DEVELOPMENT OF A GOSPEL-BASED MENTORING AND COACHING PROGRAM AT LIVING HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH IN BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY

A Project

Presented to

the Faculty of

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

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by

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December 2025

APPROVAL SHEET

DEVELOPMENT OF A GOSPEL-BASED MENTORING AND COACHING PROGRAM AT LIVING HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH IN BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY

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Defense Date: September 18, 2025

For the glory of God

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PREFACE

This project was completed because of the encouragement of several people whom I appreciate and who deserve recognition. I am grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Justin Irving, for his guidance, mentoring, and coaching along the way. I am also thankful to the pastoral staff of Living Hope Baptist Church, who were supportive, encouraging, and, most of all, transparent as they helped guide me through my project working with the congregation. I am especially thankful for my wife, who encouraged my efforts through prayer, support, and sacrifices that made the completion of this project possible. I am indebted to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for their availability, support, and direction, which provided the tools and environment to complete this project successfully. Most importantly, I am eternally committed to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, as the perfect example of a shepherd as mentor and coach.

My hope is that this project will serve and encourage others to understand the importance of mentoring and coaching the next generation of leaders of the local church and that each church will remain focused and committed to the call for discipleship.

Mark Harris

Bowling Green, Kentucky

December 2025

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Living Hope Baptist Church (LHBC) in Bowling Green, Kentucky, is a large congregation with approximately 2200 individuals participating in Sunday services. Living Hope's mission explains that the church is "a family of disciples sent to make disciples by impacting our homes, our neighbors, and every generation with the hope of Jesus."[1] Despite the size of Living Hope, the pastoral leadership team and elders are committed to the mission of reaching individuals with the hope of the gospel. The team facilitates this commitment by promoting small groups, focusing on biblical training, and building intentional relationships that lead to discipleship. The small groups are based on spiritual growth and primarily broken down by age, discipleship interest, or stage of life. Rapid growth in the young adult ministry has necessitated the development of new small groups to meet the needs of young people ages 23 to 30 who have graduated college, started their careers, and are seeking a community of gospel-based relationships to help them navigate their new position in life. As such, LHBC needs to train mature Christian leaders to engage and equip these young adults with a biblical worldview that is practical and effective in helping them navigate today's workplace challenges.

Context

As an active member of Living Hope Baptist Church and a current young adult small group leader, I have observed many strengths existent in Living Hope's discipleship ministry and specifically in the young adult ministry. First, Living Hope

[1] Living Hope Baptist Church, "Beliefs," accessed May 15, 2023, https://livehopeful.com/about/beliefs/.

Baptist Church has a robust inventory of Christian training and development resources. Some of the resources include training in how to share the gospel with an unbeliever, training in evangelism and discipleship, classes in apologetics, and minister-in-training classes that focus on ministry in the workplace.

LHBC takes its mission seriously in each group it targets. Recently, additional focus has been given to the men's ministry that supports the church's purpose to "live as a faith-family, connecting in groups that foster the sort of Christ-centered relationships that enable us to fully love one another as Scripture commands."[2] Inspired by Hebrews 10, LHBC's focus is to edify the body and spur one another to love and good deeds within the body. The adult men's ministry has a goal to grow the number of mature Christians seeking an opportunity to engage and grow meaningful one-on-one relationships in the church.

Within the young adult ministry, members have a strong desire to seek community that will "live as a faith-family, connecting in groups that foster the sort of Christ-centered relationships that enable us to fully love one another as Scripture commands, consider others more important than ourselves, and express Christ's care as we share both joys and sorrows."[3] The young adult ministry is growing through large group gatherings and individuals joining small groups for community and study. In response, the young adult minister has created a program of studies throughout the week that allows one to participate in a small group when it best fits their weekly schedule. The pastor of the young adult ministry is open to and encourages mature Christians to come

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[2] Living Hope Baptist Church, "Living Hope Baptist Church Covenant," last modified March 30, 2021, 3, https://livehopeful.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Living-Hope-Baptist-Church-Covenant-approved-033021.pdf.

[3] Living Hope Baptist Church, "Governing Documents: Constitution, Articles of Faith, Covenant, and Bylaws," last modified February 2022, https://livehopeful.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Governing-Documents_2022Condensed.pdf.

alongside him to build a stronger program that will invite the involvement and spiritual growth of young adults.

There are also weaknesses in the current context, and a number of these have informed the need for this project to grow the number of active small groups focused on intentional gospel-based relationships.

First, most of the men in Living Hope Baptist Church are generally disengaged from church activities outside of Sunday morning services. Many of the men at LHBC are not aware of the Minister in Training program that promotes focusing on God at work and the ability to contribute to the body of Christ and be on mission every day.[4]

Second, many of the current men's groups are homogenous age groups. For example, the young adult ministry connections are mostly within the young adult ministry and have little or no connection to others in the church for mentoring, equipping, or discipleship. This presents a clear opportunity to be more intentional in engaging participants from all generational age groups.

Third, the number of mature Christian leaders available has not been able to keep pace with the rapid growth in the young adult ministry.

Currently, there are only four leaders for the approximately sixty young adults participating in the ministry. With an average of fifteen participants in each small group, the group is often too large to create intentional one-on-one mentoring and coaching relationships. Ideally, the small groups would be composed of no more than four to six young adults per leader.[5]

Finally, many of the young adults say they do not feel that older members of the church would have an interest in engaging them in meaningful one-on-one

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[4] Living Hope Baptist Church, "Ministers in Training," accessed May 15, 2023, https://livehopeful.com/ministries/mit/.

[5] "Men's and women's groups are usually full at 6–8 people." Bill Search, *The Essential Guide for Small Group Leaders* (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, 2017), 47.

relationships. Interestingly, however, young adults have expressed that they would welcome this mentoring.

Rationale

The young adult ministry has grown quickly as the new members seek faith-based intentional relationships that connect them to community and provide support in their stage of life. Some in this group have grown close, meet occasionally outside of church activities, and are hungry for the gospel and how it applies to their life and work. Many of the young adults understand that "all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16–17).[6] The growing group of young adults are now looking to the church to guide them and provide the practical leadership they need. Unfortunately, the rapid growth in the young adult ministry and the lack of mature leadership volunteers have opened the door for attrition and poor training for the young adults. By moving now, Living Hope Baptist Church can address this need directly by leveraging its strengths of training tools, mature Christians looking for a way to contribute locally, and a young adult ministry interested in intentional relationships with more mature Christians. The apostle Paul's encouragement in 2 Timothy provides the plan that is needed: "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" (2 Tim 2:2). The result will be meaningful one on one relationships leading to discipleship, equipping the future leaders of the church, and more robust relationships across generations.

[6] Unless otherwise specified, all Scripture references are from the *New International Version*.

Purpose

The purpose of the project was to develop a pilot program in which mature members of the men's ministry at Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green, Kentucky, are trained in biblical mentoring and coaching of young adult church members.

Goals

The following four goals determined the successful completion of this project.

1. The first goal of the project was to secure the participation of at least six mature individuals from the men's ministry to participate in the coaching and mentoring training class.
2. The second goal of this project was to assess the mentoring and coaching skills possessed by the individuals participating in the training class.
3. The third goal of this project was to develop a six-week curriculum informed by biblical wisdom that equips participants to encourage, mentor, and coach young adults in spiritual development.
4. The fourth goal was to increase the participants' knowledge to mentor and coach young adults by teaching the curriculum over a six-week period.

A defined means of measurement and a benchmark of success determined the successful completion of each goal.[7] The research methodology and instruments used to measure the success of each goal are detailed in the following section.

Research Methodology

Successful completion of this project depended upon the completion of these four goals. The first goal of the project was to secure the participation of at least six mature individuals from the men's ministry to participate in the coaching and mentoring training class. The population approached to participate in the pilot totaled 150 individuals, including men's Bible studies, men's small groups, and men who have

[7] 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.

participated in the Minister in Training program.[8] The sample was created by issuing a general invitation to the entire population to prevent a convenience sample. This goal was considered successfully met when fourteen individuals agreed to participate in the mentoring and coaching and completed the signed consent form to participate.

The second goal of this project was to assess the mentoring and coaching skills possessed by the individuals participating in the training class. This goal was measured by administering a pre-training survey to each of the training class participants identified in goal 1.[9] The survey was developed using the primary skills targeted for the training and validated by Dr. Joseph Harrod, an expert in survey development. The data from the pre-training survey was compiled and analyzed to determine what needed to be modified in the curriculum to promote greater understanding for the participants by the end of the project. This goal was considered successfully met when all fourteen participants completed the survey.

The third goal of this project was to develop a six-week curriculum informed by biblical wisdom that equips participants to encourage, mentor, and coach young adults in spiritual development.[10] The curriculum's foundation was based on a biblical worldview and included biblically informed fundamentals of mentoring and coaching young adult Christians toward spiritual development. During the development of the curriculum, a panel consisting of the pastoral leadership at Living Hope Baptist Church evaluated each session of the training using a rubric to ensure its biblical fidelity and pedagogical suitability.[11] This goal was considered successfully met when the panel

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[8] Roy Hutchins, "Ministers in Training (MIT)," Living Hope Baptist Church, last modified July 28, 2023, https://livehopeful.com/ministries/mit/.

[9] See appendix 2.

[10] See appendix 6.

[11] See appendix 1. The pastoral panel was comprised of the following members: (1) Jason Pettus, senior pastor and elder at LHBC. Jason has a Doctor of Ministry in Leadership from Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, FL; (2) David Head, the lead pastor for ministries and spiritual formation at LHBC, responsible for teaching, training, and discipleship. David has an MDiv from New Orleans

scored 11 out of 13 measures as sufficient or exemplary, and the two areas that required attention were specifically and sufficiently addressed in the curriculum and approved by the individual who requested the changes (LHBC's Pastor of Spiritual Formation).

