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EQUIPPING SMALL GROUP LEADERS OF GRACE CHURCH
IN EDEN PRAIRIE, MINNESOTA, TO BECOME
DISCIPLE-MAKERS

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EQUIPPING SMALL GROUP LEADERS OF GRACE CHURCH
IN EDEN PRAIRIE, MINNESOTA, TO BECOME
DISCIPLE-MAKERS

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For the glory of God in all nations.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations . . .

*and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses,
entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.*

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PREFACE

This doctoral work is complete only by God's grace and mercy. I am forever indebted to him for his incredible kindness displayed toward me in Christ Jesus. He has been, and is, and always will be, the fountain and inspiration for anything praiseworthy I accomplish.

I am incredibly thankful to the Lord for my amazing wife and soul mate, Manjit. She inspired me to do this course of study and has loved me faithfully and patiently during my long seasons of study. She is my rock, encourager, cheerleader, and best friend. I would never have completed this work without her.

I am thankful for my dad. He has been my mentor, guide, proofer, and, best of all, my friend. He has encouraged me to study and think about being a man who lives on mission. His passion for prayer, revival, and mission has never waned in over sixty years of ministry.

My mom has gone on ahead of us to meet Jesus, and I miss her dearly. She always loudly celebrated whatever her family accomplished. I know she would have been incredibly proud to see her son reach this point, and I dedicate this project to her.

My family is an incredible gift. Hannah and Adam, Daniel and Maria, Amy and Kaleb, Ellen, Isaac, I love you more than words can say, and I am incredibly proud of who you are and what you are accomplishing. I love every second I get to spend with each one of you and, of course, our grandchildren! What can I say? They are one of life's greatest joys. It is hard to describe the love and happiness they bring. Avaline, Lucy, Briella, and Beckman, and two more on the way in '24—Papa loves you.

I also want to thank Troy Dobbs, Grace Church Senior Pastor, for his

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I also want to thank my advisor, Dr. Keith McKinley, who has been a constant encouragement in the process of writing this project. He encouraged me to study 2 Timothy 2 in its entirety, and consequently, my life and ministry have been deeply impacted by Paul's paradigm, message, and metaphors contained therein. Thank you.

Lastly, my prayer for this project is to challenge the Body of Christ to make Jesus's last commandment our greatest priority. If we are not making disciples of all nations, what are we making? May God's people rise up and live radical, obedient, sacrificial, disciple-making lives teaching others who will teach others so that our families, cities, states, nations, and our world are transformed by the pure gospel of the kingdom for the glory of King Jesus.

Stephen Harrison

Victoria, Minnesota

December 2023

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The mission statement of Grace Church (GC) states, “We exist to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ across the street and around the world.”¹ The focus of all ministry activity at Grace Church is to glorify God by making disciples locally and globally (Matt 28:19–20). For this reason, Grace Church seeks to equip believers to be disciple-makers across the street and around the world for the glory of God.

Context

GC is in the southwest suburbs of Minneapolis. It is a nondenominational church that has existed for over ninety years. GC meets in a 350,000-square-foot facility with a 4,200-seat worship center on a 62-acre campus. The congregation reflects its locale, with many affluent, upper-middle-class families calling GC home. Through attendees’ generosity, the church is financially stable, can invest in a large staff, and offers many programs. The church has been debt-free since late 2019.

From its inception, GC has been mission-minded. In the early 1930s, the first pastor left the church for mission work in Morocco. The church’s annual missions budget is currently \$5 million, in addition to an operating budget of about \$15 million. The missions program has been led for over three decades by the same pastor who has maintained a firm commitment to church planting in the least reached areas of the world. Consequently, GC has numerous sister churches and 132 missionaries. Over the years,

¹ Grace Church, “Who We Are,” accessed April 21, 2023, <https://grace.church/who-we-are/our-beliefs/>.

GC has sent thousands of people and millions of dollars around the globe to support evangelism, church planting, and disciple-making.

GC is committed to biblical teaching and offers a multitude of excellent gospel-centered programming, banner events, and Christian concerts. Before the COVID-19 lockdown, over 170 programs were operating out of GC, ranging from drug, alcohol, grief, and pornography recovery groups to life groups in men's, women's, youth, and children's ministries, along with various other programs. Over 800 men and 1,000 women meet weekly for gender-specific Bible study. In addition, GC's facility hosts a variety of concerts and events, from famous Christian musicians to comedians, Easter reenactment pageants, and mass choir Christmas concerts. People around the Twin Cities area have been challenged to consider following Christ through events at the GC building.

Over the last few years, Grace Church has grown primarily through transfer attendees from other large local evangelical churches. Many new attendees desire to hear biblical preaching and appreciate the multi-faceted programming.

The number of baptisms a church performs annually is a way to measure conversion growth. In 2019, there were 165 baptisms, and last year baptisms reached pre-COVID numbers once more. Of the 165 baptisms, some grew up at GC or joined the church from paedobaptism backgrounds, and some were converts from non-Christian backgrounds. Over the last fifteen years, on average, GC has seen 200 decisions for Christ annually. So, the recent dramatic growth of GC is a combination of predominantly transfer growth and some conversion growth.

Given GC's mission statement, disciple-making is a priority. Numerous complex tangible and intangible reasons contribute to conversion growth.² It could be

² It is estimated there are approximately 10,000 people who call GC their home church based on online interactions, email connections, and attendees.

that some of the things we think of as strengths (excellent programming, banner events, transfer growth, affluence, and stability) may be limiting factors. Jesus's discipleship paradigms are often antithetical to the attractional style of church prevalent in suburban America today.

Excellent gospel-centered programming, regional events, and financial resources help a church grow. Still, these programs and events may inadvertently not adequately equip and train attendees to fulfill the Great Commission and make disciples in their neighborhoods. Is there a better way to equip suburban Christians to make disciples and see an increase in conversion growth? Expecting events and programming to bring in new converts may fail to produce the desired new convert growth.

The three main challenges facing GC are consumerism, individualism, and spectatorism. These weaknesses inhibit conversion growth by causing church members to live below their calling to "go and make disciples" (Matt 28:19–20).

Consumerism is a significant component of suburban life. People shop for schools for their children, houses to live in, and churches to attend. A multiplicity of programs and events to attract pre-Christians could encourage a consumeristic approach in church attendees. Connecting those who respond to the gospel at such events to local churches is challenging. Overall, GC does an excellent job of keeping events Christ-centered and evangelistic. However, consumerism is a genuine challenge.

Another challenging factor is that attendees may assume that to reach people, it is sufficient to merely bring their non-Christian friends, coworkers, and family to the GC facility for events and programs rather than taking the time to pour into the lives of non-Christians in their homes, workplaces, and neighborhoods. GC intends for the facility and consistent biblical programming to equip attendees for the work of the ministry. Yet, when a consumeristic mindset prevails, some people may attend GC to consume information or entertainment rather than be equipped to do the work of the kingdom themselves.

Individualism is a deeply held American value that impacts GC and probably most churches in America. Suburban America is founded on individualism, where even truth has become an individual choice. Individualism makes people reluctant to share their faith because relationships with coworkers and neighbors are optional. Most suburban families live private lives without relating to neighbors for months at a time. Many church attendees do not engage lost people or know many non-Christians. Individualism tends to celebrate attendance and knowledge acquisition over relationships with non-Christians, and authentic Christian community is needed to impact suburban communities with the kingdom.

Another challenge with an individualistic approach to Christianity is reducing church to a weekly event attended alone or with family rather than a lifestyle of disciple-making and community accountability. Unfortunately, people can attend events without connecting in Christian community and growing in obedience to Scripture. Consequently, they are not being discipled and making disciples themselves.

Spectatorism describes the mentality of Christians who attend church to watch and listen without engaging with their local community and fulfilling the call to make disciples. Some churchgoers believe church staff are the paid professionals who do ministry work, and attendees pay tithes to enjoy a great facility and hire a gifted ministry team. Not everyone shares this sentiment, but spectatorism takes its toll on many suburban churchgoers' obedience to the call to make disciples.

Christian spectators are less likely to be involved in prayer, evangelism, and disciple-making. There may be a link between "spectatorism" and event-focused programming. Spectatorism can undermine the "go and do" Jesus commanded.

Rationale

The challenges of consumerism, individualism, and spectator Christianity hinder the conversion growth of the church, and consequently, the gospel is not shaping

communities as it should. Suburban life adds another layer of complexity, focusing on consumerism and individualism. A return to first-century Christianity is essential to impact the prevailing culture. New Testament disciple-making strategies allow churches to experience a return to biblical Christianity. Peyton Jones advises against reproducing “the effects of a church growth movement” and instead seeking “to reproduce the predictable results of implementing first-century practices.”³ He advocates training church leaders to have a “New Testament mindset before they begin” and allowing Scripture to govern missional practices.⁴ The following are three ways a return to biblical Christianity could significantly address suburban churches’ challenges.

Community versus Individualism

Many people in suburban America are lonely. Neighbors do not know each other. The internet and an entertainment culture are no substitutes for genuine friendship and community.⁵ Christians can model what it means to live in community and use their homes for hospitality and Christian gatherings. Ed Stetzer recommends, “Christians gather in missional or house communities, practicing solid New Testament church structure, and reaching out to their neighbors.”⁶ The Christian practice of hospitality may well be the “chief antidote to suburban anonymity and isolationism.”⁷

Christians who follow biblical disciple-making strategies and open their homes provide a place where people can experience Jesus and make a difference in the suburbs.

³ Peyton Jones, *Church Plantology: The Art and Science of Planting Churches* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2021), 10.

⁴ Jones, *Church Plantology*, 10.

⁵ John Fuder and Noel Castellanos, *A Heart for the Community: New Models for Urban and Suburban Ministry* (Chicago: Moody, 2009), 227.

⁶ Ed Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 167.

⁷ Albert Y. Hsu, *The Suburban Christian: Finding Spiritual Vitality in the Land of Plenty* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 132.

Providing community breaks the grip of individualism and demonstrates the power of the gospel through hospitality and generosity. Christians will begin to pray for non-Christian friends, neighbors, and coworkers. Specific prayer will increase opportunities to share and give the courage to engage non-Christians through relational evangelism. Invitations can be given to discover God through his Word in the context of community.

Sacrifice versus Consumerism

Jesus calls his disciples to renounce all they have and follow him. Sacrifice is his condition for discipleship (Luke 14:33)—a challenging call in a consumer-driven society. To follow Jesus has always meant sacrifice for his followers, and Christians must obey Scripture whatever the cost and live committed to making disciples. Christians living generously and sacrificially while obeying Scripture will break the grip of consumerism. Ashley Hales, in her book *Finding Holy in the Suburbs*, observes, “If the suburbs hold out consumerism and busyness as solutions to our hungers, the gospel paradoxically states the opposite: in losing our life, we find it (Matthew 10:39).”⁸ When we lose our lives and find Christ, we will obey the Great Commission’s call and seek to reach those in the suburbs—people loved by God.

Participation versus Spectatorism

The great danger of consumer-driven Christianity is that it produces Christian spectators. In his book, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*, Aubrey Malphurs laments this situation and says, “The great tragedy is that far too many Christians are not involved in any service for Christ or his church.”⁹ A biblical disciple-making paradigm addresses this problem by equipping ordinary believers to pray for the

⁸ Ashley Hales, *Finding Holy in the Suburbs: Living Faithfully in the Land of Too Much* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 124.

⁹ Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century: A Comprehensive Guide for New Churches and Those Desiring Renewal* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 152.

lost and encouraging authentic, loving engagement with non-Christians. Non-Christians will be invited to study God's Word and grow to know and follow Jesus. Conversion growth will only happen when laypeople are equipped to make disciples. Training small group leaders in disciple-making strategies allows GC to equip its lay leaders to experience increased participation in the Great Commission.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip GC's small group leaders to make disciples who make disciples.

Goals

The following three goals were established to determine the completion of this project. The goals focused on identifying disciple-making deficiencies, preparing an intervention (training) to address deficiencies, and then assessing the effect of the intervention.

1. The first goal was to assess the current level of disciple-making competency among GC's small group leaders, providing a baseline for the intervention evaluation and providing data for curriculum development to address any disciple-making deficiencies.
2. The second goal was to prepare a curriculum to equip small group leaders to develop disciple-makers.
3. The third goal was to implement a curriculum and equip small group leaders to develop disciple-makers in a small group setting.

Definitive research methodology measured when these three goals were accomplished.¹⁰ The research methodology and instruments used to measure the success of each goal are detailed in the following section.

¹⁰ All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

Research Methodology

Three goals determined the effectiveness of this project. The first goal was to assess the current level of disciple-making competency among small group leaders of GC. Administering the Pre-training Disciple-Making Practices Inventory (PRE-DMPI) to all small group leaders measured this goal. This goal was successfully met when more than 100 leaders completed the PRE-DMPI and the results were compiled electronically to analyze disciple-making competency at GC. This extensive sample survey provided the basis for assessing the success of the training intervention.

The second goal was to develop an eight-session biblical disciple-making curriculum. This curriculum combined Paul's disciple-making strategy in 2 Timothy 2, The Timothy Initiative's "Disciples Making Disciples Training Curriculum," GC's "Vital Signs" sermon series, and Jesus's leadership training paradigm. Each session was conducted in a small group format and included prayer, worship, interactive teaching, Bible study, and discussion. Sessions lasted around ninety minutes. Participants were required to complete homework such as video teachings, evangelistic assignments, and book reading. The course primarily focused on developing a love for God and a love for those who do not know Jesus while implementing biblical disciple-making strategies into daily life. An expert panel of the GC Senior Pastor, another senior director GC pastor, and a long-serving small group leader measured this goal utilizing a rubric to evaluate the course material's biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability.¹¹ This goal was successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level and GC approved the curriculum.

The third goal was to implement the curriculum and equip small group leaders in a small group setting. Participants in this training were invited from those who completed the PRE-DMPI. This goal was measured by administering the POST-DMPI

¹¹ GC has twelve elders who oversee the church. The senior pastor is one of the elders along with eleven lay elders. Pastors are full-time ministry leaders employed by the church.

within one week of participants finishing the course. Goals were successfully met when various appropriate statistical analyses for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-course results.

Additionally, the training curriculum was qualitatively assessed by evaluating each participant's major takeaways and recommendations for course improvement. The post-course survey (POST-DMPI) allowed each participant to evaluate the course's impact and identify improvement areas. This goal was completed after the POST-DMPI content analysis demonstrated that the training positively affected participants.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

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

Discipleship. The object of discipleship is to develop people into the image of Christ (Rom 8:29; 12:1–2; 2 Cor 3:19). In his book, *With Christ in the School of Disciple Building*, Carl Wilson argues that numerical growth of disciple-making is only as effective as “the quality of life in disciples.”¹² This project defines discipleship as the believer's personal growth in Christ.

Discipling or disciple-making. The object of disciple-making is relational and intentional, focusing on introducing pre-Christians to Christ and then teaching them to observe all that Jesus commanded (Matt 28:19–20). Jesus instructed us to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19), not just make converts. Disciple-making is helping “new Christians to progress to the point where they are fruitful, mature, and dedicated disciples” who make disciples.¹³

ReVitalize curriculum. The project curriculum is an eight-week training course based on Paul's leadership development paradigm detailed in 2 Timothy 2, Jesus's

¹² Carl Wilson, *With Christ in the School of Disciple Building: A Study of Christ's Method of Building Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 52.

¹³ LeRoy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 61.

leadership development strategy, and Grace Church's *Vital Signs* teaching series. The project includes detailed participant and teacher content for each training session.

Several delimitations were placed on the project. Participants were required to be GC attendees who completed the PRE-DMPI and were accepted to the training course. Priority was given to GC small group ministry leaders in order to train those with the most immediate influence within the church. Another delimitation was the condensed nature of this course into eight sessions. While the basic principles of disciple-making could have been taught in this time frame, it was understood that participants may need additional training and supervision to apply these principles in personal ministry and lifestyle. The project's full completion included curriculum development, pre-assessment, course instruction, post-assessment, and ministry plan development. Furthermore, the relationship between the trainer and participants was expected to extend beyond a formal classroom setting. There was practical modeling and participation in disciple-making methodologies such as prayer, Bible study, and evangelism, as participants were encouraged to make lifestyle changes.¹⁴

Conclusion

God has called every Christ-follower to make disciples. Specific obstacles challenge the fulfillment of the Great Commission in the suburban context, such as consumerism, individualism, and spectator Christianity. The following chapters show how utilizing biblical disciple-making paradigms will increase a small group leader's participation in the Great Commission and develop lay leaders who make disciples. Chapter 2 establishes the theological underpinnings of developing leaders who will make disciples from Paul's second letter to Timothy, his young leader. Chapter 3 analyzes the

¹⁴ This project does not focus on small group theory or on a particular contemporary model of small group ministry. The project is a training for leaders who happen to be small group leaders. Researching small group ministry is beyond the scope of this project.

works of two eminent theologians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who have written on the strategies Jesus utilized as he developed leaders who would multiply. Chapter 4 describes and explains the project, and chapter 5 draws conclusions from the project about disciple-making in the suburban context.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR DEVELOPING SMALL GROUP LEADERS OF GRACE CHURCH IN EDEN PRAIRIE, MINNESOTA, TO BECOME DISCIPLE-MAKERS

Second Timothy 2 reveals three essential elements in developing leaders who will make disciples.¹ The three parts are the paradigm of multiplication, the gospel, and six metaphors to make and multiply disciples. Paul's charge to his protégé, Timothy, to "entrust [the gospel] to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2) is the foundation of his leadership development strategy.² After giving Timothy the charge to teach others who can teach others, Paul describes the characteristics of a leader who makes disciples and provides a concise description of the essential gospel to be taught to faithful leaders who can teach others. Paul's leadership development paradigm will be described, the message he wanted Timothy to pass on will be identified, and the metaphors Paul used to describe the character of the leader who will teach others. Then, conclusions will be made arguing that Paul has provided a clear strategy for replication.

The Paradigm: Teaching Leaders to Teach Others

In 2 Timothy 2:1–2, Paul describes his paradigm for multiplying leaders and passing the gospel to successive generations. Paul charged Timothy to carefully pass on what he had learned by delegating teaching to those he had taught.³ Paul's paradigm of passing on the gospel

¹ The biblical and theological basis for this leadership development training has been delimited to one chapter of the Bible. This chapter does not provide a canon-wide survey of leadership development, but purposefully focuses on one Scripture passage to provide a coherent disciple-making leadership development paradigm.

² Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the *English Standard Version*.

³ R. Kent Hughes and Bryan Chapell, *1–2 Timothy and Titus: To Guard the Deposit*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000), 209.

by delegation to subsequent generations of leaders has four components. First, Paul emphasized the necessity of Holy Spirit empowerment. Next, he challenged Timothy to teach only the pure gospel, and this gospel was to be entrusted to faithful men. Last, Paul charged Timothy to teach people who are gifted to teach others.

The first part of Paul’s paradigm for reproducing leaders is the necessity of empowerment by grace. Paul exhorted Timothy, saying, “You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2:1). George Knight observes, “‘You’ (σὺ) is an emphatic personal address to Timothy. With οὖν, it contrasts those in Asia who have turned away from Paul (1:15) and compares him with Paul and Onesiphorus (1:16–18).”⁴ “You then” can be translated “therefore”—in light of what was written previously. In contrast to false teachers and spiritual attacks, Paul reaffirms his deep love for Timothy by calling him “my child.”⁵ Paul assured Timothy of his love despite his weakness and fear (1:6) and sought to encourage him by this to be receptive to his message. In this atmosphere of public opposition (1:16–18) and personal weakness (1:6–8), Paul is lovingly encouraging Timothy of the need to be strengthened by grace. Timothy would need a power much greater than his own to be effective.⁶

Philip Towner notes that Paul reiterated his previous theme of Holy Spirit power (1:6–7, 14) as he expressed his love for Timothy and commanded him to be “strengthened by grace.” Towner highlights the essential role of the Holy Spirit in strengthening Timothy in his discipling of believers:

⁴ George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1992), 389.

⁵ Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 488.

⁶ William Mounce’s comment is helpful:

σὺ οὖν, τέκνου μου, ἐνδυναμοῦ ἐν τῇ χάριτι τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, “You, therefore, my child, be continually strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” Paul has been admonishing Timothy throughout chapter one with a series of imperatives (1:6,8,13,14). Throughout chapter one Paul has also made it clear that Timothy is not to perform these tasks by his own strength (1:6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14). This verse, 2:1, brings these two thoughts together, continuing the series of commands to Timothy but stressing that Timothy is to work by the grace that comes from Christ Jesus . . . the PE insist that Timothy’s power comes from a daily empowering available only externally, from Christ. (William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017], 503)

In 1:7–8, Paul introduced the theme by connecting power to the Holy Spirit (*dynameos*) and then to God (*dynamis*). Here the command “be strong” in the verbal form (*endynamou*) continues the wordplay as it connects this power to “grace” and “Christ Jesus.” The verb is probably to be taken as passive, which implies strengthening through divine agency. It is also in the present tense, which, in view of the aorist tense of the two verbs that follow, marks the action it alludes to and suggests that responding to this command concerning empowerment will somehow be the ongoing key to carrying out the rest.⁷

Paul is telling Timothy that the source of strengthening power he will need to fulfill the commandment to teach others is the Holy Spirit, and this “ongoing strengthening” is the key to everything else Timothy would accomplish.⁸

The command to be strengthened in grace echoes Paul’s previous instruction to Timothy to “fan into flame the gift of God” (1:6–8), “to which is linked the promise of power from the Holy Spirit.”⁹ In both passages, Paul instructs Timothy that spiritual power is an essential prerequisite to any teaching and disciple-making he may undertake. Knight summarizes Paul’s command to Timothy as “Yield yourself to divine empowerment” when he was teaching others to make disciples.¹⁰

The second part of Paul’s paradigm is for Timothy to pass on only the pure gospel he had learned from Paul. All that Timothy had received from Paul was the “pattern for Timothy’s teaching as well as the substance of what had been entrusted to him.”¹¹ In the first chapter, Paul uses an identical phrase, “Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me” (1:13), thus identifying what Timothy was to pass on to others.

⁷ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 488.

⁸ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 503.

⁹ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 488.

¹⁰ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 489. It is interesting to note that Towner continues his argument that Paul is connecting power with grace here in 2:1. He connects 1:6 “grace” (*charis*) in discussing “the gift (*charisma*) of God.” Towner states,

If we make the connections, the *charisma* of God (= the gift of the Holy Spirit) will be understood as the means by which God manifests his grace (*charis*) among his people. . . . In this case, power is linked with ‘grace,’ which is further defined as being in Jesus Christ.” In addition, Mounce uses the same phrase “divine empowerment” when speaking of Timothy being enabled by the Holy Spirit or “strengthened by grace,” making an additional point that “this same empowerment is available for all Christians, not only for some select group whose members think they are empowered by some special grace.” (504)

¹¹ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 489.

Timothy heard Paul's pure gospel message "in the presence of many witnesses" (2:2), and Knight argues that Paul is speaking in a broader sense than just at Timothy's ordination. He argues that the many witnesses had been taught Paul's gospel, and they could "testify to the soundness of those words and to the fact that those words are the truth of God that should be passed on." "Many" refers to the many disciples who had heard Paul preach the gospel, meaning that Paul had not taught Timothy a hidden or secret gospel.¹² Paul had been effective in teaching others.

In summary, the message that Paul preached was not his invention. Paul charged Timothy to teach the gospel he received from Jesus Christ himself.¹³ This gospel message was not a secret, and Paul clarified the epitome of his gospel later in this passage (2:8–13). It was critical to Paul that Timothy taught only what he heard and learned from Paul in his disciple-making efforts so that the reproduction of the message would be kept pure in the face of opposition through false teachers.

The third part of Paul's paradigm was for Timothy to take the deposit of truth he learned from Paul and entrust the message to faithful men. Towner summarizes, "The command itself, 'entrust (*parathou*) [these things] to reliable people, which comes in the next phrase, picks up and echoes the language of 'deposit' and 'guarantor' (*paratheke*) introduced in 1:12–14 and earlier in 1 Tim 1:18; 6:20 to describe the succession of Paul's ministry to his follower."¹⁴ Towner has highlighted important distinctions. The faithful teachers Timothy taught must be reliable and not distort the message they learned from Timothy. Paul required qualified, faithful teachers to pass on the gospel message to subsequent generations.¹⁵ Paul deposited the gospel in

¹² Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 390.

¹³ David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, Christ-Centered Exposition (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2013), 161.

¹⁴ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 489.

¹⁵ In a helpful clarification, Mounce notes, ἄνθρωπος, "man," is often used in a generic sense of "humankind," and there is no question that women played a vital role in Jesus's ministry and the spread of the gospel. But in light of the Ephesian problem and

Timothy and believed he would entrust it to others who would pass it on (1 Tim 1:14; 2 Tim 2:2).

In discussing Paul's charge to Timothy (2:2), Knight observes, "Faithful (πιστοῖς) as used here is not to do with believing, but as 'trustworthy' or 'dependable' ones to whom one can entrust such important truths."¹⁶ It is important to note that here faithful includes "dependability in relation to apostolic teaching (in contrast to that of the heretics), loyalty to Christ and Paul (in contrast to those who abandoned him), and commitment to fulfill what one has promised to do."¹⁷ Paul required Timothy to find men faithful to the gospel's message, trustworthy, and dependable to teach only what they learned.

The fourth part of Paul's paradigm for developing leaders is for Timothy to make sure those entrusted with the message of the gospel would also teach.¹⁸ Paul's goal is that the kingdom Jesus inaugurated would grow through effective instruction, so the ability to teach is an essential qualification. Paul is giving Timothy the paradigm for effective disciple replication by telling him to teach those who would teach others.¹⁹

the limitation that Paul places on the Ephesian women (1 Tim 2:9–15) and widows (1 Tim 5:3–16), it seems unlikely that Paul is telling Timothy to entrust the gospel to men and women alike. It is more likely that Paul is thinking of male elders, who were repeatedly required to be able to teach (1 Tim 3:2; 5:17; cf. the use of ἄνθρωπος in, e.g., 1 Cor 7:1; Eph 5:31; 2 Tim 3:8; BAGD, 68 [2ba]) and who had to be able "to exhort with healthy doctrine and to rebuke those who oppose [it]" (Titus 1:9). However, there is nothing in the passage, or elsewhere, that limits teaching to elders alone." (Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 506)

Mounce does not limit Paul's charge to mean that men only should teachers but recognizes that eldership is a male office to whom the gospel has been entrusted.

¹⁶ Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 390.

¹⁷ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 491.

¹⁸ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 504.

¹⁹ Paul's emphasis on teaching disciples to make disciples is what Jesus taught the first disciples. Jesus's last command was to "make disciples of all the nations" (Matt 28:20), which is the imperative in what we call the Great Commission. Dharti Lewis observes, "There is one imperative and three participles describing how to fulfill the imperative." Dharti Lewis, *Among Wolves: Disciple-Making in the City* (Nashville: B & H, 2017), 153. Jesus's imperative to "make disciples" happens by God's people going, baptizing, and teaching. Teaching is crucial because people will be baptized and go as they understand the gospel and God's desire for all people groups to know him. Teaching is essential for healthy disciple-making, and in this context, teaching is not mere head knowledge. Effective instruction is much more than information learned and never acted upon. Jesus commanded us to teach people to observe all he commanded (Matt 28:20). Jesus did not have in view here just mental acceptance of information, but disciples' hearts and minds embracing his instruction resulting in obedient lives committed to disciple-making. Both Jesus and Paul commanded their disciples to obey all that Jesus commanded and teach others to do the same. Lewis calls this "teaching to the point of obedience." Lewis, *Among Wolves*, 159.

Towner recognizes that the aptitude for teaching is the “key to the success of the process envisioned.” He explains that “the activity in view is the authoritative teaching of the faith (2:2), for which the gifting [*and enabling*] of the Holy Spirit is a practical necessity (Rom 12:7).”²⁰ William Mounce concurs that teaching competency is not solely based on natural gifting, but the giftedness to teach is a grace gift of the Holy Spirit. He goes on to state the “(ἑτέρους) ‘others,’ could be other men but more likely refers to other people, i.e., instruction to the church as a whole” who would then go on and teach others (2:2).²¹

Paul’s fourfold paradigm of leadership development was simple and reproducible. Timothy, empowered by the Holy Spirit, was to take the gospel he had received from Paul and teach it to people who could then teach. The gospel would advance through reliable people teaching others to obey the gospel. If Timothy and subsequent generations of leaders follow Paul’s instructions, the gospel’s impact would grow exponentially. Timothy’s obedience “provides a pattern for the continuation of the ministry and its expansion.”²²

The Message: The Gospel of Jesus Christ

Paul gave Timothy a succinct summary of his gospel and then included a hymn reinforcing the truth of the gospel (2 Tim 2:8–13). Paul emphasized the suffering that the gospel necessitates in the lives of those who faithfully obey the charge to teach the true gospel to those who will teach others. Paul broke this gospel message interlude into three parts: First, he provided a succinct summary of the gospel (v. 8). Second, he described the gospel’s power (vv. 9–10) and concluded with a trustworthy saying (vv. 11–13) for Timothy to remember.²³

First, in his short gospel summary, Paul called Timothy to “remember

²⁰ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 491.

²¹ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 507.

²² Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 491.

²³ Hughes and Chapell, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, 217.

(μνημόνευε) Jesus Christ.”²⁴ “Remember” is a present imperative, meaning to “keep in mind” and “think about.”²⁵ John Stott asks why Paul wants Timothy to remember Jesus Christ. He explains, “Essentially because he is the gospel, the heart of the good deposit. Indeed, Paul expresses it; he is the heart of ‘my gospel,’ the gospel ‘not invented by me but entrusted to me,’ like ‘my deposit’ (1:12). So then, if Timothy is to guard the deposit and to hand it on faithfully to others, he must ‘remember Jesus Christ . . . as preached in my gospel.’”²⁶ Paul wants Timothy to remember two foundational truths about his gospel.²⁷ Jesus Christ has “risen from the dead,” and he is the “offspring of David.”²⁸

Knight notes that this is the only place in 2 Timothy where Jesus Christ (Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν) appears in this order. Everywhere else in 2 Timothy, Paul writes, “Christ Jesus.”²⁹ Hughes observes that the two names correspond to the two truths. “‘Jesus’s (his human name given him at birth) matches ‘risen from the dead.’ ‘Christ’ (which means ‘Messiah’) matches ‘descended from David.’”³⁰ Putting Jesus first in order of name here emphasizes Jesus’s humanity and that he has risen from the dead, proving his deity.

These two truths encapsulate the gospel. Stott notes, “The birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus are all implicit.”³¹ Jesus’s humanity is shown as a descendant of David,

²⁴ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 511.

²⁵ Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 397.

²⁶ John R. W. Stott, *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 51.

²⁷ In reference to Paul’s use of the phrase “my gospel,” Towner states, “Paul calls this my gospel (Rom 2:16; 16:25; compare 1 Cor 15:1; Gal 1:11; 2:2; 2 Cor 4:3; 1 Thess 1:5; 2 Thess 2:14). In so doing he claims not to be its author but rather one to whom it has been entrusted (an apostle) by Christ. The reminder of apostolic authority here is, however, intentional. Paul’s view of things accords with Christ’s, while opposing views do not (Gal 1:8).” Philip H. Towner, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, IVP New Testament Commentary, vol. 14 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 176.

²⁸ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 511.

²⁹ Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 397.

³⁰ Hughes and Chapell, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, 217.

³¹ Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 51.

and his divinity is demonstrated by the words “risen from the dead.” The resurrection reveals the gospel’s power because Jesus died to pay our debt of sin “and was declared the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 1:4). Jesus being a descendant of David “indicates that he has established his kingdom as great David’s greater Son (Lk 1:32, 33).”³² Stott summarizes, “Taken together, the two phrases seem to allude to his double role as Savior and King.”³³ John echoed this dual theme when he greeted the churches, “from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead (Savior), and the ruler of kings on earth (King)” (Rev 1:5). Jesus’s double role as Savior and King is the epitome of the gospel. Mounce recognizes Paul’s succinct gospel summary and states that “the bulk of the gospel story deals with Jesus’s life, including his Davidic descent.”³⁴

Second, Paul describes the gospel’s power. Although Paul is suffering as a criminal for the gospel’s sake (9–10), he encourages Timothy to suffer well and endure hardship.³⁵ Paul emphasizes that he is “bound with chains as a criminal,” yet he contrasts his chains with the unchained power of God’s Word. Towner calls Paul’s writing “clever wordplay” and concludes that Paul looked beyond his prison cell and the most powerful empire on earth to God’s ultimate power. Paul had previously written that “extreme human weakness is the vehicle for displaying God’s power” (2 Cor 12:9). He may have been physically chained,³⁶ but it is impossible to chain the Word of God.³⁷

Paul’s gospel epitome explains why Paul is willing to endure suffering joyfully as a

³² Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 51.

³³ Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 51.

³⁴ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 512.

³⁵ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 513. Mounce makes a helpful contrast by recognizing that “ἀλλὰ, but, has its full adversative force, setting the freedom of the gospel against Paul’s imprisonment.”

³⁶ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 513.

³⁷ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 503.

“serious criminal for the sake of the gospel.”³⁸ He is convinced that nothing can stop the unchained Word of God and the gospel from advancing. Also, Paul is willing to suffer so that God’s people may “obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus” and enjoy “eternal glory” (v. 10).³⁹ Paul could endure because his focus was not on the “light momentary affliction” he was experiencing. He looked at the unseen age to come and believed God was “preparing an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (2 Cor 4:17–18).

Paul presented “a pattern of sacrificial ministry” to Timothy modeled after Jesus Christ’s ministry.⁴⁰ Paul wanted Timothy and successive disciple-making generations of Christians to understand that “suffering is a normative part of gospel ministry.”⁴¹ Towner argues these examples are a “mysterious paradox that makes human weakness the divine crucible from which ministry done in God’s power may emerge. This fact alone makes enduring the hardest of afflictions worthwhile, and the completion of the elect’s salvation is an urgent motive that Timothy himself must embrace.”⁴²

Paul concluded his gospel summary with a hymn encapsulating the Christian life, calling it a “trustworthy saying” (v. 11). Mounce recognizes it as a hymn that “discusses

³⁸ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 513.

³⁹ Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, New International Biblical Commentary, vol. 13 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), 247. Fee claims the term “elect” means

“God’s chosen people” would be an excellent translation of *tous eklektous* (the elect). Far too much ink has been spilled on the theological implications of this term, whether it refers to the “elect” who are already saved or to the “elect” but not yet saved. Such theologizing quite misses Paul’s point. Here again, as in Titus 1:1, 2:14, and many other places, Paul has appropriated or language for God’s people and applied it to Christian believers. Furthermore, as in verse 8 above, the emphasis here falls on their continuity with the past, not their theological status. (Fee, 247)

Interestingly, Towner concurs with Fee’s conclusion in regard to this verse. See Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 505n31. Mounce concurs, saying, “In this case *εκλεκτούς*, ‘elect,’ may refer to the elect who have not yet been saved, *διὸ* could also mean that Paul is thinking of the mystical idea of filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ in his (i.e., Paul’s) body (Col 1:24). In this case *εκλεκτούς*, ‘elect,’ refers to all Christians and shows Paul’s willingness to apply OT terms for Israel to the church (Titus 1:1; cf. Rom 8:33; 16:13; Col 3:12).” Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 513.

⁴⁰ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 507.

⁴¹ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 507.

⁴² Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 507.

conversion and how it works itself out in different lives.”⁴³ The passage focuses on Paul’s message for Timothy (vv. 8–13). Paul began by telling Timothy to “Remember Jesus Christ” (2:8). Here, at the end of the section, Paul uses these four “theological affirmations” to reinforce and remind future disciples that they are obligated to participate in suffering for the gospel’s sake.⁴⁴

Stott summarizes that these verses contain “two pairs of epigrams, general axioms of Christian life and experience. The first pair relates to those who remain true and endure; the second pair to those who become false and faithless.”⁴⁵ Each epigram begins with an “if” that describes a Christian’s action and is followed by a corresponding consequence. Gordon Fee ascribes the poem or hymn to Paul and argues that the “language and thought as a whole is thoroughly Pauline—to the detail.”⁴⁶

The first epigram declares, “If we have died with him, we will also live with him” (v. 11b). This first line is almost identical to Romans 6:8: “Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.” This stanza relates to the believer’s conversion – dying to self and rising to new life in Christ Jesus.⁴⁷ The stanza is present tense, so the believer now lives in and through Christ. However, it also contains the thought of “eschatological fulfillment yet to be realized.” The resurrection has resulted in the believer experiencing life, so “the primary eschatological event has already set the future in motion.”⁴⁸

The second epigram moves into “the present life of the believer” and declares, “If we endure, we will also reign with him” (v. 12a).⁴⁹ Paul’s primary concern is that Timothy would

⁴³ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 515.

⁴⁴ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 507.

⁴⁵ Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 53.

⁴⁶ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 249.

⁴⁷ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 516.

⁴⁸ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 249.

⁴⁹ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 516.

endure in the face of suffering. So, the one who endures will receive the reward of eternal glory (v. 10). Here is a call for Timothy to endure, and if he perseveres, “they will reign together with Christ in the eschatological kingdom.”⁵⁰ Those who persist in faith can anticipate reigning with Christ.

The third epigram declares, “If we deny him, he also will deny us” (v. 12b). This line shifts from a disciple’s positive actions to negative actions. Fee comments, “The content stands in clear contrast to line 2 as its opposite. Therefore, it almost certainly presupposes the context of suffering and persecution. Thus, it is a warning to Timothy and judgment on those who have already deserted, such as the Asians.”⁵¹ This stanza is a solemn warning against apostasy because Christ denies those who deny him. This stanza resembles Jesus’s condemnation of those who deny him (Matt 10:32–33).⁵²

The fourth epigram declares, “If we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself” (v. 13). Hughes comments, “The final stanza comes as a surprise. A magnificent reversal. Whereas the preceding stanza was a warning, this is a promise, as are the first two stanzas.”⁵³ Jesus will remain faithful even if the Christian lapses into temporary unfaithfulness.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 516.

⁵¹ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 249.

⁵² Mounce argues that the third stanza is addressed to believers who apostatize:

If believers do not endure and do apostatize, then Christ will claim before the judgment seat that he never knew them. The shift to the future tense may indicate that the saying is directed toward a Christian and not a mixed audience since the denial is a future possibility. (If it were directed to a mixed audience, the denial of nonbelievers would be present tense.) ἀρνείσθαι, “to deny” has a range of meanings from a refusal to do something, to a temporary denial such as Peter’s, to full-blown apostasy. Because the punishment is Christ’s denial, because of the close similarity to the saying of Jesus in Matt 10:33, and because the fourth line refers to temporary unfaithfulness, line 3 speaks of apostasy in its fullest sense (cf. Titus 1:16). In its historical context, it is a warning to the Ephesians, especially Hymenaeus, Philetus (2:17), and possibly the deserting Asians (1:15), that their apostasy has serious consequences. Since the force of 2:1–7 is directed toward Timothy, he would also be included in the warning along with Paul and all believers. (Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 517)

⁵³ Hughes and Chapell, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, 222.

⁵⁴ Mounce corroborates Hughes and Fee, arguing that the last line is not a warning but a promise to believers who are struggling in difficult circumstances:

It appears that the hymn is trying to deal with the different responses to conversion (line 1). If it does not cover the common occurrence of temporary faithlessness, then it has omitted a large part of the Christian experience. This suggests that line 4 deals with the present-day faithfulness of God... For these reasons, most

However, some commentators interpret this line as apostasy similar to the third line and take the position that “God must be faithful to himself and mete out judgment.”⁵⁵ Fee disagrees, stating, “Although such an understanding is possible, it seems highly improbable that this is what Paul himself intended. After all, that could have been said plainly.”⁵⁶

These four epigrams form an exposition of Paul’s argument for why Timothy must suffer and endure. Paul instructed Timothy to use this gospel to teach and train faithful disciples who would also endure for the sake of the people of God that many would “obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (v. 10b). Paul reminded Timothy of the essentials of his gospel so its transmission to others would be without error. So, in this way, Timothy was to teach others and multiply disciples.

Paul highlighted to Timothy the importance of teaching. He commanded Timothy (“remind” is imperative) to teach “them” of “these things” (2:14). Knight states that Paul has the “faithful men” of verse 2 in mind. He argues that by doing so, Paul has elevated his command to be the foundation of his metaphors describing a godly leader in two regards.⁵⁷ First, Paul uses metaphors to teach Timothy the characteristics of these faithful men and women who will teach others. Second, Paul gives the content of what needs teaching in his gospel interlude (2:8–13).⁵⁸

see line 4 as a promise of assurance to believers who have failed to endure (line 2) but not to the point of apostasy (line 3). Peter’s denial of Christ (Matt 26:69–75; Mark 14:66–72; Luke 22:54–62; John 18:15–17, 25–27) and his repentance and forgiveness (John 21:15–19) are often used as an illustration. This message was especially significant in the Ephesian context since their opposition to Paul entailed faithlessness to God. If Timothy was feeling defeated, it would also serve to encourage him. (Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 518)

⁵⁵ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 250.

⁵⁶ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 250.

⁵⁷ “What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others” (2 Tim 2:2).

⁵⁸ Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 410. I have summarized here Knight’s commentary on these verses, as this is crucial to my argument that the chapter must be viewed as a whole teaching with the foundation of the teaching being verses 1 and in particular verse 2. The six metaphors clarify to Timothy the kind of teachers that Paul believes will multiply. In addition, Knight corroborates my suggestion that the gospel interlude in verses 8 through 13 was the essence of what Paul required Timothy to teach to his teachers. Stott also takes the position I am proposing: “Looking back over the chapter, we are now able to picture in our minds the composite portrait of the ideal Christian minister or worker which Paul has been painting with a variety of words and images.” Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 67.

The Metaphors: Characteristics of Disciple-Making Leaders

Paul includes six metaphors to challenge Timothy to work hard and suffer well as he teaches others to teach others. The first three, the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer, are metaphors Paul frequently uses. The final three are the approved worker, the useful vessel, and the Lord's bondservant. The metaphors identify the characteristics required to be a leader who teaches others and consequently multiplies. They "all emphasize that Timothy's work will be strenuous, involving both labor and suffering."⁵⁹ In addition, all six metaphors have in view a reward if faithfully completed.

