i>, from Chapter 6, “Investigate and Invest in the Soil,” pages 68, 104-120.</p> <p>(1) Read the Scripture, discuss the parable and Jesus’ meaning, and, based on the reading, define the four soil types and the roles of the church/believers and God.</p> <p>I. Investigating the Soils</p> <p>A. Soil on the Path</p> <p>B. Rocky Soil</p> <p>C. Thorny Soil</p> <p>D. Good Soil</p> <p>Discuss the background of 1 Corinthians 3:6, which includes verses 1-5, where the leaders were being more exalted than they ought to have been. Paul reminds the Corinthians that leaders do their part, but God is the one who causes the growth.</p> <p>II. Knowing Our Parts and God’s Part</p> <p>A. Planting</p> <p>B. Watering</p> <p>C. Growing</p>

Training Session 4 (page 2)

(2) The Heart Assessment Questionnaire, Parts 3 and 4

Parts 3 and 4 ask questions to discern the participants' view of self from the perspective of God self, and others and their view of others and their other-centered actions based on what Jesus states as the second greatest commandment in Matthew 22:39, "Love your neighbor as yourself." The assessments are entitled "View of Self" and "Love of Others." The Heart Assessment Questionnaire is the instrument used to start the soul care conversations and to discern the spiritual heart health of the responders. This look at the last two questionnaires continues to aid trainees in the effort to put a practical spin on the soul care ministry, namely how we can begin to discern where people are and then begin moving them to where they need to be with God, self, and others.

(3) The Telephone Survey

The students for the soul care conversation sessions called The Starting Point are the membership prospects. For the purposes of the telephone survey, membership prospects are those persons, 18 and older, who have made public decisions for membership within the last 18 months (counting back at the start of the survey) but have neither started nor completed the membership process. Three four-week classes will be conducted. Through the survey the trainee will glean the prospects' continued interest in membership and, if interested, will issue an explanation and invitation to The Starting Point, with the first round beginning in two weeks.

LOOK:

Consider the four types of soil. Were you at any time another type other than the good soil you are now? Explain. If yes, what moved you to where you are today?

TOOK: What will you do with the lesson?

(1) Of the "harassed and helpless" people that you have seen, with which can you begin a conversation to determine their soil type and discern God's work in their heart? With much prayer, move toward one of them this week with a goal of striking a spiritual conversation with them.

(2) You are receiving at least five names of persons to call for the telephone survey. Pray for each one. Ask the Spirit to open the opportunity for dialogue beyond the survey questions. If you get the opportunity, explain to them in great detail how they stand to benefit from participating: being known and knowing others better and knowing the Lord's heart for you even as you get to consider your own heart for God.

Introduction to Soul Care
Session 5: The Practice of Soul Care, Part 2 - Role Play Training and Evaluating
<p>EXEGETICAL IDEA: The Apostle Paul urges Timothy to “present himself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). Trainees have considered the biblical basis of soul care through the life and ministry of Jesus, the theoretical and historical issues related to soul care from experts in the field, and the practical issues related to soul care. Now, they will practice it by being both receivers and givers of soul care as they experience session one of The Starting Point.</p>
<p>LESSON AIMS – Trainees will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Understand experientially part one of the Heart Assessment Questionnaire, verses 34-38 of the guiding Scripture, Matthew 22:34-40, and the supporting Scriptures. (2) Record their responses to the questions on part one of the Heart Assessment Questionnaire and share their responses. (3) Record and analyze the responses of fellow trainees to part one of the Heart Assessment Questionnaire. (4) Record and submit the overall evaluation of the leader and the session. (5) Report the results of the telephone survey in which they gleaned the continued interest in membership of prospective members and whether the prospective members accepted or rejected the invitation to The Starting Point.
<p>HOOK: See appendix nine, for the lesson plan of the first Starting Point session, “Love of God.”</p>
<p>BOOK: See appendix nine, for the lesson plan of the first Starting Point session, “Love of God.”</p>
<p>LOOK: Trainees will consider, write, then share their thoughts about their relationship with God, God’s thoughts about their relationship with Him, and what they perceive to be the thoughts of family and friends about their relationship with God.</p>
<p>TOOK: What will you do with the lesson? Trainees will use the evaluation guide to respond to others’ sharing about their relationship with God and offer a verbal response to the sharing. Ask them: Are you now curious to know how your “harassed and helpless” friend/s would respond to these questions, at least the first two, which asks about their thoughts and God’s thoughts about their relationship with God? Why not ask them?</p> <p>The project leader received from the trainees the telephone survey results and each other’s HAQ Part 1 assessments of one another; an evaluation of these assessments would determine the trainees’ competency in assessing soul care conversations.</p>

