INTEGRATING BIBLICAL COUNSELING PRINCIPLES INTO

THE SMALL GROUP DISCIPLESHIP MODEL AT

FOOTHILLS CHURCH OF STAYTON, OREGON

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A Project

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the Faculty of

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by

Robert Raymond Baddeley

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APPROVAL SHEET

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I dedicate this project to my wife, Rockelle, who lovingly and consistently encourages

me to put biblical knowledge to practical use.

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PREFACE

For nearly 25 years I have been blessed to be involved in the discipleship processes of the local church as a pastor of various duties. Whether it was in youth, worship, or small groups ministry, it has always been about what God is doing in and with the people I was serving. I owe much of my trajectory to the late Dr. David Miller, president and theology professor at Corban University, who challenged and encouraged me to be faithful and obedient; as well as Dr. Tim Anderson, who mentored and discipled me during those crucial and formative years. I am also indebted to Dr. Craig Hardinger, former lead pastor and forever friend who introduced me to the world of biblical counseling, which has truly focused and flavored all my ministry efforts since.

I am so very thankful to The Southern Baptist Seminary for the opportunity to grow and learn in the field of Biblical Counseling. I have been blessed beyond measure in my time and instruction here. I could not have accomplished any of this without the direction and compassionate supervision of Dr. Matthew Haste, who was more than helpful every step of the way. Also, I am truly indebted to the technical expertise of my editor, Betsy, who has helped me every inch of the way—thank you!

Rob Baddeley

Stayton, Oregon

December 2020

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A good number of evangelical churches integrate the disciple making mandate of Matthew 28:18 into their mission statement. Along with that commitment, churches embrace and encourage the use of small group ministry in those discipleship processes. To promote discipleship and give form to that disciple-making mission, the leadership of Foothills Church in Stayton, Oregon, created a position with discipleship and small groups specifically in mind, titled "pastor of discipleship." As the administrative head of the small group structure, the task of the pastor of discipleship was to not just give it form but to help define and refine the definition of disciple and to train leaders to engage with the congregation as they learned to follow Christ in life together.

Context

Foothills Church (FC) of Stayton, Oregon, is a community church in a town of approximately 8,000 people. The city of Stayton neighbors Salem, the capital city of Oregon, and serves as a bedroom community in many respects, while retaining its own small-town identity. While Stayton is historically and predominantly Roman Catholic, this influence is largely cultural rather than active as a faith community. FC is the largest Protestant presence in town, with an average weekly attendance of 350. FC started over one hundred years ago as an independent Baptist church. For approximately fifty years it enjoyed a denominational affiliation with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC), as First Baptist Church of Stayton. In 2003, the church went through a name change to better reflect its community outreach and demographic makeup, although its doctrinal stance remains baptistic. FC's governing structure is elder-led, though it was congregationally-ruled until 2007. The mission statement is "A whole church for a broken

world." This statement is meant to reflect a commitment for being whole in Christ, and providing a place for pursuing that in a broken world in need of a Savior. After a lead pastoral change in 2015, FC decided to hire me a pastor of discipleship to organize and lead discipling efforts. The small groups ministry at the time was a buffet style offering of felt needs-based studies, from popular teachers and authors to smaller Bible study options.

Discipleship at FC

With the hiring of a pastor of discipleship in 2015, the leadership took a step forward in providing direction and clarity, as well as energy, to the cause of disciple-making at FC. The staff and elder board went through discipleship material produced by Real Life Ministries from Post Falls, Idaho with its senior pastor, Jim Putman. While this deeply influenced the church's direction and language, it also caused a bit of a stalemate as the conversation led to deeper questions—of which some were not ready to hear the answers. It exposed the church's general (with some exceptions) lack of commitment as leaders to engage in the disciple-making process at a relational level. While FC's commitment to the Great Commission is clear on paper organizationally, the process by which the church goes about making disciples has yet to become reproducible and recognizable in many practical ways. The leadership agrees on some corporately held assumptions when people in our care talk about following Jesus, but the process is somewhat vague and elusive. In this way, the church's strength—allocating resources toward discipleship—became a lens that showed its weakness—an inability to functionally disciple people as a reproducible structure.

The small groups structure was reorganized as multi-generational home-based groups that centered on the sermon teaching from the larger gathering on Sundays. Exceptions to this structure were Financial Peace University classes that are offered

periodically,[1] and Women's Ministry, which meets at the church in table groups on a weekly basis. This reorganization was strategic in its intention to break down demographic boundaries that served special interests, such as young parents, retirees, singles, etc., rather than body-life discipleship. The groups were intentionally kept at 12 to 15 adults, and families were encouraged to stay together so that children were incorporated in the Lifegroup. With this mixture of people in different life stations and places in their spiritual walk, there would be ample opportunity to speak into one another's life and point one another to Christ through the meditation and application of the Word taught on Sundays. The general format for Lifegroups included fellowship time and some food, with group discussion over that week's sermon and then prayer for group members and concerns. A discussion guide is produced each week to help the leaders keep the meeting moving, reiterating big points and themes while allowing leaders to address points to best serve their particular group.

Part of the ministry history at FC includes a time when there was significant participation in their Celebrate Recovery group, which was very popular and impacted a significant number of people.[2] This is significant as at one time all group ministries at FC were coordinated and viewed together, so as a new discipleship direction began to take root, people's previous paradigms within group ministry influenced their perceptions. The ministry fizzled when key leaders moved on without cultivating other leaders and the infrastructure lost momentum, which led to it simply fading away.

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[1] Financial Peace University is a popular faith-based financial management program by Dave Ramsey. See Financial Peace University, accessed January 12, 2018, http://www.daveramsey.com/fpu.

[2] Celebrate Recovery is a reference to the popular addictions and recovery material produced and popularized by Saddleback Church, which seeks to employ the traditional twelve-step model of recovery infused with Christian principles.

Biblical Counseling at FC

With my arrival as discipleship pastor came an emphasis and movement toward biblical counseling. Historically, FC was integrational in its approach, with pastors doing only crisis and short-term counseling. Those seeking counseling for stubborn or significant issues were usually referred to licensed Christian counselors operating in nearby Salem, which offers many of those kinds of services. Since I arrived on staff as an ACBC certified biblical counselor,[3] those referrals have largely stopped. There has also been an interest in biblical counseling at a lay level at FC. In the summer of 2018, I made a concerted push for a group of lay leaders to participate in ACBC online training and 23 people participated, with varying degrees of conviction and passion. At the conclusion, there was some interest to pursue more training by a few, an appreciation and newfound respect for biblical counseling by most, and some pushback by some who were put off by the approach of the videos regarding their attitude toward integrational Christian counseling.

Contextual Weaknesses

Looking at the leadership structure at FC, an immediate cause of concern is the lack of unity and energy from the elder board and other key leadership elements, such as deacons and Lifegroup leaders. Like many churches, if people are willing and able to serve, all too often the vetting and training is limited to the most accessible methods with the least cost to the volunteer. In short, leadership wanted to make the process easy if people were willing. Part of the challenge of unity and energy has been the tyranny of the urgent in leadership changeover. As staffing has changed, many lay leaders may feel ill equipped, but at the same time suffer "vision burnout" as yet another person steps forward with another way to do what they have been laboring toward for years. When presented with the concepts of biblical counseling, it was received by some as the next thing on the

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[3] The Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) was formerly known as the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors (NANC).

Christian shelf, more methodology like so many others in their ecclesiological past; four spiritual laws, lifestyle evangelism, Purpose Driven churches, etc.

The leadership structure of FC has historically been shaped educationally by nearby Corban University, Western Seminary in Portland, and more recently Multnomah University, also in nearby Portland. Due to FC's proximity with Corban, there are multiple generations of Corban (formerly Western Baptist College) graduates serving in the congregation. All the listed institutions have a strong stance on biblical authority and inerrancy and they all identify with the evangelical and conservative camp in history and practice. However, those institutions espouse an integrational model of counseling, blending what they consider the best of Christian counseling with input from secular methodologies and licensed programs. The weakness and challenge here is to define and refine our ministry's theology in regard to soul care.

Rationale

FC has served as a source of gospel truth and a stronghold for biblical teaching in its community for over fifty years, and as such, still holds to fundamental truths and principles that have not waned despite cultural pressures and shifting theological landscapes. To infuse spiritual strength to its mission of being a whole church to a broken world, equipping leadership in biblical counseling as it seeks to disciple others is a glaring current need. As the largest Protestant church presence in a small community with many needs, requests for care will always come and that demand will outpace FC's ability to minister. The ministry approach must include training for elders in introductory biblical counseling training, as well as for Lifegroup leaders who do much of the shepherding care to the body as a whole at FC.

The training was multi-faceted in its scope. Part of it was apologetic in nature—it was a defense of the biblical counseling model and must graciously but firmly show the weaknesses (at best) and deception (at worst) of the integrational model that now is so accepted and pervasive. The tension that comes from proximity with institutions

advocating programs that lead to state licensure needed to be explained and addressed. The training had to also be educational. While the elders are versed in the Scriptures as part of their office and calling, the practice of soul care is as much of an art as a science. To skillfully apply the Word requires some concentrated training and helping participants categorize the wisdom of Scripture into categories with handles for application.

The goal of biblical counseling as it relates to discipleship is conformity to Jesus Christ and lifelong pursuit of walking with Jesus, abiding in Him (John 15:1-5). In the church setting, many get comfortable and settle for religiosity and consider discipling from largely external parameters—behavior modification rather than heart transformation. The infusion of biblical counseling principles into discipling focuses efforts on heart issues, which by its nature works itself out in practical ways (Luke 6:43-45). By training people to examine their root motivations and influences FC can provide a better foundation for building on sanctification efforts that must be included, but done more intentionally. In short, the objective is not to produce nicer people or more functional sinners, but to grow people in the way of living gospel-centered, redemptive lives patterned in deed and motive by their Savior.

By including the core shepherding elements in terms of leadership (Lifegroup leaders), a couple things are accomplished. First, this helps ratify their role in the discipleship process. The concept of lay leaders discipling one another in a small group setting has always been held as biblical and appropriate. There still exists a kind of "glass ceiling" mentality that lay leaders are unable to speak into one another's lives like a paid pastor or appointed elder. While the aim is not to diminish the role of elder or pastor, the goal is to fully equip and give leaders a godly confidence in the use of the Scriptures as they have critical one-on-one conversations where God's Word should be brought to bear on life circumstances. No one would say that only pastors can do this; but unfortunately, due either to discomfort, ignorance, or fear, this is often the response. Second, by equipping small group lay leaders the idea is to not only encourage biblical counseling in the

discipleship process among them, but to model confidence in the Word to those receiving it, which can be used to draw people to the power of God, his living Word (Heb 4:12).

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to integrate biblical counseling principles into the discipleship model at Foothills Church in Stayton, Oregon.

Goals

The following four goals reflect the steps and purpose of the project.

1. The first goal was to assess the current understanding of how biblical counseling principles interact with discipleship among staff, lay leadership, and Lifegroup leadership at FC.

2. The second goal was to define and connect the elements of the discipleship process and biblical counseling for FC leadership involved in key shepherding roles of staff, elders, women's ministry, and Lifegroup leaders.

3. The third goal was to modify attitudes in increasing the confidence of FC leadership in their practice of biblical counseling basics in the context of relationally discipling people in small group settings.

4. The fourth goal was to develop a biblical counseling-based discipleship leader training curriculum for FC leaders.

The completion of these goals was determined by a defined means of measurement and an accompanying benchmark of success. The research methodology and instruments used to measure the success of each goal are detailed in the following section.

Research Methodology

Four goals determined the effectiveness this project. The first goal was to assess the current understanding of how biblical counseling principles interact with discipleship among elders, women's ministry leadership, and Lifegroup leadership at FC. This group of targeted leaders involved in shepherding ministries at FC was given a

Discipleship Inventory Survey (DIS) prior to the training.[4] The DIS was used to evaluate theological and biblical knowledge of biblical disciple making, and how well the leaders integrate the administering of the Word in real life situations calling for counsel. The DIS also gathered data regarding participants' confidence in Scripture and the Word's application to real life shepherding situations. This goal was met when the target group completed the inventory and the results were analyzed to gain an accurate understanding of the current practice of discipleship and counseling within their shepherding roles. The DIS was administered both pre and post training as a t-test dependent sampling.

The second goal was to define and connect the elements of the discipleship process and biblical counseling for FC leadership involved in key shepherding roles of staff, elders, and Lifegroup leaders. Success was determined by using the pre- and post-training DIS scores to measure growth in participants' understanding of the connection between discipleship and biblical counseling. Positive statistical change demonstrated by t-testing for dependent samples was the benchmark for success.

The third goal was to modify attitudes in increasing the confidence of FC leadership in its practice of biblical counseling basics in the context of relationally discipling people in small group settings. This goal was measured by the participants' completing the pre- and post-training DIS to measure change in confidence level in applying biblical counseling principles in the relational discipleship context. Success was measured by positive statistical change in confidence related scores.

The fourth goal was to develop a biblical counseling-based discipleship leader training curriculum for FC leaders. The training was an eight-week course meeting once a week. The scope of the training consisted of teaching foundational principles of biblical counseling, core elements of the disciple-making process, and practical implementation

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[4] See appendix 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 real life discipleship settings using case studies and group interaction. The goal was measured by an expert panel using a rubric to evaluate biblical fidelity, instructional methodology and scope, and shepherding relevance of the curriculum.[5] This panel consisted of an elder from FC, a certified biblical counselor, a local area pastor, and a college-level faculty trained in education and Bible. The benchmark for success was when at least 90 percent of the rubric evaluation criteria were met. Revisions continued until this standard was attained.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

To better understand the scope of this project, key terms are defined to help the reader moving forward.

Biblical counseling. The term *biblical counseling* is used in a technical sense to refer to the process of focused discipleship where God's Word is applied by the abiding power of the Holy Spirit to a particular area of life. Articulated succinctly by Elyse Fitzpatrick, "Biblical counseling is the act of one believer coming alongside another to bring the truths of both the indicatives and imperatives of Scripture to bear on their heart and life for their edification, the strengthening of their faith, and the glory of God."[6] While biblical counseling can be used specifically to address sin and related issues, its scope is greater and deeper, as fleshed out in the description from the Biblical Counseling Coalition Confessional Statement:

> God's people engage in conversations that are anchored in Scripture, centered on Christ and the Gospel, grounded in sound theology, dependent upon the Holy Spirit and prayer, directed toward sanctification, rooted in the life of the church, founded in love, attentive to heart issues, comprehensive in understanding, thorough in care, practical and relevant, and oriented toward outreach.[7]

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[5] See appendix 5.

[6] Paul Tautges, "Interview with Elyse Fitzpatrick," March 8, 2013, http://counselingoneanother.com/2013/03/08/interview-with-elyse-fitzpatrick/.

[7] Biblical Counseling Coalition Confessional Statement, accessed January 7, 2019, https://biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/confessional-statement/.

Discipleship. *Discipleship* refers to the entire process where a person begins and commits to following Jesus. At FC, the working definition of a disciple finds it roots in Matthew 4:19 and is defined as someone who follows Jesus (head), is changed by Jesus (heart), and is committed to His mission (hands). A disciple knows who Jesus is and accepts his authority, is in the process of having their character and heart conformed to him, and shares in his redemptive mission. *Discipleship* involves intentionality in highly relational settings. There is intentional focus on fostering the growth of the head, heart, and hands of a believer so he or she in turn can make disciples of others. At the most practical level, *discipleship* is the training of Christians to think, act, and feel as a Christian according to the Word of God.[8]

Integrational counseling. *Integrational counseling* refers to counseling systems that infuse or include secular theory and practice alongside Christian principles in their counsel. The scope here is wide, but the presuppositions are the coexistence and harmony (thus "integration") of the secular and sacred methodologically when dealing with the immaterial (soul-care) of people. A working definition comes from Stanton Jones, who identifies and writes from this perspective:

> An integrationist believes the Christian psychologist should draw on the resource of God's answers to these ultimate questions as the foundation for both how we engage the science of psychology and how we structure our practice in the profession of psychology. The integrationist also surmises that Scripture does not provide us all we need in order to understand human beings fully, and that there is a legitimate and strategic role for psychology as a science and profession in giving us intellectual and practical tools for understanding and improving the human condition.[9]

Sufficiency of Scripture. *Sufficiency of Scripture* is a direct reference to both the scope and authority of Scripture. Scripture is sufficient for believers, when rightly interpreted, to reveal all that is needed to understand one's spiritual need for Christ, how

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[8] John Piper, "What Is Discipleship and How Is It Done?," Desiring God, accessed January 7, 2019, https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-discipleship-and-how-is-it-done.

[9] Stanton Jones, "An Integration View," in *Psychology and Christianity: Five Views*, 2nd ed., ed. Eric Johnson (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2010), 101-2.

to live in a way pleasing to God, and how to live in a way that honors him regardless of circumstance, from trials to blessing. Because of the nature of Scripture as divine revelation, inerrant, and trustworthy, in both perspective and methodology it is wholly adequate for resolving issues related to sin.[10]

Two delimitations applied to this project. First, the project was focused on members of FC currently involved in shepherding leadership roles within the body of the church. Second, the timeframe of the project was confined to thirty weeks to allow pre and post-training inventories to be taken and analyzed, along with participants attending the eight online training sessions.

Conclusion

Discipleship and counseling have long been components of the Christian experience, but for too long have been considered too distinct from each other in practice in the local church. The combined concepts of disciple-making, along with the foundations of biblical counseling, are necessary for churches to make a difference, encouraging those within as well as reaching out to meet the deepest needs of their communities.

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[10] Wayne Mack, "What Is Biblical Counseling?" in *Totally Sufficient*, ed. Ed Hindson and Howard Eyrich (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2004), 50.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR
INTEGRATING BIBLICAL COUNSELING
PRINCIPLES AND DISCIPLE MAKING

The principles of the biblical counseling movement, instead of being viewed as separate or removed from the discipleship process, need to assume a foundational and ancillary role. As a church that in creed upholds the Word of God rightly, the wedding of biblical counseling principles into the disciple-making process is absolutely essential. A number of texts will be explored to support this connection.

First, Scripture itself establishes the human need for counsel. Ephesians 4:17-24 demonstrates the noetic effect of sin and resultant condition of natural man, and the need for special revelation due to his fallen state in the sanctification process as people move from "old man to new man." Second, 2 Timothy 3:14-17 shows that the Word of God is the all sufficient source and standard for that counsel, and that all that is necessary in terms of soul care of the inner man is supplied through the Scriptures. Third, the process of biblical counsel is made to work itself out relationally in community as sanctification and discipleship is practiced. The biblical processes relating to the one anothers and relational imperatives in Colossians 3:12-17 support how biblical counsel and discipleship are corporate and relationally based ventures, not just as a medium (being the body of Christ as His Church) but how community is fundamentally related to them both. Finally, the wisdom literature of the Proverbs is examined and testifies to the connection of discipleship and its relationship with biblical counsel, the Word of God, and His community.

Standing in Need: Ephesians 4:17-24

The Scriptures testify to fallen humanity's need for counsel. An exegesis of Ephesians 4:17-24 supports the idea that the unregenerate heart and mind bear the noetic effects of the fall and stand in need of the gracious Word of God.

In Ephesians 4, Paul makes his transition from the gospel and doctrinal foundations to their applications and ethical implications with the metaphor and imperative "walk" (*peripateo*). It starts in verse 1 but continues it throughout his letter.[1] Though he states his goal up front, he walks the process back for the reader to explain the problem faced in growing toward the goal of living in unity and love as God's people (4:15-16). While all the Scriptures testify to the need for God's gracious act of self-revelation, in particular unregenerate man stands in desperate need of correction when it comes to self-awareness. The thoughts, beliefs, and perceived needs people experience in their fallenness may or may not be accurate because self-perceptions and awareness are affected by the noetic effects of sin. It is not that sinners cannot think; it is that sinners think wrongly. This problem finds it root deeper than just in knowledge or mental capacity but originates from what the Word describes as *the heart*, that seat of immaterial man where one's deepest convictions, beliefs, feelings, and thoughts originate.[2]

As Paul urges the Ephesian believers to pursue walking in Christ, he compares the desired end goal with their current culture and former way of life. As a church largely comprise of Gentiles, located in one of the largest cities of the Roman empire behind only Rome and Athens, it was a cultural and religiously syncretistic melting pot.[3] They were to walk and live in a different manner altogether; the implication being that as former Gentiles (spiritually) they had a strong cultural way of living that was antithetical to the gospel way of living that Paul was instructing them to take on. Paul was completely

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[1] Harold Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 61-62.

[2] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 479.

[3] Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 88.

aware of the powerful influences of their former way of life.[4] He was also aware of the effects of sin on the human condition, which he fleshes out in verses 17-18. He outlines the process and results of what is known as the noetic effects of sin and distinguishes how they formerly thought and their resultant spiritual inability. In short, because of the impact of sin on the intellectual mind, as Heath Lambert notes, "our thinking is damaged most significantly on the issues of maximum importance in our life."[5] The doctrine of the noetic effects of sin is found elsewhere and is more developed in Paul's other writings—most notably in Romans 1:18-32. However, Paul brings to light some key components of this condition that speak to the issue at hand: the unity and application of the gospel at Ephesus.

The Gentile way of life is juxtaposed here for emphasis. Gentiles are described as being "darkened in their understanding" (*eskotomenoi te dianoia ontes*) This is not a reference to a fleeting thought or momentary lapse, which is conveyed here using the perfect participle. Paul furthers his argument in linking a way of living and direction of one's moral and volitional compass.[6] His concern was beyond any particular decision or situation; it was their whole mindset, which is the intent of *dianoia*.[7] This darkening of their understanding is set in contrast to Paul's earlier prayer for them that they would rather experience the eyes of their heart enlightened (1:18). The darkness of mind that characterized their Gentile way of living in the past included their ignorance of God, but the moral and spiritual disparity is ultimately the intent the light/dark imagery used here by Paul, as well as elsewhere in the New Testament. This lack of knowledge was not

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[4] Leon Morris, *Expository Reflections on the Letter to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 134.

[5] Heath Lambert, *Theology of Biblical Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 70.

[6] Morris, *Expository Reflections on Ephesians*,135.

[7] S. M. Baugh, *Ephesians*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), 335.

purely intellectual or philosophical; it was willful ignorance and refusal to acknowledge God for who He is.[8] Everyone in their own estimation feels "enlightened" (cf. Prov 21:2), but as Paul had himself experienced, without God, religious or not (and he certainly was), all are born without God (2:12) and as such live a life that is by definition in *alienation* from God. This separation from God is not meant to leave room for the idea of neutrality, that somehow unsaved humanity are unwitting refugees outside the gates, desperately seeking a way in to God's favor and presence. This alienation is a result of the futile thinking that comes from the enemy camp, outside the people of God.[9] It is decidedly hostile to God, not to be construed as neutral or open. There is some discussion as to the logical order and progression in this sentence. In other words, what is the relationship between the darkening of the mind, futility of the thinking, alienation of God, and hardness of heart? In his discussion regarding the interpretive options of the participles in play—*ontes* (the state of mind/being), *eskotowmenoi* (having been darkened) and *apellotriomenoi* (having been alienated)—Hoehner concludes that the line of reasoning here is best supported grammatically as understanding that "the reason that they walk in the futility of their minds was because their reasoning process had been darkened."[10] This darkening speaks strongly to the crippling noetic effects of sin on the unregenerate mind.

