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A PARADOXICAL FAMILY REVIVAL FOR UNCHURCHED  
FAMILIES AT KING STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

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by  
Zachary Charles Parker  
December 2020

**APPROVAL SHEET**

A PARADOXICAL FAMILY REVIVAL FOR UNCHURCHED  
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Zachary Charles Parker

Read and Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kevin M. Jones (Faculty Supervisor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Danny Bowen

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I dedicate this to all the families with a gospel void.

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## PREFACE

It is with a full heart of gratitude that I offer this project to the Learning and Achievement Academy. During this project, they have remained faithful, hopeful, and flexible. Their team understands the eternal significance of teaching children the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I am grateful for King Street Baptist Church and their trust during this powerful season of revitalization.

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary provided a unique context where I was able to meet lifelong friends, enjoy academically rich lectures, engage in challenging discussions, and receive exceptional feedback. To Dr. Danny Bowen for lighting a spark in me for this project from the very beginning. To Dr. Kevin Jones, my faculty supervisor, for communicating with me with transparency and grace during each conversation.

To the Stacey family for providing a Louisville home. You listened, asked questions, and have been supportive in all areas of my life. We are family forever.

To my parents, I am forever thankful for your unwavering care in all my escapades. We defy the odds daily. I am so proud to be your son.

And, of course, to my wife and son. Elim, you were born during my final season at SBTS. I hope to emulate the love of Jesus as we raise you to be a man of God. Bethany, thank you for believing in me and being the perpetual wind in my sails.

Zack Parker

Cocoa, Florida

December 2020

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The overarching goal of the Learning and Achievement Academy (LAA) is to provide the highest quality of Christian education for students from kindergarten through sixth grade. In order to accomplish this goal, LAA teachers creatively attempt to engage with parental figures and King Street Baptist Church (KSBC), located in Cocoa, FL, in areas of academic excellence and—most importantly—Christian discipleship. Christian education must transcend the walls of the classroom. It must be practiced not only in school but also in a local church and in the home. This method is called family worship. Donald S. Whitney elaborates on the importance of this idea: “While there is no direct, explicit commandment in Scripture about family worship, the Bible clearly implies that God deserves to be worshipped daily in our homes by our families.”<sup>1</sup> At the core of Christian family worship should be the gospel of Jesus Christ.

An approach that seeks the inclusion of Christian discipleship taking place in the home requires teachers to resourcefully seek ways to build relationships with parental figures and emphasize the eternal significance of family worship. Joshua 24 makes it clear that a family’s worshipping the Lord is primary above all else. Distractions may intervene, but focus will serve a family well. Joshua 24:15 reads, “But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve

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<sup>1</sup> Donald S. Whitney, *Family Worship* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 15.

the LORD.”<sup>2</sup> Teachers of LAA can enthusiastically and consistently work with KSBC to integrate gospel-focused conversations and lifestyles within the students and the parental figures. This, subsequently, will provide fertile soil for building relationships between staff and family.

This project aims to equip students to be persuasive advocates for the empowerment of their own parental figures to take responsibility in leading their families at home and beyond.

### **Context**

For over sixty-five years, King Street Baptist Church has been dedicated to local missions in pursuit of honoring Jesus Christ. KSBC began as a small church plant, organized in February 1952 in the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Peak in Cocoa, Florida. Shortly after this small church plant commenced, the Peaks moved down the street, and their growing fellowship followed them. It became apparent that while the fruitful church plant met in a home, it must find adequate accommodations for anticipated growth.

During this time, First Baptist Church of Cocoa, led by Pastor James A. Sawyer, noticed this thriving church plant. Sawyer formed a missions committee that would recommend a site proposed for this growing church plant. After prayer and discernment, 1040 W. King Street was purchased for \$4,400.00. On November 8, 1952, KSBC broke ground on a 40-by-90-foot sanctuary. The first service was held on Easter Sunday in 1953 with eighty people attending. On August 24, 1953, KSBC called its first pastor, Reverend Jack Shaw.

Due to continued progress in the mission, on November 1, 1953, ground was broken on for 36-by-39-foot educational annex. As the worship service experienced development, in correlation, Sunday school flourished, and God moved mightily through

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<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations come from the New International Version.

the obedience of the people. KSBC gained formal organization of church status on August 29, 1954. The surrounding area of the church was heavily populated by middle-class white families. There was a racial divide between the north and south side of the Fiske Boulevard corridor in which KSBC sat. The church ministered to families on the north, and it remained this way for two decades.

Once residential and industrial development of in West Cocoa began, the Fiske Boulevard corridor became industrialized, and surrounding areas north of Fiske became Section 8 housing. Thus began the integration of diversity in a once heavily populated white neighborhood. African American and Hispanic communities began to migrate to this area of West Cocoa, while the housing authority utilized the vacated homes. KSBC attempted many different outreach initiatives to become a multicultural church, but leadership never fully surrendered to the inclusive environment. KSBC experienced significant decline in attendance in both worship services and Sunday School. According to church records, in the 1970s, KSBC averaged nearly 300-400 people in attendance every Sunday. As of 2015, attendance had dropped to nearly 35 people per Sunday morning.

### **A New Paradigm for Ministry**

In 2018, the City of Cocoa conducted the Fiske Neighborhood Study, compiling extremely detailed research. This study revealed that roughly 54 percent of the Fiske Boulevard Neighborhood Distribution was black or African American, while 37.4 percent was white.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, KSBC consistently lacked diversity, and the congregation did not reflect the surrounding neighborhood.

In January 2018, KSBC called a new pastor, who helped lead a revitalization.

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<sup>3</sup> University of Central Florida: Master of Urban and Regional Planning, "City of Cocoa - Fiske Boulevard Neighborhood Study," University of Central Florida, accessed February 10, 2019, <https://ccie.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2018/11/report-FiskeBoulevardNeighborhoodStudy.pdf>.

The mission and vision of this revitalization proclaimed to be fueled by the truth of the Holy Bible, emphasizing that God’s Word is endlessly creative, thoughtful, and intentional and hoping to actualize and pray over the Scriptures in order to find direction. KSBC challenged themselves to let go of their preferences and live in God’s priorities.<sup>4</sup>

This new direction called for adjustments wherever needed in order for KSBC to reflect the neighborhood in which it resided, and the church trusted in God to provide those means. Within a month, a local feeding ministry approached the church to partner in outreach. Small Beginnings Feeding Ministry (SBFM) included fifteen volunteers who graciously prepared a feast once a week for those in need. The next week, SBFM began serving over eighty people every Thursday afternoon on the church’s grounds. This outreach grew to providing clothing and toiletries and even preaching, teaching, and Communion. Numerous people who attended Thursdays began attending church on Sunday mornings. As activity began to increase, the community took notice.

Within a month of partnering with SBFM, a local real-estate connection introduced the Learning and Achievement Academy to KSBC. Conversations and prayer began immediately. LAA communicated intentions of promoting the highest quality of Christian education from kindergarten through sixth grade. Directors of LAA negotiated with KSBC to engage in partnership and to utilize the facility on a daily basis to house their school. By way of a church council and business meetings, KSBC voted to accommodate the school, and they began minor construction projects to meet city codes.

Also, within the agreement, the directors of LAA asked the church to be involved with students and parental figures in hopes of strengthening their approach to education and Christian discipleship. Their primary mission was to encourage the teaching of the gospel in the classroom so that it would transfer to the homes of the

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<sup>4</sup> King Street Baptist Church, “Mission and Vision,” accessed June 10, 2019, <https://kingstreetbaptist.com/>.

families. LAA serves over fifty students, with 100 percent of their students being either African American or Hispanic. This partnership had internal, external, and eternal potential. The first semester launched January 2019 at KSBC, and subsequently, the church began reflecting the neighborhood.

### **A New Family Dynamic**

During this transition, the pastor of KSBC held weekly chapel for the LAA students. After I began prodding for information regarding their spiritual awareness and depth of knowledge of the gospel, research was conducted with permission granted by the school and parental figures. Simple questions were asked that only required a response through the raising of hands. These questions included whether the students could define the gospel. Was the Bible read or talked about at home? Did the children go to church with their parental figures? Results invoked concern in my heart and it prompted me to initiate immediate action to find a solution. With unofficial documentation collected, it was vital that other resources be reviewed in order to conclude whether this lack of gospel-mindedness and minimal church participation was unique to KSBC. Of the thirty students participating, 23 percent did not attend church regularly, 16 percent were confident in their salvation in Jesus Christ, and 10 percent participated in family worship.

The pastor of KSBC reached out to a prominent local private Christian school to determine whether KSBC's results were consistent. This line of communication was intended to clarify if private Christian schools were suffering from a lack of family worship and gospel-mindedness. Merritt Island Christian School (MICS) is an outreach ministry of First Baptist Church Merritt Island (FBCMI) in Merritt Island, Florida. FBCMI is roughly 2.5 miles from King Street Baptist Church. MICS serves as a co-educational day school on a fourteen-acre campus centrally located in Brevard County's "Space Coast." With the Indian River on the west, the Banana River on the east, and the Atlantic Ocean just three miles away, the location offers easy access to Cape Canaveral,

Cocoa Beach, Kennedy Space Center, Blue Origin, and SpaceX.<sup>5</sup>

FBCMI is located directly across the street from the school. The church and school are structurally connected by a tunnel bridge for student traffic crossing. The senior pastor of the church serves as the overseer of the church and school. The school has an experienced and highly qualified superintendent who has no professional responsibilities at the church. According to staff from the school, the slogan and mission of the church that has emerged in past years is to “bridge the gap” between the church and school. There is great potential for this mission to materialize with pieces in play to build upon and deplete the staggering number of non-churchgoers attending the school. For example, MICS does not have a bus system. Every day, most parents or guardians have a presence on the church/school property during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up. This reality provides unlimited access for the church to engage with parental figures on a consistent basis.

The school’s mission aims to lead students to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, to inspire them to academic excellence, and to equip them to impact their community through the biblical principles of character, leadership, and service.<sup>6</sup> The school also has a Parent-Teacher Fellowship (PTF) that promotes community and cooperation between parents, teachers, and administration in order to ensure the shaping of students’ lives and the reinforcement of Christian values. The PTF puts on events and supplies coffee for parents during morning drop-off, but there is minimal involvement from the church with the students. The MICS school board and most of the FBCMI pastoral staff have been consulted for the purpose of this project.

The superintendent provided a 2015-2016 questionnaire completed by MICS

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<sup>5</sup> Merritt Island Christian School, “About,” accessed September 10, 2019, <https://micscougars.com/about/>.

<sup>6</sup> Merritt Island Christian School, “About.”



staff, parents, and high school, middle school, and elementary school students. The questionnaire revealed that approximately 445 out of 500 students and their families were unchurched. The KSBC pastor was granted access by the superintendent to the middle school students to perform a survey. The middle school students were measured by way of the pastor's questions in a variety of areas. It was recorded that out of sixty middle school students, 50 percent did not consider their faith to be the priority of their life, 45 percent were unchurched, and 15 percent did not have salvation in Christ. Hence, an opportunity exists to leverage the platform of middle school Bible classes to engage the students in gospel education and to actualize Christian discipleship.

LAA and MICS are two separate private Christian schools within a seven-mile radius of one another and have almost identical issues in regard to family worship. Statistically and spiritually, this troubling research reveals the potential of similarities in additional private Christian schools outside of LAA and MICS. Why are parents of Christian school students not attending church or having gospel conversations at home? The KSBC pastor and LAA directors agreed to attack this gap by means of developing a gospel curriculum to teach the students. This curriculum was to be tailored specifically for the spiritual development of the students at LAA. The parental figures would be challenged by their children to speak about church and, more importantly, the gospel. The assignments would be intentionally directed towards the parental figures by asking them questions of faith, church, and discipleship.

### **A Renewed Focus on the Gospel**

Even on a marginal scale, this evidence suggests that it is paramount for Christian educators, pastors, and—most importantly—parental figures to develop a renewed focus on the gospel. Donald Whitney emphasizes this focus and elaborates its eternal significance: “We are not made right with God by practicing family worship, or by how well we love and provide for our families, or by anything else we do. The

gospel—the message that can lead to being right with God—is the truth of what God has done for us through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.”<sup>7</sup> The hope is to lead families to the pews of the church and empower them to begin being intentional in leading children to Christ while not delegating this biblical mandate to the Christian school or expecting the Christian school to accomplish it. As statistics have revealed, this initiative could combat the curve and embrace the opportunity to equip the children with knowledge of, and trust in, the gospel.

Contrary to biblical design, this ministry project is a paradoxical family revival that equipped the students attending the Learning and Achievement Academy at King Street Baptist Church in Cocoa, Florida, to share the gospel with their parental figures. The intention was to disciple the students who attend LAA with a gospel-focused curriculum. The paradox was evangelizing the parental figures through the students, purposely building an evangelistic platform to reach the students’ unchurched family, and allowing the students to lead a family revival.

### **Rationale**

MICS is an outreach ministry of one of the largest churches in Brevard County, Florida. FBCMI is heavily anticipating a surplus of growth with major modifications to facilities and property underway. Is the anticipated growth tucked away right across the street with the 445 unchurched students and their families? Parents are traveling over thirty miles to make sure their child is getting a Christian education, but why are they not attending church anywhere? Despite being equipped with authentic gospel training every day, the middle school students will not experience any nourishment to their spiritual growth when there is no fragrance of the gospel in their homes. And the same goes for LAA. This reality cannot be overlooked at any Christian

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<sup>7</sup> Whitney, *Family Worship*, 66-67.

school. In the context of LAA, this project armed the students with appropriate tools in the classroom while encouraging the parents—at least—to engage in a gospel conversation with their parental figures and—at best—to attend a local church setting, with the ultimate hope that the students and parents would obtain salvation in Jesus Christ.

This ministry project developed a method of discipleship to empower and encourage LAA students to evangelize their parental figures. It was structured with a humble accountability of the students with intentions to mold the family dynamic to be as God intended—actively participating in family worship. The creativity of engaging the parental figures can be unlimited. Neglecting the biblical responsibility of family worship rests solely on the parental figures, but the church and school leadership are postured with an incredible opportunity to serve these students with the gospel message. This effort embarked church members on a new chapter at KSBC regarding their approach to, and revitalization of, ministry.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to lead family revivals by having the students of the Learning and Achievement Academy share the gospel with their unchurched parental figures.

### **Goals**

The following goals were paramount in achieving the purpose of this ministry project. These goals reflect the Great Commission of Jesus Christ (Matt 28:19-20). The students at LAA were encouraged to actualize 1 Timothy 4:12 in support of the paradoxical discipleship method.<sup>8</sup> The gospel-focused curriculum the students receive

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<sup>8</sup> In 1 Tim 4:12, Paul says, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.”

empowered them to share the gospel with their unchurched families.

1. The first goal was to assess the gospel-mindedness of students and their parental figures at LAA with a pre-survey.<sup>9</sup>
2. The second goal was to develop a fifteen-session gospel-focused curriculum within the context of LAA and have it approved by an expert panel.<sup>10</sup>
3. The third goal was to take LAA students through the gospel-focused curriculum.
4. The fourth goal was to evaluate the impact of the gospel-focused curriculum with a post-survey for LAA students and parental figures.<sup>11</sup>

### **Research Methodology**

Four goals guided the effectiveness of this project. The strategy of this research methodology was intentionally built to measure statistical significance and to reach benchmarks of success within the ministry context.

The first goal was to assess the gospel-mindedness of middle school students and their parental figures at LAA with a pre-survey.<sup>12</sup> An expert panel consisting of one senior pastor, one college professor, one high school Bible teacher, and one children's ministry director approved a gospel-focused survey and curriculum for students and their parental figures at LAA. The expert panel assisted throughout the implementation of this project. My expectation of the expert panel was to provide accountability in assessing the pre-survey and curriculum in the areas of biblical accuracy, teaching clarity, spiritual growth, academic soundness, and ministry benefit vis-à-vis students. The pre-survey also served as the post-survey delivered as part of the fourth goal. The first goal was measured by administering the pre-survey approved by the expert panel. Surveys were distributed

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<sup>9</sup> See appendix 1 ("Gospel-Mindedness Pre-Survey").

<sup>10</sup> See appendix 2 ("The G.O.S.P.E.L. Curriculum") and appendix 3 ("Curriculum Assessment Form").

<sup>11</sup> See appendix 4 ("Gospel-Mindedness Post-Survey").

<sup>12</sup> All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with, and approved by, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in this project.

prior to teaching. Parental figures and students of LAA were surveyed to assess their gospel-mindfulness. This goal was considered successfully met when 80 percent of parental figures and students successfully completed and turned in the pre-survey. The surveys were collected following weeks of distribution.

The second goal was to develop a fifteen-session gospel-focused curriculum that equipped the students at LAA to share the gospel proficiently and passionately to their parental figures. The curriculum covered foundational biblical knowledge, consistently modeling gospel-focused discipleship methods for students to share with their parental figures. The curriculum was tailored specifically to fill voids evaluated from the assessment survey. This goal was measured by the expert panel, who evaluated the curriculum's biblical accuracy, teaching clarity, spiritual growth, and academic soundness, and ministry benefit vis-à-vis the students. An expert panel consisting of one senior pastor, one college professor, one high school Bible teacher, and one children's ministry director approved a gospel-focused survey and curriculum for students and their parental figures at LAA. The expert panel assisted throughout the implementation of this project. My expectation of the expert panel was to provide accountability in assessing the pre-survey and curriculum in the areas of biblical accuracy, teaching clarity, spiritual growth, academic soundness, and ministry benefit vis-à-vis students. This goal was considered successfully met when the expert panel approved curriculum.

The third goal was to take LAA students through the gospel-focused curriculum. The students began in the school context learning the curriculum. As the curriculum progressed, the students began sharing the gospel with peers at LAA. The following week, the students shared the gospel with teachers and administrators at LAA. Additionally, the students shared the gospel with a group of pastors. This goal was considered successfully met when 80 percent of students shared learned material in an elementary setting and in the presence of teachers and pastors. Teachers and pastors gave feedback in the areas of volume, material learned, and confidence of delivery.

The fourth goal was to evaluate the impact of the gospel-focused curriculum on the students and their parental figures following the students' delivery of the gospel to their parental figures. This goal was measured by administering a post-survey that measured the change in knowledge, confidence, and motivation of students and their parental figures concerning gospel-mindedness. This goal was considered successfully met when the paired *t-test* for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-survey scores of the students and their parental figures.

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

The following definitions of key terms are used in this ministry project:

*Elementary students.* Students at the Learning and Achievement Academy are distinctly defined as grades third through sixth grade. At LAA, the program is explained as such. The elementary program at LAA provides academic instruction for grades kindergarten through sixth. The faculty is comprised of qualified and experienced professional educators who love Jesus Christ and are committed to student achievement. Students receive Bible teaching and attend chapel once a week. All subject areas are taught from the Abeka program, including mathematics, science, language arts, reading, history and geography, and media and technology.

*Gospel-minded.* This term refers to the general knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ and worldview communicated based upon feedback from the data collected in surveys. The surveys gathered the "gospel-mindedness" of LAA students and their parental figures. Questions varied and included, but were not limited to, daily Bible readings and defining the gospel.

*Bible class.* This term refers to a mandated class at MICS for students in seventh and eighth grade in which the Bible is taught and tested through the school year. Curriculum was delivered with the advisement of the middle school principal.

Two limitations applied to this project. First, the accuracy of the pre- and post-surveys was dependent upon the willingness of the respondents to be honest about their knowledge and understanding of the gospel. To mitigate this limitation, the respondents were promised that their answers would remain anonymous. The second limitation concerned the constancy of attendance. If students were absent during this fifteen-week period, then it would be difficult to evaluate their level of knowledge, confidence, and motivation to share the gospel. To mitigate this limitation, each student was given access to lecture notes and other handouts. Students were then tested after they reviewed missed assignments.

Two delimitations were placed on this project. First, the participants were required to be elementary students, third grade through sixth grade, at the Learning and Achievement Academy—not any other grade level or school. Second, the curriculum was taught in fifteen consecutive weeks and required additional time for some students to bear fruit. The students received the foundational elements to share the gospel and rehearsed to a variety of classrooms, teachers, and pastors, but some students needed more time and maturity in order to proficiently communicate the depth to which the gospel-focused curriculum had impacted their worldview.

### **Conclusion**

God intends to teach all people more about him through means of his Son Jesus Christ. The endless amount of creative methods in which the gospel message is shared is continuously innovative, but in this project, the goals led LAA elementary students to share the gospel with their parental figures. The following chapters reveal how these elementary students were equipped with the knowledge, confidence, and motivation to proficiently share the good news of Jesus Christ. Chapter 2 focuses on the significance of the biblical commands from God for the parental figures to lead their children. Chapter 3 provides theoretical and sociological support for the biblical

commands and explains why a paradoxical approach to the issue was needed for this context to be successful. Chapter 4 transparently reviews the gospel-focused curriculum and the overall implementation of the project. Chapter 5 concludes the ministry project, communicating a variety of reflections that range from theological to personal strengths and weaknesses identified throughout the duration of the project.



## CHAPTER 2

### THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR FAMILY REVIVAL

The family is divinely arranged for dispensing the gospel message. The biblical design of parenting and family discipleship reveals the intentionality with which God built—and continues to build—his kingdom, inserting children as the cornerstone. Parents have been tasked to raise up their children under the tutelage of God’s Word and through the workings of the Holy Spirit.

God changed the world through his Son Jesus Christ. As Stuart Scott states, “In all of eternity, there has only been one perfectly faithful parent, and he had the only perfectly faithful son.”<sup>1</sup> Through his Son’s obedience and sacrifice, God offered forgiveness, love, and salvation for eternity. This is the framework of the gospel—the testimony of Jesus Christ communicating the good news of eternal life on behalf of the Father. It is important to emphasize that God delivered this good news by way of his child.