The fourth goal was to increase the participants' knowledge to mentor and coach young adults by teaching the curriculum over a six-week period. This goal was measured by re-administering the survey utilized in goal 2 to the nine participants who fulfilled the attendance requirements of the pilot class (see delimitations).[12] This goal was considered successfully met when a *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive, statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-training survey scores.[13] Additional qualitative questions at the end of this survey assessed the participants' feedback on the class, including what they learned, how it helped them develop greater knowledge as a mentor and coach, and recommendations for future training.[14]

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

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

Mentoring. Mentoring is defined by Roger Smalling as "a process involving a relationship between a leader and one being prepared for leadership."[15] Mentoring can cross generations and leverage the experience of older mature Christians in the congregation to come alongside younger adult Christians to discuss and address life's circumstances. This provides a pathway for spiritual maturity and a platform to grow

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Baptist Theological Seminary; (3) Clay Mullins, pastor for impact missions and operations at LHBC, responsible for the men's ministry and small groups. Clay has an MA in Christian Ministry from Liberty University and is in the MDiv program at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The panel, comprised of the senior leadership of Living Hope Baptist Church, was ideal to ensure the training curriculum is consistent with and supportive of the biblical and theological convictions of LHBC.

[12] See appendix 2.

[13] See appendix 4 for t-test results and appendix 3 for difference in pre- and post-training scores.

[14] See chapters 4 and 5 for further description of participant feedback.

[15] Roger L. Smalling, *Christian Leadership: Principles and Practice* (London: Faithbook, 2022).

future church leadership. As Paul explains in 2 Timothy 2:2, "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." The goal of mentoring for this project is to help young adults strengthen their Christian worldview and apply it at home and at work.

Coaching. For purposes of this project, mentoring and coaching is a cycle in which coaching is the encouragement and sending that follows mentoring. John Whitmore explains that coaching is "working to unlock and maximize people's potential to help them fulfill their own purposes and achieve outstanding performance."[16] A mentor and coach becomes a lifelong friend in Christ—to listen, share burdens, and develop a biblical response. As the cycle of mentoring and coaching continues, the equipped mentee moves forward and implements responses aligned with a Christian worldview.

Mature Christian members. This group consists of members of Living Hope Baptist Church between the ages of 45 and 65 years.

Young adult members. This group consists of members of Living Hope Baptist Church between the ages of 23 to 30 years.

Biblical worldview. A view that relies on the inspired Word of God to address all of life's situations, an "objective view of the world derived from the authoritative revelation of God in Scripture."[17]

One limitation applied to this project. Due to various circumstances beyond their control, not all project participants will be able to participate in all sessions in person. To mitigate this limitation, I scheduled a separate meeting during the week for any participant who was not able to attend a session.

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[16] John Whitmore, *Coaching for Performance: The Principles and Practice of Coaching and Leadership*, 5th ed. (Boston: Nicholas Brealey, 2017), 12–13.

[17] Kelly M. Kapic and Wesley Vander Lugt, *Pocket Dictionary of the Reformed Tradition*, IVP Pocket Reference Series (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 83.

Three delimitations applied to this project. First, a minimum of six trainees were needed to implement the curriculum and assess its effectiveness. The second delimitation was the requirement of each participant to attend and/or complete at least five sessions. This requirement was necessary to support the data analysis described in the fourth goal. The third delimitation restricted the project implementation to men between the ages of 25 and 65 years who are members of Living Hope Baptist Church. This provided for a reasonable control group for the pilot, so that what was learned from the pilot could be considered across additional adult groups in the church. It is important to note that although the participation goal was achieved, the results, though directional, are not generalizable across the entire men's ministry or church population.

Conclusion

Mentoring and coaching young adults in today's cultural context of self-centeredness and variable truth is difficult at best. The pressure of enculturation is significant and can creep into every aspect of life. J. T. English states, "The West is in the middle of a cultural moment that centers all of reality on the autonomous self."[18] Clarifying and teaching a Christian worldview is critical to ensuring that young adults in today's world understand that truth is not variable and, in fact, has been in place for thousands of years. Scripture explains these timeless truths and provides many examples of mentoring and coaching that lead to growth and maturity in one's faith.

The following chapters demonstrate how the biblical examples of mentoring and coaching provide a solid roadmap for mature Christians to mentor and coach young adults in today's cultural context. Chapter 2 focuses on four biblical examples that demonstrate the principles of mentoring and coaching. Chapter 3 demonstrates how the principles of mentoring and coaching noted in chapter 2 are congruent with best practices

[18] J. T. English, *Deep Discipleship: How the Church Can Make Whole Disciples of Jesus* (Nashville: B&H, 2024), 23.

of mentoring and coaching today. Chapter 4 describes the implementation of the project, and chapter 5 concludes the project with final thoughts on the project implementation.

CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS SUPPORTING A BIBLICAL APPROACH TO MENTORING AND COACHING

Introduction

Mentoring and coaching are contemporary words from today's secular culture that are frequently used in the current church setting. As a result, the secular definitions of these terms can be confused or conflated with the church's definitions of mentoring and coaching. This becomes more confusing when one considers the challenges faced by young people as they wrestle with how secular and professional spaces variably define truth and individual identity. Understanding and maintaining a biblical worldview is becoming more challenging for young adults. "Young people are skeptical about the reliability of the original biblical manuscripts; they tend to read the Bible through a lens of pluralism; they seem less likely to believe the Scriptures have a claim on human obedience."[1] They need to receive mentoring and coaching congruent with timeless biblical principles that secure their identity in Christ, provide biblical guidance for life, and are based on the truth presented in Scripture. These principles can deeply inform how one can implement a biblical model of mentoring and coaching. This will secure a biblical worldview that equips young adults to stand strong as culture attempts to redefine truth and identity. It is the mature Christian who understands the truth, has experienced the challenges of living the truth, and is responsible for sharing the truth and equipping the next generation to live with a biblical worldview secured by the truth.

Scripture is clear that God's plan expects the older and mature in faith to teach

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[1] David Kinnaman with Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church . . . and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016), 52.

the younger generation the pillars of the faith. Further, it is expected that mature Christians are to teach the younger generation the truth revealed in Scripture. Generational engagement and teaching are an expectation and tradition in both the Old and New Testaments (Ps 78:4–6). Specifically, the mature in faith are expected to teach, lead, and shepherd the younger generation. It is important to note that the use of the word shepherd is complementary to the roles of pastor and elder. The Christian office of shepherd is inspired by 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, and 1 Peter 5, which detail the qualifications and imply the responsibilities of a shepherd of the flock as part of God's household. The pastor and elders provide a shepherding role as an office in the church. It is the leader's character and function of shepherding that should be modeled by many in the church, beyond the office—shepherds teaching shepherds. The shepherd as pastor or the elder as shepherd helps to teach by example. Specifically, how to engage others with the Gospel with the intent to make disciples.

In many ways, the role of the small group leader and mentor as shepherd is consistent with the qualities and character of what we would want to see in those in the office of pastor/elder. While many Christians should function as shepherds, it is essential to recognize that there is also a biblical office where one is uniquely called to function as a shepherd within the church. In other words, the mentor as shepherd is complementary and supportive of the office, but not the same.

Today, one can implement these commands to teach and encourage the younger generation by engaging in the process of mentoring and coaching congruent with biblical principles. Walking with the younger generation provides an example of how to live, creates a platform to teach the truth, and provides the environment to encourage the younger generation as they grow and learn to mentor others. "He decreed statues for Jacob and established the law of Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children" (Ps 78:5–6). Mark Futato suggests the "instruction

was never intended solely for the original audience but was envisioned as being passed on to each subsequent generation. The idea of passing on this instruction did not originate with human beings but with God himself."[2] It is also important to note that this instruction was emphasized because the previous generations had not followed the laws and statutes of the Lord. Futato continues by explaining, "The emphasis in the two recitals is on the failure of the ancestors to obey."[3] The point is clear: the older generation is to be a good example, avoid the problems of the past, and teach the younger generation to follow the Lord's laws and statutes by word and example. God's design is for the older generation to walk with and teach the younger generation and to mentor and coach them according to biblical principles concerning how to lead and shepherd.

In his letters to Titus and Timothy, the apostle Paul supports the importance of the mature in faith teaching and entrusting the faith to younger generations. Paul emphasizes to Titus the importance of being an example and reliable teacher. Paul explains to Titus: "Encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech" (Titus 2:6–8). The church that Titus presided over was not only men but both men and women. Earlier, Paul encouraged the older women to be good examples, explaining, "Teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live. Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children" (Titus 2:3–4). The point to be considered is "where there are elderly men in domestic and church settings, there will be elderly women too. The godly bearing of both groups is equally important for the flourishing of God's people."[4] For both men and women, Paul provides Titus

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[2] Mark D. Futato, *The Book of Psalms*, in *The Cornerstone Biblical Commentary*, vol. 7, *The Book of Psalms, The Book of Proverbs*, ed. Philip W. Comfort (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2009), 260.

[3] Futato, *The Book of Psalms*, 261.

[4] Robert W. Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 510.

instructions that direct the older generation to implement biblical principles that should inform and guide them as they mentor and coach the younger generation.

Paul had a consistent message of teaching Timothy by example. Paul starts by encouraging him to be an example and quickly transitions to Timothy teaching individuals who can teach others. Paul encourages Timothy to teach individuals who can comprehend the message of the gospel and, more importantly, teach others. Paul's instructions are clear: the mature in faith should teach and instruct the younger generation. "You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Tim 2:1–2). The expectations are clear: Timothy is to be an example and teach others. Using today's vernacular, being an example and teaching biblical principles to the younger generation is to be a mentor and a coach. Yarbrough emphasizes the seriousness of Paul's message to be an example and mentor: "This is the only time Paul writes my son in the pastoral epistles, a further indicator that particular gravity attaches to what he is about say."[5] Paul expects Timothy to lead by example and teach biblical principles. Timothy, in contemporary terms, is expected to be a mentor and coach.