Paul first used the military imagery of a suffering soldier (vv. 3–4) to communicate the warfare of the Christian life (2 Cor 10:3–5; Eph 6:10–17; Phlm 2). He usually applied the imagery in the context of struggling against opponents of the gospel (1 Tim 1:8). Paul called Timothy to "share in suffering" (2 Tim 1:8; 2:9; 4:5) for the faith in opposition to false teachers and strategies of the enemy. Paul saw Jesus as his commanding officer, so the Christian is like a soldier under his leader's authority. Paul distinguished the good soldier willing to suffer from the mediocre soldier who refused.⁶⁰

The discipline and dedication of Roman troops meant that they were often victorious. They were free from being "entangled in civilian pursuits" (v. 4). Towner calls this "the quality of single-minded devotion to duty." The soldier avoids a "preoccupation with the affairs of life" because they are "actively engaged or on assignment."⁶¹ However, this does not mean that Paul is speaking against marriage or participating in everyday life. Paul's encouragement to Timothy is to serve and, if necessary, suffer. In every part of the Christian's life, the directions of the commanding officer, Jesus Christ, must take priority. In order to please their Commander, the Christian soldier must remain disciplined in every area of life and not be entangled in distracting pursuits (2 Cor 5:9).

⁵⁹ Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 43.

⁶⁰ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 492.

⁶¹ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 493.

Stott summarizes this metaphor by saying, “If we are to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ, we must be dedicated to the battle, committing ourselves to a life of discipline and suffering, and avoiding whatever may ‘entangle’ us and so distract us from it.”⁶² Paul is challenging Timothy to be untangled from the affairs of this life and please his commanding officer by teaching faithful people who can also teach others. Jesus prayed that his disciples would remain in the world but be kept by God from the enemy. Jesus stated that his followers were “not of the world” but sent into the world so that the “world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:15–21). Mounce recognizes that “Christians, in general, must have some involvement in day-to-day affairs, but they can never become entangled in them.”⁶³ Timothy must be prepared to obey his commander’s call to make disciples by teaching others, remain untangled from worldly pursuits, and suffer if necessary.

Next, Paul uses the metaphor of a disciplined athlete in the Greek games as a model for Timothy to follow (2 Tim 2:5). Every competitive event had rules, and each athlete prepared diligently for the contest. Some events had a ten-month training that an athlete had to complete before participating in the games.⁶⁴ Each event awarded prizes to the winner. Evergreen wreaths were awarded at Greek games for winning athletes who had competed “according to the rules.”⁶⁵ Similarly, Paul likens the winner’s wreath to an imperishable “crown of righteousness” rewarded to those who complete their Christian race (2 Tim 4:8).

This metaphor is similar to Paul’s challenge to the Corinthian church to run in such a way that they will receive the prize. He challenges them that they should exercise “self-control in all things” in order to receive an “imperishable wreath” (1 Cor 9:24–25). In all of Paul’s athletic references, he places an eschatological emphasis on competing for the victor’s crown. These

⁶² Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 45.

⁶³ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 509.

⁶⁴ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 509.

⁶⁵ Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 46.

references are recurrent in his writings to Timothy (see 2:11–13; 4:6–8). However, the emphasis in this verse (2 Tim 2:5) falls upon “according to the rules.” Timothy must have “wholehearted devotion to the task, as well as full compliance with the rules of the contest, which in this case includes suffering.”⁶⁶

Stott thoughtfully adds, “The context requires that competing ‘according to the rules’ has a wider application than only our moral conduct.”⁶⁷ He argues that Paul describes not only Christian life but also how Christians should serve. Faithfulness in serving according to the rules is the determining factor in being rewarded (2 Tim 2:5).

Paul reminded Timothy that he must persevere to the end. He would need the discipline of an athlete to pass the gospel baton to trustworthy men and women who would teach others. Only then would Timothy receive the victor’s wreath. Then he would be able to say like Paul, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith,” and then Timothy would also receive the most wonderful of all wreaths, “the crown of righteousness” (2 Tim 4:7–8).⁶⁸

Paul’s third metaphor is of a hardworking farmer (2 Tim 2:6). Farming involved “strenuous toil” in the first century.⁶⁹ Hughes notes that a “farmer’s life involved long hours, constant toil (plowing, sowing, weeding, reaping, storing), constant disappointments, and it needed much patience.”⁷⁰ This kind of work means suffering, and the verb (*kopiaō*) “work hard, toil” carries the thought of striving and struggling. This is the kind of work required to disciple others.

Paul often used this word in his writing and understood its implications from his own life

⁶⁶ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 242.

⁶⁷ Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 46.

⁶⁸ Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 46; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 510.

⁶⁹ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 510.

⁷⁰ Hughes and Chapell, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 212.

(1 Cor 4:12). Paul repeatedly urged Christians to work hard, utilizing this verb to speak of the endurance and fortitude required for successful spiritual ministry (1 Cor 15:10; Phil 2:16; Col 1:29; 1 Tim 4:10; 5:17).⁷¹

The latter part of the verse (2 Tim 2:6) focuses on the reward the hardworking farmer should receive, namely the first share of the crops. Similar to the other metaphors, the reward has an eschatological component. Fee argues that this Scripture does not invalidate a Christian worker making a living from ministry, which he states is “foreign to the context, but about his final reward for being hardworking.”⁷²

Stott argues that the hardworking farmer will enjoy two types of harvest. First, the Christian who diligently cultivates the field of his character and obediently “walks by the Spirit” and “sows to the Spirit” (Gal 5:16; 6:8) will reap a harvest of holiness. Second, in reference to what Jesus said about the fields being ready to harvest (Matt 9:37; Luke 10:2; John 4:35), a harvest of souls, it would seem that many are waiting to hear the gospel and ready to receive the good seed, but there is a shortage of workers.⁷³

Therefore, the hardworking farmer must be willing to do the laborious work of planting gospel seeds and reaping the fields “by tears and sweat and pain, especially in prayer and in sacrificial personal friendship.”⁷⁴ The disciple-maker is like the hardworking farmer who labors in discipling and prayer, cultivating, sowing, planting, tending, and harvesting to see reproduction and please the Lord of the harvest.

When taken together, these first three metaphors (2 Tim 2:3–6) “convey a consistent theme.”⁷⁵ Each person in the metaphors displays discipline in the face of suffering and diligently

⁷¹ Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 394.

⁷² Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 243. Mounce concurs with Fee’s position: “While the metaphor of a farmer receiving his own crop as a return on his labor is consistent with the idea of a minister being paid for his work, this is not the emphasis of the metaphor in this context.” Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 510.

⁷³ Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 48.

⁷⁴ Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 48.

⁷⁵ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 495.

works to receive an incalculable prize. Paul repeatedly calls Timothy to be committed to suffering and sacrifice for the sake of the double reward of pleasing his Master and seeing a harvest of souls as he makes disciples. Paul longs for Timothy to pass on the deposit he has received to those who can teach by suffering as a good soldier, not entangled by civilian pursuits, by competing as a disciplined athlete, and by the hard work of a farmer.⁷⁶ Stott claims, “There will be no victory for the soldier unless he gives himself to his soldiering, no wreath for the athlete unless he keeps the rules, and no harvest for the farmer unless he toils at his farming.”⁷⁷

Paul’s fourth metaphor is that of an approved worker (2 Tim 2:14–19). Paul instructs Timothy not to quarrel about words but to “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved” and to “rightly handle the word of truth” (2:15).

The first phrase urges Timothy to present himself to God as one who has been tested and approved. Timothy’s ministry must contradict the false teachers who have misled people in their desire to seek human approval. They will “experience shame before God because of their errors and sins.”⁷⁸ If Timothy does his best to do this, he will not need to be ashamed because he has worked well in contradistinction to false teachers by accurately handling the word of truth. Paul’s challenge that Timothy “does his best” has the sense of being “zealous, making every effort with persistent zeal.”⁷⁹ In this way, God will approve of him as “tested and genuine.”⁸⁰

The second phrase, “rightly handling the word of truth,” is the most challenging phrase in this verse. This phrase emphasizes that the worker must “cut a straight path.”⁸¹ Mounce

⁷⁶ Here it is implied that those he has discipled will disciple others, but it is not stated. The disciple becomes the discipled, and when he discipled others he actually becomes the teacher.

⁷⁷ Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 49.

⁷⁸ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 254.

⁷⁹ Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 411.

⁸⁰ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 524.

⁸¹ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 524. Mounce includes a helpful discussion of how to interpret this phrase:

The most difficult issue in the verse is the precise meaning of ὀρθοτομεῖν, “to handle correctly.” However, while its specific nuance is debated, its general thrust is clear. In contrast to the opponents, perhaps with

identifies that this phrase contributes to the main thrust of Paul’s charge here to Timothy as he urged him to be an approved worker (2:15). In contrast to the false teachers (1:15; 2:17), the approved worker must understand and teach the gospel and rightly live out the gospel.⁸²

So, Paul identifies two characteristics of God’s approved workers. First, they teach others and disciple them according to Scripture (2:2; 2:14). If they do this with persistent zeal, they will not be ashamed because “they handle the word with such scrupulous care that they both stay on the path themselves, keeping to the highway and avoiding the byways and make it easy for others to follow.”⁸³ Second, their manner of life and conduct validate their message. Unlike the false teachers in Ephesus, “Timothy is to teach the true gospel and behave in accordance with its teachings, his teaching and conduct acting as a deterrent to the opponents.”⁸⁴

Paul’s fifth metaphor is that Timothy must be a useful vessel (2:20–23).⁸⁵ Houses contain all kinds of vessels and instruments—some for honorable and some for dishonorable purposes.⁸⁶ Fee argues that the metaphor differs from Paul’s other vessel illustrations, where all vessels are useful to the Master (1 Cor 12:21–24). Fee argues that verse 21 gives Timothy a choice: Is he willing to be cleansed from anything false and be a vessel fit for the Master’s use—a vessel for honor?⁸⁷

regard to both their beliefs and their behavior, Timothy is to deal correctly with the gospel message, perhaps both its teaching and the manner of life to which it calls. ὀρθοτομεῖν occurs only here in the NT. It is a compound verb: τεμνεῖν, “to cut,” ὀρθός, “straight.” It is used in nonbiblical Greek in connection with οἶδος, “way,” meaning “to cut a straight path.” There has been much discussion of the precise nature of the metaphor: a mason cutting stone, a farmer cutting a straight furrow (Chrysostom), and other suggestions, with the emphasis on “the straightness with which the work of cutting or laying out is performed.” Chrysostom emphasizes the idea of “to cut”: to “cut away what is spurious, with much vehemence assail it, and extirpate it. With the sword of the Spirit cut off from your preaching, as from a thong, whatever is superfluous and foreign to it.” (Mounce, 524)

⁸² Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 524.

⁸³ Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 67.

⁸⁴ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 524.

⁸⁵ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 530. Mounce breaks this section down as follows: “v 20 is the metaphor, v 21 interprets the metaphor, and vv 22-26 spell out the specific terms of how Timothy is to behave.”

⁸⁶ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 531.

⁸⁷ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 261.

Stott states that the house represents the church and argues that the vessels are teachers. He cites the phrase “a chosen instrument of mine” to show how God used this metaphor of an instrument bringing the gospel to “Gentiles and kings and children of Israel” (Acts 9:15). In addition, when Paul wrote, “we have this treasure in jars of clay” (2 Cor 4:7), he described both himself and other workers by the same metaphor. Paul uses the Greek word (*skeuos*) for “instrument,” “jar,” and “vessel” in his letter to Timothy. *Skeuos* meant any kind of utensil. The idea of service is in the author’s mind in each of these verses. Paul was a *skeuos* to carry the gospel to those who had never heard it and to teach those who were believers. This metaphor is similar to the previous worker illustration; however, Paul changes the metaphor from good and bad workers to honorable and dishonorable vessels.⁸⁸ So, here Paul is challenging Timothy to be a set apart and useful worker for the master of the church, Jesus, by serving and teaching.

Timothy is challenged to cleanse himself from anything that would defile his vessel (2:22–23). The language used here is for ritual cleansing. Fee states,

The rest of the application, which continues to do wordplays with the imagery, supports this interpretation. Timothy is to be made holy (*hegiasmēnon*, “sanctified”), a most appropriate double entendre. Just as the “vessels” of the Temple were “sanctified” for sacred purposes, so is Timothy to be set apart (made holy) and thus useful to the Master (cf. The metaphor in 2:40, of course, keeps the imagery of the large house with its honorable vessels).⁸⁹

Paul’s instructions for cleansing include positive and negative appeals. Towner notes that “the presence of spiritual imposters make the pursuit of this life something of an emergency. The flee-pursue formula gives the teaching an urgent tone.”⁹⁰ Stott claims this reference is “not to be understood exclusively as a reference to sexual lust, but to self-assertion as well as self-indulgence, to selfish ambition, headstrong obstinacy, arrogance and indeed all the wayward impulses of youth.”⁹¹

⁸⁸ Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 59.

⁸⁹ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 261–62.

⁹⁰ Towner, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, 187.

⁹¹ Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 61.

Paul uses contrasting verbs to emphasize the critical nature of fleeing and pursuing. The word “flee” (*pheugō*) means to seek safety in flight or escape—usually when fleeing from physical danger.⁹² The verb “pursue” (*diōkō*) is the opposite.⁹³ “If *pheugō* means to run away from, *diōkō* means to run after, pursue, chase, in war or hunting.”⁹⁴ The Christian worker must flee from evil like a person escaping from a pursuing army, and conversely, they must chase passionately after righteousness.

Paul challenges Timothy that overcoming temptation is not simply denying his desires but actively pursuing Christ. There are four qualities Timothy must pursue: righteousness, faith, love, and peace. In addition, these qualities are to be sought together with others who are pursuing God with pure hearts (2:22). In comparing this list with a similar text (1 Tim 6:11), Towner helpfully summarizes by stating the Christian worker should display “visible uprightness (righteousness), a genuine relationship with God (faith), and a resultant life of service to others (love). The characteristic of peace is undoubtedly added here because of the turbulent setting in view and the emphasis on the redemptive (peacemaking) role of God’s worker.”⁹⁵

In summary, Paul’s exhortation to be an honorable vessel means Timothy must make every effort to “both to run away from spiritual danger and to run after spiritual good, both to flee from the one in order to escape it and to pursue the other in order to attain it.”⁹⁶ The

⁹² W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Basingstoke, Hants, England: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1985), 107.

⁹³ Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, 234.

⁹⁴ Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 62.

⁹⁵ Towner, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, 187. Note: The turbulent setting refers to the false teachers like Hymenaeus and Philetus whose teaching was spreading like “gangrene” (2 Tim 2:15).

⁹⁶ Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 63. Stott calls this the “double duty of Christians.” It bears including this section to clarify his meaning:

This double duty of Christians—negative and positive—is the consistent, reiterated teaching of Scripture. Thus, we are to deny ourselves and to follow Christ. We are to put off what belongs to our old life and to put on what belongs to our new life. We are to put to death our earthly members and to set our minds on heavenly things. We are to crucify the flesh and to walk in the Spirit. It is the ruthless rejection of the one in combination with the relentless pursuit of the other, which Scripture enjoins upon us as the secret of holiness. Only so can we hope to be fit for the Master’s use. If the promise is to be inherited (“he will be a vessel for noble use”), the condition must be fulfilled (“if anyone purifies himself from what is ignoble”). (Stott, 63)

Christian worker that obeys Paul’s command “will be a vessel for honorable use, useful to the master, and ready for every good work” (2:21). The work of entrusting the gospel to trustworthy people who will teach others is the excellent work Paul has in mind.

Paul’s sixth and final metaphor of the Lord’s servant (2:24–26) transitions from a vessel to a servant in the household. Before Paul discusses the qualities of the Lord’s servant, he contrasts the Lord’s servant and those who oppose his message. Here, Paul’s contrast applies to Timothy and leaders who would be servants of the Lord in the years to come.⁹⁷

Paul describes the content of these controversies (2:18) and possibly the teachers themselves in severe terms. He calls them “foolish (a strong pejorative) and stupid (apaideutos, uninstructed, ill-informed) arguments. Although apaideutos can mean stupid or ignorant, in this context, it more likely refers to the fact that the perpetrators of these quibblings, who have rejected the truth, are themselves uninstructed or poorly informed.”⁹⁸

Paul calls the Lord’s servants to oppose false teachers through gentle correction. This is why Timothy must have “nothing to do with foolish and ignorant controversies” (2:23).⁹⁹ According to Knight, there are three parts to the opposing action of the servant of the Lord. First, Paul commands kindness, patience, and gentleness to everyone. Second, the Lord’s servant must be able to teach. Here, Paul reiterated what he required of Timothy and those he taught (2:2). Third, the leader must “set an example of tolerance and patience with those in error.”¹⁰⁰ Paul here described the qualities of the teacher Timothy needed to emulate in order to oppose false teachers and see people “escape the snare of the devil” (2:26).

Stott comments on the impact of the Lord’s servant combining “Christian teaching

⁹⁷ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 535. Mounce explains, “The indefinite δούλον, ‘a servant,’ and the parallel expression ‘servant of (Jesus) Christ’ (Rom 1:1; 2 Cor 11:23; Gal 1:10; Eph 6:6; Phil 1:1; Col 4:12; cf. 1 Cor 7:22; 2 Cor 4:5) describing Christian workers both show that the scope of the phrase extends beyond Timothy to Christian leaders in general (cf. the indefinite ‘if someone’ [v 21] and ‘man of God’ [1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 3:17]).” Mounce, 535.

⁹⁸ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 264.

⁹⁹ Towner, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, 188.

¹⁰⁰ Towner, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, 188.

with a Christian character, and if he is meek in his dealings with the wayward, ‘correcting his opponents with gentleness,’ lasting good may follow.”¹⁰¹ Paul wanted Timothy to be a kind and gentle teacher so God would grant his opponents repentance to turn to the “true gospel.”¹⁰² Paul challenged Timothy that the teacher’s life must match their message.

Paul recognized that false teachers and their teaching had “captivated minds and hearts to do the will of Satan.”¹⁰³ Only the preaching of the gospel would cause people to “come to their senses” (2:26) and turn to Christ. Towner helpfully observes, “All opposition to God and God’s servants are ultimately engineered by the devil (1 Tim 3:7; 4:1). God’s enemy is actively and consciously behind the false teaching (the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will). The Christian who forgets this takes a great risk.”¹⁰⁴ Paul warned Timothy of the conflict he would face as a servant of the Lord.

Paul encouraged Timothy that God will rescue broken and ensnared people through his servant teaching the gospel and living in a manner consistent with its demands. As Timothy’s life matches the message, Paul’s twofold goal, that of “repentance of the opponents and their subsequent turning to the true gospel,” will be realized. Paul reminds Timothy of God’s sovereignty as “it is God who gives repentance.”¹⁰⁵ Paul, again, emphasized the power of teaching the gospel with godly Christian character in the disciple-making process.

Conclusion

Second Timothy 2 has provided the paradigm for reproducing disciple-making, the message that must be taught, and six metaphors that focus on the disciple-maker’s character.

Paul’s leadership development paradigm mirrored Jesus’s paradigm of developing

¹⁰¹ Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 78.

¹⁰² Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 536.

¹⁰³ Towner, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, 189.

¹⁰⁴ Towner, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, 189.

¹⁰⁵ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 536.

disciple-making leaders. Paul invested in Timothy and encouraged him to be strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul instructed Timothy to entrust what he had seen and heard to faithful people who would teach others. In this manner, the gospel would be passed to successive generations of disciples with purity, power, and potency.

Paul's message was simple yet powerful. He urged Timothy to remember Jesus Christ, the risen Lord (Savior) and descendant of David (King), who is worthy of being followed even if it means suffering and sacrifice. Paul reminded Timothy of the power of the gospel, which, even though its messengers may suffer like criminals, the message itself is powerful and unchained. Last, Paul included a short, memorable hymn encapsulating the Christian life—conversion, endurance, apostasy, and faithlessness.¹⁰⁶

The six metaphors Paul employed to communicate “the composite portrait of the ideal Christian minister or worker”¹⁰⁷ vary in details and images yet display a unity of thought and message. Paul urged endurance, dedication, and a focus on the rewards of obedience as an unentangled soldier, a disciplined athlete, and a hardworking farmer. The approved worker must present themselves to God and teach God's gospel accurately. The honorable vessel must be set apart and useful to their Master, and the Lord's servant must be kind, gentle, patient, and able to teach.

Timothy must take pains to conduct himself properly. The approved worker must be tested and found to be true, unashamed of his work, correctly teaching and living the message of the gospel. It involves striving to be an honorable vessel for the master, fleeing youthful passions, and pursuing those qualities not found in the opponents, such as righteousness, faith, love, and peace.

¹⁰⁶ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 519.

¹⁰⁷ Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 67.

Stott concludes, “Each metaphor concentrates on a particular characteristic that contributes to the portrait as a whole and lays down a condition of usefulness.”¹⁰⁸ The reproducing teacher must surrender and be given wholeheartedly to being the Lord’s soldier, athlete, and farmer to receive the promised rewards. The disciple-making worker must cut a straight path through opposition and obstacles to be approved by God and not ashamed. The useful vessel must be willing to be purified and refined, put away those offensive things, and passionately pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace. The Lord’s servants must teach in a manner that reflects their Master by being kind, patient, and gentle. They will see reproduction because God will grant their opponents repentance and freedom from the devil’s chains.

Paul challenged Timothy and teachers through the ages to live out what they learned. Their character must match their teaching, and the message must be entrusted to trustworthy men and women who are able to teach others so that multiplication will occur. There will be suffering and sacrifice, but the joy of seeing people escape from the devil’s snare and pleasing the one who enlisted them will eclipse the cost of any sacrifice. This is how disciples can make reproducing disciples, and so, by God’s grace, play their part in fulfilling the Great Commission.

¹⁰⁸ Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 67.

CHAPTER 3

IDENTIFYING JESUS’S STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING DISCIPLE-MAKING LEADERS BASED ON THE WRITINGS OF A. B. BRUCE AND ROBERT E. COLEMAN

Jesus, in the last assignment he gave to his disciples, instructed them to “make disciples of the nations” (Matt 28:19–20). Essentially, as leaders of the new kingdom Jesus inaugurated, the disciples had to be able to multiply like-minded leaders so that the kingdom would expand and grow to be what God had called it to be—a worldwide disciple-making movement. Jesus gave his future leaders clear strategies for accomplishing this goal through his commands, teaching, and lifestyle.

Considering the challenges of individualism, consumerism, and spectatorism faced by the suburban American church, disciple-making leaders are critical.

The previous chapter demonstrated how Paul laid out God’s strategy for disciple-making (the paradigm for multiplication, the essential message of the gospel, and the characteristics of disciple-makers). Yet, Paul was building on what Jesus taught and demonstrated.

This chapter contends that a review of Jesus’s disciple-making strategies will clarify the essential components of his paradigm of developing disciple-making leaders. Two seminal works will examine Jesus’s paradigm, *The Training of the Twelve* by A. B. Bruce and *The Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert E. Coleman.¹

¹ The first book used for the basis of this chapter was written by Alexander Balmain Bruce, a Scottish pastor and seminary professor for over forty years. *The Training of the Twelve* was published in 1871. In his introduction, D. Stuart Briscoe commented, “Bruce’s work speaks powerfully and effectively to the contemporary Christian generation,” acknowledging that Bruce’s work had profoundly impacted his life and ministry. D. Stuart Briscoe, introduction to *The Training of the Twelve: Timeless Principles for Leadership Development*, by Alexander Balmain Bruce (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1988), ix.

The second book used to identify Jesus’s strategy for developing disciple-making leaders is

The thesis of this chapter is that by identifying Jesus’s four-fold leader training paradigm and its content and comparing Jesus’s strategy with Paul’s, that together these leadership development paradigms can provide the foundation for a curriculum to develop leaders who make disciple-making leaders. The two most prominent works on Jesus’s leadership development paradigm of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been used to identify Jesus’s four-fold strategy.²

Jesus developed leaders equipped to lead a movement that would start to fulfill his stated desire of making disciples of all nations (Matt 24:14; 28:19–20; Acts 1:8). First, Jesus led by example. He *modeled* how to choose and raise leaders by his life and demonstrated how a reproductive leader should live. Second, Jesus *taught* his leaders about the kingdom he was inaugurating. Third, he sent them out on *assignments* by giving them opportunities to do “trial missions.”³ Last, Jesus *supervised* his disciples through ongoing relationship and personal and group debriefing. The four pillars of Jesus’s strategy will be explained and summarized, compared with Paul’s paradigm for reproducing leaders, and synthesized into a functional model to develop disciple-making leaders.

Jesus’s Leadership Development Paradigm

Modeling

By his example, Jesus modeled to his disciples how to train leaders. Jesus

The Master Plan of Evangelism by Robert E. Coleman. First published in 1963, it has since sold 3.5 million copies. Billy Graham wrote the introduction for a later edition and claimed the book significantly impacted world evangelization like few others. Coleman was a seminary professor for over 50 years and argued for a return to the strategies Jesus utilized in developing leaders who would reproduce themselves. Justin Taylor, “A 20th Century Classic: *The Master Plan of Evangelism*,” *The Gospel Coalition* (blog), December 6, 2014, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/a-20th-century-classic-the-masters-plan-of-evangelism/>.

² As stated, this chapter will appropriate these two sources to provide a consistent foundation upon which to glean insights into Jesus’s leadership development strategy. These insights will then be utilized to develop a scheme for the delivery of the training curriculum for small group leaders.

³ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 109.

wanted these leaders to multiply so everyone would hear the good news. There were two parts to his modeling. He modeled his methodology and then the content of these methods reinforced how his disciples were to live.

Method

Jesus modeled to his followers the methods he wanted them to replicate,⁴ and he never required the twelve “to do or be anything that he had not demonstrated first in his own life, thereby not only proving its workability but also its relevance to his mission in life.”⁵ For his disciples to fully observe his life, Jesus renounced his right to privacy and gave the twelve full access to himself, modeling the kind of life they were to replicate.⁶

Jesus modeled making surprising choice in selecting leaders who would eventually multiply. Coleman describes them as “a rather ragged collection of souls . . . they were impulsive, temperamental, easily offended, and had all the prejudices of their environment.”⁷ Jesus specifically chose ordinary men to develop as leaders in his kingdom and assigned them the task of winning the world for Christ (Matt 8:26; 17:16; 26:56; Mark 14:32–41; Luke 9:54; John 14:9; 18:15–27).⁸

Jesus chose unqualified men, preferring those lacking society’s leadership

⁴ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 229.

⁵ Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: F. H. Revell, 1993), 36. Jesus encouraged his disciples that he was sending them in the same manner that his Father had sent him and that they would do even greater things (John 14:12; 20:21).

⁶ The apostle John, as he remembered his experiences with Jesus, wrote in intimate detail about the access Jesus gave him into his life and ministry.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:1–3)

⁷ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 23.

⁸ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 23.

qualifications.⁹ They often misunderstood and failed to follow Jesus’s instructions, but Jesus looked beyond their propensities to unbelief, fear, and failure and saw their hearts.¹⁰ In contrast to the norms of leadership selection, Jesus’s leadership selection was not based on aesthetics or social status but on character, humility, and instructability.

Jesus had many followers but called only a few to live in proximity with him. He often spoke to crowds of people but primarily focused his teaching and training on the small band of leaders who would impact the masses. Prior to commencing his public ministry, Jesus began to assemble his leaders and call them to live in proximity with him. His strategy was to profoundly impact a few men who would, in turn, impact the world for God.¹¹ It was essential that Jesus’s future leaders experienced the full force of his life and ministry, which could only happen if they lived in close proximity to him.

Jesus limited the number of men he chose to be his disciples in order for his lifestyle and instruction to have the maximum impact on them.¹² He chose twelve men to lead his disciple-making movement (Matt 10:2; Mark 3:13–16; Luke 6:12–13). Within this group of twelve disciples, there was an even smaller group. Peter, James, and John were frequently asked to accompany him to significant events (Matt 17:1; Mark 5:37; 9:2; 13:3; 14:33; Luke 8:51; 9:28). His choice to develop a small group of leaders “graphically illustrates a fundamental principle of teaching: the more concentrated the size of the group being taught, the greater the opportunity for effective instruction.”¹³ Coleman calls this the “genius of his strategy”—Jesus gave himself without reserve to the twelve and then the three rather than the thousands who had begun following him (Matt

⁹ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 38.

¹⁰ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 19–20.

¹¹ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 21.

¹² Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 24.

¹³ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 26.

19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 14:33; 18:22).¹⁴ Jesus chose a small group to deeply train and equip to influence the masses and future generations of leaders.

Content

As Jesus’s small group of disciples began following him, they witnessed all aspects of his life. The power of Jesus’s training program was the educational impact of living with him. They were privileged “to know the secrets of the kingdom of God” (Luke 8:10). In contrast to the prevalent Western-style ministry classroom education, “knowledge was gained by association before it was understood by explanation.”¹⁵

As the twelve lived with Jesus, they witnessed his powerful work amongst the crowds and listened to his personal and public teachings. They experienced him regularly taking time to pray both in their presence and when he prayed to his Father in secret.¹⁶ Occasionally, Jesus allowed his disciples to watch him communing with his heavenly Father, and the twelve witnessed the power and encouragement it provided for him. Eventually, the disciples realized prayer was a critical part of his extraordinary life, and they asked him to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1).

It was not just Jesus’s prayer life that the disciples observed. They witnessed Jesus living in total submission to his Father (John 5:19) and his sacrificial service to them and the crowds that followed him. Coleman explains,

They saw how the things they cherished—physical satisfaction, popular acclaim, prestige—he refused; while the things which they sought to escape—poverty, humiliation, sorrow, and even death—he accepted willingly for their sake. As they watched him minister to the sick, comfort the sorrowing, and preach the gospel to the poor, it was clear that the Master considered no service too small nor any

¹⁴ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 31–32. Coleman repeatedly makes this point throughout his book. He also notes that Jesus purposefully sifted out those who were not willing to be devoted followers: “Jesus did not have the time nor the desire to scatter himself on those who wanted to make their own terms of discipleship” (52).

¹⁵ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 38.

¹⁶ There are numerous scriptural references revealing Jesus’s prayer life, particularly in Luke’s Gospel (3:21; 5:16; 6:12–16; 9:18–22; 9:28–29; 11:1–8; 18:1–8; 22:32; 23:34; 23:46).

sacrifice too great when it was rendered for the glory of God. They may not have always understood it, and certainly could not explain it, but they could never mistake it.¹⁷

The disciples daily watched Jesus model self-denial by rejecting comfort and pleasure to serve those God wanted to reach (Matt 8:20). His servant leadership challenged the disciples. During the Last Supper, Peter particularly found it hard to allow Jesus to wash his feet, and Jesus encouraged them to serve in like manner (John 13:1–20). Through his servant-leader lifestyle founded on self-denial, humility, and sacrifice, and motivated for the glory of God alone, Jesus challenged all existing paradigms and provided an unparalleled model example of authentic Christian leadership.

Jesus sought to prepare the twelve for what lay ahead by demonstrating how to suffer. He warned his disciples in no uncertain terms that there would be suffering and trials ahead. Jesus encouraged them through his example of humility, self-denial, suffering, and ultimate triumph over all his enemies and death itself (John 16:5–7, 33).

Moreover, Jesus modeled what it means to fully surrender to the Father's will in his humiliation and death on the cross, and the disciples eventually recognized that “nothing was more worthy of the Son of God than to humble Himself and become subject unto death, even the death of the cross.”¹⁸ Jesus modeled to them by his example of surrender, suffering, and sacrifice, how to trust God even in the face of death (Luke 22:42). Jesus taught the twelve by example that they, in turn, would have to deny themselves, take up their cross, glorifying their Father, as he had done, through their own trials and suffering (Matthew 10:38; 16:24; Mark 8:34–35; Luke 9:23) not to save the world, but to glorify their Father in heaven.

Jesus's suffering was not just a demonstration for the twelve or those involved in ministry but for all who would follow Jesus throughout the ages. Jesus commands all

¹⁷ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 63.

¹⁸ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 178.

those who would follow him to “bear a cross in fellowship with Himself” (Matt 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23).¹⁹ Bruce calls this the “great law of discipleship” and clarifies that taking up the cross typically will not mean physical death but facing the “troubles that come on those who earnestly endeavor to live as Jesus lived in this world.”²⁰ The disciples watched as opponents questioned and harassed him while he remained steadfast under extreme pressure (Matt 22:15–22).²¹ Jesus demonstrated by his example how leaders should go through trials and suffering, trusting God in order to reproduce subsequent generations of healthy leaders.

In anticipation of their ultimate calling as witnesses and ambassadors, Jesus demonstrated evangelism.²² Jesus ministered to people from all levels of society and loved and cared for people by befriending the weak, sick, and poor (Matt 11:4–6; 15:22–28; Luke 8:43–48; 14:12–14; 16:19–31). The disciples watched as Jesus ministered to people, discerned their hearts and needs, invited them into a relationship with him, and challenged them to choose to follow him. Jesus showed the disciples that evangelism was not programmatic but an overflow of the Spirit dwelling in him (Matt 3:16; Luke 4:16–21). The twelve would need an immersion in the same Spirit (Acts 1:8).

¹⁹ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 182.

²⁰ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 183–84.

²¹ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 75–76.

²² Coleman defines Jesus’s evangelism. He sees it as proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom, but also demonstration of the kingdom and a call to entirely surrender to the King:

Evangelism was lived before them in spirit and in technique. Watching him, they learned what it was all about. He led them to recognize the need inherent in all classes of people, and the best methods of approaching them. They observed how he drew people to himself; how he won their confidence and inspired their faith; how he opened to them the way of salvation and called them to a decision. In all types of situations and among all kinds of people, rich and poor, healthy and sick, friend and foe alike, the disciples watched the master soul winner at work. (Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 75–76)

Bruce similarly explains what how he views evangelism: “The twelve are now to come before us as active agents in advancing the kingdom of God. Having been for some time in Christ’s company, witnessing His miraculous works, hearing His doctrine concerning the kingdom, and learning how to pray and how to live, they were at length sent forth to evangelize the towns and villages of their native province, and to heal the sick in their Master’s name, and by His power.” Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 99. Evangelism, to Bruce, is more than just proclamation of the kingdom of God, but also incorporates prayer, kingdom-focused lifestyle, healing the sick, and living and ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Aware of the satanic powers arrayed against the advance of his kingdom, part of the content of what Jesus modeled to his future leaders was how to overcome satan's opposition. His lifestyle demonstrated that victory over these powers would require complete submission to his Father's commands, sincere faith, and trust in God (Mark 9:28–29).²³ Jesus often demonstrated to his watching disciples how to pray for the sick or those oppressed by demons and encouraged them to do as he had shown them (Matt 8:14–17; 10:1; 28:16–20; Mark 3:13–15; 6:7–11; Luke 9:1–2; John 20:21–22).

Another aspect of the content Jesus modeled to his disciples was profound love for people. He demonstrated God's compassion for his lost world. Coleman states that Jesus "lost no opportunity to impress on his followers the deep compulsion of his own soul aflame with the love of God for a lost world. Everything he did and said was motivated by this consuming passion."²⁴ Jesus gave himself in love, healing diseases and afflictions throughout whole regions (Matt 4:23–24; 8:16; Mark 1:39; Luke 4:40), and as he looked upon the crowds, he was moved with compassion, sending his disciples out to bring hope and help (Matt 9:35–38). The twelve needed to receive this love and learn how it is the motivating force for an active evangelistic lifestyle.²⁵

In summary, Jesus provided an example of the strategies he wanted his disciples and subsequent followers to replicate. He chose a small group of ordinary men and developed them as leaders with all their flaws and failings. The disciples gained knowledge by association as they lived and served with Jesus. The content of that which Jesus modeled was simple but profound. His selection of a small group of leaders with an even smaller subset for specific training, and the proximity he allowed, set the pattern for healthy leadership development in future generations of leaders. Jesus often prayed,

²³ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 58.

²⁴ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 62.

²⁵ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 62–63.

demonstrating to his disciples the necessity of complete dependence on the heavenly Father. Jesus's posture of surrender and constant reliance on his Father provided a model of how to endure in the face of suffering and also how to overcome satanic opposition. Jesus modeled a genuine love for all kinds of people, and his ministry of evangelism, carried out in the compassion and power of the Spirit, modeled to his disciples how ministry should be done in submission and surrender to the Father and reliant on his strength alone.²⁶

Teaching

Jesus utilized various teaching strategies depending on the setting and audience he was trying to reach. This was his method. The content of his teaching as he developed leaders was specific and aimed at preparing leaders who would understand his goal.

Method

Both hearing and seeing Jesus was invaluable preparation for the disciples' future role in becoming leaders in his kingdom. Jesus expected his disciples to be "students of Christian doctrine,"²⁷ to know and obey his teaching, and subsequently train others who would embrace his methods and lifestyle. Jesus expected his disciples to reproduce, and through their word, others would become his followers so that, with time and effective disciple-making, the whole world might know him (Matt 24:14; John 17:20, 21, 23). Jesus's teaching was a critical component in accomplishing this worldwide mission. This section discusses Jesus's teaching methods, his commitment to teaching the Scriptures, how he taught with words of comfort, counsel, and loving, truth-filled challenge, and the centrality of his instruction regarding evangelism and disciple-making.

²⁶ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 69. Coleman notes, "After all, the power is in the Spirit of Christ. It is not who we are, but who he is that makes the difference."

²⁷ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 30.

Jesus taught a variety of audiences. He often spoke to large crowds of people on hillsides, in towns and villages, in homes and synagogues, and on the seashore. These were sermon-like discourses and often provoked various responses from those in attendance. These discourses included parables, commandments, and statements concerning himself. These crowds were a mix of his followers and disciples, curious onlookers, and those opposed to his message (Matt 5:1; 11:7–30; 13:1–9; 14:13–21; 15:29–39; 19:1–22; Mark 2:4, 13; 3:8–32; 4:1–36; 5:21–31; Luke 6:17–49; 8:1–18; John 6:1–15; 22–27).

After these times of public teaching, the disciples were free to ask clarifying questions and voice their concerns about Jesus’s teaching. Jesus reserved explanations and clarifications for these more personal, more profound teaching times. Often the crowds were left confused, “but privately to his own disciples he explained everything” (Mark 4:34).

Teaching opportunities were taken with the disciples as Jesus traveled, evangelized, and ministered to the crowds. Once he had chosen his twelve leaders, they became the focus of instruction in small group settings. Jesus took time to explain parables and answer and ask questions. In this smaller setting, he often asked provocative questions, answering their questions with his own. The smaller environment provided opportunities for honest and open dialogue (Matt 10:1–4; 16:13–28; 28:16–20; Mark 4:10–34; 8:27–38; 13:3–37; 14:12–14; Luke 9:1–6; 10:1–16; 11:1–3; 18:1–34; 22:7–38; John 14–17; 20:19–29).

Jesus’s commitment to the Scriptures was very evident to the disciples. He often quoted from Old Testament passages and used one of Isaiah’s prophetic proclamations to launch his public ministry (Luke 4:16–21).²⁸ Jesus took time to expound

²⁸ Jesus quoted from Isaiah 61:1–3.

Scripture to his disciples.²⁹ After Jesus's death and resurrection, he met two of his disciples walking away from Jerusalem, and "beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). Jesus used the Scriptures to encourage and challenge his disciples. Their response was to exclaim, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24:32).

Another part of Jesus's teaching method was using words of comfort and counsel. For example, as his path drew closer to the cross, his disciples were aware of the growing opposition to their Master. Jesus tried to prepare the twelve for what lay ahead by speaking of his death on numerous occasions (Matt 16:21–23; 17:22–23; 20:17–19, Mark 8:31–32; 9:30–32; 10:32–34, Luke 9:21–22; 9:43–45; 18:31–34; John 12:7–8; 13:33; 14:25; 29). Despite Jesus's teaching, they refused at that time to accept that death would be his life's and ministry's final outcome.³⁰ However, his teaching was not in vain. It would not be long before the disciples remembered Jesus's preparatory words validating his message (Acts 2:22–36). So consequently, part of Jesus's teaching method was to use words of comfort and counsel to encourage his disciples.³¹

Jesus's final address to the few disciples he entrusted with his worldwide mission ended with words of great comfort (Matt 28:20). Bruce asks, "What could be kinder and more encouraging than this promise: 'behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age'?" As Jesus was about to ascend to his heavenly throne, he encouraged "them on their way through the world as messengers of the kingdom; to make them feel

²⁹ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 73.

³⁰ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 174.

³¹ John's Gospel particularly focuses on Jesus's discourses prior to his death (John 12–17).

that the task assigned them was not an impossible one.”³² Similarly, Jesus’s leaders have taught Jesus’s words of comfort and counsel to those they disciple.

Additionally, part of Jesus’s teaching method was to correct his disciples by speaking challenging, truth-filled, loving words.³³ An example was when Peter was repeatedly challenged for his impetuous claims and statements. The thought of his Master suffering and dying on a cross was too much for Peter to accept. He “did not yet understand that Christ often shows special favor to His followers by making them in a remarkable degree partakers of His bitter cup and His bloody baptism.”³⁴ Peter repeatedly disregarded Jesus’s pointed and blunt challenges. However, despite Peter’s failure, it must have been comforting when Jesus sought and restored him.³⁵ Jesus modeled to his disciple-making leaders the use of challenging words and gracious restoration when those words are not adhered to.

Jesus used challenging words to correct Peter and his entire group of disciples. He addressed the disciples’ selfish desires that hindered them from embracing the incongruous nature of his kingdom. He repeatedly called them to renounce everything—even their very life—to be his disciples (Matt 10:38; 16:24; Mark 8:34–35; Luke 9:23; 14:27, 33) and rebuked the pride that blinded them to the ultimate triumph of his kingdom. Bruce summarizes,

Hence Jesus justly upbraided them for their unbelief and their mindless stupidity. Had their hearts been pure, they might have known beforehand what was to happen.

³² Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 533–34.