Unfortunately, there is a concerning shift of the biblically based responsibility for teaching God’s Word from parental figures to Christian private school teachers, pastors, and church volunteers. This chapter argues that parental figures are falling short in the delivery of the gospel, while God consistently reveals the gospel’s significance as the foundation for a child’s source of new life. The need for the gospel in the lives of children and teenagers is a serious matter and should not be delivered by surrogates when God intended it to be delivered through their parental figures. Christian school teachers,

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<sup>1</sup> Martha Peace and Stuart Scott, *The Faithful Parent: A Biblical Guide to Raising a Family* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2001), 3.

pastors, and church volunteers can supplement parental figures as disciple-makers of youth, but based upon biblical design, teaching the gospel to children is the primary responsibility of parental figures.

This chapter consists of three sections, each with multiple subsections, supporting the thesis previously stated. First, with support from 1 Kings 2:1-4, I illuminate the diligence of discipleship required of parental figures as a lifelong obedience. This section serves as a charge for parental figures and encourages a mindset that begins with faithfulness and evolves to shaping children with biblical discipleship. Second, I show how God speaks through the psalmist in Psalm 127:1-5 elevating the importance of building a heritage of children who are favored in the Lord. This section supports God as the Master-Builder and shows how building begins at infancy. This section further discusses how the heritage of the Lord is found in the lives of children and highlights the importance of parental figures' aiming to hit the marks of biblical discipleship. Third, I make this same case using the words of the apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:1-4. Paul spoke confidently to the church of Ephesus by guiding parents and children simultaneously to be intentional in their relationship grounded by faith in the gospel. This passage teaches the idea that family matters to God.

Throughout the chapter, I employ scriptural support bringing light to the negligence that parental figures have displayed and how the truth of the gospel can redirect their hearts.

In his book *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, Tedd Tripp argues that the gospel uniquely meets the needs of fallen humanity.<sup>2</sup> This book is intended for parents with children of all ages. It provides insightful perspectives for shepherding a child's heart in the direction of the Lord. These refreshing biblical approaches extend great wisdom in

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<sup>2</sup> Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 1995), xix.

the area of child-rearing. Tripp proclaims, “Our culture has lost its way with respect to parenting. We are a rudderless ship without a compass. We lack both a sense of direction and the capacity to direct ourselves.”<sup>3</sup> From the Old Testament to the New Testament, there are varying methods of communication that elaborate the crucial responsibility of parents disciplining their children in a godly manner. Without parental commitment to these biblical commands, there will be a generation of children without direction or hope.

### **King David’s Charge (1 Kgs 2)**

In 1 Kings 2, David delivers a charge—perhaps packaged as a farewell but received as a salutation—that empowers his child, Solomon, as a son, a man, a husband, a king, and a father. King David illuminates the necessary diligence in discipleship for parental figures to their children as a lifelong obedience. Beginning even before their baby’s conception, parental figures can become faithful in understanding that it is only through God’s grace that they will receive the strength and endurance to obey this lifelong discipleship command to disciple their children.

In an assumable yet inevitable transition for a father and son, the setting in 1 Kings 2 reveals that even in the last words of the parental figure, one can disciple one’s child. King David imprints an exclamation point on the heart of his son as he prepares for the heavens: “So be strong, act like a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in obedience to him, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and regulations, as written in the Law of Moses” (vv. 2-3). Possibly, this statement can be described as a charge to parental figures to empower their children with faith in God for a lifetime.

From a wide scope, this can be perceived as a leadership transition as well. Not only does this dynamic present an intimate moment between father and son, but a transfer of power. In any shift of leadership, specific protocols must be executed in order to

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<sup>3</sup> Tripp, *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*, xv.

explain tasks. As Donald Wiseman explains, “By God-given requirement a ruler had to pass on his responsibilities to his successor (Deut. 17:18-20). Such final directives marked a transfer of leadership, as by Moses (Deut. 31:1-8), Joshua (Josh. 23:1-16) and Samuel (1 Sam. 12:1-25).”<sup>4</sup> This particular scenario was unique and involved common practices as well as discipleship. The combination of a leadership transfer and a father-son relationship gives a different perspective when unpacking the depth of the verse.

King David was served at his bedside for the remaining days of his life by servants of his kingdom. Philip Graham Ryken provides imagery to this powerful scene: “The old king was on his deathbed. In fact, he had been in bed since the opening verse of 1 Kings, when, despite the best efforts of his servants, he simply could not stay warm. Although he had managed to rouse himself long enough to appoint Solomon as his successor, David was still dying.”<sup>5</sup> In a larger context, this moment was the end of a legendary and tumultuous era. Even this larger-than-life biblical figure had to go the way of all the flesh, but he had a final charge to his son that communicated the divine responsibility for furthering the dynasty that would ultimately save humanity of their sins. Acts 13:36 supports that David served God’s purpose in his own generation.<sup>6</sup>

This final charge is arguably David’s offering of his last will and testament. In his two-part speech to his son Solomon, David began with laying the foundation spiritually, which this section focuses on. In this charge, David communicated to his son what perhaps he believed made a man. The king ended his speech with practical advice as a leader; he insisted on providing wisdom to Solomon on how to lead as king politically.

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<sup>4</sup> Donald Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 1993), 74.

<sup>5</sup> Philip Graham Ryken, *1 Kings*, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2011), 43.

<sup>6</sup> Acts 13:36, “Now when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed.”

To begin the farewell, it was apparent that David's words were heavy and full of experience. Ryken declares, "David wanted the same thing for Solomon that every father wants for their son: he wanted Solomon to be strong; he wanted Solomon to be a man. But David defined man very differently from the way most people define it."<sup>7</sup> Manhood is ambiguous; the definition consists of attributes such as physical strength, sexual conquest, and a successful career. Ryken continues, "Many people think that physical strength, or sexual activity, or professional success, or financial independence will make a man. But if these are the only thing we live for, we will waste our lives, because what makes a man is obedience to the Word of God."<sup>8</sup> King David had been a warrior king with physical strength, he had been a man of sexual conquest (which brought great shame), and he had abundant wealth; yet, he did not articulate these things to his son in his final words because conceivably his understanding of manhood had humbly matured.

When David told Solomon to walk in God's ways, he was telling him to live a godly lifestyle. King David emphasized God's having a chief influence upon the way a man thinks, behaves, and approaches his manner of life. In Ryken's words,

When it comes to godly manliness, God's Word puts everything in proper perspective. The Bible teaches a man to join his physical strength to patience and gentleness, so that rather than striking out in selfish anger, he uses his power to protect the weak. The Bible teaches a man to bring his sexual desire under the control of the Holy Spirit. Rather than satisfying his own lusts, he gives his whole body and his whole heart to one woman for a lifetime, so in his daily calling, so that his work brings honor to Jesus Christ instead of to himself, and so that his wealth can advance the kingdom of God rather than being used for his own foolish pleasures. The best and only way to avoid wasting your life is to base everything you do on the Word of God.<sup>9</sup>

King David explained to his child why it was so important to walk in the way of the

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<sup>7</sup> Ryken, *1 Kings*, 50.

<sup>8</sup> Ryken, *1 Kings*, 51.

<sup>9</sup> Ryken, *1 Kings*, 52.

Lord: “Do this so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go and that the Lord may keep his promise to me: ‘If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a successor on the throne of Israel’” (1 Kgs 2:3-4). King David ended his exhortation in this profound way possibly because he wanted to remind his son that God keeps his promises and will bless the royal house.

King David passed on experiential wisdom to his son Solomon, reminding him that God will provide prosperity with a commitment to faithfulness. This wisdom was due to David’s familiarity of God and the confidence he developed with God himself. Amidst his turbulent tenure at the helm of Israel, David remained faithful to God, and God blessed him. David made sure to communicate this in his final words.

King David was many things, to many people, but it may be forgotten that he was a parent. Parental figures will make mistakes in the course of child-rearing, but these mistakes can be renewed by one’s faithfulness towards God. King David fulfilled the necessary diligence in discipleship to his son. The passage discussed above gives direction and hope to all parental figures in the hope of fulfilling discipleship as a lifelong obedience. It also serves as a charge to all parental figures to emulate this example no matter what life may present. These promises hold true today. Parental figures who follow biblical principles will prosper (Ps 1:1-3; Matt 7:24-25). Just as David communicated these wise words to his son, the thrust of this passage will only be preserved by parental figures’ faithful obedience to the Word of God now and for centuries to come.

### **Begin with Faithfulness**

The charge to parental figures supported by the argument unpacked with King David’s example, begins with faithfulness. The word “faithful” appears numerous times in the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, “faithful” is used to describe God.

It means to possess permanence, truth, certainty, steadfastness, surety, and trustworthiness, and it carries the idea of a firm and sure support.<sup>10</sup> As described in the New Testament, “faithful” means to be “trusted, reliable, or true.”<sup>11</sup> These definitions reveal the reverence behind the word and the intention that God has for it in the efforts of those blessed to be parental figures. King David remained faithful until his final breath.

In their book *The Faithful Parent*, Martha Peace and Stuart Scott express unique biblical insight supporting the notion of faithfulness as the cornerstone of parenting. They emphasize the importance of a parent’s relationship with God. It is assumed that Christian parents want their children to follow Christ, but it is critical that parents remain faithful whether their children do or do not. *The Faithful Parent* is filled with practical and biblical advice for parents of children of all age groups. Peace and Scott take readers on a journey to discover how God—in all circumstances—will inevitably have the most impact on children.

Peace and Scott leverage the significance of faithfulness by finding support in the gospel. They communicate the gospel’s core by showing how “faithfulness, not perfection, is rewarded by the Lord. That’s because we can no more live a sinless life than we can make our children do the same thing. Only our Lord Jesus is he ‘who knew no sin’. He never sinned, but we do, and he knew we would need his help and encouragement to raise our children faithfully as he desires.”<sup>12</sup> King David was far from perfect, but Scripture would argue that he remained faithful to God. Peace and Scott press upon the importance of consistent encouragement and the great responsibility parental figures must undertake in order to sustain the journey of lifelong obedience in faithfully

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<sup>10</sup> James Strong, *The New Strong’s Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Hebrew Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 10 (#539).

<sup>11</sup> W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of the New Testament* (Old Tappan, NJ: H. Revell, 1966), 72.

<sup>12</sup> Peace and Scott, *The Faithful Parent*, 4-5.

bringing up a child in the ways of the Lord. The authors affirm, “A person who is striving to honor the Lord in parenting, repenting, and changing is a faithful parent.”<sup>13</sup> Did King David reveal these characteristics?

In one of the most infamous developments throughout all of Scripture, David found himself in a severe moment of weakness. He deceitfully ordered a man, Uriah, to be murdered in order to commit adultery with the man’s wife, Bathsheba, subsequently impregnating her. David’s deception in leading Uriah to battle in order to ultimately share intimacy with Bathsheba placed a crimson stain on the legacy of David’s kingship. However, as revealed in Psalm 51:3, the king offered authentic repentance: “For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.” As mentioned previously, David delivers experiential wisdom in 1 Kings 2—wisdom that is passed on through discipleship. Parental figures have more to offer than they may acknowledge, but, ultimately, this experiential wisdom can serve to be impactful when sharing it with their children. David revealed his faithfulness by remaining trustworthy that God portrays a steadfast love and he would recover from this season of sin.

### **Shape with Discipleship**

As David demonstrated with his son Solomon, parental figures can emulate this example and shape their children with biblical discipleship. Unfortunately, the biblical method of discipleship, or disciple-making, has transitioned to more passive suggestions rather than intentional Christlike guidance. The newfound cultural mold is flawed and possesses shortcomings, but with faithfulness, the end result will be victory in the Lord. Disciple-making means sharing the good news about God’s grace and how it can be obtained through Jesus Christ. Disciple-making is intended to give God glory.

Rod Dempsey, professor of educational ministries at Liberty University,

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<sup>13</sup> Peace and Scott, *The Faithful Parent*, 5.



exhorts, “Our motivation as disciple makers is to bring the maximum amount of glory to God in our lives and in the lives of those we serve.”<sup>14</sup> In their book *Disciple Making Is . . .*, Dempsey and Dave Early provide the entire scope of disciple-making in a way that inspires and informs readers to obey the Great Commission with great passion while giving God the glory. According to Dempsey,

As disciples, bringing glory to God should be present in every facet of our lives. There are several different stages in our development as disciples of Jesus. Yet in all phases we are created to bring God glory: we are saved to bring God glory; we grow spiritually to bring God glory; we serve to bring God glory; in our suffering we bring God glory; we use our gifts, bearing fruit to bring God glory. Every aspect of our lives should be lived to fulfill God’s plan for our lives, namely to bring Him glory.<sup>15</sup>

Dempsey and Early highlight each phase of disciple-making throughout their book. Beginning with biblical and theological foundations, they leverage bringing God glory as the initial phase that aims disciple-makers towards the cross. Beginning to shape the understanding of discipleship in this manner will empower parental figures to cling onto the truth that claims God as the centerpiece of it all.

While disciple-making involves a variety of phases which will be communicated further on in this paper, biblical accountability is at the forefront. Arguably, this accountability requires reshaping thoughts, actions, behaviors, and worldview. Discipleship is a responsibility that should never be taken lightly, and one must develop an endurance for this task as the journey ahead can be tumultuous. Many scholars—over the course of centuries and decades—have educated their contemporary culture in methods and theological interpretations of discipleship. Martin Luther, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, and A.W. Tozer to name a few. Maybe these trends have faded and have served more as a fad, while others, such as

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<sup>14</sup> Dave Early and Rod Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is . . . : How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville: B&H, 2013), 19.

<sup>15</sup> Early and Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is . . .*, 20.

Bonhoeffer, have been cemented into disciple-making principles that will forever be considered timeless.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a courageous Lutheran pastor and founding member of the Confessing Church. Numerous writings from Bonhoeffer remain on the syllabi of seminarians around the globe, and these writings on discipleship are considered to be widely influential. Bonhoeffer's literary labors illuminated the necessities of discomfort, sacrifice, and being led solely by Jesus in discipleship while giving glory to God in this pursuit. Bonhoeffer examines this idea in his book *Discipleship* by stating,

Where will the call to discipleship lead those who follow? What decisions and painful separations will it entail? We must take this question to him who alone knows the answer. Only Jesus Christ, who bids us follow him, knows where the path will lead. But we know that it will be a path full of mercy beyond measure. Discipleship is joy.<sup>16</sup>

Bonhoeffer, having been imprisoned for his involvement in anti-Nazi activities, recalled the dedication and sacrifice discipleship required. Debatably, Biblical accountability takes Christ-followers on a journey that will encounter painful separations, but in the end, giving God the glory will produce a heavenly joy.

King David, like Bonhoeffer, experienced numerous hardships, but he consistently showed resiliency. This marked David as a man after God's own heart (see 1 Sam 13:14). Jesus further communicated the marks of discipleship while refocusing efforts of discipleship towards obeying the will of the Father: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt 7:21).

At different phases of the Christian journey, believers may question whether they are living or obeying God's will for their life. For King David, for the disciples of Jesus, and for parental figures, how can Christians be certain that they are living a life

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<sup>16</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, trans. Barbara Green and Richard Krauss (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), xi.

that brings glory to God and are providing a life of discipleship to others? A. W. Tozer's work provides a remedy for this issue.

Tozer was a Christian pastor, author, and influential theologian. In his book *Discipleship*, he warns of the malpractice of discipleship, urging those embracing the responsibility to steer clear of substituting this biblical command with anything outside of God's will.<sup>17</sup> These cautionary cries need to be understood in order to better identify the true marks of biblical discipleship. As I have previously argued in this chapter, discipleship has transitioned to more passive suggestions rather than intentional Christlike guidance. This supports the claim of Tozer and why it is important to avoid substitutionary discipleship efforts.

Tozer's three examples of substitutionary discipleship include pietism, literalism, and zealous religious activity. Pietism is described as an enjoyable feeling of affection for a person, and it is not valued in cross-bearing or keeping the commandments of Christ.<sup>18</sup> Within this specific approach, an absence of practical obedience would be the main deterrent due to the fact that its source is found in feeling as opposed to an ardent love—found through the Holy Spirit—towards Jesus. Discipleship can take a turn to pleasing others as opposed to bringing God the glory, ultimately falling short of the command. Tozer's explanation of pietism reveals this danger.

Next, Tozer describes literalism: "Literalism manifests itself among us in many ways, but it can always be identified in that it lives by the letter of the Word while ignoring its spirit."<sup>19</sup> Jesus's approaching the Pharisees to address their tithing of mint, anise, and cumin while dismissing the heavier matters of the law highlights the void in

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<sup>17</sup> A. W. Tozer, *Discipleship: What It Truly Means to Be a Christian—Collected Insights* (Chicago: Moody, 2018), 11-14.

<sup>18</sup> Tozer, *Discipleship*, 11.

<sup>19</sup> Tozer, *Discipleship*, 13.

their hearts because the law was intended to direct individuals to acknowledge issues such as justice, mercy, and faith (Matt 23:23). Tozer goes on to articulate that literalism attempts to shape a holy temple upon a sandy foundation of a religious self. In conclusion, he exclaims, “It will suffer, sacrifice, and labor, but it will not die.”<sup>20</sup> If there is not death to oneself, then there cannot be resurrection in Jesus himself. This approach can lead to self-righteousness as opposed to selfless service unto others.

The final area of substitution for discipleship that Tozer discusses is zealous religious activity. This topic can be argued as one of the chief influences contributing to the destruction of the modern-day church. Tozer contends, “Christ has become a project to be promoted or a cause to be served instead of a Lord to be obeyed.”<sup>21</sup> This puts a hitch in understanding Christian spirituality and leads people to pursue religion over God. Religion can fall towards the will of a person, or whatever may suit one’s desires, as opposed to the origination found in the sovereign will of the Lord. Redirecting zealotry towards the direction of obeying the will of the Lord is an excellent foundation for biblical discipleship. Identifying the substitutionary methods of discipleship may bring conviction to those practicing unbiblical styles. Subsequently, however, this perhaps allows Christians to detect marks of true discipleship when eradicating falsities that are detrimental to emulating Christ’s example.

The apostle Paul writes in Romans 2 that the invisible actions of God can now be clearly seen when the work of God is in a person. Many Christian scholars have written on the marks of Christian discipleship. It is a consistent topic discussed in contemporary Christian writings. Tozer argues that if authentic pursuit of Jesus is actualized, these marks should be clearly seen in a person. This is because he believes no man or woman is ever the same after God has laid his hand upon him or her. As a result,

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<sup>20</sup> Tozer, *Discipleship*, 13-14.

<sup>21</sup> Tozer, *Discipleship*, 13-14.

there will clearly be certain marks that separate a Christian from a non-believer.

The first mark of discipleship to be examined is a deep reverence for all things divine. John Piper, Christian author and pastor, professes, “Without doubt, for human beings the affection of love is well-placed and successful when placed in God,”<sup>22</sup> for this is the first and greatest commandment: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matt 22:37). Piper, like Tozer, reveals powerful reverence to the holy God in all of his writings.

Tozer explains the deep reverence that will appear clearly in a person participating in discipleship: “A sense of the sacred must be present or there can be no receptivity to God and truth. This mysterious feeling of awe precedes repentance and faith and is nothing else but a gift from heaven.”<sup>23</sup> Reverence and sacredness necessitate a seriousness that honors the path set before the Christian. When developing a spirituality such as this, a Christian humbly recognizes God and truth as synonymous.

The next mark of discipleship to be considered is the possession of a supreme moral sensitivity. The fluctuation of cultural trends creates waves of insensitivity towards matters of the heart. This mark is found in the work of God in a person who possesses transformed thoughts, behaviors, and actions that shape him or her to be acutely sensitive towards the things of evil. As Kelly Kopic and Justin Taylor assert, “Sin moves by drawing the mind away from God, enticing the affections and twisting desires and paralyzing the will, thus stunting any real Christian growth.”<sup>24</sup> If there is no sensitivity towards evil, then the evil will deceitfully stunt the discipleship process. Supreme moral sensitivity supplies an empathy towards those hurting and finding themselves in need due

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<sup>22</sup> John Piper, *The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God's Delight in Being God* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah Books, 2000), 6.

<sup>23</sup> Tozer, *Discipleship*, 17.

<sup>24</sup> Kelly M. Kopic and Justin Taylor, eds., introduction to *Overcoming Sin and Temptation*, by John Owen (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 7.

to the sin festering in their souls.

Further, Tozer explains, “Inward repulsion toward the swine pen that rouses the prodigal and starts him back home is a gift of God to His chosen.”<sup>25</sup> This ripens a unique and mighty moral discontent towards all things opposing God. And the source of such opposition is found in sin. Sin has its pleasures (Heb 11:25), and the vast majority of humanity “strike a truce with it quite early in life and are not troubled by much of it thereafter.”<sup>26</sup> This mark is clearly seen when the work of God in a person transitions him or her to be bitter towards sin in the world and, more importantly, in him- or herself.

The accountability of biblical discipleship is victorious when the refinement process exposes marks such as these. True biblical marks of discipleship bring glory to God. This responsibility can and should be the tip of the spear in regards to a parental figure’s worldview. To observe these discipleship marks in children will give joy for generations. Parental figures must gain endurance every step of the way as the discipleship process is a lifelong obedience.