APPENDIX 11

BIBLICAL COUNSELING TRAINING LETTER TO PANEL WITH SUMMARY OF TRAINING PLAN

The panel of six seminary trained staff and lay leaders, including the pastor, received this letter as an introduction to the plan to establish a biblical counseling ministry at Clifton Park Baptist Church by training five recruited persons in a certification track through the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC). The letter contains a detailed explanation of why ACBC was the agency of choice, a summary of the training and certification process, and the costs associated with the training. The panel gave their feedback on the “Biblical Counseling Training Plan Assessment” sheet, appendix 13.

July 25, 2019

Dear (Name of Panel Member):

Thanks again you for agreeing to serve as a member of the advisory panel for those portions of my Doctor of Educational Ministry project which require independent evaluation, namely the four-part Heart Assessment Questionnaire (which you completed in January) and now the proposed training plan for prospective counselors in CPBC's upcoming Biblical Counseling Ministry. In my first letter to you, I erroneously indicated that you would "assess the readiness of selected leaders to conduct the three four-week Soul Care sessions where the questionnaire will be used." That was my job to do. Your second and final work will be assessing the biblical counseling training plan as mentioned. The goal related to this task is stated as follows:

5. The fifth goal will be to develop a plan to train five persons in biblical counseling for more intensive soul care needs.

As we seek to approach all we do from a soul care perspective, it is very likely that we will find persons who require more intensive soul care. The need, therefore, for a biblical counseling ministry arises out of those situations where long-term, more targeted, intensive discipleship is required. Clifton Park would do well to have these trained persons on standby, who would be capable of administering the counseling themselves or knowing when to refer.

You are receiving documents that reflect my choice of the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) as our umbrella and training agency. There are three reasons that this agency is selected: (1) My own doctoral work in biblical counseling counts as the Fundamental Training Course and through my seminars I completed the Theology and Counseling Exams (one and a half of which were examined by an ACBC fellow; the other half will be submitted later for his review). Also, I have exceeded the required number of pages to be read. Since I have read many of the books on their reading list, I am qualified to make general recommendations to our prospective counselors while giving them the opportunity to consider an area of concentration. In addition, having met most of the requirements in phases one and two, I will be pursuing my own certification through ACBC. (2) ACBC appears to be among the three agencies who offer certification and it appears to be the more prominent among the three. Also, the other biblical counseling training centers direct counselors desiring certification to ACBC and the two other certifying agencies. (3) Finally, my choice is driven by the fact that ACBC has a designated person who aids churches in establishing biblical counseling ministries.

As the enclosed documents reflect, ACBC's certification process is done in three phases. Phase 1 is entitled "Learning." In this phase prospective counselors would meet three requirements: (1) Complete a 30-hour Fundamentals Training Course online, which is offered in the summer and the winter. The next course will be offered January to March 2020. Please see the seven topics covered in the course on pages 2 and 3 of the enclosed documents. (2) Observe for 10 hours an ACBC Certified Counselor through observation DVDs. (3) Finally, grow through reading 1,000 pages of biblical counseling books from the "Approved Reading List" (enclosed as a separate sheet). Three hundred of those 1,000 pages must be from the "Biblical Counseling and Theology" category, which is one of eight categories.

The costs associated with Phase 1 are as follows: \$100 for the Fundamentals Training Course; \$168 for the physical set of observation DVDs and notebooks on the counseling sessions or \$90 for a digital emailed link to the observation DVDs only; and the books from the reading list have a minimum estimate of \$85. (I would suggest that the church purchase both the physical and digital copy of the observation DVDs, which can be used for training present and future counselors and to build a biblical counseling section in our library of the books on the reading list. Still, counselors-in-training would be encouraged to build their own biblical counseling library.)

Phase 2 is entitled "Exams and Applications" and its name reflects the two actions that are taken in this phase. Prospective counselors will complete two exams, the "Theological and Counseling Exams" (pages 9-13). Preparation for these open-book exams comes from the Fundamentals Training Course and the reading. A prospective counselor is ready to submit her application for certification upon completion of phase one and the exams. See the Application sheet (page 13) for the checklist of eight tasks/items required as part of the application. The cost associated with Phase 2 is a \$100 application fee.