³³ The scope of this section is to review the teaching strategies Jesus used to develop reproducing leaders. Regarding Jesus’s use of challenging words to his disciples, there are numerous examples and categories that could be discussed. The focus of this discussion is Jesus’s method of by using challenging, truthful, loving words to train his future leaders. The content and subjects of these words were broad and included: preaching to separate, challenges to ritualism, challenges to be merciful, forgiving, humble, words of caution and warning, warning about suffering, sacrifice, and tribulation, urging his followers to diligence, self-renunciation, and patience, and triumph through misunderstanding and conflict. These categories were gathered throughout Bruce’s book *The Training of the Twelve*.

³⁴ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 529.

³⁵ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 487, 520.

As it was, they comprehended nothing till their Lord's death had blighted their hope and blasted their ambition, and bitter sorrow had prepared them for receiving spiritual instruction.³⁶

Jesus was not afraid to speak truth-filled challenging words to expose hearts and minds to the pride and selfishness that often controlled them. Jesus did not shy away from preparing his disciples for spiritual battle and resistance to the message of the cross and his kingdom they would encounter by telling them the truth. In light of the challenges they would face, Jesus urged them to be “as wise as serpents, and harmless as doves” (Matt 10:16), emphasizing the “need for propriety and tactfulness” when dealing with those outside the kingdom.³⁷ Still, Jesus's future leaders must speak loving, truth-filled, challenging words—no matter the cost.³⁸

Content

Evangelism was a content focus of Jesus's teaching to his disciples. He taught and reminded the twelve to evangelize by proclaiming his new kingdom and followed his evangelism teaching with practical demonstrations.³⁹ Evangelism opportunities abounded, and Jesus took full advantage of them as he taught the disciples. When Jesus sent seventy-two disciples to evangelize the places he was planning to go, he gave them simple and clear instructions that he modeled before their sending. They were first to pray, asking the Lord of the Harvest to send them. Next, Jesus instructed them on their going and the message they were to bring. The seventy-two evangelists returned rejoicing at all God had accomplished through them (Luke 10:1–20).

Jesus was clear about the priority of evangelism. Evangelism should not be

³⁶ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 506.

³⁷ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 84.

³⁸ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 84.

³⁹ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 75. An example of practical demonstrations of evangelism followed by instruction would be after the transfiguration in Mark's Gospel, where Jesus healed a boy with an unclean spirit and then instructed his disciples about prayer and fasting (Mark 9:14–29; Matt 17:14–20; Luke 9:37–43).

relegated to a secondary activity or done when convenient. It was the constant thrust of Jesus's ministry and teaching commencing in the Great Commandments and culminating in the Great Commission. For the twelve, the command to evangelize and make disciples was certain. Coleman states it was "perceived by impulse at the beginning of their discipleship, but progressively clarified in their thinking as they followed him, and finally spelled out in no uncertain terms"⁴⁰ (Matt 22:37–40; 28:18–20).

Ongoing disciple-making was the ultimate aim of Jesus's teaching. Evangelism initiates the disciple-making process. It was of utmost importance that his kingdom message was taken to the ends of the earth by disciples who understood the necessity of making disciples who would make disciples. To this end, Jesus invested time in instruction. When Jesus began to recruit his disciples, he began with a promise and a clear statement about his great aim. He said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt 4:19; Mark 1:17). Bruce observes the importance of training men who would train others:

These words show that the great Founder of the faith desired not only to have disciples but to have about Him men whom He might train to make disciples of others: to cast the net of divine truth into the sea of the world and to land on the shores of the divine kingdom a great multitude of believing souls. Both from His words and from His actions, we can see that He attached supreme importance to that part of His work which consisted in training the twelve.⁴¹

Making disciples was the simple evangelistic strategy Jesus taught his disciples. His instruction was not wasted on just a few "so long as they reproduced and taught their disciples to reproduce."⁴² Reproduction through disciples making other disciples was a significant part of Jesus's strategy for overcoming the powers of darkness and bringing the gospel message to the world. Hence, Jesus's investment in teaching his

⁴⁰ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 89.

⁴¹ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 12.

⁴² Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 100.

disciples, who would teach all the commandments they had received from Jesus to those they evangelized and discipled (Matt 28:19–20).⁴³

In summary, Jesus taught his disciples in a small group setting as they responded to his messages and ministry delivered to the crowds. He answered questions, clarified concepts, and presented more profound and new truths to his twelve disciples. At times he specifically taught his three leaders, Peter, James, and John. Jesus taught at all times and places. He taught them to be committed to the Scriptures and used words of comfort and counsel. Sometimes, Jesus confronted his disciples with truth-filled loving words of challenge. His teaching to his disciples focused on evangelism and disciple-making with the goal of training leaders who would replicate the life and truth they had received from him to successive generations of disciple-making leaders.

Assignments

This pillar of Jesus’s leadership development paradigm can be viewed through the lens of his method and the content of that method.

Method

Jesus developed his disciples by giving them various assignments. His aim was two-fold. He had specific missions for them to accomplish and gave assignments to prepare them for what lay ahead. The short-term mission assignments pointed to the worldwide task the disciples would eventually be assigned. Assignments made his disciples face crises and hardship that sometimes led to failure. Failure was part of the process of developing resilient leaders who would be able to guide others through similar challenges.

⁴³ In contrast, Coleman notes that in churches today, “mass recruitment” and “popular recognition” often, unfortunately, take priority over Jesus’s “long-range goal of reaching the world” through disciple-making reproduction. He continues, “The methods of evangelism employed by the church collectively and individually have reflected this same momentary outlook” instead of undertaking the often unseen, slow, and tedious work of training a few disciples for reproduction. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 107.

Content

Jesus gave them their final and most significant evangelistic assignment just before he ascended (Acts 1:8). Coleman notes, “On at least four occasions as he met with his disciples, he told them to go out and do his work.”⁴⁴ Jesus sent out his disciples on a “trial mission” even though they were somewhat unprepared for what lay ahead. He wanted them to experience the joys, challenges, and trials of kingdom expansion through their leadership and evangelism, which would strengthen their faith and enthusiasm. On their return, Jesus listened to their reports, cautioned them against pride, and took them away for retreat and debriefing (Luke 10:1–23).⁴⁵

Whenever Jesus sent his disciples out on a trial mission, he gave them explicit instructions (Matt 10:5–42; Mark 6:7–13; Luke 9:1–6; 10:1–16). In addition, Bruce observes, “The first, shorter part, common to the narratives of all the first three evangelists, relates to the present; the second and much longer part, peculiar to Matthew’s narrative, relates mainly to the distant future.”⁴⁶ Jesus assigned his disciples trial mission as part of their training. They were to learn to depend on God, obey the call to proclaim the kingdom, suffer rejection, and find people of peace—all valuable kingdom lessons (Luke 10:1–12). However, the more comprehensive lesson was for later when the continuation and expansion of what Jesus started was entrusted to these men Jesus had developed through the trial missions—not just preaching the gospel of the kingdom to the Jewish nation but to all tribes and nations. These evangelistic assignments prepared Jesus’s leaders for what was to come later.⁴⁷

Jesus used failed assignments to develop his leaders (Matt 26:36–46; Mark

⁴⁴ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 87.

⁴⁵ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 109.

⁴⁶ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 109.

⁴⁷ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 109.

14:32–42). Failure reveals the heart in a way that success never can. These challenging assignments caused the disciples’ hearts to be “searched, and all their latent weakness discovered: the old man is to be divided asunder from the new; the vain, self-confident, self-willed, impetuous Simon son of Jonas, from the devoted, chivalrous, heroic, rock-like Peter.”⁴⁸ The disciples’ failures and struggles caused them to begin to face their weaknesses and pride. Failure would bring humility and honesty, allowing them to lead others through failure and challenging circumstances.

Jesus taught his disciples that redemption is possible despite failure, pride, and desertion. God can use failure for good and not only in their lives but in the lives of subsequent generations of disciples. Bruce recognized that “falls, rightly improved, may become steppingstones to Christian virtue and training for the office of a comforter and guide.”⁴⁹ Jesus forged his leaders through the fires of failure and discouragement, knowing that failure is not the end of the story. Jesus was preparing and developing leaders who could shepherd others with “the meekness, patience, compassion, and wisdom necessary for carrying on such labors with success.”⁵⁰

Jesus called his disciples to experience significant, sometimes shattering, heart-shaping events. Jesus used the events the disciples witnessed and the assignments they experienced as opportunities to build resilient leaders. Some of the experiences that the disciples went through and witnessed were for future benefit. In the months and years that followed, they would remember these experiences, and their faith would be strengthened, even though they had no category at that point, for what they had seen and heard.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 472.

⁴⁹ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 477.

⁵⁰ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 477.

⁵¹ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 193–94. The transfiguration was not the only assignment the disciples were given that had a later application. Jesus washing their feet and celebrating communion

Jesus assigned other heart-shaping events to his disciples, such as the arrest and trial of Jesus, the cross, the resurrection, and the breakfast Jesus provided after he was resurrected. He knew that these events would bear spiritual fruit in their lives, bringing repentance, humility, and an ability to encourage others during times of crisis and failure.⁵² Jesus used each heart-shaping assignment to teach, train, and equip his disciples to lead his worldwide mission of kingdom expansion with those they would be leading.

In summary, the various assignments Jesus gave to his disciples were designed to prepare them for what lay ahead. He gave them evangelistic trial missions to test them (Matt 10:5–42; 21:1; 28:19–20; Mark 6:7–13; Luke 6:12–13; 9:1–2; 10:1–12; Acts 1:8), helping them to realize how much they needed his promise of power if the ends of the earth were to hear the good news of the kingdom (Acts 1:8). Jesus gave some assignments that he knew his disciples would fail. This failure revealed their hearts and would help them be patient and gracious to those they would soon lead. He also utilized heart-shaping assignments to enable them to be an encouragement to future disciples in times of crisis and struggle. Even now, Jesus’s leaders are prepared through their various assignments to equip them to make disciples who will fulfill the great evangelistic assignment of heralding the gospel of the kingdom to all people groups (Matt 24:14).

Supervision

Jesus supervised his disciples. Supervision is the fourth pillar of his paradigm for developing leaders who would multiply. The content of this method demonstrates the importance of supervision.

with them would fall into this category (John 13), along with the cross and resurrection.

⁵² Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 474.

Method

One of Jesus's strategies for developing leaders was supervising those he trained to maximize their growth and development. Jesus's constant supervision included practically applying truth to their lives and reviewing and debriefing after completing assignments. Coleman clarifies Jesus's supervisory role:

The important thing about all this supervisory work of Jesus was that he kept the disciples going on toward the goal he had set for them. He did not expect more from his disciples than they could do, but he did expect their best, and this he expected always to be improved as they grew in knowledge and grace. His plan of teaching—by example, assignment, and constant checkup—was calculated to bring out the best that was in them.⁵³

Jesus knew supervision was essential to achieving his goal of the gospel of the kingdom being proclaimed to all people and nations (Matt 24:14). With this goal in mind, Jesus supervised his disciples. Hence, there was always “more to do and learn. He rejoiced in their success, but nothing less than world conquest was his goal, and to that end, he always superintended their efforts.”⁵⁴

Content

Jesus's constant supervision provided the opportunity for continued leadership development and, if done lovingly with accountability and opportunities for growth, will bring out the best in those being supervised. Despite the pressure of intense ministry and increasing opposition, Jesus remained committed to their development by giving them time and attention (Mark 3:20; 6:31), and he was faithful to challenge or encourage them whether they experienced success or failure (Matt 8:26; Mark 8:14–21; Luke 10:17–20; John 16:31–33). Jesus practiced constant supervision with his disciples before, during, and after their missions assignments.⁵⁵

⁵³ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 96.

⁵⁴ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 96.

⁵⁵ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 99.

Jesus's supervision included practical applications to their lives through what they were learning (Luke 11:1–13). Coleman called these occasions when Jesus followed the disciples' assignments "checkup sessions." He argues it reveals Jesus's strategy of reviewing the disciples' experiences and making "practical application of it to their lives."⁵⁶ When the seventy-two disciples returned from their mission, Jesus instructed them about the dangers of pride and what should cause them to rejoice. He thanked his Father for them and spoke encouraging words, seeking to develop them through practical applications (Luke 10:17–23).

Jesus would supervise his disciples by using retreats into solitude to encourage them and review and debrief the mission assignments he had given.⁵⁷ Jesus met with them to listen to updates and rejoice in the God who had allowed them to minister. Jesus spent time with his disciples "to hear their reports and to share with them the blessedness of his ministry in doing the same thing."⁵⁸ Coleman observes that Jesus, through this debriefing, helped "them to understand the reason for some previous action or to prepare them for some new experience."⁵⁹ Jesus reviewed and debriefed through "questions, illustrations, warnings, and admonitions," he emphasized what his disciples "needed to know in order to fulfill his work, which was the evangelization of the world."⁶⁰

Jesus's supervision maximized his disciples' growth and development. It provided loving accountability and opportunities for change to produce leaders who could take the gospel of the kingdom throughout the world. Jesus constantly supervised those he was training by checking in with them, making practical applications of their

⁵⁶ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 92.

⁵⁷ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 91.

⁵⁸ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 91.

⁵⁹ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 92

⁶⁰ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 92.

experiences, and reviewing and debriefing with his disciples after significant assignments.

Summary

According to Bruce and Coleman, Jesus's four-fold strategy to develop leaders who would reproduce was through modeling, teaching, giving a variety of assignments, and supervision. His paradigm for developing and reproducing leaders was effective. The fledgling movement that Jesus inaugurated would shake the entire Roman empire within a few years. The ordinary men Jesus chose and developed accomplished what Jesus intended.⁶¹ These ordinary disciples became Spirit-empowered leaders in the worldwide movement that Jesus commenced to make disciples of all nations.

Churches must embrace the same paradigms Jesus utilized to prepare leaders who will make disciples. The church's primary calling is to make disciples and teach them to obey all that Jesus commanded so that the nations would be glad and sing for joy (Psalm 67:1–5; Matt 28:19–20). Throughout Scripture, God has made known his heart for all peoples everywhere to know his Son, Jesus, and two millennia after Jesus's death, resurrection, and ascension, there are still over three billion people who have no access to the gospel.⁶² To see the good news of Jesus Christ transform societies and nations, churches must return to Jesus's disciple-making strategy.

Leaders must be developed who will multiply as Jesus commanded. This will take time, sacrifice, and commitment, and start small. As we give access to our lives to those we disciple, they must see our lives modeled on Jesus. Servant leaders who make evangelism a priority out of a heart of love for people, not out of duty or obligation. We

⁶¹ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 96.

⁶² Joshua Project, *Global Dashboard*, accessed March 18, 2023, https://www.joshuaproject.net/people_groups/statistics. Many Scriptures describe God's desire for his glory to be known and worshipped by all peoples in all places, including Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; Num 14:2; Pss 22:27; 46:10; 67:1–2; 72:19; 96:3, 10a; 117:1; 150:6; Isa 2:2–4; 40:3–5; 42:6–7; 49:6; Hab 2:14; Eph 4:10.

must be teachers of God’s Word, focusing on reproducing the truth and life of Jesus in those we lead by giving assignments and supervising with loving accountability.⁶³

Church leaders must invest in the slow, tedious, challenging work of developing reproducing leaders by modeling the leadership development paradigms of Jesus.⁶⁴

As Jesus did, we must begin by training a few ordinary, hand-picked disciples willing to follow Christ regardless of the cost. Leaders must model abiding in Christ and fully obeying his commands, even if this means suffering and sacrifice. We must demonstrate what it means to be consecrated to Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and live authentic, humble, evangelistic lives modeled on the life of Christ. Ongoing disciple-making will occur as Christian leaders commit to developing a few leaders who follow the same pattern with those they lead. Only by doing so will we see Jesus’s last command of making disciples of the nations become a reality.

Comparison of Jesus’s and Paul’s Leadership Development Paradigm

Bruce and Coleman identified Jesus’s four-fold paradigm for developing leaders who would train disciples to make disciples. The previous chapter evaluated and described Paul’s strategies for developing leaders. In seeking to establish a New Testament leadership development paradigm, comparing Paul’s strategies identified in

⁶³ Coleman applies Jesus’s principle of supervision to our present context: “The counselor should stay with the new believer as much as possible, studying the Bible and praying with him or her, all the while answering questions, clarifying the truth, and seeking together to help others. If a church does not have such committed counselors willing to do this service, it should be training some. And the only way they can be trained is by giving them a leader to follow,” Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 48.

⁶⁴ Jesus’s paradigm for developing reproducing leaders was time-consuming and sacrificial as he modeled living a reproductive lifestyle. It was deliberate and concentrated on the few men he selected. Jesus allowed these men to watch his private life of communion with his Father, and they witnessed the Spirit-empowered ministry that consequently flowed out of him. Coleman corroborates, stating,

It will be slow, tedious, painful, and probably unnoticed by people at first, but the end result will be glorious, even if we don’t live to see it. Seen this way, though, it becomes a big decision in the ministry. We must decide where we want our ministry to count—in the momentary applause of popular recognition or in the reproduction of our lives in a few chosen people who will carry on our work after we have gone. Really it is a question of which generation we are living for. (Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 36)

chapter 2, and Jesus’s strategies, described in chapter 3, will be helpful (see table 1 for a leadership development paradigm comparison).

Both Jesus and Paul developed leaders by modeling. Their lives deeply impacted those whom they trained. After Jesus washed his disciples’ feet, he told them, “I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you” (John 13:15). Similarly, Paul encouraged the young Christians in Corinth to follow him, even as he followed Christ (1 Cor 1:11).⁶⁵ In his first epistle, Peter challenged Christians to embrace their calling to follow Christ’s example (1 Pet 2:21). Both Jesus and Paul lived near those they were training. So, the leaders they developed were taught how to live and saw for themselves the example of a life lived in surrender to God. It is essential that leaders who want to multiply model lives worth reproducing.

Jesus chose ordinary men to invest in and train to be his leaders. Paul did likewise. Timothy was a young man who struggled with fear and insecurity, but Paul consistently encouraged Timothy in his weaknesses (1 Tim 1:18; 4:14; 6:11–14; 2 Tim 1:6–7; 2:1, 22; 4:2). Ordinary men were trained in small groups where modeling could be personal and life-changing. They witnessed their leader’s life and character and how they navigated trials.⁶⁶ Jesus and Paul saw value in deeply investing in a few unremarkable leaders who would influence many.

Both Jesus and Paul knew that for any leader to rise above their propensities and failings, they must be empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). Both Jesus and Paul modeled and taught the importance of the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:21–22; John 20:21–22; Gal

⁶⁵ Paul similarly encouraged the church in Thessalonica, stating that they “became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit” (1 Thess 1:6).

⁶⁶ Paul was aware that his life was an example of the rich grace of God: “The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life” (1 Tim 1:15–16).

5:16; Eph 5:18; 2 Tim 2:1). Paul longed that those he led would be mature in Christ, and he recognized that this could only be accomplished “with all his [Christ’s] energy that he powerfully works in me” (Col 1:29). Paul urged Timothy to be “strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus” thus encouraging him to yield his life to divine empowerment and overcome his weaknesses and the opposition that surrounded the progress of the gospel (2 Tim 1:14; 2:1). It was evident to those trained by Jesus and Paul that the Holy Spirit was the source of their ability to develop other leaders.

Jesus’s disciples and Timothy observed their leaders’ obedience to God and the suffering it caused. Jesus and Paul experienced much opposition and modeled how to suffer well, trusting their heavenly Father (Acts 9:16; 14:22; 21:13; 2 Cor 6:4; 11:24–31; Phil 2:1–11; 1 Pet 2:21).

Both Jesus and Paul developed leaders by teaching. Jesus repeatedly urged his disciples to obey all that he commanded (John 14:15–23; 15:10, 14). The final command to his future leaders was to make disciples of all nations by teaching obedience to his commands (Matt 28:20). Similarly, Paul urged Timothy to “remember Jesus Christ” and to “remind them [the men he was teaching to teach others] of these things” (2 Tim 2:8, 14). Paul challenged Timothy to “rightly handle the word of truth” and teach only the truth he heard Paul teach (2 Tim 2:2, 15). In addition, Paul warned Timothy to guard by the Holy Spirit what he had received and to “follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus (2 Tim 1:13–14). Teaching was foundational in both Jesus’s and Paul’s leadership development. For Paul, God’s Word was the infallible word of truth and would equip the men of God he was training and be the message they would teach to others (2 Tim 2:15; 3:16–17).

Table 1. Leadership development paradigm comparison

Jesus's Paradigm:	Paul's Paradigm:
<p><i>Modeling</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selection of ordinary men - Focus on a few - Proximity: life-on-life - Personal life: prayer and fasting, character, trials, and suffering - Ministry: evangelism and Holy Spirit empowerment 	<p><i>Strengthened by grace</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The necessity of the Holy Spirit - A life yielded to divine empowerment - Grace to overcome fear/timidity - Grace to overcome personal weakness - Grace to overcome opposition
<p><i>Teaching</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commitment to Scriptures - Instruction - Evangelism - Disciple-making - Challenging and comforting words 	<p><i>What you heard from me</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pass on the pure gospel of Jesus - Follow the pattern of sound words - Teach only what was learned from Paul - Warned about false teachers
<p><i>Assignments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trial missions - Significant events: sorrow and misunderstanding - Failure and redemption - Crisis and challenge 	<p><i>Entrust to faithful men</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teach and train - As Paul disciplined Timothy, so Timothy must disciple others - Delegation - Trustworthy in teaching others - Reliable - Dependable to reproduce - Qualified, faithful leaders - Time, effort, proximity
<p><i>Supervision</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constant supervision - Ongoing relationships - Practical application - Challenge and encouragement - Accountability - Review and debrief 	<p><i>Who will be able to teach others</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers training teachers - Multiplication through effective instruction - Faithful leaders must teach others who will do the same and reproduce - Gifted to teach by the Holy Spirit - Exponential impact through multiplication

Both Jesus and Paul gave assignments. As previously discussed, Jesus gave his disciples various assignments, and he used these assignments to train, humble, strengthen, and prepare his disciples to be able to evangelize and make disciples who would do likewise. Similarly, Paul asked Timothy to remain Ephesus to protect and

strengthen the church and to train faithful men who would teach others (1 Tim 1:3; 2 Tim 2:2). Paul gave Timothy a challenging assignment. Jesus and Paul had the same goal: kingdom expansion through multiplication. Jesus and Paul trained leaders who would pass on what they learned and lived out to faithful leaders who would teach others. As Jesus and Paul's leaders fulfill their God-given assignments, other leaders are developed, and new people are brought into the kingdom.

Both Jesus and Paul developed leaders by supervision. Both of Paul's letters to Timothy are full of loving oversight, challenge, and encouragement to Timothy. Paul was following Jesus's example of supervision with his disciples. They both valued ongoing relationships with loving accountability. Their development of leaders was not transactional or temporary. Jesus and Paul checked up on those they were developing through relationships, accountability, review, and debriefing so that the leaders they were developing were healthy and able to complete their assignments.

Synthesis

The leadership development paradigm of Jesus, as described by Bruce and Coleman, can be synthesized with Paul's leadership development as outlined in his second letter to Timothy. Combining Jesus's and Paul's strategies will provide the basis for a leadership training curriculum that is thoroughly biblical and effective in training leaders who will multiply.

The curriculum should be group-based, consisting of a few ordinary people willing to commit their time and energy for eight weeks. People will be selected not based on personality or social status but on their willingness to learn and dedicate time to training. Jesus and Paul demonstrated grace in choosing, mentoring, and training ordinary people who could be trusted to teach others. Reliability, dependability, and character are preferred over giftedness.

Groups must have access to the leader training them. More than just weekly contact will be necessary for strong relationships to develop. Groups must interact with their leader, sharing challenges and successes to form a bond of friendship, love, and mutual respect. Developing leaders will take time, effort, and proximity.

Spiritual disciplines are an essential part of leadership development. Jesus emphasized prayer and also fasted. The spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, Bible study, memorization, and times of worship must be a core component of leadership training. Spiritual discipline training must include theological teaching on the Spirit-filled life with training on how to pray and study the Bible.

Along with a commitment to study and know the Scriptures, there must be a commitment to loving accountability. Jesus developed his leaders in an atmosphere of honesty and truth-filled conversations. The Scriptures must be studied, memorized, and obeyed, and loving accountability will increase obedience to what Jesus commanded. However, participants must not experience guilt, shame, or condemnation when they struggle and sometimes fail. Accountability must be exercised in an atmosphere of grace and love.

There must be a commitment to the pure gospel and making it known. First, the gospel proclaimed must be the pure gospel of the kingdom, not watered down or altered. Paul emphasized that only the pure gospel must be passed on. Second, this pure gospel must be proclaimed. People come to know Christ by hearing the gospel and continue to mature in their faith as they hear, understand, and obey it. Proclamation evangelism is a core part of developing leaders that multiply.

For the training to be successful, there must be a commitment to making disciples who make disciples. In the passages studied, both Jesus and Paul made disciple-making a commanded priority. Multiplication occurs as each leader trains the next generation of leaders, who then teach and train others.

The curriculum must provide participants with meaningful assignments to challenge and encourage them. The curriculum must include a variety of assignments. Participants will join organized outreach events and be expected to share their faith and pray for those they meet. Participants will be assigned to live a prayer-care-share lifestyle in their neighborhood, including visitation, community projects, and finding ways to serve local communities.

Supervision is an essential part of the training curriculum. Participants must be encouraged through regular communication and loving accountability. Oversight must facilitate ongoing relationships that encourage participants by reviewing progress, assessing development, and honest, loving evaluation and debriefing. Supervision will occur during group sessions and one-to-one communications.

CHAPTER 4

SMALL GROUP LEADER TRAINING AND PROCESS

The goal of the training was to provide small group leaders with the theological underpinning for disciple-making and motivation to reach their neighborhood for Christ, develop a multiplication mindset, live a life worth reproducing, and maintain a firm commitment to God’s mission of making disciples. The training curriculum targeted the leader’s head—knowing what they are called to; heart—developing a heart to know and love God and receive his heart for the lost and broken; and hands—being willing to serve those around them creatively to share the love of Christ with non-Christians to lead them to Christ.

In discussing the project with GC pastoral staff, there was agreement that developing, training, and equipping small group leaders would be helpful, due in part to what was learned through the COVID-19 pandemic. During the lockdown, small group leaders were unsure how to continue their groups, and many groups stopped meeting altogether. Another impetus for small group leader training was to increase conversion growth by developing small group leaders who are activated in their faith to reach neighbors, friends, and work associates with the hope of the gospel.

The Ethics Research Committee of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, in conjunction with my faculty advisor, approved the commencement of the project to equip small group leaders of GC. The project commenced by administering the Pre-Disciple-Making Practices Inventory (PRE-DMPI) to various small group leaders.¹ After the curriculum was prepared, it was evaluated by two GC pastors and a senior small

¹ See appendix 1 for the PRE-DMPI survey instrument.

group leader. Next, an email was sent to around two hundred small group leaders from these various groups, seeking volunteers to join the eight-week leadership training. The POST-DMPI was administered within one week of project completion, and post-project test results were analyzed and compared to pre-project test results.² The implementation of the project began on April 26, 2023, and continued through August 2, 2023.

Pre-Training Survey Analysis

The first goal was to assess the current level of disciple-making competency among small group leaders of GC.³ The PRE-DMPI was sent to around three hundred small group leaders to accomplish this goal. There was a total of 117 responses to the PRE-DMPI survey.⁴ This survey provided the basis for establishing a baseline for GC small group leaders' current disciple-making practice and identified areas that the curriculum must address for the disciple-making practices of small group leaders to be learned and strengthened.

A seven-point Likert Scale was employed, ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” The survey was peer-reviewed and revised accordingly. The survey items were divided into seven constructs or sections: Spiritual Habits (SH), Relationships (RE), Gospel-Centered (GC), Identity (ID), Disciple-Making Habits (DM), Reaching Out (RO), and Summary (SU). These constructs were used to assist in data analysis. The table below maps the item numbers to the constructs for pre- and post-training survey instruments.

² See appendix 6 for the POST-DMPI survey instrument.

³ The survey used in this project was adapted from the 2020 research project of Joshua Bradley Moran, “Developing Disciple-Makers at Flintville First Baptist Church in Flintville, Tennessee” (DMin project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 90–95.

⁴ See appendix 1 for the Pre-Training Disciple Making Practices Survey.

Table 2. Mapping items to constructs

Construct		Pre-intervention item numbers	Post-intervention item numbers	Likert item numbers
1	Spiritual Habits (SH)	8–15	6–13	1–8
2	Relationships (RE)	16–23	14–21	9–16
3	Gospel-Centered (GC)	24–29	22–27	17–22
4	Identity (ID)	30–33	28–31	23–26
5	Disciple-Making Habits (DM)	34–42	32–40	27–35
6	Reaching Out (RO)	43–50	41–48	36–43
7	Summary (SU)	51–52	49–50	44–45

The PRE-DMPI provided critical insight into the need for a training curriculum for GC small group leaders to equip them to grow in disciple-making and outreach.⁵ The lowest average item score in all constructs was in the “Disciple-Making Habits” construct. The DM construct addresses living an evangelistic lifestyle, including items such as having spiritual conversations with non-Christians, discipling other Christians, teaching both Christians and non-Christians about Christ, praying for the lost, and regularly seeking out opportunities to engage lost people.⁶ The curriculum needed to address areas of weakness identified by the large group PRE-DMPI.

It is important to note that 93 percent of those surveyed are long-time small group leaders. The average age of respondents is 52 years old, and the average number of years respondents have followed Christ is 33 years. The average length of church membership is 32 years for the 116 respondents. These leaders are mature, long-serving leaders, and so the leadership development they have previously received is not developing these areas of disciple-making in their life and ministry. The items and

⁵ See appendix 2 for Pre-Training Disciple- Making Inventory (PRE-DMPI) large group average results.

⁶ Item 33: I regularly share my faith with non-Christians—average score: 4.80. Item 35: I meet with spiritually open non-believers to share about my faith—average score 4.46.

constructs with scores below 6.0 reveal deficiencies, while constructs below 5.0 reveal more serious deficiencies requiring intervention.

Areas of concern are Scripture memory, being held accountable to obey Scripture, leading someone to Christ, being involved in missions efforts, praying for the lost, engaging lost people in friendships, discipling other believers, and reaching out evangelistically to people. At the construct level, areas of concern are Disciple-Making Habits and Reaching Out.

Item areas of more serious concern, scoring below 5.0, are as follows: a mature believer is mentoring me, regularly sharing my faith with non-Christians, meeting with non-Christians to lead them to Christ, visiting the sick, and giving food to the hungry.

The curriculum addressed the above deficiencies, seeking to strengthen GC small group leaders in disciple-making so that small groups would grow and multiply.

Curriculum Development

The second goal was to prepare a curriculum to equip small-group leaders to develop disciple-makers. The curriculum and teaching scripts were written during a writing retreat from April 26 to May 6. Eight lessons were developed incorporating Paul's leadership development strategy detailed in 2 Timothy 2.⁷ The curriculum also reflected areas identified as needing to be addressed in the PRE-DMPI, such as reaching out, Bible memory, and training for outreach and gospel conversations.

The training consisted of eight weekly meetings. Each session included worship, prayer, discussion, and review. Each week had a focus, and the group studied passages relevant to the weekly theme. One of the men's ministry small group leaders hosted an introductory potluck meal to commence the training and a celebration meal

⁷ See appendix 3 for the small group leader training curriculum.

once training was complete. These meals encouraged relationships and modeled community and hospitality.

Each gathering began with prayer and worship. Also included each week was a short discussion about the big ideas from the assigned reading and teachings. The group looked back and held each other accountable for the previous week's action plan. Then, a disciple-making strategy was taught, and Scripture passages related to the specific topic were studied. Last, there was a time to look ahead each week and ask, "What do I sense God is asking me to do in response to his word this week?"

Participants were expected to complete weekly assignments. The assignments included watching one of Pastor Troy's "Vital Signs" sermons and the teaching video prepared from 2 Timothy 2. A chapter of *The Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert E. Coleman was also assigned, along with relevant memory verse.

During the training, participants were equipped and expected to share their faith and pray for people they encountered in their ordinary course of life. In addition, there were opportunities to interact with others in the training course, discussing, debating, and collaborating to bring the Good News to non-Christians while enjoying fellowship and experiencing iron sharpening iron in community with others from Grace Church who have the same heart to make disciples. Multiple email contacts with participants each week ensured they had the relevant information to complete their assignments.

Week 1 focused on the priority of disciple-making, and the big idea was that God wants us to make disciples wherever we go. Paul's leadership strategy for multiplication was studied from Timothy 2:1-2. The first week's goal was to understand the priority of taking the gospel across the street and around the world to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Week 2 focused on the message of the gospel, and the big idea for this week was that God has given us the message we should be sharing. Paul gave Timothy the

message that he should teach others, who would then go and teach others so God's movement would multiply. So, the Scripture studied was 2 Timothy 2:8-13 with the goal of each participant understanding the gospel.

Week 3 focused on the soldier engaged in serving, and the big idea was that God wants us to obey our Commander, Jesus, serving and suffering with one aim to please him. Also, God's armor was studied to encourage participants to stand firm in Christ. The Discovery Bible Study method was taught and utilized to teach about God's armor for his soldiers.⁸ The third week's goal was that participants would embrace the call to suffer and serve the cause of Christ across the street and around the world.

Week 4 focused on the athlete growing in God's Word, and the big idea was that, like an athlete who competes according to the rules, God gave his Word for us to grow in our obedience. The fourth week's goal was to understand the value of learning, knowing, and obeying God's Word.

Week 5 focused on the farmer dependent on prayer, and the big idea for this week was that God wants us to be like farmers who cannot force their crops to grow. We must scatter the seeds of the gospel wherever we go, knowing that prayer prepares the soil and only God can cause his Word to germinate in people's hearts. The fifth week's goal was to understand the importance of prayer and sowing gospel seeds. Each participant was challenged to regularly and prayerfully share their story of how Jesus changed their life with people where they live, work, study, shop, and play.

Week 6 focused on the worker who gives generously, and the big idea was that God has called us to be his workers. Generous workers must be generous with their time, treasure, and talents to serve the King! The sixth week's goal was for participants to

⁸ The Discovery Bible Study is a simple reproducible method of studying the Bible. It includes basic observation, interpretation, and always concludes with application by asking in what area is God requiring obedience. It is helpful to learn this method to be able to start DBS groups with non-Christians who are interested in learning more about Jesus. For more information: World Missions & Evangelism, "Resources," accessed May 1, 2023. <https://worldmissionsevangelism.com/resources/>.

understand the importance of using their resources for God's purposes and that living generously flows out of daily communion with Jesus. Participants were challenged to create a daily routine of spending time in God's Word, hearing his voice, and immediately obeying what he spoke.

Week 7 focused on the vessel of honor being connected in community, and the big idea for this week was that God wants us to be connected in healthy community, like the vessels in a house that the Owner can use for his purposes. Week 7's goal was for participants to embrace a biblical perspective of their identity in Christ and learn to see themselves as God sees them.

Week 8 focused on the servant authentic in worship, and the big idea was that God is our Father; we are his sons and daughters who serve him because we know and love him. Week 8's goal was that participants would know and love God and make disciples for his glory.

Curriculum Evaluation

Part of the second project goal was for the fully developed curriculum to be approved by an expert panel. This panel consisted of the GC senior pastor and two other GC pastors. The panel was provided a rubric to provide a basis for review and approval.⁹ The panel reviewed the curriculum through one-on-one meetings, covering biblical faithfulness, scope, methodology, and practicality.

GC Senior Pastor Troy Dobbs evaluated the curriculum, as did the Senior Director of Family Ministries Pastor (overseeing all men's, women's, young adults, students, and children's and small group ministries). In addition, the curriculum was also

⁹ See appendix 2 for the Disciple Making Curriculum Evaluation rubric and evaluation responses.

reviewed by a long-serving small group leader. The average score of the curriculum evaluation was 98 percent approval.¹⁰

Project Implementation

The third goal was to teach small-group leaders to become disciple-makers. This goal succeeded when the training was complete and a significant statistical improvement was observed in the pre- and post-training results. The training occurred on Wednesday evenings and was held in a participant's home. The first training was held on Wednesday, May 31, 2023, and the eighth and final training was held on July 31, 2023.¹¹

An invitation email was sent to around 200 small group leaders, and 44 people signed up for the class. Thirty-three people completed the training course, with the survey indicating the average completion of the course and all training materials equalled 90 percent.

After the eighth training was completed, a post-training survey was administered to project participants. All thirty-three participants returned the POST-DMPI. These results were compared to the initial survey to assess the effect of the training on participants.

In addition to taking the survey, each participant was asked to give written feedback regarding the impact of the training and recommendations for change. This qualitative data helped evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the training and provided valuable feedback for future curriculum preparation.

A Statistical Comparison of the Pre- and Post-Training Surveys

The fundamental research question the POST-DMPI survey analysis sought to

¹⁰ Each evaluation is included in appendix 2, including all comments made by the evaluators.

¹¹ See appendix 3 for the Disciple Making Curriculum in its entirety. It was named "ReVitalize" to fit with church branding of training courses.

address is, did the training intervention make a positive difference in the lives of participants? However, the research analysis can also shed light on other important questions, such as, is it possible to identify specific elements of the intervention that were particularly effective, and if so, are there mechanisms for making that positive difference? Also, are there areas of improvement that could strengthen the curriculum when used in the future?

The statistical analysis focused on the Likert-scaled items (identical in the pre- and post-training survey instruments). These items were numbered 1 to 45 for both survey instruments. For ease of interpretation, the Likert-scale was reversed for each item (1 = “strongly disagree” and 7 = “strongly agree”), and all statements were phrased positively such that a high score indicates a positive self-assessment of knowledge and behavior. This analysis used matched pairs with the difference variable defined as the respondent’s post-training score minus their pre-training score for each item. Therefore, improvement for an item is indicated by a positive average score from the pre- to post-training survey.¹² Throughout this analysis, the null hypothesis is that the training intervention made no positive difference, and the alternative hypothesis is that the training intervention made a positive difference.

This analysis used four statistical methods to analyze the data: (1) a Matched Pairs Sign Test analysis, (2) the matched pairs t-test, (3) the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, and (4) a regression analysis.¹³ The Matched Pairs Sign Test analysis tests the null hypothesis that the number of items (or constructs) with positive improvements was greater than zero. The matched pairs t-test tests if the average differences for items (or constructs) are significantly greater than zero. The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test tests if

¹² This is called “matched pairs” because the before and after scores are matched for each respondent and the difference between them is the value used.

¹³ The matched t-test was utilized because it has been used by many other students to analyze Likert data. The Matched Pairs Sign Test analysis was utilized to give big picture overall statistical inferences.

the median differences for items (or constructs) is significantly greater than zero. The matched pairs t-test requires metric (interval or ratio) data. In contrast, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test uses ordinal data and is, therefore, more appropriate for Likert-scaled data. The regression analysis helps identify the mechanisms by which the training impacts the Summary construct. The following two sections present the statistical results at the item level and then the construct level.

Item-Level Statistical Analysis

Matched Pairs Sign Test Analysis

It was observed that 41 of the 45 Likert-scaled items had positive sample means, which strongly suggests improvement with the training intervention. It is reasonable to hypothesize that the results are random for all 45 items, with a 50-50 chance of improvement ($p = 0.5$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is that the training intervention has no improvement as measured by the 45 items. The alternative hypothesis is that we have improvement as measured by the 45 items.

The Matched Pairs Sign Test analysis was used to calculate the probability of improvement for 41 of 45 items. Using the standard terminology for the Matched Pairs Sign Test analysis, the probability of having 41 successes in 45 trials with a probability of success of $p = 0.5$ on any one trial is 0.00000000467. (This is like getting 41 heads when flipping a fair coin 45 times.) This extremely small value means the null hypothesis can be rejected confidently. Therefore, it is statistically appropriate to conclude that the training intervention made a positive difference overall. Table 3 summarizes the Matched Pairs Sign Test analysis.

Matched Pairs T-test

A one-tailed t-test was used to test this hypothesis for each of the 45 items. The one-tailed t-test determined that none of the t-values was significant ($\alpha = 0.05$ percent). Therefore, the null hypothesis for any of the 45 items could not be rejected using matched pairs t-test analysis.

Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test

A more appropriate alternative for Likert-scaled data is the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test because it uses ordinal data. Using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for each item, there was a statistically significant positive improvement in the medians for three items (40, 43, and 45), as shown in table 4 below.

Table 4. Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test item-level analysis

Item	#40 - I help my friends and neighbors with problems they have	#43 - I make or buy food for others outside of my immediate family	#45 - I am growing in my knowledge of and involvement in disciple-making
<i>p</i> -value	0.012	0.031	0.015
	* $0.01 < p \leq 0.05$ → <i>Significant Difference</i>	* $0.01 < p \leq 0.05$ → <i>Significant Difference</i>	* $0.01 < p \leq 0.05$ → <i>Significant Difference</i>

It can be concluded from these three items that the training intervention helped participants reach out to those around them who do not follow Jesus, and most importantly, the result from summary item 45 suggests the training increased participants' understanding and involvement in disciple-making, which was the aim of the intervention. Therefore, we can reject the null hypothesis of no improvement for these three items.

Construct-Level Statistical Analysis

The same type of analysis was conducted at the construct level. The score for a construct is defined as the average across all the items in a construct.

Matched Pairs Sign Test Analysis

By using this approach across all seven constructs, it can be observed that all seven constructs showed improvement in the sample means. Using the Matched Pairs Sign Test with $p = 0.5$ for any one construct, the probability of improvement for 7 of 7 items is 0.0078125. This small value suggests that the null hypothesis of no improvement can be confidently rejected again.

Using the Matched Pairs Sign Test analysis for the items within each construct, the null hypothesis of no improvement for constructs 1, 3, and 6 (Spiritual Habits, Gospel-Centered, and Reaching Out) can be rejected. This indicates that in these constructs, participants demonstrated improvement, meaning the intervention was successful. These results are shown in table 5.