Peace and Scott conclude their book by encouraging parents with a plea for accountability: “Next to our salvation and our spouses, our children are the most important gift that God has given us. What love and joy they bring into our lives and, at times, what great sorrow.”<sup>27</sup> Faithfulness is identified in a heroic biblical figure such as King David in his pursuit of God’s own heart. This faithfulness is shown dynamically through his role as a parental figure. Faithfulness produces grace, which produces the ability to fulfill the lifelong task of discipleship. Peace and Scott further exhort parents, “As a faithful parent, continue to grow in God’s grace and take delight in his commands. Let your children see that God’s commands are joy and not a burden. No matter the ages

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<sup>25</sup> Tozer, *Discipleship*, 18.

<sup>26</sup> Tozer, *Discipleship*, 18.

<sup>27</sup> Peace and Scott, *The Faithful Parent*, 209.

of your children, love and enjoy them.”<sup>28</sup> The necessary diligence required of parental figures’ discipling—as a lifelong obedience—their children can be obtained through faithfulness to God.

### **The Master-Builder’s Perspective (Ps 127)**

Building is a concept usually associated with construction, but in Psalm 127:1-5, God communicates the spiritual components required for building up children. The psalmist stresses to parental figures the importance of building up children through the notion that they are a heritage and privilege given by God. As supported in the previous section, the diligence of discipleship of children is a lifelong obedience. As with building up anything or anyone practically, the process requires diligence. God calls parental figures to build up children by their (i.e., parents’) aiming to fulfill biblical obedience mandated by the Lord and humbly receiving children as a heritage from the heavens.

Parental figures are tasked with being faithful and trusting God to be the Master-Builder of their children. There is no scriptural passage that instructs parental figures to be self-reliant in raising up their children. In his best-known work *The Treasury of David*, esteemed Baptist preacher and writer Charles Spurgeon pleads, “We are here taught that builders of houses and cities, systems and fortunes, empires and churches all labour in vain without the Lord; but under the divine favour they enjoy perfect rest.”<sup>29</sup> In the pursuit of obedience unto the Lord, vanity should be absent, subsequently, favor will bless the approach and spiritual growth will ensue.

For clarity in understanding the difference between building in vain and the alternative, two biblical examples will suffice. First, the tower of Babel is a prime

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<sup>28</sup> Peace and Scott, *The Faithful Parent*, 210.

<sup>29</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: An Original Exposition of the Book of Psalms; A Collection of Illustrative Extracts from the Whole Range of Literature; A Series of Homiletical Hints upon Almost Every Verse; and Lists of Writers upon each Psalm* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984), 83.

example of disobedience. Spurgeon avows, “So was it with the Babel builders; they said, ‘Go to, let us build us a city and a tower’; and the Lord returned their words into their own bosoms saying, ‘Go to, let us go down and there confound their language.’ In vain they toiled, for the Lord’s face was against them.”<sup>30</sup> Similarly, parental figures who are building up their children should never be found toiling in vain; rather, they should be pursuing God and prayerfully requesting his face to shine upon their discipleship efforts. This lens of faithfulness will communicate a humility that impacts generations.

Second, King Solomon displayed biblical obedience when he entrusted God as the Master-Builder and received support in the building of the temple. When it was time to build, matters were very different because God blessed the erection of the palace. All things were united under God to aid Solomon in this undertaking. Psalm 127 shifts from construction-related illustrations of a building to the revelation of an analogy of building up children as a heritage from God. Learning from the people of Babel, it is convincing that God’s intentions for parental figures are that they would not raise their children in vain. Scripture reveals that parental figures are receiving children as an inheritance from God; therefore, parental figures’ honoring him in building up their children should not be done in vain but by trusting that God will be the Master-Builder.

### **Begin at Infancy**

The foundation of the child is the platform that a parental figure builds, and according to God, it should be in unison with his commands. Spurgeon boasts, “Not only do we now spend our strength for nought without Jehovah, but all who have ever labored apart from him come under the same sentence. Trowel and hammer, saw and plane are instruments of vanity unless the Lord be the Master-builder.”<sup>31</sup> God entrusts parental

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<sup>30</sup> Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 83.

<sup>31</sup> Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 84.



figures to be instrumental elements in raising children. This responsibility is not to be delegated to Christian schools, youth pastors, children’s ministry directors, or church volunteers. These individuals mentioned are arguably paramount in the building process; however, God, the Master-Builder, has made it clear that parental figures are to embrace children as a gift, a privilege, and a responsibility to be fulfilled.

The word “sons” in Hebrew is defined as “builders.” Spurgeon describes these “builders” as being set-up or set-forth in order to build up families under God’s divine blessing.<sup>32</sup> Spurgeon declares that this approach to obedience would bring great honor and happiness to the parents having children and grandchildren while building a legacy of godliness. As discussed, vainness is useless to God. It is impractical and unbiblical in raising children. This understanding charges parental figures to direct their focus to the diligence required in building up a child, beginning at infancy.

Parenting can be defined in many different ways. Biblical parenting is outlined by a culmination of Scriptures, but it can be easily deterred by worldly philosophies. Tedd Tripp explains, “Recognizing God has called you to function as His agent defines your task as a parent. Our culture has reduced parenting to providing care. Parents often see the task in these narrow terms.”<sup>33</sup> Tripp brings to light the disengagement from biblical responsibility and the consequent engagement in a weak form of care-taking. He petitions, “If you are going to direct them in the ways of the Lord, as Genesis 18 calls you to, you must know them and their inclinations. This task requires more than simply providing adequate food, clothing, and shelter.” Tripp further illuminates the crisis of parental figures delegating God-given responsibilities to others. In order to build up a child, parental figures must know the child.

If a parental figure neglects diligence in discipleship, innocent ignorance will

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<sup>32</sup> Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 90.

<sup>33</sup> Tripp, *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*, 33.

cultivate deadly sin from within a child. Tripp pours salt on a hidden wound when he labels parental figures' separation from biblical parenting as a form of care-taking. This delegation of biblical responsibility serves as a spiritual cancer, and this ministry project hopes to encourage the utilization of the cure found in the gospel.

Peace and Scott support starting discipleship early: "The Scriptures do not tell us much about babies. What we do learn, we glean from Scriptures that use babies as an illustration of another point."<sup>34</sup> As seen in Psalm 127, a builder must have precise intentionality in order to convey that the building up process has a goal to meet. Examples of biblical intentionality in beginning discipleship as early as infancy can be found in Lamentations, the Gospel of Matthew, 1 Thessalonians, and 1 Peter. In these illustrations, the inspired writers implement persuasive features that capture the innocence of an infant as well as empower adults to better reflect their child's innocence by serving an almighty God.

### **A Favorable Heritage**

The psalmist states how children are a heritage from the Lord. They are an offspring and a reward from him. The word "heritage" (*nachalah*) is mentioned over two hundred times in the Old Testament. The widespread usage indicates that heritage, or inheritance, is exceptionally important to God. Therefore, children's being a heritage from God means that they are the highest gift that he provides following salvation through his Son, Jesus Christ. Christian scholar H. T. Armfield states that the language of the Targum, an ancient Hebrew manuscript, seems to imply that children are a heritage belonging to the Lord and not a heritage given by the Lord.<sup>35</sup> This encapsulates the unfathomable love God has for all his children. Parental figures must fall back into the

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<sup>34</sup> Peace and Scott, *The Faithful Parent*, 41.

<sup>35</sup> H. T. Armfield, quoted in Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 93.

illustrations regarding infancy with a sense of nostalgia, belonging as a child of God themselves and now being blessed in receiving an inheritance from God to build up his heritage and advance his kingdom.

Puritan pastor and theologian Joseph Caryl furthers this point by noting the significance that children belong to God and how the wealth of inheritance is found to be more in children than in land and houses. Caryl contends, “But are not houses and lands, gold and silver, an heritage bestowed by the Lord upon his people? Doubtless they are, for the earth is his, and the fullness of it, and he gives it to the children of men. But though all things are of God, yet all things are not alike of him: children are more of God than houses and lands.”<sup>36</sup> Heritage can be communicated in a variety of ways, but in the eyes of God, children hold a special weight, and such importance is consistently revealed in the Scriptures.

### **Hit the Mark**

Why are parental figures continuously miscarrying the delivery of the gospel while God consistently reveals its significance as the foundation for child’s source of new life? Parental figures have become wayward in executing their biblical responsibilities, and their parenting styles have been described as care-taking. Psalm 127:4-5 reminds, “Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.” The mark arguably is not to just take care of children but to teach them, discipline them, and keep them maturing through biblical accountability. Parental figures must aim in this direction. Parental figures must disciple their children.

Parenting and following God are difficult tasks. In victory and in suffering, believers are encouraged to continue to have faith. Obedience to the Scriptures does not

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<sup>36</sup> Joseph Caryl, quoted in Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 93.

guarantee that Christians will avoid difficulty and suffering, but such obedience will net God’s favor. Spurgeon focuses on the significance of diligence among Christians. This topic can allow Christ-followers to focus on stewardship in the resources and opportunities provided. Also, being good stewards as parental figures requires diligence, and diligence produces favor in God’s eyes. As Spurgeon states, “We are bound to be diligent, for this the Lord blesses . . . . He gives children as a favor.”<sup>37</sup> This argument allows Christians to grasp the truth of diligent discipleship and how impactful it can be for the familial unit as a whole.

In parental figures’ efforts to build up children, aiming parenting methods in the direction of God will result in glory to God and favor among the family. The aim is Jesus, and in return, his marks will be saturated upon the children.

### **The Apostle Paul’s Affirmation (Eph 6)**

In Ephesians 6:1-4, the apostle Paul speaks confidently to the church at Ephesus, simultaneously guiding parental figures and children to be intentional in their relationship. These truths are to be grounded in obedience, honor, and discipline. Paul articulates the duty of children towards their parental figures in verses 1-3, and he follows up with the duty of parental figures in verse 4. Paul sums up the duty of children towards their parental figures in two words: obey and honor. Paul argues that children must also uphold their biblical mandates when appropriately they are taught and modeled by their parental figures.

### **The Household Code**

Andreas J. Köstenberger explains Paul’s “household code” as follows: “The apostle Paul considered children’s obedience to be vital.”<sup>38</sup> The “household code” refers

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<sup>37</sup> Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 84-85.

<sup>38</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*,

to the Greco-Roman standard of living. Köstenberger describes it as “a literary device or kind of list that addresses the various members of the household as to their duties, usually progressing from the ‘lesser’ (i.e. the one under authority) to the ‘greater’ (i.e. the one in a position of authority).”<sup>39</sup> In the larger context surrounding Ephesians 6, it is clear that children’s obedience to their parental figure’s method of discipleship would be a result of their (i.e., the children’s) being filled with the Holy Spirit. If there is evidence of the Holy Spirit in children, then they would develop an understanding of obedience. This would be arguably evident in the children’s behavior.

The word “obey” (6:1) implies that children have a readiness to hear and obey the orders of their parental figures. Negligence in teaching obedience falls on irresponsible parental figures. As Köstenberger writes,

By way of implication, it is critical that parents teach children the importance of obedience. Parents who neglect to hold their children accountable for rendering obedience fail them in that they do not help them along the path of Christian discipleship, of which obedience is a central component. Hence the primary importance of obedience is not for parents to receive their children’s obedience, but for parents to help children to learn to exercise obedience ultimately in their relationship with God. The fact that proper obedience is possible, for children as well as for adults, ultimately only as a result of faith commitment to Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit, suggests that introducing the child to a personal relationship with God in Christ ought to be a burning fire in the heart of every Christian parent (primarily because of their concern for their child’s salvation). Nevertheless, obedience should be demanded and disobedience punished, even in non-Christian (as of yet) children.<sup>40</sup>

Not only are the children ordered to listen to their parental figures; they must also carry out, or follow through on, what was communicated to display honor and respect.

### **God’s Authority**

The absence of obedience reveals an absence of authority. Authority is not

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2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 105.

<sup>39</sup> Köstenberger, *God, Marriage, and Family*, 104.

<sup>40</sup> Köstenberger, *God, Marriage, and Family*, 106-7.

grounded in the parents themselves but, instead, the authority to which they submit when they obey God. In an effort to teach this concept, the apostle Paul explains the act of obedience to have a layer of love furnished with encouragement. Scottish Christian scholar William Barclay delivers this interpretation in an inspiring manner: “As Paul sees it, children must honor their parents and parents must never discourage their children.”<sup>41</sup> Barclay continues, “The honor Paul demands is not the honor of mere lip service. The way to honor parents is to obey them, respect, them, and never cause them pain.” Children need an example in order to be redirected to the ultimate authority found in God and Christ.

When teaching obedience, parental figures can be encouraged to reflect the approach that God has shown consistently in the Bible. Doing so leads children to observe their parental figures’ working by faith under the authority of God—the one who possesses ultimate authority. Christian author Wally Metts states that the first act of sin was a violation of the principle authority: “God’s simple command, ‘Thou shall not eat of it,’ was rationalized, reconsidered, then laid aside, as a whole race fell into ruin. Understanding and applying God’s principles of authority is a very important part of our lives.”<sup>42</sup> An absence of parental figures’ recognition of God’s authority reveals an irresponsible acceptance of disobedience.

Irresponsible parenting is not new; nor is it groundbreaking. Irresponsible methods in parenting has revealed parental figures’ negligence in delivering the gospel to their children, while God consistently reveals its significance as the foundation for children’s source of new life. The Christian family dynamic pronounced by Paul communicates fully the importance of honor, obedience, and discipline. This “household

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<sup>41</sup> William Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 177.

<sup>42</sup> Wally Metts, *Ephesians: All This and Heaven Too* (San Antonio, TX: Accent, 1980), 95.

code” can serve as the incubator for each family member, allowing for daily spiritual nourishment and accountability. Children’s having examples in the household will provide them with deeper understanding and propel them towards maturity in Christ.

### **Conclusion**

James Emery White is spearheading studies in an increasing trend of what has been coined “the rise of the nones.” White defines this movement as follows: “What are the nones? The short answer is that they are religiously unaffiliated. When asked about their religion, they did not answer ‘Baptist’ or ‘Catholic’ or any other defined faith. They picked a new category: none.”<sup>43</sup> White’s research indicates that the number of the religiously unaffiliated has doubled over the past two decades. This form of irresponsibility is fueling the delegation of biblical responsibility to others that God commanded to parental figures. Such delegation is proving to be influencing a religious pandemic that is elevating this new category as the fastest-growing religious community in the United States.

A generation is being raised up that claims no religious affiliation, and this same generation will be tasked with raising up children of their own. Who is to blame? Has the church deterred these “nones”? Is it because parents have taken their foot off the gas pedal in regards to discipleship and obedience to biblical mandates? A family revival is a hope that can renovate the landscape and flatten the curve concerning destructive and passive efforts in the rising generation.

A lifelong obedience of discipleship requires endurance, forgiveness, and faith. Building a child up in the way of the Lord takes precision, patience, and trust. And establishing a biblical household code by obedience, honor, and discipline involves a love of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>43</sup> James Emery White, *Rise of the Nones: Understanding and Reaching the Religiously Unaffiliated* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2014), 14.

Whether it be cultural trends, churches' compromising Christian principles, or families' delegating to others the responsibility of teaching their children the gospel, the truth is that things need to change. Parents must regain confidence in their ability to be disciple-makers. Insecurity, laziness, and doubt are attacks of the enemy. Christians are reminded in the book of James, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind" (Jas 1:5-6). With faithfulness in God, the unlimited and all-powerful source of wisdom, this revival can serve as a redirection for generations to come.



### CHAPTER 3

#### THE THEORETICAL, PRACTICAL, AND HISTORICAL BASIS FOR STUDENT-LED FAMILY REVIVALS

For many students and parental figures, family worship and church attendance are minimal or even obsolete. Parental figures likely blame complicated or busy schedules, and students, especially those who do not drive, are at the disposal of their parental figures to take them to, or bring them back from, basically everywhere. But those students who attend private Christian schools are entrenched in an environment that has the capability to minister the gospel of Jesus Christ each and every day. Why not leverage those opportunities in order to bring about change—better yet, revival—within the familial unit that is lacking momentum towards the foot of the cross? This chapter analyses three specific areas of subject matter that ultimately support the approach of leading a family revival through the platform of private Christian school students.

The first section discusses and defines the power of revival by revealing historical evidence of revivals within the context of the United States and how they were initiated by the outpouring of the Spirit of God. Also, this section highlights scholars and pastors who experienced revival themselves. The second section examines a basic theoretical understanding of paradox and then emphasizes paradoxical illustrations found in Scripture. This section illuminates the ability to introduce the family revival directed through the student in an effort to transform parental figures. This chapter concludes by identifying family ministry trends over many generations and the issues they have presented. In an attempt to expose these issues, this approach displays the trajectory of the family dynamic while bidding to redirect and develop new, stronger trends. Contrary to the biblical design of the familial unit, it is argued that brokenness can be revived

through addressing issues in student and family ministry paradoxically. Theoretical, historical, and practical applications are provided throughout.

### **Understanding Revival**

The word “revival” has become an ambiguous term. It is misused, misappropriated, and misunderstood. Some understand revival to mean a series of meetings, a spiritual epiphany, or a religious spectacular, while others consider revival to be an emotional extravaganza. Even amidst the most renowned biblical scholars, this term is widely defined in a variety of different ways. The intention of this section is to introduce a few definitions of revival as well as define what revival is not, all while supporting the thesis that a family revival can occur through a group of students because of their faith in Jesus Christ.

Richard Owen Roberts is an acclaimed revival author, itinerant preacher, and biblical expositor. He has dedicated his lifetime of studies to learning about spiritual awakenings and revivals. Roberts has edited numerous books and pamphlets on the subject of revival and is also highly referenced on the topic by scholars alike. In his book *Revival!*, he discusses a myriad of questions that lead readers to crafting a biblical definition of revival. The book’s framework provides a who, what, when, where, how, and why format, building an understanding from the first page until the last.

Roberts’s opening remarks deter readers from falling into the misconceptions of revival by proclaiming, “Let me begin by declaring what I am not talking about. By revival I do not mean scheduled meetings. In many parts of America, it is common to hold ‘revivals.’ One frequently sees signs announcing: *Revival – One Week Only* or *Revival Every Night Except Saturday.*”<sup>1</sup> This assumption is the general understanding of revival. It is likely that churches, or the gatherings of multiple churches, attempt to

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Owen Roberts, *Revival!* (Wheaton, IL: Richard Owen Roberts, 2015), 15.

reenact what had transpired in the past as opposed to embracing what God has in store for the future. Roberts opposes planned revival and believes that this dynamic distracts attention from the primary source, which is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and that the evidence will shine brightly through the people in whom the Spirit resides. Roberts proclaims,

With the very life of God surging in the soul, the revived will be gripped by intense earnestness and a spirit of expectation. The God that raised up Jesus from the dead has raised them from their own graves of sin. The power that lifted the exalted Saviour to the heavens and placed Him on the right hand of the Father is working in them with quickening might.<sup>2</sup>

The gathering of multitudes of people and preaching the gospel is not revival. This approach opens the opportunity to engage with lost souls, but Roberts defends against this thought as revival by stating, “When the term revival is applied to organized mass evangelism, both concepts suffer. As significant as mass evangelism is, and as wise as it may be to organize this work carefully—such labors cannot be called revival with any degree of accuracy. Mass evangelism is work men do for Christ. Revival is something Christ does for men.”<sup>3</sup> During these mass gatherings, or consistent church growth, strategically laid out biblical principles may have been actualized, but these cannot be synonymous with revival. In revival, there is a wonder about it, a greater work at hand that is out of the norm and not estimated, predicted, or projected.

As with most spiritual conversations, fables, or experiences, it is wise to take the approach of being open but cautious to the encounters being discussed. There are people who use the term revival to manipulate the minds of others in order to please their selfish heart idols. These calculated efforts are intended to produce a fake religious experience. Roberts steers clear of this deceit and offers a definition of revival that full-

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<sup>2</sup> Roberts, *Revival!*, 27.

<sup>3</sup> Roberts, *Revival!*, 16.

heartedly infuses the purpose to be all about the work of God: “In using the term revival, I am speaking of an extraordinary movement of the Holy Spirit producing extraordinary results.”<sup>4</sup> This description cements revival as exclusive to the greater work of God. There is nothing man can do that is as extraordinary as one of the most minute works of God. In 1 Corinthians 1:27-29, Paul brings to light this understanding that only God encompasses the ability to invoke miracles: “But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.” Nothing man can do will ever be comparable to what God does and will forever do.

An extensive amount of scholarly work has been conducted over the past three hundred years of American history debating the true essence of revival and what truly solidifies its source. In his book *Revival and Revivalism*, British pastor and author Ian Murray offers exceptional insight into the historical evolution of revival throughout distinct phases of American history. Murray navigates readers through a wide variety of monumental moments, educating them on the significance of the esteemed Samuel Davies and the emergence of revivalism and concluding with the New York Awakening of 1857-1858.

Murray credits the first phase of revivalism (1620-1858) as the last general religious awakening in North America. He states, “Revival was understood to refer to some special seasons wherein God doth in a remarkable manner revive among his people.”<sup>5</sup> Beginning in that particular period, revivals of religion were always held in high appraisal by the church and its people. But over the years, especially in the latter

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<sup>4</sup> Roberts, *Revival!*, 16.

<sup>5</sup> Iain H. Murray, *Revival and Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism 1750-1858* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), xvii.

part of the nineteenth century, “a new view of revival came generally to displace the old, and a distinctly different phase in the understanding of the subject began.”<sup>6</sup>

William McLoughlin and Bernard Weisberger, both American historians, conducted a thorough historical and scientific examination on the subject of revival. McLoughlin opens his preface to *Modern Revivalism* by stating, “History has not dealt fairly with American revivals.”<sup>7</sup> His stance combats the opposing positions of many, but mostly that of Weisberger, who attempts to debunk the fanaticism of the subject.