Jay Adams leverages the importance of proper teaching and training for a new generation when he considers the importance of Christian counseling. Adams draws a practical conclusion that is consistent with mentoring and coaching a new generation: "Since so precious few do truly Christian counseling, and since it is important to convey these principles and practices to the next generation, why not teach several young pastors how to do it?"[6] The point is clear. Be it a pastoral role, counseling role, or mentoring role, all those within the body who have been equipped to lead others as a shepherd are to

[5] Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 370–71.

[6] Jay E. Adams, *I Timothy, II Timothy, and Titus*, CCC (Cordova, TN: Institute for Nouthetic Studies, 2020), 58.

guide the next generation by example and teaching, to shepherd them, and to be a mentor and coach that leads by example and teaches biblical truth that builds a biblical worldview.

Two benefits are the edification of the younger generation and the future strength of the church. The Bible includes many examples of mentoring relationships, including the Old Testament example of Jethro mentoring Moses (Exod 18:19–23), who then continues the process and mentors Joshua. The New Testament is also full of examples of mentoring and coaching, including Christ with his disciples and Paul with Titus and Timothy. A. B. Bruce writes that when Christ said to the disciples, "'Follow me,' . . . 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."[7] Christ expected his disciples to lead by example and teach a biblical worldview. Today, mentoring and coaching is a congruent platform that provides the opportunity to continue the vision of leading by example and teaching and applying biblical principles to the next generation.

The Bible expects sound leadership and teaching. A mentoring and coaching model informed by biblical principles provides a template for doing so (Isa 40:13–14). Certainly, Isaiah uses these verses to emphasize God's sovereignty, perfect and all-powerful attributes, and his deserving our faith, praise, and obedience. Using a paradigm of personal development, Isaiah walks through the process of properly shepherding an individual. Breaking down these verses demonstrates a process of explanation, demonstration, obedience in action, and feedback. Isaiah notes that our perfect God does not need any of these steps, yet he uses God's perfect and unlimited nature to touch upon them. Isaiah, pointing to God as the perfect shepherd, provides a template for a shepherd

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[7] A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve: How Jesus Christ Found and Taught the 12 Apostles*, A Book of New Testament Biography, Pantianos Classics (1871; repr., n.p.: Pantianos, 2018), 12, Kindle.

to follow.

The Bible provides multiple examples throughout many relationships in Scripture. Each example demonstrates how the mentor is qualified, how the mentee is identified, and how the process of mentoring and coaching is followed by the encouragement and sending of the mentee. On the importance of mentors, Tracy Hubbard writes, "Such leaders are responsible for teaching and training successors capable of carrying on their legacy and God's work, as demonstrated through the Biblical examples of Moses and Joshua, Paul and Timothy, and Jesus Christ and his disciples."[8]

It is important to acknowledge that the words mentoring and coaching are not terms one would find in the Scriptural narrative. The Scriptural principles of leading, teaching, edification, and sending however, are often referred to in terms of mentoring and coaching in today's Christian vernacular. This project will use the terms of mentoring and coaching that are informed by the biblical principles of leading by example, teaching, edification, and the building of a relationship that equips the next generation to understand and implement a Biblical worldview in their daily life.

Those who want to help others understand the importance of biblically-informed mentoring and coaching and its application to young adults should guide them through the examples of Moses and Joshua, Eli and Samuel, Paul and Timothy, and Jesus and his disciples. This will demonstrate that God's Word is sufficient to provide instruction on mentoring with a biblical worldview and coaching the mentee to implement a biblical worldview in their daily life and responsibilities.

Moses and Joshua

God appointed Moses as a leader and prophet. Moses's leadership position and relationship with Joshua provided the environment for him to mentor and coach Joshua

[8] Tracy K. Hubbard, "A Bridge to the Future: A Coaching-Based Curriculum to Prepare Licensed Ministers for Senior Pastor Roles in the Baptist Church" (DMin diss., Regent University, 2024), 5.

for many years. Moses's background and experience were an example for Joshua to engage and model. As Moses's assistant, Joshua walked daily with and was mentored by Moses, and as he matured, Moses sent him on assignments and coached him through various situations. Ultimately, Moses trained and commissioned Joshua as his replacement. Once commissioned, Moses sent Joshua into the promised land as his replacement to fulfill God's plan (Num 27:18–20).

Moses's Qualifications

Moses's qualification to lead Israel out of Egypt began with his appointment by God. John Calvin explains, "After God had furnished his servant with promises to engage him more cheerfully in his work, he now adds commands, and calls him to undertake the office to which he is designed."[9] God heard the cries of his people (Exod 3:7) and was concerned about their suffering and moved to rescue them (Exod 3:8). God specifically chose Moses to lead the Israelites out of captivity: "So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt" (Exod 3:10). John Mackay describes it as an assignment that is given to Moses by God; he is to be God's instrument for the deliverance of Israel. "It is to Moses that the task of rescuing the people is allotted. He is now divinely commissioned to be the instrument through whom God will work."[10] Calvin is more specific when he describes Moses's role as a vocation that depends on God's promise: "God aroused Moses to perform his commands by setting the hope of the deliverance before him. Because the command and vocation undoubtedly depend upon the promise."[11] The description of vocation implies it is a long-term life assignment, something Moses will grow into that provides the opportunity to mentor and

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[9] John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses Arranged in the Form of a Harmony*, trans. Charles William Bingham (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 1:69.

[10] John L. Mackay, *Exodus*, A Mentor Commentary (Ross-shire, Scotland: Mentor, 2001), 73.

[11] Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses*, 69.

teach others.

Moses's qualifications also included the roles of shepherd and prophet. In Old Testament terms, the shepherd refers to one "responsible for leading, feeding, protecting, and procuring rest for their flock."[12] This is a picture of a strong leader in a managerial role. For Moses, however, being a shepherd in Midian was a humbling experience when one considers his previous status in Egypt. John Peter Lange writes, "After being forty years an unknown shepherd, he has, as he thinks, given up, with his rancor, also his hope. Moreover, he feels, no doubt, otherwise than formerly about the momentous deed which seems to have done his people no good, and himself only mischief, and which in Egypt is probably not forgotten."[13] It is easy to see how Moses could have given up hope or lost his faith, yet God used it as an opportunity to groom him for his vocation as a humble servant. Lange continues, "Humility of itself does not stand in the way of a bold faith but is rather the source of it."[14] Moses proved to be an example of bold faith as he led the nation of Israel out of Egypt and into the promised land.

Moses was also a prophet, as described in Deuteronomy 18:15, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites." He was not only their leader and shepherd, but Moses was also the model of being a prophet to the people. "Moses thus shows how the true prophet will speak the words of Jehovah given into his mouth, namely, simply give them again, not perhaps to conceal the threatening by the promise, but speak all that is given him by the Lord."[15] Moses demonstrated all the characteristics that would be needed to mentor and coach

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[12] Matthew Montonini, "Shepherd," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

[13] John Peter Lange, *Exodus or the Second Book of Moses*, trans. Charles M. Mead, LCHS 2 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 10.

[14] Lange, *Exodus*, 10.

[15] Wilhelm Julius Schröeder, *Deuteronomy, or the Fifth Book of Moses*, trans. A. Gosman (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 149.

Joshua for his future leadership role; he was a faithful shepherd to Israel who led with humility and showed proper communication to and worship of God.

Moses's Engagement as a Mentor

Moses evidently chose Joshua to be his aid and eventual protégé. Alexander Whyte notes, "There was quite a circle of young men continually around Moses, and Joshua, the son of Nun, was the choicest and the most capable of them all."[16] By choosing and spending time with Joshua, Moses created an environment for mentoring and coaching. As Numbers 11:20 explains, "Joshua, son of Nun, who had been Moses' aid since youth," spent forty years of his life as an aid under Moses's tutelage and mentorship. One can see the stage being set for a lifetime of Moses mentoring Joshua.

The selection of Joshua is later validated when the Lord tells Moses to record an important event and includes specific instructions for Joshua that will facilitate Moses's mentoring and shepherding of Joshua. God wanted Joshua to understand the gravity of the recent battle, so when giving Moses instructions, "the Lord said to Moses, write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it" (Exod 17:14). Clearly, Joshua has been selected by God, who prepares him to fulfill the responsibilities for his vocation. John MacKay explains that the exercise of reading the record to Joshua "points to Joshua's future role as a leader in Israel."[17] He continues, "It is a formal reading of the scroll to Joshua in company that is envisaged, so that they would be reminded of the help the Lord had given them, and of his stated intention regarding the Amalekites."[18] Joshua was chosen by Moses, directed by God, and mentored by Moses to remember God's instructions.

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[16] Alexander Whyte, *Bible Characters*, vol. 1, *Adam to Achan*, 6th ed. (Edinburgh: Oliphant Anderson and Ferrier, 1896), 277, Logos.

[17] Mackay, *Exodus*, 305.

[18] Mackay, *Exodus*, 305.

Moses Mentoring Joshua

Moses's leadership position provided the environment to mentor Joshua to continue in the fulfillment of God's plan. Sending Joshua out provided Moses with frequent opportunities to lead, mentor, and coach Joshua. Moses's trip up Mount Saini provides an example of Joshua being mentored from the beginning. Joshua accompanied Moses up the Mountain: "Then Moses set out with Joshua his aide, and Moses went up on the mountain of God" (Exod 24:13). This is a significant event; we understand from the account in Exodus that Joshua is the only one who accompanies Moses as all of Israel looked on from below: "To the Israelites the glory of the Lord looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain" (Exod 24:17). This account suggests that Joshua approached the Lord with Moses as they climbed the mountain but did not enter the cloud as Moses spoke with God. Further, Joshua likely witnessed Moses enter the cloud and speak with God. One observes Joshua traveling up the mountain with Moses, residing for forty days with Moses, and likely speaking with and serving Moses during their time on the mountain. John Mackay explains, "It is clear from 32:17–18 that Joshua accompanied Moses at least some way further up the mountain. By taking Joshua with him, it would seem that Moses anticipated being on the mountain for some time."[19] Moses chose Joshua to go up the mountain to serve him and to continue Joshua's training and equipping.