Table 5. Construct-level analysis with Matched Pairs Sign Test

Construct name	Spiritual Habits (SH)	Relationships (RE)	Gospel-Centered (GC)	Identity (ID)	Disciple Making Habits (DM)	Reaching Out (RO)	Summary (SU)
Construct number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Improvement	Plus	Plus	Plus	Plus	Plus	Plus	Plus
Success p	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Trials	8	8	6	4	9	8	2
Plus	8	6	6	4	7	8	2
Minus	0	2	0	0	2	0	0
p -value	0.0039	0.1445	0.0156	0.0625	0.0898	0.0039	0.2500
	$0.001 < p \leq 0.01$	No significant difference $p > 0.05$	$0.01 < p \leq 0.05$	No significant difference $p > 0.05$	No significant difference $p > 0.05$	$0.001 < p \leq 0.01$	No significant difference $p > 0.05$

Notes:

1. Improvement is “plus” if the average difference is greater than zero.
2. Success p is 0.5, indicating our assumption that a “plus” and a “minus” are equally likely.
3. Trials is the number of items in this construct.
4. Plus is a count of the number of items that have a positive improvement (a sample mean that is positive).
5. Minus is a count of the number of items that have negative improvement (a sample mean that is negative).
6. p -value is the probability calculated by the Matched Pairs Sign Test with parameters $p = 0.5$, $n =$ trials count, and $s =$ plus count.

Matched Pairs T-Test

A one-tailed t-test was used to test for construct level improvement and found no significant differences for any of the seven constructs at the $\alpha = 0.05$ percent level. This means the null hypothesis of no improvement cannot be rejected using the t-test. The average improvements were small relative to the standard deviations, so this statistical analysis does not allow a conclusion that the training intervention made a significant difference for any of the constructs.

Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test

As stated previously, the Wilcoxon Signed Ranked Test is a more appropriate alternative for Likert-scaled data because it uses ordinal data. Using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for each item, there was a statistically significant improvement in three constructs (GC, RO, and SU). These results are summarized in the table below.

Table 6. Wilcoxon Signed Ranked Test construct-level analysis

<i>Construct</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Spiritual Habits (SH)	Relationships (RE)	Gospel-Centered (GC)	Identity (ID)	Disciple Making Habits (DM)	Reaching Out (RO)	Summary (SU)
<i>p</i> -value	0.0910	0.2078	0.0323	0.0523	0.2160	0.0172	0.0349
	* 0.01 < <i>p</i> ≤ 0.05	* 0.01 < <i>p</i> ≤ 0.05	* 0.01 < <i>p</i> ≤ 0.05	* 0.01 < <i>p</i> ≤ 0.05	* 0.01 < <i>p</i> ≤ 0.05	* 0.01 < <i>p</i> ≤ 0.05	* 0.01 < <i>p</i> ≤ 0.05
<i>Significant difference</i>	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES

As demonstrated by the Wilcoxon Signed Ranked Test construct-level analysis, these differences for constructs 3, 6, and 7 suggest that the training intervention significantly impacted participants’ gospel-centered living, reaching out, and their growth in knowledge and understanding of disciple-making. Therefore, this analysis leads us to reject the null hypothesis of no improvement for these three constructs.

Regression Statistical Analysis

A linear model was tested using construct data to complete the statistical analysis. The initial model for respondent *i* is

$$C_{i7} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 C_{i1} + \beta_2 C_{i2} + \beta_3 C_{i3} + \beta_4 C_{i4} + \beta_5 C_{i5} + \beta_6 C_{i6} + \varepsilon_i$$

where C_{i7} is the Summary construct score for respondent *i*, C_{ij} is the construct score for

construct j for respondent i , and ε_i is the error term for respondent i . (The construct score for respondent i is defined as the average difference across all items in the construct.)

This initial model found that two constructs (Spiritual Habits and Identity) had a statistically significant impact on the Summary construct; the other constructs did not have a statistically significant impact on the Summary construct.

Rerunning the regression model with just these two constructs found a good fit for the linear model $C_{i7} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 C_{i1} + \beta_4 C_{i4} + \varepsilon_i$, with a highly significant F -value ($p = 0.0000157$), an adjusted R-squared of 49 percent, and highly significant p -values for both Spiritual Habits (C_1) and Identity (C_4). These regression model results are summarized in the table below.

Table 7. Construct regression results

Multiple R	0.722336				
R Square	0.521769				
Adjusted R Square	0.489887				
Observations	33				
	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	2	12.50664	6.253318	16.3656	0.0000157** *
Residual	30	11.46306	0.382102		
Total	32	23.9697			
	Coefficients	Standard Error	t -Stat	p -value	
Intercept	$\beta_0 = 0.11353$	0.112803	1.006444	0.32225	
Spiritual Habits (C_1)	$\beta_1 = 0.63079$	0.206495	3.05473	0.00469* *	
Identity (C_4)	$\beta_4 = 0.53529$	0.178725	2.995051	0.00546* *	

** Significant at the 0.01 level. *** Significant at the 0.001 level.

The interpretation of this regression model is that it can be stated with confidence that changes in Spiritual Habits (C_1) and changes in Identity (C_4) have a statistically significant impact on changes in our Summary construct (C_7). This makes sense because to grow in knowledge and practice of disciple-making, there must be an understanding of the call of Jesus to make disciples, an increase in love for God and those who are lost, and last, a deeper understanding of the disciple-maker's identity in Christ bringing the confidence to engage non-Christians and share the gospel. This important model validates the intervention and its effect on participants' lives.

A Qualitative Analysis of the Post-Training Survey

This qualitative analysis is not exhaustive but supplementary to the thorough statistical analysis. It was deemed helpful to provide deeper insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the ReVitalize training curriculum. The qualitative analysis provides a more subjective view in evaluating the effect of the intervention on the participants in addition to the statistical analysis already described.

Two questions were asked at the beginning of the POST-DMPI.¹⁴ Participants could add as much or as little in response to these questions as they wanted. Their responses were collated and coded, recognizing similar concepts, phrases, and words. The coding word headings and the concepts, phrases, and words that are included under the coding word are listed in appendix 7. It is helpful to graph the frequency of the coded constructs to clearly see and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the project.

Utilizing a qualitative study in the context of missions and training is not without precedent. In their article, *Rigorous Missiological Research Using Qualitative Inquiry*, Richard Starcher, Leanne Dzubinski, and Jamie Sanchez. state, "Qualitative inquiry is a journey of constructing meaning with the people who share their stories with

¹⁴ Question 1: What are the most important takeaways for you from the course? Question 2: How could the ReVitalize training be improved?

us.”¹⁵ It is helpful to analyze these two qualitative questions to bring more clarity in evaluating the effect of the training (intervention) on participants from their written perspective.

Starcher et al. identify precisely what these questions are intended to accomplish: “One of the chief advantages of qualitative inquiry is that its methods allow researchers to capture others’ perceptions of whatever phenomenon is the object of study.”¹⁶ This is an essential facet of post-intervention qualitative analysis. It is helpful to thoroughly analyze the training so that positive and negative feedback are obtained, coded, and assessed. Participants’ perceptions of the training are constructive in determining the success or failure of the training and developing and refining future disciple-making training.

Participant “Takeaways” Qualitative Analysis

The first question asked of the participants was: “What are the most important takeaways for you from the course?” The “takeaway” qualitative feedback was identified and coded by categorizing repeated phrases and words.¹⁷ These results are in table 8.

¹⁵ Richard L. Starcher, Leanne M. Dzubinski, and Jamie N. Sanchez, “Rigorous Missiological Research Using Qualitative Inquiry,” *Missiology* 46, no. 1 (2018): 51.

¹⁶ Starcher, Dzubinski, and Sanchez, “Rigorous Missiological Research Using Qualitative Inquiry,” 52.

¹⁷ “Takeaway” coding analysis is tabulated in appendix 7.

Table 8. Frequency count by “Takeaway” category

	Takeaway Category	Responses #
1	Multiplication	18
2	Holy Spirit	3
3	Intentionality/Priority	18
4	Strategy	13
5	Relationships	10
6	Evangelism	17
7	Character	11

Figure 2 below ranks the “takeaway” categories from the most responses to the least.

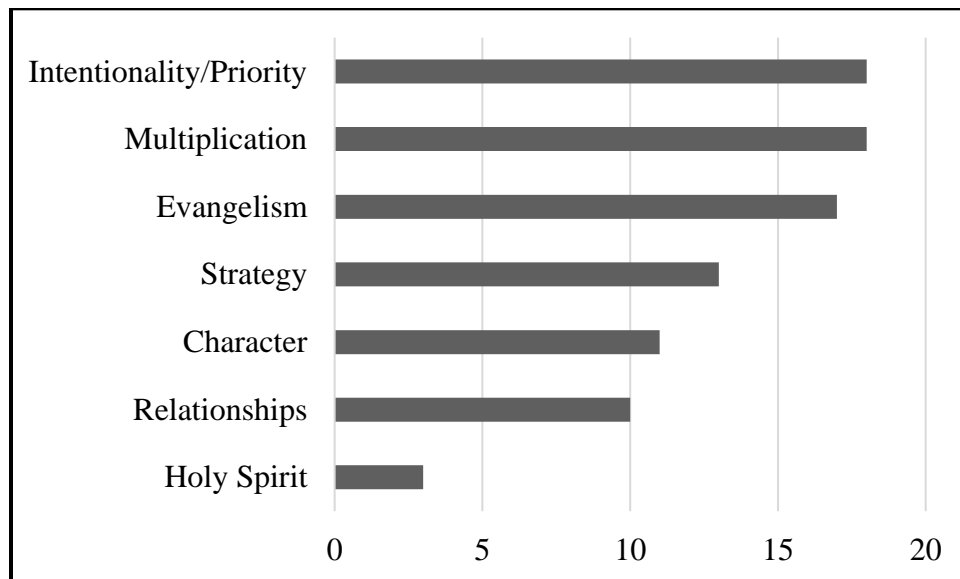


Figure 2. Frequency count by “Takeaway” category

It is informative to see the repeated words and phrases that participants used to describe their takeaways from the training (see appendix 7). Figure 2 demonstrates that “intentionality/priority” and “multiplication” in disciple-making are the most common themes participants took away from the training. This is very positive, as the pre-training

survey identified a lack of intentionality in engaging non-Christians and making disciples.

Many wrote about being more intentional in sharing their faith and making disciples who make disciples. This is another critical aspect of the training. Paul's multiplicative strategy was taught by focusing on his paradigm of teaching others who will teach others. It seems that many participants receive the challenge to multiply.

“Evangelism” was prominent in takeaway feedback. Again, this was very significant due to outreach and having spiritual conversations questions scoring lower on both the pre- and post-training surveys. This demonstrates that although participants may not share their faith as much as they would like, they are challenged and want to grow in this area.

The “strategy” takeaway was identified by over a third of respondents. This is helpful because practical strategies were taught weekly on various subjects related to disciple-making. Practical strategies strengthened the theological content and enabled participants to start implementing these strategies into their lives.

The last three coded categories of “character,” “relationships,” and “Holy Spirit” emphasize that participants recognized the critical importance of character in the disciple-making process. Many recited a phrase that was often used—our message must match our lifestyle. So, character is crucial in disciple-making. Paul uses the six metaphors in 2 Timothy 2 to describe the kind of leaders who would multiply, and character is critical in this endeavor. The remaining categories of “relationships” and the “Holy Spirit” are also essential but lesser themes in the curriculum. It is helpful to note that they were not missed as participants considered their takeaways.

Participant “Improvement” Qualitative Analysis

The second question asked of the participants was, how could the ReVitalize training be improved? “Improvement” qualitative feedback was identified and coded by

categorizing repeated phrases and words.¹⁸ These results are shown in table 9.

Table 9. Frequency count by “Improvement” category

	Improvement Category	Response #
1	Time Challenges	40
2	Application	10
3	Curriculum	6
4	Class Size	3
5	Recommendations	4

Figure 3 below ranks the “improvement” categories from the most responses to the least.

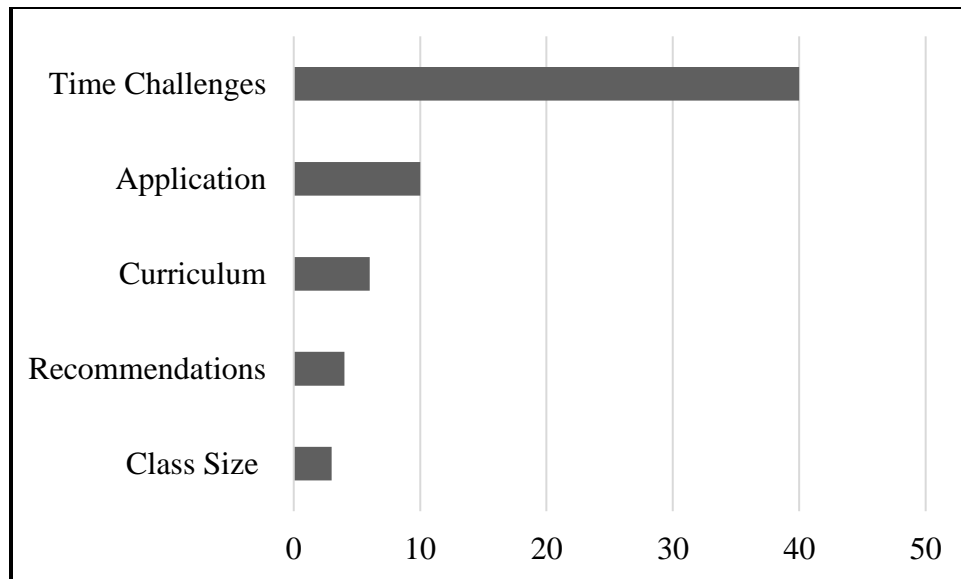


Figure 3. Frequency count by “Improvement” category

¹⁸ “Takeaway” coding analysis is tabulated in appendix 7.

Figure 3 demonstrates that “time challenges” were the most frequently mentioned area of improvement for the training curriculum. Many felt the volume of material was a lot to fit into their already busy schedules. No participants expressed concern about the content. For some, there was just too much of it. Many participants said they would have preferred more time to train together. Some suggested doubling the length of the course, and some even suggested taking a year to go through the material. Participants reported around two hours of homework each week. For some, this was too much.

About a third of participants expressed that the course would have been improved by doing more practical assignments such as evangelism or community service projects. “Application” is an area that could be improved. However, there were weekly all-church evangelism opportunities that participants could have attended. Another part of the practical application was a desire by some participants to role-play, sharing their testimony or the gospel. The training included some occasional role-play, but evidently not enough.

There were a few “curriculum” recommendations, such as adding PowerPoint to the training materials, using more color and design in the weekly handouts, and adding more of an overview to the material at the beginning of the course. These are all helpful suggestions that will be incorporated in future trainings.

An interesting improvement noted by three participants was to reduce class size. This helpful observation reflects Coleman’s teaching in the *Master Plan of Evangelism*, in which it was strongly encouraged to begin training with a faithful few. This excellent and biblical suggestion may address the practical application element noted as missing by ten participants.¹⁹ The class ended up much larger than expected.

¹⁹ Interestingly, the class ended up much bigger than expected. I designed the curriculum for approximately twelve people.

Conclusion

Three goals have guided this project. The first goal was to assess the current level of disciple-making competency among small group leaders of GC and use the assessment to shape the disciple-making training curriculum. The PRE-DMPI accomplished this goal. The second goal was to prepare a curriculum to equip small-group leaders to develop disciple-makers and address areas of deficiency identified by the PRE-DMPI. An eight-week curriculum was developed to achieve this goal. The third goal was to implement a curriculum and equip small group leaders to develop disciple-makers in a small group setting. This goal was also accomplished, and the POST-DMPI was administered to all participants to assess the effectiveness of the training. In addition to the survey, each participant was asked to give written feedback regarding the impact of the training and recommendations for change to assess the training qualitatively.

Participants received the training well; many expressed how the course impacted them. It was enjoyable to see participants' healthy participation and strong commitment, even during a busy summer season. Eleven people dropped out of the training. However, it was encouraging to see thirty-three people complete the training with an average completion assignment and attendance rate of 90 percent, as indicated on the POST-DMPI.

The statistical analysis demonstrated encouraging results at both an item and construct level. At the item level, the Matched Pairs Sign Test identified that 41 out of the 45 items had a positive difference from the pre- to post-training survey. The Wilcoxon Signed Rank test identified a significant difference in three items related to outreach and growing in knowledge and involvement in disciple-making. These results indicate the intervention positively affected participants at an item level.

At the construct level, the Matched Pairs Sign Test analysis revealed that all seven constructs demonstrated improvement in the sample means, and three notably improved. They were Spiritual Habits (SH), Gospel-Centered (GC), and Reaching Out

(RO). These are significant constructs that are foundational to disciple-making. In addition, the Wilcoxon Signed Ranked Test analysis revealed that participants had significant gains in the Gospel-Centered (GC), Reaching Out (RO), and Summary (SU) constructs. The construct analysis indicated the intervention positively affected critical constructs, validating the hypothesis that the training was successful.

The last analysis utilized was the Regression statistical analysis. The regression analysis identified that changes in Spiritual Habits (SH) and Identity (ID) significantly impact the Summary (SU) construct score. The Regression analysis identified a crucial correlation. The data reveals that as participants grow in their love for Christ through spiritual disciples and understand their identity in Christ with greater clarity, they grow in their knowledge and practice of disciple-making. This data will help shape future training curricula. It has been demonstrated through statistical analysis that the training intervention was successful and accomplished the goal of equipping GC small group leaders to multiply through disciple-making.

The qualitative analysis provided good additional data to assess the effect of the intervention on participants. The two survey questions allowed participants to reflect on what impacted them from the training and what could be improved. The three most identified takeaways of intentionality/priority, multiplication, and evangelism revealed the impact of the training on participants. Many identified a renewed sense of responsibility to share their faith and have friendships with non-Christians. Numerous comments talked about reaching out and being more intentional about having spiritual conversations with people who are searching. Many recognized the call to make disciples who will make disciples.

The largest area of improvement was in training delivery methods. Many participants felt the course merited a more extended focus. No concerns were expressed about the content, but participants had a lot of material to complete each week. There was also a valid concern that participants needed more opportunities for practical application.

The qualitative analysis provided excellent anecdotal data to evaluate the training. It provided both validation for the curriculum and helpful and wise ways to improve the delivery of future trainings.

The statistical and qualitative analyses have demonstrated that the training intervention was successful. Some areas require improvement, but the data indicates a significant and effective training intervention.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

This chapter evaluates the ministry project. The project's goals, strengths, and weaknesses are discussed, concluding that it has fulfilled its immediate purpose. The three goals of the project have been accomplished. The chapter also discusses possible improvements to the training when repeated, and the theological and personal reflections are derived from using 2 Timothy 2 as a biblical foundation for disciple-making leadership development. Finally, a conclusion completes this evaluation.

Evaluation of Purpose and Goals

This project aimed to increase Grace Church small group leaders' disciple-making knowledge and practice. GC is in a wealthy suburb of the Minneapolis metropolis. The church is known for its commitment to biblical teaching and depth. It has experienced significant growth post-COVID, probably due to the senior pastor's biblical stance on the many cultural issues facing churches in our nation today.¹ Yet, there is a desire in GC's pastoral leaders for an increase in conversion growth and the establishment of healthy, multiplying small groups. In addition, there is a need to strengthen small group leaders as the COVID-19 crisis badly impacted GC's small group ministry, which has not yet recovered.

Suburban churches face similar challenges that many American churches are facing. They were previously identified as consumerism, individualism, and

¹ Recent attendance figures show a 30 percent increase in weekend attendance from July 2022 to July 2023.

spectatorism.² However, these challenges are exacerbated in the context of affluent suburban life, and only a return to first-century Christian practices will break the grip of this triumvirate that leads to passivity and lack of healthy multiplication in the American church. So, the project aimed at teaching and equipping small group leaders to live out the call to fulfill Jesus’s command to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19).

Paul’s instructions to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2 provide the leadership strategy that GC small group leaders must embrace, not just giving mental affirmation to Paul’s strategy but investing their lives in obedience to the call of God to teach others who will likewise teach others and so multiply. In this passage, Paul gives the paradigm for multiplication, the message that will bring life change, and six metaphors that the leader must embrace and model for leadership multiplication to be successful.³ This passage formed the bedrock of the training to equip small group leaders to make disciples who will also make disciples according to Paul’s strategy.

For the project to be successful, three goals guided the process of the disciple-making training. An evaluation of each goal is as follows:

Goal 1: Assessing Disciple-Making Competency

This goal was successfully met. Over one hundred small group leaders completed the PRE-DMPI survey.⁴ The survey provided good insight into the areas where GC small group leaders need equipping to better disciple and multiply.⁵ The survey identified that the areas of concern were Reaching Out and Disciple-Making Habits, which were essential in developing the curriculum. The survey also provided a

² See chapter 1.

³ See chapter 2.

⁴ PRE-DMPI is the survey was sent out prior to the training. See appendix 1.

⁵ See appendix 2 for PRE-DMPI large group results.

pre-intervention baseline for training participants who retook the identical survey (POST-DMPI) within a week of completing the ReVitalize training. It was telling that the average years as a church member of those who took the PRE-DMPI survey was 33 years. Yet, only a few are being mentored or discipled by another believer. Many were not discipling anyone and only occasionally sharing their faith. The PRE-DMPI survey revealed a significant need for this type of training. It is encouraging to note that the POST-DMPI survey results identified significant differences in items related to outreach and growing in knowledge and involvement in disciple-making.

Goal 2: Curriculum Development

This goal was successfully met with the completion of the ReVitalize eight-week training curriculum and expert panel review.⁶ Chapters 2 and 3 were invaluable resources as the curriculum was developed. Chapter 2 provided the theological foundation for the training. Paul's leadership development was broken into eight parts—his paradigm, message, and the six metaphors that describe the leader that will multiply. Chapter 3 provided the strategies for how the curriculum was to be implemented. In Chapter 3, Jesus's paradigm for leadership development was studied, yielding valuable insight into his four-part strategy (teaching, modeling, assignments, and supervision).

The curriculum was built on these two chapters and also included weekly teaching from GC senior pastor Troy Dobbs. He taught a series on discipleship called *Vital Signs*. GC pastors felt this would be an excellent addition to ensure the curriculum was consistent with GC's established discipleship pathways. In addition, participants were required to read a chapter of Robert E. Coleman's book *The Master Plan of Evangelism* and watch a weekly teaching prior to each training session. The weekly training sessions were based on DMM strategy training from The Timothy Initiative.

⁶ See appendix 4 for the ReVitalize training curriculum and appendix 5 for the teaching video scripts that accompanied the ReVitalize training.

An expert panel reviewed and approved the curriculum. Each reviewer received the curriculum warmly and gave it their wholehearted endorsement.⁷ The second goal was successfully met, given the expert panel's responses to the Curriculum Evaluation Rubric.

Goal 3: Curriculum Implementation

The eight-week training was completed. A total of thirty-three people completed the training. On the POST-DMPI survey, the average attendance and assignment completion rate was 90 percent, which was surprising given the content volume and training during a Minnesota summer season!

Each participant took the POST-DMPI within a week of completing the course. The survey results were then analyzed statistically and qualitatively to assess the success of the ReVitalize training.⁸ There were four statistical analyses completed at the survey item and construct level. The results were very encouraging. The statistical analysis revealed that the majority of items demonstrated improvement through the training intervention. Most participants reported that they had grown in their knowledge and involvement in disciple-making. Improvement was demonstrated in the construct areas of Gospel-Centered, Reaching Out, and Summary.

The regression analysis was informative. It pointed to significant changes in the Summary construct when there are changes in the Spiritual Habits and Identity construct.⁹ This is valuable data for future implementation of the ReVitalize training. This data will improve the training and discipling of GC small group leaders. The

⁷ See appendix 3, Leadership Training Curriculum Evaluation.

⁸ Chapter 4 includes a detailed explanation of the statistical and qualitative analysis results, which will not be repeated here.

⁹ The Summary construct contained two questions: (1) One day God will hold me accountable for how I have ministered to others. (2) I am growing in my knowledge and involvement in of disciple-making.

regression analysis suggests that the ability to cultivate leaders who can effectively multiply does not primarily rely on teaching methodologies or leadership skills. Instead, developing leaders who will multiply through disciple-making is based on teaching and modeling what it means to love God deeply and to understand your identity in Christ. Such leaders will grow in their knowledge and involvement in disciple-making and thus multiply.

Goal three was accomplished when analyses revealed a statistically significant positive difference between the scores of the pre- and post-training surveys (PRE-DMPI and POST-DMPI). The null hypothesis was rejected, pointing to a successful intervention. Additionally, qualitative data supported the success of the course, as affirmed by participants. An assessment of quantitative and qualitative data utilizing the PRE-DMPI and POST-DMPI surveys confirms the accomplishment of goal 3.

Project Strengths and Weaknesses

The POST-DMPI analysis revealed significant differences were gained in disciple-making knowledge and practice, and the project accomplished all its goals. The following section will identify strengths and weaknesses. Five strengths were identified: curriculum strength, engagement, accountability and encouragement, imparting vision, and worship and prayer. Five weaknesses were identified: content volume, class size, class interaction during training, and more focused survey statements.

First, a strength of this project was the content of the curriculum. In the qualitative analysis, participants spoke about the personal impact of the content and how they realized that disciple-making must have a much higher priority in their lives. There was a lot of content that was rich in challenging biblical teaching. There was also practical equipping at each training session to try and make the content transformative. The variety of delivery methods also helped to impact participants' lives. There were sermons, teachings, readings, short videos, and practical assignments for participants to

receive the training. Many remarked about the depth of teaching from 2 Timothy 2, which was gratifying considering the investment of time in writing chapter 2. Improvements revealed by the survey results demonstrated the impact of the content on participants.

Second, participant engagement was a strength. The thirty-three who completed the training were fully committed. Of the eleven people who dropped out, most left after the introductory session as they realized the time commitment required. The participants were eager to be involved in the sessions, discussion groups were animated, and people were engaged. There were good times of prayer and sharing. People lingered after each session to connect and talk. The engagement level was very encouraging, and many participants became friends.

The third strength was the accountability and encouragement to apply and implement what was being learned immediately. Participants shared what they had put into practice each week in the form of a question: “Did you do what God asked you to do last week?” This loving accountability is often missing from our churches and gatherings, leading people to assume that head knowledge without any action or life change is acceptable. Participants gave testimonies each week of sharing with or praying for people. In fact, I am still receiving testimonies of people inviting their non-Christian friends to their small groups.

The fourth strength of the project was imparting a vision for disciple-making. Many participants realized they had just tried to convert people and not disciple them. Others remarked that they now realized the goal of disciple-making was that the person they disciple will disciple others. Many had never considered this type of disciple-making multiplication. This vision for disciple-making includes the challenge to obey what Jesus and Paul called us to do. Unlike many other studies, knowledge acquisition was not the goal. Participants were strongly encouraged and held accountable to actually go and make disciples instead of just learning about disciple-making.

The fifth strength was the times of worship and prayer the group enjoyed together. Seeing people contribute and gain confidence in public prayer and worship was essential in preparing participants' hearts to be affected by the training and receive a vision for disciple-making. A time of prayer and worship is vital to effective training. It was also important to model what a healthy disciple-making group should look like by engaging in worship and prayer. It communicated that worship and prayer are critical in heart preparation. Time spent together in the presence of Christ was powerful and impacting and was an integral part of the training curriculum. The regression study identified the value of spiritual disciplines in developing disciple-making leaders, of which prayer and worship are vital components.

The following are the weaknesses of the project. It is helpful to identify weaknesses to modify and improve future curricula. Weaknesses were identified by assessing the felt needs of participants expressed in the POST-DMPI survey and from my reflection on the project.

First, the main challenge for participants was the tension between content volume and the time allotted to cover the curriculum. The POST-DMPI survey revealed a felt need for more time to cover the prepared material. Many recommended at least double the sessions. Some even requested a 12-month training. There were no concerns expressed about the content, which was warmly received. However, there was too much content to adequately teach and ensure the content was assimilated into the participants' lives. This was a weakness and must be addressed in the future.

It is important to note the curriculum was well received. Many participants appreciated the training and were impacted by the material they read, watched, and studied. The volume of content required to complete the eight-week training was challenging. In light of the encouraging and significant analytical results, I do not think the training curriculum itself was a weakness. Still, it would have been helpful to extend the training to twelve or sixteen weeks. Extending the training probably would have

resulted in increased life transformation, disciple-making knowledge, and practice.

The second weakness identified was class size. On the one hand, having so many people sign up and actively participate in the course was very encouraging. On the other hand, the size of the group meant that I could not do the very things I wrote about in chapter 2. I wanted to model accessibility to the leader, which happened somewhat through email. Still, I hoped for weekly one-on-one meetings where discipleship could occur, and I could pour into people's lives. The group size also impacted the assignments I wanted to give out. There were too many of us to do joint assignments such as evangelism and street ministry. Instead, I had to encourage people to do this on their own. The group size also meant that supervision was more distant than I hoped. However, supervision can be ongoing, which has been happening organically. Participants have been texting or reaching out, continuing relationships developed over the training sessions. So, a lack of assignments and supervision due to class size was a weakness.

A third weakness the POST-DMPI identified was that there should have been more testimonies, sharing, and class interaction in the weekly sessions. More sharing would have been very beneficial. The pressure to push through the training material meant time for sharing was limited. Again, reducing the content through doing a more prolonged course would provide time for more group sharing and testimonies.

A fourth weakness the POST-DMPI identified was the need to improve some training delivery methods. Some participants recommended developing PowerPoints for each session and including visual slides in the video teachings to enhance learning.

Last, the fifth weakness identified was based on personal reflection. This is the first time I have undertaken a surveyed project like this. Two pastors at GC reviewed the survey, which was helpful, but if I repeat the process, I would change some survey statements. Given the opportunity to repeat the project, I would include more questions focused on doing the work of disciple-making.

What Would I Do Differently?

In light of the weaknesses identified, I would reduce the class size to twelve people and run two or three classes rather than have such a large group, and I would extend the class to a minimum of twelve weeks. I believe the content is powerful and life-changing, but covering it too quickly with too many participants minimizes the impact of the material.

I would make more effort to replicate the strategies of Jesus that I wrote about in chapter 2 (teaching, modeling through proximity, assignments, and supervision). The missing parts of his strategy were modeling, assignments, and supervision. I did not include enough of the elements Jesus utilized in his leadership development.

Another change I would make is to focus on training younger leaders. A few young adults took the course, but not enough. It is essential to influence young leaders to change to a disciple-making paradigm. I would actively recruit participants from ministries engaged with children, youth, and young adults. Younger leaders are open to change and new ideas.

Personal and Theological Reflections

As I think about this disciple-making project and doctoral studies, many reflections come to mind. Obviously, it has been a tremendous amount of work and a considerable sacrifice for my family. My studies have been funded by the church I serve and strongly supported by GC's senior pastor, Troy Dobbs. I know that many of my friends and fellow leaders around the world would love the chance to read, study, think, pray, and meditate upon missiology, church planting, and revitalization as I have had the opportunity. I am deeply grateful for those who have made it possible.

These studies have shaped me. Things I thought about and somewhat understood have become clearer in my mind and heart. The call to make disciples is a clarion call in my life and ministry. My studies of 2 Timothy 2 and Jesus's leadership development paradigm, so beautifully identified by Coleman and Bruce, have deeply

impacted me. It has been formative in the sense that disciple-making is not just a teaching I preach, but it is a lifestyle I feel called to live out. I must make disciples. It is imperative that I actually do it—not just teach about it. The project allowed me to test my disciple-making convictions, and the results have only confirmed my commitment to implement this training as a core part of future ministry.

Just as I was discipled by an older man as a young student, I must invest in discipling younger leaders. It is messy, time-consuming, and inconvenient, but sacrificial friendship is the only way to truly disciple one another. It cannot happen in ten minutes on a Sunday morning. Proximity and life-on-life discipling are not a thing of the past. They must happen today.

I am convinced that Jesus’s call to make disciples is paramount to life and ministry, but I am also convinced that it is a call to disciple the nations. This latter part of Jesus’s command has been neglected; we must disciple the nations. There must be an “ends of the earth” component to our discipling if we are to see the gospel of the kingdom reach all nations (Matt 24:24; Acts 1:8). This can happen only as we are fully surrendered and empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2 Tim 2:1–2). We must obey the call to teach others, who will teach others also.

This training will be a cornerstone of my ministry. I intend to teach and train disciple-makers, modeling a disciple-making lifestyle. Our second campus has requested help shaping their leader training with ReVitalize content, and there are continued opportunities at our main campus. Some of the participants have requested the material to teach their small groups. I will use the material as I travel to many of our global partners, utilizing the material to encourage churches and missionaries to make developing disciple-making leaders a priority.

An area that has deeply impacted me is the result of the regression study. The analysis points to spiritual disciplines that develop a love for God and a thorough understanding of identity in Christ, leading to growth in disciple-making knowledge and

practice. The value of understanding identity in Christ was visibly demonstrated after the training on identity when several participants sincerely expressed their appreciation for the subject matter, and the following week, one participant was visibly moved as he described the impact of living into his identity in Christ that week.

It was sobering in reviewing the PRE-DMPI to realize that these loyal, Jesus-loving, long-serving leaders were rarely sharing their faith and having spiritual conversations with non-Christians or being disciplined or discipling others. This is not a criticism but an observation of the need to realign our teaching and focus on developing a deep-abiding love for Christ and a fuller awareness of their identity in Christ. Then, they will have the love and motivation to make disciples, evangelize, and lead others to do the same.

Samuel Whitefield's book *Discipleship Begins with Beholding* echoes this theme of spending time with God. He argues that it is not information that will transform us, but it is spending time "beholding the Lord and being transformed into his image."¹⁰ He challenges the assumption that discipleship is learning more information and solely focused on behavior modification. He reminds us that it is possible to "live a disciplined life and adopt moral behavior without beholding God or knowing him."¹¹ He argues that we are captivated by beautiful things and will sacrifice to enjoy what we are captivated by. Whitefield states, "This is the way the human heart is made, and it is the model for biblical discipleship. We 'see' Someone who is beautiful. We become fascinated by Him. And then we joyfully and gladly reorient our lives to behold more of that Person and desire to be a part of His people."¹² How true that as God's people spend time with him in loving fellowship, reading his Word, praying, and reorienting our lives to obey what he

¹⁰ Samuel Whitefield, *Discipleship Begins with Beholding* (Grandview, MO: OneKing, 2020), 7.

¹¹ Whitefield, *Discipleship Begins with Beholding*, 7.

¹² Whitefield, *Discipleship Begins with Beholding*, 8.

has called us to do, we will grow in our knowledge and involvement in disciple-making. Spiritual disciplines are the foundation of knowing and loving God and, consequently, of disciple-making leadership.

The second part of the regression study recognized the importance of identity. It is crucial that the disciple-making leader knows who is in Christ and then lives into that new identity they have been given. It is so important that as we develop leaders, they understand and embrace their calling as new creatures in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). John Stott writes on this theme of identity:

In practice we should constantly be reminding ourselves who we are. We need to talk to ourselves, and ask ourselves questions: “Don’t you know? Don’t you know that you have been united to Christ in His death and resurrection? Don’t you know that you have been enslaved to God and have committed yourself to His obedience? Don’t you know these things? Don’t you know who you are?” We must go on pressing ourselves with such questions until we reply: “Yes, I do know who I am, a new person in Christ, and by the grace of God I shall live accordingly.”¹³

Stott here correctly and incisively recognizes the importance of knowing and living into the truth of who we are in Christ. The centrality of teaching identity is critical and will shape my disciple-making and training moving forward. I have always valued helping people I disciple, knowing who they are in Christ, but now it will be a central facet of any future equipping curriculum.

An area for future study that interests me is developing disciple-making leaders who deeply love Jesus and others in other large, gospel-centered churches across America. Despite many churches falling into error and compromise, I’m convinced many churches are ready for a return to first-century Christianity. There has been a resurgence of interest in disciple-making, and indeed, this is a positive sign that true Christians are tired of sitting on the sidelines and want to be about their Master’s business. Maybe one way we could begin to return to first-century practice would be to incorporate some

¹³ John Stott, *Romans: God’s Good News for the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 187.

DMM practices biblically and wisely into our gatherings. I am convinced this will have a positive impact on small groups. It was encouraging to see how people responded to prayer and worship together, reading God’s Word and being held accountable to spend time in God’s Word and share their faith.

Conclusion

My deep conviction is that disciple-making, fueled by a passionate love for God and a deep abiding understanding of who I am in Christ, will be the means of discipling the nations. There are no shortcuts. Jesus and Paul are totally aligned. The command to disciple the nations can only be fulfilled as leaders, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, whose character matches the pure gospel they proclaim, teach faithful leaders who will teach others, and so the kingdom will multiply the way Jesus intended, and we will see the conversion growth we long for. However, we are not just looking for converts but disciples who fully surrender to Christ and take up the call to make disciples themselves.

A commitment to developing leaders who can teach others who will also teach is critical. Paul saw the potential of what happens when the pure gospel is given to leaders who multiply disciples. Jesus invested deeply in a few chosen leaders who would multiply disciples. The pattern is simple, but it is not easy. It goes against much of what we have been taught and believed about church growth. We like to start big and wonder why we do not see the results we long for. Jesus and Paul started small and invested their lives in those they led. This is the pattern we must follow.

Only this kind of discipling will break the grip of individualism, consumerism, spectatorism, and any other “ism” blighting so many of our churches and our nations today. All is not lost! We must return to “first-century Christianity” to see this happen.¹⁴

¹⁴ Peyton Jones, *Church Plantology: The Art and Science of Planting Churches* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2021), 10.

We will see the first-century results we so long for as we return to first-century Christianity and obey the call to make disciples who will make disciples. Only by living in proximity and community will we see the grip of individualism broken. Only as we live sacrificially, will we see the grip of consumerism broken, and only as we participate in the great call to make disciples who make disciples will the grip of spectatorism be broken. Then, the kingdom will come to our homes, communities, and all nations in a transformative manner.

APPENDIX 1

PRE-TRAINING DISCIPLE-MAKING PRACTICES INVENTORY

The following instrument is the pre-training Disciple-Making Practices Inventory (PRE-DMPI).¹ A fifty-two-question survey with a seven-point Likert scale follows some general questions. The instrument aims to assess each GC member's present level of understanding, practice, and confidence in effective disciple-making.

The pre-training DMPI survey was utilized to establish a baseline for curriculum development, and the post-training DMPI was analyzed in various ways to determine the effectiveness of the training.

¹ The survey used in this project was adapted from the research project of Joshua Bradley Moran, "Developing Disciple-Makers at Flintville First Baptist Church in Flintville, Tennessee" (DMin project, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 90–95.

PRE-TRAINING DISCIPLE-MAKING PRACTICES
INVENTORY (PRE-DMPI)

Agreement to Participate

This survey aims to assess the level of spiritual maturity in leaders at Grace Church. The goal is to develop a curriculum that helps people grow in their spiritual maturity. For those interested, a leader training will be developed, and you will therefore be given the survey before and after the training. Spiritual maturity can sometimes be an area where people experience guilt or shame. Please resist this! Your honest answers will help me build the best program possible! Thank you!

You are about to participate in is designed to assess your understanding of Christian disciple-making. Ps. Steve Harrison is conducting this survey for the purpose of collecting data for his dissertation project.

Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and your name will never be reported or identified with your responses.

By completing this survey, you are giving informed consent for using your response in this research.

Because ministry is relational, we prefer you include your name below rather than complete the survey anonymously. However, if you prefer to be anonymous, please use the last four digits of your phone number for future reference.

General Questions:

1. Date: _____
2. Name (or 4-digit code): _____
3. Gender: _____
4. Age: _____
5. How many years have you professed Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?
6. How many years have you been a member of a Bible-believing church?
7. Are you currently serving as a ministry leader, teacher, or discipler of other believers?
 - a. Yes or No?

Directions: Please mark the appropriate answer. Some questions may ask you to give your opinion using the following scale:

SA = Strongly agree

A = Agree

AS = Agree somewhat

NA = Neither agree nor disagree

DS = Disagree somewhat

D = Disagree

SD = Strongly disagree

Item	Construct #1 – Spiritual Habits (SH)	SA	A	AS	NA	DS	D	SD
1	I spend time each day reading the Bible.							
2	I spend time each day in prayer.							
3	I am passionate about my relationship with God.							
4	I strive to live by God’s commands found in the Bible.							
5	I memorize Scripture.							
6	I attend church regularly.							
7	I use my gifts and talents to serve my local church.							
8	When I learn that I have disobeyed the teachings of the Bible, I try to correct my behavior.							
Item	Construct #2 – Relationships (RO)	SA	A	AS	NA	DS	D	SD
9	I have someone who holds me accountable in my spiritual life.							
10	I strive to forgive others who have offended me.							
11	I have someone with whom I can talk about spiritual matters.							
12	I seek advice from mature Christians about life’s challenges.							
13	I am open to constructive criticism from fellow Christians.							
14	A mature believer is mentoring me.							
15	I like to worship and pray with other believers.							
16	I pray with other believers regularly.							

Item	Construct #3 – Gospel-Centered (GC)	SA	A	AS	NA	DS	D	SD
17	I feel I have a good understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.							
18	I feel confident in my abilities to lead someone to faith in Christ.							
19	I feel a responsibility towards the Great Commission.							
20	I believe all Christians should participate in completing The Great Commission.							
21	I am giving to missions through supporting missionaries or ministries locally and globally through giving my prayer, finances, and time (pray/give/go).							
22	I am involved in missions efforts. I've been on a mission trip, and I regularly pray about missions opportunities and am open to God's leading on future trips.							
Item	Construct #4 – Identity (ID)	SA	A	AS	NA	DS	D	SD
23	I believe the Holy Spirit is active in my life.							
24	I see myself as loved and valued by God.							
25	I am growing in my relationship with God.							
26	I am confident in my identity in Christ.							
Item	Construct #5 – Disciple-Making Habits (DM)	SA	A	AS	NA	DS	D	SD
27	I regularly pray for the lost.							
28	I go out of my way to make friendships with people I know are lost.							
29	My neighbors and co-workers know that I am a Christian.							
30	I seek out opportunities to talk to others about spiritual matters.							
31	I feel confident in my abilities to teach other believers about knowing God better.							
32	I feel confident in my abilities to teach pre-Christians how to know God better.							
33	I regularly share my faith with non-Christians.							