In *They Gathered at the River*, Weisberger offers his strong opinion, declaring, “There are numerous histories of revivals in the United States written by devout ministers or worshippers in the evangelical denominations. They are, almost without exception, useless as history.”<sup>8</sup> As a historian, it is interesting yet infantile that Weisberger would take such a strong stance against revivals as he dedicated an entire book and invested much time into studying them.

It was due to the work of these two gentlemen, as well as many others, that a new term known as “revivalism” would be generated. As defined by author John Kent, “American revivalism began as a method of obtaining (at least in appearance) the external signs of conviction, repentance and rebirth.”<sup>9</sup> These external signs of revival described were signs of danger throughout American history and still serve as a hazard today. An external response entailed emotional charges and manufactured environments led by man and not by God. It was authenticity internally being stirred by the Spirit of God that proved to be a phenomenon that had high favor in its place in history.

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<sup>6</sup> Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, xviii.

<sup>7</sup> William G. McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York: Ronald Press, 1959), v.

<sup>8</sup> Bernard G. Weisberger, *They Gathered at the River: The Story of the Great Revivalists and Their Impact upon Religion in America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1958), 275.

<sup>9</sup> John Kent, *Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism* (London: Epworth Press, 1978), 367.

Nevertheless, this distinction between revival and revivalism has been crucial in determining which area of belief to camp on. The argument between the two is extensive, but this ministry project is grounded in revival—something extraordinary produced by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit’s internally transforming a people.

### **An Outpouring of the Holy Spirit**

Pastor, professor, and author Robert Davis Smart furthers the notion of historical spiritual outpourings in his book *Pentecostal Outpourings: Revival and The Reformed Tradition*. Smart gives biblical support in his introduction to defining revival as well as filters through many subsequent outpourings of the Holy Spirit throughout history that ultimately revived the church. Throughout the book, he differentiates by tradition, context, and specific regional culture while using biblical interpretation to gauge the motive of each revival being studied.

Smart begins his analysis with a familiar passage that exposes his own humble personal agenda: “Revivals cannot be merited by us but have been secured by another—Jesus Christ. Jesus tells his disciples that His righteous life and atoning death won for us ‘the promise of My Father’ (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4). When Jesus ascended to the Father and sat down at the right hand of God, He poured out His Holy Spirit at Pentecost.”<sup>10</sup> The Christian worldview would likely classify this event as a top-tier historical and redemptive occurrence, but it is arguably not the last time Christ poured out his Spirit.

Smart’s book “depicts these special seasons of mercy in such a way that readers will hope for revivals once more as well as learn from the past revival leaders.”<sup>11</sup> As Smart sifts through the prominent Reformed traditions and their leaders in revival, he lays out specific takeaways that give credence to his overall study. It came to his attention

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<sup>10</sup> Robert Davis Smart, *Pentecostal Outpourings: Revival and the Reformed Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2016), x.

<sup>11</sup> Smart, *Pentecostal Outpourings*, xi.

that Reformed leaders began to elaborate more so on the topics of doctrine, apologetics, and the intellect of revival as opposed to the spiritual components found in the Holy Spirit:

The Reformation deposited a deep concern not only for theology and doctrine but also for spiritual life in the church. Reformed churches that do not seek help from and welcome the special presence of the Holy Spirit may assume wrongly that all that really matters is an intellectual understanding of doctrine. Honest leaders will admit that their congregations may grow cold and lifeless without the help and power of the Holy Spirit to make their love for and worship of Christ strong and vibrant.<sup>12</sup>

The intention behind Smart's defense is to invite readers to refocus on, and truly seek, this Christlike experience while maintaining a holy hunger and desire for clean and full fruit that are found in revivals by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The fluctuation of thought and analysis throughout specific periods of history consistently redirects readers to avoid the synthetic trap of mind over soul. Developing a focus on the warmth and life found in Christ Jesus sets a course for a ministry to be postured and prepared for an outpouring of God's Spirit at any moment.

### **Jonathan Edwards on Revival**

Jonathan Edwards is one of the most—if not *the most*—prominent authors on the subject of revival. To describe Edwards and provide his accolades would be overwhelming, so in brief, Edwards can best be portrayed as theologian, philosopher, pastor, author, and pioneer of the expansion of Protestantism in the nineteenth century. He has written in abundance on the topic and experience of the Holy Spirit and revival. In his *Discourse on the Trinity*, Edwards proclaims that it is God's call on a leader's heart to wrestle with him for the "effusion of His Spirit" and that the "grand object of prayer" and the "grand promise of the New Testament" should be "fetched" by faith in Christ's finished work on the cross. Edwards declares that this specific work of the Holy Spirit

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<sup>12</sup> Smart, *Pentecostal Outpourings*, 254-55.

through Jesus was and will forever be “the sum of all blessings” to each and every one who believes on him.<sup>13</sup>

In 1733-1734, Edwards experienced a monumental moment during his ministry that would forever shape his idea and approach to the effusion of the Spirit of God. He recalled this experience in *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*. Thomas Kidd, professor of history and author, gives an overview of Edwards’s explanation in his book *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America*. Kidd describes Edwards’s account as systematic and that it was fair to frame it as a “stupendous stir.”<sup>14</sup>

Edwards was twenty-six years old when he wrote *A Faithful Narrative*, and he had just embraced leading, preaching, and teaching in the pulpit of Northampton, Massachusetts. He followed in the footsteps of the mighty Solomon Stoddard, who happened to be his maternal grandfather. Young people were attracted to his zeal, fervor, and intellectual capabilities in interpreting the Scriptures. Although educated as a theologian, his heart and calling as a pastor was always evident.

Early on during his tenure at the helm, Edwards realized that the orchestration of the Lord was at work, so he began evaluating how to respond in such a way that would benefit the souls of all involved. According to Kidd,

In 1733 Edwards began to notice that the congregations’ young people had adopted a new “flexibleness” in their attitudes towards his preaching. He insisted that they give up their “mirth and company-keeping” on Sunday evenings, and he began to see in them a willingness to comply. At the time Edwards also organized neighborhood meetings (the settlements encompassed by the Northampton congregation were far-flung) of fathers concerning the governance of their children. Surprisingly, the fathers reported that their children needed no extra chastening to get them to remain faithful to the Sabbath. The youths themselves were convinced

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<sup>13</sup> Jonathan Edwards, “Discourse on the Trinity,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 21, *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 136.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 16.



by Edwards preaching.<sup>15</sup>

The momentum of this excitement began to gain traction and Edwards decided to “strike while the iron was hot and began encouraging dismayed young people to organize into small group meetings for ‘social religion.’”<sup>16</sup> Nearly a year later, conversions began to stockpile. Edwards’s account describes a popular young woman’s being among the many who had been converted. Edwards saw this occurrence to be favorable as he believed the impact of her transformation would produce results within her sphere of influence. Subsequently, however, the effects of the woman’s transformation shaped out to be far greater than he had imagined. Again, per Kidd’s account,

What had begun as a movement of God among young people became universal, and everyone, young and old, seemed to talk only of religion and salvation. Many more began attending the private meetings in homes for discussing spiritual topics, and church assemblies became energized with fervent singing. The fleeting pleasures of carousing and joking were replaced by what Edwards called “spiritual mirth.” Northampton also became a regional revival center, a necessary feature of most sizable revivals.<sup>17</sup>

This account reveals that God can provide an outpouring of his Spirit into and through the lives of young people. This can, in turn, radically transform the dynamic of the community.

Edwards documents that over three hundred young people were converted during this season of revival. Although the revival began to wane, the impact and effects of this specific event spread like wildfire, bearing fruit for centuries ahead. Edwards’s *A Faithful Narrative* made it to print and sparked many awakenings within the New England region. Then, in 1737, a full edition was published in London, giving a new means of accessing a model for revival. In Kidd’s words, “The text became both a commodity in the Atlantic

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<sup>15</sup> Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 16.

<sup>16</sup> Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 17.

<sup>17</sup> Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 18.

world's markets and a vehicle for spreading the eschatological revival. The narrative no doubt contributed to a growing revival movement in Britain, as it came out in a second London edition in 1738."<sup>18</sup> This written work even made it to the hands of John Wesley in 1738. Wesley recounts how *A Faithful Narrative* made a deep impression on him concerning the kinds of revivals he desired to generate through his own approach to ministry.

This specific awakening continues to serve as a framework for pastors and congregations in ways such as giving hope, direction, and belief that God can do mighty and unthinkable acts in the lives of those willing to listen, learn, and serve. The publication of *A Faithful Narrative* heightened expectations of revival and revealed that young people can be made an example of even though it may be contrary to traditional thought. This paradox illuminates that an outpouring of the Spirit of God is unconventional by nature but intentionally miraculous in ways never imaginable.

### **Paradoxes in Christianity**

Though brokenness within a family unit is contrary to biblical design, a family's wellness can be revived by addressing student and family ministry issues paradoxically. Students and parental figures must know that God can unveil his divinity through this approach, primarily focusing on children's being empowered to be an example of God's favor and transformation. As with Edwards's account in *A Faithful Narrative*, it is not too farfetched to believe that a revival can be ignited by way of children. This is the paradox. According to Oxford Dictionary, this term is defined as a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement or a proposition that when investigated or explained, may prove to be well-founded or true.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 22.

<sup>19</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Paradox, *n.* and *adj.*," accessed August 10, 2020, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/137353?rskey=EX8tm7&result=1#eid>.

Renowned theologian, philosopher, and literary revolutionary Søren Kierkegaard spent ample time researching, meditating, and writing on the topic of paradox. In his work *Philosophical Fragments*, Kierkegaard leverages a quote of Johannes Climacus, stating,

The supreme paradox of all thought is the attempt to discover something that thought cannot think. This passion is at bottom present in all thinking, even in the thinking of the individual, in so far as in thinking he participates in something transcending himself. But habit dulls our sensibilities, and prevents us from perceiving it.<sup>20</sup>

Kierkegaard not only wrestled with this quote to challenge his own way of thinking, but he also believed that developing an approach such as this would be paramount in his studies and his worldview.

There are many biblical paradoxes that have been researched and written about for hundreds of years. Writer and scholar G. K. Chesterton is formally known as the “prince of paradox” in academic circles. His ability to craft words and unpack seeming contradictions supports his title. Author, teacher, and speaker Darrow Miller recalls that Chesterton describes this as “truth standing on its head to gain attention.”<sup>21</sup> Chesterton eloquently navigated the Scriptures with a paradoxical lens not by pinning one portion as truth and another other as false but by divulging the brilliance of wisdom through interpreting a unique perspective found somewhere in the middle.

In his acclaimed work, *Orthodoxy*, Chesterton explains the profundity found in observing the incarnation of Christ. When attempting to grasp the notion that God took on human form, it can only be through intense meditation and prayer that one can begin formulating the possibility of this miraculous idea. Chesterton states, “For orthodox

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<sup>20</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments or A Fragment of Philosophy*, trans. David F. Swenson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962), 46. Kierkegaard does not provide any bibliographic information for Climacus.

<sup>21</sup> Darrow Miller, “Chesterton, Paradox and Truth,” Darrow Miller and Friends, March 14, 2011, <http://darrowsmillerandfriends.com/2019/03/14/chesterton-paradox-truth/>.

theology has specially insisted that Christ was not a being apart from God and man, like an elf, nor yet a being half human and half not, like a centaur, but both things at once and both things thoroughly, very man and very God.”<sup>22</sup> In Christian theology, this is commonly known as the hypostatic union. Scholar Walter Elwell, defines hypostatic union, “It can be stated as follows: In the incarnation of the Son of God, a human nature was inseparably united forever with the divine nature in the one person of Jesus Christ, yet with the two natures remaining distinct, whole, and unchanged, without mixture or confusion, so that the one person, Jesus Christ, is truly God and truly man.”<sup>23</sup>

Another heavy paradox in Christianity is the cross. This example is foreshadowed in Psalm 85:10: “Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other.” The cross is God’s displaying both his righteousness and his love. His righteousness is revealed in the punishment of man’s sins by Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. God’s love is disclosed in the fact that he sent his Son to take on the punishment due to sinful man. In this moment (i.e., the crucifixion), the paradox is the simultaneity of God’s love and righteousness on display.

Chesterton explains how during these instances in Christianity, it requires that one embraces a tension. He describes this in an example illustrating a variety of thoughts as colors:

[The church] has kept [seeming paradoxes] side by side like two strong colours, red and white, like the red and white upon the shield of St. George. It has always had a healthy hatred of pink. It hates that combination of two colours which is the feeble expedient of the philosophers. It hates that evolution of black into white which is tantamount to a dirty grey . . . . All that I am urging here can be expressed by saying that Christianity sought in most of these cases to keep two colours co-existent but pure. It is not a mixture like russet or purple; it is rather like a shot silk, for a shot silk is always at right angles, and is in the pattern of the cross.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (London: John Lane, 1908), 169.

<sup>23</sup> Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 583.

<sup>24</sup> G. K. Chesterton, *The Everyman Chesterton*, ed. Ian Turnbull Ker (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 345.

Each “color,” Chesterton argues, manifests glory individually and precisely. His affirmation gives an opportunity to observe a discipline of thought illuminating a humble wisdom found only by those who seek the wealth of these truths. Chesterton uses Genesis 1:26 and Romans 3:23 as examples to solidify his stance that man is simultaneously the highest creature and the greatest sinner. These tensions of thought serve to be Chesterton’s wheelhouse for writing. His worldview is refreshing as it is liberating from a judgment-ridden lens commonly associated with theology and churches today. In Chesterton’s words, “Stated baldly, charity certainly means one of two things—pardoning unpardonable acts, or loving unlovable people.”<sup>25</sup> Chesterton embraced the tension and had growth spurts in his ability to impact the thoughts and faith of generations to come.

In brokenness, hope seems distant, and faith appears dim. The paradox of Jesus and his shed blood on the cross enlivens the dead and gives everlasting joy to those willing to seek him. The imagery of a dead man on a tree would bring most people to tears, but in that moment (i.e., the crucifixion), the universe shifted, and death turned to everlasting life. The brokenness of man has been forever healed by the love of God in a glorious tension that shines bright for all to see. Such healing can be constant not just for individuals but for the familial unit as well.

### **Restoring the Familial Unit**

As discussed briefly in the opening portion of this chapter, identifying cultural issues festering within the contemporary student and family ministry is paramount in restoring the familial unit. In an attempt to expose these issues, this section reveals the trajectory of the family dynamic while tactfully bidding to redirect and develop new, stronger trends paradoxically.

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<sup>25</sup> G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (Chicago: Moody, 2009), 155.

Russell Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, discusses pertinent developments emerging in church culture in his book *Onward: Engaging the Culture without Losing the Gospel*. Moore recalls a powerful conversation he had with an older, seasoned gentleman when he (i.e., Moore) was a doctoral student in his mid-twenties. During classroom lectures, coffee breaks, and study sessions, Moore and his colleagues would grieve over the status of the church and how culture was deflating its vibrance in more areas than they could respond to. Moore and his classmates were heavily discouraged about the future state of the church.

When Moore relayed these talks to the older gentleman, the man began to rebuke these claims about the future status of ministry and changed the worldview of Moore from that moment on: “‘Why, you speak as though Christianity is genetic,’ the old theologian said. ‘Of course, there is hope for the next generation of the church. But the leaders of the next generation might not be coming from the current Christian subculture. They are probably still pagans.’”<sup>26</sup> The man went on to give examples of Paul of Tarsus, C. S. Lewis, and Charles Colson, all prominent men in their own respects who were originally far from the church but were later transformed by the saving and renewing power of the gospel as adults. Moore responded, “And I was too ignorant to see it because, he was right, I implicitly assumed that somehow the Christian gospel was just a matter of genetic passing along of the faith. This is something we must remember as we seek to cultivate a renewed Christian moral witness for the next generation.”<sup>27</sup>

This ministry project has many layers—namely, teaching the gospel to students, having them share the gospel to their parental figures, and exercising hope for

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<sup>26</sup> Russell D. Moore, *Onward: Engaging the Culture without Losing the Gospel* (Nashville: B&H, 2015), 206-7.

<sup>27</sup> Moore, *Onward*, 207.

the parental figures to respond faithfully to the truth their student delivers to them. Of course, planting gospel seeds in children is colossal, but what about the impact that this can have on parental figures? Could the children sharing the gospel with their parental figures really be the catalyst for restoring the familial unit for the next generation?

In the last chapter of *Onward*, Moore offers the idea of exercising a gospel counter-revolution. This approach is similar to that of a paradox—as discussed earlier. Moore’s encouragement is for all to share in the mission of a gospel counter-revolution and not to neglect, compromise, or disengage from it if the future of the American church is thought to be doomed. Moore emphasizes that the church will go on the way that God ordains it, but if neglect, compromise, or disengagement are present among Christians, then faithfulness will be absent. Moore writes, “Jesus will build his church, with us or without us. But if we are going to be faithful to him, we must share his mission. This means we don’t just talk about lost people; we talk to them. And we don’t talk to them as enlightened life-coaches promising an improved future, but as crucified sinners offering new birth.”<sup>28</sup> New birth means new strategy, new perspective, and new leaders who continue the momentum. To determine who those leaders will be is not up to any particular person; rather, it is God who calls people to lead, and it is important to remember that God builds differently than man.

Moore uses counters in the same way Chesterton describes paradoxes. Chesterton argues, “All that I am urging here can be expressed by saying that Christianity sought in most of these cases to keep two colours co-existent but pure.”<sup>29</sup> The old does not disappear in a person, but the new offers forgiveness, transforms life, and provides new leadership and perspective to the church. This new birth is ultimately a fulfillment of

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<sup>28</sup> Moore, *Onward*, 214.

<sup>29</sup> Chesterton, *The Everyman Chesterton*, 45.

Jesus's promise gift his church with everything needed for its onward march through time and space.<sup>30</sup> The old and the new can co-exist, but the new is pure and gives meaning to life as one moves forward.

As discussed in chapter two, parental figures are to raise up their children under the tutelage of God's Word and fulfill the mandate of discipleship as a lifelong obedience. Parental figures' shortcomings should not allow for the excuse of their missing the mark of family worship and gospel-centered conversations within the household. So, the question remains: If parental figures are placing their children in private schools and are failing to engage them with gospel conversations at home, how can advancing the gospel be an option for the next generation?

Influencing students in private school settings—not as life coaches, morality teachers, or legalistic elitists but, instead, as servants of the Lord—can ultimately ignite a flame in students' parental figures. One may never know whether a particular parental figure is a dormant spiritual giant. As Moore declares, in regard to an individual, not necessarily a parental figure,

The next Jonathan Edwards might be a man driving in front of you with the Darwin Fish bumper decal. The next Charles Wesley might be a misogynistic, profanity-spewing hip-hop artist right now. The next Charles Spurgeon might be managing an abortion clinic right now. The next Mother Teresa might be a heroin-addicted porn star right now.<sup>31</sup>

Moore's illustration is a charge to believers to never underestimate the power, plan, and purpose of God. If one generation falls short, the next one does not necessarily have to overcorrect; rather, a new approach to equipping the next generation for a different culture in days ahead may arise.

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<sup>30</sup> Moore, *Onward*, 215.

<sup>31</sup> Moore, *Onward*, 215.



## Family Ministry Trends

Next generation ministry is an emerging trend proactive in pursuing the 4/14 window. The Florida Baptist Convention's Billy Young delivered a presentation describing this window as the prime age range for children to dedicate their life to Christ. Young spoke strongly about the church's historical and original framework as well as its drift from the early education of the Hebrew culture.<sup>32</sup> In the standard today, it is rare to find an example similar to the original exhibited thousands of years ago. According to authors Michael Anthony and Warren Benson,

Early educational efforts among the first Hebrews was not very well structured by modern standards, although that is not to say that they lacked intentionality. Life itself was the content of instruction. A child learned by living in community with others and at the feet of his/her parents. These early origins of home schooling formed the basis of passing down the Hebrew culture and religious practices from generation to generation.<sup>33</sup>

In this dynamic, the familial unit was disciplined and dedicated towards their learning of the Scriptures as well as the discipleship of their entire family.

This inadvertent home-schooling approach was basically a Christian school that demonstrated a godly lifestyle. But, overtime, this model began to bend, and the foundation began to weaken. Hundreds of years of educational enhancement and public schooling initiatives, as well as many other factors, led to the demise of this pure form of family worship and academics.

In *A Theology for Family Ministries*, Michael Anthony and Michelle Anthony discuss a shift in family ministry: "Especially in the Middle Ages, there appears to have been a loss of the ancient model for discipleship in families. Generations grew less literate, and training in Christian traditions increasingly became the domain of

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<sup>32</sup> Billy Young, presentation to Brevard Baptist Association, August 9, 2019.

<sup>33</sup> Michael J. Anthony and Warren S. Benson, *Exploring the History and Philosophy of Christian Education: Principles for the 21st Century* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 25.

professional clergy in ecclesiastical institutions.”<sup>34</sup> It was during this transition that the delegation of responsibilities likely began to shift from parental figures to pastors or teachers. According to *The Book of Common Prayer* (1549), pastors were tasked with spending a half hour every Sunday afternoon, for at least six weeks, instructing children in the areas of the Apostle’s Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments.<sup>35</sup> A variety of factors may have been involved in this alteration, but regardless, the trajectory was set for parental figures to be less engaged in biblical responsibilities, and the repercussions have been crippling ever since.

Leading Reformer and theologian Martin Luther combatted this deficiency when noticing that the practice of family ministry began to slip away. Luther avowed,

If we would re-instate Christianity in its former glory, we must improve and elevate the children, as it was done in the days of old . . . . It is the chief duty of the father of a family, to bestow more, greater, more constant care upon the soul of his child than upon his body—for this is his own flesh, but the child’s soul is a precious jewel, which God has entrusted to his keeping.<sup>36</sup>

What may have been an overcorrection at the time has turned into a deep wound for generations following. The church stepped up and took responsibility, but instead of parental figures’ being reeled into participation with the church, their involvement floated away.