Specific instructions for Moses to mentor Joshua are likewise captured in Exodus 17:14. As noted above, this verse confirms God's instruction to engage Joshua and share the information that is to be remembered. The balance of the verse proves an example of Moses being charged to mentor Joshua: "And make sure that Joshua hears it" (Exod 17:14). Moses was to work with his assistant to confirm his understanding of God's plan and to prepare him for his future vocation. Joshua is becoming more than an

[19] Mackay, *Exodus*, 423.

assistant; he is in a close relationship with Moses and certainly under his tutelage. Whyte states, "It is stated again and again in the sacred history that Joshua stood before Moses and was his minister. Stood ready, that is, to run the great man's errands, and to set out with him on his hallowed expeditions, and, in short, to be more than a son to Moses in the absence of his own sons."[20] Moses invested in Joshua as he would a son. They spent many hours together as Moses spoke to Joshua, listened to Joshua, and mentored Joshua. Whyte suggests, "Moses missed so much at home he found so thankfully when Joshua and his companions gathered round Moses to drink in his counsels and to execute his commands."[21] Joshua was a trusted student who listened to Moses's instructions and enthusiastically engaged in the mentoring process. Joshua's future as a leader is confirmed when the Lord "said to Moses, 'Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit of leadership, and lay your hand on him'" (Num 27:18). It is apparent that Joshua is growing under Moses, and God instructs Moses to commission him.

Moses was a genuine mentor to Joshua. He kept Joshua near and walked with Joshua through critical situations. As a shepherd, Moses trusted Joshua, taught Joshua, and provided feedback on the assignments given to Joshua. He also coached him by providing feedback and counsel when observing Joshua's thoughts or actions in specific situations.

Moses Coaching Joshua

God designed a relationship in which Moses could mentor and coach Joshua. "There are numerous instances where God appointed and led those he called to a specific task. Those God chose demonstrated their love for Him and strived to walk obediently. For example, Moses led the people of Israel (Exod 3) and trained Joshua as his successor

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[20] Whyte, *Adam to Achan*, 278.

[21] Whyte, *Adam to Achan*, 280.

(Josh 1:1)."[22] For the purpose of this project, the process of training or coaching works congruently with mentoring. The mentor uses coaching as a tool that provides an opportunity for the mentee to learn and observe and then attempt the same skills or behaviors. The expected outcome is the successful development of the mentee, which results in the eventual sending of the mentee to their spiritual vocation. The coaching process has four primary steps: explanation by the mentor, demonstration of the expected behavior by the mentor, trial by the mentee, and the final step of critique and review. The mentor models the desired behavior, and only after an understanding is in place does the mentee attempt the behavior or task himself. The larger responsibility lies with the mentor as he demonstrates and explains the objective. Additionally, the mentor is responsible for providing feedback and encouragement to the mentee after the trial has taken place. Each step is critical for the mentor, but the critique is particularly important as it is designed to correct, edify, encourage, and send again. The cycle continues until the mentee has the skill or behavior in place. In so doing, the mentor creates an environment that equips the mentee with the example, tools, and experience to be successful. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate how Moses coached Joshua during the forty-year period toward the intended result: Joshua developed experience and equipped himself for his future vocation—to lead the Israelites into Canaan.

In one example, Moses begins this process by explaining to Joshua what he needs to know and understand. God instructed Moses to "write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven" (Exod 17:14). Not only is this an example of explaining an important event to Joshua, but it is also a continuation of the mentoring and coaching cycle.

Joshua had just returned from a battle that was successful in that it weakened

[22] Hubbard, "A Bridge to the Future," 18.

the Amalekites, but it did not destroy them. John Currid explains, "Joshua's defeat of the Amalekites was not one of total destruction or annihilation. The verb overcame has the basic sense of 'to weaken/disable.'"[23] Moses took this opportunity to review the results of the attack with Joshua, provide feedback and encouragement, demonstrate how to rely on God and his promises, and reiterate the importance of obeying God. Joshua needed to understand his success, but he must continue to rely on God, who makes it clear that He will destroy the Amalekites. Currid continues, "The point is to contrast the eternality of God's command and justice with the eventual demise of the people of Amalek."[24] Moses coaches Joshua, reviewing the battle and providing encouragement that God is in control and will justly eliminate the Amalekites. Iain Campbell emphasizes the importance of teaching Joshua: "This latter point is so important that it is set before Israel again in Deuteronomy 25:17–19. Moses urges the people of God not to forget what Amalek did, and not to forget how God responded."[25] Moses is instructed to reassure Joshua of the event's importance and how God will respond. Relying on God and his promises will be the primary pillar of Joshua's future vocation to lead the Israelites to conquer the promised land.

Another component of being a coach is to provide rebuke and edification during feedback and review. Moses takes many opportunities to rebuke and correct Joshua, including when "Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp" (Num 11:26). The event unfolds as Joshua approaches Moses to scold Eldad and Medad. Interestingly, he receives an answer he did not expect. "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!" (Num

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[23] John D. Currid, *Exodus*, vol. 1, *Exodus 1–18*, EPSC (Durham, England: Evangelical Press, 2000), 367.

[24] Currid, *Exodus 1–18*, 368.

[25] Iain D. Campbell, *Opening Up Exodus*, Opening Up Commentary (Leominster, UK: Day One, 2006), 72.

11:29). Moses guides Joshua to understand the true goal of worshiping God. Joshua understood that Moses was the leader, yet he needed to understand that God would work with people other than Moses. Moses makes clear his goal that everyone should strive to be strong, Spirit-led followers of the Lord. In this, Moses teaches an important lesson. It is not about Moses; it is about God. In this example, "Eldad and Medad did not gather with the rest of the seventy in the tabernacle court, but through their prophesying in the camp the phenomenon became more widely known and allowed Moses to give it his public approval."[26] Moses rebuked Joshua and used it as an opportunity to help equip Joshua for the future.

The cycle of coaching continues throughout Moses and Joshua's relationship with the expectation that Moses is equipping Joshua for his future vocation as Moses's replacement. When the required skills, environment, and experience are in place, Moses sends Joshua to his new vocation.

Moses Sends Joshua

Sending has two roles in the development of a mentee. First, sending provides the opportunity and environment to demonstrate understanding. Second, it ultimately sends the mentee to their vocation and to the role of mentoring others. This section will review both roles of sending.

Moses had many opportunities to send Joshua during their forty years of preparing to enter Canaan, including sending with explanations and instructions, as captured in Numbers 13:16–20:

> These are the names of the men Moses sent to explore the land. (Moses gave Hoshea son of Nun the name Joshua.) When Moses sent them to explore Canaan, he said, "Go up through the Negev and on into the hill country. See what the land is like and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? What kind of towns do they live in?

[26] Gordon J. Wenham, *Numbers: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 4 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1981), 123.

> Are they unwalled or fortified? How is the soil? Is it fertile or poor? Are there trees in it or not? Do your best to bring back some of the fruit of the land." It was the season for the first ripe grapes.

The verses focus on the land and the direction to the men to bring back a report to Moses on the condition of the land. Calvin suggests, "The main point was, that the pleasantness and fertility of the land might allure them to take possession of it."[27] This would encourage the group, which included Joshua, Moses's understudy. Like many lessons in Scripture, Calvin suggests that there was an additional goal in sending the group of scouts: "Still, perhaps, God would intentionally have the Israelites forewarned, that they would have to do with strong and powerful enemies."[28] It is reasonable to conclude that Moses intended to understand the land, have Joshua obtain firsthand exposure to the land and confirm his faith and commitment to the task. R. Dennis Cole supports the observation that this task was in part to prepare and assess Joshua:

> At the conclusion of the list of the scouts' names, emphasis is given to the person of Joshua, whose former name was Hoshea. The inclusion here serves several purposes in the narrative: (1) to highlight his role as a leader, (2) to portend his role as a spokesman for God, and (3) to provide a structural marker for the chiastic rhetorical structure of the passage in which contrast is made between the faithful leaders—Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb—and the faithless ten scouts who held sway over the Israelite congregation.[29]

Moses's inclusion of Joshua in the group creates an environment for Joshua to apply what he has observed from his mentor. Furthermore, the sending of Joshua helped to support his vocation in the future as a faithful leader and follower of God. Finally, it is easy to see how this event provided dialogue, correction, edification, and encouragement for Moses's mentee.

The second set of examples includes the commissioning and sending of Joshua to lead the Israelites into the promised land. Moses, the mentor, hands over authority to

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[27] Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses*, 4:57.

[28] Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses*, 4:57.

[29] R. Dennis Cole, *Numbers*, NAC 3B (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 218.

Joshua, the mentee. God directs Moses to inform Joshua of his vocational mission: "But your assistant, Joshua son of Nun, will enter it. Encourage him, because he will lead Israel to inherit it" (Deut 1:38). God is clear that Moses is to send and encourage Joshua as his mentor and as one who is transitioning the leadership role. Eugene Merrill confirms, "Joshua would succeed Moses and lead the people in. Preparation for this transfer of leadership had already begun (Num 14:30); later in Deuteronomy it is validated by a public ceremony (31:14–23)."[30] Moses had mentored Joshua for this moment; his task was complete when he sent Joshua to assume his role in leading the people into the promised land. J. A. Thompson reviews the transfer of authority from the superior, Moses the mentor, to the subordinate, the mentee Joshua: "To stand before someone in Hebrew idiom is to attend upon a superior (1 Kgs 10:8). Joshua is referred to in several places as Moses' 'minister' or 'servant' (Exod. 24:13; 33:11; Num. 11:28; Josh. 1:1). The disqualification of Moses necessitated the appointment of Joshua to lead the people into the land."[31] God clearly designed for Moses to mentor Joshua as a leader, as God knew Moses would not enter the promised land. This also demonstrated the importance of proper worship and obedience to God. These were elements woven into all that Moses taught Joshua about God's power and plan.