Item	Construct #5 – Disciple-Making Habits (DM) cont.	SA	A	AS	NA	DS	D	SD
34	I spend time weekly discipling and encouraging other Christians.							
35	I meet with spiritually open non-believers to share about my faith.							
Item	Construct #6 - Reaching Out (RO)	SA	A	AS	NA	DS	D	SD
36	I feel personally responsible for helping the poor and helpless.							
37	I intentionally greet visitors at church.							
38	I intentionally make conversations with people I do not know.							
39	I am intentionally patient, kind, and generous with service people I encounter, such as servers, baristas, Uber drivers, etc., and I often ask them if I can pray for them.							
40	I help my friends and neighbors with problems they have.							
41	I know the names and family members of my closest neighbors.							
42	I feel burdened to make visits to those I know are injured, sick, or homebound.							
43	I make or buy food for others outside of my immediate family.							
Item	Construct #7 – Summary (SU)	SA	A	AS	NA	DS	D	SD
44	One day God will hold me accountable for how I have ministered to others.							
45	I am growing in my knowledge of and involvement in disciple-making.							

APPENDIX 2
 PRE-TRAINING DISCIPLE-MAKING PRACTICE
 INVENTORY (PRE-DMPI) LARGE
 GROUP RESULTS

These are the average score results of the 116 surveys returned after the PRE-DMPI was sent out to small group leaders throughout the church.

Table A1. Pre-DMPI large group analysis

Item Statements	Item	Average Score
I spend time each day reading the Bible.	1	6.06
I spend time each day in prayer.	2	6.42
I am passionate about my relationship with God.	3	6.67
I strive to live by God’s commands found in the Bible.	4	6.74
I memorize Scripture.	5	5.39
I attend church weekly.	6	6.71
I use my gifts and talents to serve my local church.	7	6.32
When I learn that I have disobeyed the teachings of the Bible, I try to correct my behavior.	8	6.53
Construct #1 - Spiritual Habits (SH) Average		6.35
I have someone who holds me accountable in my spiritual life.	9	5.93
I strive to forgive others who have offended me.	10	6.40
I have someone with whom I can talk about spiritual matters.	11	6.67
I seek advice from mature Christians about life’s challenges.	12	6.49
I am open to constructive criticism from fellow Christians.	13	6.32

Construct #1 - Spiritual Habits (SH) Average (cont.)		
A mature believer is mentoring me.	14	4.82
I like to worship and pray with other believers.	15	6.66
I pray with other believers regularly.	16	6.18
Construct #2- Relationships (RE) Average		6.19
I feel I have a good understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.	17	6.73
I feel confident in my abilities to lead someone to faith in Christ.	18	5.97
I feel a responsibility towards The Great Commission.	19	6.50
I believe all Christians should participate in completing The Great Commission.	20	6.67
I give to missions by supporting missionaries or ministries locally and globally through giving my prayer, finances, and time.	21	6.58
I am involved in missions efforts. I've been on a mission trip, and I regularly pray about missions opportunities and am open to God's leading on future trips.	22	5.60
Construct #3- Gospel Centered (GC) Average		6.34
I believe the Holy Spirit is active in my life.	23	6.58
I see myself as loved and valued by God.	24	6.74
I am growing in my relationship with God.	25	6.57
I am confident in my identity in Christ.	26	6.63
Construct #4- Identity (ID) Average		6.63
I regularly pray for the lost.	27	5.98
I go out of my way to make friendships with people I know are lost.	28	5.24
My neighbors and co-workers know that I am Christian.	29	6.17
I seek out opportunities to talk to others about spiritual matters.	30	5.57
I feel confident in my abilities to teach other believers about knowing God better.	31	6.06
I feel confident in my abilities to teach pre-Christians how to know God better.	32	5.84

Construct #4- Identity (ID) Average (cont.)		
I regularly share my faith with non-Christians.	33	4.80
I spend time weekly discipling and encouraging other Christians.	34	5.92
I meet with spiritually open non-believers to share about my faith.	35	4.46
Construct #5- Disciple-making Habits (DM) Average		5.56
I feel personally responsible for helping the poor and helpless.	36	5.61
I intentionally greet visitors at church.	37	5.29
I intentionally make conversations with people I do not know.	38	5.35
I am intentionally patient, kind, and generous with service people I encounter, such as servers, baristas, Uber drivers, etc., and I often ask them if I can pray for them.	39	5.54
I help my friends and neighbors with problems they have.	40	5.90
I know the names and family members of my closest neighbors.	41	5.36
I feel burdened to make visits to those I know are injured, sick, or homebound.	42	4.59
I make or buy food for others outside of my immediate family.	43	4.90
Construct #6- Reaching Out (RO) Average		5.32
One day God will hold me accountable for how I have ministered to others.	44	6.69
I am growing in my knowledge of disciple-making.	45	6.21
Construct #7 - Summary (SU) Average		6.45

APPENDIX 3

REVITALIZE LEADERSHIP TRAINING CURRICULUM EVALUATION

The GC Senior Pastor and the Family Ministries Pastor (who oversees all men's, women's, young adults, students, and children's and small group ministries) completed the following evaluation. In addition, the curriculum was evaluated by a long-serving small group leader. Each pastor and leader evaluated the course material to ensure it was biblically faithful, sufficiently thorough, and practically applicable. Their evaluations are included at the end of this appendix.

Name of evaluator: _____

Date: _____

DISCIPLE-MAKING CURRICULUM EVALUATION					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Faithfulness					
The content of the curriculum is theologically sound.					
The curriculum is faithful to the Bible's teaching on disciple-making.					
Scope					
The curriculum sufficiently covers the basics of disciple-making.					
Methodology					
The curriculum sufficiently addresses disciple-making methodology.					
The curriculum uses various learning approaches such as lectures, discussions, case studies, role play, and homework.					
Practicality					
The curriculum includes opportunities to practice disciple-making.					
At the end of the course, participants will be able to make disciples.					

Please include any additional comments regarding the curriculum below:

Grace Church Senior Pastor evaluation:

Name of evaluator: Troy Dobbs Date: 05/10/23

DISCIPLE-MAKING CURRICULUM EVALUATION					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Faithfulness				X	This is a fantastic model for discipleship. It's clear and measurable and applicable.
The content of the curriculum is theologically sound.				X	
The curriculum is faithful to the Bible's teaching on disciple-making.				X	
Scope					
The curriculum sufficiently covers the basics of disciple-making.				X	
Methodology					
The curriculum sufficiently addresses disciple-making methodology.				X	
The curriculum uses various learning approaches such as lectures, discussions, case studies, role play, and homework.				X	
Practicality					
The curriculum includes opportunities to practice disciple-making.				X	
At the end of the course, participants will be able to make disciples.				X	

Please include any additional comments regarding the curriculum below:

This is a project that can immediately be applied to the disciple-making process of the local church. It is well-written, well-researched, well-documented. This hits the mark!

Grace Church Senior Director of Family Ministries Pastor evaluation:

Name of evaluator: Jim Erickson Date: 08/22/23

DISCIPLE-MAKING CURRICULUM EVALUATION					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Faithfulness				X	Very well organized and framed biblically.
The content of the curriculum is theologically sound.				X	Yep, for sure.
The curriculum is faithful to the Bible's teaching on disciple-making.			X		Yes. This is a difficult space in which to have relationship, transformation, and discipline.
Scope					
The curriculum sufficiently covers the basics of disciple-making.				X	
Methodology					
The curriculum sufficiently addresses disciple-making methodology.				X	Yes.
The curriculum uses various learning approaches such as lectures, discussions, case studies, role play, and homework.				X	Exceptional on this front as well.
Practicality					
The curriculum includes opportunities to practice disciple-making.				X	Yes, very well and practical.
At the end of the course, participants will be able to make disciples.				X	Indeed.

Grace Church small group leader evaluation:

Name of evaluator: Dan Haugland Date: 8/11/23

DISCIPLE-MAKING CURRICULUM EVALUATION					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Faithfulness					
The content of the curriculum is theologically sound.			X		<p>Amazing work, Steve. You've covered all critical aspects tremendously well. I love that you started with the foundational focus of all Believers- the greatest commandment(s) - Love God (first), Love others (second). We must never forget our first love is the Lord Himself – He is our entire focus with all our being, which (as a result) empowers us to turn outward and joyfully love others in endless ways (disciple-making) by the power of the HS, thru the church.</p> <p>Other critical doctrines I appreciate you covering were justification (identity), regeneration (farmer), and indwelling vs. filled w/HS.</p> <p>I have been so deeply transformed by personal study of certain doctrines that I would love to unpack justification, regeneration, and predestination a little more to help students grasp God's work/power in disciple-making. You covered those, but my mind loves those particular ideas because they completely answer "who does what" in evangelism and disciple-making efforts.</p> <p>Also, it may not fit with your focus, but would it make any sense to add any ideas about the future glory we're moving toward? (new heavens, new earth, all nations around the throne, God dwelling with/ man again as originally designed, etc.?)</p> <p>But you are not lacking anything, brother.</p>
The curriculum is faithful to the Bible's teaching on disciple-making.				X	<p>2 Tim 2 + Paul + Jesus is a great framework to build from.</p>

Scope				
The curriculum sufficiently covers the basics of disciple-making.			X	Your work is well-rounded and thorough in explaining the structure and each aspect as it ties to Biblical truths while aligning with Grace Church leadership in your local body. Purpose – assist in making disciples/ SG leaders. Theological basis – 2 Tim 2 Content creation – Paul’s methods, Gospel Power, Metaphors of disciple-makers Deliver/execution – Christ’s life/examples. 7 Vital Signs – align w/ GC.
Methodology				
The curriculum sufficiently addresses disciple-making methodology.			X	The methodology aspect is probably the strongest part of your curriculum.
The curriculum uses various learning approaches such as lectures, discussions, case studies, role play, and homework.			X	Vast ideas, methods, structures, acronyms, processes, assignments, etc., used across all the content & delivery that distill truths for students, challenge them, then simplify the transition to action – all while easy to remember and recall.
Practicality				
The curriculum includes opportunities to practice disciple-making.			X	Assigning action as part of the program is a crucial part. It should always be the result of growing in God’s word, applying it to our lives, and obeying HS working in us. This is what many, many Christians lack and can be a big “knock” on evangelicalism. We must act out of simple and immediate faith and obedience, not out of our level of confidence or convenience. We will be uncomfortable, but we must break out of ourselves into obedience. Fear is a liar holding us back from experiencing full lives in Christ.
At the end of the course, participants will be able to make disciples.			X	Theologically sound, but not “over the heads” of anyone. You simplify key doctrines and make them accessible and motivating. If followed diligently with humble motivation, God will change people through this curriculum, and I think it will accomplish the purpose and goals you’ve set.

Please include any additional comments regarding the curriculum below:

The most impactful part of your work was your focus on HS indwelling vs. filled. It hit me how incredibly important it is to draw out this distinction. It has to be the #1 issue that holds believers back from living out their lives with maximum effort and effectiveness for Christ. This is a massive deception the church is under, which could be due to unawareness, not understanding, or not giving the effort involved in positioning ourselves to be filled and used by the HS.

I appreciated the visual of untying and raising your sails as a simple “how to” when considering the HS’s work in our lives. I don’t think I’ve heard much preaching or teaching in the church on the “HOW” of being filled w/ the Spirit. It’s provocative to think how many Christians could answer the question, “how can a Christian be fully filled and directed by the Holy Spirit in daily life.”

Thanks for including me in your work!

Dan

APPENDIX 4
REVITALIZE LEADERSHIP TRAINING
CURRICULUM

The mission statement of Grace Church is “We exist to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ across the street and around the world.”¹ The focus of all activity at Grace Church is to glorify God, and the Great Commission (Matt 28:19–20) shows how to glorify God by making disciples locally and globally. For this reason, Grace Church seeks to equip believers to be disciple-makers across the street and around the world for the glory of God.

This training is designed to assist in making disciples of Jesus Christ across the street in our neighborhoods and workplaces through developing leaders who will multiply. Jesus gave us clear instructions to make disciples as we go about our daily lives. It is a definite across-the-street and around-the-world commission! Jesus wants to fill our hearts and lives so that making disciples becomes a priority as we seek to glorify God because we love him so much.

Vanderstelt and Connelly recognize that “God’s mission is that his people will be so saturated in Jesus that every person, in every place, would daily experience the good news of Jesus and be transformed by it in the course of their daily lives.”² God accomplishes his mission by using ordinary folks who love him so much that they are saturated by the gospel and obey his call to make disciples. God is not looking for highly

¹ Grace Church, “Who We Are,” accessed April 21, 2023, <https://grace.church/who-we-are/our-beliefs/>.

² Jeff Vanderstelt and Ben Connelly, *Saturate Field Guide* (Bellevue, WA: Saturate , 2015), 15.

gifted or talented people but Christians who will say, “Yes!” This happens in the context of everyday life with its challenges and changes. God wants to show up in the fabric of our lives and impact our neighborhoods, workplaces, and families for his glory and our good!

The church of Jesus Christ is God’s plan to fulfill the commission he gave to us, and we gather weekly in a building that facilitates teaching, fellowship, training, and equipping. So, the church is not a building but God’s redeemed people whom he longs to use to impact the world around them with his Good News! The people of God are the church. Church is not a weekly event we attend. We have been sent out daily to love Jesus and make him known all around us by being the church on mission. Jesus wants everyone everywhere to know him and have the opportunity to love and be loved the way they were designed. He wants everyone to know what it means to be forgiven and live for God’s glory! This means that as fully devoted Christ-followers, “we see our time, our money, and our unique abilities as means to serve both the people who are the church and those in our cities who don’t know the great news of God’s love for them in Jesus Christ. All of life counts, and everyone matters.”³

Another implication of the church being God’s people and not a building is that God’s work is not done mainly by paid professionals on a Sunday morning. Members of the church are not solely volunteers who run programs and provide financial support, but each member is a critical part of God’s mission. God wants to activate every believer to live on mission right where he has placed them—in their families, neighborhoods, and workplaces. Vanderstelt and Connelly summarize this concept: “God loves to use normal people in everyday life. He wants everyone involved.”⁴

³ Vanderstelt and Connelly, *Saturate Field Guide*, 18.

⁴ Vanderstelt and Connelly, *Saturate Field Guide*, 19.

Curriculum Overview

The purpose of this training is to develop small group leaders at Grace Church with the goal of seeing small groups multiply and impact the suburban neighborhoods in which they are located.

The theological basis of the training is 2 Timothy 2. Paul's *paradigm* of multiplication, the pure *message* of the gospel, and the *metaphors* that describe the characteristics of leaders that multiply provide the training's content foundation. In addition, Jesus's four-fold strategy of modeling, teaching, assignments, and supervision will be utilized to deliver the content and concepts. Last, Pastor Troy Dobbs preached a sermon series entitled *The Seven Vital Signs of Discipleship*⁵ that are incorporated into the training as weekly assignments and provides continuity with GC's established discipleship process.

GC's mission statement affirms our commitment to make disciples of Jesus Christ. The training focuses on making disciples who multiply. The training aims to equip small group leaders with a theological underpinning for disciple-making and practical strategies to reach their neighborhood for Christ, develop a multiplication mindset, live a life worth reproducing, and maintain a firm commitment to God's mission of making disciples. The training curriculum targets the leader's head—knowing what they are called to, heart—developing a heart to know and love God and receive his heart for the lost and broken, and hands—being willing to serve those around them creatively to share the love of Christ with non-Christians to lead them to Christ.

Training Format and Scheduling

Each week will consist of the following components:

Gathering: There will be eight weekly meetings, including worship, prayer,

⁵ Troy Dobbs, "Sermons in: Vital Signs," last modified January 23, 2022, <https://grace.church/messages/series/vital-signs/>.

discussion, training, and review (approx. 90 mins). The Discovery Bible Study (DBS) method will study the passages relevant to the weekly theme.⁶ A small group leader will host an introductory potluck meal to commence the training and a celebration meal once training is complete. These meals will encourage relationships and model community and hospitality.

Each gathering will begin with prayer and worship. The prayer time will begin with worship in Scripture and song (worship). There will be a time of confession (admit) and then a time to pray for specific needs (request). Also included each week will be a short discussion about the big ideas from the week's reading and teachings. Then, the group will look back, holding each other accountable to the previous week's action plan. They will look up to God's word by studying a specific topic and a selected passage. Last, there will be a time to look ahead and ask, "What do I sense God is asking me to do in response to his word this week?"

Equipping: each week, participants will be expected to complete the following:

1. Watch one of Pastor Troy's Vital Signs sermons (30 to 40 mins).
2. Review the teaching video (15 to 20 mins).
3. Read a chapter of *The Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert E. Coleman.
4. Memorize assigned Scripture verses.

Going: During the training, participants will be equipped and expected to share their faith and pray for people they encounter in their ordinary course of life.

Supervision: Each week, there will be multiple email contacts. Participants will be encouraged to leave each gathering with an action step they feel the Lord is

⁶ Discovery Bible Study – This is a simple reproducible method of studying the Bible. It includes basic observation, interpretation, and always concludes with application by asking in what area is God requiring obedience. It is helpful to learn this method to be able to start DBS groups with non-Christians who are interested in learning more about Jesus. Use the following link for more information: <https://worldmissionsevangelism.com/resources/>

calling them to complete. Participants will have access to the leader for prayer needs and any questions or concerns that may arise.

Weekly Rhythm: The training is intended to teach disciple-making principles and practical ways of being a disciple-maker. Each week there will be a sermon to watch and a short teaching on the weekly focus. There will also be Bible memorization and reading of a chapter from *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. In addition, there will be an opportunity to interact with others on the training course, discussing, debating, and collaborating to bring the Good News to non-Christians while enjoying fellowship and experiencing iron sharpening iron in community with others from Grace Church who have the same heart to make disciples.

This training packet includes detailed information about each week's activities with sermon and teaching video links, discussion questions, memory verses, and Bible study outlines.

Scheduling: Here are the gathering dates:

1. **May 24, 2023, Introduction & Potluck Gathering:** review training strategy, introduce participants, worship, pray, questions, and answers.
2. **May 31, 2023, Week 1** – The Priority of Disciple-Making
3. **June 7, 2023, Week 2** – The Message of the Gospel
4. **June 21, 2023, Week 3** – Engaged in Serving (Soldier)
5. **June 28, 2023, Week 4** – Growing in God's Word (Athlete)
6. **June 28, 2023, Mid-Point Gathering**
7. **July 5, 2023, Week 5** – Dependent in Prayer (Farmer)
8. **July 12, 2023, Week 6** – Generous in Giving (Worker)
9. **July 19, 2023, Week 7** – Connected in Community (Vessel of Honor)
10. **July 26, 2023, Week 8** – Authentic in Worship (Servant)
11. **August 2, 2023, Celebration Gathering**

Additional Resources: Additional reading resources are recommended but optional as part of the training. All books are available in PDF format and will be shared with participants. Most of these books are included on the Vital Signs Resource page.⁷

The recommended reading is as follows:

1. *Power Through Prayer* by E.M. Bounds.
2. *Continuous Revival* by Norman Grubb.
3. *The Treasure Principle* by Randy Alcorn.
4. *The Knowledge of the Holy* by A.W. Tozer.
5. *The Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert Coleman.

⁷ Grace Church. "Vital Signs Resources," accessed May 1, 2023, <https://grace.church/vital-signs-resources/>.

Week 1 – The Priority of Disciple-Making

The big idea for this week is that God wants us to make disciples wherever we go. Paul gave us a paradigm for how to do this, so the Scripture we will be memorizing is 2 Timothy 2:1–2.

GOAL: Understand the priority of taking the Gospel across the street and around the world to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

READ: 2 Timothy 2

MEMORIZE: 2 Timothy 2:1–2 *You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.*

READ: Chapter 1 – Selection (*The Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert E. Coleman)

WATCH: Vital Signs Sermon: **CLICK HERE**⁸ Part 1 (January 16, 2022)

Sermon Questions:

1. *What is the health and vitality of your inner person?*
2. *Are you growing in Christ?*
3. *Are you spiritually alive and healthy?*
4. *What’s one big takeaway from the sermon?*

WATCH: Teaching – Paul’s Method of Replication: **Week #1 Teaching**⁹

Teaching Questions:

1. *What are the four parts of Paul’s plan for multiplication?*
2. *“Paul is telling Timothy that the source of strengthening power he will need to fulfill the commandment to teach others is the Holy Spirit, and this “ongoing strengthening” is the key to everything else Timothy would accomplish. What is*

⁸ Troy Dobbs, “Sermons in: Vital Signs,” January 16, 2022, <https://grace.church/messages/series/vital-signs/>.

⁹ Stephen Harrison, “Grace Ministries - ReVitalize #1,” May 24, 2023. <https://vimeo.com/829975707?share=copy>.

the key to what God wants you to accomplish? Do you think you are relying on yourself or trusting the power of the Holy Spirit?

3. *Why was Paul so concerned that only the “pure gospel” be learned and passed on?*
4. *What are the qualifications of those Timothy was to teach? Why?*
5. *What is Paul’s whole goal in these verses?*

WATCH: What Strategy Would You Use?¹⁰

GATHER: worship, prayer, and study.

Look Back: *What were your big takeaways from this week’s teaching and reading?*

Look Up:¹¹

Realizing that a disciple-making leader needs to be constantly strengthened by grace (2 Tim 2:1), we will focus on the importance of the Holy Spirit for the disciple. We can’t do the work of passing on the gospel to faithful people who will teach others unless we learn how to surrender our lives to Jesus and be filled with his Spirit.

In John 14:16-17, Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to His disciples.

“And I will pray to the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”

In this passage, we observe the following:

- The Father sent the Holy Spirit at the request of Jesus.
- Jesus described the Holy Spirit as a “Helper” and “the Spirit of truth.”
- The Holy Spirit will be with us forever.
- Only followers of Jesus receive the Holy Spirit.

Read John 16:7-15 together.

¹⁰ IBCMultiplication, “What Strategy Would You Use,” July 19, 2019. <https://vimeo.com/347540695>.

¹¹ This week’s Look Up lesson is taken from Chapter 1, The Timothy Initiative Staff, *DMD Level 1 (US Edition)*, 13–19.

This passage demonstrates that it is more important to be filled with the Holy Spirit than to be in the physical presence of Jesus.

Focus on John 16:7-10. Jesus also explained that the Holy Spirit would convict the world concerning three areas:

- The world's sin.
- God's righteousness.
- God's coming judgment.

In John 16:13-15, Jesus revealed that the Holy Spirit will be our guide and will lead us into all truth.

Be Filled with the Spirit

As the disciple of Jesus is led and directed by the Holy Spirit, they need constant filling with the Spirit. Knowing what it means to be “filled with the Spirit” is one of the keys to living a victorious and fulfilled Christian life. There are many truths about being filled with the Spirit that are important to remember:

- It is a command, not a suggestion.
- It is not something we do ourselves but something God does in us.
- We need to ask the Holy Spirit to fill us constantly.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit and being filled with the Holy Spirit are not the same. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit happens at the point of salvation (Acts 2:38; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16). Being filled with the Spirit, as commanded in Ephesians 5:18, means being controlled by the Holy Spirit.

When you become a Christian, you receive the Holy Spirit, but He doesn't get all of you. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is a process of giving Him control of our lives and submitting our will to His. We are controlled by our sinful desires or the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:5-6).

Untying and Raising the Sails

In order to live a Spirit-filled life, it is essential that you begin each day by asking the Holy Spirit to fill you—to take control of your life. A simple way to do this is by adopting habits that will prepare and remind you to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

In John 3:8, Jesus describes the Holy Spirit saying, *“The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”* If the Holy Spirit is like the wind, an easy way to understand what it means to live a Spirit-filled life is to think of our lives as a sailboat. Two things need to be done to a sailboat before the wind can fill its sails:

1. You must untie the sails.
2. You must raise the sails.

Before a sailboat can leave the harbor, the sails must be untied from the main mast. You take the first step to prepare the boat for its voyage by untying the sails. Our sins are like the ropes that keep the sails tied to the mast. Sin restricts us as we try to follow God faithfully. The sins we do not confess keep us from seeing the ways that God wants to move in our lives.

We “untie the sails” by confessing all known sin and surrendering our lives again to the Lord. By confessing our sins, we express our dependence and need for God to make us new each day and to prepare our hearts for the leading of the Holy Spirit. A life that is tied down by sin and our own desire for control will not be free to be filled by the winds of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 12:1).

Untying a ship’s sails from the mast is not enough to leave the safety of the shores. For the sails to catch the wind, we must “raise the sails.” When you raise the sails, you are opening your life up to the possibility that the Spirit will do something great with your obedience. By raising your sails, you tell God, *“I’m available! This boat is Yours! Empower me and direct me to the people You want me to share my story and Your story with. Help me to follow the Spirit better and to respond in obedience.”*

There may be days or seasons when you feel that your sail is too small to have an impact. Do not let this keep you from raising your sail and committing your day to the leading of the Spirit! God will do far more than we could ever imagine with small acts of consistent obedience (Ephesians 3:20).

Group Discussion: How different would your interactions and conversations with people be if you started each day by untying (confessing your sins) and putting up your sails (asking the Spirit to fill and us you)?

The Holy Spirit in the Process of Making Disciples: Jesus disciplined His twelve followers for three years. The twelve lived and ministered with their Teacher, but He told them it was necessary that He go so He could ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit. He instructed them to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father—the filling of the Holy Spirit. Why did Jesus want the disciples to have the Spirit?

“You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Jesus promised His disciples would **receive power** when the Holy Spirit filled them. The purpose of being filled by the Holy Spirit was to empower the believers to be bold witnesses for Jesus. Throughout the Book of Acts, ordinary people were led and empowered by the Holy Spirit, which resulted in lost people coming to faith in Jesus and glory being brought to God. The same promise is true for every disciple of Jesus today!

Key Principle: God the Father is constantly drawing people to Jesus through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He invites and expects us to join Him in that process.

Group Discussion: How does it make you feel that God is inviting us to partner with Him in this process of life transformation? How do you sense the Holy Spirit’s prompting in your life through your actions, attitudes, and thoughts? How can you remain sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s leading as He connects you to people the Father is drawing to Jesus?

As you journey through this training, you will be asked and held accountable to share your story (Week 5) and God’s story (Week 2) with people where you live, work, study, shop, and play. Some of these people will be family, friends, or coworkers. Some will be complete strangers whom the Father is drawing to Jesus. We call these people that the Holy Spirit is drawing to Jesus pre-Christians. They are all around us. The Holy Spirit desires to connect us with them. Are you ready? Are you intentionally looking for them? God often uses these people as relational “can-openers” to reach their friends, relatives, and acquaintances with the Gospel of the Kingdom. Sometimes these catalytic people are

referred to as “persons of peace.” (See Luke 10 for this concept.)

Remember, one of the critical roles of the Holy Spirit is to testify about Jesus. As you are filled each day, He will connect you to people He has already been drawing to Jesus. Our strategies or unique gifts will not change the world; it is the fullness of Jesus in and through us! We do not rely on our own strength and giftings but serve others out of the love that overflows from the Holy Spirit in us. Our dependence on the Holy Spirit is the key to effective living and evangelism. Only the Holy Spirit can enable us to live a prayer-care-share lifestyle and lead our small groups with a heart to train up leaders who will train others.

Look Forward:

- Write “I will” statements on what God has challenged you this week.
- Share your statement with the group/trainer each week so they can hold you accountable.
- Begin each day by asking the Holy Spirit to fill you—to take control of your life.
- Take time to prepare for the Week 2 Gathering.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to connect you with a pre-Christian this week. Actively pursue identifying who this person is. When He does, share how God’s love has changed your life. Be ready to report back with whom you shared and what happened.
- Note: You may need to ask the Spirit to fill you multiple times throughout the day (1 Thess 5:17-18; Eph 5:18).
- Write down all you are hearing from God in your journal. Respond in obedience to what you are hearing. Under the Holy Spirit’s guidance, list potential pre-Christians you can pray for, care for, and share with—people willing to join your small group.

Week 2 – The Message of the Gospel

The big idea for this week is that God has given us the message we should be sharing. Paul gave Timothy the message that he should teach others, who would then go and teach others, and so God's movement would multiply, and so, the Scripture we will be studying is 2 Timothy 2:8-13.

GOAL: Understanding the Gospel.

READ: 2 Timothy 2 – Review last week's memory verse

MEMORIZE: Romans 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

READ: Chapter 2 – Association (*The Master Plan of Evangelism*)

WATCH: Vital Signs Sermon: [CLICK HERE](#)¹² Part 2 (January 23, 2022)

Sermon Questions:

1. *Pastor Troy commented: "Discipleship is not just about gaining information. It's not just about personal transformation. Genuine Christian discipleship is about spiritual reproduction. It is reproducing Christ in other people. It's about leading others to Jesus Christ and helping them become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. Genuine discipleship is always about disciple-making." What do you think about that statement? Does it describe you? Are you a disciple-maker?*
2. *What are the six points Pastor Troy made about the Great Commission? Please make a note of them!*

WATCH: Teaching – Paul's Message – The Pure Gospel: [Week #2 Teaching](#)¹³

Teaching Questions:

1. *What are the three parts of Paul's gospel summary?*
2. *What two truths encapsulate the gospel?*
3. *Why do you think we don't like the idea of suffering the gospel?*

¹² Troy Dobbs, "Sermons in: Vital Signs," January 23, 2022, <https://grace.church/messages/series/vital-signs/>.

¹³ Stephen Harrison, "Grace Church Ministries - ReVitalize #2," May 24, 2023. <https://vimeo.com/829988957?share=copy>

4. *Paul teaches Timothy a song rich in theology. How should this impact the content of what we sing? Also, it shows the value of singing good theology!*

WATCH: Share Life Training **Video 2** How to Share the Gospel (7 mins) **VIDEO 2**¹⁴

MEMORIZE: Romans 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

GATHER: worship, prayer, and study.

Look Back: *What were your big takeaways from this week’s teaching and reading?*

Did you do what you felt God called you to do?

Did you get to pray for, care for, and share with any pre-Christians this week?

Look Up: Learning How to Share God’s Story – The G.O.S.P.E.L.¹⁵

This week we will learn how to tell God’s story. While there are many ways to share God’s story, it is essential to help connect your story with God’s story.

Group Discussion: *How do you share God’s story with people? Is it easy? Do you have a strategy for sharing? People often share their story of how they met Jesus and then ask, “Do you have a story like that?” to get to share the Gospel appropriately.*

Remember, the goal of sharing your story is to connect with someone in a way that they are open to hearing you share God’s story. Before sharing your story with someone, asking them about their story (or where they are on their spiritual journey) is a good idea. After they share their story with you, a great way to transition to God’s story is to ask them, “*Would you be interested in hearing how you could have a friendship with Jesus, like me?*” or, “*Would you like to hear about how Jesus can transform your life?*” If they say yes, they are inviting you to share the Gospel!

This week, you will learn, or maybe review, a method called G.O.S.P.E.L. There are

¹⁴ Grace Church, “Share Life Small Group Resources - Week 2 How To,” <https://grace.church/share-life/> (accessed May 26, 2023).

¹⁵ Part of this week’s Look Up lesson is taken from Chapter 3, The Timothy Initiative Staff, *DMD Level 1 (US Edition)*, 45–62. Grace Church Share Life Small Group curriculum was used to describe the G.O.S.P.E.L. process. Grace Church, “Vital Signs Resources,” Accessed May 1, 2023, <https://grace.church/vital-signs-resources/>.

numerous variations to this approach, and you can adapt it as you see fit. The main goal is to actively and intentionally share God’s story with others.

Key Principle: *God loved the world so much that He sent His Son Jesus, so those who believe in Him will receive eternal life (John 3:16).*

G.O.S.P.E.L.¹⁶ Method of Sharing the Gospel

Discussion: How would you define “the Gospel,” and what are the different ways that you have heard it explained? (In its simplest form, the Gospel means “good news” of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.)

We will grow in confidence by going deeper in our understanding of the Gospel.

Here is the GOSPEL acronym:

God created us to be with Him.

Our sins separate us from God.

Sins cannot be removed by good deeds.

Paying the price for sin, Jesus died and rose again.

Everyone who trusts in Him alone has eternal life.

Life with Jesus starts now and lasts forever.

God created us to be with Him. Read Genesis 2:15–25; Col 1:16; John 10:10; John 17:3. How would you explain to a non-believer what it means to be with God? (e.g., abundant life, eternal life, fullness of joy, our longing for communion and worship fulfilled, peace, etc.)

Our sins separate us from God. Read Rom 3:23; Rom 6:23.

How do you explain what sin is to a non-believer? (Sin is missing the mark of God’s perfect standard. Sin is going our own way, putting ourselves on the throne, declaring

¹⁶ Dare 2 Share Ministries, “HOW TO SHARE THE GOSPEL,” Accessed May 2, 2023. 2023. <https://www.dare2share.org/resources/how-to-share-the-gospel/>. This site has training videos and helpful resources for the G.O.S.P.E.L. method of sharing the gospel.

independence from God.)

Sins cannot be removed by good deeds. Read Isaiah 64:6; Eph 2:8-9.

What does it say about our deeds? How would you explain what the Bible says about works-based salvation to someone who thinks their good works can save them?

First, ask how they came to that conclusion. It is always wise to identify others' underlying assumptions. (If they claim Christianity, "Can you show me where you find that in the Bible?")

Second, ask, "Can I share with you what the Bible says?" Share Isaiah 59:2 and Eph 2:8-9. We may not have sinned as much as others, but our heart is too impure to be with God. Consider the analogy of a drop of poison in a glass of water. There may be way more water than poison, but it still cannot exist with life.

Paying the price for our sins, Jesus died and rose again.

Read Rom 5:8 and 1 Cor 15:3-4.

Why did Jesus have to die? (If God pardoned us without any punishment, He would violate His perfect justice, whereas if God didn't pardon us at all, He would violate His perfect love. Therefore, by taking our place, the cross is the only way God could satisfy His perfect justice and love.)

Read 1 Corinthians 15:17-19. What is the importance of His Resurrection? (If Jesus had stayed dead, it would mean He didn't have power over death, but since He did rise, we can trust Him that we will be raised as well. The Resurrection proved that He was God.)

Everyone who trusts in Jesus alone has eternal life. Read John 3:16 and John 14:6.

What does it mean to trust in Jesus? (It means putting our whole weight upon Him, not resting any of it on our own achievements. If I trust that a chair can hold me, it is not just me verbally saying it. If I really trust it, I will put my full weight on the chair. If I am partially holding myself up with one leg, chances are I don't actually trust it fully.

How would you respond to someone who says there are other ways to God? (If there are different ways to God, Jesus died for nothing. This means that God is a fool for sending His Son to a painful death when there were other ways to redeem people. Remember

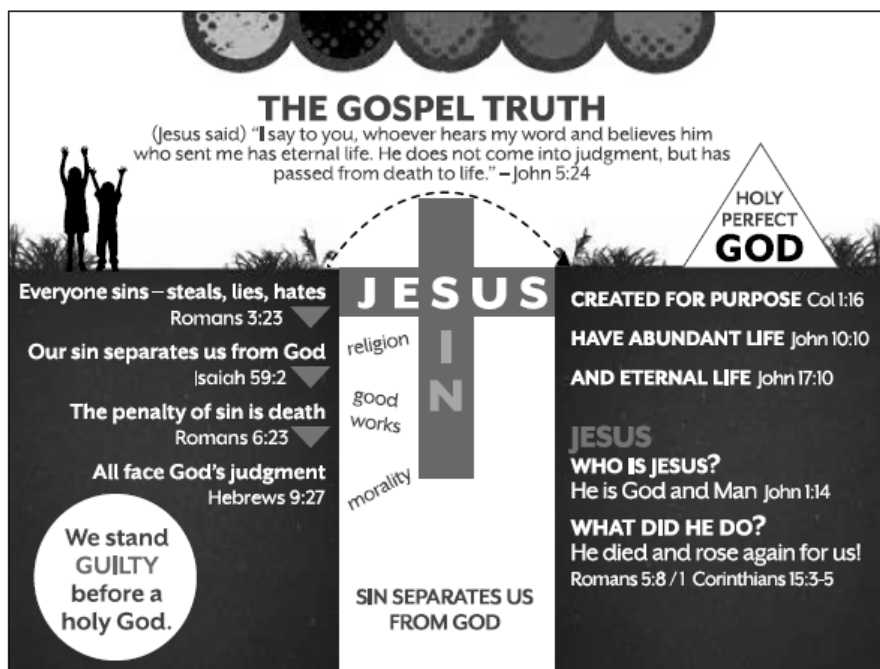
what Jesus said in the garden, “*Father, if it is possible [if there is any other way], let this cup [of crucifixion] pass from me.*” Also, why would He call us to world evangelism (The Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20) if people could be saved apart from Christ? John 14:6 is critical, “*no one comes to the Father but through me.*”)

Life with Jesus starts now and lasts forever. Read John 5:24 and John 10:10.

What does new life in Christ look like? (a relationship with God restored, brokenness mended, emptiness filled, heartbreak healed, etc., but also dying to self, giving up temporary, sinful pleasures for eternal joy)

Group Activity: Practice sharing the GOSPEL. Gather in groups of two or three and practice sharing/drawing God’s story. Offer constructive feedback and make sure it is brief, straightforward, and easy to understand.

- Make the Gospel personal by identifying their brokenness and revealing how God speaks into their pain with the hope of His Good News.
- Remove any religious or spiritual terms that people may not understand.
- Adjust the story according to feedback until it is clear and easy to understand.
- Repeat this process until everyone is confident about sharing the Gospel.



What to do when someone says, “Yes!”

As people begin placing their faith in Christ, encourage them to share their story immediately. It is also essential to lead them into a closer relationship with Jesus. Begin discipling them right away! It is good to follow every Gospel presentation with an invitation to accept Christ (Romans 10:13). After you share your story or the Gospel in any form, you can ask, “*Would you like to make Jesus King of your life now?*” If they say “Yes,” pray with them. You can use the simple prayer below as an example. Remember, there is nothing special about reciting the words below (*it is through faith in Christ that we are saved Ephesians 2:8-9*).

Lord Jesus, I confess that I am a sinner. I am sorry for all of the wrong things I have done in my life. I believe and place my faith in YOU, that YOU came to this world, lived a perfect life, died for my sins, and were raised to life again. Please forgive me for my sin. Jesus, I confess You as my Lord and Savior now. Please fill me and transform me from the inside out. I am Yours! In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Additional Resources:

3 Circles Method: <https://www.namb.net/evangelism/3circles/>

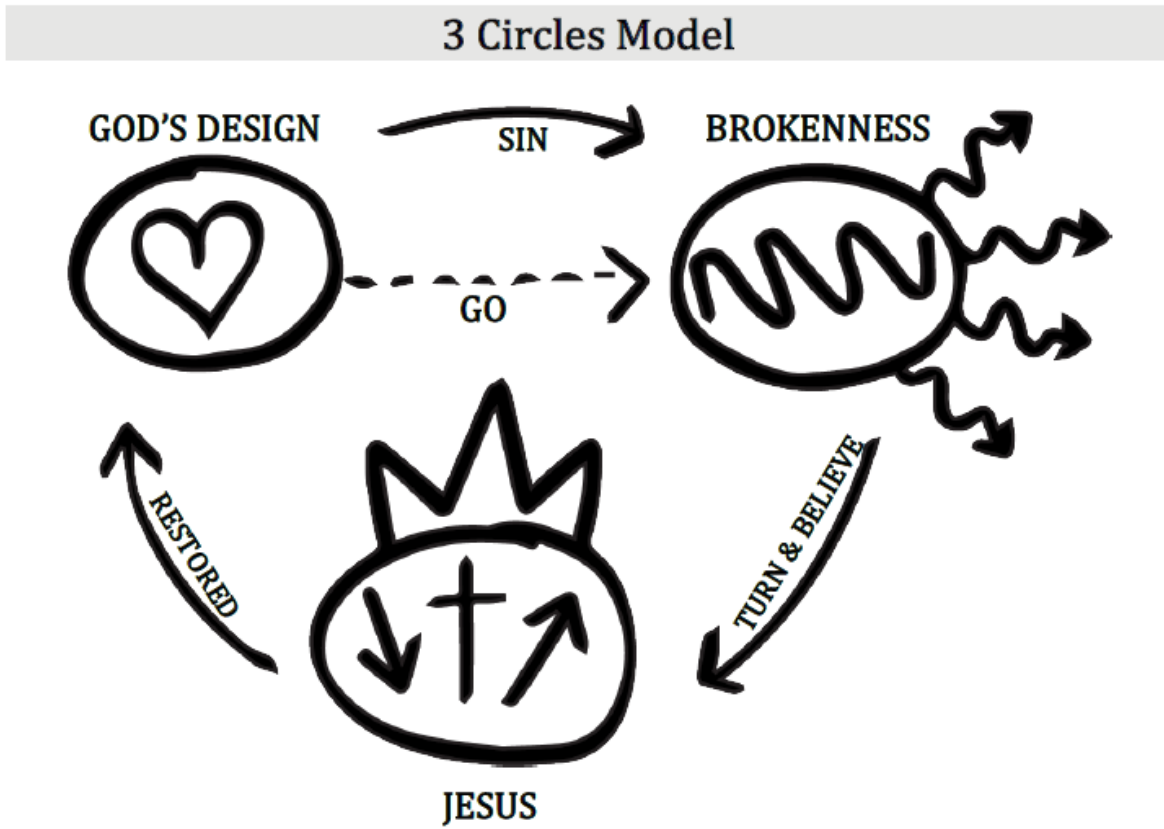
The Four Method: <https://thefour.fca.org/#home>

Look Forward:

- Write “I will” statements on what God has challenged you this week. What will you do in response to God’s voice today and this week?
- Share your statement with the group/trainer each week so they can hold you accountable.
- Begin each day by asking the Holy Spirit to fill you—to take control of your life.
- Take time to prepare for the Week 3 Gathering.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to connect you with pre-Christians this week. People who could be future members of your small group!

- Begin memorizing the GOSPEL presentation.
- Share GOSPEL with two to three people from your list this week – ask them if you can practice something you’re trying to memorize!
- Write down all you are hearing from God in your journal. Respond in obedience to what you are hearing.