Another family ministry standard of high regard was found in the Puritan model that is still traceable from most forms today. This particular style was intentional in a family’s taking moments throughout each day to worship by way of singing songs, reading Scripture, or corporate prayer time. There was not a half hour set aside, not

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<sup>34</sup> Michael Anthony and Michelle Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministry* (Nashville: B&H, 2011), 159.

<sup>35</sup> Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 201n8. Orme is referring to *The Book of Common Prayer*, sect. “The Order of Confirmation.”

<sup>36</sup> Martin Luther, *Papers for The Teacher: German Educational Reformers*, ed. Henry Barnard (Chicago: American Journal of Education, 1914), 135, quoted in Anthony and Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministry*, 160.

necessarily a plan; instead, there were serendipitous moments of praise throughout the day. According to Anthony and Anthony, “Brief, daily times of family worship were central to this model; in fact, family worship and order were perceived as a primary means for the prospering of true religion in all of life.”<sup>37</sup> This model relieved the potential stress of scheduling, caught the family in the moment, and allowed the raw experience to be the source of true religion.

From the Hebrew culture to the medieval era to the Puritan model, family ministry has always been a dynamic that seems to be at the forefront of thought throughout generations. Whether it be positive or negative, family ministry is essential for the advancement of the gospel and the equipping of generations to come.

In 1915, Henry Cope produced a classic volume titled, *Religious Education in the Family*. Covering a myriad of topics, the main emphasis encouraged the family unit and the church to partner in religious education. Cope states, “In a word, let the church be to the family that larger home where families live together their life of fellowship and service in the spirit and purpose of religion and where there is a natural place for everyone.”<sup>38</sup> In a sense, Cope had the idea of a Christian community beginning with the home, and finding the same faith, principles, and practices enhanced in the larger home of the church.

More specific, the Christian school can find an essential role in this community as well. Beginning at the home, finding a larger context of education with like-minded peers at the school, and capitalizing all learned and practiced education at church with similar families pursuing the same model. Each stage – the home, school, and church – can serve to be accountability measures for not only the children, but the adults as well. Within this dynamic, the family can be enriched by the fellowship with one another, and

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<sup>37</sup> Anthony and Anthony, *A Theology for Family Ministry*, 160.

<sup>38</sup> Henry Frederick Cope, *Religious Education in the Family*, 118.

carry that from each setting they encounter, together as a unit, as well as separate as individuals.

In recent years, family ministry books are beginning to fill up the shelves and have become a more prevalent topic for discussion and argument amongst scholars, pastors, and church leaders. Timothy Paul Jones assembled a field guide to family ministry, unpacking his experience in ministry, academia, leadership, and fatherhood. Throughout the five sections of his book, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, he unveils a direction that does not give focus to new programs, rather empowers parental figures with ideas filled with the wisdom of becoming and maturing as disciple-makers in the home.

Jones emphasizes and defines family ministry as such, “the process of intentionally and persistently coordinating a ministry's proclamation and practices so that parents are acknowledged, trained, and held accountable as primary disciple-makers in their children's lives.”<sup>39</sup> This concept further supports the thesis of this project in that the parental figures will find themselves contradicting the biblical mandate if choosing to delegate discipleship to the Christian school. Jones also adds that the gospel is to be rehearsed in homes and reinforced in churches so that it can be revealed with integrity to the world.<sup>40</sup> The thought of the home having a vacancy of the gospel while church and Christian schools are a keepsake in a family, releases the truth of that the household spirituality foundation is built upon sinking sand.

### **Conclusion**

Revival reveals an outpouring of God’s Spirit at any place, at any time. Revival cannot be manufactured, replicated, or bought. Revival can transpire in the life of

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<sup>39</sup> Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 33.

<sup>40</sup> Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 144.

a child, who can directly impact the life of his or her parental figure. When a child begins witnessing to his or her parental figure, a new type of Christian paradox emerges. It may appear to be contradictory on the surface, but deeply underlying, there is a divine truth—namely, God is at work. A child’s witnessing to his or her parental figure is not a model that has been practiced in the past, but due to the lack of involvement of many parental figures today, this next generation may be geared up for just such a model.

A familial unit is unique because of the diversity each one possesses and unfortunately, the familial unit is broken. But, as revealed through the historical, theoretical, and practical discussion above, this unit can be revived paradoxically by the saving grace of Jesus Christ. In his farewell sermon, Jonathan Edwards brilliantly articulates his belief in family worship as well as the importance it served during his time as a pastor:

Let me now, once more, before I finally cease to speak to this congregation, repeat, and earnestly press the counsel which I have often urged on the heads of families, while I was their pastor, to great painfulness in teaching, warning, and directing their children: bringing them up in the training and admonition of the Lord: beginning early, where there is yet opportunity, and maintaining constant diligence in all labors of this kind . . . . Every Christian family ought to be as it were a little church, consecrated to Christ, and wholly influenced and governed by His rules. And family education and order are some for the chief means of grace. If these fail, all other means are likely to prove ineffectual.<sup>41</sup>

Family worship is the wellspring in which the gospel flows. Edwards documents this clearly. If every family served as a church and in the church, then the message of Jesus Christ in a familial unit would very likely be restored and replicated.

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<sup>41</sup> Jonathan Edwards, “Farewell Sermon,” in *Selected Sermons of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Harry Norman Gardiner (New York: Macmillan, 2006), 148.

## CHAPTER 4

### ELEMENTS OF THE MINISTRY PROJECT

This project was designed to evaluate and improve the gospel-mindedness at the Learning and Achievement Academy. In an effort to build upon a previous case study executed at another Christian private school, a curriculum was developed in order to initiate gospel conversations with LAA students in the fall of 2019. A pre-survey was delivered and executed prior to the teaching of a developed curriculum to students and parental figures. A gospel-minded curriculum was developed and reviewed by an expert panel. At the conclusion of the lessons, the same survey (i.e., post-survey) was administered to students and parental figures.

The project had four goals: (1) assess the gospel-mindedness of students and their parental figures at LAA with a pre-survey; (2) develop a gospel-focused curriculum and receive approval by the expert panel; (3) teach the gospel-focused curriculum to LAA students; and (4) evaluate the impact of the gospel-focused curriculum for LAA students and their parental figures with a post-survey.

#### **Goal 1: Assess Gospel-Mindedness**

The first goal was to assess the gospel-mindedness of students and their parental figures at LAA with a pre-survey. An expert panel consisting of one senior pastor, one college professor, one high school Bible teacher, and one children's ministry director approved a gospel-focused survey for students and their parental figures at LAA. The expert panel assisted throughout the duration of the project. The expert panel were expected to provide accountability in assessing the pre-survey and curriculum in the areas of biblical accuracy, teaching clarity, spiritual growth, academic soundness, and ministry

benefit vis-à-vis students.

The first goal was measured by administering the pre-survey approved by the expert panel.<sup>1</sup> The survey had two parts: assessment prior to the teaching of the gospel-focused curriculum (pre-survey)<sup>2</sup> and assessment after the teaching of the gospel-focused curriculum (post-survey).<sup>3</sup> Surveys were distributed prior to the teaching of the curriculum with the intention to assess the gospel-mindfulness of parental figures and students of LAA.

This goal was considered successfully met when 80 percent of parental figures and students successfully completed and turned in the survey. The surveys were collected one week after they were distributed. All thirty students filled out and returned the gospel survey, while twenty-eight parental figures completed and returned the survey. Subsequently, this goal was considered successfully met.

### **What Is the Gospel-Mindedness of Students and Parental Figures at LAA?**

The data acquired using the pre-survey results showed great diversity in the responses concerning the gospel-mindedness of students and parental figures (see tables 1 and 2 below). It seems likely that the use of the word “gospel” is misunderstood in regard to how it involves personal salvation. A small number of respondents seemed to have a genuine understanding of the gospel, but percentage gaps suggest an absence of cohesiveness between parental figures and students.

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 1 (“Gospel-Mindedness Pre-Survey”).

<sup>2</sup> See appendix 1 (“Gospel-Mindedness Pre-Survey”).

<sup>3</sup> See appendix 4 (“Gospel-Mindedness Post-Survey”).

Table 1. Pre-survey: “Do you know how to share the Gospel?”

	Yes	No
Parental Figures	60.7%	39.3%
Students	23.3%	76.7%

Table 2. Pre-survey: “Do you have salvation in Jesus Christ because of the Gospel?”

	Yes	No
Parental Figures	89.3%	10.7%
Students	80.0%	20.0%

This data showed a disconnect between parental figures and students in comprehending the relationship between the gospel of Jesus Christ and salvation in Jesus Christ. This data served as a primary instrument in developing a gospel-focused curriculum.

### **What Biblical Responsibilities Did Students and Parental Figures Find Important?**

The pre-survey revealed that parental figures and students differed in responses in most categories. Parental figures were offered an opportunity to speak with the pastor regarding the survey and curriculum, but none inquired. Based upon observation of the data, it was apparent that the children and parental figures were not collectively committed to biblical responsibilities. A majority of parental figures revealed irresponsible efforts towards biblical accountability on a personal and familial level.

The students surveyed evidenced a lack of knowledge concerning who God is, and it was assumed that they were not aware of the biblical responsibilities of their parental figures. Tables 3 and 4 share data collected from parental figures in areas of biblical responsibilities, while tables 5 and 6 share data from students in the areas of



primary biblical responsibilities.

Table 3. Pre-survey: “I meet with other Christians for the purpose of accountability”

Several times per week	Once per week	Several times per month	Once per month	Several times per year	Not at all
7.1%	17.9%	21.4%	10.7%	25%	17.9%

As discussed in chapter 2, accountability is a strong characteristic found in Christian discipleship. With LAA parental figures collectively neglecting this specific aspect of discipleship (see table 3 above), students may not have had an example of what it means to embrace a lifelong discipleship relationship with their parental figures. This dynamic exposed how meeting with other Christians for the purpose of accountability is not a priority in the lives of parental figures at LAA.

Table 4. Pre-survey: “I meditate on Scripture”

More than once per day	Once per day	Several times per week	Once per week	Several times per month	Once per month	Several times per year	Not at all
0%	10.7%	10.7%	17.9%	14.3%	7.1%	25%	14.3%

Data collected in reference to meditating on Scripture (see table 4 above) discloses an intermittent commitment to pursuing an understanding of God through Scripture. It is likely that those who chose “several times per year” were referring to the times in which they attend church per year. The same goes for those who selected “once per week”; their response likely implies that they are meditating on Scripture once per week during their time at church. It is not conclusive, but arguably likely these

assumptions have accuracy.

Tables 5 and 6 offer results from LAA students, and they reflect rudimentary—yet promising—biblical responsibilities. These specific areas of focus determine the prayer life of the students and how often they read their Bible. Each student was allotted as much time as needed to complete the survey. Multiple students asked questions, but they were given minimal explanation for the purpose of authenticity.

Table 5. Pre-survey: “I pray”

More than once per day	Once per day	Several times per week	Once per week	Several times per month	Once per month	Several times per year	Not at all
10%	60%	16.7%	10%	3.3%	0%	0%	0%

Table 6. Pre-survey: “I read my Bible”

More than once per day	Once per day	Several times per week	Once per week	Several times per month	Once per month	Several times per year	Not at all
0%	10%	10%	36.7%	0%	6.7%	33.3%	3.3%

Goal 1 was successfully met, and data was collected that served to be essential in the development of the gospel-curriculum. The gospel-mindedness pre-survey consisted of seventeen questions (see appendix 1).

**Goal 2: Develop a Gospel-Focused Curriculum and Receive Approval**

The second goal was to develop a fifteen-session gospel-focused curriculum intended to equip LAA students to share the gospel proficiently and passionately. The curriculum covered foundational biblical knowledge and consistently modeling gospel-

focused discipleship methods. The curriculum was specifically tailored to fill voids evaluated during the pre-survey assessment. This goal was measured by the expert panel who evaluated the biblical accuracy, teaching clarity, spiritual growth, academic soundness, and benefits of the curriculum. This goal was considered successfully met when the expert panel approved the developed curriculum.

### **How Was the Gospel-Focused Curriculum Structured?**

While developing a fifteen-session curriculum, it was important to build an understanding of the gospel not by breaking down its essence into principles as much as delivering the story of its existence. Beginning with creation and following with the fall, proclaiming the redemption secured by Jesus, and empowering the Great Commission were areas of focus in the story of learning about salvation in Jesus. The idea that the gospel can be taught in this story format was borrowed from Robert Thune and Will Walker.<sup>4</sup> Their book *The Gospel-Centered Life* gives lessons, intended for a small group, that help individuals understand how the gospel can shape every aspect of their life.

The gospel-focused curriculum for the LAA students needed a framework that covered significant and foundational understandings. Thune and Walker's words provided helpful insight for the direction of the curriculum: "If the gospel is constantly 'bearing fruit and growing' (Col. 1:6), then everything has to do with the gospel—God, humanity, salvation, worship, relationships, shopping, recreation, work, personality . . . everything! The objective in this lesson is to establish a framework for talking about the gospel."<sup>5</sup> The framework found in this book was intertwined with the lessons included in the curriculum.

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<sup>4</sup> Robert H. Thune and Will Walker, *The Gospel-Centered Life* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2009), 1-6.

<sup>5</sup> Thune and Walker, *The Gospel-Centered Life*, 3-4.

Because this curriculum needed to be accessible for elementary students, much of the context had to be refined in order for the material to be compatible with the students. The curriculum used the word “gospel” and broke it down as an acronym “G-O-S-P-E-L.” Within each letter, the teacher unpacked theological and spiritual elements that support and maintain accountability to the truth found in God’s Word.

### **What Responses Did the Expert Panel Provide for the Gospel-Focused Curriculum?**

The expert panel—which consisted of one college professor, one senior pastor, one high school Bible teacher, and one children’s ministry director—provided diverse responses that sharpened the gospel-focused curriculum. Each professional communicated different areas of strengths and weakness that were helpful for the overall effectiveness of the ministry project. The expert panel approved the gospel-curriculum with an “excellent” rating filed out in the assessment form (see appendix 3).

### **Goal 3: Teach the Gospel-Focused Curriculum to LAA Students**

The third goal was to teach LAA students the gospel-focused curriculum. The students began in the school context learning the curriculum during the weekly chapel hour. As the curriculum progressed, the students began sharing the gospel to peers, teachers, and administrators at LAA. Additionally, the students shared to a group of pastors and their parental figures during a worship service held at KSBC. This goal was considered successfully met when 80 percent of students shared learned material in an elementary setting, in the presence of teachers and pastors, and in front of their parental figures in a church worship service. Teachers and pastors gave feedback in the areas of volume, material learned, and confidence of delivery.

## **G.O.S.P.E.L. Curriculum Implementation**

The G.O.S.P.E.L. curriculum was developed to be accessible for any family, children's ministry, Christian school, or church staff that desires to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ with accuracy, brevity, and clarity. The material was a general overview and served to aid in laying foundational knowledge of the gospel message of Jesus Christ for elementary students. The objective behind this curriculum was to equip students with a foundational knowledge of the gospel message and to encourage them to initiate conversations with their parental figures at home and beyond. The hope behind this curriculum was for God to ignite a family revival through the students' conversations with their parental figures.

Every week, the sessions began with prayer requests, tithing, the verse of the week, and a prayer delivered by a student. This was followed by a review of the previous week's work, review time, an object lesson, discussion time, final remarks, and a closing prayer. Students were encouraged to stand each time they spoke in order for them to build confidence in their public speaking abilities and develop professional etiquette.

### **Lesson 1: Vision Casting and Surveys**

The goal of the initial lesson was to cast a vision for students to generate excitement for the weeks ahead. The entire group participated in a covenantal prayer that was biblically explained. Each student filled out a survey, and the teachers collected and handed out surveys to parental figures for them to fill out. The instructor shared his personal testimony and described the impact Jesus and the gospel made in his personal life. His testimony included a discussion of the need for the gospel in a broken world as well as a general overview the last things (i.e., eschatology). A key terms sheet was provided to each student for his or her reference.

The object lesson made use of the game BEANBOOZLED to demonstrate a memorable Bible verse for the students. The verse was Proverbs 26:11, which reads, "As

a dog returns to its vomit, so fools repeat their folly.” The instructor picked out the vomit-peach combination and asked a student volunteer to keep eating the same jellybean over and over again. The instructor described how silly it was and leveraged this example to explain the truth found in childish and repetitive sins. The following questions were asked: “Why do we return to the gross things in life? Why do we continue to return to sin when it harms our faith and our loved ones?”

### **Lesson 2: G (Give)**

The goal of this lesson was to discuss how God gave us his Son Jesus. In return, the discussion described how students can give in a variety of creative ways to demonstrate and reflect God’s love to others. The instructor asked a student to come forward, open up the Bible, and recite the verse of the week (John 3:16).

Prior to discussing this aspect of the lesson, the instructor determined an appropriate local outreach that would be suitable for the students’ socioeconomic status and demographics. The outreach considered was relatable to the student’s story. Once a non-profit, ministry, or outreach was selected, an offering was collected every week. The instructor impressed upon the children that it is not the amount of money they give that is important but the faith they exercise in giving. The instructor began probing the room with questions (e.g., “To you, who is Jesus?”). The students were given time to think. Depending on their answers, the instructor continuously guided them towards the fundamental understanding of God’s giving us his Son Jesus and how giving requires sacrifice. The instructor stressed the importance that we do not give in order to receive Jesus; rather, we shadow his example by giving to others.

### **Lesson 3: O (Obey)**

The goal of this lesson was to discuss the concept that when we obey God’s Word, we reveal love for him. The verse of the week was John 14:23. The instructor asked everyone to stand on their feet, and he revised the famous game “Simon Says,”

using a personal name (e.g., “Pastor [name],” “Mr./Mrs. [name]”) instead of “Simon.”

The game began with silly and simple commands to motivate full participation. The game was played for five to seven minutes.

Once everyone calmed down, the instructor began asking whether the game was difficult or easy. Everyone concluded that it was easy. Then, the instructor asked why it was so easy to obey simple and silly commands, while it seems to be so difficult to obey God’s commands. Jesus’s promises are true, and in John 14:23, he says, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching.” The instructor then asked, “What are some of Jesus’s teachings and commands?” The students were then required to look up verses and stand and share. Some of their responses were as follows:

1. Love one another (John 13:34).
2. Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind (Matt 22:37).
3. Love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:31).
4. Come, follow me (Matt 4:9).

#### **Lesson 4: S (Save)**

The goal of this lesson was to teach concepts of sin, repentance, and forgiveness, ultimately understanding how Jesus is the “life saver” from sin and offers eternal life. The verses of the week were 1 John 1:9 and Titus 2:11-12. The instructor asked students about their understanding of sin. As students shared, the instructor threw Life Saver candy to participants. The same followed for the topic of forgiveness. The instructor emphasized that just as a life saver is used to save people from drowning in the water and just as a Life Saver candy is used to save people from bad breath, God gave us Jesus as a life saver from our sins.

In advance, the instructor printed out papers that defined key terms such as sin, repentance, forgiveness, and salvation. The discussion time was used to study these definitions and discuss examples in the lives of students. The discussion time focused on

accepting that Jesus died because of the sin in the lives of the ones whom he loved. God sent Jesus to teach about sin, forgiveness, repentance, salvation, and love. Students read definitions out loud. The instructor used this time to teach about forgiveness and how to simply confess sins to God and ask for his forgiveness.

### **Lesson 5: P (Prayer)**

The goal of this lesson was to teach the transformational opportunities found in prayer. The verse of the week was James 5:16. The instructor broke students up into small groups of two or three. Students volunteered to hand out paper, pencils, and pens. As students sat in different areas around the room, the instructor talked to them about the safety found in confessing sins to God via prayer because of the trust he has secured in his Word and his Son. Examples of biblical prayers were shared, such as Jesus's prayer in the garden of Gethsemane (Matt 26:36-56) and the book of Psalms. Each student wrote prayers down on paper and put them on the "prayer wall." The found can be optional for future uses of this curriculum: Place a cork board, or something of the sort, on a wall, and then post folded paper prayers on it. Have students answer a series of questions about prayer and then discuss. Some example questions are as follows:

1. What does prayer mean to you?
2. How do you pray?
3. What does prayer do?
4. Whom should we pray for?
5. Can we pray with our family, friends?
6. Is it cool to pray?

### **Lesson 6: E (Equal)**

The goal of this lesson was to help students develop a mindset that all people are God's children even amidst the division created by the world. Jesus died *equally* for everyone. The verse of the week was Proverbs 22:2. The instructor asked for every



student to stand up and then began asking about the following items (follow-up commands in parentheses):

1. Gender (move to one side)
2. Race (move to corners)
3. Age (move to sides)
4. Wearing sneakers or sandal (raise hand)
5. Both parents in home (raise hand)
6. No parents in home (raise hand)

After students sat down, the instructor handed out a piece of paper and had students write down Mark 8:33, which reads, “‘Get behind me, Satan!’ he [Jesus] said. ‘You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns!’” This began the discussion on how Satan will use every tactic to divide, whereas the love of Jesus communicates unity and equality. No matter whether we are rich or poor, God is the Father, and Jesus is the Savior. The instructor talked about the hate and judgment of others and how it divides, while the love of Jesus unites. The instructor had students play the game “Red Light / Green Light.” After a few rounds, the game shifted to students’ answering the following questions: “What are worldly ways of thinking? What are godly ways of thinking?” The instructor substituted “green light” for godly sayings and “red light” for worldly sayings. He then discussed the temptation to do the things of the world as opposed to the things of God.