With the stark effects of sin on inner man laid out, Paul assesses blame for the condition, and lays it squarely on the Gentile mind. Their initiative comes from their own darkened mind, thus they are themselves responsible, shown by the emphatic reflexive pronoun *eautou*.[11] This darkness of mind is a result of the hardness (*porosin*) of heart. To

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[8] Thomas M. Winger, *Ephesians*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 2015), 508.

[9] Morris, *Expository Reflections on Ephesians*, 136.

[10] Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 585.

[11] Benjamin L. Merkle, *Ephesians: Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament*, ed. Andreas J. Kostenberger and Robert W. Yarborough (Nashville: B & H, 2016), 140.

track this progression backwards, hardness of heart speaks to an obstinacy that is metaphorically pictured in callousness or petrification.[12] The spiritual result is that their conscience pays the price. They find themselves unable to discern things morally and thus experience lessened inhibition and conviction.[13]

The resulting spiral continues as their hard-heartedness leads to disastrous practical implications, which leads to the rest of Paul's instruction. Firmly mired in futility, darkness, and lacking moral conviction, the results are abandonment of moral restraint to the trifecta of sensuality, greed, and impurity (v. 19). Thielman notes the relationship between these moods and sees them as somewhat overlapping. Their lifestyle is one that leads to despair and hopelessness, which ultimately finds its voice in "unrestrained debauchery" (*aselgeia*).[14] Many have noted that these behavioral descriptions lend themselves (and are used for) sexual sins, but it is also bleeds into all kinds of impurity. The mindset here is one that has simply stopped caring what others think and how one's actions affect others. It is a kind of sinfulness that lacks social restraint of conscience. Part of the noetic effect of sin and its resultant problems have to do with not just knowledge and ability, but of restraint and conscience. Barth notes the religious link of greed, impurity, and debauchery in a religious way, making the primary thread idolatry with its resultant character.[15] Idolatry would have been a marked characteristic of Gentile culture, with its polytheism and heavy emphasis on temple worship and the associated sexual immorality. The abandonment of idolatry was the very thing Paul was calling them out of and asking them to abandon. This characteristic of insatiability and relentless

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[12] F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians,* The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 355.

[13] Merkle, *Ephesians*, 139.

[14] Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 299.

[15] Markus Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 34a (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), 503.

desire for more is the cruel end of the futile mindset that finds its core in covetousness—

the incessant want of more of what one does not have, and in doing so completely

disregards God's true provision for one's life in the quest to self-satisfy.[16] This harsh

relationship between creation and creatures is pictured in its end form in Romans 1:18-

32, where part of God's judgment is shown in giving them over to a mind of, among

other things, covetousness (1:29). The fallen mind can only want, and outside of God it

will never be satisfied.

The Effect of Learning Christ

Having tracked the sinful effects and resultant behavior of the Gentile mind

and spirit, Paul transitions from where they "were" to where they "are." What the

Ephesians have been taught is completely identified with the person and the teaching of

Jesus. In noting the oddity of the phrase "learning Christ" Arnold notes, "One normally

learns a content (e.g. the law, statues, and ordinances, etc.) or a certain pattern of

behavior (e.g. to obey God or to do good) but not a person. This unique expression most

likely heightens the element of personal relationship with Christ that is central to the

Christian faith and emphasized in Ephesians."[17]

The first class conditional sentence structure with the aorist shows Paul's

assumption that they have indeed been taught and learned Christ – it is assumed to be

true. The new way of life Paul is talking about here is a direct antithesis to the fallen way

of life they had previously lived in as Gentiles, in that now they were in Him, and that in

Him was truth. He in fact, would have been known as "the truth" (Jn.14:6).[18] Whereas

prior to this much of their religious upbringing would have been solely an academic or

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[16] Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 592.

[17] Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary Series, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 284.

[18] Arnold, *Ephesians*, 285.

intellectually based pursuit, both the object and teacher came together in the risen Christ. It was out of this newfound sense of relationship that it could be said "as a Jew learned the Torah, so now a Christian can be said to learn Christ."[19] This truth in Jesus was the sum total of the teachings from Christ as well as the apostolic teaching and gospel traditions that had been transmitted by the apostles post-resurrection. This holistic idea of person/teaching is to be held as a both/and proposition, not either/or. What Paul was confident of was that in contrast to what they had learned through Gentile living, the Ephesian Christians had learned and believed the "word of truth" (1:13) that had come from the apostles and the historical Jesus.[20]

The "old person" that is being put off is the old man, the person who was an unbeliever characterized by the descriptions seen in v.17-19. The "putting on and putting off" here are aorist participles, emphasizing their already completed nature, harkening back to Paul's discussion of how believers have been crucified with Christ (Rom.6:6).[21] The clothing metaphor which is clearly implied in taking off and putting on, captures the essence of Paul's instruction on how he wants them to address life in their inner man. This is a complete identity shift and accompanies change of process. The old man was caught in the continual process of moral corruption and deceit, and is here reminded to live that which is true and has happened; that they are now in the continuing process of renewal of mind (*ananeousthai de to pneumatic tou nous humon*).[22] Note the present tense indicating that this is continual process, compared to the putting off the unregenerate man at conversion as a completed action. This echoes Paul's exhortation in Rom.12:2 to be "transformed by the renewal of your mind." The sphere of this renewal is

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[19] Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 280.

[20] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 302.

[21] Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 602.

[22] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 305.

the mind, the inner man and this is necessary because of where we started. Unregenerate man has "mind" problem that is only addressed by the gracious transformation of the mind afforded him by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5) and here in Ephesians works to renew us into God's likeness; described as "in righteousness and holiness." For this discussion however what is highlighted is the need presented at the beginning of the passage: our futility, ignorance and darkness—set in contrast to Paul's affirmation of their position and place in the gospel truth of Christ and the sphere of spiritual renewal, the mind or spirit of the inner human being.[23]

The Object of Trust: 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Having established the state of heart and need, the question is begged, where to now? An examination of 2 Timothy 3:14-17 shows that the Scriptures are the all-sufficient source and the standard for counsel. An exegesis of 2 Timothy 3:14-17 demonstrates that the Scriptures have divinely based authority and a comprehensive scope of counsel for the life of the believer.

The occasion and timing of Paul's letter to his friend, disciple, and co-laborer Timothy has parallels to the cultural landscape today. Paul, writing to Timothy from prison in Rome (2 Tim 2:8), was encouraging his work there amongst and despite fierce opposition. His tone in this letter is intensely personal and less formally doctrinal, though it contains significant doctrinal implications for the church moving forward.[24] The problems Timothy was facing in ministry at the church in Ephesus were a blend of persecution from both religious and secular forces. That these influences would conflate and produce opposition to the gospel makes perfect historic sense, and while commentators give varying amounts of credit in different places, be it classic Judaism,

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[23] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 306.

[24] William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Nashville: T Nelson, 2000), ixii.

proto-gnostic teachings, some sort of syncretism of the two, Essene influence, or pagan religious influences such as sorcery and magic practices of known popularity (Acts 19:19), the sum result was the same.[25] False teaching was present, and encouragement and defense was needed.

Paul addresses both encouragement and his indirect apologetic in verse 14, following the first contrast between faithful teaching and his persecutions. Without full development, Towner notes that "against the tide of opposition with its alternative gospel, Timothy is to 'continue in what he has learned,' to stand his ground and resist going with that flow of innovation and deception."[26] His theological training was sound, as attested to by Paul earlier in the letter (1:5, referring to Lois and Eunice). His childhood instruction was clearly based on the solid foundation of the sacred writings of his youth (*heira grammata*) that were already known as a Greek way of referencing the Old Testament Scriptures. Keener notes, "Although there were different ways of counting the books, it is clear from the listing in Josephus (*Apion* 1.8, 39-40) and subsequent listings that these Scriptures correspond to our Old Testament canon."[27] To be clear, in this specific context he is referring to Old Testament Scriptures and not the completed canon the church now enjoys. That Paul was referring to more than just the Old Testament texts is strongly inferred by Paul's explicit reference to the salvation that is "through faith in Christ Jesus" (v. 15), which would have been beyond the explicit instructions found in Old Testament Scripture. Mounce takes this as Paul's apostolic wedding of those Old Testament writings to the gospel that now propels him in his efforts and writings to the

[25] Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, ixx-ixxv.

[26] Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 580.

[27] Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014), 621.

churches.[28] While the canon was yet to be finalized, that these writings were taking on scriptural status along with the Old Testament is sure (2 Pet 3:15-16. There is a parallel being worked out here as sacred writings (*hiera grammata*) and all Scripture (*pasa graphē*) are both plural (and anarthrous), which in Mounce's estimation shows the shift in understanding that is occurring. The strict understanding of *graphē* as only the Old Testament is being broadened to include the gospel of Jesus and ultimately Paul's proclamation and teachings alongside it.[29] Paul's encouragement to Timothy as he shepherds the flock at Ephesus is to hold on. Specifically, hold on to the sacred teachings that have been at work in Timothy from his youth, entrusted to him by faithful people. To continue here (*mene*) is more than intellectual but has a sense of remaining and abiding found in John's gospel so often (8:31 and 15:5-6). There is the distinct call for the union of orthodoxy and orthopraxy, a key theme in the Pastoral epistles as well.[30]

To continue in the training of the Scriptures beyond knowledge of salvation is to empower a person when confronted with heresy and false teaching, which was the immediate concern here in Ephesus. In light of a teaching that went from "bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived" (3:13), the instruction of the Scriptures was set in direct contrast.[31] This passage has become a poster verse for the evangelical defense of the inerrancy of Scripture, and the language of verses 16-17 bring that to bear, even though in the end that is not the exegetical thrust or main point of Paul in context. The grammatical discussion surrounding "all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching" (3:16a) is the topic of much scrutiny. While several grammatical possibilities exist with reference to what "all" means or whether *theopnuestos* is attributive or predicative, some

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[28] Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 564.

[29] Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 568.

[30] Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 233.

[31] Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 582.

conclusions and applications moving forward are considered true regardless, as the point of this section is not to decide the interpretive options definitively.

While there are different grammatical options, context makes the interpretation fairly certain. Timothy, well-versed in the Scriptures, would not need a refresher on the inspiration of the writings of the Old Testament. This reminder would have been old news (albeit comforting). As a Jew, he was being reminded of how profitable the Scriptures were in regard to the task he was facing, based on its inherent character— coming from God Himself.[32] All he needed for the task of equipping in all necessary facets was found in the Word of God. It is important to note how the source is related to its profitability. It is the tone of absoluteness here in both extent—*pasa graphē* as it relates to the character of Scripture—that it is His very "breath."[33] Paul is linking and creating a trustworthiness in the witness of the gospel truth and the sacred writings of Scripture. It is all relational, starting with God Himself who has given His very life— giving "breath" of instruction for living. These truths have been relationally modeled and transmitted to Timothy, through the Old Testament texts and the living witnesses of his heritage who instructed him in his youth, and finally to Paul and Timothy's relationship. The thread of relational instruction and the character of those involved in it is powerful and confirming. This whole chain starts with God Himself, His revelation and breath that gives life.[34]

The sphere of Scripture's usefulness is demonstrated here in chiastic structure; positive and negative aspects along with encouragements and warnings.[35] In verses 16-

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[32] Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 14, 2nd ed. (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1990), 176.

[33] George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1992), 447.

[34] Andreas Kostenberger, *2 Timothy*, in vol. 12 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 591.

[35] Kostenberger, *2 Timothy*, 591.

17, Paul highlights four key areas in which Scripture is profitable or useful (*ophelimos*). First, it is useful for instruction—teaching (*didaskalia*). Given the encroaching heresies being combatted in Ephesus by Paul and now Timothy, the firm grasp of the truth was essential. It is noteworthy that Jesus, Paul, and the apostles used the Old Testament as a content source and cited it exhaustively in their writings and teachings, modeling in practice what is expressly stated here. The Scriptures were given for instruction, so New Testament writers leaned on them to do exactly that in the furtherance and expansion of the gospel and church.[36] Assuming the intended chiasm here, the next sphere is the negative aspect of reproof (*elegmon*). This broad term covers alerting someone to sin, calling someone to task for a specific misbehavior, and in its final form can be punitive and disciplinary.[37] The rebuking here can have multiple applications as well as levels of intensity. While the reproof may be doctrinal in nature, as would be the case when applied to false teaching, it could also have a personal practical application in one's personal life,[38] thus the expansive beauty and reach of the Scriptures.

The third sphere of usefulness is its ability to set one right or provide correction (*epanorthosin*). Seen positively, it has the goal or aim of recovery in mind.[39] While popular culture may not find the idea of correction initially positive, as one becomes aware of the lostness of his or her ways, recovery has become a catchphrase of modern culture that people gravitate toward. While the act of correction may feel harsh, when coupled with the intent of recovery it takes on a positive tone that can encourage even as it brings faulty thinking and behavior to light in one's life. The fourth and final sphere is training in righteousness. God's Word serves as the basis and foundation of

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[36] Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 449.

[37] Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 591.

[38] Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus,* 237.

[39] Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus,* 591.

instruction and discipline, encapsulated in the Bible as "training" (cf. Eph 6:4). Conduct and instruction are tied together here for the express purpose of behavior that is described as righteous in character, modeling its source—God Himself.

The purpose clause (*hina*) for which Scripture is profitable is given in verse 17. It makes one capable or proficient (*artios*). In the ESV it is translated as "competent." Believers have been equipped by God through Scripture for every good work (*pan ergon agathon*); "every aspect and task of the Christian life."[40] It should be noted that, in particular, Paul was encouraging Timothy as a leader in the church at Ephesus, as an elder and shepherd, so he reminded him that the Scriptures had everything he would need for that task, as a man of God, and a Christian leader in the congregation. Attempts to limit the application here to only Christian leaders in the church, i.e., pastors and elders, seem unwarranted and unnecessarily restrictive. The usage of the phrase occurs only here and in 1 Timothy 6:11, and is found in the LXX describing both major and minor leaders amongst God's people, along with worshippers of Israel's God. While it is specifically addressed to Timothy as a spiritual leader, it is within the context to apply it to believers in general seeking to be men of God.[41] The phrase *anthropos* of God need not be limited exclusively to leadership since Scripture's goal is salvation, which is presumably for all. It makes sense that the character and intent of Scripture here can be universally applied to believers as a whole.[42] Speaking to this specifically, I. Howard Marshall states, "Since the broad concern of the passage is with the Scriptures as the source of divine wisdom that leads to salvation, the application here is probably to believers in general."[43]

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[40] Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 450.

[41] Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 260.

[42] Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus,* 592-93.

[43] I. Howard Marshall and Philip H. Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, International Critical Commentary (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 796.

The goal of God's instruction is that it would have an abiding (perfect passive participle) sense of equipping; by this instruction one would have its continuing results as believers navigate life.

The Counsel of Community: Colossians 3:12-17

Having laid the groundwork for the need for and the nature of biblical counsel, the medium or arena by which that flourishes is addressed in Colossians 3:12-17. In an age and culture that celebrates and idolizes individuality, the idea of corporate culture and expression can feel a bit dated or out of touch. However, as is shown in Colossians 3:12-17, it is in community of faith, the New Testament church, where godly instruction was planted, watered, and flourished. By God's design and His will moving forward, the body of Christ continues as that vehicle and leads in the transformative instruction of God's people on a relational level. This truth and provision is not to decry or deny individual responsibility and participation. What is seen in Paul's letter to the Colossian church is how individuals of faith collectively were to practice their growing faith and what it looked like in belief and practice.

In Colossians 3:1-11, detailed instructions are given on a believer's identity and position (vv. 1-4) and what was to be 'left behind' or mortified in the pursuit of the new man (vv. 5-11).[44] These verses are tied together to the section at hand, which begins with "therefore" (*oun*) at the beginning of verse 12. Paul is writing to a church collective at Colossae; he stresses corporate language as he launches into a formative stretch of Scripture chock full of imperatives. These commands are addressed to and explicitly intended to be practiced among the elect (*eklektoi*). Paul is laying the groundwork for his conclusions regarding conduct, and part of that foundation is their corporate identity as God's people, and as such the objects of His covenantal love and favor. That Gentiles

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[44] David W. Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 237.

would now become and enjoy the blessings of being God's people, with far reaching implications for the church, was no small thing. Regardless of how one views God's distinction among people, there is no denying that the birth of the church had created a people of God on par and intimately related to Israel in God's plan moving forward. To be God's people was to be chosen, holy, and dearly loved.[45]

The new self that is called to be "put on" continues the clothing metaphor begun in the previous section of mortification and the act of "putting off." One cannot avoid the ethical implications of what it means to be part of God's community here. What is coming is Paul's request for the Colossians, noted by Harris, to "wear the moral garments that are appropriate to their calling and status."[46]

Paul calls the Colossian believers to put on five different virtues or qualities. All five show how believers are to live in community with their fellow man. While they all illustrate something a little different, the stress of the list is on the "ecclesial life" as opposed to the "separately individualistic." Scot McKnight, quoting Hans Hubner in his commentary, adds that "nothing is as unbiblical as the so-called self-realization."[47] Compassionate hearts (*splagchna oiktirmou)* begin the list, and as the heart was considered the seat of the emotions and inner man, this sets the stage for one's actions in community as part of God's people.[48] This term encompasses compassion is a compound term and is often used in describing Jesus in his ministry (cf. Mark.1:41; Matt 9:32-34) McKnight continues, "Compassion comprises three elements; a need expressed, a

[45] N. T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 12, North American ed. (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity, 2008), 141.

[46] Murray J. Harris, *Colossians & Philemon*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1991), 160.

[47] Hans Hubner, quoted in Scot McKnight, *The Letter to the Colossians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2018), 318.

[48] Ralph P. Martin, *Colossians and Philemon*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 110.

response of mercy and love to that need, and an action that alleviates that need."[49] These virtues are all seen in Jesus and reflect His dealings with people when He walked among the disciples. Kindness and lowliness (humility) are paired virtues, showing what Christlikeness looks toward others as well as internally.[50] As the list concludes, it adds the positive and negative of the previous two—gentleness reflecting the meek attitude toward others and patience being the opposite of wrath.[51] Paul anticipates the challenges of living in community and unity in verse 13 as he calls for forbearance and forgiveness to be part of their mutual commitment. Only those who have put on the virtues just listed will be in position to offer that kind of grace, modeling that which they have been shown by Christ Himself and in turn seeking to model it in His body amongst its members. It is especially noteworthy that forgiving and being forgiven are portrayed in the gospel as interdependent (Matt 6:12, 14-15; 18:23-25). Dunn describes the relationship between the two: "The experience of having been forgiven . . . releases the generous impulses to forgive others."[52] In the growing body of Christ there in the Lycus Valley, amidst the syncretism and false teachings and empty philosophies encroaching on their fellowship, Paul stresses that their fellowship be marked by these graces toward one another and he finishes it with the big ending—love (*agapen*). This theme runs clearly in all of Paul's writings so love finds itself here comfortably (cf. Rom 13:8-10; 1 Cor 13; Gal 5:6).[53] Love is prominent and preeminent that its use here as it is the perfect bond (*sundesmos tes teleiotetos*) and has been given various angles. While the clothing metaphor seems to

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[49] McKnight, *The Letter to the Colossians*, 321.

[50] Martin, *Colossians and Philemon,* 110.

[51] J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, Classic Commentary Library, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959), 221.

[52] James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 231.

[53] Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon,* 232.

conjure the imagery of a belt holding one's clothes on or together, this is not the use of the *sundesmos*. Its meaning and usage philosophically speak to that which overcomes plurality by producing unity.[54] Since this idea of bond has already come up in Colossians (2:19, in reference to ligaments and sinews) there is strong reason to see how it is used here as the virtue *above all others* that holds together and gives form to the others in the body of Christ. In summary, Dunn says, "At the end of the day it is this love (and only this love) which is strong enough to hold together a congregation of disparate individuals."[55] It is for the express goal of Christoformity that love perfectly binds these godly graces together in the body of Christ as practical expressions of the covenant commitment shown by its members together.[56]

While some have taken verse 15 to be a transition or abrupt insertion, closer examination reveals that Paul's turn to peace is foundational in his progression to thanksgiving and worship. Anticipating tension in the body dynamic, he recognizes the need for a deciding metric in those situations. This metric is the lordship and rule of Christ, more specifically, His peace. The peace of Christ is the rule—literally the umpire or arbiter (from *brabeuo*). The rule and ruler of matters with potential difference and division, such as those that exist in the dynamic nature of the church, is the peace of Christ. The "one body" nature of the fellowship is the arena where Christ's peace is to operate.[57] This construct is best seen as subjective genitive; it is the peace Christ gives.[58] The enjoyment of the rule and peace of Christ leads his people to thanks and praise, as seen in verses 15b-17. Pao notes that as praise was definitive in the Old Testament

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[54] Harris, *Colossians & Philemon,* 164.

[55] Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon,* 232.

[56] McKnight, *The Letter to the Colossians*, 323.

[57] Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon,* 234.

[58] Harris, *Colossians & Philemon*, 165.

covenantal relationship with God and Israel, so thanksgiving would serve believers in the new covenant and their relationship with Christ.[59]

It is in the scope of this body that Paul enjoins them to let the Word of Christ dwell in richly. The word here certainly includes the gospel of Christ, as well as His words passed along through apostolic teaching. The word is an active presence among them, and most likely Paul's intent here is corporate indwelling primarily, although this would not necessarily preclude individual indwelling as well.[60] The corporate nature is more clearly seen as the community at Colossae practices the multi-faceted ministry of the Word of Christ among one another. There was a teaching and admonishing (*noutheto*) to be practiced, which surely overlapped, but both were to be administered in wisdom, which led to praise, worship and singing—such was the moving impetus of the *logos* enjoyed corporately among the Colossian believers.[61] In the shared activities seen here— teaching, warning, praise—is the power of the fellowship when it comes to how the *logos* works itself out in the body of Christ. The Word is the element and medium by which these different expressions form and guide the heart. At the very least, there exists many levels on which catechesis takes place. To detach song from the instructional component is unnecessary. As is often seen through one's own church experience, Pao comments, "More theology is engrained in our hearts through singing than through the printed page or even through preaching."[62]

The conclusion of the section calls the reader back to the big picture—all we do, in word or deed, are to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus (v. 17). Those who belong to Him represent Him and are being empowered by Him. Following the lists of

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[59] Pao, *Colossians and Philemon,* 247.

[60] Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 157.

[61] McKnight, *The Letter to the Colossians*, 330.