A second example features the final commissioning of Joshua, as Moses transitions, supports, and encourages Joshua in the presence of Israel, making clear that Joshua is the new leader of the people:

> Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel: Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the Lord swore to their ancestors to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. (Deut 31:7–8)

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[30] Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary*, vol. 2, *Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, ed. Philip W. Comfort (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1996), 480.

[31] J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 5 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1974), 103.

This commissioning is the pinnacle of Moses's mentoring relationship with Joshua. Thompson notes, "Moses now charged Joshua publicly to lead Israel to the land of promise."[32] The stage is set, and Joshua is now going to be in charge. Moses continues to equip Joshua with encouraging words that are based on what he has learned and observed from Moses over many years. Thompson notes, "Yahweh will be with Joshua and will not forsake him in the conflicts of coming days. Hence there is no need for him to fear or be dismayed."[33] The public commissioning confirms Moses's support and encouragement of Joshua as leader before Joshua and all of Israel. Edward Woods emphasizes, "This encouragement is given by Moses to Joshua in the presence of all Israel, confirming the integrity of Joshua's succession and stature in the people's eyes as Moses' legitimate successor."[34] Moses has completed his work as mentor, and Joshua is equipped to move ahead in his new vocation.

The mentoring and coaching of Joshua by Moses captures each step in the process with clarity. Moses is the example; Moses explains what is to be done, and Moses coaches Joshua to develop into his future role. Finally, it is important to note that Moses is teaching someone based on his experience and responsibilities. This concept will be evident throughout the balance of this chapter. The point is that anyone can teach from their experience when they are focused on God's plan. Next, we will see how someone who was a priest and prophet trained Samuel.

Eli and Samuel

Eli was a leader and judge of Israel when Samuel entered the scene as his protégé and mentee. The *Lexham Bible Dictionary* describes Eli as "the judge and the

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[32] Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, 317.

[33] Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, 317.

[34] Edward J. Woods, *Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 5 (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2011), 301.

priest of Shiloh. The judge of Israel for 40 years and the mentor of the prophet Samuel."[35] The relationship between Eli and Samuel will unfold as Eli, an experienced leader in his field, engages Samuel as a young boy and prepares him for his vocation as a leader and prophet. Interesting to note is that Eli, though a prophet and leader, is someone who has life challenges similar to those faced by many families today. His two sons were corrupt and not worthy of their roles. He was the "father of the corrupt priests Hophni and Phinehas."[36] This will be important as the narrative unfolds and Eli, the mentor, demonstrates a heart of submission in times of difficulty. This submission would be an example to Samuel of always submitting to God and remaining humble in one's vocation.

Eli's Qualifications

Eli, as judge, priest, and prophet, had a larger role than any man could take, yet he tried. Whyte suggests, "Eli was not a great man like Moses or Aaron, but he took both the office of Moses and the office of Aaron upon his single self."[37] Eli assumed a significant task beyond what anyone could do. Whyte explains, "Eli was both the chief judge and the high priest in himself for the whole house of Israel. The ablest, the most laborious, the most devoted, the most tireless and sleepless of men could not have done what Eli undertook to do."[38] Does this sound familiar? Today, one may call Eli a workaholic, taking on more than he should, often at the expense of others, including his sons. L. O. Lineberger sets the stage for understanding this biblical portrait of Eli: "The Bible is a textbook on the science of how to live. Notice I did not say a textbook on

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[35] J. Chase Franklin, "Eli," in *Logos Bible Study Factbook* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2024), https://ref.ly/logos4/Factbook?ref=bk.%23Eli.1.

[36] Franklin, "Eli."

[37] Alexander Whyte, *Bible Characters*, vol. 2, *Gideon to Absalom*, 4th ed. (Edinburgh: Oliphant Anderson and Ferrier, 1896), 72, Logos.

[38] Whyte, *Gideon to Absalom*, 72.

science. It is a manual of the spiritual life, THE book of religion."[39] God's Word is transparent and demonstrates how he can use anyone for his purpose. Lineberger explains that Eli was as much a man of God as he was a man with failures, and "if the children of any man are a clue to that man's life and character, then we would be tempted, on first sight, not to think very highly of Eli's character; for we read that the sons of Eli were base men; they knew not the Lord."[40] One can see this in today's church and in many families. This is not to suggest all families are guilty of Eli's primary sin, yet all have challenges demonstrating brokenness. As Lineberger reminds us, we may be prone to think, "Surely Eli is a bad man. But no, Eli is a man of genuine virtues and splendid qualities. He is really a good and kind and honorable man, a very harmless and likable man."[41] Eli is a person everyone knows at church and in the community. Despite his shortcomings, he has (and we have) experience that can help mentor someone.

Every Christian likely knows someone with a challenging family problem. Eli's problem is one that we should all take note of. It is important to mention that Eli had his failures and shortcomings as described in the Scriptures. He was not a perfect mentor or shepherd. Other interpreters' references focus on his challenges and present him in a less favorable light. These interpretations are valid and focus on his sins relative to his sons and the subsequent judgment by God. There were consequences. "Eli left his sons in office when he should have at least exiled them. Furthermore 1 Samuel 3:13 clarifies that this sin of honoring his sons above God was the primary reason for the curse on Eli's family."[42]

The point made in this section is that Eli, with a difficult and problematic past,

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[39] L. O. Lineberger, "Eli: The Parent's Eye-Opener," *BibSac* 85, no. 338 (1928): 145.

[40] Lineberger, "Eli: The Parent's Eye-Opener," 146.

[41] Lineberger, "Eli: The Parent's Eye-Opener," 147.

[42] Brett W. Smith, "The Sin of Eli and Its Consequences," *BibSac* 170, no. 677 (2013): 20.

was compliant with God in his shepherding of Samuel. God in his sovereignty used Eli for God's purpose. Eli completed the task and, in the end, served his purpose with Samuel prior to his death.

Eli's Engagement as a Mentor

Samuel was dedicated to God by his mother, Hannah. Samuel's birth was the answer to the prayer of a faithful woman of God. Joyce Baldwin notes, "People like her were salt and light in the community."[43] Hannah was an example of worship in hardship and in blessing. "She believed God knew all about her and could give her a son. For her part, she would acknowledge that any son born to her was in answer to prayer, and therefore she vowed to give him back to God, who gave him."[44] The stage was set for Samuel's dedication to the Lord.

Eli initially observed Hannah's prayer for a child and sent her off with a blessing; he also observed her return after Samuel was born. Eli graciously accepted Samuel into his care and tutelage. He cared for him, and he loved him. When speaking of Eli's goodness, Lineberger explains, "We know that Eli was a lovable man because of his friendship with the boy Samuel. He, a gray-haired old man, loved Samuel dearly; and Samuel, the little boy, loved Eli just as dearly."[45] Eli was a shepherd and mentor. It is clear this was more than a job for Eli; it was a commitment to love someone, walk with someone, and teach them to be their eventual replacement. Lineberger notes, "Eli not only loved and did his best by a little boy, which is a splendid thing to do; but he loved and did his best by the lad who was finally to take his job from him."[46] This was to be a

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[43] Joyce G. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, TOTC 8 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 59.

[44] Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 57.

[45] Lineberger, "Eli: The Parent's Eye-Opener," 147.

[46] Lineberger, "Eli: The Parent's Eye-Opener," 147.

relationship of love and mentoring.

Eli's Mentoring of Samuel

The mentoring relationship between Eli and Samuel includes examples of Eli teaching a scriptural worldview, both Eli and Samuel listening to God, and Eli sending out Samuel to implement his biblical worldview. Samuel's growth and prophetic call, as captured in 1 Samuel 2–3, demonstrate the fruit of Eli's mentoring and coaching Samuel to be a minister before God. The section describes Eli coaching Samuel through assigning a task and closes with Samuel having been sent and recognized as a prophet of God. Eli remained an example to the end despite the challenges he faced as a result of his personal family shortcomings.

First Samuel 2 presents the first example of Samuel being trained as a priest: "But the boy ministered to the Lord before Eli and the Priests" (1 Sam 2:11). Robert Bergen confirms the "responsibility for Samuel's upbringing was now transferred from Elkanah to Eli as the youth was set apart as a lifelong attendant to the Lord."[47] Eli was now Samuel's mentor, and the assignment lasted a lifetime. Eli committed to work with Samuel and train him as a proper priest and his eventual replacement. David Erdmann captures two important components of Eli's role as a mentor to Samuel: "The growing boy Samuel, conformably to his consecration, had to perform, certain duties connected with the service of God being laid upon him. Before Eli, that is, under his supervision, and according to his appointment."[48] Eli was his supervisor, and it was clear to Samuel that for his future vocation, Eli was to be his mentor.

Eli took the time to mentor Samuel as a minister and priest before the Lord. Eli's efforts were effective over time, as evidenced by Scripture: "The Lord visited

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[47] Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, NAC 7 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 77.

[48] David Erdmann, *The Books of Samuel*, trans. C. H. Toy and John A. Broadus, LCHS 5 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 73.

Hannah; and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew before the Lord" (1Sam 2:21). Erdmann explains that Samuel's time with Eli not only helped him in his role, but also facilitated his relationship with God: "Samuel's growth before the Lord indicates not only that he remained in the Sanctuary, but also, that as the condition of his calling, he grew in fellowship of heart and life with God."[49]

Concurrently, Eli must rebuke his own children (1 Sam 2) who are not fulfilling the required priestly duties. Bill Arnold captures Eli's challenge: "The irony here is that young Samuel is nurtured in the faith by Eli, the high priest, whose own sons are so wicked that his priestly line will eventually be deposed."[50] Though Eli's sons were not appropriately behaving as priests, Samuel continued to grow under his committed mentoring: "Now the boy Samuel was growing in stature and in favor both with the Lord and with men" (1 Sam 2:26). Erdmann continues, "Samuel is now again presented, as he developed in his childhood as well physically as morally; while the sons of Eli were a horror to God and men, he was well-pleasing to God and men."[51] Eli also creates an environment for Samuel to ask questions and be properly trained.