### **Lesson 7: L (Love)**

The goal of this lesson was to teach the students the characteristics of love. Each student was asked to demonstrate all characteristics before the next week. Each student was assigned to record each action on a sheet of paper and report back to the class. The verse of the week was 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. The instructor broke the group up into fifteen groups or pairs, depending on class size, and assigned each group with a

characteristic of love found in the verse of the week. In this assignment, each student was asked to communicate how he or she intended on demonstrating this characteristic at home or school. The lesson taught that God gives many examples of his love, and it is possible to demonstrate these examples in daily life. It was important to teach the students that these areas of love do not have to be reserved for when no one is watching. They can be done at school or with siblings, friends, and family.

### **Lesson 8: Boys vs. Girls Review**

Weeks 8-14 of the curriculum provided creative ways for elementary students to recall the lessons learned and the verses of the week and to refine their ability in sharing the gospel to others. During lesson 8, the instructor divided boys and girls into two separate groups and gauged the students' understanding of the gospel through a fun and interactive contest. This opportunity sharpened the skills of students in communicating the gospel message.

### **Lesson 9: Separated Groups Review**

The goal of this session was to meet with the boy's group for fifteen minutes and then with the girl's group for fifteen minutes. This reduced distractions and allowed for more intimate small-group discussions. The instructor was intentional in inviting a volunteer of the opposite gender to create a safe and transparent environment. The discussion began with an explanation of the following week and how it would consist of each student's standing in front of his or her peers (gender specified first) and delivering the gospel message out loud. The students would have the opportunity to use notes and take a few minutes to attempt. The instructor reassured them that this was not a test of any sorts but a time to sharpen their ability to communicate the most precious and important truth they would ever learn.

### **Lesson 10: Peer Review**

The goal of this session was to allow each student to stand in front of his or her peers and deliver what he or she learned about the gospel of Jesus Christ. The boy's group shared with no girls present, and the girl's group shared with no boys present. The instructor allowed them to do their best and served as a source of encouragement. For future implementations of this curriculum, this part may be difficult if the group is not strong collectively. However, if they are very supportive of one another, then the instructor should make an effort to allow the students to provide constructive criticism. If not, then a volunteer should be asked to facilitate while the instructor talks with each student one on one. Students should be given feedback in the following areas:

1. Volume (Children talking in front of a crowd tend to be very quiet.)
2. Material (Did the child cover the material thoroughly?)
3. Confidence (Did the child appear to be confident in his or her ability to deliver the material?)

### **Lesson 11: Poster Preparation**

The goal of this lesson was for the students to make posters for each letter of the gospel. Students were split up into groups, and each group was responsible for designing its poster according to the letter it received.

### **Lesson 12: Presentation Practice to Peers and Teachers**

The goal of this lesson was for each student to practice sharing the gospel message in front of a teacher—or multiple teachers—and administrators. For future implementations of this curriculum, prior to the activity, the instructor should sit down with teachers and discuss their role in this exercise. Teachers should be there for support and suggestions.

### **Lesson 13: Presentation to Pastors**

The goal of this lesson was for each student to practice delivering the gospel

message in front of a pastor—or multiple pastoral figures. For future implementations of this curriculum, prior to activity, the instructor should sit down with pastors and discuss their role in this exercise. Pastors should be there for support and suggestions.

### **Lesson 14: Presentation to Parental Figures**

The goal of this lesson was for each student to deliver the gospel message in front of his or her parental figures in a corporate worship setting. The instructor discussed the need for the gospel in a broken world by covering a general overview of heaven and hell and communicating the development of the gospel-focused curriculum. Following this, students came forward one at a time and delivered the gospel message. The instructor expressed sincere gratitude for the parental figures, teachers, pastors, volunteers, and—most importantly—the students for their full and committed participation. Post-curriculum surveys (see appendix 4) were then handed out to each student and parental figure. The instructor emphasized that there was no right or wrong answer.

For future implementations of this curriculum, this lesson will look different for every context, but the priority is to plan an event that includes all of the parental figures in one setting so that they witness their children deliver the gospel. At the beginning of the service, the instructor can use this time to introduce him- or herself and give a brief overview of the last few months. Following introductions, the instructor should invite a student who has shown spiritual growth over the past few months to come before the crowd and ask for prayer requests. The instructor should communicate to parents how this practice has been a staple in the curriculum lessons.

### **Lesson 15: Final Encouragement and Final Surveys**

The goal of this lesson was to collect the surveys filled out by the students and parental figures so that data could be collected to determine the impact of G.O.S.P.E.L.

curriculum. The instructor also used this time to reveal the final amount that was raised for the local outreach. Each student was awarded a personalized certificate. The instructor took time to talk about the progress and growth of each student. More importantly, the instructor thanked them for trusting God’s Word and the teaching of the gospel.

**Goal 4: Evaluate Impact of Gospel-Focused Curriculum**

The fourth goal was to evaluate the impact of the gospel-focused curriculum on the students and their parental figures following the students’ delivery of the gospel to their parental figures in a church worship service. This goal was measured by a post-survey of students and parental figures concerning gospel-mindedness that was previously filled out as a pre-survey. This goal was considered successfully met when the scores demonstrated improvement. Table 7 reveals statistical data that demonstrates a significant impact of the gospel-focused curriculum.

Table 7. Post-survey: “Do you know how to share the Gospel?”

	Yes	No
Parental Figures	67.9%	32.1%
Students	100%	0.0%

In conclusion, the measure for this goal included a post survey, and the goal was met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference between pre- and post-survey scores for students:  $t(29) = 14.95, p < .0001$ . Another measure for this goal included a post-survey, and the goal was met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference between pre- and post-survey scores for parental figures:  $t(27) = 3.206, p = .0001$ . Although the difference in scores for parental figures was not as significant as difference in scores for the students, the goal was still met.

## CHAPTER 5

### PROJECT EVALUATION

The previous chapter explained how students at the Learning and Achievement Academy were taught and equipped with the ability to share the gospel of Jesus Christ through the development and delivery of a gospel-focused curriculum. This chapter aims to evaluate the project while reflecting on the overall experience. This evaluation focuses on the results and how well they line up with the project goals. This chapter also transparently considers the strengths and weaknesses of the project as well as potential future adjustments to the project. This chapter concludes with brief personal and theological reflections.

#### **Evaluation of the Purpose**

The mission of the Learning and Achievement Academy is to provide the highest quality of Christian education. All curricula and activities must be evaluated by administrators and teachers as working towards the stated mission. The implementation of, and attention on, the gospel-focused curriculum centered on the life of Jesus Christ leveraged all academic content towards the LAA mission and, therefore, was an essential project. The purpose of this project—that is, teaching LAA students the gospel in hopes of igniting many family revivals—was helpful in defining family worship and biblical discipleship.

#### **Evaluation of Goals**

The first goal of the project was to assess the gospel-mindedness of LAA students and their parental figures—the needs, weaknesses, and other related issues—with a survey. The initial survey assessment, approved by the expert panel, was necessary

in order to properly sharpen the pre-survey questions. The data collected was then utilized to develop a gospel-focused curriculum. This goal was foundational, and it built an understanding with the expert panel by clearly communicating the need for the project. Students and parental figures differed in answers, which led to the formulation of a curriculum that would serve LAA students in discipleship.

If any changes were to be made, I would have reconsidered some of the phrases and terminology of the survey questions. Because the teaching had not yet been administered, some of the vocabulary in the pre-survey questions may have been too advanced for students at LAA. Students raised their hands and quietly asked questions if needed, but an explanation or more elementary-level word usage may have been more accurate for collecting data.

The second goal was to develop a fifteen-week gospel-focused curriculum in order to fill the gaps discovered in the pre-surveys. This resource was intended to ignite a family revival led by the students at LAA. The second goal was successfully met when the curriculum was developed and the expert panel approved the curriculum.

One of the curriculum's main points of emphasis was repetition of material. The curriculum entailed consistent verbiage that is common in the gospel story. The use of repetition also included repeating the same model for lessons every week. During the curriculum's development, the expert panel noted the importance of taking into consideration elementary students' attention span and reading levels. This recommendation was an exceptional addition to the curriculum.

The third goal was to teach the curriculum to the students at LAA, enhancing their gospel-mindedness through training and practice. This curriculum was an excellent resource in equipping LAA students in a way that was rudimentary but did not compromise the story and good news of Jesus Christ. The pre-survey results were clear in indicating a lack of gospel-mindedness in LAA students and room for growth in their parental figures. Each week, the teaching of the curriculum generated more and more

excitement with the students, making the instruction a joy.

The fourth goal was to evaluate the impact of the gospel-focused curriculum upon LAA students and their parental figures. Following the teaching of the curriculum, the entire student population agreed that they knew how to share the gospel (see table 7 above). The administrators of LAA were adamant about utilizing this material in the subsequent years. The LAA director stated that the G.O.S.P.E.L. curriculum helped redirect the administration's vision for the academy and empowered the entire staff to have a gospel perspective when teaching the children and engaging with their families.

Teachers shared that they were satisfied with the transformation they observed in the students over the fifteen-week period. Each teacher individually expressed how students were excited to attend lessons every week. They expressed sincere gratitude, as did the parental figures. The post-survey results indicated an increase in all areas concerning the students in regard to their enriched knowledge of the gospel.<sup>1</sup>

It is likely that an improved instrumentation in the post-survey could have added clarity to the results concerning parental figures. For example, it may have been helpful to focus heavily on the impact that children had made on their parental figures because of the teaching the students were receiving at school. Using the same survey for pre- and post-assessment was beneficial for observing differences in students, but enhancing a metric system to identify specific areas of growth would have been even more helpful to gauge the impact made on the parental figures.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The measure for this goal included a post survey, and the goal was met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference between pre- and post-survey scores for students:  $t_{(29)} = 14.95, p < .0001$ .

<sup>2</sup> The measure for this goal included a post-survey, and the goal was met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference between pre- and post-survey scores for parental figures:  $t_{(27)} = 3.206, p = .0001$ . Although the difference in scores for parental figures was not as significant as difference in scores for the students, the goal was still met.



### **Strengths of Project**

The project had several strengths. First, the project empowered the students of LAA to talk about Jesus. Students were able to learn about the variety of pillars that build and hold together the gospel story, and they expressed interest in learning more about this good news. Their behavior improved weekly, and their interactions grew in respect and attentiveness. A related strength included the access to the students. Every week, an hour was spent solely on engaging the children with biblical truths, object lessons, interactive games, and spiritual development. The teachers and administrators began asking the pastor to sit in on disciplinary actions, which offered the opportunity to reflect on the material learned from the lesson(s) in the gospel-focused curriculum.

The project's next strength concerns the trust and flexibility of LAA. The administrators were supportive of the project from the visionary stage to the final worship service. At times, schedules had to be flexible, but there were never any complaints or burdens. The administrators were fully submissive to the curriculum and began promoting the project to the parental figures. This gave teachers and parental figures the chance to engage in gospel conversations as well. About midway through the curriculum, teachers asked if they would be able to sit in on the lessons in order to learn themselves and pick up pointers from the instructors—as the students became extremely receptive to the teaching style.

This project was intended to initiate a family revival by the students vis-à-vis their parental figures, but though this project did not measure for revival, it can be argued that the teachers and administrators had a stirring of their hearts as they witnessed the spiritual maturity of the students. This revealed a humility in the teachers, and God's grace was apparent in this dynamic.

The next strength concerns the revitalization of King Street Baptist Church. From the introduction of this project, KSBC surrendered prejudices and stale outreach approaches as they observed the fruit of labor in partnering with the school. The strength

in this area concerns the relationship growth between the church and the school as not only a partnership but also new brothers and sisters in Christ unifying for the common purpose of advancing the gospel message through the property that God had ordained. KSBC went from only having activity on the campus Sunday mornings and Wednesday evening to having participation on a daily basis. Due to the location of the church, it was apparent that the ministry was changing, and the neighborhood took notice.

Finally, the end of the final worship service was an exclamation point. In this project, this moment served as the culmination of everything intended. With over one hundred people in attendance—ranging from students, teachers, administrators, Small Beginning Feeding Ministry volunteers, church members, community leaders, and parental figures—everyone gathered for the purpose of fellowship and witnessing the sharing of the gospel message by students at LAA. The KSBC fellowship hall was jammed packed, and the tables were mixed and matched with everyone getting to know one another.

In a true team effort, and in Baptist fashion, a potluck was held after the worship service. Formatted like every other Sunday, this event revealed the identity of the neighborhood like never before. The church recognized the potential of the ministry, the school felt welcomed to be part of the church, community leaders were amazed at the vibrance, and parental figures watched their children stand before them all and talk about the gospel of Jesus Christ. It could not have been scripted any better than it was, and God deserves all the glory.

### **Weaknesses of Project**

Four difficulties created weaknesses in implementing this project: (1) one teacher delivering all lessons, (2) students missing lessons, (3) a lack of statistical change on the post-survey concerning parental figures, and (4) the pre- and post-survey fluctuating between scalar and categorical questions and responses, which limited the my

ability to interpret significant change and significant frequency.

Concerning the first weakness, though it is not a guarantee, it is likely that more diversity concerning the teachings and the teacher could have provided the students with more perspective. The LAA student population is 100 percent minority, consisting of African American and Hispanic students. Involving an African American pastor and a Hispanic pastor in teaching parts of the lessons—rather than just having one Caucasian pastor as the teacher—may have sharpened the students’ focus more. Statistically, this addition likely would not have changed anything, but spiritually, it could have broadened the students’ understanding of the gospel, allowing them to visually observe the gospel transcending race.

Relatedly, diversity in requesting a woman to speak directly with the female students could have likely been beneficial from a discipleship standpoint. It can be assumed that female students may not have addressed certain questions to a male pastor because of the potentially uncomfortable dynamic of speaking to a male as opposed to a female. Resources were available, however, as church volunteers that participated were mainly women, but those women were not included in the teaching role. Incorporating women into the classroom instruction role would more than likely not have impacted the statistical nature of the project.

The area of weakness was the uncontrollable aspect of students’ missing lessons. Knowing that this would be a potential factor, the implementation in the curriculum was intentional in adding strong methods of repetition and review. It was beneficial that there were minimal days missed by students and that such absences were not a detriment to their learning, but this was an inevitable weakness that could have been addressed by conducting one-on-one reviews with the student(s) who missed lessons prior to the end of the curriculum. It is worth noting, however, that if there were handouts for particular lessons, students who may have missed a day were given those handouts the following week.

Third, although the post-survey was statistically beneficial for the students, it did not communicate advancement in gospel-mindedness vis-à-vis parental figures. It did, however, reveal increases in family worship participation, which ultimately was part of the overarching goal of the project. The post-survey was identical to the pre-survey, allowing direct impact to transpire in results, but because the students were the ones being taught each week, the students likely did not discuss every aspect of the curriculum with their parental figures, thus leading to this result.

Lastly, the pre- and post-surveys contained screening, scalar, and categorical questions and options. The screening and categorical items cannot be used in a t-test and, therefore, cannot be averaged. The tables provided in the project are an attempt to describe the change of frequency with which the answers occurred on the pre- and post-surveys. The intention was to have the t-test and the tables reveal two benchmarks of success for the curriculum.

### **Adjustments Moving Forward**

Having addressed the weaknesses of the project, there are three different adjustments that I would make in moving forward or passing along the curriculum: (1) have a meeting with parental figures prior to the teaching of the gospel-focused curriculum to their students; (2) have an after-action report, or debrief, with parental figures following the worship service in which the students shared the gospel with them; and (3) have a field trip to the outreach facility where we donated the tithing collection.

First, in retrospect, I believe it would have been extremely beneficial to have had a meeting with the parental figures prior to teaching the curriculum. In the initial survey, I provided a letter explaining the purpose of the project, the intention of the project, and that parental figures could reach out to me directly if they had any reservations or concerns about the project. Parental figures were required to sign-off for permission. On numerous occasions leading up to the teaching, I met with administrators

and teachers to best prepare and schedule the events that led up to the final worship service. The teachers were also heavily involved in communicating with parental figures, and they also collected all of the pre- and post-surveys.

I believe that the impact would have been even greater if the parental figures would have been presented with the opportunity to speak with me directly before and after the teachings, and ministry could have been offered to them as well. The difficulty of gathering parental figures was the biggest hindrance of such parent-instructor interaction happening, but such difficulty does not justify failing to attempt it. On the other hand, trying to make such interaction happen may have stiffened the flexibility or caused potential issues.

Second, following up with a pre-meeting, a post-meeting with parental figures would have likely been beneficial in fully gauging the influence that their student's learning experience had on them (i.e., the parental figures). During the worship service, I was able to communicate my reflections on the time I had teaching their children, but it would have been interesting to hear what they thought of the dynamic as well as if they had seen any particular transformation in their students at home. I would have also enjoyed this time to be able to listen to their response in watching their child stand up before a crowd of one hundred people and share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It would have also been beneficial to listen to concerns, reasons, or doubts that parental figures may have in the church, why they do not generally attend church, and if this curriculum taught to their children may have ignited convictions within their own lives to better engage in the discipleship of their own children. Also, this would have been an even better opportunity for me, as the pastor of King Street Baptist Church, to build stronger relationships with parental figures outside of the normal morning and afternoon visitations when they pick their children up from school. At the worship service, a strong invitation to visit KSBC was given, as was a detailed history of the church and how leadership was praying for a season of revitalization. The administrators

attended the church multiple times, and students and their families appeared sporadically. The biggest surprise was the students' attendance at Vacation Bible School the following summer.

Third, having a field trip to the ministry where we donated the collections would have been easily doable. It was discussed early in the project planning stages, but because of the timing around the holidays, it became difficult to fulfill. The ministry with which we partnered was a Christian pregnancy center that offers free ultrasounds, parenting classes, baby necessities, and counseling services. The students raised \$250.00, and the money was presented to the center during the Christmas holiday. I believe the visual of the place would have settled well with the students, allowing them to directly observe the place they helped support.

### **Theological Reflections**

Matthew 28:19-20 includes the Great Commission communicated by Jesus to his disciples. It is a charge that extends to all Christ-followers, and it is a noble direction that involves patience, wisdom, sacrifice, and love. The text reads,

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Christian parental figures have a Great Commission responsibility not only to those who have not found salvation in Christ but also—more importantly—the children whom God has blessed them to nurture and raise up. Discipleship, as discussed in chapter 2, is a lifelong obedience ranging from the closest of family members to the most distant of strangers. This is a huge responsibility that should never be taken lightly.

As the teacher of the students who participated in this project, and likely the only pastoral figure they may have encountered, I took careful consideration in stewarding God's Word to them. We spoke about the Great Commission and how this

will be a privilege for them to undertake in the seasons of life ahead. Theologically speaking, gospel seeds were planted during this project, and in due time, they will come to fruition for the world to be enlightened.

As a result of the spiritual impact this project had on KSBC, the church began to fulfill what is found in Acts 2:1-11:

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!”

From being a predominantly white church and keeping the surrounding neighborhood at an arm’s reach to partnering with a minority Christian school and having a worship service that truly reflected the neighborhood, KSBC actualized obedience to a degree of what took place in Acts 2. This began to break down the walls of preferentialism into what can be identified as a healthy and biblical ministry.

Christian author Alton Garrison puts it this way:

Every church—small or large, urban or suburban, or rural, American or international, and with whatever blend of ethnicity—needs both the power of the Spirit and a process of growth. Spiritual experiences are wonderful but without a plan, you’ll find yourself wondering how to take your church from where you are to where it needs to be. The Acts 2 church had Jesus as its foundation and the Holy Spirit as its force. If we are to have healthy churches today, we need the same foundation, Jesus, and the same force, the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

This project began with Jesus as the foundation and the Holy Spirit as the force (or,

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<sup>3</sup> Alton Garrison, *A Spirit-Empowered Church: An Acts 2 Ministry Model* (Springfield, MO: Influence Resources, 2015), 12-13.

better, empowering agent). This approach described by Garrison is not a gimmick; rather, it is a process that God has revealed. This model is biblical, transferable, and replicable. This is the model that was originally used by Christ; it worked then, and it can work now.

Another theological reflection that merits greater discussion than the spaced allowed here is how this project allowed me to better observe and understand the dynamics of Christian education and family worship. Some questions I have reflected on are as follows: Is there a divide? Is there a common ground? Does Christian education exist because of the lack of family worship? Regardless, Leyland Ryken writes, “In one important way, a Christian student’s calling is the same as it is for the Christian in any situation of life. Its central focus is the individual’s relationship with God.”<sup>4</sup> Parental figures, Christian educators, pastors, and students must have common ground in their relationship with God. Even if parental figures are delegating their biblical responsibilities to Christian educators, the most important result to come from this is that the child begins to have a relationship with God.

In return, if Christian teachers are handed this biblical responsibility to disciple students who have a discipleship void at home, Deuteronomy 6:4-9 serves as a charge to these Christian schools to place on all personal and structural elements the great redemption of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Great Commission:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

These reminders will hopefully impact—if indirectly—the parental figures as they drop-off and pick-up their students daily. Reminders can be found in many creative ways.

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<sup>4</sup> Leland Ryken, “The Student’s Calling,” in *Liberal Arts for the Christian Life*, ed. Jeffrey C. Davis and Philip G. Ryken (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 16.



## **Personal Reflections**

This project served to be so much more than the final stage of earning a Doctor of Ministry degree. Although the honor is humbling and encouraging, the impact that this leg of my journey has made on my worldview will forever be special to me and my family. My personal reflections bring me back to the beginning of the backstory that led to the celebration during the final worship service.