[62] Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 248.

things that happen in community, the Colossian believers are enjoined to give thanks to Him in all things in which they partook. Word and deed here harken back to the instructional elements involved in the following of Christ, as well as the outflow or actions that make up the behavior to be lived out together.[63]

Wisdom Literature and Community: The Proverbs

The giving of God's truth and wisdom for living of course did not start in the pages of the New Testament. While the narratives and historical journey of Israel can be mined and rich theology gained, for the purpose of this chapter a brief look at the contributions of wisdom literature, in particular the Proverbs, is considered. More specifically, beyond its general scope of wise counsel, the power of biblical counsel in community is emphasized and how biblical counsel is a powerful relational component of discipleship connecting the Word of God and His people in community.

As a genre, Proverbs comes as a collection of writings from various authors, while often it is generalized as coming from Solomon. The text itself ascribes at least five authors contributed along with Solomon; the men of Hezekiah (25:1), Agur (30:1), and Lemuel (31:1).[64] Being significantly different in structure and form from the other books of Scripture (especially the New Testament), its intended audience was not originally singular. However, in its final edited form many agree that while it has no stated addressee, it was intended for the covenant community with the anticipation that it would be a source of wisdom in godly homes.[65] Its collective feel has given rise to the idea that it was a collection of sayings used in a court setting.[66] While undoubtedly there is a wealth of

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[63] Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 250.

[64] Bruce K. Waltke, *Proverbs*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 31.

[65] Waltke, *Proverbs*, 63.

[66] Tremper Longman III, *Proverbs*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament: Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 28.

information to be had, both theological and practical, in viewing Scripture and its purposes (see 2 Tim.3:14-17), the wisdom of Proverbs is meant to do more than impress or inform academically. Proverbs is best understood in a covenantal sense. This book comes from God to His people explaining how to live in a sinful world. Its overriding theme for that task is to understand, live, and be guided by the fear of the Lord.[67] Far from the idea that fearing the Lord is a negative concept, it is essential in understanding Him in His sovereign greatness and the corresponding need of His gracious salvation, which gives rise to one's responsive love for Him.[68]

Proverbs and Kinds of People

While there is a diversity in the Proverbs, there exists four distinct audiences for its message; the simple, the young, the wise, and the fool.[69] Beyond provision for general admonition, the reader can see immediately that the distilled wisdom of God was created for and intended to be understood in community. In particular, its counsel would make sense as it was practiced and heeded within the variety of differing societal relationships and forms seen in the Proverbs, as the divisions of people groups illustrate.

The "simple ones" (*pethaim*) are pictured as easily impressed, moldable, and susceptible (cf.14:15), which is distinguished from "youth" (*naar*), who lack wisdom from inexperience and are characterized more so by their lack of maturity—and they stand in need of discipline. The "wise" are those accepting and blessed in wisdom, while the last people category is that of the "fool" (*ewil*). Fools are described often but never actually addressed, as they despise wisdom and discipline (27:22).[70] While people are

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[67] Joshua Blount, "Lessons from Proverbs: Not Just a Collection of One-Liners," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 27, no. 3 (2013): 17.

[68] Blount, "Lessons from Proverbs," 19.

[69] George M. Schwab, "The Proverbs and the Art of Persuasion," *The Journal of Biblical Literature* 14, no. 1 (1995): 7.

[70] Schwab, "The Proverbs and the Art of Persuasion," 7.

often categorized in Proverbs as to their state in wisdom receptivity, the different examples of relational contexts the author uses is noteworthy. Familial metaphors abound in proverbial wisdom; the father/son metaphor dominates the first few chapters (1:8,15; 2:1; 3:1, 4:1,10). Wisdom extends from personal holiness to how children honor their parents to personal discipline (3:12; 6:20-22; 15:5). Marital relations involving chastity and communication are plentiful (5:15-19; 19:13, 25:24; 27:15-16; 31:10-11). Outside of family, the circle of friends one chooses to spend time and receive influence from have significant effect on the counsel both given and received (17:17, 18:24), also neighbors (25:8-10; 24:28; 26:18-19). Casual associations are given warnings and guidelines for interaction in the Proverbs—those not in the community of faith and generalized by their sin; the proud (16:9), wicked (22:5), drunkards (23:20), gluttons (28:7), and immoral women (2:16-19) to list some key people.[71]

That the wisdom offered in Proverbs is almost always given in relational context shows that while personal holiness is always an inherent part of the consideration of biblical counsel, it is to be used in a horizontal fashion with others. Blount, who describes Proverbs as a public spring and not a private pool, states, "Godliness is both a matter of inward piety and public ministry."[72] Part of the beauty of Proverbs is the fullness of its counsel—the Proverbs do much more than present a list of things to abstain from but also give the positive action needed to respond in a godly way. To be sure, Proverbs has plenty of warnings but is also plentiful in encouragement toward the things that ought to be enjoyed and pursued by the faithful guided by the fear of the Lord, captured in His goodness.[73] This warning/encouragement motif in Proverbs is similar to Paul's put off/put on language in Ephesians 4.

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[71] Roy B. Zuck, Eugene H. Merrill, and Darrell L. Bock, *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 241-42.

[72] Blount, "Lessons from Proverbs," 23.

[73] Blount, "Lessons from Proverbs," 24.

Another aspect of the form and structure of Proverbs that gives it a high relational emphasis is the personification motifs seen throughout the book. Murphy identifies four different "women" in the book: "wisdom" (1:20-33; 8:1-36; 9:1-6); marriage partner (5:15-19); "folly" (9:13-18); and "stranger" (2:16-19; 5:1-14).[74] There exists much speculation as to the meaning and extent of the woman wisdom. Murphy goes as far as to suggest that woman wisdom is "a surrogate for YHWH . . . a representation of the Lord's orientation to creation, the divine presence in the world, a divine communication. . . . Thus she would be the 'feminine' in God, who created human beings in the divine image when he 'created them male and female' (Gen 1:27b)."[75] Offering a more toned down explanation of the feminine language, Waltke notes that all personae are feminine because, as Karl Brugman demonstrated over a century ago, in languages that mark their nouns as masculine or feminine, that gender marking guided the poetic imagination in personifications. In short, since noun (*khokma*) is feminine, so would the personification be feminine.[76] This metaphorical personification of Wisdom is used poetically as opposed to Woman folly, so this is consistent poetically but not in terms of the literal nature of the wisdom of Yahweh. The comparison of Jesus in the New Testament and the clear allusion of Jesus' work in creation shows that this is not to be construed as feminine in its essence, as Jesus clearly was not female. In the repeated New Testament comparisons of Jesus and wisdom one sees the relational, yet not feminine per se, features found in the book—he is the embodiment of God's wisdom (Col 1:15-16). So, any emphasis on the feminine of God is confusing and unwarranted.[77] It is wisdom's relationship with God's creation on display here in Proverbs, not God's essence. As

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[74] Roland E. Murphy, *Proverbs*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1998), 278-79.

[75] Murphy, *Proverbs*, 280.

[76] Waltke, *Proverbs*, 83.

[77] Longman, *Proverbs*, 66-69.

summarized by Duane Garrett: "Woman Wisdom of Prov 8 does not personify an attribute of God but personifies an attribute of creation. She is personification of the structure, plan, or rationality that God built into the world. She is created by God and fundamentally an attribute of God's universe."[78]

The use of the Proverbs in biblical counsel is made possible in many ways because of the personification used in the book. As believers practically pursue Christlikeness and turn to that which is good and perfect and from above, the loving use of personification takes wisdom from above and reveals God's nature and by extension, to Mankind as his creation. In this, the knowledge of God's nature is delivered to and integrated with man's everyday life.[79] While the structure and tone of Proverbs is highly didactic, many feel it was given to God's people during a time of social and religious decay, so this instruction was given not for personal enhancement and holiness but for the health and salvation of the community of God's people both socially and institutionally.[80]

The New Testament church has always held a high view of the Proverbs, as seen by its frequent use by the New Testament writers. Proverbs is quoted in the New Testament ten times.[81] An example of this is Peter's use of Proverbs 26:11 in 2 Peter 2:22 discussing false teachers, referencing "dogs returning to its vomit" and "a sow that is washed goes back to wallowing in the mud."[82] Since the time of the early church fathers, the description of *woman wisdom* in Proverbs 8 has been seen and viewed by many as a Christological reference, but close examination (beyond the patristic father's overwhelming

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[78] Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, The New American Commentary, vol. 14 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 113.

[79] C. Hassel Bullock, "The Book of Proverbs," in *Learning from the Sages*, ed. Roy B. Zuck, Selected Studies in Proverbs (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 22.

[80] Bullock, "The Book of Proverbs," 24.

[81] Allen P. Ross, "Introduction to Proverbs," in Zuck, *Learning from the Sages*, 44.

[82] Waltke, *Proverbs*, 126.

acceptance) show that there are too many times where New Testament writers did not equate *sophia/khokma* with Jesus when they had clear chances and reasons to do so. In his detailed discussion of the logos in his prologue, John did not correlate them (John 1:1-18). Nor did Paul when discussing Hellenistic heresy in Colossians (1:15-17). Almost all agree that Proverbs 8 serves as a type of Christ, however, as there are many similarities: preexistence with God before creation, part of creation, teaching heavenly wisdom, dwelling with humanity and experiencing human rejection, leading to life for those who heed them, and death and judgment for those who spurn them.[83] The ending acrostic poem of Proverbs 31, the "lady of virtue," which portrays an incredible wife and mother, industrious in all she does, falls into this category as well. Along the lines of the other female personifications—the woman of chapter 31 gives a final snapshot of the woman of wisdom that started as a general call to the public, "in the streets" and "in the markets' (1:20). Her maids cry out over the town, inviting in 9:3-4. She finishes this symbolism as an accomplished matriarch of her home, as put by McCreesh, "ever-present, faithful guide, lifelong companion for all who choose her way."[84] The motif of the woman of wisdom grows throughout the book, calling out to those who "fear the Lord"(v.1:8) to enjoy her blessings, invited into relationship that the book culminates in as one of "wife." The covenantal, relational nature of the wisdom of Proverbs is woven throughout the book by design, and as such it holds great value for God's people today as the timeless truths of Yahweh's character are rehearsed and applied in community, as the body of Christ. This application must be done so in wisdom, but it certainly is a significant source of practical wisdom for human relationships and the knowledge of God, as it was in the days of Paul when it was part of the canon he references in 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

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[83] Waltke, *Proverbs*, 130.

[84] Thomas P. McCreesh, "Wisdom as Wife: Proverbs 31:10-31," in Zuck, *Learning from the Sages*, 410.

Conclusion

A review of the preceding passages demonstrates several truths regarding biblical counsel as it relates to discipleship and its relational components. That fallen mankind, as a community, stands in desperate need of specific revelation and is unable to respond without God's extended grace must be understood. When working with people in soul care in churches one cannot assume regeneration but the noetic effects of sin can be. The church's discipling efforts must not only be aware of this truth but address it specifically in its discipleship methodology. After laying down the basis for need, 2 Timothy 3:14-17 illustrates and defends both the sufficiency and authority of God's Word as the basis of counsel, in scope and practice. The humble confidence of one trained by the Scriptures is powerful and essential in the integration of biblical counseling principles into the fabric of the local church's discipleship.

The medium for such efforts in biblically based discipleship, or perhaps a useful vehicle, is the community of believers that people share life with and commit to relationally. In Colossians 3:12-17, Paul illustrates how this progressive sanctification is to work and play out in the confines of the local church, beyond preaching. From a look at the Proverbs as a basis for counsel of God's people, it was demonstrated that relational contexts have always been the chosen vehicle for the redemptive work of God in the transformation of people into being His; from Israel in the Old Testament to the body of Christ in the New Testament. Many of these relational contexts are universal and the very form of Proverbs lend itself to instruction and growth in practical, sanctifying ways with each other. Chapter 3 explores the gap between discipleship and biblical counseling, and how the local church is to respond to that divide effectively through small group relational efforts.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL CONSIDERATIONS
IMPACTING THE INTEGRATION OF BIBLICAL
COUNSELING PRINCIPLES
AND DISCIPLE MAKING

Attitudes and practices of modern-day soul care currently in practice did not develop in a vacuum. It is beyond the purposes of this project to definitively trace the path of current church discipleship from its forefathers, but a cursory discussion of some key figures and movements help one to understand where the church finds itself in practice and conviction. A number of forces have contributed to the state of local church disciple making and its relationship with biblical counseling principles. This chapter will highlight some of those movements and forces along with their contributions and effects on discipling for the local church moving forward. In many ways, the current church position regarding discipling and biblical counseling is a result of many churches (speaking generally) abrogating their responsibility in soul care to secular practitioners, integrational methodologies, and parachurch sub-contractors.

A Brief History of Ecclesiastic Retreat

The Enlightenment Period, which was born out of the mentality fueled by the Reformation, involved casting off many traditional ways of viewing the church, the world, politics, and the makeup of man in general. While it gave birth to tremendous opportunities for the church, it also made room for freedom to embrace new and unorthodox worldviews. While this enabled Locke, Descarte and Newton to charge through the now open doors to pursue things like religious liberty, philosophy, and the sciences, it also came at the expense of many theological underpinnings that served the church up to that point. Prior to the Enlightenment, morality and politics were part of a muddled whole (yet separate

entities), which saw the state as God's instituted and ordained authority serving the common good, with the church serving as its ministry and teaching wing to the believers within. The Reformation created a rift in that arrangement and shattered the church's tenuous unity, leaving people then to ask, "what church am I following?"[1] The Enlightenment's answer to the question, "where does moral order originate?," morphed into a two-tiered system of the individual's personal and natural "rights" and the idea of social contract, where the individual could "sign away" his rights for a perceived greater good. Nancy Pearcey summarizes the two-story concept of truth: "By treating the lower story [political science] as philosophically neutral, Christians failed to recognize *alien* [she means secular] philosophies—and sometimes adopted them without being aware of it."[2]

The effects of the Enlightenment continue while the movement itself may officially be considered finished. Implications remain in relation to the understanding of church, God, and truth. David Wells writes in *No Place for Truth*, "Although the brazen promises of the Enlightenment about the possibility of remaking all of life are now dead, the premise on which they were built—freedom from God, freedom from authority, freedom from the past, freedom from evil—simply refuses to die."[3]

The educational influences of the Enlightenment, reflected by those like Jonathon Locke, had begun to seep into the bedrock American educational systems like Yale by the early 1700s. This change in thinking would exert influence on how pastors

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[1] Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 382.

[2] Pearcey, *Total Truth,* 383-84, emphasis original.

[3] David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth*: *Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 58.

saw the human soul in its component parts; in particular the relationships between passions, affections, and virtues.[4]

The Great Awakening period in America in the 1700s was greatly influenced by the empirical emphasis brought on through thinkers like Locke. Pastors were responding to the changing culture around them both socially and academically, and rather than interpreting life strictly hierarchically, the debate centered on the relationships between will, intellect, and sensibilities, and one's experiences with them.[5] There came a more thoughtful emphasis on volition and how that worked within the framework of faith. Preachers like Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield called for the conversion of sinners, with the wake of souls left to be cared for and discipled by ministers. The theology of conversion was brought face to face with the psychologies of self, with growing dissension about how one was to feel, act, and believe, since these expressions of faith were finding different outlets in terms of people's response.[6] The inductive philosophical approach of Francis Bacon was adopted as a means of truth discernment in the soul. By breaking down moral patterns and behavior into categories, it was short trip to doing soul care by developing categories created through such analysis. Laws of nature and understanding for various levels of spiritual growth grew from such a framework.[7] A western, post-reformation church worldview that had held a more traditionally Calvinistic theology was now being challenged by a decidedly more Arminian flavor. Self-determinism—politically and philosophically—was beginning to see free will express itself in people's faith as it does more prominently in Arminian styled church traditions. The American church scene was experiencing a phase of Revivalism and emphasis on

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[4] E. Brooks Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America: From Salvation to Self-Realization* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983), 143-44.

[5] Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America*, 132.

[6] Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America*, 71.

[7] Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America*, 148.

conversion of the soul—and seeing a tremendous swing in its understanding on how they viewed sin and its effect on the will as well as personal efforts in sanctification. Huge crowds were being drawn together for the purpose of decision making and conversion—not bad goals, to be sure. However, in its wake, as the crowds thinned, the ongoing process of progressive sanctification and the church's ability to disciple people who had made decisions for Christ was put to the test. The decision to change experienced tension with the process of change.[8] Holifield summarizes this cumulative effect: "The combined forces of revivalism, the Wesleyan theology, the new Haven doctrines, and the Unitarian movement were sufficient to move popular American Protestantism gradually toward an understanding of sin as an act rather than a status—as a volitional decision rather than a common condition."[9]

The combination of increased urbanization, emphasis on personal piety as a duty of self-care, and the church's changing role in society alongside mental philosophers of the age that had been embraced by American protestant liberalism was finding its way from the academy to the street. By the early twentieth century, religious educational institutions were offering distinct "practical" and "classic" curriculum offerings due to the perceived inability of the church to handle theological soul issues in a way that an increasingly progressive and socially progressive church culture felt was needed.[10]

William James' pragmatic psychological approach to body and mind in the early 1900s influenced the liberal Protestant movements of the times. As people were engaging in increasing interest centering on self and the implications of the individual, one's faith became a vehicle that aided a person's journey of discovery. Once mankind's foci of study became how an individual is to understand oneself in the world, it was a

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[8] Heath Lambert, *The Biblical Counseling Movement after Adams* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 30.

[9] Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America,* 143-44.

[10] Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America,*176.

short and quick move to see the church was giving way to a totally different and decidedly therapeutic mindset. Holifield, quoting Edward Scribner Ames from his article in "The American Journal of Theology" (1906), states that theology had become the "handmaiden of functional psychology" and "in that assertion, theology finally became therapy."[11]

It is not as though pastoral ministry gave up biblical theology as its guide to soul care—the church has not been left without a witness to faithful theological practice in regard to dealing with the human condition. Church history is replete with examples from classic literature dating back to the early church fathers that speak very specifically to the domains that would now be considered almost purely (and unfortunately) psychological and therapeutic.[12] While not using modern psychological terminology, the church has always addressed issues of belief, behavior, and truth as it works itself out in a sinful world—it was just generally regarded as part of the discipleship process rather than something set apart from the soul. Regarding a common area of counsel such as behavior modification, early church father Anthony of Egypt (251-356) explains,

> That this state may be preserved in us it is good to hear the apostle and keep his words, for he says, "Try your own selves and prove your selves" (2 Cor.13:5). Daily, therefore, let each one take from himself the tale of His actions both by day and night . . . let the following be observed. Let us each one note and write down our actions and the impulses of our soul as though we were going to relate them to each other. . . . If we record our thoughts as though about to tell them to one another, we shall more easily keep our selves free from vile thought through shame lest they should be known.[13]

In addressing pastoral concerns among their people, the Puritans regularly interacted with behaviors and maladies that would now be deemed psychological in nature. Richard Baxter (1615-1691), way before its modern psychological heyday, addresses addictions:

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[11] Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America,* 201.

[12] Thomas C. Oden, *Pastoral Counsel*, Classical Pastoral Care Series 3 (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 226.

[13] Antony, in Athanasius' *Life of Antony*, quoted in Oden, *Pastoral Counsel*, 211.

Some are specifically addicted to pride and others to worldly-mindedness; some to sensual desires, and others to frowardness or other evil passions. Now it is our duty to give assistance to all these; and partly by our dissuasions, and clear discoveries of the odiousness of the sin, and partly by suitable directions about the remedy, to help them to a more complete conquest of their corruptions. . . . How much more we love their persons, by so much the more must we manifest it, by making opposition to their sins.[14]

In terms of the current state of the biblical counseling movement and its traction in the American church, one cannot overstate the impact that technology and the sciences, along with modernism and the lure of its advancements, have had on the church. When popular currency is equated with being progressive, it is hard to maintain relevance when pragmaticism, enhanced with self-focused liberal theology and medical-model practices, have captured public opinion. This social/economic shift set the stage for the church to play catchup or be on the defensive in terms of the cultural debate. As the church was being pulled into the societal vortex of psychology, the church found itself very accommodating, seeing Freud and his followers as a viable approach for the church. However, almost forebodingly Thomas Oden says, "Regrettably the theological moorings were not sufficiently deep to prevent an ever-increasing drift towards forgetfulness of the previous traditions of pastoral counseling. It is as if a great shade had been pulled. Classic pastoral wisdom fell into deep sleep for about four decades."[15] The rise of liberal protestant theology in the early twentieth century made for a good pairing with the rise of modernism and its therapeutic bent. Liberal theology came with optimism toward human nature while psychology gave the modern liberal church a therapeutic "cast."[16] As he tracks the progression of the mental health phenomenon historically, Powlison notes,

In the century after the Civil War, the professional roles of asylum superintendent, psychological research scientist, and charity worker transmuted into a new secular

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[14] Richard Baxter, *Puritan Pastor*, 98-99, quoted in Oden, *Pastoral Counsel*, 237.

[15] Thomas C. Oden, "Recovering Pastoral Care's Lost Identity," in *The Church and Pastoral Care, Psychology and Christianity*, ed. Leroy Aiden and J Harold Ellen (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 22-23.

[16] David Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2010)*,* 24.

psychotherapeutic pastorate. . . . Pastoral retreat and subordination mirrored the advancing authority of those secular professions offering and administrating psychotherapy, psychotropic medication, and psychiatric institutions. . . . Hospital, clinic and office displaced church and community as the locus of cure.[17]

It is not the examination of psychology by the church during those years that was the issue as much as that the examination was not done *critically*. Regarding this lack of discernment Oden explains,

> During the past twenty-five years of my professional life the methodological key to the active energies of pastoral care has been its pervasive hunger for the accommodation of various therapies from orthodox Freudian and Jungian all the way through the broad and colorful spectrum of Harry Stack Sullivan, Carl R. Rogers, B.F. Skinner, Erich Fromm, Fritz Perls, Eric Berne, Albert Ellis, Will Schutz, and Joseph Wolpe—all of whom one by one have been courted and welcomed and accommodated (*often rather uncritically*) (italics mine) into the practice, structures, language, professional apparatus of Christian ministry.[18]

Much to its detriment, American fundamentalism took an isolational approach during much of the deciding movements that has led the church to this point in the discussion. While fighting theological battles that came from Europe in the form of Higher Criticism, and facing secular pressures against scriptural inerrancy in the face of the rise of science and evolutionary theory (Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925), the secular surge of what would become the "mental health" sciences went nearly unnoticed by some. Secular psychology and liberal theology had risen in prominence to such a degree that in comparison, conservative Protestant orthodoxy came off as unpractical and irrelevant, so the church's retreat, largely, followed suit amidst that wave.[19] The irony is that the secular rush to fill this void was filled with psychotherapeutic talk therapists who had been christened by Freud as the new class of "secular pastoral workers" charged with the secularization of the counseling task.[20] The intentionality of Freud to wrest soul care (not his terminology, to be sure) from the church so blatantly was a clarion call, but in

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[17] Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement,* 22-23.

[18] Oden, "Recovering Pastoral Care's Lost Identity," 23.

[19] Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement*, 26.