Phase 3, the final phase, is entitled "Supervision." Here the counselor-in-training (CIT) puts into practice what they learned in phases one and two. For one year they are required to complete 50 sessions of supervised counseling with an ACBC Fellow. The sessions must be a minimum of one hour in length; the CIT sends the supervisor a case report for each counseling session; and 10 of the 50 sessions must be with the same counselee. ACBC provides the CIT with a list of available fellows and once the fellow is secured, the CIT notifies the ACBC office. The cost associated with Phase 3 is a \$650 supervision fee. I recommend that the church pay half of this fee. Once certification is earned, biblical counselors maintain their certification through continuing education opportunities and an annual membership fee of \$100.

Regarding the costs and certification – Without the assistance of the church, the total cost for each CIT could be either \$1203 (\$168 physical observation DVDs & notebooks) or \$1,125 (\$90 digital observation videos). If the church pays the recommended fees (DVDs and half the supervision fee), the cost per CIT would be \$710 and \$85 (\$625) less if the books are used from our biblical counseling library. Please note that a prospective counselor does not have to pursue certification in order to get the training through ACBC. If certification is not pursued, the out-of-pocket cost for the CIT could be \$185 for the fundamentals course (\$100) and the books (\$85) from the Approved Reading List. (If

they use our books, their cost would be \$100.) However, note the benefits of certification on the enclosed Supervision fact sheet (page 19, last section).

Please provide your feedback on the enclosed Biblical Counseling Plan Assessment Sheet. Feel free to contact me by email (xxx@xxx.xxx) or cell (xxx-xxx-xxxx) for needed clarification for completion of the assessment sheet. Otherwise, you may include your questions, comments, concerns, and/or suggestions on the sheet itself. The completed assessment is due August 11, 2019. Your continued support in this venture is highly valued!

Yours in Him,

Janet W. Henley

Enclosed: Introduction/Summary of ACBC, descriptions and documents related to the three-phase ACBC training and certification process, ACBC's Approved Reading List, and the Biblical Counseling Training Plan Assessment Sheet

APPENDIX 12

BIBLICAL COUNSELING TRAINING PLAN ASSESSMENT

The panel of six seminary trained staff and lay leaders, including the pastor, provided feedback to the biblical counseling training plan on this assessment form.

BIBLICAL COUNSELING TRAINING PLAN ASSESSMENT

PANELIST: _____ DATE: _____

QUESTIONS:	COMMENTS:
CONCERNS:	SUGGESTIONS:
RESPONSE: <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Approved with Modifications <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	
PROVIDE ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY ON THE BACK OF THIS SHEET!	

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ABSTRACT

INCORPORATING SOUL CARE INTO THE MEMBERSHIP PROCESS AT CLIFTON PARK BAPTIST CHURCH IN SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND

Janet Wilson Henley, DEdMin
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Robert D. Jones

This project sought to incorporate soul care into the membership process at Clifton Park Baptist Church in Silver Spring, Maryland. Chapter 1 presents the ministry context of Clifton Park and the purpose, rationale, and goals of the project. Chapter 2 provides the biblical basis for the project, which is grounded in Jesus' ministry actions in Matthew 9:35-36 and in His declaration in Luke 5:31 that the sick need a physician. The project also finds support in Jesus' soul care actions in John 4:1-42 and in Luke 8:40-48 and 19:1-10, and in His soul care mandate in John 13:1-17. Chapter 3 presents the need for soul care in churches, presenting the why of the approach, and provides direction in how the church can prepare itself to perform this ministry. Chapter 4 provides the timeline for the project and the specific actions needed to bring it to fruition. Chapter 5 evaluates the project based on the completion of the goals and the stated purpose for its implementation. It is hoped that this project can help to create a soul care way of being within and outside the walls of Clifton Park Baptist Church.

VITA

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EDUCATION

B.A., Lambuth College, 1983 (now the University of Memphis at Lambuth)
M.Div., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1988

MINISTERIAL

Minister of Education and Discipleship, Clifton Park Baptist Church, Silver Spring, Maryland, 1991-
Interim Minister of Youth, Clifton Park Baptist Church, Silver Spring, Maryland, 2000-2010