Eli's Coaching of Samuel

The prophetic call of Samuel in 1 Samuel 3 captures a moment of coaching that Samuel and Eli will never forget. Under Eli's supervision, "the boy was ministering before to the Lord before Eli" (1 Sam 3:1). Given Samuel's behavior, it is evident Eli had explained the role of ministering to the Lord and provided demonstrations for Samuel to understand. Samuel was also a dutiful protégé and would go to Eli to ask questions or to assist his ailing elder. The cycle of coaching was in place, and it was the time the Lord

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[49] Erdmann, *The Books of Samuel*, 75.

[50] Bill T. Arnold, *1 and 2 Samuel*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 72.

[51] Erdmann, *The Books of Samuel*, 76.

chose to speak to Samuel.

This passage reveals that Samuel had not yet heard the voice of the Lord and went to Eli thinking his mentor had called him. Mary Evans observes, "Samuel's willingness to get up three times in the night, apparently without complaint, to attend to the ailing old man speaks well for the character of the young priest."[52] As the voice of the Lord would be new to Samuel, he would naturally go to Eli when he heard a voice. When Eli did not recognize what was happening, the Lord called to Samuel again: "A third time the Lord called, Samuel! And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, Here I am; you called me. Then Eli discerned that the Lord was calling the Boy" (1 Sam 3:8). At this moment, Eli coached Samuel on what to do and how to respond. He sent Samuel back to listen for the voice of the Lord. Though Eli did not know what God intended to say to Samuel, he knew that God intended to speak with Samuel. His mentorship and coaching were coming to a climax. Eli knew if God was speaking to someone, it was to speak to a prophet. David Firth notes "that Samuel was both a Nazirite (of sorts) and a priestly figure is important, highlighting the variety of roles he played. But his role as a prophet is of decisive interest."[53] Firth continues, "Since nothing so far points to this, the narrative of Samuel's prophetic call is recorded emphasizing why all Israel knew Yahweh's prophet."[54] Despite the fact that Eli knew things were about to change, he remained faithful in his duty as a mentor and supported Samuel as his eventual replacement. God chose to speak to Samuel, not Eli. Despite this, Eli remained committed to his role as mentor. He finished the coaching cycle and reviewed with Samuel what God had to say.

Loving his mentor, Samuel hesitantly engaged in the final process as God

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[52] Mary J. Evans, *1 & 2 Samuel*, Understanding the Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), 28.

[53] David G. Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary 8 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 74–75.

[54] Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 75.

delivered bad news and judgment for Eli. Samuel eventually told Eli and delivered the news of judgment: "So, Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him" (1 Sam 3:18). One can imagine the difficulty of the moment, being led by Eli for many years, learning from Eli, respecting what Eli was teaching him, being encouraged by Eli, and then having to deliver the news of judgment to come on Eli and his family. "It is unsurprising that Samuel is afraid to tell Eli the content of the revelation to Eli. But in a neat irony, Eli calls Samuel just as Yahweh has and Samuel responds as he has in the night, except that this time it is Eli calling."[55] Baldwin captures the emotions of the moment: "Under the weight of so severe a message, Samuel lay until morning. How could he broach such a subject with the venerable old man to whom he was responsible?"[56] Samuel had information that would be devastating to his mentor, whom he was now caring for. Eli, however, continued his commitment as the mentor and encouraged Samuel to reveal the message. Baldwin suggests Samuel "need not have feared, for Eli took the initiative and solemnly charged Samuel to tell him the whole message."[57] Though Eli did not anticipate the message delivered, he again provided a demonstration of how a mentor should respond to God's Word. "Moreover, he accepted graciously all that he heard, though the further pronouncement of God's judgment can only have added, in his old age, great sadness and apprehension of the future. Nevertheless, what the Lord does is good; Eli acquiesces in his will."[58] Samuel certainly felt compassion for Eli, with whom he had developed a strong and loving relationship. Eli validates the relationship through his actions of support and humility as a coach.

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[55] Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 78.

[56] Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 68–69.

[57] Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 68–69.

[58] Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 68–69.

Samuel Is Sent

Chapter 3 closes with the confirmation of Samuel as the prophet: "All Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the Lord" (1 Sam 3:20). Once God's prophecy to Samuel came to pass, Samuel would be sent. "Eli fell off the seat backward beside the gate. And his neck was broken and he died, for he was old and heavy. Thus he judged Israel forty years" (1 Sam 4:18). It was now time for Samuel to assume the role passed on by his mentor. Robert Bergen effectually notes Samuel's transition to prophet:

> The drumbeat of the writer is that the Lord was at work in Samuel's life—from the moment of his conception, through his early development, into his entrance into the prophetic ministry, and now in the maturation of that ministry. The Lord did not let Samuel's prophetic pronouncements "fall to the ground"; the young man's words, like those of any authentic prophet, were authoritative and trustworthy because they were the Lord's words. Samuel's success was in fact the Lord's success.[59]

Samuel was the national prophet sent by God. Bergen emphasizes, "Like Moses the prophet before him, Samuel was attested; his words had passed the Torah's test for authenticity. For the first time since Moses, Israel had a national prophet."[60]

In closing this section on Eli and Samuel, it is reasonable to review how God used a broken individual for His purpose. Eli, as noted earlier, was flawed in his role, as demonstrated by his lack of leadership with his sons. When Samuel entered the scene, Eli was willing and able to raise Samuel correctly as a priest and eventually as a prophet.[61] Much can be learned from Eli's mistakes and his work with Samuel. For his mistakes, we understand that without God as the priority, Eli experienced the challenges and calamities that can befall one who ignores God and makes poor decisions for themselves and their family. Learning from Eli's mistakes, one can make the right decision and turn away from their sin, striving to seek God's plan and purpose above all else in their life. Sadly, Eli put

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[59] Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 88.

[60] Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 88–89.

[61] For a discussion of Eli's failings as a father and priest, see Peter J. Leithart, *A House for My Name: A Survey of the Old Testament* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2000), 125.

his sons before God and faced the consequences for his actions. Looking forward, we all need to remember to put God first in our lives. This helps us have a proper outlook, helps us as shepherds, and helps us be examples in our community. Regardless of the stage in life or sins of the past, through Christ we can turn from our sin and seek God's purpose in our lives. Similar to how God used Eli with Samuel, God can use anyone's experience to help others in the community and ultimately bring glory to God as his plan is accomplished.

Paul and Timothy

The apostle Paul chose Timothy as his protégé, asking Timothy to join his second missionary journey when they were in Lystra. This initiated a long, rewarding, and meaningful relationship between Paul and Timothy. Cliff Kvidahl describes their meeting "at Lystra, when Paul chose Timothy to accompany him on his second missionary journey. He was likely selected due to his outstanding character" (Acts 16:2).[62] Their relationship lasted until Paul's imprisonment and death. According to Scripture, Timothy was a dutiful mentee and supported Paul until the end, including bringing things to Paul while imprisoned in Rome, as Paul requested, "When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments" (2 Tim 4:13).

This section will review Paul and Timothy's relationship as mentor and mentee. Paul provides an excellent example of mentoring by example, including following each step of the coaching cycle to support and grow Timothy for his vocation as a pastor and missionary. Paul and Timothy's relationship was a commitment by both individuals and lasted the remainder of Paul's life. Their commitment serves as an example to everyone engaged in mentoring and discipleship.

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[62] Cliff Kvidahl, "Timothy," in *LBD*.

Paul's Qualifications

Paul spoke multiple languages and was well-educated. Richard Losch notes, "Saul was something of an exception. He was obviously fluent in Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic, and probably also Latin."[63] Paul was trained by respected individuals who were experts in their field. Paul himself explains, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors" (Acts 22:3). Gamaliel's training was well known, and he was often considered the most desirable teacher to have in Jerusalem. Alexander Whyte suggests that "perhaps the very finest mind that had been born among men since the beginning of the world entered on the study of Old Testament theology when Saul of Tarsus sat down at Gamaliel's feet."[64] Paul was no ordinary student, and Gamaliel was no ordinary teacher. Gamaliel was "a leader of the tribe of Manasseh and one of the great rabbinic teachers of the first century."[65] As a result of his training, Paul was qualified in the Scriptures and considered an expert. Losch asserts, "Saul was therefore a true scholar of Torah and the Jewish faith."[66] Paul's additional credentials in the Jewish faith included "being a Pharisee. He was a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee" (Acts 23:6).[67] He was also a high priest of notoriety. Paul explains, "I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as the high priest and all the Council can themselves testify" (Acts 22:4–5).

Paul's birthplace was significant as a great industrial city. Whyte elaborates, "Paul was proud of his birthplace, as he might very well be. For Tarsus was a great city in

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[63] Richard R. Losch, *All the People in the Bible: An A–Z Guide to the Saints, Scoundrels, and Other Characters in Scripture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 333.

[64] Alexander Whyte, *Bible Characters*, vol. 5, *Stephen to Timothy* (Edinburgh: Oliphant Anderson and Ferrier, 1901), 100.

[65] Losch, *All the People in the Bible*, 492.

[66] Losch, *All the People in the Bible*, 333.

[67] Losch, *All the People in the Bible*, 333.

a day of great cities." [68] Considering his qualifications, it is apparent that Paul was no ordinary Jew. He was a priest, a pharisee, and well-educated. Although he was from a major city, he traveled widely and could communicate across the region in multiple languages. Paul was clearly an authority and qualified for his vocation.

The final component of Paul's qualifications is calling out by Christ. Paul explained his encounter with Christ. "I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, "'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' I replied, 'Who are you, Lord?'" Then he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting' (Acts 22: 7–8). Eckhard J. Schnabel points out the significance of Paul's declaration: "Paul informs the Jews standing in front of him that he has personally met Jesus of Nazareth."[69] Schnabel continues, "Paul informs the Jews standing in front of him that he has personally met Jesus of Nazareth—after he had been executed and while his followers were being persecuted for proclaiming that Jesus had risen from the dead."[70] Paul's authority is from God.