[20] Lambert, *The Biblical Counseling Movement after Adams*, 32.

many ways the church was too busy fighting other battles—though maybe in the end not as crucial—to answer the bell. It is noteworthy of all of these historic names, figures, and movements that once the terms of debate were assigned and assumed, much was accomplished. The evangelical church answered the bell and began producing works and methodology in response to the secular uprising. However, the church's assimilation into the world of counseling—along with its terminology and foundational presuppositions—in many ways set the terms of engagement for the battle that would ensue. Put succinctly, once the church started talking psychology's language in terms of the human condition and man's greatest need, it found itself in dire straits.

Liberal Protestantism, reinterpreting the world and revelation in largely immanent terms, had found itself worshipping at an altar of experience. This kind of discourse paralleled the philosophy of German philosophers like Hermann Lotze, and as his countryman and theological counterpart Albrecht Ritschl began building off his themes, the die was cast for theological confusion by conflation.[21] The attempt to join forces methodologically in the early twentieth century was seen highlighted in the Emmanuel Movement, launched by some Episcopalians in Boston in 1905. Their goal was "application of psychological principles to the problem of religion."[22] Elwood Worcester, the rector of St. Stephen's in Philadelphia, was a key player in this early movement, as a graduate of General Theological Seminary of New York as well as having a PhD in Philosophy from Leipzig. His desire to unite the medical sciences and the blossoming therapeutic movement fueled him to write *Religion and Medicine* (1908), which was panned by one critic as "the first book in which any attempt was made to point out the legitimate place of religious instruction as part of psychotherapy."[23] As this odd

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[21] Holifield, *A History of Pastoral America*, 197.

[22] Holifield, *A History of Pastoral America*, 202.

[23] Holifield, *A History of Pastoral America*, 202-3.

alliance between the church and the therapeutic movement continued to grow, it was unfortunate (for the church) since they had developed the habit of deference to the modern psychiatric playbook as it came to dealing with the human condition, even with church people under pastoral care. The realm of pastoral counseling had, in Powlison's words, "essentially drifted into a junior version of psychotherapy."[24] Given the drift and acquiescence of the American church at the time, pastors found themselves trying to implement biblical care and solutions using secular categories. However, the quest for biblical solutions to the heart issues plaguing mankind cannot be adequately defined while using a secular thesaurus.

The Rise of Evangelical Therapy

Considering how the roots of the therapeutic movement had been laid historically by its secular forefathers, the church's response was, unfortunately in kind, therapeutic. Fuller Seminary's response came in the formation of its Graduate School of Psychology in 1965.[25] It's mandate was simple: "To integrate conservative Protestant faith with modern psychology's insights and therapies."[26] The initiative for this move was noted in George Marsden's *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism,* and the strong influence of then-board member C. Davis Weyerhaeuser's financing. As a known critic of biblical inerrancy and having a wife with known anxiety issues who had been under psychiatric care, Weyerhaeuser was personally, theologically, and financially vested in the move from traditional roles of biblical soul care to the new therapeutic role of psychology. He embraced this role in ushering in Fuller's Graduate School of Psychology.[27] This mandate to merge soul care and therapy

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[24] Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement*, 24.

[25] Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement*, 27.

[26] Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement*, 27.

[27] Paul Tautges, *Counseling One Another: A Theology of Interpersonal Discipleship*

has been duplicated and multiplied—as most post-graduate Christian-based educational institutions now boast of something similar. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Deerfield, IL) hired Gary Collins to teach pastoral psychology in 1969. Rosemead Graduate School of Psychology (which joined with Biola University) was formed under Bruce Narramore in the early 1970s, which became a real mouthpiece for the evangelical integrational counseling movement.[28]

With some of these institutions stepping into what many considered a void, the 1970s were a period where Christian psychology, at a popular level, surged in influence in conservative churches. Bombarded by what was considered incontrovertible empirical evidence by the scientific heads of the day, people like Gary Collins, James Dobson, and Bruce Narramore wrote on felt need topics from the shared perspective of psychology and Christianity. These men, along with many others who would follow, spearheaded that popular movement into what is now considered the evangelical therapeutic movement.[29] The 1970s and 1980s were a boon for evangelical Christian psychology, when classic institutions like Wheaton College added a master's degree in psychology (1980) and Dallas Theological Seminary brought in psychiatrists Frank Minirth and Paul Meier (mid-1970s).[30] The church was hungry from defending itself doctrinally from mainline liberalism, recovering from two World Wars, and emerging from its defensive isolational stance culturally. Evangelicalism was eager to read about how to parent, improve their marriage, and investigate what place "self" played in their lives, especially since cultural forces were flooding the marketplace with information and news that seemed so practical and pertinent to their plight.

(Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2015), 15.

[28] Tautges, *Counseling One Another*, 52.

[29] Eric L. Johnson, "A Brief History of Christians in Psychology," in *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views*, ed. Eric L. Johnson, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2010), 31.

[30] Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement*, 203.

Parachurch Influence

Another element factoring in the mix of the evangelical church's influence on people and soul care prior to the modern biblical counseling movement was the rise of the modern parachurch movement. There have always been existing organizations that fit the definition, being "para"—from the Greek meaning "alongside"—alongside the local church. While beyond the scope of this project, the works and writings of Ralph Winters argue forcefully (yet not conclusively) that the church from its inception in Acts has enjoyed a dual structure and that only in modern times has evangelical Protestantism recovered from its anti-Catholic bias in ecclesiology to recognize this. He believes the local church established by Paul and others found expression in "modalities" that basically assumed the existing form of the Jewish synagogue. These became localized church bodies that had built in institutional force and a base of operations that was geographically centered and determined. The second structure he sees in Acts is found in Paul's "missionary band" that was sent out and was planting churches, accepting funds and support from others in its evangelistic mission (cf. Acts 13:2-3). Winters also sees the apostles themselves as a proto-type of a parachurch group, as they did not comprise themselves a church but banded together and functioned alongside the growing churches. Their ministry was related to, supportive of, yet not exactly the same as those seen and prescribed in local church modalities. These parachurch formations he terms "sodalities."[31]

Winters traces these blooming sodalities in church history, most prominently in Catholic tradition, where there is a decided "pause" at the Reformation due to the adversarial schisms that followed Luthor's movement both theologically and ecclesiologically. He maintains that this idea of sodality "blindness" fuels the divide

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[31] Ralph Winters, *Foundations of the World Christian Movement: A Larger Perspective*, Course Reader, rev. ed. (Pasadena, CA: Institute of International Studies, 2009), 182.

between local (modality) church structures and parachurch sodalities, in particular, missions' agencies.[32]

The primary problem with Winters' thesis is that, beyond its orthodox intentions, it confuses form and function. His dichotomy of local church being the nurturing body and the agency structures being the outreach arm goes beyond biblical mandates and descriptions. The local church has been called to both. The requirements of church membership are categorically different than those of agencies, which are by definition more restrictive based on their chosen sphere of mission.[33]

Beyond the academic discussion was the practical effect of the parachurch on local church ministry. While secular therapists were taking the role of pastors in practical soul care, the parachurch was in effect stating with their efforts that the church was failing in its outreach mission as well and supplanted it, even as it in title was designed to come *alongside* it. Not all parachurch ministries supplant their local churches. In fact, one of catalytic factors of parachurch history came in 1942, when the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) was formed, a coalition born out of a desire to harness and unify evangelicals for broader purposes. The NAE explains,

> The accomplishment of the NAE during its early years was not simply the creation of new agencies or the opening of regional offices ready to serve the evangelical public. Instead, the accomplishment of the NAE was its ability to pull together a new coalition of conservative Protestants. While the fundamentalist movement that preceded the NAE was largely the domain of Baptists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians in the northern part of the United States, from the 1942 conference on NAE embraced numerous Christians in the Pentecostal, Holiness, and Anabaptist traditions. Pentecostalism, which had been kept at arm's length by most fundamentalists, had become part of the conservative alliance.[34]

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[32] Ralph Winters, "History of the Parachurch," accessed April 10, 2020, https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/history-of-the-parachurch.html.

[33] Bruce K. Camp, "A Theological Examination of the Two-Structure Theory," *Missiology* 33, no. 2 (April 2005): 207.

[34] National Association of Evangelicals, "History," accessed April 15, 2020, https://www.nae.net/about-nae/history/

This coalition gave birth and support to chaplain movements, missions agencies, and educational institutions. Since then, parachurch movements exist and influence many different cultural niches, from youth ministry (e.g., Youth with a Mission, AWANA, Child Evangelism Fellowship) to family ministry (Focus on the Family), humanitarian aid (Samaritan's Purse), and government policy advocacy (Family Research Council). The question remains, as parachurch institutions grow, how is the local church faring? Nothing has been decided definitively in regard to the tension between local church and parachurch, but given the observable general decline in church interest in Western society, the question arises; is there a correlation between parachurch ascendancy and local church decline? Could it be that that the two are competing rather than complimenting one another?

American evangelicalism has always had a strong affinity to toward disestablishmentism and hierarchy—it is part of the nation's genetic makeup politically. That the parachurch would flourish as a competing, cause-driven undercurrent option to the established church makes a type of sense, even if it was not particularly planned as such. Since parachurch organizations are built on a business model structurally and legally, that they would be also run on (if at least not highly susceptible to) "market reasoning" in the business of spiritual direction in those turbulent times was also highly likely.[35] The parachurch growth explosion at the same time as the American marketplace, religious revivalism, and modern therapy is a nod to the effect that the spheres of life had on one another in the early twentieth century. That is a deeper discussion entirely, but suffice to say, the proliferation of parachurch ministry has coincided with the advent of secular therapy and post-modern decline of evangelical churches, and to not think they are part of the bigger discussion is being unnecessarily naïve.

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[35] Mark A. Knoll, "The Logic of Evangelicalism and the Challenges of Philanthropy," *Lake Institute on Faith and Giving*, 2007, accessed April 12, 2020, https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/handle/1805/5569, 11-14.

In contrast to traditional secular talk therapy that seeks to draw out the individual without making judgments or desiring to impart as far as belief or objective content, biblical counseling and discipleship is a content-based structure for helping people become followers of Jesus. As developed in his book *Instrument in the Redeemer's Hands*, Paul Tripp says, "The overall biblical model is this: God transforms people's lives as people bring his Word to others."[36] This model may occur in differing formats such as the public proclamation of the Word in preaching as well as the private ministry of the Word done in community, one-on-one, or in small groups. In either mode, biblical counseling is more than empathy, compassion, and a listening ear—it is the infusion of the content of the life-changing Word of God into a person's life, heart, and circumstances. "Lasting change," coined by Tripp, is when "our identity, purpose and sense of direction are defined by God's story."[37] A person is able to make sense out of this life when he sees it correctly as well as his place in this life. If the goal is to just establish or more deeply identify "self," then one's perspective will always seem to fall short since according to the Bible people are neither the author nor even the main character.

A number of crucial elements are involved in the foundations of discipleship, and while not exactly derived in terms of importance or hierarchy, there is an order that helps make sense of them logically. The first stop is to begin with content—or the importance of instruction.

Instruction as the Foundation

At its core, being a disciple involves following—in Christianity's case, following Jesus. It is He who chose those first disciples in the various gospel accounts; He initiated and asked them to follow, and He would make them "fishers of men" (Matt

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[36] Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change*, Resources for Changing Lives (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 19.

[37] Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands,* 28.

4:19). Jesus does the same today. No one comes to Him except those whom the Father draws (John 6:66). The goal of discipleship is to become like the one followed. This has always been the goal, set forth in Scripture in different places and ways but maybe nowhere as clear as in Colossians 1:28: "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ." While recognizing the medium of discipleship as relational, one cannot overlook the objective content and actual practice involved in the progressive sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit on a person's life.

The hallmark passage for the church's mission of making disciples is seen at the end of Matthew (28:19-20), giving marching orders as well as guidelines. The two-pronged admonition to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to teach disciples to observe all that Jesus had commanded them, stands as a continuing call. The content of this teaching is comprehensive. As Jesus called disciples to Himself in the gospels, he defined that in part by their intent to follow and obey: "If you abide in my teachings, you are truly my disciple" (John 8:31). Jesus, as He shared life with the twelve, also taught them that discipleship was not just modeling of good behavior. Jesus, as God's supreme expression of Himself as the living Word, placed a premium on this revelation.

As the New Testament continues into Paul's letters, this high view of instruction continues. He encourages Timothy to this very end: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15). Bill Hull summarizes the power and purpose of biblical instruction: "The disciple studies Scripture to renew his mind and shape his own behavior, to have a working knowledge of God' principles as they apply to life, so he can fight temptation and take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and in order to defend the faith among those seeking to understand the Christian message."[38]

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[38] Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Pastor* (Old Tappan, NJ: F. H. Revell, 1988), 62.

The intention of instruction is not knowledge for knowledge sake but for transformation. The goal of becoming of a disciple is not to remain as one is but to be changed into the likeness of the one he is following (Luke 6:40). Paul highlights the value of instruction even more clearly in Romans 12:2 where he connects the transformation of one's mind with growth and ability to discern God's will for living in this life, in this world that conversely is trying to conform mankind into a contrary image—making people disciples of the world.

While the content of instruction is to be biblical, there still is the issue on how that ends up being read and applied. Much attention has been drawn to the caricature of a biblical counselor who uses the Word like a topical thesaurus of sin issues or like an encyclopedia to reference maladies of the soul. Jay Adams, as a forefather of the modern biblical counseling movement, has been a pioneer who has taken many of these arrows from his detractors. Modern biblical counseling is continuing to grow and provide more nuanced discussion and answers. However, in those early days, Adams had clear goals and objectives. His aim was to restore pastoral care to the church and wrest it away from the modern secular health care movement which was wholly godless at the time. Adams' platform consisted of a denial of inorganic mental illness, the illegitimacy of secularists engaging in matters of the soul, and a central belief that humanity's primary problem was sin, and must be dealt with as such, in a truly biblical fashion.[39] The caricatures and misconceptions arose from not reading Adams counsel as a whole, as well as being somewhat led astray by his at times strong and repetitive rhetoric. His dogmatism made him a target as often as his content. As an example, while it is true that all problems humanly speaking are derived from sin, it is not always a result of one's own personal sin. Adams himself explains,

> The notion that is so widely spread abroad (sometimes by those who ought to know better), that nouthetic counseling considers all human problems the direct result of actual sins of particular counselees, is a gross misrepresentation of the facts. From

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[39] Lambert, *The Biblical Counseling Movement after Adams*, 39-40.

the beginning (cf. *Competent to Counsel*, 1970, pp.108, 109) I have stated clearly that not all problems are due to their own sins. In Competent, I cited the cases of Job and the man born blind (John 9:1ff.). Those who persist in attributing to me views that I do not hold are culpable.[40]

Early biblical counselors were often accused of being on "sin hunts" in the lives of the troubled, when the reality is that they often struggle as a result of the sin of others (who sin against them; lie, cheat, steal, or kill), or when the sin-cursed world "groans" and disasters happen; i.e., earthquakes, famine, flooding. The ministry of the Word was never meant to be administered in a cut and paste fashion into people's lives.[41] The use of the Word needs to see the big picture as its applied, recognizing that in its pages is the divine drama of gospel narrative to lost humanity. When the church reads and ministers it that way to others it goes from academia to the story that God uses to win hearts, bringing "one another" ministry alive.[42]

The practical value of instruction is always an issue when it comes up in the context of addressing felt needs and real-life issues of discipleship. To that end, biblical content is not used or given indiscriminately. Beyond instruction being biblically based, (which is the founding premise) instruction should be given in a practical manner. The goal is that the disciple would be equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:17). The Word of God is something designed to actually work! Not just in theory, but for the life giving, daily operations type of decisions that a follower of Jesus has to navigate.[43] Bobby Jamieson likens the biblical instruction to a map: "Instruction is for action. We listen to the teaching of God's Word for the purpose of living it out. Sound doctrine isn't an

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[40] Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 1976), 139-40.

[41] Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands,* 24.

[42] Robert W. Kellemen, "The Bible Is Relevant for That?," in *Scripture and Counseling: God's Word for Life in a Broken World*, ed. Robert W. Kellemen (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 181.

[43] Wayne Mack, "Providing Instruction through Biblical Counseling," in *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, ed. John MacArthur and Wayne A. Mack (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 163.

informational archive that serves only to present facts. Rather, it's a road map of our pilgrimage from this world to the world to come."[44]

The instruction of Scripture is sufficient for everything needed for life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3), but that does not mean it is exhaustive in its instructional knowledge. It is comprehensive in scope, while not declaring itself exhaustive. The instructions of Scripture have what Heath Lambert calls "material sufficiency" in regard to biblical counseling and life.[45] While the Scripture may not contain any detail at all in how to drive a truck, it does give a Christian truck driver everything he needs to fulfill his task to the glory of God. What the Bible does speak to materially, it does so in a sufficient way, such as the knowledge of God and His salvation.[46]

In the life and training of discipleship, the conviction that instruction from the Word of God is sufficient and authoritative is foundational. This is the spirit of Paul writing to Titus as he instructs him in Titus 2:1 to "teach what was in accordance with sound doctrine." Titus already had the doctrine—it was not a reteaching of that. It was teaching that expounded on what had already been delivered. His point was not that Titus was forbidden to teach doctrine; the point was that he was to flow from sound doctrine to where that needed to be applied in the church at Crete.[47] This admonition from Paul does not preclude learning from other disciplines. Even Adams, who is often misunderstood as being anti-science, understood that it had benefits: "I do not wish to disregard science, but rather I welcome it as a useful adjunct for the purposes of illustrating, filling in generalizations with specifics, and challenging wrong human interpretations of Scripture,

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[44] Bobby Jamieson, *Sound Doctrine: How a Church Grows in the Love and Holiness of God*, 9Marks (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 18.

[45] Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 48.

[46] Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 51.

[47] Jamieson, *Sound Doctrine*, 19.

thereby forcing the student to restudy the Scriptures."[48] The Bible never claims to be exhaustive in its knowledge of all things knowable. However, it does say that it is enough to make believers complete, in the sense of being thoroughly equipped to accomplish every good work (according to 2 Tim 3:17).

A Starting Point: Who Is He?

Given modern culture's theological worldview, it stands to reason that any discussion of the issue moving forward must address the theological issue of God's place, who He is, and His relationship with His creation. Many models of God in today's church culture give a portrait of distance and aloofness, uninvolved with the affairs of His creation. The fog of what has been called "Therapeutic Moral Deism" pervades many circles, forming a chasm between the God of the Bible and His creation. Citing the research study done by Christian Smith for the National Study of Youth and Religion at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, R. Albert Mohler writes,

> Moralistic Therapeutic Deism presents a unique understanding of God. As Smith explains, this amorphous faith "is about belief in a particular kind of God: one who exists, created the world, and defines our general moral order, but not one who is particularly personally involved in one's affairs--especially affairs in which one would prefer not to have God involved. Most of the time, the God of this faith keeps a safe distance.[49]

The Scriptures speak often of the wonder and glory of God, and a practical key need of a modern culture is the re-grounding of one's worldview in these truths. This Semitic ideal of "weighty importance" in both intrinsic and extrinsic expressions is tied to the biblical view of God's glory—His *chabod*.[50] Any discussion about following Jesus is necessarily tied to His mission of fulfilling His Father's purposes on earth in defeating

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[48] Jay E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970), xxi.

[49] R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "The New American Religion," *The Christian Post*, April 18, 2005, https://www.christianpost.com/news/moralistic-therapeutic-deism-the-new-american-religion.

[50] Douglas Bookman, "The Godward Focus of Biblical Counseling," in MacArthur and Mack, *Counseling*, 52.

death and sin, as well as providing a perfect example of holy dependence and Christian living to His followers (cf. John 4:34; 6:38). It was Jesus' goal, however, to bring glory to the Father in what He did and how He lived (John 17:4-5). One of the glories of God is the attribute of self-sufficiency, which serves as the basis for complete dependency on Him as his creatures.[51] Since He is dependent on nothing, everything else is dependent on Him. It is often lost in the shuffle in a world that rarely gets beyond felt needs, but as people examine motives and hearts in soul care, the presuppositions of who God is in relation to fallen humanity are ever more important. They in fact provide the framework for a proper understanding of everything else—most notably oneself. When it comes down to the street level in terms of heart issues such as humility/pride, self and independence, a thoroughly biblical view of God and His riches that He pours out in terms of Christ and His Spirit is crucial in people's pursuit of Christlikeness. As Jesus' goal was the glory of God, and a Christian's aim is to follow him in that (1 Cor 10:31), the aim in discipleship must have a healthy and robust view of God and His glory. Theologies that diminish or take away from this miss the eternal mark, and as such are doomed to suffer setback and failure no matter how attractive the short-term gain. When the emphasis turns to the individual and self, the goal then shifts to being about what God does for man, and what they do to come to Him rather than God's sovereignty and His hand in those works.

While emphasis on self has been shown to be a misplaced emphasis, for believers to understand correctly (and biblically) who they are in terms of identity serves as a steadying foundation for discipleship. A correct understanding of who we are serves as the next step in developing discipling foundations.

Crisis Point: Who Is Man?

One thing that the modern cult of self has demonstrated is that society loves labels, and is all too willing to make as well as distribute them. Who people believe

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[51] Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 109.

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themselves to be has foundational implications on heart motivations and behavior. While a therapeutic model derives its labels (and corresponding treatment) from the *Diagnostics and Studies Manual of Mental Disorders*, vol. 5 (*DSM-5*),[52] the New Testament disciples were told to take their identity cues from their newfound position in Christ. This is often done in comparison to one's former allegiances and ways of life, as seen in Ephesians where Paul admonishes them to put aside former ways of life (4:22) for the ways of a new self (4:24), which are to be enjoyed by believers because of God's grace where He "raised us up with Him [Christ] and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (2:6). It is a short but profound question to ask, "Who am I?" Jerry Bridges in his book titled *Who am I?* squarely addresses the issue of identity and comes out with a seven-layered response to that question for the disciple of Jesus. Taking the phrase "in Christ," he unpacks the Christian identity into categories: (1) I am a creature, (2) I am in Christ, (3) I am justified, (4) I am an adopted son of God, (4) I am a new creation, (5) I am a saint, (6) I am a servant of Christ, and (7) I am not yet perfect.[53] These identities are not listed to be studied in depth but to show the complexity and depth of the believer's identity and the richness of the phrase "in Christ." Conversely, this impact is evident as well as people now live in a culture abounding with medical sounding labels that carry implications on life, hopes, convictions, and behavior. When someone self identifies as "I am ADHD" (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), or "I have PTSD" (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), those labels come with some culturally assumed sense of responsibility or lack thereof as well as stigma and limitations. To summarize, labels mean things to people individually and influence greatly how they treat other people.

A big part of the discipleship task for the church is to embrace its identity in a transcultural way. This is necessary because identity has become subjective (defined by

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[52] American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5* (Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

[53] Jerry Bridges, *Who am I? Identity in Christ* (Adelphi, MD: Cruciform Press, 2012).

the individual) or fluid (changeable). The significance of Christian identity is a watershed issue for believers because it is theologically derived, which assumes that God is sovereign over identity— "who I am." To be labeled and declared "in Christ" is not just a forensic reality but the start of one's journey in progressive sanctification. What can constitute a huge challenge to discipling is the tendency to walk through life with a "problem-based identity."[54] When believers struggle with sin and things get bleak and life appears fruitless, the answer is given in Peter's words: "For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins" (1 Pet 1:9).