Here is another way to share the gospel:



Week 3 – The Soldier Engaged in Serving

The big idea for this week is that God wants us to obey our Commander, Jesus, serving and suffering with one aim to please Him! Also, he has provided us with armor in order for us to take our stand firm in Christ. The Discovery Bible Study method will be taught and used to teach us about God's armor for his soldiers.

GOAL: Embrace the call to suffer and serve the cause of Christ across the street and around the world.

READ: 2 Timothy 2 – Review memory verses

MEMORIZE: 2 Timothy 2:3–4 *Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.*

READ: Chapter 3 – Consecration (*The Master Plan of Evangelism*)

WATCH: Vital Signs Sermon: This sermon has no video archive. Watch this film called *I See Nations*: **I SEE NATIONS**¹⁷

Film Questions:

1. *What was one major takeaway from the film?*
2. *Was the film encouraging? Why? Why not?*
3. *Was your understanding of the Great Commission challenged?*

WATCH: The Soldier Suffering & Serving: **ReVitalize Teaching Week #3**¹⁸

Teaching Questions:

1. *What kind of soldier are you? A good soldier willing to suffer, or a mediocre soldier who refuses to suffer well and complains or gives up altogether.*
2. *What kind of pursuits distract you from fully pleasing your commanding officer?*
3. *Why is it so hard for us to suffer? Christians around the world experience persecution, and we think an angry Facebook post is persecution!*

¹⁷ I See Nations Film, "I See Nations," November 18, 2022.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDun8p4u9LM&t=3s&ab_channel=ISeeNationsFilm.

¹⁸ Stephen Harrison, *Grace Ministries - ReVitalize #3*. May 31, 2023.
<https://vimeo.com/832068738?share=copy>.

WATCH: DBS EXPLANATION VIDEO¹⁹

GATHER: worship, prayer, and study.

Look Back: *What were your big takeaways from this week’s teaching and reading?*

Did you do what you felt God called you to do?

Did you pray for, care for, and share with any pre-Christians this week?

Look Up:²⁰

This week, we will learn a method to study God’s word and then practice it with a Scripture teaching what God has provided for us to succeed in the battle we are all a part of. There will be opposition from opposing forces as we press into God’s calling to make disciples and impact our neighborhoods through multiplying small groups.

First, let’s learn the Discovery Bible Study (DBS) method:

Goal: The goal of learning this method is that every small group leader will expand the existing group they lead or start new groups for new believers or “pre-Christians” by guiding them through a Discovery Bible Study (DBS) so they can begin to read God’s Word, hear His voice, and respond in obedience.

Discovering the Bible as a group is critical to a long-term plan for multiplying disciples, small groups, and churches. In Week 4, the SOAPS method will be learned as a way to do personal Bible study. However, DBS is a practical Bible study method for groups studying Scripture together. DBS is used all over the world in various cultures and contexts. It is highly effective and easy for anyone to do. One of the benefits of this study method is that it can be done with people who may not have a relationship with Jesus or any prior biblical knowledge or background. Fully devoted, mature believers can also utilize it. The power comes from reading Scripture in community, asking good questions, and allowing the best teacher, the Holy Spirit, to challenge and encourage us.

Remember, *“The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged*

¹⁹ GOMVMT USA, “Go2020 Guide - Discovery Bible Study,” June 08, 2023.
<https://youtu.be/rceQ7wEgnlk>.

²⁰ This week’s Look Up lesson is partially taken from Chapter 8, The Timothy Initiative Staff, *DMD Level 1 (US Edition)*, 113–126.

sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

How to Do Group Discovery Bible Study

As you meet with a group of those you are discipling or who have some spiritual interest, it is good to follow the usual practice we have been using of looking back, looking up, and looking forward.

As you begin by looking back, have everyone share one thing they are **thankful** for and any anxiety or fear they are experiencing. Point out to the group that one aspect of prayer is telling God what we are grateful for and sharing our worries and stresses with Him. As everyone shares, pray for one another.

The Holy Spirit

After you pray, ask the group to share what God said to them in their personal time (devotions) with Him since your last meeting. Asking this question at the beginning of every session encourages group members to spend personal time with God. Allowing them to share provides room for the Holy Spirit to take the group study in a completely different direction than you planned. Be sensitive to the group and ensure everyone has time to share what God is showing them.

After this time, ask the group to share how they have done on their “I will” statements since the last gathering. Sharing will encourage and hold each other accountable to ensure we obey what we learn and hear from God.

Scripture

After everyone has a chance to share, choose a passage of Scripture and have someone read it aloud. Everyone follows along in their Bibles (or listens carefully, for those without Bibles or who are illiterate). When they are done, have someone else read the same passage aloud again. This time have everyone just listen to the passage as the person reads. When they are done, ask a volunteer to retell the passage in their own words. When they finish, ask the group to fill in any gaps in the story. Reading, listening, and retelling Scripture is very important. It allows everyone time to think about the

passage and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to them through His Word. Retelling the passage will enable participants to think through how to share it with someone outside the group. Allowing the group to add to the retelling encourages everyone to think about the main points in the passage. Even though going through the passage multiple times may seem repetitive and time-consuming, the process helps develop healthy disciples and retain what you are learning.

Discovery Study

After your group retells the Scripture, you can study the passage. Your discussion should be filled with questions that aid your discussion and get to the heart of the passage. Questions facilitate the discovery process and allow your group to interact with Scripture and grow spiritually. It would be best to use many of the same questions you use for your personal devotional time as you interact with Scripture. Utilizing the same questions allows our interaction with Scripture to be easily reproducible as we train other disciples.

Below are the questions:

- What did you like about this passage?
- Did anything concern you? Why?
- What does this passage teach us about God?
- What does this passage teach us about people?
- Is there a **Sin** to avoid?
- Is there a **Promise** to claim?
- Is there an **Example** to follow?
- Is there a **Command** to obey or an action to take?
- With whom should you share this truth?

Keep the discussion focused on Scripture. If you or someone else in your group are knowledgeable of the Bible, it may be hard to avoid introducing outside materials into the study. The leader needs to work hard to limit the sharing of popular opinions or extra-biblical materials. These opinions and materials do not facilitate interaction with Scripture. **Do your best to keep the discussion focused on the Scripture and guided by the Holy Spirit.**

Commitment

Knowledge of God's Word must lead to obedience and sharing with others. This next step begins with a statement and a question:

“Since we believe God's Word is true, what must we change to obey God?”

Everyone in the group should answer this question before finishing. If they already obey this Scripture, have them share how they obey it and have trained others. Ask if they need to do anything to increase their obedience to God's Word in this area of their life. Keep this part of your time focused on specific action steps. After everyone shares how they will obey Scripture, have them identify someone who needs to hear what God said to the group. Encourage them to share what they learned with that person. Before you finish, ask the group to identify people they know who are in need. Ask the group to identify ways to meet those needs in the next week. Finally, close with prayer.

Key Principle: By participating in a Discovery Bible Study, we can grow in our relationship with God and be mutually encouraged by others.

Summary of Group Discovery Bible Study:

Looking Back

- **Opening prayer:** Begin by having the group share one thing they are thankful for and one challenge or fear they face. Allow for a time of group prayer.
- **What did God say:** Ask each person to share what they sense God has taught them through His Word since the last meeting.
- **What did I do:** Ask each person to share how they have obeyed God since the previous meeting. Also, ask about their “I will” statements.

Looking Up

- **Read:** Read the portion of Scripture aloud while people follow along in their Bibles.
- **Re-read:** Have someone else read the same passage aloud while the group listens.
- **Share in your own words:** Have someone else in the group retell the passage in

their own words. Allow the group to add to the retelling if necessary.

- **Discovery questions:** Use discovery questions to encourage the group to interact with the passage.
- **Pray:** Have everyone take two minutes to pray and ask, *“What will I do in response to what I have learned from Scripture and God’s Spirit today?”*

Looking Forward

- **Obey God’s Word:** Have each person write down their **“I will” statement and then share with the group what they will do to obey the passage over the next week.**
- **Action plan:** Have the group identify people they will share the passage with during the next week and write down their names. Have the group identify people in need and commit to meeting those needs.
- **Commitment and closing prayer**

Some Common Questions about Discovery Bible Study:

What about those who cannot read?

The discovery process for those who cannot read is similar to the group process outlined above, just listening instead of reading. Allowing the group to retell the passage is even more critical in oral settings because repetition helps them remember it.

Can non-Christians participate in the Group Discovery Bible Study process?

Yes, everyone has the opportunity to hear God’s voice and respond in obedience. For non-Christians specifically, try these sorts of questions:

- *“If this story is true, how does that change how we act?”*
- *“What questions do you have about this story?”*
- *“Do you know anyone who needs to hear this story?”*
- *“Does anyone want to accept Christ?”*

Encourage them to share the story with anyone they name.

Ask: *“Is there anyone we know who needs help (physical, emotional, financial, practical)? What can we do to help them?”*

Have the group decide what needs to be done and commit to doing it together before the next meeting.

Some Guidelines for Leading a Discovery Bible Study:

1. Let the Bible speak for itself, and don't feel the need to have an answer for every question. Keep pointing to Scripture and ask, *"What does the Scripture say?"* Give space for processing and for the Holy Spirit to speak.
2. If someone asks an important question, but you do not have an answer, simply say, *"That's a good question, but I don't know how to answer it. Let me study and maybe talk with some friends, and we can follow up with that next week."*
3. If your group grows larger, break into groups at the beginning and/or the end as you share what God has been doing in your life or your "I will" statements. Come back together for the Bible study portion to ensure everyone has time to share.

Model & Practice: Leading A Discovery Bible Study

We will now model how to use the DBS method by studying a portion of Scripture relevant to today's theme of the Soldier who serves and suffers, if necessary, for the Commander who enlisted them. *Turn to Ephesians 6:10-20.* Use this chart to study what God has provided for his soldiers to stand firm.

LESSON: _____	THREE COLUMN DISCOVERY BIBLE STUDY	SCRIPTURE: _____
<u>HEAR</u>	<u>UNDERSTAND</u>	<u>OBEY</u>
What does it say? (Write Scripture)	What does it mean? (My own words)	What must I do to obey? ("I will..." statements)
		Is there a Sin to confess?
		Is there a Promise to claim?
		Is there an Example to follow?
		Is there a Command to obey? (S.P.E.C.)
		In obedience to God's word, this
		week:
		"I will: _____"
		"I will: _____"
		"I will: _____"
		"I will: _____"
		I'm going to share what I learned
		today with:

Look Forward:

- Write “I will” statements on what God has challenged you this week.
- Begin each day by asking the Holy Spirit to fill you—to take control of your life.
- Prayerfully consider starting a Discovery Bible Study with others you are already discipling. Or, consider starting a study that will reach your friends, family, coworkers, and/or any of those for whom you have been praying to share your story and God’s story.
- If you start a Discovery Bible Study, invite anyone with whom you share your story or God’s story (even if you just met them) to join your group or someone else’s group from your Church to which they might be willing to go.
- Take time to prepare for the Week 4 Gathering.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to connect you with a pre-Christian this week.
- Write down all you are hearing from God in your journal. Respond in obedience to what you are hearing. Under the Holy Spirit’s guidance, list potential pre-Christians you can pray for, care for, and share with.

Week 4 – The Athlete Growing in God’s Word

The big idea for this week is that, like an athlete who competes according to the rules, God has given us his word for us to grow in our obedience.

GOAL: Understand the value of learning, knowing, and obeying God’s word

READ: 2 Timothy 2 – Review memory verses

MEMORIZE: 2 Timothy 2:5 *An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.*

READ: Chapter 4 – Impartation (*The Master Plan of Evangelism*)

WATCH: Vital Signs Sermon: **GROWING IN GODS WORD**²¹

Sermon Questions:

1. *Are you submitted to God’s word in every area of your life?*
2. *Does your life demonstrate how much you honor God’s word through study, memorization, and reading?*
3. *What do you think of the teaching of illumination? What has God spoken to you through his word recently?*
4. *Why is the application of God’s word so important?*
5. *What is the grand story of the Bible?*

WATCH: Teaching – The Athlete Completing According to the Rules: **WEEK #4**

ReVitalize Teaching²²

Teaching Questions:

1. *How should we run the race set before us, and why?*
2. *In the light of the context where Paul is telling Timothy to pass on the message, how does this metaphor describe the leader who multiplies?*
3. *What is the reward for the athlete who successfully competes according to the rules?*

²¹ Troy Dobbs, “Vital Signs 2014 - Growing in God’s Word,” February 16, 2014, <https://grace.church/sermon/growing-in-gods-word/>.

²² Stephen Harrison, “Grace Ministries - ReVitalize #4,” June 23, 2023, <https://vimeo.com/838711711?share=copy>.

GATHER: worship, prayer, and study.

Look Back: *What were your big takeaways from this week's teaching and reading?*

Did you do what you felt God called you to do?

Did you pray for, care for, and share with any pre-Christians this week?

Look Up:²³

A newborn baby relies on his mother to be fed, but he must eventually learn to feed himself. In the same way, Christians must learn to feed themselves to mature. One of the best ways to grow is to start spending time in God's Word on your own. As you begin trusting and obeying God's Word, allow the Holy Spirit to guide you through the following practices:

- Studying and understanding Scripture.
- Applying and obeying Scripture.
- Praying through and about Scripture.
- Memorizing Scripture.
- Sharing Scripture with others.

Key Principle: Every believer must learn to grow in understanding, trusting, obeying, and sharing God's Word.

Knowing and obeying the Bible is a defining element in the life of a disciple. We read God's Word to hear God's voice and grow in our relationship with Him. The more time we spend in God's Word, the more we will begin to recognize His voice. Once we hear His voice, we put what He said into action through obedience and application. This is why we encourage every disciple to read the Bible daily and read through it at least one time per year, every year. Are you following a Bible reading plan yet? If you are going to prioritize Bible reading, you need a plan. Consider getting an app for your phone like the YouVersion Bible, which has a daily guide to help you read through the Bible in the next

²³ This week's Look Up lesson is taken from Chapter 6, The Timothy Initiative Staff, *DMD Level 1 (US Edition)*, 91–102.

year. You could also buy a “Read Through the Bible in a Year” Bible or find a resource online to help you develop a reading plan. If you read just four chapters of the Bible daily, you will finish reading the entire Bible in 11 months. Even if you miss a day, you can read the Bible in less than a year.

Feeding Yourself through a Personal Bible Study: A personal Bible study plan is a great way to be intentional and focused in your study of Scripture and growth as a disciple. You can use the SOAPS process as you learn to feed yourself from Scripture. SOAPS stands for these steps:

- Scripture
- Observation
- Application
- Pray
- Share

Following these five steps provides a simple, practical, reproducible, and effective Bible study method that any follower of Jesus can use and train others to use. Let’s describe this process. Before you begin reading Scripture, practice communicating with God (prayer) by telling Him you want to spend time with Him. Ask that He speak to you through His Spirit and His words from Scripture. Have paper, a journal, or a computer to take notes and record what you are learning, hearing, or processing as you study. When ready, read or listen to the Bible and walk through the SOAPS steps as described below:

Scripture:

Choose a passage and read or listen to it at least twice. Write down verses or phrases that stand out to you that you want to remember. Write down things you might want to understand better or have questions about.

Observation:

As you read and re-read the passage, ask questions about the passage, like the ones listed in the following bullet points. Write down your thoughts, ideas, or any truths you are

processing:

- What did you like about this passage?
- Did anything concern you? Why?
- What does this passage teach us about God?
- What does this passage teach us about people?
- Is there a **Sin** to avoid?
- Is there a **Promise** to claim?
- Is there an **Example** to follow?
- Is there a **Command** to obey?
- Is there an action to take or to avoid?
- With whom should you share this truth?

Application:

As you read Scripture, think about what it means to obey these commands or concepts in your life. Ask yourself, *“How do I respond today in light of what I have just read? What would I have to do? Is there an area of my life in which I need to do things differently?”* Write your thoughts and specific applications on what you must do in obedience to God’s Word and His Spirit.

Pray:

Stop and think about what you have just read and sensed from this passage. Take a few minutes and ask God’s Spirit to speak to you about any specific things you need to do in light of this passage. Write down anything you feel you need to do. Then, write a short prayer that tells God what you’ve read in His Word, what you understand about obeying His commands, and what you plan to put into practice based on what you’ve learned. Pray the prayer you wrote to God and ask for help to live for Him today.

Share:

Prayerfully reflect on who needs to hear the truths God has revealed to you. Write down their name, pray for them, and consider a time you could intentionally share what you're learning.

Remember: God's Word is not just for you, but for others also. Share with others what you learned and tell them how you obeyed and applied the Scripture to your life. They can hold you accountable and figure out ways to help you obey God's Word. Often, you will find God's Spirit has already been talking to them about the same concepts or truths, and you will all be encouraged God is using you in this process.

To start a dialogue with others about what God is showing you in your reading, you might use the phrase, "*As I was reading the Bible today, I sensed God showed me something, and I thought about sharing it with you,*" or, "*I was wondering what you might think about what I am processing,*" and wait for a response. If the Holy Spirit is working in their hearts, they will ask to hear more. Share your faith with those who engage in conversation.

Model & Practice: Break into groups of 2 or 3 and practice SOAPS with one of these Scriptures:

- *1 Corinthians 9:24–27*
- *Philippians 3:13–15*
- *2 Timothy 4:6–8*

Look Forward:

- Write "I will" statements on what God has challenged you this week. What will you do in response to God's voice today and this week?
- Share your statement with the group/trainer each week so they can hold you accountable.
- Begin each day by asking the Holy Spirit to fill you—to take control of your life.
- Take time to prepare for the Week 5 Gathering.

- Study the Bible using the SOAPS Bible study method at least one time this week in your devotional time. Be prepared to share what you have learned and with whom you shared it at the next training.
- Follow up with those you have been sharing with.
- Encourage anyone you lead to Christ to study Scripture with the SOAPS study method you learned in this chapter.
- Continue asking people if you can pray for them, sharing GOSPEL, and sharing your story and God's story with at least two to three people this week. Be ready to report back on what happened.
- Write down all you are hearing from God in your journal. Respond in obedience to what you are hearing. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, pray for pre-Christians whom you can pray for, care for, and share with.

Week 5 – The Farmer Dependent in Prayer

The big idea for this week is that God wants us to be like farmers who cannot force their crops to grow. We must scatter the seeds of the gospel wherever we go, knowing that prayer prepares the soil and only God can cause his word to germinate in people's hearts.

GOAL: Understand the importance of prayer and sowing gospel seeds. Every disciple-maker will regularly and prayerfully share their story of how Jesus changed their life with people where they live, work, study, shop, and play.

READ: 2 Timothy 2 – review memory verses.

MEMORIZE: 2 Timothy 2:6 *It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.*

READ: Chapter 5 – Demonstration (*The Master Plan of Evangelism*)

WATCH: Vital Signs Sermon: **DEPENDENT IN PRAYER**²⁴

Sermon Questions:

1. *What was the one thing the disciples asked Jesus to teach them?*
2. *Why is theology so important in prayer?*
3. *Assess what your priorities are when you pray.*
4. *Go back and look over how God has answered your prayers!*
5. *What is our greatest need?*

WATCH: Teaching: The Farmer Dependent in Prayer and Sowing Gospel Seeds: **Week #5 Revitalize**²⁵

Teaching Questions:

1. *Farming was strenuous work in the first century. What does this tell you about how Paul expected Timothy to complete his assignment of training leaders who would multiply?*
2. *What twofold harvest will the diligent farmer reap?*

²⁴ Troy Dobbs, "Series: Vital Signs 2014 - Dependent in Prayer," February 09, 2014, <https://grace.church/sermon/dependent-in-prayer/>.

²⁵ Stephen Harrison, "Grace Ministries - ReVitalize #5," June 29, 2023, <https://vimeo.com/840863708?share=copy>.

3. *What process must the farmer go through to see a good crop?*

WATCH: Neighborhood prayer-walking teaching: **PRAYER WALKING**²⁶

GATHER: worship, prayer, and study.

Look Back: *What were your big takeaways from this week’s teaching and reading?*

Did you do what you felt God called you to do?

Did you pray for, care for, and share with any pre-Christians this week?

Look Up:²⁷

As a Christ-follower, you are a child of God and a member of God’s family. You can pray directly to, have fellowship with, and spend time with God at any time. You are an ambassador for Christ (2 Cor 5:20). The Great Commission calls you to spread the Gospel and teach others to obey God’s ways (Matt 28:19-20). Every believer, every member of the body of Christ, is to contribute to the growth and building up of the Church. We are all called to share the Good News of salvation: the Gospel!

Key Principle: Every believer is called to be a disciple, and every disciple is called to be a disciple-maker.

Four biblical principles motivate us and demonstrate the urgency to share the Gospel:

1. The commandment of the Lord Jesus: *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).*
2. The reality of eternal separation from God: A rich man’s plea to share the Gospel with his family: *“I beg you therefore, Father, that you would send him to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment” (Luke 16:27–28).*
3. The personal desire to share the Gospel because my life has been transformed: When the Pharisees threatened the disciples to stop talking about Jesus, they

²⁶ GOMVMT USA, “Go2020 Guide - Prayer Walking,” June 08, 2020, https://youtu.be/VgCjz_1T27U.

²⁷This week’s Look Up lesson is taken from chapter 2, The Timothy Initiative Staff, *DMD Level 1 (US Edition)*, 23–142.

responded, *“We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard”* (Acts 4:20; 1 Corinthians 9:16–17; Acts 9:16).

4. The Holy Spirit’s prompting and directing to those ready to receive the Gospel: *“Come over to Macedonia and help us”* (Acts 16:9). The Apostle Paul’s passion for reaching the lost compelled him to go.

Group Discussion: Which of the four principles impacts or motivates you most? Break into small groups and share with each other.

Imagine there is an incurable disease, and many people are dying daily. You repeatedly hear news about the hopelessness of this disease. Now, imagine that someone developed a cure for this disease and chose not to give it to everyone. What will the affected and infected people think of this person? How would they feel if they knew healing was available but could not access the cure? Thank God we have the cure! It is Jesus!

We should not only lead people to become Christ-followers but also to become disciple-makers. By multiplying disciple-makers, you can rapidly spread the Gospel.

Unfortunately, most Christians think it is the job of professional ministers (for example, evangelists, pastors, and missionaries) to proclaim the Gospel. Most Christians consider “evangelism” to be inviting people to church and hoping the pastor will lead them to give their lives to Christ. This is not God’s design!

Every Christ-follower should regularly experience the immense joy of sharing the love of God with others! Bringing others to Jesus is the call of every disciple! Every member of the body of Christ is a minister! Consider the verse you have memorized: *“And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also”* (2 Tim 2:2).

Every Christ-follower can and should share their story of how Jesus transformed their life with their neighbors, friends, family, and network of relationships. God always honors obedience and faithfulness to His Word.

Why do Christians not share their stories about how Jesus changed their lives?

Most Christians do not share their story or the Gospel for a few reasons:

1. They are afraid. The One with all authority in heaven and on earth is with us and promises never to leave us as we make disciples in obedience to His command (Matt 28:19-20).
2. They do not sense the urgency of sharing the Gospel. Across the world, nearly one person every second is dying without knowing the possibility of eternal life in Jesus (John 4:21–38).
3. They do not see people the way Jesus sees them. Their love for Jesus has not compelled their hearts enough to love others and see people the way Jesus does (Matt 9:36; 1 Cor 9:16–17; 2 Cor 5:14). You may also feel you do not know with whom to share. Taking the time to consider who needs to hear the Gospel is a simple but essential task. In the following pages, you will have a chance to consider with whom you can share.
4. They do not know how to share the Gospel. If this describes you, begin by asking the Holy Spirit to empower you to love God, to love others, and to lead and guide your life and ministry (Rom 8:9–11; Eph 3:16, 5:18; Gal 5:16). Some of the best people to share the Gospel with are people you see regularly and have a personal relationship with already.

Group Discussion: As a group, before moving on, identify the reasons **you** do not share your story. Share those reasons with the group and ask for help overcoming those fears. In Luke 10:2, Jesus says, *“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few.”* You are invited and have the privilege of actually being the answer to somebody’s prayer. Do you realize that God is already working behind the scenes in people’s lives all around you, preparing their hearts to respond to the Gospel? Are you ready to partner with the Holy Spirit and be a part of transforming lives for eternity? It is clear that you should share the hope of the Gospel with your neighbors, friends, family, and network of relationships. This is why we want to train you in how to do this effectively.

The Power of “My Story”

A well-crafted story of life change is incredibly powerful. In our culture of tolerance and acceptance of people’s differences, your story can be an open door to start a spiritual

conversation. Sharing a story can be an easier way to share the truth without it being offensive because it is difficult to argue with someone else's experience. Information rarely inspires, but a story can connect and create a desire to hear more.

This chapter will equip you to write a clear, concise, and compelling story you can share with those to whom you want to present the Gospel.

The Basic Form of a Testimony

This basic outline can help you get started. Having a script will help you have greater confidence in sharing your story. It will help you be better prepared when the Holy Spirit gives you opportunities to share your story.

As you start sharing your story, some crucial things can help your story land on more fertile ground. Here are the critical aspects of effectively communicating your story:

Prayer: Once you hear the needs and concerns of a person, ask them if you can pray for them. You might be surprised that most people will gladly let you pray for them on the spot. Prayer can be an effective way to begin a spiritual conversation. If you are not consistently praying for others, consider starting by practicing the three steps below:

1. Pray daily for your list of people who are pre-Christians
2. Pray for boldness and awareness to share with those whom God brings on your path each day.
3. Be prepared to pray for others as you discover their needs.

Care: People won't care what you say until they first see how much you care for them. For this reason, showing genuine interest in them and what is going on in their life is essential. If you do not naturally care for and take a genuine interest in others, consider starting now. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see people through His eyes.

Share: The purpose of sharing our story with people is to point them to Jesus and to tell them of the life change we have found through a relationship with Him. We share our story so others can have the same relationship with Jesus!

Writing Your Story

Organizing your story around three distinct parts is best when you share it. This is the same format that the Apostle Paul followed in Acts 22 and 26.

1. **Before Knowing Christ:** How I lived my life before I knew Jesus. (If you came to Jesus when young, start with how Jesus found you.)
2. **Knowing Christ:** How Jesus found me (or how I recommitted or rededicated to an earlier decision).
3. **After knowing Christ:** How my life has changed because of Jesus.

It is essential to craft your story intentionally so that it will connect with a lost person and help them see how Jesus transformed your life.

Model & Practice: Sharing Your Story

Group Activity: Use the outline below to prepare your story:

Step 1: Take ten minutes to write a rough draft of your story using this as an outline.

(The goal is to be able to share your story in two to three minutes. Make sure you give equal time to before and after.)

My life before Christ: (Struggles, brokenness, pain, pursuits, dysfunctions, emptiness, etc.)

How I came to know Christ: (How Jesus found me, or what led me to trust Jesus.)

How my life has changed after coming to Christ: (How Jesus has transformed my brokenness, pain, emptiness, etc.)

After writing your rough draft, break into groups of two or three and share your stories with each other. Choose your words carefully and assume that the person you share with does not have a church background. Give feedback to help each other make it understandable to an unbeliever.

Step 2: Go back and look at the story you wrote down. *What are a few keywords that describe who you were before you met Christ?* Write these words down as bullet points on the chart below. Some examples may include addicted, no purpose, lonely, empty, anxious, hopeless, angry, disconnected, abusive/abused, etc.

How has your life in these areas been transformed since you began a relationship with

Jesus? For example, I was addicted; now, I am sober. I was empty; now I am filled. I had no purpose; now I have meaning. I was alone; now, I belong to my church family.

Connect who you were before Christ with who you are now, after Christ, to show the change that Jesus has made in your life. Add these to your story to share what Christ has done in your life.

Break into groups again with two or three people who have not heard your story. Share your story with each other and give feedback to help each other make it clear and concise. As time permits, have different people share their stories before the whole group.

- Once you finish practicing, write down the best version of your story on the next page. Sharing your story is one of the most critical tools in evangelism and is required as you go forward in this training.
- As you begin each chapter for the rest of this manual, you will be reminded to share your story. Sharing your story is so important that we recommend you select one or two people to practice sharing your story with before each training session.

My Story Final: [MY STORY TRACT](#)²⁸ Click here to prepare your print version.

My life before Christ:

(Struggles, brokenness, pain, pursuits, dysfunctions, loneliness, etc.)

How I came to know Christ: (What led me to trust Jesus.)

²⁸ Grace Church, “My Story Gospel Tract,” accessed June 2, 2023, <https://grace.church/mystory/>.

How my life has changed after coming to Christ: (How Jesus has transformed my brokenness, pain, emptiness, etc.)

Group Activity: Do you remember the story of the incurable disease and the person who found the cure? The cure to all of life’s problems is found in Jesus. Who needs the cure? List the names of all family members, relatives, neighbors, friends, colleagues, classmates, and any others God brings to your mind who have not come to Christ. If you struggle to think of 30 names, consider the categories below. If you are unsure if they are a Christ-follower, include their name.

List the first people the Holy Spirit brings to your mind.

List the people you call, text, and email most from your phone or social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, etc.).

List the people where you live (family and neighborhood).

List the people where you work or study (employment and school).

List the people where you shop (grocery store, restaurants, coffee shops).

List the people where you play (gym, sports leagues, teams, clubs, etc.).

My list I commit to praying daily and sharing my story with:

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 16. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 18. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 19. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 20. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 21. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 22. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 23. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 24. _____ |

Action Step: If someone decides to follow Jesus, ask them: “*Who are three people you*

need to share your decision with today? Who also needs to know this truth about Jesus to experience a relationship with Jesus?” Ask them to commit to sharing it with them today or set up a time to share it with them this week.

Consider these three blessings as you begin sharing your story:

1. It is a great blessing to lead someone to the Lord.
2. It is a blessing to disciple them by adding them to your small group and bringing them to church.
3. It is the greatest blessing to equip them to lead others to Jesus and help them plant disciple-making small groups.

Model & Practice: Starting a Spiritual Conversation

Role-play how to start a spiritual conversation with someone in the group. First, the trainer will use questions to begin praying for someone. Then, they will use a “defining moment” to start a spiritual conversation. When you listen to someone share their story, really listen! The person you are talking to may have defining moments you can relate to. The moments when Jesus met you in your time of trouble can be a connection point with the person hearing your story. Do you know how to begin a spiritual conversation with people? The following offers practical ways to bridge the conversational gap to share your story/God’s story.

1. Ask people how you can pray for them. Remember actually to pray for them!
Here are a few ways to ask people if you can pray for them:
 - a. *“Is there anything in your life I may be praying for?”*
 - b. After listening to them, ask, *“Can I pray for you right now?”*
 - c. *“I have been praying for you recently, and I was wondering if there is anything specific in your life I can pray for?”*
2. Use “defining moments” in your life to connect with other people who have gone through similar hardships. A defining moment was a time in your life when you experienced significant pain/hurt/loss/fear (parents divorced, significant health or medical issues, loss of a loved one, financial stress, emotional trauma, problem in school, etc.). Those defining moments likely became a moment of growth in your understanding of God and your relationship with Him. As you drew closer to

God, you probably experienced His grace, mercy, love, presence, and/or leading in new ways!

As you listen to the stories of others, your defining moments can become a bridge in the conversation to connect with the person.

Group Activity: List three defining moments from your life that you can use to connect with others during a conversation. Describe how Jesus met you in your time of need. What did you learn from that difficult time or hardship, and how is your life different as a result? When someone talks to you about a struggle you can relate to, use a defining moment from your life to bridge the gap between your story and God's.

- _____
- _____
- _____

***Important Note:** Feedback from TTI disciple makers worldwide reveals that the average person will have to share their story with 15-30 people for one person to receive Christ. Do not be discouraged as you work through your list if a large percentage do not respond immediately. **Remember the three steps: Prayer, Care, and Sharing.** Continue in a relationship with them, and you may have the chance to invite them to church or your small group or begin a DBS with them. Don't give up! Continue to pray for them and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Look Forward:

- Write "I will" statements on what God has challenged you this week. What will you do in response to God's voice today and this week?
- Share your statement with the group/trainer each week so they can hold you accountable.
- Begin each day by asking the Holy Spirit to fill you—to take control of your life.
- Take time to prepare for the Week 6 Gathering.

- Now that you have prepared your story, pray, go, listen, and share! Take bold steps of faith. Ask for God's passion for reaching the lost and the Holy Spirit to lead you to pre-Christians.
- During the week: Intentionally share your story with at least one person from the list of names you made (and any other pre-Christians you encounter*). Be ready to report back to your trainer with whom you shared your story and what happened.
- Communicate with your accountability partner your plans, including with whom, when, where, and how you will share your story this week. Hold each other accountable, and if helpful, go together to support one another. It may not always work out perfectly according to your plans, but persevere and be faithful to Christ's commands.

Important Note: You will have opportunities to share your story with people not on your list. Keep your heart open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit in your regular daily routine. As you pray, ask God to direct you to those who are hungry for Him and open to His Son, Jesus. He may allow your path to cross with persons of peace not listed above (Luke 10:5-9).

Week 6 – The Worker Generous in Giving

The big idea for this week is that God has called us to be his workers.

Generous workers are generous with their time, treasure, and talents to serve the King!

GOAL: Understand the importance of using your resources for God’s purposes. Living generously flows out of daily communion with Jesus. Every disciple-maker must create a daily routine of spending time in God’s Word, hearing His voice, and immediately obeying what He spoke.

READ: 2 Timothy 2 – Review memory verses

MEMORIZE: 2 Timothy 2:15 *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.*

READ: Chapter 6 – Delegation (*The Master Plan of Evangelism*)

WATCH: Vital Signs Sermon: **GENEROUS IN GIVING**²⁹

Sermon Questions:

1. *Why do people miss it regarding generosity?*
2. *How did they hold on to their things so loosely?*
3. *How did their lifestyle validate the message of Jesus Christ?*
4. *How does your giving of time, treasure, and talents reflect our love for Jesus?*

WATCH: Teaching – The Worker Approved by God: **ReVitalize Teaching #6**³⁰

Teaching Questions:

1. *What does Paul’s phrase “cut a straight” path mean? Why is this so important?*
2. *What are the two characteristics of God’s approved workers?*

GATHER: worship, prayer, and study.

Look Back: *What were your big takeaways from this week’s teaching and reading?*

Did you do what you felt God called you to do?

Did you pray for, care for, and share with any pre-Christians this week?

²⁹ Troy Dobbs, “Series: Vital Signs 2014 - Generous in Giving,” February 23, 2014, <https://grace.church/sermon/generous-in-giving/>.

³⁰ Stephen Harrison, “Grace Ministries - ReVitalize #6,” July 03, 2023, <https://vimeo.com/842000260?share=copy>.

Look Up:³¹

You have been challenged to spend time with God regularly through Scripture reading and prayer. When you practice those skills daily, it is often referred to as a “daily devotion.” When you make a daily devotion an ongoing habit in your life, you will find that your relationship with God can grow tremendously. We must embrace this reality: ***The God of the universe wants to spend time alone with you daily!*** A daily devotion is one of the best ways to enjoy that relationship with our Creator.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus made a habit of going away alone to spend time with God. *“Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed”* (Mark 1:35; See also: Luke 5:16; Matthew 14:23; Luke 22:39-44). ***If Jesus prayed regularly and spent time with His Father, how much more do we need it today?***

Two Simple Components of a Devotional Life

1. Talk with and listen to God through prayer.
2. Let God speak to you by reading and reflecting on the Bible and listening to the Holy Spirit.

The Purpose of Our Devotional Life

1. To worship God: To honor and enjoy Him!
2. To grow in our relationship with God: We connect with Him and can share our joys and concerns as we draw closer to Him.
3. To be led by God: To obey His will and plans for our lives as we point others towards Him.

Group Discussion: Read Psalm 42:1 and Psalm 119:147–148 together. Discuss how the

³¹ This week’s Look Up lesson is taken from Chapter 7, The Timothy Initiative Staff, *DMD Level 1 (US Edition)*, 103–112.

writer regarded God and felt about spending time with God when he wrote these psalms. Describe his attitude and honestly assess your feelings and desires for meditating on God and His Word.

Tools for Your Daily Devotions:

Bible: Read or listen to the Scriptures daily, and then write down or share what you learned from the reading with someone. Reflect on what you read throughout the day. Reading God’s Word is so powerful in our lives that it answers life’s most important questions like: *Where do I come from? Why do I exist? How should I live? What happens when I die?*

Journal/Notes: During your devotional time, write down what you sense God is saying to you and the names and needs of those you pray for. It may be beneficial to have a second pad of paper to write down things that come to your mind that interrupt your time with God. During your time of prayer, you may remember you have to mow the grass, get milk, or call a friend. Write down the things distracting you on the second pad of paper. This allows you to clear your mind from interruptions and distractions so that you can focus on God. When you finish your devotions, you can shift focus to your to-do list.

Time & Place: Choose a time and place to consistently meet God without being disturbed. Consider putting your phone on silent or (if possible) in another room. Creating an environment where you can draw near to God will make that time even more fruitful.

Plan: Read the Bible intentionally. Meditate, take notes, pray, and obey. It is helpful to use a Bible reading plan to organize your reading. You can download an app with various reading plan options at www.youversion.com.

Group Discussion: What other tools do you use that help you have a more effective daily time with God? Share how you use them and why they are helpful for your devotional time. Do you have a time and place that is already working for you? Why did you choose that place and time?

How to Meditate on God’s Word: Meditating on God’s Word is intentionally letting its

truths permeate the depths of your heart. It's not just about knowing God's truth; it's about taking the time to reflect on, process, and absorb its truths into the core of who you are. God's Word is living and active. This is why the same passage and questions will speak to our hearts differently every time. As you read God's word daily, ask yourself good questions about how these truths can transform your life, as practiced in the SOAPS method. ***Memorization leads to meditation!***

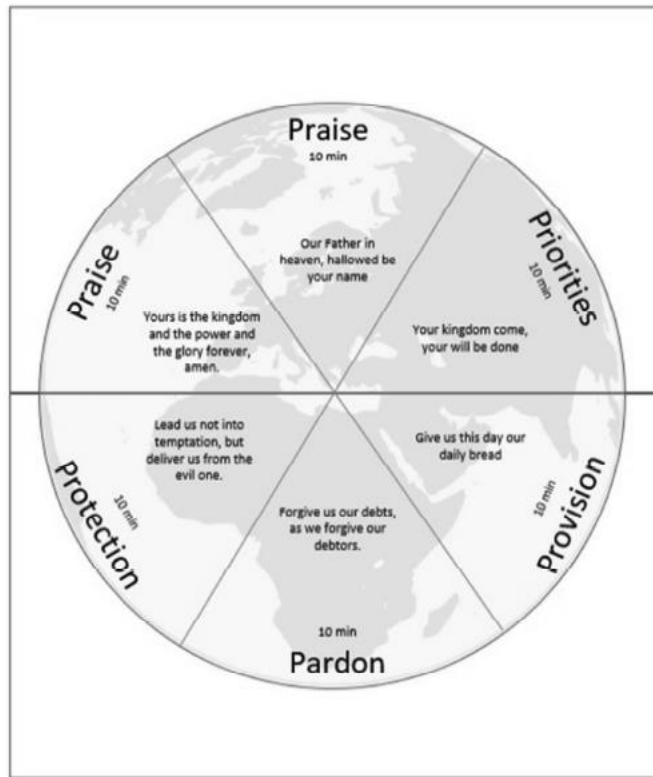
Developing Your Devotional Life: It is critical for your growth as a follower of Jesus to be faithful in keeping your daily devotions. Like any other important meeting you have during the day, put it in your calendar or set a reminder on your phone. Choose a regular time and place to which you can commit. Make your time with God a daily priority. How often you meet with God will be the most crucial decision in your walk with God. If you neglect it, you will lose the power to be used by God and fulfill the mission for which He created you. The one similarity that every great man or woman of God throughout history has in common is that they spent significant time alone with God daily.

It is your decision how often you meet with God. Setting aside daily time with God will be a catalyst to spiritual growth and the deepening of your relationship with Him. While Jesus was on this earth, He said, "*Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*" (Matthew 6:33). Of all the things you could encounter in this world, there is nothing more critical than encountering God consistently. **If you are too busy to spend time with God, you are too busy!** Your priorities need to be reorganized! One of God's desires is for you to have fellowship with Him and to know Him. Your goal should be to praise and worship God by consistently meeting Him through reading His Word and talking to Him in prayer.

Key Principle: The primary purpose of daily devotions is to know and worship God and respond in obedience to His Word and Spirit.

Group Discussion: Gather in groups of two or three and discuss how you do your daily devotions and any changes/additions that need to be made based on this week's lesson.

Also, review the prayer diagram below to incorporate into the prayer portion of your daily devotions:



Look Forward:

- Write “I will” statements on what God has challenged you this week.
- Share your statement with the group/trainer each week so they can hold you accountable.
- Are you willing to commit to a daily devotion? Identify who will encourage and hold you accountable for your commitment. Encourage and challenge those you disciple to set a specific time and place when they will have daily devotions.

Show them how and hold them accountable for it!

- Time: _____
- Place: _____

- Take time to prepare for the Week 7 Gathering.

- Ask the Holy Spirit to connect you with pre-Christians. Actively pursue identifying who this person is. When He does, share how God's love has changed your life. Be ready to report back with whom you shared and what happened.
- Write down all you are hearing from God in your journal. Respond in obedience to what you are hearing. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, continue to pray for divine appointments with pre-Christians whom you can pray for, care for, and share with.

Week 7 – The Vessel of Honor Connected in Community

The big idea for this week is that God wants us to be connected in healthy community, like the vessels in a house that the Owner can use for his purposes.

GOAL: Provide every disciple maker with a biblical perspective of their identity in Christ and learn to see themselves as God sees them. This will enable them to live in a healthy community with other believers.