Engagement of Timothy

Paul had the opportunity to choose Timothy because of similar backgrounds and circles of influence in their lives. Paul had occasion to meet Timothy in an environment where he was able to learn about Timothy and his reputation. The book of Acts reveals, "Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him" (Acts 16:1–2). Paul was so impressed with Timothy that he desired to bring him on his future missionary journey (Acts 16:3). Jay Adams writes that "Timothy, who had become a believer on the first trip to Lystra,

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[68] Whyte, *Stephen to Timothy*, 98.

[69] Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, exp. ed., ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 903.

[70] Schnabel, *Acts*, 903.

took the place of Mark as Paul's faithful companion."[71] As the relationship unfolds, one learns "Timothy would be true to the end,"[72] indicating a committed relationship with the willingness to invest in one another.

Timothy's reputation, faith, and communication skills also provided a pragmatic reason for Paul to engage Timothy. Beyond their similar backgrounds, Timothy had the potential to add to the work of spreading the gospel. Timothy's "Jewish and Greek background would grant him broad cultural access"[73] when Paul and Timothy would travel in the region. Here, one observes an important component of Paul's selection of Timothy for ministry: Paul identified Timothy's willingness to engage in and be part of Paul's journey. Alberto Valdés remarks, "Paul saw the benefit of having Timothy's assistance, and so he wanted to have him go on with him. To that end Paul took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who resided in that region."[74] Certainly, circumcision was not required of Timothy, yet he understood the benefit of making some personal changes and sacrifices to assist Paul in the goals of his missionary journeys. Timothy was willing to participate and possessed the skills to add value in the future. Whyte comments on Paul's encouragement to Timothy to read and be prepared: "Reading in Timothy's day would mean to him very much what is nowadays called expository preaching or lecturing, as we say in Scotland."[75] Timothy had important skills that would also help Paul propel the gospel in the region. Paul identified Timothy as one willing to learn what was necessary to be successful; Timothy demonstrated a

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[71] Jay E. Adams, *Acts*, CCC (Cordova, TN: Institute for Nouthetic Studies, 2020), 102.

[72] Adams, *Acts*, 102.

[73] Alberto S. Valdés, "The Acts of the Apostles," in *The Grace New Testament Commentary*, vol. 1, *Matthew–Acts*, ed. Robert N. Wilkin (Denton, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 2010), 565.

[74] Valdés, "The Acts of the Apostles," 565.

[75] Alexander Whyte, *Stephen to Timothy*, 295.

commitment to apply his skills to engage in the process and willingly engaged Paul to be his mentor.

Paul Mentoring Timothy

The apostle Paul's ability to train others is typified by his mentoring and coaching relationship with Timothy. Paul's skills in training, coaching, sending, and encouraging Timothy will be illuminated in this review of verses from some of Paul's epistles. One will observe his commitment to Timothy and his attention to detail as Paul mentors Timothy to equip him for his new vocation. R. Kent Hughes explains, "If one is to fully obey the apostolic gospel directives, one must carefully instruct others as to what the apostolic deposit is and enable faithful believers to teach others."[76] Paul is as serious about the message as he is about Timothy's development.

Paul committed to training and developing Timothy by walking with him every day. Paul's work provided examples for Timothy to observe and eventually imitate. Acts 16 helps to illuminate the significant time Paul invested in Timothy. Paul committed to bringing Timothy on his missionary journeys and immediately began to provide an example of what it takes to be a missionary on his team: "As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey" (Acts 16:4). The first missionary journey with Timothy provided an opportunity for Paul to initiate the tone of the relationship. Paul was to deliver an important message from the apostles. This provided an example for Timothy to understand how to engage the new and growing churches with the appropriate message and direction when there were many questions and challenges between the Gentiles and the believing Jews.

Paul provided a front-row seat for Timothy on their first missionary trip.

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[76] R. Kent Hughes and Bryan Chapell, *1–2 Timothy and Titus: To Guard the Deposit*, Preaching the Word (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2006) 210.

Timothy was able to observe his mentor demonstrate the important task of delivering the apostles' messages. Calvin illuminates the importance and seriousness of the mission:

> They delivered them the decrees to keep. In these words Luke doth signify unto us how desirous Paul was of peace. The best and strongest bond to keep and foster peace among the churches, was to keep that which was set down by the apostles. When Paul taketh great pains about that, he taketh great heed lest through his fault there arise any trouble.[77]

Calvin shows Paul's commitment to being a faithful example to the churches and, more than just talking to Timothy, *demonstrating* to Timothy how it was to be done before asking Timothy to do the same. Truly a mentor, Paul was committed to the time and effort needed to equip Timothy. Kenneth Gangel points to the fact that Paul brought Timothy with him wherever possible. This strengthened the relationship and resulted in the equipping of Timothy for his eventual vocation as a pastor. Gangel writes, "Paul calls him a son, a fellow worker, and includes Timothy whenever possible in his itinerant ministry before ultimately placing him in a leadership role at Ephesus."[78] One can imagine how Paul's mentoring of Timothy grew as they traveled and worked together for many years. Ultimately, Paul's training and mentoring resulted in growing Timothy into a missionary and pastor in Ephesus.

After Timothy has had the opportunity to observe Paul in action, Paul challenges his mentee, Timothy. Paul explains, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Tim 2:2–3). Paul clearly states that he provided examples for Timothy as they walked together on their mission trips. He was a mentor with a purpose: to be an example for Timothy, to train him in a proper biblical worldview, and to work alongside him. Timothy would then

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[77] John Calvin, *Commentary upon the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Henry Beveridge (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 2:93.

[78] Kenneth O. Gangel, *Acts*, HNTC 5 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 267.

apply that worldview as an expert in his vocation.

Paul wanted Timothy to pursue his vocation with the same intensity that he observed in Paul. Knute Larson uses a sports analogy to explain the importance of training in life and in faith: "Proficiency in any sport requires a person to follow certain rules and disciplines and to develop specific skills. The drive for excellence determines the demands of training."[79] One can see why Paul chose Timothy, given his skills and willingness to take on the task. Larson ties the analogy to faith, explaining, "The Christian life demands the same determined spirit, the same focused attention, and the same disciplined practice."[80] Paul pursued excellence and demanded the same of Timothy. As Timothy watched Paul, he observed focus, determination, and disciplined practice. Paul leveraged Timothy's attitude. Further, he was committed to making sure Timothy was prepared and equipped for his vocation.

Paul's mentorship gave Timothy the key tenets to follow. Paul's demonstration as a mentor "called Timothy back to basics."[81] Paul demonstrated to Timothy the importance of "the grace of God and the instructions he had received. The apostle then proceeded to encourage Timothy to remain faithful: enduring hardship, identifying with the crucified Christ, committing to orthodox belief and behavior, disciplining his life for noble use in God's kingdom."[82] Just as Paul demonstrated the importance of relying on the Holy Spirit, he encouraged Timothy to do the same. Larson notes, "Our own relationship with Christ Jesus must be developing in trust and dependence before we can expect to influence others for his kingdom. The perpetual strength of God's grace would

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[79] Knute Larson, *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, HNTC 9 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 279.

[80] Larson, *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, 279.

[81] Larson, *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, 280.

[82] Larson, *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, 280.

enable Timothy to fulfill his tasks."[83]

Paul and Timothy were more than just student and teacher. Paul was Timothy's mentor and shepherd. He loved Timothy deeply, and Timothy loved Paul as a father. Their lifelong relationship created an environment for Timothy to become equipped by observing Paul in his vocation. It also created a bond that gave Paul the confidence to send Timothy in his place. Paul complimented Timothy and encouraged others to embrace Timothy as his messenger: "I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare" (Phil 2:20). Richard Melick sheds light on how Paul observed Timothy growing in his love of Christ and his love of others: "Paul's commendation was that Timothy had acquired a concern for others that had become second nature in its genuineness."[84] Paul was sending his mature mentee and protégé to stand in his place, confident that his training and mentorship were successful. Paul's letter to the Corinthians confirms that Timothy is a friend and a partner. Melick continues, "All the evidence suggests that Timothy was a partner in ministry, sharing Paul's commitments and burdens."[85] It is important to note that Timothy was also committed as a fellow Christian to share in Paul's burdens. Melick emphasizes, "Significantly, Paul did not commend Timothy for like desires; his word like-souled suggests that the basic life principles coincided. Apparently, for Timothy to live was Christ as well, and he conducted his affairs in that way."[86] Timothy was emulating his mentor. Melick confirms this when commenting on verses 23 and 24: "In sending Timothy, Paul sent the best he had, an

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[83] Larson, *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, 280.

[84] Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, NAC 32 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1991), 118.

[85] Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, 118.

[86] Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, 117–18.

extension of himself, and a costly gift to them. After all, they had sacrificed for him as well."[87]

Paul walked with Timothy, trusted Timothy, trained Timothy, and relied on Timothy to be his replacement. St. John Chrysostom best captures Paul's confidence in Timothy as his mentee: "Timothy is the one with me who loves you. For I might have sent others, but there was none like him. This then is that likemindedness, to love the disciples as the master loves them. Who, says he, will truly care for you, that is, as a father."[88] Paul's commitment and determination resulted in one like himself, one he trusted and loved as his son. He was more than a teacher; he was his mentor.

Paul Coaching Timothy

Paul's letters to the Philippians, Thessalonians, and Timothy include many examples of Paul following the cycle of coaching. As noted, Paul was committed to being an example and mentor to Timothy. Paul provides a detailed explanation for his mentee to see and understand the task to be implemented. His life and works, as recorded in Scripture, provide numerous examples of how to implement and use the skills properly.

Paul uses the third step in the process, trial by the mentee, when he provides his mentee with a trial opportunity, giving Timothy the opportunity to implement what Paul has taught. This is followed by Paul's critique, review, and edification. This section will detail specific examples of how Paul mentored and coached Timothy. Paul's goal was to successfully equip Timothy to engage his vocation as a missionary and pastor at Ephesus.

In his first letter to Timothy, Paul follows the coaching cycle when explaining,

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[87] Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, 119.