As a means of inducement while counseling, a person's identity in Christ is of utmost importance to Paul in the New Testament. He uses the indicative statements of one's position in Christ to speak to freedom from sin (Rom 6:7) as well as the ability to live victoriously against sin moving forward (Rom 8:37).[55] This statement of identity is more than just positive well-wishing—it is a recognition of new life (regeneration) and more specifically attention paid to the heart change of the individual. This new creation, taken from 2 Corinthians 5:17, now has desires for God (Ps 42), along with ability to view life through the lens of God's grace, a capacity to serve others instead of self, and see and use emotions as expressions of faith for the glory of God rather than expressions of fear and despair.[56]

One's view of the makeup of man as a holistic being is a driving consideration at this point. In the whole discussion of what constitutes man, a biblical view is that humanity is comprised of body and soul, the material and immaterial. These are not

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[54] Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, 262.

[55] Wayne Mack, "Biblical Counseling and Inducement," in MacArthur and Mack, *Counseling*, 179-80.

[56] Robert W. Kellemen, *Gospel-Centered Counseling: How Christ Changes Lives*, Equipping Biblical Counselors Series (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 211-16.

juxtaposed in opposition to one another, just two different aspects to what it means to be human. Therefore, having a strong biblically informed theological anthropology is of utmost importance when discussing issues of discipleship and counseling.

The effects of sin are universal and obvious; sin brought death and separation (Rom 5:12). God's redemptive movement toward mankind in the work of Jesus was more than able to conquer sin and death, and Scripture paints this work as both a physical and (eventually) a soul glorification (Rom 8:18-24). Many Christian counselors and integrationists separate the immaterial part of man into soul and spirit to make functional room for psychology and its influence in the discussion, but to bifurcate the soul to two entities is biblically unwarranted—man is functionally dichotomous. Lambert summarizes the biblical usage of nine different biblical terms that all provide color and insight into the immaterial part of humanity, but all describe that same basic aspect—the soul—without making any definitive or hard lines to creating a soul and separate spirit category. A three-fold position is not warranted.[57] While a detailed defense against the trichotomy position isn't necessary here, seeing man, his problem and solution as cohesive whole is important.[58] The soul conveys one's heart, mind and volition and this complex dynamic comprises the immaterial part of mankind which works itself out in thoughts, actions and feelings—they are dynamically interwoven.[59] When components like volition and feelings are introduced, the doctrine of total depravity tends to be less prominently discussed. However, a biblically informed theological anthropology includes the understanding that man is lost, spiritually dead (Eph 2:1-3), which has an all-pervasive effect on the person that cries out for the redeeming work of the gospel. Since a person is

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[57] Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 194-96.

[58] See Ken Sarles discussion on dichotomy vs trichotomy and relevant texts for concise distinction and defense of dichotomy in "Frequently Asked Questions about Biblical Counseling," in MacArthur and Mack, *Counseling*, 256-57.

[59] Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2016), 16-17.

also body, the interplay between body and soul must be quantified and clarified as well. The Scriptures always speak of the heart as the initiator of moral action, while the body serves as the mediator (the medium) through which it takes place.[60] While one can speak of heart and body distinctly for comparison, the reality is that sin has unequivocally worked on both fronts, corrupting both. Discipleship and counsel should always take into account that both are involved and affected, and must be addressed. The blessed hope awaits both body and soul, its end secure in Christ, with the ultimate fulfillment being yet future.

In considering these critical points of discipleship, the topic turns now to God's chosen vehicle for discipleship: the local church. More specifically, the following section will consider how the smaller units within the church tend to bring relationships and sustaining accountability within the body of the larger church.

God's Answer in the Body

The church is to take its cues from the earthly model seen in Jesus' incarnational ministry—the Savior sharing His life with His disciples. While the church of today is not in the business of sending apostles, it is still to operate in obedience to the Great Commission. Looking at the big picture of discipleship, Lee Lewis and Mike Snetzer put it this way, "Gospel centered worship provides the fuel for discipleship, gospel centered community provides the context for discipleship, gospel centered service is the overflow of discipleship, and gospel centered multiplication is the result of gospel centered discipleship."[61] It is that context of discipleship—small group community—now considered a key element in the local church's discipleship and biblical counseling plan.

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[60] Lambert, *Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 198.

[61] Lee Lewis and Mike Snetzer, "Biblical Counseling in Small Groups, Counseling in the Context of Community," in *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, ed. Robert Kellemen (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 138.

Many have noted the example of Jesus' earthly ministry in the choosing and discipling of the first twelve disciples as recorded in the gospels. That relational model continues to serve the church as the disciple-making mandate remains and people, despite technology and differing cultural proclivities, are still relational beings. The current small group ministry model owes much of its form and momentum from John Wesley's work in discipleship in the Methodist church in the eighteenth century. His three-strand method of society (crowd), class (small group of 12-20) and band (intimate gathering of 2-3), built on his understanding of the growth of the New Testament church from Christ's ministry, served as a template that many have used and borrowed from in generations and movements that followed. The society/crowd was the meeting of the church, which met for worship and instruction. It was usually too large for personal interaction but met for the purpose of learning.[62] The class was where the small group dynamic was implemented. It was a mixed gendered, multi-class group that emphasized personal holiness, accountability, and confession of sin. The personal application of the teaching of the Word was emphasized and attendance was considered mandatory if one was part of the larger society. The class meeting was considered the most influential instruction unit of the Methodist movement, but it was simple in design, though rigorous. It was labor intensive for leaders due to the high level of accountability. For Wesley, the call to follow Christ was never considered casual.[63] Transparency, honesty, and sharing were considered essential to these groups, and they multiplied rapidly.[64] The band, comprised of four people of the same age group and gender was intended for intense growth and purpose. Morrell writes,

> The environment was one of ruthless honesty and frank openness. There were specific rules about punctuality and order within the meeting. He introduced accountability questions which everyone answered openly and honestly in the meeting each week:

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[62] Doug Morrell, "John Wesley: 3 Strand Discipleship Process," accessed March 9, 2020, https://www.corediscipleship.com/john-wesley-3-strand-discipleship-process/

[63] Bill Hull, *Conversion and Discipleship: You Can't Have One Without the Other* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 160-61.

[64] Morrell, "John Wesley."

1) What known sins have you committed since our last meeting? 2) What temptations have you met with? 3) How were you delivered? 4) What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not? 5) Have you nothing you desire to keep secret? You can see from these questions that there was no place to hide in a Band. Bands became the training ground for future leaders. This group held to extreme confidentiality in a "safe place," mutual submission where matters of indifference were yielded to the released leader, and godly stewardship. This was the group that could intensively pursue goals and vision together.[65]

The small group context continues to evolve historically and is considered an important if not essential element of most evangelical churches. In a church that is discipleship focused, the small group ministry purpose will reflect that purpose specifically. As Brad Bigney and Ken Long put it, "Don't just put some chairs in a circle and invite people over. A small group ministry should align with the ministry of the church."[66] Clearly more than proximity is needed; these groups are united by their cause. The idea of Christian community is the holy grail in many ways. What many consider to be the real lynch pin of success is seen in Acts 2:46-47—people breaking bread in their homes and attending the temple together with generosity and gladness. This community, in its form the modern church knows as small groups, must be intentional as such. In describing what he calls the gift of God's community, Dustin Wills writes, "We are called to bring hope and help to relationships, to minister to people's loneliness. To do that we must contend for a community defined by the Scriptures, rather than fall into the counterfeit pattern of individualism that is so prevalent in the world (and that too often sneaks into our churches."[67]

The gospel centered thread that is to bind these communities is too often overlooked but must be emphasized. The biblical call for unity throughout the epistles is found not in good feelings but in the Christ that believers share and the gospel call by

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[65] Morrell, "John Wesley."

[66] Brad Bigney and Ken Long, "Tools to Grow Your Church: Uniting Biblical Counseling and Small Groups," in Kellemen, *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, 92.

[67] Dustin Willis, *Life in Community: Joining Together to Display the Gospel* (Chicago: Moody, 2015), 26.

which they are driven (Eph 4:3-4). The connection between God's design for His people in community and the gospel is complex to be sure, but it can be said plainly that when the body of Christ comes together to serve one another, it pushes individuals to die to *self* in response to the greater whole. While this may seem a rationally driven conclusion, the sinful experience of humanity shows that it is not. Sinful man is driven by self and sin left to itself without the empowerment of the gospel. In *How to Change*, Timothy Lane and Paul Tripp explain,

> Living in community pushes us to die to ourselves. There are times when loving others and allowing others to serve and love us will feel like death, but this is the pathway to real life in Christ. The more we understand our own hearts, the more we see that it takes the work of God's grace to transform self-absorbed individuals into a community of love. Being in redemptive relationships shows us our need for change and helps bring it about.[68]

Due to the compartmentalization of the American way of life, the small group is the medium by which proximity is gained to relationally administer the one another's of Scripture. The intentional formation of this structure is key to promoting intimacy within the body. Witt, in his dissertation "A Strategy for Incorporating Biblical Counseling in North American Church Plants," notes,

> From Roman to Third John, one finds sixty-four "one-another" statements in which Christians are commanded to love, admonish, encourage, pray for, reprove, rebuke correct, and care for one another in many ways…Regardless of church size, Christians are to live in community, fostering biblical love for one another. The natural result of this biblical response to the gospel is another benefit of biblical counseling, which is edification."[69]

Not only is the small group structure designed for the relational implementation of the one another edicts of the Christian life, but it also allows for the communal bearing of one another's burden that happens when people share in one another's suffering. As David Powlison's work in biblical counseling has shown, there is power in coming

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[68] Timothy S. Lane and Paul Tripp, *How People Change* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2008), 72.

[69] Rushton Witt, "A Strategy for Incorporating Biblical Counseling in North American Church Plants" (DMin project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013), 98.

alongside not just with counsel in admonishment but also entering into the world of the suffering.[70] Paul illustrates this in Galatians 6:2: "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." As the context is dealing with people who have been overtaken (*prolēmphthēi*) by sin, it is in the process of restoration by those who spiritual (*pneumatikoi*) that Paul is calling for help to bear that burden (*bastazete*).[71] *Burden* here is the same word used for Jesus as he bore the world's sins on the cross. That this is tied to the law of love in Christ further solidifies that burden bearing is a duty of the body in community. The implications of the practice of burden bearing in community is tremendous. So often people feel ill-equipped or unable to support one another individually. However, as the body reaches out in support—individual parts working in concert for an expressed purpose, being empowered by the unity of the gospel—the body can speak truth and minister grace to those with whom make up its share life.[72]

There exists a continuum of discipleship care from intentional to intensive in the local church context of small groups. The American church often errs in putting too much space between *intentional* discipleship—the regular interaction of one another ministry; and *intensive* discipleship— specific, problem resolving interactions between believers often associated with formal counseling. The discipleship care that takes place in typical community groups does not differ as significantly as one may expect from those in intensive discipleship groups. All groups are in the business of gospel transformation in the context of life, but some do that amidst particularly besetting and life dominating sins. This gap between what has been traditionally labeled "counseling" kinds of groups and general Lifegroups has created murkiness around what it takes to

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[70] Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement*, 248.

[71] A. T. Robertson, *The Epistles of Paul*, Word Pictures in the New Testament, vol. 4, (Nashville: Broadman, 1933), 315, Logos Bible Software 8.

[72] F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1982), 261.

disciple, as well as what it means to counsel. Garrett Higbee's model at Harvest Bible Chapel is structured as "Counseling in Community" (CIC), and more specifically, their groups are geared to bridge that gap by providing a discipling small group model that goes from intentional to intensive as an "every believer experience."[73] When groups gather intentionally as the priesthood of believers, they begin to step into the gap that previously was considered off limits or beyond layman's scope of ministry. Since the local church is the place for the equipping of the saints (Eph 4:12), that equipping works itself out relationally in ways that involve instruction with one another (Rom 15:14). Higbee envisions his model of CIC as a hopeful third wave of the biblical counseling movement that brings the duties and responsibilities of every believer's priesthood and soul care together in a way that helps diminish or eradicate the perceived need for professionals in the realm of discipling and soul care.[74] The CIC model builds on traditional biblical counseling foundations like scriptural sufficiency and progressive sanctification but with the added emphasis of priesthood and community exercised in small groups as the mouthpiece Paul intended in Ephesians 4:15: the truth in love delivered in relationship.[75]

Conclusion

The evangelical church's stance and relationship with the current biblical counseling movement did not occur in a vacuum, but was largely developed in response to forces from without. Some of these forces were philosophical shifts affecting societies as a whole. Some were the church's response to scientific advancement and a response to people's views on everything from their world to their mind and behaviors. While the

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[73] Garrett Higbee, "Biblical Counseling and Soul Care in the Church," in Kellemen, *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, 58.

[74] Higbee, "Biblical Counseling and Soul Care in the Church," 60.

[75] Higbee, "Biblical Counseling and Soul Care in the Church," 65.

church was not as prepared to respond as one may have liked in retrospect, it did spawn a resurgence in biblical counseling that the church was forced to dig back into its classic pastoral soul care roots as well as answer the call to questions posed by those wanting to embrace syncretism in their approach to dealing with people's heart/mind/soul issues. This was shown in the blending of newfound therapeutic content and practice into mainstream evangelical biblical counseling, soul care, and ultimately, discipleship.

This course of events forces biblical counseling to frame core discipleship issues, such as intentionality in instruction, proper understanding of man's identity in Christ, and a more robust view of the local church and the body of Christ in the process of discipleship and sanctification in the lives of individual people.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND DESCRIPTION

Introduction

This chapter will detail the organization, implementation, format, and weekly content of the discipleship training course used to engage core biblical counseling principles into the fabric of the leaders involved in shepherding at Foothills Church (FC). The course ran for eight consecutive weeks, online, on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 p.m. –7:30 p.m.

Course participants were chosen based upon their current ministry and position of leadership at the church. The structural design for discipleship at FC revolves heavily around our small groups program, called Lifegroups, of which I am the overseeing pastor. Invitations to all Lifegroup leaders were extended. Elders and their spouses were also invited to participate, as well as women comprising the Women's ministry leadership team. All of these individuals are involved in a shepherding role at FC, and this was the target group chosen for this class. The class began the class on Wednesday, April 29 and concluded it eight weeks later on June 17. Initially, 25 people signed up for the class, but due to life issues and scheduling, the class finished with 22.

Project Challenges

The implementation and execution of the project faced at least two significant challenges. One of the challenges was external and brought on by the onset of the societal responses of the COVID-19 pandemic. The other challenge was more of an internal matter regarding church leadership.

Constraints and Challenges
due to Format

While this project was originally scheduled to be held in person at FC, the global pandemic of COVID-19 forced me to modify the class format. Due to the state of Oregon shutting down all public meetings, I decided to go ahead with the training class online, using the Zoom online meeting format. This change in format made for a number of challenges; some foreseen, some discovered throughout the course. It also just upset the fabric of people's life enough that almost from the onset, the class lacked the initial enthusiasm and energy needed in some ways. People were simply having a hard time adjusting, which affected their motivation, priorities, and learning. The class moved forward, but it was a challenge.

The technology learning curve was a reality to be dealt with. While some participants had experience with collaborative online learning environments, many did not. Since almost everyone was now thrust into working remotely from home online in some form, they rose to the challenge. However, the first couple meetings were truly not as productive or as conducive to learning as originally planned, largely due to having to figure things out as we were doing them. The mechanics of using breakout rooms, polling, videos, etc., in Zoom got easier, but it took time. Part of the challenge of everyone's life now taking place online was the reality of "Zoom fatigue." Many were having to work from home, sitting in front of a screen all day. What no one appreciated at the time was the toll it takes on a person being online. When a person is on screen with others, he is "on." The person has to project differently than when face-to-face. In short, being "on" for extended time is mentally exhausting. Therefore, many of the participants that agreed to do this online training were now faced with spending not just their day, but part of a night online. In short, Zoom fatigue was a factor.

Another hurdle of being online was student-teacher engagement. The screen added another barrier and layer to overcome to engage participants, which was personally a challenge for me as one who is used to reading people in person and taking cues and

responding to classes through feedback. These aspects were difficult to key into electronically. Some participants understood the struggle and visibly worked to bridge the gap, which others sat back like they were watching television (a very passive approach).

Church Leadership Challenges

Heading into the class, there was still not full active support from church leadership regarding biblical counseling. Due to long running integrational sentiments, there was caution from some, and cynicism from others. While they were not opposed to my teaching the course, I first needed to demonstrate that what was being taught was indeed discipleship, by biblical definition and in line with the recently minted FC definition of discipleship that the elders had spent considerable time working through. The link between discipleship and biblical counseling principles demonstrated in the class format, where I specifically tied each foundational biblical counseling principle practically to the church mission as well as FC's discipleship language. This connection was done so intentionally that a lot of biblical counseling verbiage was couched in discipleship terms, rather than some of the more formal biblical counseling language. For the sake of the class, discipleship was used synonymously with counseling because of the context of the instruction, except in situations where intensive discipleship would be necessary, and it had an obviously more "counseling" feel.[1]

Since it was imperative to the church leadership that the instruction needed to connect discipleship (biblical counseling principles) strongly and practically into the church's mission statement and definition of discipleship, each weekly segment spent time emphasizing this connection. Each weekly session also addressed the foundational nature of the principle at hand, using the metaphor of rebar in concrete as a necessary

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[1] This language of intensive discipleship in reference to common understandings to formal counseling is illustrated in diagram form and discussed in Garrett Higbee, "Biblical Counseling and Soul Care in the Church," in *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, ed. Robert Kellemen (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 59.

strengthening element and how the particular area of discipleship girded and strengthened the foundations of faith in a disciple. To be personal as well as educational, each session stressed how the content was foundational to believers as disciples, as well as how each topic was vital as a discipler (due to the training language of the course).

Weekly Sessions

The course implemented over an eight-week period. The following is a summary and overview of each weekly session and topic.

Week 1: Foundations of the Word

The first session included introductions, and some attention on Zoom etiquette. As the group was diverse in the sense that they served different groups of people, we spent time discussing the church's vision of discipleship and how these topics of study would encourage them in that process. For FC, this definition served as a baseline for discussing each topic and how it relates to both being a disciple as well as discipling others. The church website states, "We believe a disciple follows Jesus, is changed by Jesus, and is committed to His mission."[2]

The nature of the class was that this was a foundational course, and not exhaustive in its scope. The metaphor of rebar in concrete—beliefs that both strengthen and undergird faith—was invoked and would serve throughout the course as a reference point.

The content of week 1 focused on the sufficiency and authority of Scripture. Jude 3 speaks to the faith of the saints and how important trust and confidence in Scripture was in the early church as well as today. While FC's by-laws have a statement on scriptural authority and sufficiency, time was spent unpacking the practical applications of 2 Timothy 3:14-17 from both the disciple's and discipler's perspective, and how easy

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[2] Foothills Church, "About Us: Who We Are," accessed July 25, 2020, http://www.foothillsstayton.org/who-we-are.

it is to slip on this foundational issue moving forward. Many were challenged in regard to how their idea of sufficiency was challenged culturally. As Lambert puts it, "It has become the task of the biblical counseling movement to defend the sufficiency of Scripture from attack by those who believe the Bible is not a sufficient resource to help when life's challenges confront a person"[3]

The rest of the session was spent on the teachings of Psalm 19:7-11, regarding the attitude and holding a high view of Scripture; 2 Timothy 3:14-17 and the character of Scripture; and 2 Peter 1:2-21, specifically the practicality, scope, and power of the Word. While much of this information was review for many, the most spirited and challenging discussions came around the sufficiency of Scripture from the 2 Peter passage, and what all was included (or not) in the statement "for life and godliness." This confusion and discussion would serve as a foreshadow of the nature of the group and the extent to which integrational methodology affected the group's thinking.

Post-session comments. This first gathering, for many, was a new experience doing something of this magnitude online in real time. The class suffered from a number of technology struggles as people climatized to Zoom, the online meeting format, and the learning curve associated with integrating technology of this magnitude. As a result, this initial class session did little interactive sharing. As I did not want to lose people in transitions, there ended up being considerable lecturing—too much. The content was delivered and well received, but many were discouraged by the challenges of the medium and engagement. The goal for the rest of the course shifted from less content to more student engagement with one another around the content. I was also made aware that an hour was just about the time limit for the setting. A concerted effort was made after this session to provide participants with a pre-session email a couple days prior to the

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[3] Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 41.

session—a "sneak-peak" at the upcoming topic with some questions and readings, to help them pre-process somewhat. I also decided to include a more detailed and robust version of my teaching notes prior to the upcoming sessions so they would have some study material as well as notes to write on during the sessions.

To help measure class learning and evaluate areas for improvement on the course in the future, the class completed a pre-class survey (the DIS) of twenty-eight questions to determine a baseline of competency and confidence in topic areas covered in the class. The survey question format was comprised of two yes/no questions, two fill-in-the-blanks, and twenty-four, six-point Likert scale questions, evenly distributed to cover the eight weeks of topics.[4]

Week 2: Handling of the Word

Session 2 began with breakout sessions to review the previous week's material, and after some brief sharing transitioned into a case study of how to explain to a new disciple the issues around hermeneutics and how one studies and reads the Word. The foundational importance of this issue was stressed as there exists much confusion about how one is to read and interpret the Bible. The emphasis was on the nature of the structure of Scripture and how believers are to approach it. Unfortunately, the experience for many Christians is that they came to faith with an unstructured approach to the Bible and face discouragement and confusion as they learned how to read it. The Bible is not to be read like a novel or self-help book.

The class centered on the need for good interpretive principles and how to intuitively practice hermeneutics every day, interpreting the world and information. Attention was given in teaching to 2 Timothy 2:14-15 in regard to a believer's approach to and handling of the Word. The recognition of the depth and riches of God's Word was also discussed and how it is complex as well as how accessible it is (2 Pet 3:14-18). A

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[4] See appendix 2 for the pre- and post-DIS results.

group breakout session around Hebrews 5:11-14 helped participants discover the nourishing and layered level of maturity that comes with the Word and spiritual growth (or stagnation of that growth).

The session concluded with teaching around inductive Bible study methodology. Some introductory teaching was given on how the reader is to make observations, interpretations, and applications when reading the Bible. Disciples are called to be diligent as they instruct others due to false teaching and one's own spiritual myopia. It is the tendency of the fallen heart and mind to miss the bigger picture, as well as view everything one reads in Scripture as primarily personal and individual. Good use of interrogative question-asking when looking at a text was discussed and shared.

The beauty and complexity of the different types of biblical literature was discussed and in breakout sessions the class looked at examples of different type of literature (narrative, wisdom, epistolary) and worked through them. Groups then shared what they had to do given the literary nature and how that affected (or did not affect) interpretation and application, along with audience analysis.