King Street Baptist Church possessed a lot of building space and nothing but old books, dusty choir robes, and decades' worth of vacation Bible school material to fill it up. When the church asked me to interview for the position, I told them that I would only consider it if they, after prayerful consideration, would be willing to stretch themselves in outreach. It was evident that God had provided the space they owned to be used for collaboration, not clutter. I did not have any specific plan in mind at that point, but the deacons and church council agreed that the church needed to begin a season of revitalization.

As mentioned in chapter 1, a local real-estate connection put me in contact with a school looking to partner with a church and use space for an academy. Due to the swiftness of this contact, the church was not anticipating such dramatic change. After all, I had been there for only a couple of months. I did due diligence in contacting city officials, code enforcement, and the fire marshal to find out what we needed to do in order to be up to code for a school. As I took note of all the construction projects, called out different quotes, and interviewed different contractors, I presented the strategic plan to the church council.

KSBC did have a building fund, and it was enough to cover the cost of the renovations required to bring in a school. The construction project included five sets of fire-raided doors, a fire-alarm system, multiple exit signs, and new ceiling tiles and flooring for a new library and administrative offices. The new additions were not the difficult part about which the church council needed to be persuaded; the vision excited

them. The challenging part was letting go of all the items that had sat in closets for years and collected dust. It took multiple meetings to agree upon room arrangements, the removal of items, and the organizational management of the dual-use classrooms. The church council approved the financial and lease terms, and then the plan began. Discussions started in August 2018, and by God's grace, a large big learning curve, and the flexibility of both church and school, the school began January 2019.

Different strategies were implemented to get the students acclimated to the KSBC environment. To begin, we hosted chapel services once per week starting in September 2018. This allowed me to build rapport with staff and students and to keep motivating the construction of the school in the church. This ended up being an exceptional idea and allowed a strong foundation. We had a powerful experience together.

In July 2020, I was called away from serving as the pastor of KSBC to serve active duty as a Navy chaplain. Although it was extremely difficult to leave the church and LAA when things were momentous, Navy chaplaincy is a calling that I know has been on my life for some time. God, in his impeccable timing, provides leaders with gifts and talents to do his will that ultimately works for his good. Some leaders must combat sin, others enjoy a harvest. In 1 Corinthians 3, Paul provides support to this notion:

Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit, but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings? What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each of his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. For we are co-workers in God's service, you are God's field, God's building.

The Lord shows us, specifically with the apostle Paul, so that assorted leadership over the

course of multiple seasons supports the grand mission of the advancement of the gospel.

### **Conclusion**

There is no greater joy in completing this project than knowing that for over fifteen weeks, the gospel was the center piece of instruction for over twenty-five students. No honor, degree, or accolade outweighs the seeds planted in the hearts of those students. The teaching was imperfect, but the material was celestial. My hope is that parental figures will take back the mantle and begin harnessing an idea of how they can lead their family unit in family ministry. This style of worship is intimate, vulnerable, and life-giving. A revival cannot be manufactured, but it can happen by the outpouring of God's Spirit. Whether it be today, tomorrow, or years from now, let us pray that we continue to march with patience and be poised in expectation for God's Spirit to continually fill and empower us. To God be the glory.

## APPENDIX 1

### GOSPEL-MINDEDNESS PRE-SURVEY

#### **Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the current Gospel-mindedness of the participant. This research is being conducted by Zack Parker for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Directions: Answer the following multiple-choice questions by placing a check next to the appropriate answer.

#### **Part 1**

1. Do you consider yourself a follower of Jesus Christ?  
 A. Yes  
 B. No
  
2. Do you repent of your sin and trust in Jesus Christ for forgiveness?  
 A. Yes  
 B. No

3. Do you know how to share the Gospel?

A. Yes

B. No

4. Is the Gospel more than having heard about Jesus?

A. Yes

B. No

5. What is your age in years?

A. 18-24

B. 25-34

C. 35-44

D. 45-54

E. 55-64

F. 65 and over

6. I read my Bible (check only one)

A. more than once per day

B. once per day

C. several times per week

D. once per week

E. several times per month

F. once per month

G. several times per year

H. not at all

7. I meditate on Scripture (check only one)

A. more than once per day

B. once per day

C. several times per week

D. once per week

E. several times per month

F. once per month

G. several times per year

H. not at all

8. I pray (check only one)

A. more than once per day

B. once per day

C. several times per week

D. once per week

E. several times per month

F. once per month

G. several times per year

H. not at all

9. I have a specific time set aside for prayer.

A. Yes

B. No

10. I most often pray for (check only one)

A. myself

B. family

C. friends

D. other

11. I most often pray (check only one)

A. at church

B. at home

C. while traveling

D. at work

E. other

12. I meet with other Christians for the purpose of accountability (check only one)

A. several times per week

B. once per week

C. several times per month

D. once per month

E. several times per year

F. not at all

13. I pray with my children (choose only one)

A. more than once per day

B. once per day

C. several times per week

D. once per week

E. several times per month

F. once per month

G. several times per year

H. not at all

14. I read the Bible with my children (choose only one)

A. more than once per day

B. once per day

C. several times per week

D. once per week

E. several times per month

F. once per month

G. several times per year

H. not at all



15. I read Christian books to/with my children (choose only one)

A. more than once per day

B. once per day

C. several times per week

D. once per week

E. several times per month

F. once per month

G. several times per year

H. not at all

16. I lead my home in family worship (specific time of Bible-reading and prayer) (check only one)

A. more than once per day

B. once per day

C. several times per week

D. once per week

E. several times per month

F. once per month

G. several times per year

H. not at all

Personal Identification Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 2

### THE G.O.S.P.E.L. CURRICULUM

The G.O.S.P.E.L. Curriculum has been developed with the intention to become accessible for any family, children's church, Christian school, or church staff to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ with accuracy, brevity, and clarity. This material is a general overview and serves to aid in laying a foundational knowledge of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ or elementary students.

In a consistently changing world, we must be reminded that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). Culturally, we must be proactive in observing the learning behaviors of young people in order to best deliver the Gospel message in a way that is memorable, transformational, and stirs a desire to empower them to reciprocate it.

The objective behind this curriculum is to equip students with a foundation of the Gospel message and encourage them to initiate conversations with their parental figures at home and beyond. The hope behind this curriculum is that God would ignite a family revival through the student's conversations with parental figures.

As you teach these lessons, keep in mind these areas of focus: age, gender, ethnicity, Biblical teaching, spiritual/social maturity, cultural literacy, and learning capacity. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit as material may be adjusted in varying contexts.

Please use this curriculum as a guide, as different contexts will require adjustments.

Most of this material is foreign to children or extremely vague. Please feel comfortable with silence, but please be appropriately forthcoming in motivating a response. Make it fun; be silly if it can leverage a powerful teaching point. Simplicity is the core of this curriculum.

Be sure to involve all voices in the class and tailor specific roles for every student.

It is paramount to build rapport with students prior to introducing this curriculum. If that is not the case, then please use the first session to get to know one another.

Each lesson gives an allotted time of 30-45 minutes.

The word G.O.S.P.E.L. has been broken down as an acronym and each letter will serve as a building block heavily supported by a Bible verse.

At the end of the lessons, the hope is to hold an event with teachers, pastors, volunteers, church members, and parental figures to observe the children deliver the Gospel message in which they have come to believe themselves. But more importantly, the hope is for the children to encourage Gospel conversations to be prioritized in their familial unit.

### Sequence – Scope – Goals and Objectives

Week 1	Vision Casting – Prayer Covenant – Surveys	The goal of the initial lesson consists of casting a vision for students in a way that can generate excitement for the weeks ahead. Entire group will participate in covenantal prayer. Each student and parental figure will fill out an initial survey.
Week 2	G: Give	<b>John 3:16</b> – The goal of this lesson is to discuss how God gave us His Son Jesus. In return, we will discuss how we can <i>give</i> , in many ways, to demonstrate and reflect God’s love to others.
Week 3	O: Obey	<b>John 14:23</b> – The goal of this lesson is to discuss how when we <i>obey</i> God’s Word, we reveal that we love Him.
Week 4	S: Save	<b>Titus 2:11-12/1 John 1:9</b> – The goal of this lesson is to teach concepts of sin, repentance, and forgiveness. Ultimately, understanding how Jesus is our “ <i>life saver</i> ” who offers salvation.
Week 5	P: Prayer	<b>James 5:16</b> – The goal of this lesson is to teach the transformational opportunities we have in <i>prayer</i> .
Week 6	E: Equal	<b>Proverbs 22:2</b> – The goal of this lesson is to develop mindset that we are all God’s children no matter how the world may divide us. Jesus died <i>equally</i> for all of us.
Week 7	L: Love	<b>1 Corinthians 13:1</b> – The goal of this lesson is to teach the characteristics of <i>love</i> . Each student will be tasked to demonstrate all characteristics before next lesson. They will record each action and report.
Week 8	Review 1 – Boys vs. Girls	The goal of this session is to gauge the understanding of students by having a contest. Allowing time for review prep. Provide incentives that increase participation and make the event fun.
Week 9	Review 2 – Separated Groups	The goal of this session is to meet with boy’s group for 15 minutes, and follow-up with girl’s group for 15 minutes. This allows for less distraction and small group discussions. Be sure to invite a volunteer of opposite gender to create safe, transparent environment.

<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Review 3 –Separated Testimonials</b>	The goal of this session is to allow each student to stand in front of their peers and deliver their learnings about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The boy’s group will share alone, as will the girl’s group.
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>Presentation Preparation with Peers</b>	The goal of this lesson is to make posters for each letter of the Gospel. Students will be split up and have the responsibility to design their poster according to the letter they received.
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>Presentation Preparation with Teachers</b>	The goal of this lesson is for each student to practice delivering the Gospel message in front of a teacher, or multiple teachers and administrators.
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>Presentation Preparation with Pastors</b>	The goal of this lesson is for each student to practice delivering the Gospel message in front of a pastor or multiple pastoral figures.
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>G.O.S.P.E.L. Presentation with Parental Figures</b>	The goal of this lesson is for each student to deliver the Gospel message in front of their parental figures.
<b>Week 15</b>	<b>Final Encouragement and Surveys</b>	The goal of this lesson is for each student and parental figure to fill-out initial survey collecting data to determine impact of G.O.S.P.E.L. curriculum.

### **Outline & Teaching Material**

#### **Week 1: Vision Casting – Prayer Covenant – Surveys**

**GOAL:** The goal of the initial lesson consists of casting a vision for students in a way that can generate excitement for the weeks ahead. Entire group will participate in covenantal prayer. Each student and parental figure will fill out an initial survey.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** If this is the first time meeting the students, take at least 15 minutes introducing yourself, as well as giving the opportunity for students to introduce themselves.

\*Have students stand whenever they speak in front of group. This begins a method to build confidence when they are standing in front of a big crowd delivering the Gospel message to parents and peers.

**PRAYER:** Following introductions, take three minutes for prayer requests. Make sure this is the standard every meeting and take note to follow-up on requests.

**DISCUSSION:** Begin sharing personal testimony and describe the impact Jesus and the Gospel has made in your personal life. Discuss the need for the Gospel in a broken world by covering a general overview the Last Things. Use provided key terms to explain the

Last Things with Scripture references. It is okay to speak on hell with children, not to scare them, but to educate and disciple.

**OBJECT LESSON:** Every week will entail an object lesson. Lead discussion to the conversation of sin.

Use the game BEANBOOZLED to demonstrate a memorable Bible verse for children.

Proverbs 26:11, “As a dog returns to its vomit, so fools repeat their folly.”

Pick out the vomit/peach combination and ask volunteer to keep eating the same jelly bean over and over again. Describe how silly it is and leverage that truth to childish sins.

**ASK:** Why do we return to the gross things in life? Why do we continue to return to sin when it harms our faith and our loved ones?

**SURVEYS:** Hand out surveys and request that each student do their best to fill out every question. Emphasize that there is no right or wrong answer, we just want the truth. Speak with teacher and give incentive for students/parental figures to bring back surveys promptly.

**CLOSING REMARKS:** Give Scriptural passage supporting the understanding of a covenant (Deut. 7:9). Communicate how special covenants are to God and describe how a prayerful covenant with this G.O.S.P.E.L. Curriculum can be to God when we obey the teachings we learn. Explain how it is like a contract between everyone and the goal is to fulfill our responsibilities.

**PRAYER:** Lord, we ask that each of these students have the courage to trust and obey the teachings of Your Word. We ask that the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ not just be something we memorize, but something we share and demonstrate in our daily walk. May this time be a time of commitment, clarity, and a covenant towards the lessons for the weeks ahead, and Lord willing, the lives we live in the years ahead. May Your promises ring true in our speech, behaviors, and thoughts. And, may we sacrifice wrongdoings in pursuit of demonstrating Your unfailing love.

## **WEEK 2: G – GIVE**

**COLLECT:** Collect all surveys filled out by students and parental figures.

**PRAYER:** Ask a student to come to the front of the class and follow-up on last week’s prayer concerns and praises. Direct them to ask if anyone has any new prayer concerns or praises. Write down on a piece of paper and teach the child how to pray for requests.

**GOAL:** The goal of this lesson is to discuss how God gave us His Son Jesus. In return, we will discuss how we can *give* to demonstrate and reflect God's love to others.

Ask a student to come forward and open up the Bible and recite the *verse of the week*.

- **John 3:16**, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

**OBJECT LESSON:** Prior to discussing this aspect of the lesson, determine an appropriate local outreach that would be suitable for the socioeconomic/demographic of the students. Consider which outreach might be relatable to their story. Once a non-profit/ministry/outreach is established, find something to pass around and take an offering every week. Impress upon the children that it is not the amount of money they give, but the faith they exercise is revealing a faith in an Almighty God.

*Acts 20:35*, "In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus Himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than receive.'"

- How can that be? Why is it more blessed to give than receive?

**DISCUSSION:** Begin probing the room with questions. Ask questions such as, "To you, who is Jesus?"

Allow students to think and give time for them to dig deep. Depending on answers, continuously guide them towards the fundamental understanding of God giving us His Son Jesus.

- Introduce the word, *Gospel*.
- Talk about how it is a message, the *good news*, to share and that message begins with how God gave us His Son, Jesus. Ask about the cross, the grave, the resurrection.
- Describe how each week we will build our understanding and it begins with God giving us His Son.
- God did not ask for anything in return, He was the initial example of how it is better to give than receive.
- Express the importance of giving and that it does not always imply the giving of money. We can give our time to serve, our love to share, and our faith by the way we treat others.

**CLOSING REMARKS:** When we give in areas such as our time, our love, our money, we can think of it like planting seeds. Instead of watering them with liquid, we can water our seeds with prayer and faith. When God gave us Jesus, His Son, it was Jesus's mission to give us wisdom and teachings so that we can spread this message by giving our love to share with others.

**PRAYER:** Teacher will close out in prayer.

### Week 3: O - Obey

**PRAYER:** Ask a student to come to the front of the class and follow-up on last week's prayer concerns and praises. Then direct them to ask if anyone has any new prayer concerns or praises. Write down on a piece of paper and teach the child how to pray for requests.

**RECAP:** Take a few minutes to ask students for a recap of last week. Challenge them to remember specifics:

- Is the Gospel to share or to keep? *Share*
- What did we determine "G" stood for? *Give*
- What was our verse of the week? *John 3:16*
- Is it more blessed to receive or give? *Give*

**OFFERING:** Have two new students take offering from class.

**GOAL:** The goal of this lesson is to discuss how when we *obey* God's Word, we reveal that we love Him.

Ask a student to come forward and open up the Bible and recite the *verse of the week*.

- **John 14:23**, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me."

**OBJECT LESSON:** Ask for everyone to stand on their feet. Revise the famous game "Simon Says", and use your name instead. Pastor..., or Mr./Mrs. says...

Begin with silly and simple commands to motivate full participation. Play the game for about 5 – 7 minutes.

**DISCUSSION:** Once everyone is calmed down, begin asking whether or not that was difficult or easy. More than likely, everyone will conclude that it was easy. Ask why it was so easy to obey simple and silly commands and it seems to be so difficult to obey God's commands?

We believe that Jesus's promises are true, and He states that, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching."

What are some of Jesus's teachings and commands we can begin to obey? Have students find and read.

- Love one another (John 13:34). Are we doing that? In the classroom, in our homes?

- Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind (Matt. 22:37).
- Love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:31).
- Come, follow me (Matt. 4:9).

**CLOSING REMARKS:** Our actions reveal our desires and motives. God’s actions of giving us Jesus reveals His love. Are our actions revealing love? Trust God’s promises and obey them.

- Have entire class recite a verse from an old hymn: “Trust and obey, there is no other way.”

**PRAYER:** Teacher will close out in prayer.

#### **Week 4: S – Save**

**PRAYER:** Ask a student to come to the front of the class and follow-up on last week’s prayer concerns and praises. Then direct them to ask if anyone has any new prayer concerns or praises. Write down on a piece of paper and teach the child how to pray for requests.

**RECAP:** Take a few minutes to ask students for a recap of last week. Challenge them to remember specifics:

- Is the Gospel to share or to keep? *Share*
- What did we determine “G” and “O” stood for? *Give, Obey*
- What was our verse of the week last week? *John 14:23*
- Trust and \_\_\_\_\_ there is no other way? *Obey*
- Our obedience to Jesus reveals what about us? *That we love HIM.*

**OFFERING:** Have two new students take offering from class.

**GOAL:** The goal of this lesson is to teach concepts of sin, repentance, and forgiveness. Ultimately, understanding how Jesus is our “*life saver*” who offers eternal life.

Ask students to come forward and open up the Bible and recite the *verses of the week*.

- **1 John 1:9**, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”
- **Titus 2:11-12**, “For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.”



## **OBJECT LESSON:**

- Ask students if they have sinned. Ask for examples and throw a Life Saver candy.
- Ask students if they have asked for forgiveness. Ask for examples and throw a Life Saver candy.

Just as a life saver is used to save people from drowning in the water... Just as a Life Saver is used to save people from our bad breath... God gave us Jesus as a life saver from our sins.

**DISCUSSION:** Print out papers that define key terms such as sin, repentance, forgiveness, and salvation. Unpack these definitions and ask for examples in their lives. Give some of your own life. Focus in on the one of the key components for accepting that Jesus died for us is to also embrace the fact that we are sinners who *need* Him. God gave us Jesus to teach us about sin, forgiveness, repentance, salvation, and love. Have students read definitions out loud.

If we want forgiveness, we simply confess our sins and ask God to forgive us. This will purify our hearts. We may hear that many different things or people are our life savers, but Jesus is the only One who can truly save our life.

**CLOSING REMARKS:** Take a pack of life savers and share this message with someone in your home today. Tell them that Jesus is our life saver.

**PRAYER:** Teacher will close out in prayer.

## **Week 5: P – Prayer**

**PRAYER:** Ask a student to come to the front of the class and follow-up on last week's prayer concerns and praises. Then direct them to ask if anyone has any new prayer concerns or praises. Write down on a piece of paper and teach the child how to pray for requests.

**RECAP:** Take a few minutes to ask students for a recap of last week. Challenge them to remember specifics:

- Is the Gospel to share or to keep? *Share*
- What did we determine "G", "O", "S" stood for? *Give, Obey, Save*
- What was our verse of the week last week? *1 John 1:9 and Titus 2:11-12*
- Trust and obey, there is no other way?
- Jesus is our life saver?
- What is sin? Repentance? Forgiveness? Salvation? *Refer to key terms sheet.*

**OFFERING:** Have two new students take offering from class.

**GOAL:** The goal of this lesson is to teach the transformational opportunities we have in *prayer*.

Ask a student to come forward and open up the Bible and recite the *verse of the week*.

- **James 5:16**, “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

**OBJECT LESSON:** Break students up into small groups of two or three. Allow them to have a paper and pencil/pen. As they sit in different areas around the room, talk to them about the safety in confessing sins to God in prayer because we can trust Him and this is a way to talk to Him.

Give examples of Biblical prayers: Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-56), Book of Psalms.

Have each student write prayers down on paper and put them on “prayer wall.” This can be optional. Place a cork board, or something of the sort and post folded paper prayers in or on it.

**DISCUSSION:** When pray, we can be healed of our sin.

Have students answer a series of questions on prayer. Talk about it.

- What does prayer mean to you?
- How do you pray?
- What does prayer do?
- Who should we pray for?
- Can we pray with our family, friends?
- Is it cool to pray?

**CLOSING REMARKS:** Prayer is power. Prayer is peace. Prayer is positive. Our lives can be transformed by a life full of prayer. We can pray when we sin, when we repent (turn away from sins), when we need forgiveness, when we need Jesus to save us, and when we want to thank Him for all His goodness.

**PRAYER:** Teacher will close out in prayer.

## **Week 6: E – Equal**

**PRAYER:** Ask a student to come to the front of the class and follow-up on last week’s prayer concerns and praises. Then direct them to ask if anyone has any new prayer

concerns or praises. Write down on a piece of paper and teach the child how to pray for requests.

**RECAP:** Take a few minutes to ask students for a recap of last week. Challenge them to remember specifics:

- Is the Gospel to share or to keep? *Share*
- What did we determine “G”, “O”, “S”, “P” stood for? *Give, Obey, Save, Pray*
- What was our verse of the week last week? *James 5:16*
- Trust and obey, there is no other way? Fill in the blank?
- Jesus is our life saver?
- What is sin? Repentance? Forgiveness? Salvation? *Refer to key terms sheet.*
- Prayer can heal our pain.

**OFFERING:** Have two new students take offering from class.

**GOAL:** The goal of this lesson is to develop mindset that we are all God’s children no matter how the world may divide us. Jesus died *equally* for all of us.

Ask a student to come forward and open up the Bible and recite the *verse of the week*.

- **Proverbs 22:2**, “The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.”