READ: 2 Timothy 2 – Review memory verses

MEMORIZE: 2 Timothy 2:22 *So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.*

READ: Chapter 7 – Supervision (*The Master Plan of Evangelism*)

WATCH: Vital Signs Sermon: **CONNECTED IN COMMUNITY**³²

Sermon Questions:

1. *Acts 2:42–47. Does that describe your view of the church?*
2. *What is Christian maturity according to Paul?*
3. *Have you created your own categories for acceptance?*
4. *Why is Christian community so important?*

WATCH: Teaching – The Vessel of Honor: **ReVitalize Teaching #7**³³

Teaching Questions:

1. *What hindrances are there to the full cleansing of the vessel of your life?*
2. *Thinking about the context of the chapter where Paul is providing Timothy with metaphors describing the kind of leaders needed to pass on the pure message of the gospel, why is it so important to be a vessel of honor?*
3. *How did the flee/pursue concept strike you? What is the answer to temptation?*

GATHER: worship, prayer, and study.

Look Back: *What were your big takeaways from this week’s teaching and reading?*

³² Troy Dobbs, “Series: Vital Signs 2014 - Connected in Community,” February 02, 2014, <https://grace.church/sermon/connected-in-community/>.

³³ Stephen Harrison, “Grace Ministries - Revitalize #7” July 03, 2023, <https://vimeo.com/842014084?share=copy>.

Did you do what you felt God called you to do?

Did you pray for, care for, and share with any pre-Christians this week?

Look Up:³⁴

One of the most exciting parts about being a Christ-follower is knowing that you are completely forgiven and filled with the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:21-22). The Spirit is beginning to transform your life from the inside out. A vital element of this transformation process is understanding who you are now that you have a relationship with Christ.

Understanding your true identity in Christ will transform your heart and mind so that you can become the person God created you to be!

Take a few minutes to reflect on this short but critical question: ***Who are you?***

This question is foundational to discovering your purpose in life and indicates how effective you believe you will be at fulfilling that purpose. The answer to this question is not what you do for a living or the title you tell people when they ask about your life.

This question asks:

- How do you view yourself?
- What defining quality or characteristic informs your perspective and personality?
- What do you most deeply believe about yourself?

In one to two sentences, write down who you are.

There are many ways to answer this question. It is likely that the culture or community

³⁴ This week's Look Up lesson is taken from Chapter 4, The Timothy Initiative Staff, *DMD Level 1 (US Edition)*, 61–75.

you live in attempts to answer this question with their job title, social standing, gender, or nationality. While these areas are certainly part of our identity, they do not represent **all** of our identity.

Even though this is one of the most critical questions in life for us to answer, we often neglect it. To help simplify the question, let's narrow the focus to one crucial aspect of who you are. Which of these two words do you feel best represents who you are?

- **Saint:** *sinless, holy, perfect, righteous.*
- **Sinner:** *sinful, failure, imperfect, unrighteous.*

Where do you see yourself on this scale? Circle the option you believe best describes you as a person.

SAINT 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 SINNER

Why did you rank yourself the way you did?

Interestingly enough, most Christians tend to identify themselves as closer to the “sinner” end of the spectrum than the “saint” end. As followers of Jesus, we know that we were sinners who fell short of God’s standard of perfection and holiness (Romans 3:23). As a result of this, it is very easy to become trapped in this mindset and focus on seeing ourselves through the lens of our imperfections and brokenness.

As followers of Jesus, however, we are also aware that Jesus came to set us free from the chains of sin that once bound us in darkness (Romans 6:4-8). He came and lived a perfect (sinless) life. He willingly chose to pay the penalty for our sin by dying on the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 5:8) even though He had done nothing to deserve the suffering and humiliation of death by crucifixion.

Jesus conquered sin and death by rising from the dead (1 Peter 1:3-6). **Something radical happens when we put our faith in Him and make Him the leader (Lord) of our lives!** In Christ, we are completely forgiven, we receive eternal life, and our identity is forever transformed (1 John 5:13-14; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

This radical change means we should no longer see our primary identity as *sinners*. Through faith in Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we are considered “saints.” (holy, righteous, perfect). Our identity has been transformed. If you circled anything other than a 1 (saint) on the scale above, you might be basing your identity on your performance rather than on what Jesus did for you on the cross.

Key Principle: Your identity as a Christian is no longer based on your ability to meet God’s standards. Your new identity is based exclusively on what Jesus did on the cross (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Group Discussion: Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 and 5:21. According to these verses, who are you in Christ? Who have you become because Christ became sin for us?

As a follower of Jesus, you have been given a new identity; the old person you were is no longer who you are now. When you surrendered your life to Christ, an exchange took place. Christ took your sin upon Himself as if it were His own. He paid the death penalty you deserved (Romans 6:23; 5:8), and in exchange, He gave you His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21).

This is the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! You are the righteousness of Christ. You no longer have to try to earn God’s favor. It was given to you the moment you surrendered your life to Jesus.

The New Testament contains over a hundred verses describing your new identity in Christ. Read the verses below and make a declaration of who you are as a result of these truths:

*“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become **children of God**, to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12).*

According to this verse, I am a child of God.

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who **loved me** and

gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

According to this verse, I am loved.

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

According to this verse, I am chosen! I am royalty! I am holy! I am special to God! I am called out of darkness! I am called into His marvelous light!

When the Apostle Paul writes to the churches in Corinth, Colossae, Philippi, and Ephesus, he begins each letter by confirming their new identity in Christ. Write down the word(s) that Paul uses to describe the believers in the passages below:

1 Corinthians 1:2

I am _____ .

Colossians 1:2

I am _____ .

Philippians 1:1

I am _____ .

Ephesians 1:1

I am _____ .

In Christ, you are a saint, chosen, and considered holy because the righteousness of Jesus has been attributed to you on His behalf.

Remember the previous Key Principle: You are not expected (and are hopelessly unable) to earn Christ’s righteousness.

The Bible declares that you are already Christ’s righteousness. You have a new identity based solely on what Jesus did for you. Personalize the following truths about who you are by saying,

“I am ...”

- The righteousness of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21).

- A child of God (Romans 8:15-16).
- Forgiven (1 John 1:9).
- A saint (Philippians 1:1).
- Set free from the chains of sin (Romans 6:6-7).
- A masterpiece created on purpose (Ephesians 2:10).
- A joint heir of the Kingdom of God (Romans 8:16-17; Matthew 25:34).
- A royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:8-10).
- Chosen (John 15:19).
- Accepted (Ephesians 1:6-7).
- A temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19–20).
- A vital part of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12–14).
- Valued and loved (Romans 5:8).
- A light to the world (Matthew 5:12-14).
- Given eternal life (John 10:28).

You now have the power of the Holy Spirit in you to begin helping you to be the person God created you to be. You can now choose to live a transformed life empowered by the Spirit. What a privilege!

Key Principle: The more you rely on the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the more your behavior will begin to reflect your true identity.

The Journey and Struggles of a “Saint”

Even if you know who you are and that the Holy Spirit has given you the power to live differently, you will probably still choose sin over God’s glory at different points in your walk with Christ. Total transformation is a process, and it takes time to turn from your old ways of living and pursue Christ.

In this process of transformation, how should you respond when you sin? Recognize what caused you to sin: It’s your old sin nature (old habit). It enticed you and led you to believe the lie that your sin would satisfy. At the same time, you must acknowledge the

sin you continue to struggle against. This sin can potentially ruin your life and the lives of those around you. Sin separates you from God and holds you back from who God designed you to be. Don't stay in it. Here is a simple plan of how to respond when you sin:

1. **Responsibility** – Take responsibility for your sin; don't make excuses or try to hide it (Psalm 32:5).
2. **Repent** – Ask God to forgive you. Then, turn away from your sin (1 John 1:9).
3. **Reflect** – Consider what triggered you to sin and return to your old living pattern (Galatians 5:16-21).
4. **Rise Up** – Accept God's love and forgiveness (don't stay stuck in your sin). Get up with a greater passion, knowing that God has empowered you to live in freedom from sin (Romans 6:4).
5. **Radical living** – Immediately start living out who you are in Christ! (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Your Identity is Connected to Your Purpose

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10)

You are God's masterpiece. Do you believe that? God made you on purpose, for a purpose. You are not an accident. He put you in your town, city, or community for a reason. He set you in this period of history with the skills, talents, and platforms to do great things for His Kingdom. God is specifically designing opportunities for you to be a part of His Kingdom and mission. He is working behind the scenes, preparing people and opportunities for you to make an impact. If we are not living intentionally or are not sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, we will miss those opportunities. This is why we must live daily tuned to the Holy Spirit's voice, ready to obey without hesitation.

Group Discussion: Read Matthew 5:14-16. Who does this passage say you are? What do you think Jesus meant when He said you are the *“light of the world”*? How does this passage connect who you are with what you do?

You are the light of the world: Your attitude, actions, and the way you love and treat others should be so **radically different** from the world around you will stand out.

God's grace has transformed you: This is not just for yourself but for the benefit of everyone you encounter. You are designed to display your light to the world; do not hide it from the people Jesus wants to save!

The disciples were 12 ordinary men whose lives and identities were totally transformed by Jesus. They counted the cost of following Jesus and chose to live radically different lives. Because of their willingness to do whatever God called them to do, no matter the cost, God used them to transform the known world in their lifetime.

Group Discussion: Read Luke 14:28–33. What do these verses reveal about what it means to be a disciple? What is the cost of being a true disciple?

“A true disciple is called to immediate, radical, and costly obedience.”

- Curtis Sergeant

What stirs in your heart as you read the quote about what a true disciple is?

Are you willing to commit to hearing God's voice and immediately obeying what He is asking you to do?

Take a minute to pray silently. *What do you believe God is calling you to do?* Share with the group what God put on your heart and how you will immediately implement it. Even though immediate obedience requires sacrifice and self-denial, it is the most exciting and fulfilling way to live. You were created for a purpose, placed in your city for this moment in history. It is impossible to imagine the unbelievable things God will invite you and empower you to do next! Jesus said, *“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).*

Group Activity: Divide into groups. Assign one verse to each group and have someone explain how we can be sure of our salvation in their own words.

- 1 John 5:11-13
- John 5:24

- John 10:29
- John 17:1-3
- Jude 1:24
- Romans 8:16
- Romans 8:38-39

What does Jesus promise to those who follow Him? In John 10:28, Jesus promises eternal life to those who follow Him: *“And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.”*

Key Principle: If you have trusted Jesus to be your Savior and Lord, you have received eternal life. You have a new identity and are now a Kingdom citizen! Your service to the King starts now (John 6:40).

Our Assurance of Eternal Life

1 John 1:9 tells us, *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* This means Jesus forgave all our sins, regardless of when they were committed. If you are a follower of Jesus and you sin, you still have your salvation!

Your response:

- Has Jesus died for you? _____ Yes _____ No
- Have you placed your trust in Him to forgive your sins? _____ Yes _____ No
- Do you know you have received eternal life? _____ Yes _____ No

Possible Conclusions (circle/highlight one):

- I have become a follower of Christ.
- I haven't become a follower of Christ.
- I still don't know.

Group Discussion: Now that you understand your identity is founded in Christ, how

should you respond to the following issues?

- When I am tempted, I...
- When I fail, I...
- When I am afraid, I...
- When I face hardships, I...

Your trainer will now give personal examples of how they have overcome temptations, failures, fears, and hardships because of understanding their new identity in Christ.

Look Forward:

- Write “I will” statements on what God has challenged you this week.
- Take time to prepare for the Week 8 Gathering.
- Memorize two verses from this chapter that speak about your new identity in Christ.
- Review the passages in this chapter. Write out key statements of who you are and reflect on how they should affect your daily living.
- Begin living out your new identity:
 - Believe what God’s Word says about you.
 - Learn to hear God speaking to your heart and obey His voice.
 - Look for opportunities to be a light.
 - Live each moment asking yourself: “How can I honor God most at this moment? What is He calling me to do?”
- Continue to share your story and God’s story with two to three people this week. We have been entrusted with great news, and it is God’s will for us to share it. Be ready to share what happens!
- Write down all you are hearing from God in your journal. Respond in obedience to what you are hearing. Under the Holy Spirit’s guidance, list potential pre-Christians you can pray for, care for, and share with.

Week 8 – The Servant Authentic in Worship

The big idea for this week is that God is our Father; we are his sons and daughters who serve him because we know and love him. Our worship (service) is authentic. We teach others about Jesus because we love him so much!

GOAL: Knowing and loving God and making disciples for his glory.

READ: 2 Timothy 2 – review memory verses

MEMORIZE: 2 Timothy 2:24–25 *And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, ²⁵ correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth.*

READ: Chapter 8 – Reproduction (*The Master Plan of Evangelism*)

WATCH: Vital Signs Sermon: **ACTIVE IN DISCIPLESHIP**³⁵

Sermon Questions:

1. *What does it mean to be a disciple?*
2. *What does it mean to be active in disciple-making?*
3. *What are the six points made about disciples in this passage?*
4. *What exactly is God’s agenda?*
5. *“Thus, true discipleship is not just about “getting fed” - it is always about persuading others with the gospel of Jesus Christ!” How much persuading are you doing?*
6. *Do you have a glocal vision (global/local)?*

WATCH: Teaching – The Servant of the Lord: **Week #8 Teaching**³⁶

Teaching Questions:

1. *How should we try to persuade those who oppose the gospel?*
2. *Why is combining Christian teaching with Christian character so important?*
3. *Why is it so essential for us to be making disciples who will make disciples?*

³⁵ Troy Dobbs, “Series: Vital Signs 2014 - Active in Discipleship,” March 16, 2014, <https://grace.church/sermon/active-in-discipleship/>.

³⁶ Stephen Harrison, “Grace Ministries - ReVitalize #8,” July 03, 2023, <https://vimeo.com/842030094?share=copy>.

WATCH: Disciples Who Multiply³⁷

WATCH: This is Discipleship. To Love, Liberate, Lead & Launch.³⁸

GATHER: worship, prayer, and study.

Look Back: *What were your big takeaways from this week's teaching and reading?*

Did you do what you felt God called you to do?

Did you pray for, care for, and share with any pre-Christians this week?

Look Up:

This week, we will focus on studying the call in Pastor Troy's sermon to make disciples and study the characteristics of the servant of the Lord who does just that. It is amazing how Paul drills down into Jesus's call to "Go and make disciples." In this second chapter of Timothy, Paul describes how the godly leader should multiply by teaching faithful people to obey all that Jesus taught and teach others to do the same so that multiplication will occur. Disciples will be made, the church will grow, and people everywhere will know Jesus!

Paul gives a gospel compress in verses 8-13, and then this is the final metaphor he uses to describe the faithful teachers who will train others to teach. Interestingly, he reiterates that teaching is a priority as he wraps up this section. It is also important to remember that Paul began urging Timothy to be strengthened by grace—recognizing that the Holy Spirit gives faithful men and women the ability to teach (2 Tim 2:1)!

So, we will use the SOAPS method to study Matthew 28:16–20 and 2 Timothy 2:24–26.

Scripture: Matthew 28:16–20 – Read or listen to it at least twice. Write down verses or phrases that stand out to you that you want to remember. Write down things you might want to understand better or have questions about.

³⁷ Curtis Sergeant, "03 Every Disciple a Multiplier," November 23, 2015, <https://youtu.be/-pu9ftVF4wU>.

³⁸ RELENTLESS MOVEMENT, "This is Discipleship. To Love, Liberate, Lead & Launch," April 10, 2017, <https://youtu.be/PI4U65MDr1I>.

obedience to God’s Word and His Spirit.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:24–26 – read or listen to it at least twice. Write down verses or phrases that stand out to you that you want to remember. Write down things you might want to understand better or have questions about.

Observation: As you read and re-read the passage, ask questions about the passage, like the ones listed in the following bullet points. Write down your thoughts, ideas, or any truths you are processing:

- What do you like about this passage?
- Did anything concern you? Why?
- What does it teach us about God?
- What does it teach us about people?
- Is there a **Sin** to avoid?
- Is there a **Promise** to claim?
- Is there an **Example** to follow?
- Is there a **Command** to obey?

Application: As you read Scripture, think about what it means to obey these commands or concepts in your life. Ask yourself, *“How do I respond today in light of what I have just read? What would I have to do? Is there an area of my life in which I need to do things differently?”* Write your thoughts and specific applications on what you must do in obedience to God’s Word and His Spirit.

Pray: Stop and think about what you have just read and sensed from these passages. Take a few minutes and ask God’s Spirit to speak to you about any specific things you need to do in light of this passage. Write down anything you feel you need to do. Then, write a short prayer that tells God what you’ve read in His Word, what you understand about obeying His commands, and what you plan to put into practice based on what you’ve learned. Pray the prayer you wrote to God and ask for help to live for Him today.

Share: Prayerfully reflect on who needs to hear the truths God has revealed to you. Write down their name, pray for them, and consider a time you could intentionally share what you’re learning with them.

Look Forward:

- Write “I will” statements on what God has challenged you this week.
- Continue to begin each day by asking the Holy Spirit to fill you—to take control of your life.
- Take time to think about how you will lead your small group differently
- Continue to ask the Holy Spirit to connect you with pre-Christians. Make it your aim to constantly be ready to pray with people, to care for them, and ultimately to

get the honor of sharing about Jesus with them.

- In your journal, write down what you have heard from God during this training course. Respond in obedience to what you are hearing.

Conclusion

The training is over! Now, you get to put into practice all that you have learned. Knowledge is only helpful to people if it is acted upon. Jesus said the difference between the sheep and the goats was what they did and didn't do. It was a matter of obedience.¹ So, I encourage you to obey the call of our Commander, Jesus Christ, to make disciples locally and globally. We must begin by living a Spirit-filled prayer-care-share lifestyle, which will connect us to pre-Christians. We can invite them into a relationship and begin to teach them to obey all that Jesus commanded—so teaching is a significant part of what Jesus expected us to do. We make disciples so that the Name of Jesus would be known, loved, and worshipped in all languages, all peoples, and all nations because he deserves the worship of everyone everywhere!

Thank you so much for investing time in this training endeavor. May we keep passing on what we have learned, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to faithful men and women who will teach others the pure gospel of Jesus Christ! Jesus is worthy!

I will email you a survey and a few questions to assess how the training has impacted you. Thank you so much!

¹ Matt 25:31–46

APPENDIX 5

REVITALIZE TEACHING VIDEO SCRIPTS

The following are teaching video scripts prepared and utilized to produce weekly video training based on Paul's disciple-making paradigm, message, and metaphors found in 2 Timothy 2.

REVITALIZE TEACHING SCRIPTS

Script #1 – Introduction (15 mins)

Here at Grace Church, we all know our mission statement: “We exist to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ across the street and around the world.”¹ So, the focus of all our activity at Grace Church is to glorify God, and the Great Commission (Matt 28:19–20) shows us how to glorify God by making disciples locally and globally. For this reason, Grace Church seeks to equip believers to be disciple-makers across the street and around the world for the glory of God.

This training you are about to begin is designed to assist you in making disciples of Jesus Christ across the street in our neighborhoods and workplaces through developing leaders who will multiply—specifically small group leaders. Jesus gave us clear instructions to make disciples as we go about our daily lives. It is a definite across-the-street and around-the-world commission! Jesus wants to fill our hearts and lives so that making disciples becomes a priority as we seek to glorify God because we love him so much.

God desires that his people will be so filled with his presence that every person, in every place, would experience the good news of Jesus and be transformed by it in the course of their daily lives. God accomplishes this mission by using ordinary folks who love him so much that they are saturated by the gospel and obey his call to make disciples. God is not looking for highly gifted or talented people but ordinary Christians who will say, “Yes!” This happens in the context of everyday life with its challenges and changes. God wants to show up in the fabric of our lives and impact our neighborhoods, workplaces, and families for his glory and our good!

The church of Jesus Christ is God’s plan to fulfill the commission he gave to

¹ Grace Church, “Who We Are,” accessed April 21, 2023, <https://grace.church/who-we-are/our-beliefs/>.

us, and we gather weekly in a building that facilitates teaching, fellowship, training, and equipping. So, the church is not a building but God's redeemed people whom he longs to use to impact the world around them with his Good News! The people of God are the church. Church is not a weekly event we attend. We have been sent out daily to love Jesus and make him known all around us by being the church on mission. Jesus wants everyone everywhere to know him and have the opportunity to love and be loved the way they were designed. He wants everyone to know what it means to be forgiven and live for God's glory! This means that as fully devoted Christ-followers, "we see our time, our money, and our unique abilities as means to serve both the people who are the church and those in our cities who don't know the great news of God's love for them in Jesus Christ. All of life counts, and everyone matters."²

Another implication of the church being God's people and not a building is that God's work is not done mainly by paid professionals on a Sunday morning. Members of the church are not solely volunteers who run programs and provide financial support, but each member is a critical part of God's mission. God wants to activate every believer to live on mission right where he has placed them—in their families, neighborhoods, and workplaces. Authors Vanderstelt and Connelly summarize this concept: "God loves to use normal people in everyday life. He wants everyone involved."³

Curriculum Overview

The purpose of this training is to develop small group leaders at Grace Church with the goal of seeing small groups multiply and impact the suburban neighborhoods in which they are located.

² Jeff Vanderstelt & Ben Connelly, *Saturate Field Guide*, p. 18.

³ Jeff Vanderstelt & Ben Connelly, *Saturate Field Guide*, p. 19.

The theological basis of the training is 2 Timothy 2. Paul's *paradigm* of multiplication, the pure *message* of the gospel, and the *metaphors* that describe the characteristics of leaders that multiply provide the training's content foundation. In addition, Jesus's four-fold strategy of modeling, teaching, assignments, and supervision will be utilized to deliver the content and concepts. Last, Pastor Troy Dobbs preached a sermon series entitled *The Seven Vital Signs of Discipleship*⁴ that are incorporated into the training as weekly assignments and provides continuity with GC's established discipleship process.

GC's mission statement affirms our commitment to make disciples of Jesus Christ. The training focuses on making disciples who multiply. The training aims to equip small group leaders with a theological underpinning for disciple-making and practical strategies to reach their neighborhood for Christ, develop a multiplication mindset, live a life worth reproducing, and maintain a firm commitment to God's mission of making disciples. The training curriculum targets the leader's head—knowing what they are called to, heart—developing a heart to know and love God and receive his heart for the lost and broken, and hands—being willing to serve those around them creatively to share the love of Christ with non-Christians to lead them to Christ.

Training Format and Scheduling

Each week will consist of the following components:

Gathering: There will be eight weekly meetings, including worship, prayer, discussion, training, and review (approx. 90 mins). The Discovery Bible Study (DBS) method will study the passages relevant to the weekly theme.⁵ The leader will host two

⁴ Troy Dobbs, "Weekly Messages: Vital Signs," last modified January 23, 2022, <https://grace.church/messages/series/vital-signs/>.

⁵ Discovery Bible Study – This is a simple reproducible method of studying the Bible. It includes basic observation, interpretation, and always concludes with application by asking in what area is God requiring obedience. It is helpful to learn this method to be able to start DBS groups with non-

potluck meals, one to commence the training and a celebration once training is complete. These meals will encourage relationships and model community and hospitality.

Each gathering will begin with prayer and worship. The prayer time will begin with worship in Scripture and song. There will be a time of confession (admit) and then a time to pray for specific needs (request). Then, the group will **look back**, discussing the big ideas from the week's reading and teachings and holding each other accountable to the previous week's action plan. Next, the group will **look up** being equipped and looking into God's word. Last, there will be a time to **look ahead** and ask, "*What do I sense God is asking me to do in response to his word this week?*"

Equipping: each week, participants will be expected to complete the following:

5. Watch one of Pastor Troy's Vital Signs sermons (30 to 40 mins).
6. Review the teaching video (15 to 20 mins).
7. Read a chapter of *The Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert E. Coleman.
8. Memorize assigned Scripture verses.

Going: There will be two group assignments (evangelism, community work, etc.), and during the training, participants will be equipped and expected to share their faith and pray for people they encounter in their ordinary course of life.

Supervision: Each week, there will be one-to-one contact and a group texting thread for encouragement and prayer requests. Participants will be encouraged to leave each gathering with an action step they feel the Lord is calling them to complete. Participants will have access to the leader for prayer needs and any questions or concerns that may arise.

Weekly Rhythm: The training is intended to teach disciple-making principles

Christians who are interested in learning more about Jesus. For more information: World Missions & Evangelism, "Resources," accessed May 1, 2023. <https://worldmissionsevangelism.com/resources/>.

and practical ways of being a disciple-maker. Each week there will be a sermon to watch and a short teaching on the weekly focus. There will also be Bible memorization and reading of a chapter from *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. In addition, there will be an opportunity to interact with others on the training course, discussing, debating, and collaborating to bring the Good News to non-Christians while enjoying fellowship and experiencing iron sharpening iron in community with others from Grace Church who have the same heart to make disciples.

This training packet includes detailed information about each week's activities with sermon and teaching video links, discussion questions, memory verses, and Bible study outlines.

Script #2 - Week 1 – The Priority of Disciple-Making

The big idea for this week is that God wants us to make disciples. This mindset of reproduction will impact the way we lead our small groups and even the way we live! Paul gave us a paradigm for how to do this in 2 Timothy 2:1–2. So we will be memorizing those verses: *You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.*

Introduction: Second Timothy 2 reveals three essential elements in developing leaders who will make disciples. The three parts are

1. The **PARADIGM** of multiplication,
2. The **MESSAGE** of the gospel,
3. and the six **METAPHORS** that describe the characteristics of leaders who make and multiply disciples.

Paul's charge to his protégé, Timothy, to "*entrust [the gospel] to faithful men who will be able to teach others also*" (2 Tim 2:2) is the foundation of his leadership development strategy – and this training course!

So, let's look at the PARADIGM Paul instructed Timothy to use in our first session.

The Paradigm: Teaching Leaders to Teach Others

In Second Timothy 2:1–2, Paul describes his paradigm for multiplying leaders and passing the gospel to successive generations. Paul charged Timothy to carefully pass on what he had learned by delegating teaching to those he had taught. Paul's paradigm of passing on the gospel by delegation to subsequent generations of leaders has four components.

1. Paul emphasized the necessity of Holy Spirit empowerment.
2. Paul challenged Timothy to teach only the pure gospel.
3. The gospel was to be entrusted to faithful men.
4. Paul charged Timothy to teach people who are gifted to teach others.

So, let's look at **PART ONE** of Paul's paradigm for reproducing leaders is the necessity of empowerment by grace. Paul exhorted Timothy saying, "You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2:1).

The word "**you**" is an emphatic personal address to Timothy. Paul contrasts those in Asia who have turned away from Paul (1:15) and compares Timothy with Paul and Onesiphorus (1:16–18). "You then" can be translated "therefore" – in light of what was written previously – Chapter 1. In contrast to false teachers and spiritual attacks, ***Paul reaffirms his deep love for Timothy by calling him "my child."***

Paul assured Timothy of his love despite his weakness and fear (1:6) and sought to encourage him by this to be receptive to his message. In this atmosphere of public opposition (1:16–18) and personal weakness (1:6–8), Paul is lovingly encouraging Timothy of the need to be strengthened by grace. Timothy would need a power much greater than his own to be effective.

Here, Paul reiterates his previous theme of Holy Spirit power (1:6–7, 14) as he

expresses his love for Timothy and commands him to be “strengthened by grace.” The theologian Towner highlights the essential role of the Holy Spirit in strengthening Timothy in his discipling of believers:

In 1:7–8, Paul introduced the theme by connecting power to the Holy Spirit (*dynameos*) and then to God (*dynamis*). Here the command ‘be strong’ in the verbal form (*endynamou*) continues the wordplay as it connects this power to ‘grace’ and ‘Christ Jesus.’ The verb is probably to be taken as passive, which implies strengthening through divine agency. It is also in the present tense, which, in view of the aorist tense of the two verbs that follow, marks the action it alludes to and suggests that responding to this command concerning empowerment will somehow be the ongoing key to carrying out the rest.⁶

Paul is telling Timothy that the source of strengthening power he will need to fulfill the commandment to teach others is the Holy Spirit, and this “ongoing strengthening” is the key to everything else Timothy would accomplish.

The command to be strengthened in grace echoes Paul’s previous instruction to Timothy to “fan into flame the gift of God” (1:6–8), “to which is linked the promise of power from the Holy Spirit.”⁷ *In both passages, Paul instructs Timothy that spiritual power is an essential prerequisite to any teaching and disciple-making he may undertake.* We can summarize Paul’s command to Timothy as this:

“Yield yourself to divine empowerment,” when he was teaching others to make disciples.

Next to **PART TWO** of Paul’s paradigm is for Timothy to pass on only the pure gospel he had learned from Paul. All that Timothy had received from Paul was the “pattern for Timothy’s teaching as well as the substance of what had been entrusted to him.”⁸ In the first chapter, **Paul uses an identical phrase, “Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me” (1:13)**, thus identifying what Timothy was

⁶ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 488.

⁷ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 488.

⁸ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 489.

to pass on to others.

Timothy heard Paul's pure gospel message "in the presence of many witnesses" (2:2), and here Paul is speaking in a broader sense than just at Timothy's ordination (see Chapter 1). He argues that the many witnesses had been taught Paul's gospel, and they could "testify to the soundness of those words and to the fact that those words are the truth of God that should be passed on." "Many" refers to the many disciples who had heard Paul preach the gospel, meaning that Paul had not taught Timothy a hidden or secret gospel.⁹ Paul had been effective in teaching others.

In summary, the message that Paul preached was not his invention. Paul charged Timothy to teach the gospel he received from Jesus Christ himself. This gospel message was not a secret, and Paul clarified the epitome of his gospel later in this passage (2:8–13)—which we will get to next week! *It was critical to Paul that Timothy taught only what he heard and learned from Paul in his disciple-making efforts so that the reproduction of the message would be kept pure in the face of opposition through false teachers.* This serves as a great reminder to us! We must preach only the pure gospel!

So, this brings us to **PART THREE** of Paul's paradigm. Timothy must take the deposit of truth he learned from Paul and entrust the message to faithful men. The Towner summarizes:

The command itself, 'entrust (*parathou*) [these things] to reliable people, which comes in the next phrase, picks up and echoes the language of 'deposit' and 'guarantor' (*paratheke*) introduced in 1:12–14 and earlier in 1 Tim 1:18; 6:20 to describe the succession of Paul's ministry to his follower.¹⁰

Towner has highlighted important distinctions. The faithful teachers Timothy taught must be reliable and not distort the message they learned from Timothy. Paul required

⁹ Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 390.

¹⁰ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 489.

qualified, faithful teachers to pass on the gospel message to subsequent generations.¹¹

Paul deposited the gospel in Timothy and believed he would entrust it to others who would pass it on (1 Tim 1:14; 2 Tim 2:2).

As he tells him to be faithful, Paul's charge to Timothy (2:2) is used here not to do with believing, but as **'trustworthy' or 'dependable'** ones to whom one can entrust such vital truths." It is important to note that here faithful includes three parts:

1. dependability in relation to apostolic teaching (in contrast to that of the heretics),
2. loyalty to Christ and Paul (in comparison to those who abandoned him), and
3. commitment to fulfill what one has promised to do.

Paul required Timothy to find men faithful to the gospel's message, trustworthy, and dependable to teach only what they learned – how does this apply to us?

PART FOUR of Paul's paradigm for developing leaders is for Timothy to make sure those entrusted with the message of the gospel would also teach. Paul's goal is that the kingdom Jesus inaugurated would grow through effective generational instruction, so the ability to teach is an essential qualification. Paul is giving Timothy the strategy for effective disciple replication by telling him to teach those who would teach others.

So, the ability to teach is the "key to the success of the process envisioned."

The activity Paul is speaking about is the authoritative teaching of the faith (2:2). Now, this can seem daunting. Still, it is essential to remember that teaching is a gift from God in which the Holy Spirit's gifting [and enabling] is a practical necessity (Rom 12:7).

From this, we understand that teaching competency is not solely based on natural gifting.

¹¹ In a helpful clarification, Mounce notes: "άνθρωπος, 'man,' is often used in a generic sense of 'humankind,' and there is no question that women played a vital role in Jesus' ministry and the spread of the gospel. But in light of the Ephesian problem and the limitation that Paul places on the Ephesian women (1 Tim 2:9–15) and widows (1 Tim 5:3–16), it seems unlikely that Paul is telling Timothy to entrust the gospel to men and women alike. It is more likely that Paul is thinking of male elders, who were repeatedly required to be able to teach (1 Tim 3:2; 5:17; cf. the use of άνθρωπος in, e.g., 1 Cor 7:1; Eph 5:31; 2 Tim 3:8; BAGD, 68 [2ba]) and who had to be able "to exhort with healthy doctrine and to rebuke those who oppose [it]" (Titus 1:9). However, there is nothing in the passage, or elsewhere, that limits teaching to elders alone" Mounce does not limit Paul's charge to mean that men only should teachers but recognizes that eldership is a male office to whom the gospel has been entrusted" (Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 506).

Still, the giftedness to teach is a *grace gift of the Holy Spirit*. The ‘others,’ could be other men but *more likely refers to other people*, i.e., instruction to the church as a whole” who would then go on and teach others (2:2).

In summary, Paul’s fourfold paradigm was simple and reproducible. Timothy, empowered by the Holy Spirit, was to take the gospel he had received from Paul and teach it to people who could then teach. The gospel would advance through reliable people teaching others to obey the gospel. If Timothy and subsequent generations of leaders follow Paul’s instructions, the gospel’s impact would grow exponentially. Timothy’s obedience provides a pattern for the continuation of the ministry and its expansion.

READ: Chapter 1 – Selection (*The Master Plan of Evangelism*)

MEMORIZE: 2 Timothy 2:1–2 *You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.*

Script #3 - Week 2 – The Message of the Gospel

The big idea for this week is that God has given us the message we should be sharing. Paul gave Timothy the message that he should teach others, who would then go and teach others, and so God's movement would multiply, and so, the Scripture we will be studying is 2 Timothy 2:8-13.

GOAL: Understanding the Gospel.

TEACHING:

Let's read 2 Timothy 2:8–13.

8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, 9 for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! 10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. 11 The saying is trustworthy, for:

If we have died with him, we will also live with him;

12 if we endure, we will also reign with him;

if we deny him, he also will deny us;

13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.

Here, Paul gives Timothy a succinct summary of his gospel and then includes a hymn reinforcing the truth of the gospel (2 Tim 2:8–13). Paul emphasized the suffering that the gospel necessitates in the lives of those who faithfully obey the charge to teach the true gospel to those who will teach others. Paul broke this gospel message interlude into three parts:

1. First, he provided a succinct gospel summary (v. 8).
2. Second, he described the gospel's power (vv. 9–10) and
3. concluded with a trustworthy saying (v 11–13) for Timothy to remember.

So, the first part is Paul’s short gospel summary, and Paul calls Timothy to “remember Jesus Christ.” “Remember” is a present imperative, meaning to “keep in mind” and “think about,”

Why does Paul want Timothy to remember Jesus Christ? Theologian John Stott:

Essentially because he is the gospel, the heart of the good deposit. Indeed, Paul expresses it; he is the heart of ‘my gospel,’ the gospel ‘not invented by me but entrusted to me,’ like ‘my deposit’ (1:12). So then, if Timothy is to guard the deposit and to hand it on faithfully to others, he must ‘remember Jesus Christ. . .as preached in my gospel’.¹²

Paul wants Timothy to remember two foundational truths about his gospel:

- a. Jesus Christ has “risen from the dead,” and
- b. he is the “offspring of David.”¹³

This is the only place in 2 Timothy where Jesus Christ appears in this order. Everywhere else in Second Timothy, Paul writes, “Christ Jesus.” Theologian Hughes observes that the two names correspond to the two truths. “‘Jesus’ (his human name given him at birth) matches ‘risen from the dead.’ ‘Christ’ (which means ‘Messiah’) matches ‘descended from David.’”¹⁴ Putting Jesus first in order of name here emphasizes Jesus’s humanity and that he has risen from the dead, proving his deity.

These two truths (*Jesus Christ + raised from the dead*) encapsulate the gospel. Stott notes, “The birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus are all implicit.”¹⁵ Jesus’s humanity is shown as a descendant of David, and his divinity is demonstrated by the words “risen from the dead.” The resurrection reveals the gospel’s power because Jesus died to pay our debt of sin “and was declared the Son of God in power according to

¹²John R. W. Stott. *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy*. The Bible Speaks Today. (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 51.

¹³ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 511.

¹⁴ Hughes and Chapell, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 217.

¹⁵ Stott, *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy*, 51.

the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 1:4). Jesus being a descendant of David “indicates that he has established his kingdom as great David’s greater Son (Lk 1:32, 33).”¹⁶ Stott summarizes, “Taken together, the two phrases seem to allude to his double role as Savior and King.”¹⁷ John echoed this dual theme when he greeted the churches, “from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead (Savior), and the ruler of kings on earth (King)” (Rev 1:5). **Jesus’s double role as Savior and King is the epitome of the gospel.** Mounce recognizes Paul’s succinct gospel summary and states that “the bulk of the gospel story deals with Jesus’ life, including his Davidic descent.”¹⁸

Second, Paul describes the gospel’s power. Although Paul is suffering as a criminal for the gospel’s sake (9–10), he encourages Timothy to suffer well and endure hardship.¹⁹ Paul emphasizes that he is “bound with chains as a criminal,” yet he contrasts his chains with the unchained power of God’s Word. Towner calls Paul’s writing “clever wordplay” and concludes that Paul looked beyond his prison cell and the most powerful empire on earth to God’s ultimate power. Paul had previously written that “extreme human weakness is the vehicle for displaying God’s power” (2 Cor 12:9). **He may have been physically chained,²⁰ but it is impossible to chain the Word of God.²¹**

Paul’s gospel epitome explains why Paul is willing to endure suffering joyfully as a “serious criminal for the sake of the gospel.”²² He is convinced that nothing can stop

¹⁶ Stott, 51.

¹⁷ Stott, 51.

¹⁸ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 512.

¹⁹ Mounce, 513. Mounce makes a helpful contrast by recognizing that “ἀλλα, but, has its full adversative force, setting the freedom of the gospel against Paul’s imprisonment.”

²⁰ Mounce, 513.

²¹ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 503.

²² Mounce, 513.

the unchained word of God and the gospel from advancing. Also, Paul is willing to suffer so that God's people may "obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus" and enjoy "eternal glory" (v. 10).²³ Paul could endure because his focus was not on the "light momentary affliction" he was experiencing. He looked at the unseen age to come and believed God was "preparing an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (2 Cor 4:17–18).

Paul presented "a pattern of sacrificial ministry" to Timothy modeled after Jesus Christ's ministry.²⁴ Paul wanted Timothy and successive disciple-making generations of Christians to understand that "suffering is a normative part of gospel ministry."²⁵ Towner argues these examples are a "mysterious paradox that makes human weakness the divine crucible from which ministry done in God's power may emerge. This fact alone makes enduring the hardest of afflictions worthwhile, and the completion of the elect's salvation is an urgent motive that Timothy himself must embrace."²⁶

The third part of this section: Here, Paul concluded his gospel summary with a hymn encapsulating the Christian life, calling it a "trustworthy saying" (v. 11). Mounce recognizes it as a hymn that "discusses conversion and how it works itself out in different lives."²⁷ The passage focuses on Paul's message for Timothy (vv. 8–13). Paul began by

²³ Gordon D Fee and W. Ward Gasque. *1 And 2 Timothy, Titus*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson, 1988), 247. Fee claims the term "elect" means, "'God's chosen people' would be an excellent translation of *tous eklektous* (the elect). Far too much ink has been spilled on the theological implications of this term, whether it refers to the 'elect' who are already saved or to the "elect" but not yet saved. Such theologizing quite misses Paul's point. Here again, as in Titus 1:1, 2:14, and many other places, Paul has appropriated or language for God's people and applied it to Christian believers. Furthermore, as in verse 8 above, the emphasis here falls on their continuity with the past, not their theological status." Interestingly, Towner concurs with Fee's conclusion in regards to this verse. See Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 505 (note #31). Mounce concurs, "In this case *εκλεκτός*, 'elect,' may refer to the elect who have not yet been saved, *διὰ* could also mean that Paul is thinking of the mystical idea of filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ in his (i.e., Paul's) body (Col 1:24). In this case *εκλεκτός*, 'elect,' refers to all Christians and shows Paul's willingness to apply OT terms for Israel to the church (Titus 1:1; cf. Rom 8:33; 16:13; Col 3:12)." Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 513.

²⁴ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 507.

²⁵ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 507.

²⁶ Towner, 507.

²⁷ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 515.

telling Timothy to “Remember Jesus Christ” (2:8). Here, at the end of the section, Paul uses these four “theological affirmations” to reinforce and remind future disciples that they are obligated to participate in suffering for the gospel’s sake.²⁸

READ THESE VERSES:

If we have died with him, we will also live with him;

12 if we endure, we will also reign with him;

if we deny him, he also will deny us;

13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.

Stott summarizes that these verses contain “two pairs of epigrams (pithy sayings), general axioms of Christian life and experience. The first pair relates to those who remain true and endure; the second pair to those who become false and faithless.”²⁹ Each epigram begins with an “if” that describes a Christian’s action and is followed by a corresponding consequence. Fee ascribes the poem or hymn to Paul and argues that the “language and thought as a whole is thoroughly Pauline – to the detail.”³⁰

The first epigram declares, “If we have died with him, we will also live with him” (11b). This first line is almost identical to Romans 6:8: “Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.” **This stanza relates to the believer’s conversion – dying to self and rising to new life in Christ Jesus.**³¹ The stanza is present tense, so the believer now lives in and through Christ. However, it also contains the thought of “eschatological fulfillment yet to be realized.” The resurrection has resulted in the believer experiencing life, so “the primary eschatological event has

²⁸ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 507.

²⁹ Stott, *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy*, 53.

³⁰ Fee and Gasque, *1 And 2 Timothy, Titus*, 249.

³¹ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 516.

already set the future in motion.”³²

The second epigram moves into “the present life of the believer” and declares, “If we endure, we will also reign with him” (12a).³³ Paul’s primary concern is that Timothy would endure in the face of suffering. **So, the one who endures will receive the reward of eternal glory** (10). Here is a call for Timothy to endure, and if he perseveres, “they will reign together with Christ in the eschatological kingdom.”³⁴ Those who persist in faith can anticipate reigning with Christ.