The conclusion of the session involved a discussion on the personal nature of God's Word. The teaching point was how to approach the Bible from the point of relationship rather than as manual or self-help book. Much of this material came from Robert Kellemen's *Scripture and Counseling*, along with Fee and Stuart's *How to Read the Bible for All its Worth*.[5]

The discipling connection was made from Philippians 1:9-11, where Paul's prayer for the Philippians was the combination of knowledge, discernment, and approval

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[5] Robert W. Kellemen, ed., *Scripture and Counseling: God's Word for Life in a Broken World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014); Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003).

of what was excellent—to the praise and glory of God. The Scriptures rightly understood and applied benefit those who following Jesus.[6]

Post-session comments. The emphasis on hermeneutics and interpretation was well received, as well as the warning of the dangers of eisegesis if the job is done poorly. Since FC does hold a high view of the Bible, there is a bit of skepticism brought to methodology, as many like to hold to the idea that faith (and by extension, their Bible) should be simple. The practicality of having a solid approach to Scripture in the discipleship of others was stressed and appreciated.

Week 3: Foundations of Christ

This session began with a small group breakout around what was most important to communicate about the person and work of Jesus. That Jesus is the focus of discipleship from the Word of God is succinctly put by Lewis in *Mere Christianity*: "Every Christian is to become a little Christ. The whole purpose of becoming a Christian is nothing else."[7] After an initial breakout discussion, the class reconvened as a large group, with leaders sharing group responses.

The session then focused on one's relationship with Christ, and why as disciplers it was imperative to have a "high Christology." I adopted this term as an umbrella term to mean "being focused on, to have a high view of, to be preoccupied with and submitted to."

Discipleship, as defined at FC is based on Matthew 4:19: "And He said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.'" At FC, we understand following

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[6] Phil 1:9-11 reads, "And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."

[7] C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, Macmillan Paperback ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1960), 153.

Jesus to mean knowing Christ, being changed by Christ, and joining in Christ's mission. This understood, followers of Jesus must understand how this central figure of the Scriptures fits in and is portrayed both in the Word itself and why that matters to a believer as one follows Him today. One cannot overstate this—knowing Christ and who a believer is "in Him" is foundational to becoming a disciple of Christ.

The discipling goal is to know Him and follow Him because of who He is and what He did and does. The reality too often is that Christians stop at desiring his blessing and enjoying the fruit of being his child. This session's teaching concentrated on what people (as disciples) need to know about Jesus to have a proper/high Christology.

Time was spent in class surveying the biblical teaching on the full deity (Col 1:15-20; Rom.9:4-5; John 10:30-31) and humanity of Jesus (Matt 1:25-2:2; John 4:4-6; Luke 23:36-56). This session included review on what Jesus did and accomplished for believers on the Cross; earning righteousness (Rom 5:19), paying the penalty (Heb 2:17; 1 Pet 2:24) and defeating death and sin through the Resurrection (Phi 2:5-9), along with Jesus' current roles as the mediator and high priest for all who believe (1 Tim 2:5).

For breakout sessions, groups were formed to discuss what it meant to be "in Christ" as his disciples. Living in forgiveness (Eph 1:7), power and newness of life (Rom 6:1-11) were topics of study during these breakouts. A couple other groups explored Christ's intercessory work (Heb 7:23-25) and what it means to abide in Christ (John 15:1-5).

Some of the best discussion came from putting the truths of a high Christology together with the church mission statement and discipleship definition at FC. It really highlighted how easy it is for people to let church become about other things—even good things—rather than on Jesus and his mission. Following him results in loving what he loves, doing what he did. For a believer, following Jesus means becoming like the teacher. To follow is a very literal walking in his ways, in obedience to his Word. Being changed by a high view of Christ means heart transformation and loving like Jesus loves (John

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13:35) which is a very active and willful choice as a disciple – primarily action and choice not feelings.

A high Christology changes a disciple's mission because it changes one's identity (Gal 2:20); the one following Jesus is under orders as a soldier (2 Tim 2:4) and member of His kingdom (Matt 6:33) which means a believer's life becomes His—goals, vocation, health, and direction.

Post-session comments. Considering that this was a group of leaders in the church, the idea of a high Christology was not necessarily new information. However, the implications of having a high Christology as part of discipleship methodology was explored and stressed, along with the dangers of not having that emphasis in place.

Week 4: The Foundational Problem—Sin

This session started out with a discussion on worldview presuppositions; specifically, regarding humanity—"what is our problem?" To break things up and get the class thinking, a humorous viral YouTube video was shown including the late R. C. Sproul that (at least some Reformed circles) popularized that phrase "what's wrong with you people?" as he was speaking in a roundtable discussion about sin.

After reconvening together, a brief survey of the popular views of anthropology were given (Freud, Skinner and Rogers) and their current effects on how society views humanity's problems and search for solutions. Society including culture, educational philosophy, church, and believers as well. These approaches were shown in contrast to the biblical view of sin as the problem and man's desperate need of salvation and life in the gospel of Jesus as demonstrated in Scripture.

The class then went into smaller breakout discussions involving a case-study about a co-worker with whom they had been looking for an opportunity to share the gospel. The discussion specifically considered how to talk about sin and the gospel in that situation.

The discipling importance of why sin is a big deal took the rest of the session. As one shares the good news of Jesus with people, it quickly becomes apparent that if the intent is to introduce someone to a Savior, the need to have some understanding of what someone is being saved from is crucial. Without sin, the idea of a "savior" feels pretty pointless. Having a solid biblical view of sin is foundational to growth as a disciple as well as how one goes about discipling others. Having a low view of sin does not just warp one's own pursuit and following Jesus, it ends up being confusing for those who are being discipled. Constant contact with sin in this fallen world is the cultural default and can lead to cavalier attitudes toward those to whom the church is trying to minister. This is why sin is such a primary concern in discipling. A Christ follower cannot allow himself to be calloused by sin's numbing influence.

In a word, humanity's foundational problems are all intricately bound up in the issue of sin. Jesus was the answer to humanity's problem with sin, as well as the model of how to walk in a world cursed with sin. The work of discipleship, following Jesus, is intimately wrapped up in navigating life in a sin-saturated world.

As disciple-makers, it is important to understanding the root of people's problems in this fallen world, full of broken people, and how that affects their ability and desire to follow Jesus. It is foundational to discipling to understand biblically how sin affects sinful man from within and without in the task of helping others follow Jesus.

Sin is not primarily a behavior. It is primarily a disposition—it is who a person is before they are saved. Another breakout session with the Scriptures explored how sin affects a disciple's standing, motivation, thinking, emotions, bodies, relationships, and world. Being able to articulate an accurate view of the world and humanity's condition, along with the provision of Jesus, is key in the discipleship of others and in the presentation of the gospel. When one is able to share the reality of the fallenness of the created world and come alongside others with God's truth about that world, the practicality of the truth of the gospel is highlighted.

As disciples respond and react to sin as Christ followers, they are imitating and embodying the love of Jesus that he showed while on the earth, during his suffering, and the resurrection power of the gospel. Graciously, biblically dealing with the reality of a broken world is a reflection of God's love.

Part of this session involved a class discussion of practical implications of coming alongside someone in sin in discipleship. As a discipler, being equipped to deal with the sin from all three sources—creation, their own heart, and the sins of others—was discussed. Instruction on the task and power of giving hope and context to others who also live and suffer in the same fallen world was also part of this section. Part of discipling others involves helping them respond in a godly way to the sin around them, as well as in them. Being a Christ follower is made all the more difficult by not only one's personal indwelling sin, but by those who sin around and against us. Committing to Jesus' mission in regard to sin shapes how one addresses sin personally, culturally, and relationally. How a believer is to view and deal with sin directly reflects living out the power of the gospel and calling others to join Him. When a person adopts Jesus' view of sin and sinners, they are enabled to respond like Jesus (with grace and compassion).

Post-session comments. In this class, a number of people arrived late and one missed altogether. Zoom fatigue was definitely a factor during this session—the phenomenon where being "on" in front of a screen was just draining people. Many in class had jobs that required them to be Zoom video talking during the day for their jobs as well. There was a Zoom technology failure when trying to give breakout room instructions via the chat function that made for loss of time and interaction, which I had to make up for with lecturing. In terms of content, interaction was good, even if limited. Based on questions asked during the session, it was evident they had not considered some of the effects of sin as it relates to discipleship prior to this time together.

Week 5: Foundations of the Holy Spirit

To begin the session on the Holy Spirit, the class went immediately to breakout sessions to answer the following questions and then came back and discussed as a larger group.

1.   What is the biggest challenge(s) a new believer has to face in regard to learning about and living with the Holy Spirit?

2.   What do you think is the biggest misperception regarding the Holy Spirit? From within the church? By the world (nonbelievers)?

3.   (if you have time) Off the top of your head, when you consider the ministry of the Holy Spirit—what are you personally most thankful for and why?

The Holy Spirit (in the tradition of many conservative churches like FC) tends to suffer neglect due to the somewhat mysterious nature of who he is. He also gets somewhat overlooked due to the influence of science and empiricism of today's Western church. Also, other traditions' unbiblical overemphasis on the Spirit sometimes makes evangelicals overcautious and cynical. Culturally, in today's knowledge-hungry society that tends to operate with naturalistic assumptions, discussion of the supernatural nature of God's work in man tends to be met with skepticism, fear and/or ignorance. Part of a biblical worldview is living with the reality that there is a physical and spiritual reality to this world that work together and are both very real. The Holy Spirit is the primary player in the world that cannot be seen with physical eyes, yet the Holy Spirit actively guides and engages with all humanity's eternal souls, which is why having a biblical view of the Holy Spirit and his work is essential to discipling.

This session focused on the roles of the Holy Spirit in regard to discipleship. Time was spent unpacking John 14-17 concerning the Holy Spirit's work in this age. The comparison of his role as paraclete, like Jesus was a paraclete, was prominent, as it is a rich word with a broad range of meaning that has to be contextually interpreted. It can be said that Jesus was a paraclete, and that what he was saying about the coming Holy Spirit was that He was another of the same kind: He would be God with them (John 14:16-17). Key teaching points included the Spirit's work in conviction of sin, the need for Christ's

righteousness, and judgment on the world (John 16:8-11; Col 2:13-15). The whole world experiences the convicting work of the Spirit; some will follow with conversion (Rom 15:19; John 17:6) and some will experience condemnation (John 15:20). All of this work of the Spirit glorifies Jesus (16:14).

Also discussed was the Holy Spirit's use of people to work through the Word of God. The proclamation of the gospel by disciples is the fodder for the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. This role is not limited to conversion as the work of discipling happens by means of the Spirit using people in each other's life.

When the Word is shared and taught, it is ineffectual without the work of the Holy Spirit. In reality, when someone disciples another, it is not just a dialogue; it is a "trialogue." The Spirit is always there, taking the power of the Word and making it effectual. This constant, indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit manifests the presence of Christ to believers and as he does, this has a number of implications. In the life of a believer He seals (Eph 1:13-14), teaches (John 16:12-13), enlightens (Eph 1:16-18), and empowers (John 14:15-16).

To focus on discipleship, the class went into breakout rooms to discuss a case study where it was not apparent if the person in question was a believer or not, but they professed to be. They appeared stuck and fruitless. The discussion centered around taking people at the point of their confession and the necessity of having the Spirit for any real change.

The larger group came together to share and discuss what is meant by being filled with the Spirit in Ephesians 5:18. While there is much confusion and a variety of teachings on this topic, the session centered on Lambert's discussion, tying it in contextually with Paul's other comments regarding the fulness of Christ. This quote by Lambert led to class discussion and some helpful conclusions: "Paul is not asking us to

seek more of the Spirit, but rather is asking us to depend on the Spirit to make us more and more like Christ."[8]

The Holy Spirit's sovereign dispersing of and gifting ministry was reiterated, but only in a cursory way given time constraints and the topic. Summarizing the role of the Holy Spirit and discipling at FC, there was a teaching emphasis on his sovereignty (John 6:66, Titus 3:5) and his interaction with the Word of God as he exalts Christ and the gospel.

Week 6: Foundations of Community—Body life

This session was a discipleship focus on the role of community. As a discussion starter, I asked group questions about living in a "do it yourself" culture as well as what it means to be a westerner philosophically—with a built-in kind of compartmentalization that comes from pride and exaggerated self confidence in one's ability and access to information.

Understanding "body life" is foundational to discipleship because as Christ's body, individuals assemble in varying degrees for the ministry of the Word. The public proclamation of the Word happens in large gatherings on Sunday. In smaller venues, public proclamation happens in small group ministry here at FC with the goal of equipping people in the personal (one on one) ministry of the Word, which is done in community and demonstrated in the one another's of Scripture. Both ministries of the Word are visible in the New Testament in the outworking of discipleship. Understanding and implementing this is key to the vision at FC in a practical manifestation of God's love as well as taking part in His mission, being his hands and feet. It is foundational to discipleship to know how the personal ministry of the Word works itself out in the community of the body of Christ (the church).

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[8] Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 171.

The two-winged approach to the ministry of the Word is seen in Paul's ministry in Acts 20:18-20:

> You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house,

So, the public ministry of the Word happens in various ways: the public proclamation of truth in a corporate setting, large and small groups, media, blogs, etc.

What is meant by the private ministry of the Word is the personal, one-on-one, face-to-face conversations that take the Word of God and apply it to a person's life in a specific context (this is what Paul meant by house to house). Private ministry is the informal and sometimes formal member-to-member interaction of the body of Christ. Public ministry tends to be principle-centered and more general, where private ministry is specific to a particular person and situation. The Bible upholds the need and practice of both. The public (teaching) ministry of the Word couples with the private ministry of the Word, putting wheels on discipleship that moves it outward into people's lives in specific ways.

The class broke into breakout sessions and discussed this scenario: how they would answer a next-door neighbor who had drifted from church but still considered themselves a solid believer—they just did not see the need to "go to church." The question was, what does a gentle yet corrective response look like to someone in this setting?

The rest of the session was spent teaching on how the church was different from other causes and interest groups. The church offers different community, even though other groups often try to emulate or mimic it. Specifically, the session highlighted what makes the community of faith an essential component of discipleship from Hebrews 10:22-25.

As a discipling point there was a discussion regarding the sinful tendency toward non-redemptive relationships. In creation, mankind was created to live in community, but because of the fall, there is now a tendency to run from the very friendships we were created to enjoy. Quite often, the longing for relationships is tainted by sin. In sin they are pursued as long as they can satisfy perceived desires and needs. In our brokenness, we have a love-hate relationship with relationships. Tripp and Lane point out,

> The Bible recognizes this profound tension, but still places our individual growth in grace in the context of the body of Christ. The Scriptures call us to be intimately connected to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Our fellowship is an essential ingredient for lasting change. The work of redemption involves our individual relationship with Christ alongside our relationship with others. . . . Many helpers fail to move struggling people into the rich context of redemptive relationships. Instead, they cling to the arid individualism of our society. They have a "Jesus and me" mindset as they battle sin and seek to become more like Christ.[9]

The class went into breakout groups to discuss three key passages on body life and the metaphor's implications for disciples—Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:12-26, and Ephesians 4:11-16. Upon regathering and sharing some discoveries, more detailed teaching on Ephesians 4:11-16 was done. The force of 4:15 and what it meant to be "truthing" in community was emphasized; the tense and context indicate that the body of Christ should continually, actively, and collectively embody truth in love as they walk together in intimate, vulnerable connection. In a word, Paul combined content, character, and competence shared in community. The result is seen verse 16: the body in robust health grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work. Growth in Christ is a community journey. As manifest biblical community, the body is accurately imaging the person and work of Christ, and that involves the unity displayed in the corporate body by following its corporate head's direction (Christ—Eph 4:15-16) as well as the practice of the one other's that paint the picture of community.

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[9] Timothy S. Lane and Paul Tripp, *How People Change* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2008), 65-66.

**Week 7: Discipling Foundations
in Conflict**

Building on the previous foundational truths, in a fallen world, conflict is inevitable, but by the grace of God is navigable. He has given methods and means to deal with indwelling sin as well as the sin that afflicts us from without. Scripture also gives instruction on how to reconcile and grow from the damages of conflict. Part of growing as disciples involves having a "sin plan" and understanding how to not only navigate conflict personally but helping others, for the sake of unity and the building of the faith. As conflict is a universal, an all-pervasive problem in a fallen world, it is foundational to discipleship to know how to handle conflict biblically. Jesus calls his followers to be peacemakers, which was the focus of this session.

The session started by reading a story about a hypothetical husband and wife's argumentative interaction and their responses. Then the class went into breakout rooms to discuss specifically what caused the problem, who sinned against who, and what counsel might be given if the husband (who was writing the story and the angry one in the example) approached you as a friend? The goal was to unpack the conflict and explore how peacemaking happens.

The teaching part of the session focused on James 4:1-10 and the heart's position and desires. The role of warring passions, ruling desires, and idolatry of the heart were fleshed out in this session. This session leaned heavily on Tripp's material that unpacks the progression of desire from his book *Instrument in the Redeemer's Hands*.[10] God's prescription for dealing with the idolatrous heart is ultimately humility, emphasizing the vertical issue with God as the often-overlooked primary issue (Jas 4:6-10)

Specifically, regarding horizontal conflict, the session centered on God's sovereignty as a centering point and a study of Matthew 7:3-5. The material from Ken

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[10] Paul Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change*, Resources for Changing Lives (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 85-88. The sinful progression of desire in the heart; desire, demand, expectation, disappointment and finally punishment.

Sande's *Resolving Everyday Conflict* was used for this portion.[11] Going through "the four G's"—go higher, get real, gently engage and get real—were taught as a biblical format for resolving conflict between two parties.

Through this section, a biblical view of forgiveness was also addressed, along with commonly held misconceptions often needing correction in ourselves as well as others. Key concepts of forgiveness include a radical decision to not hold someone's offense against them, sin as a removal of the barrier that separates people in relationship, its attitudinal and transactional nature, and the pursuance of reconciliation.

The relationally costly nature of peacemaking was a point of breakout discussion: why it was a challenge to grant it horizontally and what that means for disciples spiritually as those called to reflect Christ and his ministry of reconciliation. The challenge at the end of the session was to relate Christ's mandate of peacemaking to the FC definition of discipleship, along with the church's mission and to share those thoughts at the end of class.

Week 8: Foundations of the Gospel

For the final session, the class focused on the prominence and power of the gospel as it relates to the discipleship process and progressive sanctification. This session started with group discussion on what was commonly felt or understood when someone described FC as a place where "they preach the gospel." What does that mean to you? What comes to mind, what verses or truths do you attach with that? This transitioned in to the key point for this class, which was that the gospel is essential as it works out in the life of a believer, including regeneration but extending into all the other phases of God's saving work—how it is part of justification, sanctification and ultimate glorification.

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[11] Ken Sande and Kevin Johnson, *Resolving Everyday Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015), 45-98.

The Greek word in the Bible *euangelion* (good news or tidings) describes the saving work of Jesus Christ on humanity's behalf. In its kernel form of truth, it refers to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus for the sins of the world. In its broader sense, the gospel references the work of Jesus as he saves sinful man, and what that gospel directly accomplishes and enables in the life of a believer as that salvation works itself out in sanctification.

Most equate the gospel with initial salvation; being born again (John 3:3). In terms of growing as disciples, there is a need to connect the gospel to personal sanctification for growth as disciples as well as in efforts to disciple others. From a practical perspective it is imperative in disciple-making to have a robust and understood point of conversation about one's spiritual state. Nothing of eternal value or significant heart change will happen when trying to help others if they have not embraced the gospel. Specifically, they must personally believe and trust in Jesus as the answer for their sins in his life, death, and resurrection on their behalf (1 Cor 15:3-4). This is the basic belief that makes a Christian, a Christian. A biblically principled, morally upright upstanding citizen who denies the work of Jesus on the cross for his behalf is at best a Christianized *pagan*.

A significant portion of the session involved unpacking the position and power of the gospel from 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, and clarifying a concise definition. This was done in order to not fall into the error of adopting the attitude that the gospel means everything in the Bible and that Jesus is synonymous with the gospel. Jesus and the gospel are obviously very closely related, but they must be distinguished, or important nuances of what the gospel produces and accomplishes is muddled and lost.

As a class exercise, different relational scenarios were distributed to the breakout groups and, given the data of the situation and person at hand, the group was to decide how to apply and share the gospel in that situation. They were to use Scripture and support their findings and counsel them, applying the gospel to their life situation and

how it spoke to their need or challenge in the moment. After a time, they came back and shared their results.

As Paul was compelled by the power of the gospel, so should a rich understanding of it compel a disciple of Christ (2 Cor 5:4-15). As emphasized by C. J. Mahaney in *The Cross Centered Life*: "Paul simply refused to be pulled away from the gospel. The cross wasn't merely one of Paul's messages; it was the message. He taught other things as well, but whatever he taught was always derived from, and related to, the foundational reality that Jesus Christ died so that sinners would be reconciled to God."[12]

Helping people see how the power and implications of the gospel affect all areas of their spiritual walk is foundational in the life of a disciple and a disciple-maker. The rest of the session was given to how the power of the gospel works in progressive sanctification and how it grounds believers as they grow in Christlikeness, never forgetting our cleansing from a former life of sin (2 Pet 1:8-10).[13]

The gospel provides a metanarrative context to the whole of God's revelation in Scripture. It helps connect the dots between the Passover of the Israelites in Egypt to the Last Supper of the Upper Room discourse in John's gospel with Jesus' disciples. It connects today's church into that same story when communion is taken—because "for as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death "until He comes" (1 Cor 11:26). That is why the gospel is so crucial as connective tissue.

The gospel provides hermeneutic help, connecting the Old Testament to the New Testament in a powerful way that if not recognized, there can be an apparent

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[12] C. J. Mahaney and Kevin Meath, *The Cross Centered Life* (Sisters, OR: Lifechange Books, 2002), 25.

[13] Second Pet 1:8-10 describes the godly qualities of partaking in the divine nature as believers, and contrasting it with those who do not have them: "For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall."

disconnect in Scripture that need not be. The gospel also gives believers their message as ambassadors of Christ, his commissioned representatives (2 Cor 5:17-21)[14].

To help measure class learning and evaluate areas for improvement on the course in the future, after the last session the class re-took the DIS as a post-class survey to help determine the effectiveness of the course. In addition to the post-class survey, the respondents also had an opportunity to offer feedback on the course through four open-ended questions, on which they could give longer responses or suggestions.

Conclusion

The eight-week course was completed, and post class surveys were collected, along with four post-class evaluation questions.[15] These were compared to the pre-class surveys to help measure the class's effectiveness in terms of changes in students' answers regarding discipleship competency. Those results are highlighted and summarized in chapter 5.

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[14] Second Cor 5:17-21 reads,

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

[15] See appendices 2, 3, and 4 for data on post-survey responses. Appendices 3 and 4 show evaluation questions and participant responses.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT EVALUATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

At Foothills Church, people are committed to the Scriptures and are committed to living out their faith in small group community—Lifegroups. The sanctifying role of Lifegroups and the commitment to practice and implement biblical truth into everyday life issues was the impetus of this project. Lifegroups serve to connect the dots between the life-giving Word of God and his church, to provide relationships for people to foster the coming alongside one another and the private ministry of the Word. This project was a means to equip Lifegroup leaders and the core shepherding leaders in the task of discipling with a fundamental understanding of eight biblical counseling principles for that task.