**OBJECT LESSON:** Have every student stand up. Begin asking questions that will divide them up.

- Gender (move to one side)
- Race (move to corners)
- Age (move to sides)
- Apartments/House (raise of hands)
- Both parents in home. (raise of hands)
- No parents in home. (raise of hands)

Have every student sit back down. Hand out a piece of paper and have students write down Mark 8:33, “Get behind me, Satan! You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men!”

**DISCUSSION:** Begin discussing how Satan will use every tactic to divide us. Whereas the love of Jesus communicates unity and equality. No matter if we are rich or poor, God is our Father, and Jesus is our Savior. Hate divides, while the love of Jesus unites.

Make this like red light/green light: What are worldly ways of thinking? What are Godly ways of thinking? Green light – Godly sayings, Red light – Worldly sayings.

**CLOSING REMARKS:** Nothing divides us in the eyes of God. Therefore, we are all equal when we have Jesus in our hearts.

**PRAYER:** Teacher will close out in prayer.

### **Week 7: L – Love**

**PRAYER:** Ask a student to come to the front of the class and follow-up on last week's prayer concerns and praises. Then direct them to ask if anyone has any new prayer concerns or praises. Write down on a piece of paper and teach the child how to pray for requests.

**RECAP:** Take a few minutes to ask students for a recap of last week. Challenge them to remember specifics:

- Is the Gospel to share or to keep? *Share*
- What did we determine “G”, “O”, “S”, “P”, “E” stood for? *Give, Obey, Save, Pray, Equal*
- What was our verse of the week last week? *Proverbs 22:2*
- Trust and obey, there is no other way? Fill in the blank?
- Jesus is our life saver?
- What is sin? Repentance? Forgiveness? Salvation? *Refer to key terms sheet.*
- Prayer can heal our pain.
- We are equal in the eyes of God.

**OFFERING:** Have two new students take offering from class.

**GOAL:** The goal of this lesson is to teach the characteristics of *love*. Each student will be tasked to demonstrate all characteristics before next lesson. They will record each action and report back.

Ask a student to come forward and open up the Bible and recite the *verse of the week*.

- **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**, “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”

**OBJECT LESSON:** Break up into 15 groups or pairs, depending on class size, and assign each group with a characteristic of love, included in the verse of the week. In this assignment, require each student to communicate how they demonstrate, or how can they demonstrate that specific characteristic of love.

**DISCUSSION:** God gives us many examples of His love, and we can challenge ourselves to demonstrate these examples in our own lives. These areas of love do not have to be reserved when no one is watching. They can be done at school, with siblings, friends, and family.

Print out paper with 15 love characteristics.

**CLOSING REMARKS:** Each student is tasked to attempt to live out these characteristics in their own life over the next week and report back to class their examples.

**PRAYER:** Teacher will close out in prayer.

### **Week 8: Review 1 – Boys vs. Girls**

**GOAL:** The goal of this lesson is to gauge an understanding of students by having a fun and interactive contest. In the bigger picture, this opportunity will sharpen their skills in communicating the Gospel message.

**PRAYER:** Ask a student to come to the front of the class and follow-up on last week's prayer concerns and praises. Then direct them to ask if anyone has any new prayer concerns or praises. Write down on a piece of paper and teach the child how to pray for requests.

**OFFERING:** Have two new students take offering from class. Give update on how much the class has collected so far.

**RECAP:** Allow students the opportunity to share their "love stories" in how they demonstrated the characteristics of love.

**REVIEW GAME:** Place two chairs at the front of the room facing the rest of the class. Have some type of reward for the winner of each question. (I chose donut holes). Call up a boy and girl and give them review questions. Have two Bibles on hand in case the question is finding a former verse of the week.

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS:**

- Is the Gospel to share or to keep? *Share*
- What did we determine "G", "O", "S", "P", "E", "L" stood for? *Give, Obey, Save, Pray, Equal, Love*
- Trust and obey, there is no other way? Fill in the blank?
- Jesus is our life saver?
- What is sin? Repentance? Forgiveness? Salvation? *Refer to key terms sheet.*
- Prayer can heal our pain.

- We are equal in the eyes of God.
- What is patient, kind and not easily angered? *Love*
- Verses of the Week: Play Sword Drill (Who can find it the fastest and stand up and read verse.)
  - John 3:16
  - John 14:23
  - 1 John 1:19
  - Titus 2:11-12
  - James 5:16
  - Proverbs 22:2
  - 1 Corinthians 4-7
  - Mark 8:33

**CLOSING REMARKS:** Play “Mr./Mrs. Says” to close. Encourage that memorizing truths is a wonderful way to build an understanding, but living them out, sharing them, and holding them close to our hearts is the pathway to God’s heart.

**PRAYER:** Teacher will close out in prayer.

### **Week 9: Review 2 – Separated Groups**

**GOAL:** The goal of this session is to meet with the boy’s group for 15 minutes, and follow-up with girl’s group for 15 minutes. This allows for less distraction and small group discussions. Be sure to invite a volunteer of opposite gender to create safe, transparent environment.

**PRAYER:** Ask a student to come to the front of the class and follow-up on last week’s prayer concerns and praises. Then direct them to ask if anyone has any new prayer concerns or praises. Write down on a piece of paper and teach the child how to pray for requests.

**OFFERING:** Have two new students take offering from class.

**DISCUSSION:** Use this time to begin recapping the experience of the lessons so far. Ask appropriate personal questions. Trust that God will provide discernment to identify if the students are truly beginning to grasp the idea and truth found in the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

- Ask about family life and the response their family has had when they bring up the Gospel.
- If they go to church, ask about conversations they have had with Sunday School teachers.

- Ask if they find themselves thinking about Jesus more, or even opening the Bible up on their own.
- Find ways to inspire them to lead the conversation and pray for depth in the dialogue of the group.
- Have a circle prayer where everyone is encouraged to say a few words.

**CLOSING REMARKS:** Discuss how the following week will consist of each student standing in front of their peers (gender specified first) and delivering the Gospel message out loud. They will have the opportunity to use notes and take a few minutes to attempt. Please reassure them that this is not a test of any sorts, but a time to sharpen their ability to communicate the most precious and important truth they will ever learn.

Give them bullet points to study and cherish:

The Gospel is...

- Giving – God gave us His Son Jesus to show us how much He loves us.
- Obedience – When we obey the teachings of Jesus, we reveal we love Him in return.
- Salvation – Jesus died on the cross so we could be forgiven of our sins and have salvation, meaning eternal life in heaven.
- Prayer – We have the ability to pray to God and ask Him for forgiveness of sins. We can repent of our sins, that means turn away from our old ways and find new ways to share God’s love instead of the world’s hate.
- Equal – We are all sinners and fall short of the glory of God. The love of Jesus unites and does not divide.
- Love – The love of Jesus will transform our hearts and make us more like Him, and that will change the world.

**PRAYER:** Teacher will close out in prayer.

### **Week 10: Review 3 – Separated Testimonials**

**GOAL:** The goal of this session is to allow each student to stand in front of their peers and deliver their learnings about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The boy’s group will share alone, as will the girl’s group.

**PRAYER:** Ask a student to come to the front of the class and follow-up on last week’s prayer concerns and praises. Then direct them to ask if anyone has any new prayer concerns or praises. Write down on a piece of paper and teach the child how to pray for requests.

**OFFERING:** Have two new students take offering from class.

**PRACTICE:** Invite one student at a time to come forward and deliver the Gospel message.

As the teacher, allow them to do their best and be a source of encouragement. This part may be difficult if the group is not strong collectively. But, if they find themselves to be very supportive of one another, make an effort to allow them to provide constructive criticism. If not, ask volunteer to facilitate while you talk with the student one-on-one.

Give feedback in the areas of:

- Volume (Children talking in front of a crowd tend to be very quiet.)
- Material (Did the students cover the material thoroughly?)
- Confidence (Did the child appear to be confident in their ability to deliver the material?)

**CLOSING REMARKS:** Task specific groups to create poster boards for the presentation in front of their parental figures. Each poster will contain a letter of the G.O.S.P.E.L.

**PRAYER:** Teacher will close out in prayer.

## **Week 11: Presentation Preparation with Peers**

**GOAL:** The goal of this lesson is to make posters for each letter of the Gospel. Students will be split up and have the responsibility to design their poster according to the letter they received.

**PRAYER:** Ask a student to come to the front of the class and follow-up on last week's prayer concerns and praises. Then direct them to ask if anyone has any new prayer concerns or praises. Write down on a piece of paper and teach the child how to pray for requests.

**OFFERING:** Have two new students take offering from class.

**PRACTICE:** With both boys and girls in the class, invite one student at a time to come forward and deliver the Gospel message.

As the teacher, allow them to do their best and be a source of encouragement. This part may be difficult if the group is not strong collectively. But, if they find themselves to be very supportive of one another, make an effort to allow them to provide constructive criticism. If not, ask volunteer to facilitate while you talk with the student one-on-one.

Give feedback in the areas of:



- Volume (Children talking in front of a crowd tend to be very quiet.)
- Material (Did the students cover the material thoroughly?)
- Confidence (Did the child appear to be confident in their ability to deliver the material?)

**CLOSING REMARKS:** Continue to encourage students to study, rehearse on their own, and initiate discussions with family members. It would be great for them to practice with family members at home! Remind them that the following week they will be speaking in front of their teachers.

**PRAYER:** Teacher will close out in prayer.

### **Week 12: Presentation Preparation with Teachers**

**GOAL:** The goal of this lesson is for each student to practice delivering the Gospel message in front of a teacher or multiple teachers and administrators. Prior to activity, sit down with teachers and discuss their role in this exercise. Teachers should be there for support and suggestions. Remember that children already have a strong relationship with their teachers.

**PRAYER:** Ask a student to come to the front of the class and follow-up on last week's prayer concerns and praises. Then direct them to ask if anyone has any new prayer concerns or praises. Write down on a piece of paper and teach the child how to pray for requests.

**OFFERING:** Have two new students take offering from class.

**PRACTICE:** Invite one student at a time to come forward and deliver the Gospel message.

As the teacher, allow them to do their best and be a source of encouragement. This part may be difficult if the group is not strong collectively. But, if they find themselves to be very supportive of one another, make an effort to allow them to provide constructive criticism. If not, ask volunteer to facilitate while you talk with the student one-on-one.

Give feedback in the areas of:

- Volume (Children talking in front of a crowd tend to be very quiet.)
- Material (Did the students cover the material thoroughly?)
- Confidence (Did the child appear to be confident in their ability to deliver the material?)

**CLOSING REMARKS:** Continue to encourage students to study, rehearse on their own, and initiate discussions with family members. It would be great for them to practice with

family members at home! Remind them that the following week they will be speaking in front of a group of pastors.

**PRAYER:** Teacher will close out in prayer.

### **Week 13: Presentation Preparation with Pastors**

**GOAL:** The goal of this lesson is for each student to practice delivering the Gospel message in front of a pastor, or multiple pastoral figures. Prior to activity, sit down with pastors and discuss their role in this exercise. Pastors should be there for support and suggestions.

**PRAYER:** Ask a student to come to the front of the class and follow-up on last week's prayer concerns and praises. Then direct them to ask if anyone has any new prayer concerns or praises. Write down on a piece of paper and teach the child how to pray for requests.

**OFFERING:** Have two new students take offering from class.

**PRACTICE:** Invite one student at a time to come forward and deliver the Gospel message.

As the teacher, allow them to do their best and be a source of encouragement. This part may be difficult if the group is not strong collectively. But, if they find themselves to be very supportive of one another, make an effort to allow them to provide constructive criticism. If not, ask volunteer to facilitate while you talk with the student one-on-one.

Give feedback in the areas of:

- Volume (Children talking in front of a crowd tend to be very quiet.)
- Material (Did the students cover the material thoroughly?)
- Confidence (Did the child appear to be confident in their ability to deliver the material?)

**CLOSING REMARKS:** Continue to encourage students to study, rehearse on their own, and initiate discussions with family members. It would be great for them to practice with family members at home! Remind them that the following week they will be speaking in front of their parental figures.

**PRAYER:** Teacher will close out in prayer.

## **Week 14: G.O.S.P.E.L. Presentation with Parental Figures**

**GOAL:** The goal of this lesson is for each student to deliver the Gospel message in front of their parental figures in a corporate worship setting. This will look different for every context, but the priority is to have planned an event that includes all of the parental figures in one setting to witness their children delivering the Gospel.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** At the beginning of the service, the teacher can use this time to introduce themselves and give a brief overview of the last few months.

**PRAYER:** Following introductions, invite a student who has shown spiritual growth to come before the crowd and ask for prayer requests. Communicate to parents how this has been a staple in the teachings.

**OFFERING:** Have four students take an offering. Communicate to parental figures that all proceeds will benefit the specific outreach chosen at the beginning of the lessons. Express gratitude for the children's consistent participation. Have volunteers count during service and announce amount at the end.

**DISCUSSION:** Begin sharing personal testimony and describe the impact Jesus and the Gospel has made in your personal life. Discuss the need for the Gospel in a broken world by covering a general overview of heaven and hell. Communicate how the Holy Spirit led you to teach this curriculum so that the Gospel conversation can be consistent in all of our homes.

**PRESENTATION:** Allow the designated groups to present the poster boards and define the acronym we taught throughout the course of the curriculum.

Invite one student at a time to come forward and deliver the Gospel message.

**CLOSING REMARKS:** Express sincere gratitude for the parental figures, teachers, pastors, volunteers, and mostly the students for their full and committed participation.

**FINAL SURVEYS:** Hand out surveys and request that each student and parental figure do their best to fill out every question. Emphasize that there is no right or wrong answer, we just want the truth. Speak with teacher and give incentive for students and parental figure to bring back surveys promptly.

**PRAYER:** Lord, we ask that each of these students and parental figures have the courage to trust and obey the teachings of Your Word. We ask that the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ not just be something we memorize, but something we share and demonstrate in our daily walk. May this moment be remembered as transformative with your youngest children declaring your name and your truth amidst seasoned saints and those that you have placed on watch for their lives. Thank you, Lord, for your unfailing love and your redemptive grace.

## **Week 15: Final Encouragement and Final Surveys**

**GOAL:** The goal of this lesson is to collect each survey filled out by every student and parental figure for the final time and collect data to determine the impact of G.O.S.P.E.L. curriculum. Also, to reveal the final amount that was raised for the local mission.

**CLOSING REMARKS:** Handout personalized certificates to each student individually. Take the time to talk about their progress and growth. More importantly, thank them for trusting you with God's Word, and the beautiful message of His Son, Jesus. Be sure to reiterate the Gospel is a way of life that can be demonstrated in their behaviors every single day.

### **Key Terms – Week 1**

- **Last Things**

According to *The Baptist Faith and Message*, God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

- **Covenant**

Deuteronomy 7:9, "Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments."

According to *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, a covenant can be defined as coming together. "It presupposes two or more parties who come together to make a contract, agreeing on promises, stipulations, privileges, and responsibilities. In religious and theological circles there has not been agreement on precisely what is to be understood by the biblical term. It is used variously in biblical contexts. In political situations, it can be translated treaty; in a social setting, it means a lifelong friendship agreement; or it can refer to a marriage."

## Key Terms – Week 4

- **Salvation**

According to *The Baptist Faith and Message*, salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress towards moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

- **Repentance**

According to *The Baptist Faith and Message*, to repent is to pursue a genuine turning from sin towards God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.

- **Sin**

According to *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, "sin is a riddle, a mystery, a reality that eludes definition and comprehension. Perhaps we most often think of sin as

wrongdoing or transgression of God's law. Sin includes a failure to do what is right. But sin also offends people; it is violence and lovelessness toward other people, and ultimately, rebellion against God.”

- **Forgiveness**

According to *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, forgiveness is “God's restoration of relationship that entails the removal of objective guilt. Thus, to forgive the offense against God's holiness or the perpetrator of the offense are synonymous. Forgiveness can be extended both to nations (especially Israel) and to individuals.”

## **Key Terms – Week 7**

### **15 Love Characteristics**

How have you shown:

- **Patience –**
- **Kindness –**
- **No envy –**
- **No boasting –**
- **Not being proud –**
- **Honor –**
- **Serving –**
- **Controlled anger –**
- **Forgiveness –**
- **Joy –**
- **Truth –**

- **Protection** –
- **Trust** –
- **Hope** –
- **Perseverance** –

### **Key Terms – Week 9**

- **Give** – God gave us His Son Jesus to show us how much He loves us.
- **Obey** – When we obey the teachings of Jesus, we reveal we love Him in return.
- **Save** – Jesus died on the cross so we could be forgiven of our sins and have salvation, meaning eternal life in heaven.
- **Prayer** – We have the ability to pray to God and ask Him for forgiveness of sins. We can repent of our sins, that means turn away from our old ways and find new ways to share God’s love instead of the world’s hate.
- **Equal** – We are all sinners and fall short of the glory of God. The love of Jesus unites and does not divide.
- **Love** – The love of Jesus will transform our hearts and make us more like Him, and that will change the world.

APPENDIX 3

CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT FORM

**G.O.S.P.E.L.**  
Curriculum  
Assessment Form



Zachary C. Parker  
SBTS – Doctor of  
Ministry Project

Please provide professional feedback for the curriculum developed by Zachary C. Parker according to the table below.

<b>Score 3</b>	Outstanding
<b>Score 2</b>	Adequate
<b>Score 1</b>	Needs Improvement

<b>Biblical Accuracy</b>	<b>Score #</b>
Curriculum provided strong Biblical accuracy throughout entire span of teaching.	
Curriculum was Biblically led and served to be the foundation of the teaching.	

<b>Teaching Clarity</b>	<b>Score #</b>
Lesson plans communicated clear scope, sequence, goals, outline, and applications.	

<b>Spiritual Growth</b>	<b>Score #</b>
Curriculum encouraged and nurtured spiritual growth of students through Biblical truths.	

<b>Academically Sound</b>	<b>Score #</b>
Curriculum provided intellectual tools for students to be pressed in thought and contemplation.	

<b>Student Benefit</b>	<b>Score #</b>
Curriculum provided quality benefits to students in understanding, and equipping of the Gospel.	

**Additional Comments:**

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature/Title: \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX 4

### GOSPEL-MINDEDNESS POST-SURVEY

#### **Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the current Gospel-mindedness of the participant. This research is being conducted by Zack Parker for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Directions: Answer the following multiple-choice questions by placing a check next to the appropriate answer.

#### **Part 2**

1. Do you consider yourself a follower of Jesus Christ?

A. Yes

B. No

2. Do you repent of your sin and trust in Jesus Christ for forgiveness?

A. Yes

B. No

3. Do you know how to share the Gospel?

A. Yes

B. No

4. Is the Gospel more than having heard about Jesus?

A. Yes

B. No

5. What is your age in years?

A. 18-24

B. 25-34

C. 35-44

D. 45-54

E. 55-64

F. 65 and over

6. I read my Bible (check only one)

A. more than once per day

B. once per day

C. several times per week

D. once per week

E. several times per month

F. once per month

G. several times per year

H. not at all

7. I meditate on Scripture (check only one)

A. more than once per day

B. once per day

C. several times per week

D. once per week

E. several times per month

F. once per month

G. several times per year

H. not at all

8. I pray (check only one)

A. more than once per day

B. once per day

C. several times per week

D. once per week

E. several times per month

F. once per month

G. several times per year

H. not at all

9. I have a specific time set aside for prayer.

A. Yes

B. No

10. I most often pray for (check only one)

A. myself

B. family

C. friends

D. other

11. I most often pray (check only one)

A. at church

B. at home

C. while traveling

D. at work

E. other

12. I meet with other Christians for the purpose of accountability (check only one)

A. several times per week

B. once per week

C. several times per month

D. once per month

E. several times per year

F. not at all

13. I pray with my children (choose only one)

A. more than once per day

B. once per day

C. several times per week

D. once per week

E. several times per month

F. once per month

G. several times per year

H. not at all

14. I read the Bible with my children (choose only one)

A. more than once per day

B. once per day

C. several times per week

D. once per week

E. several times per month

F. once per month

G. several times per year

H. not at all

15. I read Christian books to/with my children (choose only one)

A. more than once per day

B. once per day

C. several times per week

D. once per week

E. several times per month

F. once per month

G. several times per year

H. not at all

16. I lead my home in family worship (specific time of Bible-reading and prayer) (check only one)

A. more than once per day

B. once per day

C. several times per week

D. once per week

E. several times per month

F. once per month

G. several times per year

H. not at all

Personal Identification Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ABSTRACT

### A PARADOXICAL FAMILY REVIVAL FOR UNCHURCHED FAMILIES AT KING STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

Zachary Charles Parker, DMin  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020  
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Kevin Jones

This project develops a system of learning and training through which the students and parental figures of the Learning and Achievement Academy grow in their understanding of the gospel. Chapter 1 describes the context and need for this project. Chapter 2 engages with the biblical and theological resources that support this work, and chapter 3 leverages the theoretical and practical elements that enhance this work. Chapter 4 explains the planning, development, and implementation of the project itself, including the curriculum delivered throughout the duration of the project. Chapter 5 evaluates various aspects of the project and reflects upon the implementation and efficacy of the project. Overall, through this work, the students and parental figures of the Learning and Achievement Academy will be better postured to participate in family worship because of their ability to understand and communicate the good news of Jesus Christ.

## VITA

Zachary Charles Parker

### EDUCATION

BA, Florida State University, 2012

MDiv, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016

### ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Bible Teacher, Merritt Island Christian School, Merritt Island, Florida, 2017-2018

### MILITARY SERVICE

Chaplain, United States Navy, 2020-

### MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Pastoral Staff, Thomas Road Baptist Church – Elim Home, Lynchburg, Virginia, 2014-2016

Senior Pastor, King Street Baptist Church, Cocoa, Florida, 2018-2020