The third epigram declares, “If we deny him, he also will deny us” (12b). This line shifts from a disciple’s positive actions to negative actions. Fee comments, “The content stands in clear contrast to line 2 as its opposite. Therefore, it almost certainly presupposes the context of suffering and persecution. **Thus, it is a warning to Timothy and judgment on those who have already deserted, such as the Asians.**”³⁵ This stanza is a solemn warning against apostasy because Christ denies those who deny him. This stanza resembles Jesus’ condemnation of those who deny him (Matt 10:32–33).³⁶

The fourth epigram declares, “If we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself” (v. 13). Hughes comments, “The final stanza comes as a surprise. A magnificent reversal. Whereas the preceding stanza was a warning, this is a promise, as

³² Fee and Gasque, 249.

³³ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 516.

³⁴ Mounce, 516.

³⁵ Fee and Gasque, *1 And 2 Timothy, Titus*, 249.

³⁶ Mounce argues that the third stanza is addressed to believers who apostatize. He claims, “If believers do not endure and do apostatize, then Christ will claim before the judgment seat that he never knew them. The shift to the future tense may indicate that the saying is directed toward a Christian and not a mixed audience since the denial is a future possibility. (If it were directed to a mixed audience, the denial of nonbelievers would be present tense.) ἀρνέσθαι, “to deny” has a range of meanings from a refusal to do something, to a temporary denial such as Peter’s, to full-blown apostasy. Because the punishment is Christ’s denial, because of the close similarity to the saying of Jesus in Matt 10:33, and because the fourth line refers to temporary unfaithfulness, line 3 speaks of apostasy in its fullest sense (cf. Titus 1:16). In its historical context, it is a warning to the Ephesians, especially Hymenaeus, Philetus (2:17), and possibly the deserting Asians (1:15), that their apostasy has serious consequences. Since the force of 2:1–7 is directed toward Timothy, he would also be included in the warning along with Paul and all believers.” Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 517.

are the first two stanzas.”³⁷ **Jesus will remain faithful even if the Christian lapses into temporary unfaithfulness.**³⁸ However, some commentators interpret this line as apostasy similar to the third line and take the position that “God must be faithful to himself and mete out judgment.”³⁹ Fee disagrees, stating, “Although such an understanding is possible, it seems highly improbable that this is what Paul himself intended. After all, that could have been said plainly.”⁴⁰

These four epigrams form an exposition of Paul’s argument for why Timothy must suffer and endure. Paul instructed Timothy to use this gospel to teach and train faithful disciples who would also endure for the sake of the people of God that many would “obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (v. 10b). Paul reminded Timothy of the essentials of his gospel so its transmission to others would be without error. So, in this way, Timothy was to teach others and multiply disciples.

Paul highlighted to Timothy the importance of teaching. He commanded Timothy (“remind” is imperative) to teach “them” of “these things” (2:14). Commentator Knight states that Paul has the “faithful men” of verse 2 in mind. He argues that by doing so, Paul has elevated his command to be the foundation of his metaphors describing a

³⁷ Hughes and Chapell, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 222.

³⁸ Mounce corroborates with Hughes and Fee, arguing that the last line is not a warning but a promise to believers who are struggling in difficult circumstances: “It appears that the hymn is trying to deal with the different responses to conversion (line 1). If it does not cover the common occurrence of temporary faithlessness, then it has omitted a large part of the Christian experience. This suggests that line 4 deals with the present-day faithfulness of God... For these reasons, most see line 4 as a promise of assurance to believers who have failed to endure (line 2) but not to the point of apostasy (line 3). Peter’s denial of Christ (Matt 26:69–75; Mark 14:66–72; Luke 22:54–62; John 18:15–17, 25–27) and his repentance and forgiveness (John 21:15–19) are often used as an illustration. This message was especially significant in the Ephesian context since their opposition to Paul entailed faithlessness to God. If Timothy was feeling defeated, it would also serve to encourage him.” Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 518.

³⁹ Fee and Gasque, *1 And 2 Timothy, Titus*, 250.

⁴⁰ Fee and Gasque, 250.

godly leader in two regards.⁴¹ First, Paul uses metaphors to teach Timothy the characteristics of these faithful men and women who will teach others. Second, Paul gives the content of what needs teaching in his gospel interlude (2:8–13).⁴²

What applications can we make to this teaching today?

READ: Chapter 2 – Association (*The Master Plan of Evangelism*)

MEMORIZE: Romans 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

⁴¹ “What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others” (2 Tim 2:2).

⁴² Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 410. I have summarized here Knight’s commentary on these verses, as this is crucial to my argument that the chapter must be viewed as a whole teaching with the foundation of the teaching being verses 1 and in particular verse 2. The six metaphors clarify to Timothy the kind of teachers that Paul believes will multiply. In addition, Knight corroborates my suggestion that the gospel interlude in verses 8 through 13 was the essence of what Paul required Timothy to teach to his teachers. Stott also takes the position I am proposing. See John R. W. Stott, *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 67. “Looking back over the chapter, we are now able to picture in our minds the composite portrait of the ideal Christian minister or worker which Paul has been painting with a variety of words and images.”

Week 3 – The Soldier Engaged in Serving

The big idea for this week is that God wants us to obey our Commander, Jesus, serving and suffering with one aim to please Him!

GOAL: Understand the value of serving God by serving others.

TEACHING: Let's read the paragraph that contains our focus for today – the Soldier:

*You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, ² and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. ³ **Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.** ⁴ **No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.** ⁵ *An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.* ⁶ *It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.* ⁷ *Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.**

So, we have discussed Paul's multiplication **paradigm** and the **message** that Paul wanted Timothy to teach. Now, Paul includes six **metaphors** to challenge Timothy to work hard and suffer well as he teaches others to teach others. The first three, the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer, are metaphors Paul frequently uses. The final three are the approved worker, the useful vessel, and the Lord's bondservant. The metaphors identify the characteristics required to be a leader who teaches others and consequently multiplies. **There is a common theme:** They "all emphasize that Timothy's work will be strenuous, involving both labor and suffering." In addition, all six metaphors have in view a reward if faithfully completed.

So, the first metaphor uses the military imagery of a suffering soldier (3–4) to communicate the warfare of the Christian life

2 Cor 10:3–5 For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. **4** For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. **5** We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion

raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ

Eph 6:10–17 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

Phlm 2 and Apphia, our sister, and Archippus, our fellow soldier, and the church in your house:

He usually applied the imagery in the context of struggling against opponents of the gospel. Paul called Timothy to “share in suffering” (2 Tim 1:8; 2:9; 4:5) for the faith in opposition to **(1) false teachers and (2) strategies of the enemy**. Paul saw Jesus as his commanding officer, so the Christian is like a soldier under his leader’s authority. Paul distinguished the good soldier willing to suffer from the mediocre soldier who refused. This is so searching!

The discipline and dedication of Roman troops meant that they were often victorious. They were free from being “entangled in civilian pursuits” (v 4). They had “the quality of single-minded devotion to duty.” The soldier avoids a “preoccupation with the affairs of life” because they are “actively engaged or on assignment.”⁴³ However, this

⁴³ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 493.

does not mean that Paul is speaking against marriage or participating in everyday life. Paul's encouragement to Timothy is to service and, if necessary, suffer. In every part of the Christian's life, the directions of the commanding officer, Jesus Christ, must take priority. **In order to please their Commander, the Christian soldier must remain disciplined in every area of life and not be entangled in distracting pursuits (2 Cor 5:9).**

John Stott summarizes this metaphor by saying, "If we are to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ, we must be dedicated to the battle, committing ourselves to a life of discipline and suffering, and avoiding whatever may 'entangle' us and so distract us from it."⁴⁴ Paul is challenging Timothy to be untangled from the affairs of this life and please his commanding officer by teaching faithful people who can also teach others. Jesus prayed that his disciples would remain in the world but be kept by God from the enemy. Jesus stated that his followers were "not of the world" but sent into the world so that the "world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:15–21). Another theologian, Mounce, recognizes that "Christians, in general, must have some involvement in day-to-day affairs, but they can never become entangled in them."⁴⁵ **Timothy must be prepared to obey his commander's call to make disciples by teaching others, remain untangled from worldly pursuits, and suffer if necessary.**

So, how do we, as good soldiers, remain unentangled from distractions that hinder us from pleasing our commanding officer?

READ: Chapter 3 – Consecration (*The Master Plan of Evangelism*)

The reading this week from Coleman in the Master Plan of Evangelism echoes this theme:

⁴⁴ Stott, *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy*, 45.

⁴⁵ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 509.

"It must be remembered, too, that Jesus was making men to lead his church to conquest, and no one can ever be a leader until first he has learned to follow a leader. So he brought up his future commanders from the ranks, drilling in them along the way the necessity for discipline and respect for authority. There could be no insubordination in his command. No one knew better than Jesus that the satanic forces of darkness against them were well organized and equipped to make ineffectual any half-hearted effort of evangelism. They could not possibly outwit the devilish powers of this world unless they gave strict adherence to him who alone knew the strategy of victory. This required absolute obedience to the Master's will, even as it meant complete abandonment of their own" p. 58.

READ: Chapter 3 – Consecration (*The Master Plan of Evangelism*)

MEMORIZE: 2 Timothy 2:3–4 *Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.*

Week 4 – The Athlete Growing in God’s Word

The big idea for this week is that, like an athlete who competes according to the rules, God has given us his word for us to grow in our obedience.

GOAL: Understand the value of learning, knowing, and obeying God’s word

TEACHING: Let’s read the paragraph that contains our focus for today – the Athlete:

*You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, ² and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. ³ Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. ⁵ **An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.** ⁶ It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. ⁷ Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.*

The first metaphor was a soldier. Next, Paul uses the metaphor of a **disciplined athlete** in the Greek games as a model for Timothy to follow (2 Tim 2:5). Every competitive event had rules, and each athlete prepared diligently for the contest. Some events had a ten-month training that an athlete had to complete before participating in the games. Each event awarded prizes to the winner. Evergreen wreaths were awarded at Greek games for winning athletes who had competed according to the rules. Similarly, Paul likens the winner’s wreath to an imperishable “crown of righteousness” rewarded to those who complete their Christian race (2 Tim 4:8).

This metaphor is similar to Paul’s challenge to the Corinthian church to run in such a way that they will receive the prize. He challenges them that they should exercise “self-control in all things” in order to receive an “imperishable wreath” (1 Cor 9:24–25). In all of Paul’s athletic references, he places an eschatological (**relating to the coming Kingdom*) emphasis on competing for the victor’s crown. These references are recurrent

in his writings to Timothy. Let's look at these Scriptures: 2 Tim 2:11–13, 4:6–8.

However, the emphasis in this verse (2 Tim 2:5) falls upon **“according to the rules.”**

Timothy must have wholehearted devotion to the task, as well as full compliance with the rules of the contest, which in this case includes suffering.

John Stott thoughtfully adds, “The context requires that competing ‘according to the rules’ has a wider application than only our moral conduct.”⁴⁶ He argues that Paul describes not only Christian life but also how Christians should serve. Faithfulness in serving according to the rules is the determining factor in being rewarded (2 Tim 2:5).

Paul reminded Timothy that he must persevere to the end. He would need the discipline of an athlete to pass the gospel baton to trustworthy men and women who would teach others. Only then would Timothy receive the victor's wreath. Then he would be able to say like Paul, ***“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith, and then Timothy would also receive the most wonderful of all wreaths, “the crown of righteousness” (2 Tim. 4:7, 8).***

Let's take a brief look at these Scriptures, which continue Paul's theme of an athlete:

1 Corinthians 9:24–27: *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. ²⁵ Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.*

- Run in such a way as to receive the prize
- Self-control is needed in all things!
- Those who receive the prize won't regret it! A wreath
- It takes discipline

⁴⁶ Stott, *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy*, 46.

Philippians 3:13–15: *Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.*

- Don't let the past define you! Strain forward to what lies ahead
- Can you imagine the prize that awaits those who have run the race well?
- This is how mature Christians live!

2 Timothy 4:6–8: *For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.*

- What a way to end!
- What a promise to those who endure to the end

READ: Chapter 4 – Impartation (*The Master Plan of Evangelism*)

Here's a quote from this week's reading in *The Master Plan of Evangelism*:

*“They saw how their Master denied himself many of the comforts and pleasures of the world and became a servant among them. They saw how the things they cherished—physical satisfaction, popular acclaim, prestige—he refused; while the things which they sought to escape—poverty, humiliation, sorrow, and even death—he accepted willingly for their sake. As they watched him minister to the sick, comfort the sorrowing, and preach the gospel to the poor, it was clear that the Master considered no service too small nor any sacrifice too great when it was rendered for the glory of God. They may not have always understood it, and certainly could not explain it, but they could never mistake it” p. 63 **Jesus demonstrated how to run the race well!!!***

MEMORIZE: 2 Timothy 2:5 *An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.*

Week 5 – The Farmer Dependent in Prayer

The big idea for this week is that God wants us to be like farmers who cannot force their crops to grow. We must scatter the seeds of the gospel wherever we go, knowing that prayer prepares the soil and only God can cause his word to germinate in people's hearts.

GOAL: Understand the importance of prayer and sowing gospel seeds.

TEACHING: Let's read the paragraph that contains our focus for today – the Farmer: *You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, ² and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. ³ Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. ⁵ An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶ **It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.** ⁷ Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.*

Paul's third metaphor is of a **hardworking farmer** (2 Tim 2:6). Farming involved serious hard work in the first century. One commentator notes that a "farmer's life involved long hours, constant toil (plowing, sowing, weeding, reaping, storing), constant disappointments, and it needed much patience."⁴⁷ This kind of work means suffering, and the verb (kopiaō) "work hard, toil" carries the thought of striving and struggling. **This is the kind of work required to disciple others! Seeing our small groups multiply and neighbors, friends, and family members come to know Jesus will take hard work! But it will be worth it—if we work inspired by the Holy Spirit and not working out of fleshly guilt or obligation.**

⁴⁷ Hughes and Chapell, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 212.

Paul often used this word in his writing and understood its implications from his own life (1 Cor 4:12). Paul repeatedly urged Christians to work hard, utilizing this verb to speak of the endurance and fortitude required for successful spiritual ministry (1 Cor 15:10; Phil 2:16; Col 1:29; 1 Tim 4:10; 5:17).

The latter part of the verse (2 Tim 2:6) focuses on the reward the hardworking farmer should receive, namely the first share of the crops. Similar to the other metaphors, the reward has an eschatological component.

John Stott argues that the hardworking farmer will enjoy two types of harvest. **First**, the Christian who diligently cultivates the field of his character and obediently “walks by the Spirit” and “sows to the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16; 6:8) will reap a harvest of holiness.

Second, in reference to what Jesus said about the fields being ready to harvest:

- *Matt 9:37 Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.”*
- *Luke 10:2 He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”*
- *John 4:35 Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.*

These verses teach us Jesus longs for a harvest of souls. It would seem that many are waiting to hear the gospel and ready to receive the good seed, but there is a shortage of workers.

Therefore, the hardworking farmer must be willing to do the laborious work of planting gospel seeds and reaping the fields. One commentator said this: “by tears and

sweat and pain, especially in prayer and in sacrificial personal friendship.”⁴⁸ The disciplinemaker is like the hardworking farmer who **labors in discipling and prayer**, cultivating, sowing, planting, tending, and harvesting to see reproduction and please the Lord of the harvest.

This week, we are learning about being dependent in prayer and how to plant gospel seeds.

These first three metaphors (2 Tim 2:3–6), soldier, athlete, and farmer, teach a consistent theme when taken together. Each person in the metaphors displays discipline in the face of suffering and diligently works to receive an incalculable prize. Paul repeatedly calls Timothy to be committed to suffering and sacrifice for the sake of the double reward of **pleasing his Master** and seeing **a harvest of souls as he makes disciples**. Paul longs for Timothy to pass on the deposit he has received to those who can teach by suffering as a good soldier, not entangled by civilian pursuits, by competing as a disciplined athlete, and by the hard work of a farmer. John Stott summarizes, “**There will be no victory for the soldier unless he gives himself to his soldiering, no wreath for the athlete unless he keeps the rules, and no harvest for the farmer unless he toils at his farming.**”⁴⁹

This is a challenge for me as I think about my life. What an exciting and joy-filled calling we have – the fields are ready, and the laborers few. Jesus invites us to pray that God would thrust our laborers – farmers – who will till the ground, sow the seed, weed, and cultivate and then reap a harvest of souls – with every step, every part bathed in prayer to the Lord of the Harvest who is longing for a harvest of souls!

What’s holding you back? Will you answer the call today?

⁴⁸ Stott, 48.

⁴⁹ Stott, 49.

READ: Chapter 5 – Demonstration (*The Master Plan of Evangelism*)

Here's a quote that highlights Jesus's dependence on prayer from this week's reading in *The Master Plan of Evangelism*:

"Take, for example, his prayer life. Surely it was no accident that Jesus often let his disciples see him conversing with the Father. They could see the strength that it gave to his life, and though they could not understand fully what it was all about, they must have realized that this was part of his secret of life. Note that Jesus did not force the lesson on them, but rather he just kept praying until at last the disciples got so hungry that they asked him to teach them what he was doing" p. 72.

MEMORIZE: 2 Timothy 2:6 *It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.*

Week 6 – The Worker Generous in Giving

The big idea for this week is that God has called us to be his workers. This means being generous with our time, treasure, and talents to serve the King!

GOAL: Understand the importance of using your resources for God’s purposes.

TEACHING:

Read passage: 14 Remind them of these things and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. 15 **Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.** 16 But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, 17 and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18, who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some. 19, But God’s firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.”

Paul’s fourth metaphor is that of an approved worker (2 Tim 2:14–19).

Paul instructs Timothy not to quarrel about words but to “*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved*” and to “*rightly handle the word of truth*” (2:15).

The first phrase urges Timothy to present himself to God as one who has been tested and approved. Timothy’s ministry must contradict the false teachers who have misled people in their desire to seek human approval. These false teachers will be judged by God because they have not rightly handled the word of truth. If Timothy does his best to do this, he will not need to be ashamed because he has worked well in contradistinction to false teachers by accurately handling the word of truth. Paul’s challenge that Timothy “does his best” has the sense of being “zealous, making every effort with persistent zeal.” In this way, God will approve of him as “tested and genuine.”

The second phrase, “rightly handling the word of truth,” is the most challenging phrase in this verse. **This phrase translated fully emphasizes that the worker must “cut a straight path.”**⁵⁰ This is the main thrust of Paul’s charge here to Timothy as he urged him to be an approved worker (2:15). In contrast to the false teachers (1:15; 2:17), the approved worker must understand and teach the gospel and rightly live out the gospel.

So, Paul identifies two characteristics of God’s approved workers:

First, they teach others and disciple them according to Scripture (2:2; 2:14). If they do this with persistent zeal, they will not be ashamed because “they handle the word with such scrupulous care that they both stay on the path themselves, keeping to the highway and avoiding the byways and make it easy for others to follow.”⁵¹

Second, their manner of life and conduct validate their message. Unlike the false teachers in Ephesus, Commentator Mounce summarizes this two-fold responsibility: *“Timothy is to teach the true gospel and behave in accordance with its teachings, his teaching and conduct acting as a deterrent to the opponents.”*⁵²

This is a two-fold challenge to each of us: our life must match the message we speak.

In other words, our life is part of the message we bring!

Are we leaders who cut straight paths? Or do we modify the message because it is

⁵⁰ Mounce, 524. Mounce includes a helpful discussion of how to interpret this phrase: “The most difficult issue in the verse is the precise meaning of ὀρθοτομεῖν, ‘to handle correctly.’ However, while its specific nuance is debated, its general thrust is clear. In contrast to the opponents, perhaps regarding both their beliefs and their behavior, Timothy is to deal correctly with the gospel message, perhaps both its teaching and the manner of life to which it calls. ὀρθοτομεῖν occurs only here in the NT. It is a compound verb: τεμνεῖν, ‘to cut,’ ὀρθός, ‘straight.’ It is used in nonbiblical Greek in connection with οδός, ‘way,’ meaning ‘to cut a straight path.’ There has been much discussion of the precise nature of the metaphor: a mason cutting stone, a farmer cutting a straight furrow (Chrysostom), and other suggestions, with the emphasis on ‘the straightness with which the work of cutting or laying out is performed.’ Chrysostom emphasizes the idea of ‘to cut’: to ‘cut away what is spurious, with much vehemence assail it, and extirpate it. With the sword of the Spirit cut off from your preaching, as from a thong, whatever is superfluous and foreign to it’.”

⁵¹ Stott, *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy*, 67.

⁵² Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 524.

uncomfortable on the one hand, or, on the other hand, does our life compromise the message we speak because we are not living up to it? Challenging thoughts!!!

READ: Chapter 6 – Delegation (*The Master Plan of Evangelism*) Here's a quote highlighting Jesus's call to preach the gospel and obey it with our lives. From this week's reading in *The Master Plan of Evangelism*:

"If the disciples had any notions prior to this time about the easy nature of their work, they were certainly dispelled now. They were going forth with a revolutionary gospel, and when it was obeyed, it effected a revolutionary change in people and their society" p. 85.

MEMORIZE: 2 Timothy 2:15 *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.*

Week 7 – The Vessel of Honor Connected in Community

The big idea for this week is that God wants us to be connected in healthy community, like the vessels in a house that the Owner can use for his purposes. This means we must live out of our new identity in Christ.

GOAL: Understand the value of identity and community with God’s people.

TEACHING:

2 Tim 2:20–23 Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. 21 Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.

22 So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. 23 Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels.

Paul’s **fifth metaphor is that Timothy must be a useful vessel (2:20–23).**⁵³

Houses contain all kinds of vessels and instruments – some for honorable and some for dishonorable purposes.

Verse 21 gives Timothy a choice: Is he willing to be cleansed from anything false and be a vessel fit for the Master’s use – a vessel for honor?

The Master’s house here represents the church, and these vessels are the teachers Paul has been referring to this whole chapter.

In Acts 9:15, Paul uses this phrase about himself: “a chosen instrument of mine” to show how God used this metaphor of an instrument bringing the gospel to “Gentiles and kings and children of Israel.” In addition, when Paul wrote, “We have this

⁵³ Mounce, 530. Mounce breaks this section down as follows: “v 20 is the metaphor, v 21 interprets the metaphor, and vv 22-26 spell out the specific terms of how Timothy is to behave.”

treasure in jars of clay” (2 Cor 4:7), he described himself and other workers by the same metaphor – a vessel that its Master can use. Paul uses the Greek word (*skeuos*) for “instrument,” “jar,” and “vessel” in his letter to Timothy. *Skeuos* meant any kind of utensil. The idea of service is in the author’s mind in each of these verses. **Paul was a *skeuos* to carry the gospel to those who had never heard it and to teach those who were believers.** This metaphor is similar to the previous worker illustration; however, Paul changes the metaphor from good and bad workers to honorable and dishonorable vessels. *So, here Paul is challenging Timothy to be a set apart and useful worker for the master of the church, Jesus, by serving and teaching.*

Timothy is challenged to cleanse himself from anything that would defile his vessel (2:22–23). The language used here is for ritual cleansing. Theologian Gordon Fee states:

The rest of the application, which continues to do wordplays with the imagery, supports this interpretation. Timothy is to be made holy (*hegiasmenon*, “sanctified”), a most appropriate double entendre. Just as the “vessels” of the Temple were “sanctified” for sacred purposes, so is Timothy to be set apart (made holy) and thus useful to the Master (cf. The metaphor in 2:40, of course, keeps the imagery of the large house with its honorable vessels).⁵⁴

In verse 22, Paul’s instructions for cleansing include positive and negative appeals. Let’s read the verse: *So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.*

In light of the false teachers ravaging the church, one commentator noted, “The presence of spiritual imposters makes the pursuit of this life something of an emergency. The flee—pursue formula gives the teaching an urgent tone.”⁵⁵ It is important to note here, as John Stott points out, this reference is “not to be understood exclusively as a reference to sexual lust, but to self-assertion as well as self-indulgence, to selfish

⁵⁴ Fee and Gasque, *1 And 2 Timothy, Titus*, 261-262.

⁵⁵ Towner, Philip H. *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, Il.: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 187.

ambition, headstrong obstinacy, arrogance and indeed all the wayward impulses of youth.”⁵⁶ **How challenging!**

Paul uses contrasting verbs to emphasize the critical nature of fleeing and pursuing. The word “flee” (pheugō) means to seek safety in flight or escape – usually when fleeing from physical danger. The verb “pursue” (diōkō) is the opposite. “If pheugō means to run away from, diōkō means to run after, pursue, chase, in war or hunting.” **The Christian worker must flee from evil like a person escaping from a pursuing army, and conversely, they must chase passionately after righteousness.**

Paul challenges Timothy that overcoming temptation is not simply denying his desires but actively pursuing Christ.

In verse 24, there are four qualities Timothy must pursue: righteousness, faith, love, and peace.

In addition, these qualities are to be sought together in community with others who are pursuing God with pure hearts – see verse 22.

In comparing this list with a similar text (1 Tim 6:11), which states:

“But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.”

One commentator helpfully summarizes by stating the Christian worker should display “(1) visible uprightness (righteousness), (2) a genuine relationship with God (faith), and (3) a resultant life of service to others (love). The characteristic of peace is undoubtedly added here because of the turbulent setting in view and the emphasis on the (4) redemptive (peacemaking) role of God’s worker.”⁵⁷

In summary, Paul’s exhortation to be an honorable vessel means Timothy must

⁵⁶ Stott, *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy*, 61.

⁵⁷ Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, 187. Note: The turbulent setting refers to the false teachers like Hymenaeus and Philetus whose teaching was spreading like “gangrene” (2 Tim 2:15).

make every effort to both to run away from spiritual danger and to run after spiritual good, both to flee from the one in order to escape it and to pursue the other in order to attain it. **The Christian worker that obeys Paul's command "will be a vessel for honorable use, useful to the master, and ready for every good work" (2:21). The work of entrusting the gospel to trustworthy people who will teach others is the excellent work Paul has in mind.**

READ: Chapter 7 – Supervision (*The Master Plan of Evangelism*) Here's a quote that speaks of Jesus's call to his disciples to pursue constant character development as they grew in knowledge and grace.

"The important thing about all this supervisory work of Jesus was that he kept the disciples going on toward the goal he had set for them. He did not expect more from his disciples than they could do, but he did expect their best, and this he expected always to be improved as they grew in knowledge and grace. His plan of teaching - by example, assignment, and constant checkup - was calculated to bring out the best that was in them" p. 96.

MEMORIZE: 2 Timothy 2:22 *So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.*

Week 8 – The Servant Authentic in Worship

The big idea for this week is that God is our Father; we are his sons and daughters who serve him because we know and love him. Our worship (service) is authentic. We teach others about Jesus because we love him so much!

GOAL: Knowing and loving God and making disciples for his glory.

TEACHING:

2 Timothy 2:24–26 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, 25 correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

Paul's sixth and final metaphor of the Lord's servant transitions from a vessel to a servant in the household. Before Paul discusses the qualities of the Lord's servant, he contrasts the Lord's servant and those who oppose his message. Here, Paul's contrast applies to Timothy and leaders who would be servants of the Lord in the years to come.

Paul describes the content of these controversies (*2:18 - who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some*) and possibly the teachers themselves in severe terms. In verse 23, he calls them foolish (a strong pejorative) and ignorant or stupid (uninstructed, ill-informed) arguments. Although, in the Greek, the word he used can mean stupid or ignorant, in this context, it more likely refers to the fact that the perpetrators of these quibblings, who have rejected the truth, are themselves uninstructed or poorly informed.

Paul calls for the Lord's servants to oppose false teachers through gentle correction. This is why Timothy must have “nothing to do with foolish and ignorant controversies” (2:23).

There are three parts to the opposing action of the servant of the Lord.

First, Paul commands kindness, patience, and gentleness to everyone.

Second, the Lord's servant must be able to teach. Here, Paul reiterated what he required of Timothy and those he taught (2:2).

Third, the leader must set an example of tolerance and patience with those in error. Paul here described the qualities of the teacher Timothy needed to emulate in order to oppose false teachers and see people "escape the snare of the devil" (2:26).

Stott comments on the impact of the Lord's servant combining "Christian teaching with a Christian character, and if he is meek in his dealings with the wayward, 'correcting his opponents with gentleness,' lasting good may follow." **Paul wanted Timothy to be a kind and gentle teacher so God would grant his opponents repentance to turn to the "true gospel." Here again, Paul challenged Timothy that the teacher's life must match their message.**

In verse 26, Paul recognized that false teachers and their teaching had "captivated minds and hearts to do the will of Satan," Only the preaching of the gospel would cause people to "come to their senses" (2:26) and turn to Christ. Towner helpfully observes, "All opposition to God and God's servants are ultimately engineered by the devil (1 Tim 3:7; 4:1). God's enemy is actively and consciously behind the false teaching (the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will). The Christian who forgets this takes a great risk."⁵⁸ ***Paul warned Timothy of the conflict he would face as a servant of the Lord. We must remember we are in a spiritual battle and need the power of the Holy Spirit and the armor of God to succeed!***

Paul encouraged Timothy that God will rescue broken and ensnared people through his servant teaching the gospel and living in a manner consistent with its

⁵⁸ Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, 189.

demands. As Timothy's life matches the message, Paul's twofold goal, that of "repentance of the opponents and their subsequent turning to the true gospel," will be realized. Paul reminds Timothy of God's sovereignty as "it is God who gives repentance."⁵⁹ *Paul, again, emphasized the power of teaching the gospel with godly Christian character in the disciple-making process.*

Conclusion

Timothy 2 has provided the *paradigm* of reproducing disciple-making, the *message* that must be taught, and six metaphors that focus on the disciple-maker's character.

Paul's **paradigm** mirrored Jesus's disciple-making paradigm. Paul invested in Timothy and encouraged him to be strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul instructed Timothy to entrust what he had seen and heard to faithful people who would teach others. In this manner, the gospel would be passed to successive generations of disciples with purity, power, and potency.

Paul's **message** was simple yet powerful. He urged Timothy to remember Jesus Christ, the risen Lord (Savior) and descendant of David (King), who is worthy of being followed even if it means suffering and sacrifice. Paul reminded Timothy of the power of the gospel, which, even though its messengers may suffer like criminals, the message itself is powerful and unchained. Last, Paul included a short, memorable hymn encapsulating the Christian life – conversion, endurance, apostasy, and faithlessness.⁶⁰

The six **metaphors** Paul employed to communicate "the composite portrait of the ideal Christian minister or worker"⁶¹ vary in details and images yet display a unity of

⁵⁹ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 536.

⁶⁰ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 519.

⁶¹ Stott, *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy*, 67.

thought and message. Paul urged endurance, dedication, and a focus on the rewards of obedience as an unentangled soldier, a disciplined athlete, and a hardworking farmer. The approved worker must present themselves to God and teach God's gospel accurately. The honorable vessel must be set apart and useful to their Master, and the Lord's servant must be kind, gentle, patient, and able to teach.

Timothy must take pains to conduct himself properly. The approved worker must be tested and found to be true, unashamed of his work, correctly teaching and living the message of the gospel. It involves striving to be an honorable vessel for the master, fleeing youthful passions, and pursuing those qualities not found in the opponents, such as righteousness, faith, love, and peace.

*John Stott concludes, "Each metaphor concentrates on a particular characteristic that contributes to the portrait as a whole and lays down a condition of usefulness."*⁶² The reproducing teacher must surrender and be given wholeheartedly to being the Lord's soldier, athlete, and farmer to receive the promised rewards. The disciple-making worker must cut a straight path through opposition and obstacles to be approved by God and not ashamed. The useful vessel must be willing to be purified and refined, put away those offensive things, and passionately pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace. The Lord's servants must teach in a manner that reflects their Master by being kind, patient, and gentle. They will see reproduction because God will grant their opponents repentance and freedom from the devil's chains.

Paul challenged Timothy and teachers through the ages to live out what they have learned. Their character must match their teaching, and the message must be entrusted to trustworthy men and women who are able to teach others so that multiplication will occur. There will be suffering and sacrifice, but the joy of seeing

⁶² Stott, 67.

people escape from the devil's snare and pleasing the one who enlisted them will eclipse the cost of any sacrifice. **This is how disciples can make reproducing disciples, and so, by God's grace, play their part in fulfilling the Great Commission.**

READ: Chapter 8 – Reproduction (*The Master Plan of Evangelism*) In this week's reading, Coleman emphasizes what is necessary for the transformation we so long for: *"This is the new evangelism we need. It is not better methods, but better men and women who know their Redeemer from personal experience - men and women who see his vision and feel his passion for the world- men and women who are willing to be nothing so that he might be everything - men and women who want only for Christ to produce his life in and through them according to his own good pleasure. This finally is the way the Master planned for his objective to be realized on the earth, and where it is carried through by his strategy, the gates of hell cannot prevail against the evangelization of the world"* p. 108.

MEMORIZE: 2 Timothy 2:24–25 *And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, ²⁵ correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth.*

Script #9 - Conclusion

The training is over! Now, you get to put into practice all that you have learned. Knowledge is only helpful to people if it is acted upon. Jesus said the difference between the sheep and the goats was what they did and didn't do. It was a matter of obedience.⁶³ So, I encourage you to obey the call of our Commander, Jesus Christ, to make disciples locally and globally. We must teach them to obey all that Jesus commanded—so teaching is a significant part of what Jesus expected us to do. We make disciples so that the Name of Jesus would be known, loved, and worshipped in all languages, all peoples, and all nations because he deserves the worship of everyone everywhere! And our lives must match the message! We must allow the Holy Spirit to consecrate, sift, and search us so that we are vessels fit for the Master's use.

Thank you so much for investing time in this training endeavor. May we keep passing on what we have learned, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to faithful men and women who will teach others the pure gospel of Jesus Christ! Jesus is worthy!

I will email you a survey and a few questions to assess how the training has impacted you. Thank you so much!

⁶³ Matt 25:31–46

APPENDIX 6

POST-TRAINING DISCIPLE-MAKING PRACTICES INVENTORY (POST-DMPI)

The following instrument is the post-training Disciple-Making Practices Inventory (POST-DMPI). The identical fifty-question survey with a seven-point Likert scale follows reflective questions. The instrument's purpose is to assess each training participant's level of understanding, practice, and confidence in effective disciple-making and how effective the training was in equipping participants to understand and engage in disciple-making. An identical survey provides the data needed for statistical analysis to assess the curriculum's impact on participants.

POST-TRAINING DISCIPLE-MAKING PRACTICES INVENTORY (POST-DMPI)

Agreement to Participate

The purpose of this survey is to assess the level of spiritual maturity gained by completing the ReVitalize training. Your honest answers will help me assess the impact of the training! Thank you!

Ps. Steve Harrison is conducting this survey for the purpose of collecting data for his dissertation project.

Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and your name will never be reported or identified with your responses.

By completing this survey, you are giving informed consent for using your response in this research.

Because ministry is relational, we prefer you include your name below rather than complete the survey anonymously. However, if you prefer to be anonymous, please use the last four digits of your phone number for future reference.

General Questions:

1. Date: _____
2. Name: _____
3. How much of this course did you complete (percentage)?
4. What are the most important takeaways for you from the course?
5. How could the ReVitalize training be improved?

Directions: Please mark the appropriate answer. Some questions may ask you to give your opinion using the following scale:

- SA = Strongly agree
- A = Agree
- AS = Agree somewhat
- NA = Neither agree nor disagree
- DS = Disagree somewhat
- D = Disagree
- SD = Strongly disagree

Item	Construct #1 - Spiritual Habits (SH)	SA	A	AS	NA	DS	D	SD
1	I spend time each day reading the Bible.							
2	I spend time each day in prayer.							
3	I am passionate about my relationship with God.							
4	I strive to live by God's commands found in the Bible.							
5	I memorize Scripture.							
6	I attend church weekly.							
7	I use my gifts and talents to serve my local church.							
8	When I learn that I have disobeyed the teachings of the Bible, I try to correct my behavior.							
Item	Construct #2 – Relationships (RE)	SA	A	AS	NA	DS	D	SD
14	I have someone who holds me accountable in my spiritual life.							
15	I strive to forgive others who have offended me.							
16	I have someone with whom I can talk about spiritual matters.							
17	I seek advice from mature Christians about life's challenges.							
18	I am open to constructive criticism from fellow Christians.							
19	A mature believer is mentoring me.							

Item	Construct #3 – Relationships (RE)	SA	A	AS	NA	DS	D	SD
20	I like to worship and pray with other believers.							
21	I pray with other believers regularly.							
Item	Construct #4 – Gospel-Centered (GC)	SA	A	AS	NA	DS	D	SD
22	I feel I have a good understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.							
23	I feel confident in my abilities to lead someone to faith in Christ.							
24	I feel a responsibility towards The Great Commission.							
25	I believe all Christians should participate in completing The Great Commission.							
26	I give to missions by supporting missionaries or ministries locally and globally through giving my prayer, finances, and time (pray/give/go).							
27	I am involved in missions efforts. I've been on a mission trip, and I regularly pray about missions opportunities and am open to God's leading on future trips.							
Item	Construct #5 – Identity (ID)	SA	A	AS	NA	DS	D	SD
28	I believe the Holy Spirit is active in my life.							
29	I see myself as loved and valued by God.							
30	I am growing in my relationship with God.							
31	I am confident in my identity in Christ.							
Item	Construct #6 – Disciple-Making Habits (DM)	SA	A	AS	NA	DS	D	SD
32	I regularly pray for the lost.							

33	I go out of my way to make friendships with people I know are lost.							
34	My neighbors and co-workers know that I am Christian.							
35	I seek out opportunities to talk to others about spiritual matters.							
36	I feel confident in my abilities to teach other believers about knowing God better.							
37	I feel confident in my abilities to teach pre-Christians how to know God better.							
38	I regularly share my faith with non-Christians.							
39	I spend time weekly discipling and encouraging other Christians.							
40	I meet with spiritually open non-believers to share about my faith.							
Item	Construct #6 – Reaching Out (RO)	SA	A	AS	NA	DS	D	SD
41	I feel personally responsible for helping the poor and helpless.							
42	I intentionally greet visitors at church.							
43	I intentionally make conversations with people I do not know.							
44	I am intentionally patient, kind, and generous with service people I encounter, such as servers, baristas, Uber drivers, etc., and I often ask them if I can pray for them.							
45	I help my friends and neighbors with problems they have.							
46	I know the names and family members of my closest neighbors.							
47	I feel burdened to make visits to those I know are injured, sick, or homebound.							
48	I make or buy food for others outside of my immediate family.							

Item	Construct #7 – Summary (SU)	SA	A	AS	NA	DS	D	SD
49	One day God will hold me accountable for how I have ministered to others.							
50	I am growing in my knowledge of and involvement in disciple-making.							

APPENDIX 7

POST-DMPI QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS AND CODING

In the POST-DMPI, the first question asked of the participants was, “What are the most important takeaways for you from the course?” This “takeaway” qualitative feedback was identified and coded by recognizing repeated phrases and words into the categories as shown in table A2 on the following page.

Table A2. Takeaway category and associated concepts, phrases and words

TAKEAWAY CATEGORY and associated concepts, phrases, and words	
<p><u>Multiplication</u> (Category #1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discipleship • carry message forward • make disciples who make disciples • teach others to teach others • mission • duplication 	<p><u>Relationships</u> (Category #5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating community • investing for growth • building relationships • involved in the lives of others • spending time together, doing life • invest in long-term relationships • reaching neighbors through relationship • Bible-oriented relationships • one person at a time
<p><u>Holy Spirit</u> (Category #2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • daily filling • power in evangelism and disciple-making • prayer 	
<p><u>Intentionality/Priority</u> (Category #3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prayer and purposeful training of disciples • continually investing in disciples • investing in others and helping others • intentionality in sharing faith • intentional self-sacrifice in disciple-making • live to make disciples who make disciples • urgency of task • importance of evangelism and disciple-making 	<p><u>Evangelism (Category #6)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • share gospel • sharing faith intentionally • prayer brings evangelism opportunities • evangelism is just the beginning • love-oriented service and sharing • know your faith story (clear and compelling) • reaching the lost • focus on evangelism • share the gospel sensitively • sharing faith intentionally • importance of evangelism and sharing Jesus
<p><u>Strategy</u> (Category #4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan to make disciples • daily “I Will” statements • discipleship focus • use home • teaching • SOAPS method • daily life • pre-Christian Bible study • spending time • Scripture memory • Jesus’s example 	<p><u>Character</u> (Category #7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • growing in Christ • fueled by love for the lost • life must match your message • love-oriented service • growing in the knowledge of the Lord • obedience to Scripture • Christian walk and talk being of one accord • striving to be approved • self-sacrifice • gentle in sharing faith • confident in my identity in Christ

In the POST-DMPI, the second question asked of the participants was, What are the most important takeaways for you from the course? This “takeaway” qualitative feedback was identified and coded by recognizing repeated phrases and words into the categories as shown in table A3.

Table A3. Improvement category

IMPROVEMENT CATEGORY
<p><u>Time Challenges</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> more small group time more sessions volume of material time management in training sessions increase review time longer sessions for more discussion
<p><u>Application</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> more practical application opportunities next steps opportunities evangelism opportunities role-play and testimonies
<p><u>Curriculum</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear objectives visuals and training material layout design/color PowerPoint presentation for training Simplify with less material Prayer time was long
<p><u>Class Size</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> smaller class size overall
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve occasional communication glitches Provide online access to material do the course over a year provide participant connections

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING SMALL GROUP LEADERS OF GRACE CHURCH IN EDEN PRAIRIE, MINNESOTA, TO BECOME DISCIPLE-MAKERS

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2023
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Keith McKinley

This project seeks to equip small group leaders of Grace Church in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, to make disciples. Chapter 1 presents the history and ministry context of Grace Church and the goals of this project. Chapter 2 provides an exegesis of 2 Timothy 2, describing Paul's paradigm of developing leaders who multiply, the message they would teach to others, and the six metaphors that describe the characteristics of a disciple-making leader. Chapter 3 utilizes two significant works on Jesus's leadership paradigm, providing an opportunity to synthesize Paul's and Jesus's leadership development strategies. Chapter 4 describes the project itself, recounting the content and teaching methodology of the specific course curriculum and analyzing its impact on participants. Chapter 5 evaluates the project's efficacy based on the completion of the specified goals. Ultimately, this project seeks to equip small group leaders to live lifestyles consistent with Paul's challenge to Timothy to glorify God by developing leaders who will teach others to make disciples.

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