Project Purpose Evaluation

The stated purpose of this project was to integrate biblical counseling principles into the discipleship model at Foothills Church in Stayton, Oregon. The primary discipleship structure in place was the adult small group system known as Lifegroups. Eight of the ten group leaders attended, with seven finishing the course. I chose to open the class to others in leadership shepherding roles as well. Four of the five Women's Ministry leaders partook in the class, and all six of elders, along with some spouses, participated.

As this was a foundational course, spanning eight broad topics in as many weeks, mastery of any one of these areas was never the goal. In a similar vein, while there was some interest in biblical counseling, becoming a certified biblical counselor was never a necessary goal for anyone needed to implement biblical counseling principles into their discipling process. The course was to make these principles accessible and

layperson friendly, so discussion of biblical counseling and certification was minimized to keep the intimidation factor down. The course attendees were seasoned believers, but there was a broad spectrum of confidence and training within the group. The purpose was for each attendee to leave more biblically equipped for the task of discipling having been exposed to these core foundational principles. This purpose was accomplished.

Project Goals Evaluation

Four goals were used to determine the effectiveness of this project. The first goal was to assess the current understanding of how biblical counseling principles interact with discipleship among elders, women's ministry leadership, and Lifegroup leadership at FC. This group of targeted leaders involved in shepherding ministries at FC was given a Discipleship Inventory Survey (DIS) before the training. The DIS was used to evaluate theological and biblical knowledge of biblical disciple-making, and how well the leaders integrate the administering of the Word in real-life situations calling for counsel. The DIS also gathered data regarding participants' confidence in Scripture and the Word's application to real-life shepherding situations. The DIS was administered both pre- and post-training as a t-test dependent sampling. The first goal was accomplished as a baseline of understanding was established with the DIS by the class attendees. Figure 1 displays the average pre- and post-scores for each question.
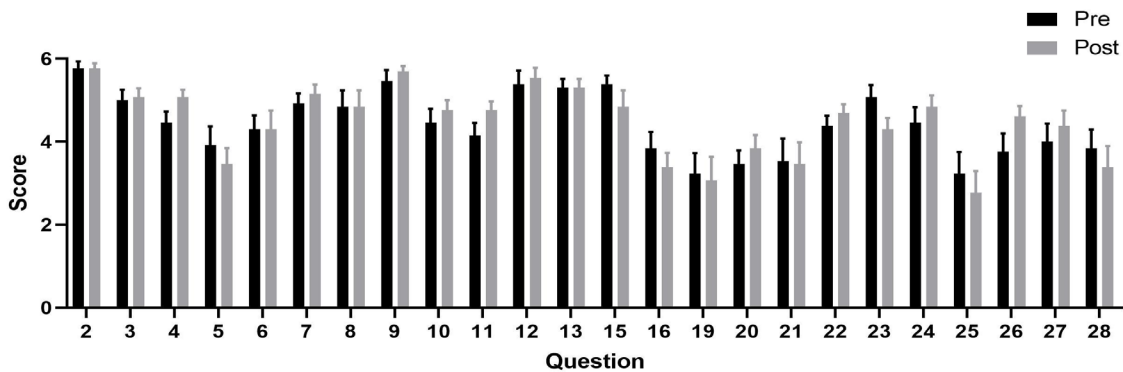
Figure 1. Individual questions' average scores

When a paired *t*-test was performed on questions 4, 11, and 26 they showed statistical significance (p = 0.03 and p = 0.04, and p = 0.04 respectively). Questions 7, 23, and 25 trended toward significance as well (p = 0.08, p = 0.09 and p = 0.08).

Since this class targeted leaders, it was no surprise to see relatively high scores in the pre-survey, which made the margin for growth smaller, relatively speaking. Had the same course been taken by newer believers, the statistical growth potential would have had a higher ceiling, to be sure. As I evaluate this goal, I feel that had I used more exacting or specific questions, it may have led to more diversity in scoring and responses. While the DIS was not all general or low-level questions, some more specificity may have helped obtain better data. The goal was accomplished, however.

The second goal was to define and connect the elements of the discipleship process and biblical counseling for FC leadership involved in key shepherding roles of staff, elders, women's ministry, and Lifegroup leaders. Success was determined by using the pre- and post-training DIS scores to measure growth in participants' understanding of the connection between discipleship and biblical counseling. Positive statistical change demonstrated by t-testing for dependent samples was the benchmark for success.

The results of this goal are mixed, upon reflection, partly due to the strategic language shift in the course itself from counseling language to discipleship. While discipleship and biblical counseling were used as synonyms in the class generally, the language of the goal itself is worded too strongly to truly encompass both terms in some ways. The goal was a success in the sense that while counseling principles were used heartily throughout all eight weeks of the course, discipleship was always the stated context. Explicit references to "counseling" were quite rare so as not to confuse the issue for the attendees.

Figure 2 illustrates the growth and decline in questions used to assess this goal. The second graph highlights the most statistically significant questions; one as growth, the other as decline. Question 4 demonstrates growth in the respondents' desire and

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motivation to pursue discipling as well as be discipled. Question 25 indicates a decrease in understanding the cooperative role of Jesus and the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. Whereas the numeric decrease was not statistically significant (p = 0.08), it does illustrate a lack of clarity in the curriculum or teaching in this area. Upon reflection, it may well have been a result of perceived time shortage in the class for instruction, and it was simply not emphasized sufficiently for adequate learning. While some of this goal was accomplished, some of it was not.
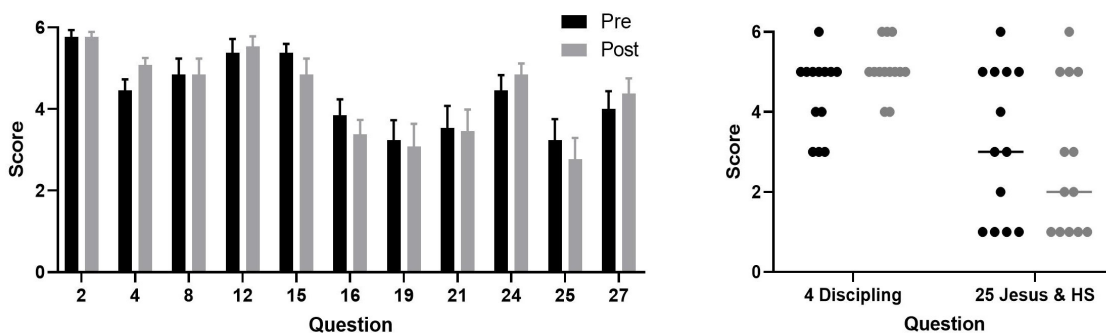
Figure 2. Connecting discipleship and biblical counseling principles

The third goal was to modify attitudes in increasing the confidence of FC leadership in its practice of biblical counseling basics in the context of relationally discipling people in small group settings. This goal was measured by the participants' completing the pre- and post-training DIS to measure any change in confidence level in applying biblical counseling principles in the relational discipleship context. Success was determined by the measurement of positive statistical change in confidence-related scores.

In 9 of 11 of the survey questions targeting this goal, there was either no change or growth in the respondent's confidence level in applying biblical counseling principles in the context of discipleship. A *t*-test that averaged all 11 questions was not statistically significant (p = 0.18). However, when items 23 and 28 were excluded, the average became highly significant (p = 0.01). Question 28, in particular, was a significant

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factor to overcome in the online class setting with only one session given to the topic. The issue of self-forgiveness is an assumed truth in modern therapeutic methodology, and it was evident that this culturally-held belief was not overcome by part of one session in this course. Future versions of this class should include a greater emphasis on this topic. Similarly, question 23 addresses the use of the Bible with a non-believer and if or how it should be used. Confusion persists as to how the Word pierces the heart, and more instruction on this process would provide clarity in this regard. Figure 3 shows the decrease of confidence in both questions 23 and 28, while the rest either were same or grew. So the goal was not met when all questions were considered but with those two questions removed as potential outliers the goal was met.
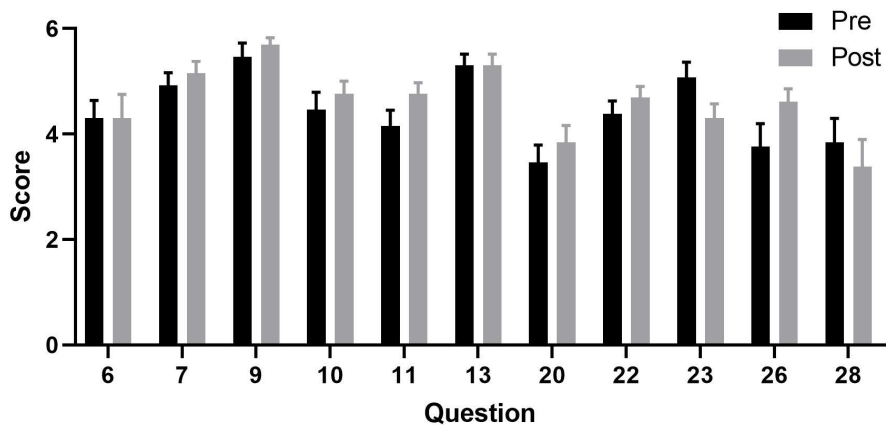
Figure 3. Confidence in biblical counseling principles in discipleship

The fourth goal was to develop a biblical counseling-based discipleship leader training curriculum for FC leaders. The training was an eight-week course meeting once a week. The scope of the training consisted of teaching foundational principles of biblical counseling, core elements of the disciple-making process, and practical implementation in real life discipleship settings using case studies and group interaction. The goal was measured by an expert panel using a rubric to evaluate biblical fidelity, instructional methodology and scope, and shepherding relevance of the curriculum. This panel consisted of an ACBC certified biblical counselor, an ACBC certified counseling pastor and a Bible

professor from Corban University. The expert panel's input was received and implemented in the second half of the project due to communication issues. Ideally, it would have been helpful to have had that input before the start of the course. This goal was met during the implementation of the ministry project during the late Spring/early Summer of 2020 from April 29th through June 17.

Project Strengths

While discipleship can often be defined and discussed so broadly that it loses clarity, a strength of the course was its eight chosen topics. This is not to say that these eight topics exhaustively represented all of discipleship. What is does mean, however, is that these eight topics provided an excellent and useful base for the person following Christ in a fallen world by means of the Word and Spirit. The eight sessions were substantive on a biblical level and took effort and energy in which to engage. They also had relevant, daily implications for living for both disciples and those being discipled.

In terms of content, there was a solid biblical foundation for each session. Each area was addressed from the Word, and the Word sufficiently addressed each area. While anecdotal and supporting material was occasionally referenced, it was illustrative rather than substantive.

I found the commitment of the attendees of the course a strength. It was not easy to commit to being in front of a screen for eight weeks, yet most were very faithful. A significant number of participants expressed a desire to grow and learn, and that was very much appreciated.

Project Weaknesses

Without question, the most significant setback in terms of the project was the medium we were forced to use at the time. As the spread of COVID-19 forced state officials to bar public gatherings in Oregon (as well as much of the country), I had to decide whether to go ahead with the project or wait it out until we could meet as a regular

group, physically together. I decided to use the Zoom video conferencing technology as the gathering format. I had no previous experience with this software, and minimal experience with any other video conferencing applications, such as Skype, etc. In reality, I was not only learning and doing a new class, but I was learning a new medium at the same time.

While I consider myself somewhat technology-friendly, the first couple of sessions involved working the bugs out of Zoom etiquette and class management, multiple monitors, using Keynote presentations, and sharing screens. As I was learning to teach on Zoom, others were figuring out how to learn on it. As the weeks went on, the issue of technology competency was replaced by what has been termed "Zoom Fatigue," a fairly recent phenomenon brought on by the rigors and dynamics of video communication. Gillespie quotes Brian Wind, of the American Psychological Association and adjunct professor of psychology at Vanderbilt University, describing some of the reasons behind video chatting/zoom fatigue. "[One reason] video chatting can be more tiring is because we have to work harder to interpret non-verbal communication. 'When we interact with people face to face, we're not only listening to their voices and looking at their faces— we're picking up on social cues, like hand movements, body movements, and even a person's energy.'"[1] I realize a lot more goes into online teaching and learning. Still, for evaluation purposes, it suffices to say the medium was a significant challenge, and while it was addressed as best as I was able, undoubtedly, it made the course harder, both to teach and to learn.

Another challenge of the course involved the season in which it was offered. Like many churches, FC's programming tends to run on the school year calendar, starting

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[1] Claire Gillespie, "Zoom Fatigue: Why Video Chat Is Exhausting You Right Now, and What to Do about It," May 26, 2020, https://www.health.com/condition/infectious-diseases/coronavirus/zoom-fatigue.

in September and winding down in May or June. The people at FC were in that winding down mode at the time of training, and in my estimation, their learning fatigue showed.

Almost universally recognized in the class feedback was the sense of too much information in too short a time. The idea of the course was to provide a well-rounded foundational introduction to core discipling principles, and what became apparent to all was that each topic was worthy of much more interaction and instruction than could be accomplished in an hour online. This observation was a noted frustration for some attendees and, without a doubt, a valid criticism. In my desire to provide quality content and a significant learning experience, gauging what was appropriate in terms of depth and amount for a class with varied educational backgrounds and abilities proved challenging.

What I Would Improve or Change

A course like this needs to have face-to face engagement, and in the future, I would hope to offer the course live in a classroom setting. I did what I felt we had to do, and it had some profit, but in the future, I would hope to provide live instruction and interaction.

Much of the setup and class expectations occurred via email, which did serve to communicate the information. Upon reflection, I would have liked to have created more of a thirst for the class and have an interest meeting for potential participants where a more visual, practical vision could be cast for the course. It would have given an opportunity to cast a vision for the class to create a thirst for the goals of discipleship ministry at FC. To understand that people can come together to be more biblically equipped to disciple in small groups is a worthy goal, but to illustrate that in an engaging, fully dimensional way would have gone a long way in creating more felt need and motivation.

I decided not to give all the notes to the attendees on the front end of the class but instead send them out week-by-week so as not to overwhelm or distract them. Class feedback showed that many would have benefitted from getting the full notes ahead of

time, feeling like they would have had more time to prepare. Given the human proclivity to procrastinate, I have my doubts that this would have been as significant a factor as respondents believed. Still, in the future, I hope to be able to provide notes at the beginning of class. I can see how that may enhance the experience for some.

While every session included breakouts and case studies, I see that even more student to student interactions would have been impactful in the application and exploration of these biblical principles. Using role-play or showing video case studies of people in real situations and having them speak to those based on the study would have been powerful. I learned a lot in this course, as a teacher, on the balance of instruction, content, and student involvement. I realized that my student experience had always been in a lecture-style classroom and that it was my default setting as a teacher. I also have never had an online class as a student, so my learning curve was significant. It was valuable for me to have gone through this in learning more interactive modes of teaching—especially online.

Along with more student interaction, I also would make sure that sessions were kept to an hour and even less if it was online. While there has to be content, I would change the overall sessions for this course from eight weeks to sixteen, essentially doubling the overall class to allow for more concentrated topical studies and really unpacking the Scriptures, allowing for more student discovery in those truths. While this change would require more commitment from the student, in future class iterations I would hope to frame the extending of the class in such a way that the value of the course would be unmistakable and interest level could be peaked. People could relax and the feeling of information overload would lessen—that sense of "drinking from a fire hose" every session. It would also give more room for class questions and discussions, which this first version of the class did not do well.

Theological Reflections

In the preparation and presentation of this project I was reminded of a number of the truths within the course afresh and anew. My appreciation and convictions regarding the sufficiency and authority of Scripture were further strengthened and galvanized. While most churches in the tradition of FC hold to a high view of the Word, confessionally, the empty philosophies of this world have done a remarkable job at chiseling away at how that value translates practically. It was painful but instructive to watch the FC leaders struggle with having a high view of the sufficiency of Scripture practically. The impact this has was impressed on me and showed the need for convictional alignment of leadership in the implementation of this project. The disparity here had obvious implications in both the data received and the learning process itself. This lack of alignment was evidenced in the post-survey responses—with the addition of qualifying comments about the sufficiency of the Word added on a number of responses. The sufficiency of the Word is a crucial battlefield and a doctrine that must be continually visited in the business of discipleship since it is so easily minimized by culture, and sometimes, unfortunately, in churches. The deceptiveness of worldly philosophies (Col 2:8) still has an allure despite its vacuous nature and inability to interpret God's creation or issues of the soul. Paul's warning to the church of Colossae stands true for the church today, especially in the context of soul care and discipleship in God's church.

In teaching this class, I gained a greater appreciation for the corporate nature of sanctification. Everyone has to digest truth and grow individually, yet God's truth is designed to be lived out and experientially learned in community. The challenge comes from the glorious (and sometimes frustrating) aspect of each student being in a slightly different place in their walk. Everyone is in the process of being progressively sanctified, and all at their own sovereignly given pace. Everyone is in a different place on their journey, even if they are committed to the same things. Although this class targeted leadership, it was quite apparent by both the data and the interaction that there was a broader spectrum of spiritual maturity than I would have anticipated initially. As a teacher,

I had to catch myself and not be discouraged or disappointed upon discovering a lack of foundational understanding. Instead, I needed to see opportunities for growth that were part of a grander curriculum than the one I had chosen for the course. I was reminded that while a teacher can impart and transmit material and minister the Word in faith and truth, the Holy Spirit ultimately illumines hearts and transforms minds, conforming believers into the image of Jesus Christ (Rom 12:1-2).

A source of encouragement from many class comments in the post-survey was the hunger to be able to minister the Word more effectively as disciples. While a good number of students had a strong evangelical background, many were less confident in regard to unpacking the Word of God as it relates to particular contexts. While I was cautious in the use of the word *counsel*, due to its therapeutic and intimidating overtones, the end result was that most people felt more equipped to minister the Word. There was a sense that people had taken at least a step or two toward what Paul was glad about in the Roman church—their ability to "instruct" one another (Rom 15:4).

Personal Reflections

The premise of the project was to introduce the shepherding leaders of FC to distinct biblical counseling principles to undergird their discipleship. As a pastor, I have always held the biblical analogy of a shepherd closely—seeing this biblical description as the best ministry picture of what pastors are called to do with people in the church. Of course, all are sheep in need of the Great Shepherd (John 10:11). As I reflect on the course itself, what I was continually reminded of—from the participants and the material—was the relational nature of discipleship. More so, that the process, content, and sometimes mechanics of discipleship are best delivered in the context of relationship. The value of leading like a shepherd is that it helps guard the heart against a business model, or even more subtly, becoming ranchers instead of living and serving among the sheep. Disciples are the work of God, and at best, under-shepherds serve the King in the process. However, participation in that work is glorious when done rightly, coming alongside and helping

other saints grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Shepherding keeps the proximity close; it is dirty work and often inglorious, and certainly not done for man's favor or financial gain in most cases. My appreciation for the discipling task grew in the unfolding of this course as I realized that all of these complex, deeply theological concepts and truths find their ultimate expression when incarnated into the life of a Christ-follower.

Growing and implementing biblical framework into discipleship is, simply put, work. It is not natural or intuitive for fallen people to follow Jesus. With that truth in clear view, the process of developing competency as a discipler is truly an exercise in humility. The total dependence on the Holy Spirit for power and illumination of the life-changing Word of God immediately confronts pride by bringing a disciple to an end of himself. That sense of sufficiency and ability to do what the Word calls us to do is challenged at every turn when the process is understood from God's perspective. To experience frustration or disappointment as a teacher is to assume too much—taking credit for results that cannot be secured on human strength or talents. The best one can do is assume Isaiah's posture in his vision, recognizing that like him, we too come from a people of unclean lips (Isa 6:5), and seek his purifying work in our lives in hopes of being of service to the Savior.

As is often said, the teacher always learns more than the students. Going through this project as a teacher personally enhanced my ability to minister the Word. It stretched and matured me as a shepherd in my role as discipleship pastor as well. I am challenged and motivated to continue learning, gleaning from the wisdom of those committed to these same principles. It was also instructive to hear from others as they wrestled with these truths from their context—my appreciation for perspective in the application of biblical counseling principles is richer, having gone through this group experience

Conclusion

The spring of 2020 marked the culmination of nearly three years of dedicated study and ten years of pastoral counseling practice, and a specific training class on eight

core biblical counseling principles in a small group discipleship model was accomplished. Despite challenges, growth and progress was made, and people were encouraged and equipped for the discipleship task at Foothills Church. While the scope of Scripture and biblical counsel is vast, a strengthening, foundational base was laid for future training and discipleship, as God sovereignly works in the hearts of those seeking him. To this end, may the saints at Foothills grow to present everyone mature in Christ (Col 1:28).

APPENDIX 1

DISCIPLESHIP INVENTORY SURVEY (DIS)

Agreement to Participate

This inventory is part of a ministry project that seeks to bolster the disciple-making efforts of Foothills Church. The inventory below will help measure our current progress and values regarding discipleship and providing counsel as part of our shepherding function in our church. You have been chosen because you are members of our body and in some way serve in a shepherding/leadership capacity here at Foothills.

The research is being conducted by Rob Baddeley as part of a ministry project for his doctoral studies in biblical counseling at SBTS. Your participation is strictly voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are providing informed consent for the use of your responses to this project. All information and responses will be kept confidential and at no point will your name be reported or used to identify your responses.

Name: _____

Directions: Answer the following by checking the appropriate line on multiple-choice questions, or by providing a short answer on the line provided. For questions asking your opinion or agreement, circle your answer based on the following scale;

> SD = Strongly disagree
> D = Disagree
> DS = Disagree somewhat
> AS = Agree somewhat
> A = Agree
> SA = Strongly Agree

Section 1: Demographic Information

Your Name: _____

1. What is your current age?
   a. _____ 18-24
   b. _____ 25-34
   c. _____ 35-45
   d. _____ 46-55
   e. _____ 56-65
   f. _____ 66 and over

2. How long have you been a born-again Christian? _____

3. How long have you been a covenant member of Foothills Church?
   _____

Section 2: Discipleship Questions

Directions: Answer the following by checking the appropriate line on multiple-choice questions, or by providing a short answer on the line provided. For questions asking your opinion or agreement, **circle** or **highlight** your answer based on the following scale;

> SD = Strongly disagree
> D = Disagree
> DS = Disagree somewhat
> AS = Agree somewhat
> A = Agree
> SA = Strongly Agree

1. Have you been *intentionally* discipled by someone? (Met with someone for the express intention for growing in your walk with Christ)
   ___ Yes (if yes, how long approximately was that process?)
   ___ No

2. I believe all Christians are called to be discipled and to disciple others.
   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

3. I read my Bible at least five times a week
   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

4. In my relationships, as part of my spiritual convictions, I am looking for people to disciple, or to disciple me.
      SD   D DS AS A SA

5. A key reason people aren't blessed by God is they fail to claim all the promises in the Bible for them.
      SD   D DS AS A SA

6. Relational conflict is primarily a direct result of being susceptible to another person's sinful actions.
      SD   D DS AS A SA

7. I am confident that, if given the opportunity, I could use Scripture to show someone how to become a Christian.
      SD   D DS AS A SA

8. While sin affects our moral standing before God, an unsaved person's mind and reasoning isn't affected by it.
      SD   D DS AS A SA

9. It is vital for Christian growth to be in regular, accountable small group relationships as well as participate in the larger church gathering.
      SD   D DS AS A SA

10. A key component of my spiritual walk and growth involves the people in my small group/life group experience.
      SD   D DS AS A SA

11. I feel uncomfortable and inadequate to personally help people deal with sin in their life.
      SD   D DS AS A SA

12. The only way a person can truly change at the heart level is through the Holy Spirit's application of the Word of God.
      SD   D DS AS A SA

13. I value and have vital spiritual relationships with others that help me grow as a believer.
      SD   D DS AS A SA

14. I have been in an intentional discipling relationship in the past year.
   ___ Yes
   ___ No

15. The Bible contains sufficient counsel for any problems or situations we need to address in this life
      SD   D DS AS A SA

16. Scripture deals with all we need spiritually, but mental health professionals provide necessary services for dealing with serious life issues that the Bible does not address.
      SD   D DS AS A SA

17. List your top three Bible passages for sharing the gospel
   a) _____

   b) _____

   c) _____

18. A key passage I would use for helping someone deal with anger is _____.

19. Being filled with the Spirit means pouring our self out to receive more of God's Spirit.

      SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

20. I am confident that I could help someone who is feeling trapped or engaged in addictive behaviors.

      SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

21. When it comes to determining where people are at spiritually, what they believe about Jesus is more important than what they think about the Bible.

      SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

22. When talking with someone about life issues, I am confident in bringing the gospel to bear on any situation.

      SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

23. Using biblical counsel in relationships with non-believers doesn't work, so I try to lean on common sense or other sources they may be more familiar with.

      SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

24. A person can know the truths of Scripture without the Holy Spirit, but it helps to have the Spirit involved.

      SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

25. Now that Jesus is in heaven, resurrected – he has handed the baton to the Holy Spirit to guide us in the church age until he returns.

      SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

26. I know where I would go in the Bible to help a couple struggling with communication.

      SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

27. The most important belief Christians must hold about Jesus is he loves us and wants us to follow his example while here on earth.

      SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

28. When it comes to relational conflict and sin, you have to forgive yourself before you can forgive anyone else.

      SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

APPENDIX 2

RESULTS OF DISCIPLESHIP INVENTORY SURVEY

The data in tables A1-A5 reflect the results of the DIS administered to the class. The numbers reflect both pre and post survey results, by question and respondent along with their averages.[1]

Table A1. DIS questions 2-6

Question	2		3		4		5		6	
Respondent	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1	6	6	5	5	5	4	4	3	6	6
2	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	3	5	4
3	6	6	6	6	4	5	6	5	5	6
4	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	7
5	4	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	5	6	2	3	3	3
7	6	6	5	4	6	6	1	1	4	4
8	6	6	5	5	4	5	6	6	5	6
9	6	6	4	4	3	5	5	3	5	3
11	6	6	5	6	5	5	2	3	2	4
12	6	6	5	5	5	6	3	3	3	2
13	6	6	6	5	3	5	4	2	5	2
14	6	5	3	4	3	4	5	5	3	4
Average	5.769	5.769	5	5.077	4.462	5.077	3.923	3.462	4.308	4.308
Class Average	0.00%		1.28%		10.26%		-7.69%		0.00%	

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[1] I am truly indebted to and grateful for Sarah Comstock of Corban University for her help and expertise in research and statistics, and her willingness to help me organize this data for this project.

Table A2. DIS questions 7-11

Question	7		8		9		10		11	
Respondent	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	5
2	6	6	5	6	6	6	5	5	6	6
3	6	6	6	5	4	5	5	5	4	5
4	5	5	5	5	3	5	4	5	3	3
5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5
6	4	4	3	3	6	6	5	5	3	4
7	4	4	1	1	5	6	2	2	5	5
8	4	5	5	5	6	6	5	5	3	5
9	4	4	5	5	6	6	5	5	4	5
11	5	6	5	6	6	6	6	5	3	5
12	6	6	6	5	6	6	5	5	5	5
13	5	5	6	6	6	6	2	5	5	5
14	5	5	5	5	6	5	5	5	3	4
Average	4.923	5.154	4.846	4.846	5.462	5.692	4.462	4.769	4.154	4.769
Class Average	3.85%		0.00%		3.85%		5.13%		10.26%	

Table A3. DIS questions 12-19

Question	12		13		15		16		19	
Respondent	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1	5	6	6	6	4	2	4	3	5	5
2	6	6	6	6	6	6	4	4	2	2
3	2	5	6	6	6	2	7	1	6	5
4	4	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	1	1
5	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	6	2	2
6	6	6	6	5	6	6	2	3	3	1
7	6	6	4	4	6	6	3	3	6	6
8	6	6	5	5	6	5	2	5	2	7
9	6	6	4	4	5	5	4	3	1	1
11	6	3	6	6	4	5	3	3	5	2
12	5	6	5	5	5	6	3	4	4	3
13	6	6	5	6	5	4	5	4	3	3
14	6	5	5	5	6	5	5	2	2	2
Average	5.385	5.538	5.308	5.308	5.385	4.846	3.846	3.385	3.231	3.077
Class Average	2.56%		0.00%		-8.97%		-7.69%		-2.56%	

Table A4. DIS questions 20-24

Question	20		21		22		23		24	
Respondent	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1	5	5	3	2	5	5	4	4	5	6
2	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	5	5	5
3	6	6	1	6	6	6	6	5	6	6
4	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	4	4
5	3	4	4	5	3	4	6	6	5	5
6	3	3	2	2	4	4	6	3	3	6
7	4	4	1	1	4	4	7	3	6	6
8	2	4	1	1	5	6	5	5	5	5
9	4	4	5	5	4	4	5	3	2	4
11	3	4	7	6	3	5	5	5	3	5
12	4	5	4	4	5	5	5	4	5	3
13	3	3	4	1	5	5	5	4	6	4
14	2	2	6	5	5	4	3	4	3	4
Average	3.462	3.846	3.538	3.462	4.385	4.692	5.077	4.308	4.462	4.846
Class Average	6.41%		-1.28%		5.13%		-12.82%		6.41%	

Table A5. DIS questions 25-28

Question	25		26		27		28	
Respondent	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1	5	5	5	6	5	5	6	6
2	3	1	5	5	5	5	5	5
3	1	1	6	6	6	6	6	6
4	6	6	5	5	2	2	3	2
5	5	5	3	4	3	2	3	2
6	3	2	3	3	4	4	2	1
7	1	1	0	4	4	4	2	1
8	2	1	4	4	2	6	2	2
9	1	1	4	4	1	5	2	2
11	5	5	2	5	5	5	5	5
12	4	3	4	5	4	3	4	4
13	1	2	4	5	6	5	6	3
14	5	3	4	4	5	5	4	5
Average	3.231	2.769	3.769	4.615	4	4.385	3.846	3.385
Class Average	-7.69%		14.10%		6.41%		-7.69%	

APPENDIX 3

POST-SURVEY CLASS FEEDBACK QUESTIONS

The following questions were added to the DIS survey given after the course to illicit open-ended feedback for future improvements on course content and instruction.

Post Class Evaluation Questions

1. What area of discipleship discussed during the class was most challenging? In a couple sentences, describe how your thoughts/beliefs/convictions were challenged.

2. In what way was the Foundations of Discipleship course beneficial for you personally, as a disciple?

3. In what way (or area) did the Foundations of Discipleship class equip you for the task of discipling others more effectively?

4. Looking over the class, what area/topic could be improved on? How could it be tweaked for improvement? Please be specific as you can.

APPENDIX 4

POST-SURVEY CLASS FEEDBACK RESPONSES

This feedback is a compilation of the class responses to the open-ended questions given after the course, listed by question.

1. What area of discipleship discussed during the class was most challenging? In a couple sentences, describe how your thoughts/beliefs/convictions were challenged.

- That I need to be actively discipling others. Glorify God in my life not just doing my things.

- The foundation of conflict of discipleship challenged me most personally. James reminder that the sourced of conflict is the evil desires within was helpful. I am challenged by my divided loyalty, wanting what I want more than what God wants. This session was convicting and helpful in drawing me back to the Lord in repentance and humility.

- Honestly Rob, a lot of my time I was focused on the notes you had sent out prior to class and trying to follow along with those while in class was in session. There was a lot of material that was good but it made it a bit overwhelming.

- The most challenging was just keeping up with the zoom technology, i.e. chat feature with the questions listed during breakouts. The discipleship areas were fine.

- By following the curriculum and schedule put forth, I was challenged - in positive ways - to learn how certain topics are relevant to those I am currently discipling. It reminded me how in some relationships we hardly talk about_____ compared to others. It helped me reshape these relationships with a fuller picture in mind.

- Nothing stands out to me as challenging as I think back on the class

- I was challenged to more purposeful in my discipleship process with others.

- It was encouraging hearing reaffirmation of what I believe and think is important in relation to spiritual growth.

- I can't think of a way my thoughts were challenged. It went over ideas I have heard before.

- I think the handling of the Word is still challenging to me but I am trusting the Holy Spirit will bring the right scriptures for the situation.

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- The actual technique and practice of relational discipleship, communicating and practicing what we learned.

- This class needs to have a booklet put together so those taking the class can compare, look ahead and have a big picture look at what is going to be shared and look back on what was shared.

- For me, it reinforced in the breakout sessions and discussions that before we can attempt to disciple, we must be relational.

- I was challenged to know scripture better as a tool for discussion…I often know it is in the Bible, but knowing where it is has been a challenge for me.

- I need to be in the word more so I can be prepared to lead someone through a situation with God's word.

2. In what way was the Foundations of Discipleship course beneficial for you personally, as a disciple?

- It challenged me to discipling and to be discipled.

- This discipleship course was beneficial to me personally as a parent. I used many of the concepts in our study and practiced them at home.

- It's always good to address topics of faith and things of the Word no matter what the context. That made the class worth it. I know you spent a lot of time on this personally for your degree and that was evident and I do appreciate that. The first time doing anything is both nerve wracking and daunting!

- It was a way to see that we were on the same page in many of the areas discussed.

- The class provided a good connection point and common language for me to engage in discussion with other members of the class. I appreciate how it exposed the class to a variety of theological conversation and topics, which may be pertinent at points in a discipleship relationship.

- It was a good overview of some core Christian doctrine. Also the foundations of it biblically were great.

- Validated many of the ideas I believed. Challenged me to disciple others purposefully.

- Relationships continue to be a critical dynamic to discipleship and subsequently spiritual growth.

- It was a good overview of the foundational doctrines of Christianity. It was a helpful reminder of what the church teaches about sin and forgiveness.

- It helped cement areas I was cloudy on and helped me coming up with a common language

- Excellent source of Biblical references and applications

- I need to get to know and engage with non-Christians more so when questions come up I have built in relationship enough so I can have those trust

conversations. For me, it was the much too short discussion time in the breakout sessions. Also, taking time to think about discipleship and discipling.

- Really recognizing it is important for me to be discipled as well as disciple…both very beneficial for my spiritual growth. I am going to pursue this in my life.

- It made me aware that I need to be actively looking for opportunities to disciple.

- Need to be more intentional about discipleship

3. In what way (or area) did the Foundations of Discipleship class equip you for the task of discipling others more effectively?

- It gave me detailed notes and verses on topics I will use in discipleship.

- I feel more equipped in handling the Word. While it can be easily misinterpreted, it is necessary that others know the Bible is completely sufficient for all our needs. I also feel more relaxed in my approach to discipleship. It will always be God who moves people to change and transforms the heart, not me. I can lovingly and obediently walk alongside another, but ultimately it is He who will convict and open eyes and ears.

- Although all good information, I didn't feel necessarily more equipped to disciple others as a result. I couldn't gather all the previous notes that we were sent, put them all together and feel like I had a good tool to go out and share the gospel with someone/disciple someone. If I was overwhelmed with it, someone new in the faith would surely be overwhelmed. I was trying to envision how this class would look being reproduced for the entire Foothills church family eventually. I think it would need to be more succinct and direct in order to be well received (and implemented) by everyone.

- It just gave me some confidence that I'm doing the right thing and on the right path. The materials had valuable information.

- Each week gave a helpful introduction to a topic or biblical direction to take a relationship. It provided footing to stand on to begin those conversations about God, Scripture, and relationships.

- I thought there was some good discussion on how to have one on one conversations with people.

- Reminded me to always use the Bible regardless of the situation.

- Good overview of biblical/theological foundations for discipleship.

- It was good to see all the Scripture laid out with all the references. I could see coming back to this to find verses when needed.

- What was most impactful was the realization that before we start any discipleship process we need to understand where their relationship with Christ is.

- Providing quick references to Bible passages.

- Building relationships with people is the best way to disciple them.

- Partially because of the zoom class nature I found these gatherings to just a session of material. The practical application of where to go from here, how we are to move forward, was definitely lacking.

- I do not feel better equipped to disciple after taking this class.

- Gave me accurate scriptural references as well as real life examples of effective discipleship. The breakout sessions were good for this.

- Identify passages in Scripture for discipling

4. Looking over the class, what area/topic could be improved on? How could it be tweaked for improvement? Please be specific as you can.

- More time to cover the material - more weeks or longer time. Time to discuss among each other and what is going on in my life with other people who need help. Practical Application. A more detailed lay-out of what it would look like to work this through with someone. I really learned a lot and enjoyed every week. I miss that I haven't been discipled and want to try to pass that on.

- I loved the class! Rob did an excellent job! If I could add one thing, it would be to email the answers to the s after each session. That would be helpful.

- 1. A more succinct tool/guide to view the gospel as something that could be easily read/used by a non-believer or new believer. 2. Having all the material handed out prior to the class, like in a binder or something that could be easily referenced for later use. 3. Less "wordy" language during the class (there were times when I was caught up in words like "high Christology" and "anthropology" and trying to understand them in the context of the class. These words made it feel more like a college class I was taking.

- The zoom classes were tedious and there wasn't enough time to go over and discuss the topics well in the breakout sessions. It felt rushed and hard to follow at times.

- The area I see as an opportunity to improve on is looking to apply conversations and concepts to more mature discipleship relationships. Many of our conversations were almost evangelistic in nature, as they were aimed at new or immature Christians. I would have loved to continue parts of these conversations toward s the ongoing and more mature discipling relationships, i.e. if Rob was discipling (respondent) consistently, how does this topic apply?

- Teaching/instruction improvements: too much lecture, too much "high-brow" for introductory discipleship class. Word choices/phrases too complicated at times. You need to develop. 1. A more basic training on discipleship that precedes a class like this. 2. Class management needs improvement in: class ran 10-15 min too long. 3. pre reading/homework didn't help much. It was often unreinforced. Would have been helpful to have it handed to us at the end of the previous session. 4. The class notes didn't match up with the slides. It was confusing to follow the notes and the slides/teaching at the same time. Maybe this wasn't your intent with the notes but I know others struggled with this as well. The fill-ins in the notes needed to match the slides exactly and the underlines on the slides. 5. I think the class objective was not met - helping people become better disciple makers at Foothills. There was very little application for small group settings at Foothills. The discipleship tie ins were 'forced' and felt tacked on. This was

primarily a systematic theology class with some discipleship things added. I think your number one goal in this class was to complete your D.Min project. That trumped, rather than aided, your goal of making us better disciple makers. Side note - the was seen/heard/ over and over again as people mentioned the importance of relationship in discipleship. This was covered as cursory in our material, at best. There was no discussion of the discipleship wheel or other tools that help us identify someone's spirituality.

- I personally don't learn very well through lectures. The best sections were the breakout sections where we could process real life situations. Zoom made this difficult, so that potentially made learning more challenging.

- How I have learned the most in relation to discipleship has been a combination of personal reflection and one on one discipleship venues. I think that each of our journeys is quite distinct and while a small group context can be used for this my experience has been that I have learned the most in one on one contexts. I do understand that there a number of things that makes that challenging.

- It might have been helpful to have more role-playing exercises. In the questions above, it asks if I feel confident about helping someone with addictive behaviors. I don't remember talking about this specifically in class.

- I was overwhelmed with the amount of material. I would divide the class into an intro and advanced class. Intro class 4 weeks long with two subjects per night/30 min per subject, 3 bullet points per subject. I need to go back over all my notes to understand what I have learned every night was so jam packed I had no time to assimilate. The advanced class could be more of what we just did. Once I had the rudimentary parts down then I would be ready to go deeper.

- Perhaps a summary of biblical references on potential discipleship and counseling topics, i.e. doubt, anger, sin, Holy Spirit, Confession, etc. with passages for each. Also, a longer class (12-16 weeks) with shorter assignments per class would be helpful. For those who are working, a 10-11 pg. document to study prior to a class is an unreasonable expectation.

- Online was hard for me. This class would have been much easier in person. I feel like people would be able to interact more and discuss more.

- A discipleship class like this, Foundations, needs to be presented to the leadership first. Once they are all on the same page, then and only then should the material be presented to the next level of leaders. Crucial that everyone gets on the same page and there isn't any assumptions to where people are at in their walk. Just because they are in leadership or been attending church for a long time.

- The class was poorly planned, unprepared, hurried, disorganized, unprofessional, unfocused and strewn with avoidable technical issues. 1. There was not a clearly defined and understood objective for the class or for each one of the sessions. The goal of the course was not clear so there was no clear path to follow to achieve that goal. 2. The class materials were not provided with enough time in advance to study and explore the related Bible verses. Sometimes the sneak peek barely matched the class. 3. When the class was in session the materials you provided beforehand did not follow the course as you held it. I know that some people just gave up trying to prepare, they knew that the class session would be different from the materials. 4. The materials provided were not organized or formatted so that it was easy to read and follow; they included grammatical and spelling errors.

Although that may seem minor, it truly distracts from the learning process and does not reflect well on you or the church. 5. I felt you tried to cram too much into each session and therefore forced to say too many times, "we are running out of time, so...we will skip that," I felt that I could be missing out on something essential. This is indicative of insufficient planning. 6. There was ample time before you held the course to prepare the technical aspects of giving the class through zoom. There were resources available to help you through the more complex aspects of the software, with connectivity issues, you did not avail yourself to these resources. The first class was a disaster technically, consequentially, setting the intention and tone (goals) of the course suffered greatly. It also undermined your position as teacher. The point here is not focused on technology, it's how well you prepared which results in the engagement of the class and how they willing and able they are to learn. 7. I learned more in the breakouts than in the lecture; interactive learning works much better in our culture than lecturing. I felt like you talked too much and did not invite participation with you...there was no time for it. 8. It felt that you wanted it to be a theology course. Some of the discipling and the Foothills mission content felt like an adjunct. 10. As you have openly said and in discussing the course with others, the course is designed around the need to conduct it for your doctorate work. I believe this moved the focus of the class for you from equipping the body to disciple to completing a requirement for your degree. This was apparent to the participants, I did receive a comment "...well, I know he needs it for his class so I'll keep up with it." I have to wonder Rob, if the focus for us putting on the class was equipping our body and leaders to be better disciplers, why come up with a whole new class from scratch when there is abundance of quality, proven resources on relational discipleship and making disciples available? Rob, I honestly do not see how this class, as presented, fits in with equipping our body to be better disciplers.

- The zoom classroom experience was hard for me. Group discussion was very helpful. Material good and relevant but there was not enough time allotted to cover all the material. Personally, I prefer to receive the study material several days to a week in advance to review and prepare for the upcoming class.

- It was a lot of information in a short amount of time. I understand why but it would be good to stretch it out over a larger period of time in the future.

- No more pandemic so we can meet in person.

APPENDIX 5

TRAINING EVALUATION RUBRIC

Discipleship and Counseling Training Evaluation Tool					
Lesson 1 Evaluation					
Scale: 1-Insufficient, 2-requires attention, 3-sufficient, 4-exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
1. The material taught was faithful to the biblical teaching on the subject.					
2. The thesis of the lesson was clear.					
3. The points of the lesson supported the initial thesis or stated purpose.					
4. The material presented was thorough enough to cover the topic.					
5. The presentation of the instruction was clear and understandable.					
6. There were appropriate points of application included with the material shared.					
7. The material made a clear connection between biblical counseling and discipleship.					

APPENDIX 6

EXPERT PANEL EVALUATION DATA

The data in this appendix shows the expert panel evaluation results and averages by rubric question and evaluator, as well as the session average for the whole panel.

Table A6. Rubric questions 1-4

Question	1			2			3			4		
Evaluator	T.A.	D.R.	J.B.	T.A.	D.R.	J.B.	T.A.	D.R.	J.B.	T.A.	D.R.	J.B.
Session 1	3	4	4	2	4	4	2	4	4	2	4	4
Session 2	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	2	3	4
Session 3	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	4
Session 4	2	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	2	3	3
Session 5	2	4	4	2	3	4	2	4	4	2	3	4
Session 6	3	4	4	2	3	4	2	4	4	2	3	4
Session 7	2	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	3
Session 8	2	4	4	3	4	4	3	2	4	2	3	4
Eval. Avg.	2.5	4	3.875	2.625	3.5	3.875	2.625	3.5	4	2.25	3.25	3.75

Table A7. Rubric questions 5-8 with total averages

Question	5			6			7			Session Avg.
Evaluator	T.A.	D.R.	J.B.	T.A.	D.R.	J.B.	T.A.	D.R.	J.B.	
Session 1	2	4	4	2	3	4	2	2	3	3.19
Session 2	3	4	4	2	3	4	2	2	3	3.14
Session 3	2	4	3	2	4	4	2	2	3	3.29
Session 4	2	3	4	2	3	3	2	2	4	2.95
Session 5	2	4	4	2	4	4	2	2	3	3.10
Session 6	1	4	4	2	4	3	2	2	3	3.05
Session 7	3	4	4	3	4	4	2	3	3	3.43
Session 8	2	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	4	3.24
Eval. Avg.	2.125	3.75	3.875	2.25	3.5	3.75	2.125	2.25	3.25	3.17

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ABSTRACT

INTEGRATING BIBLICAL COUNSELING PRINCIPLES INTO
THE SMALL GROUP DISCIPLESHIP MODEL AT
FOOTHILLS CHURCH OF STAYTON, OREGON

Robert Raymond Baddeley, DEdMin
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Matthew D. Haste

This project seeks to integrate biblical counseling practice and principles into the small group discipleship model of ministry at Foothills Church in Stayton, Oregon.

Chapter 1 discussed the context, leadership structures, and discipleship at Foothills and the rationale and goals for integrating biblical counseling into the small groups format.

Chapter 2 provides the biblical basis and theological support for the integration of biblical counseling principles into discipling within the small group format.

Chapter 3 is a review of the biblical and theological basis for the integration of biblical counseling principles and disciple-making.

Chapter 4 explains the implementation of the project. Included is the summary of each session, key texts used for instruction, and discipleship and counseling connections for each topic.

Chapter 5 evaluates the goals, objectives, and implementation of the project. It also includes reflections and lessons learned along with critique for improvements in the course.

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