[88] John Chrysostom, "Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Philippians," trans. John Albert Broadus, in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. W. C. Cotton, Series 1, vol. 13, *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (New York: Christian Literature, 1889), 224.

"As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer" (1 Tim 1:3). Paul clearly and specifically sets the tone and purpose in his instruction to Timothy. Concerning Paul's initial step in the coaching process, Christopher Porter writes, "Paul explains why Timothy is in Ephesus. Timothy has been charged to maintain Paul's doctrinal position among those who are part of the fellowship."[89] As a coach, Paul has provided the details needed to understand the problem at hand.

Paul explained the expectations and entered the next step of the process by providing a demonstration of how to handle difficult situations. These examples are from his past journeys with Timothy. Paul lays the groundwork by reminding, "To Timothy, my true son in the faith" (1 Tim 1:2). As his son in the faith, Timothy has grown up observing his mentor and teacher. We know that "Timothy made a good impression on Paul and accompanied him on the second and third missionary journeys."[90] Both journeys provided the opportunity for Paul to demonstrate how Timothy was to protect the sacred Scriptures and uphold the instructions from Christ and the apostles. Noting he was a son in the faith, Paul confirms his position as Timothy's mentor. Each journey with Timothy demonstrated what Timothy is now expected to perform. Throughout his letters to Timothy, Paul relies on their past to engage the future. Paul had created an inventory of examples he could use in mentoring Timothy.

The next step of the coaching cycle is the trial itself. This was accomplished when Paul charged and encouraged Timothy to stay in Ephesus and execute what he had learned from his mentor: "As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer"

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[89] Douglas Mangum, ed., *Lexham Context Commentary: New Testament*, Lexham Context Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), s.v. "1 Ti 1:3–7."

[90] Thomas D. Lea, *1 2, Timothy*, in *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, by Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, NAC 34 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 63.

(1 Tim 1:3–4). Paul challenges Timothy to stay and confront teachers of false doctrine. He also equips Timothy for the trial. In verses 3 to 11, Paul provides the "content of the warning, the goal of the warning, and the reason for the warning concerning the purpose of the law."[91] Paul does this, knowing he has given Timothy the tools and charged him to apply what he has learned.

Paul regularly used the fourth step in the coaching process by providing critique and review for Timothy. This is evident as one reads through his letters to Timothy as well as his other epistles. The charge to stay in Ephesus was the result of feedback Paul had received. In Paul's conversation with Timothy, he charges Timothy to "stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer" (1 Tim 1:3). Paul was made aware of the problem through feedback, he understood the problem, and Paul then reviewed it with Timothy. Paul provided instructions and encouragement to confidently address the issues. "It is best to see this as Paul's reaffirmation of his appointment of Timothy to serve as his personal representative before the church."[92] In other words, Paul provides feedback and sends Timothy back to engage the problem. This not only completes the fourth step in the process but also continues the cycle as Timothy returns utilizing the information and training from Paul. When they meet again, Paul will be able to (1) receive information, provide suggestions on what to consider, (2) refer to his demonstrations in the past, and (3) send Timothy again. This process results in Timothy growing and being considered a brother and co-worker by Paul: "We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service in spreading the gospel of Christ" (1 Thess 3:2).

Paul, the mentor and coach, is the embodiment of his epistles. One observes Paul's commitment and preparation to walk with someone as a friend, example, and

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[91] Lea, *1, 2 Timothy*, 65–72.

[92] Lea, *1, 2 Timothy*, 66.

shepherd. Paul takes the time to carefully explain the importance of each task while maintaining a high level of commitment to the individual and the task of spreading the gospel. When complete, he sends Timothy.

Timothy Is Sent

Paul's second letter to Timothy includes his final charge to Timothy. Paul knows the end is near for himself, and he encourages Timothy to continue in the faith. Paul confirms his example as a mentor and confirms each step of the coaching cycle for Timothy:

> You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:10–17)

Paul recaps his example as a mentor. His teaching, his way of life, and his demonstration of his faith proved to be an example of how to proceed. Paul explained and demonstrated how to be a disciple of Christ. Paul then encouraged Timothy by referring to Timothy's successful attempts to imitate Paul, his mentor. Paul then proceeds to the fourth step: reviewing what Timothy had learned and applied. The cycle is complete, and he gives Timothy one last charge to rely on the Scriptures as a tool to teach, rebuke, correct, and train. Paul closes with encouraging words and the cycle that Timothy is to follow, just as Paul demonstrated and followed with him. John Stott explains, "Paul is reminding Timothy not simply that he has fully known or observed his doctrine and conduct, as if he were merely an impartial student or a detached observer, but that he has become a

dedicated disciple of the apostle's."[93] Timothy has completed the training and is ready to be sent. Stott continues that Timothy "made it his own, believed it, absorbed it, lived by it. Similarly, he doubtless began by watching the apostle's manner of life, but then he went on to imitate it."[94] Timothy followed his mentor, listened to his coaching, and was equipped to be sent.

Jesus Christ and the Disciples

Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, provided the perfect model of how to live. Christ's relationship with the disciples is the perfect example of how to love, shepherd, and mentor others. His examples demonstrate his love for his disciples, his desire to love and save mankind, his commitment to shepherd, and his determination to be an example for his followers. No words can begin to capture his majesty, deity, or perfection.

To begin discussing Christ in doctrinal terms, the *Lexham Bible Dictionary* describes Christ: "Jesus Christ is the incarnate Word of God, the Creator and Savior of the world, the founder of Christianity, and the sinless exemplar of its principles and practices."[95] This is possible because Christ was in the beginning and will reign forever. Christ's example as a man is the perfect example to follow.

Christ the Qualifier as Man and God

J. Lanier Burns describes Christ: "Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great."[96] The apostle Paul explains that Christ "appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the

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[93] John R. W. Stott, *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 93–94.

[94] Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 94.

[95] J. Lanier Burns, "Jesus Christ," in *LBD*.

[96] Burns, "Jesus Christ."

nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in Glory" (1 Tim 3:16). One begins to see the picture that Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man. The apostle Paul asserts,

> Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God, the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom 1:1–4)

Paul's statement has a parallel, noted in the book of Mark, when Jesus asks the question, "David himself calls him Lord. How then can he be his son?" (Mark 12:37). Though the crowd remained quiet, Thomas Parr explains, "The obvious answer is that the Messiah must be both God and man."[97] Christopher Watson notes, "Christ is the only way because Christ is both God and man; there is nothing between the believer's soul and God. To know Jesus is to know the Father."[98] To know Jesus is to know the way to God, as he is the one true mediator.

St. John Chrysostom agrees in his homily concerning 2 Corinthians 4:6 on how one sees God in Christ:

> Darkness was upon the face of the deep. And God said, Let there be light, and there was light. Howbeit then indeed He said, Let it be, and it was: but now He said nothing, but Himself became Light for us. For he said not, 'hath also now commanded,' but hath Himself shined. Therefore neither do we see sensible objects by the shining of this Light, but God Himself through Christ.[99]

Christ was both God and Man. Though the focus of this section is on Christ as a mentor, it is important to touch on the biblical and theological foundations confirming his dual nature called the Hypostatic Union.

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[97] Thomas Parr, "Mk 12:35–37," in *Lexham Context Commentary: New Testament*, ed. Douglas Mangum (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020).

[98] Christopher Watson, "2 Cor 4:1–6," in Mangum, *Lexham Context Commentary: New Testament*.

[99] John Chrysostom, "Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Second Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians," trans. Talbot B. Chambers and J. Ashworth, in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Series 1, vol. 12, *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*, ed. Philip Schaff (New York: Christian Literature, 1889), 319.

Scripture provides confirmation that Christ was fully God. Ten attributes noted in the New Testament are proof of his complete deity. The attributes begin with his divine authority (Matt 28:18). Next, he performed miracles demonstrating his deity (John 2). Third, he was able to forgive the sins of anyone who believed (Mark 2). Next, one observes Christ accepting worship, which is reserved for God, as the crowd praised him (Matt 21:9). The fifth attribute is his being God and becoming flesh (John 1:14). From the beginning of the Gospels his name Emmanuel confirmed he was "God with us" (Matt 1:23). Continuing, one reads in John 10:30 that Christ and God are one. The eighth example confirms Christ's divine nature of omniscience (John 2:25) and a second component of his nature: omnipotence (Heb 1:1–4). Finally, Christ had a perfect nature (2 Cor 5:21).

The doctrine of the Christian church has been consistent that Christ was fully God and fully man. Stephen Wellum explains,

> Throughout the ages, the church's confession has been uniform: Jesus is God the Son, the second person of the eternal Trinity, who at a specific point in history took to himself a human nature and was born as Jesus of Nazareth in order to accomplish our redemption. In the language of the Chalcedonian Definition, our Lord Jesus is God the Son incarnate—one person who subsists in two natures, fully God and fully man—who alone is Lord and Savior and worthy of our worship, trust, and obedience.[100]

Christ came as God to fulfill what only God could do. He did it as a man, and it was apparent to those who knew Christ and walked with Christ. Wellum points out that "the apostles placed what Jesus did and who Jesus said he was within the epochal-covenantal storyline of Scripture and identified him as the Son of God come as a man to do what only God can do and all that God requires of man."[101] Christ was fully God who had come to fulfill Scripture as fully man.

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[100] Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 39–40.

[101] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 188.

Scripture also confirms Christ's identity as fully man. Ten examples from the New Testament begin with Christ having a human birth (Matt 2:1). [102] Christ also lived in a town and grew up in a small town named Nazareth (Matt 2:23). Christ had a human body complete with all the requirements and limitations a human has to manage. He needed water as he became thirsty (John 4:7) and would get tired and need rest (John 4:6). Christ had to eat to survive, which is memorialized in Matthew 21:18. Christ was also an emotional person, demonstrating compassion (Matt 9:36) and sorrow (John 11:35). Finally, Romans 5:18–19 captures Christ as the perfect example of what it means to be a human. Because of his perfection, we can have eternal life.

Church doctrine also supports Christ being fully man. The Apostles Creed not only confirms his deity, but also details his human nature. Wellum suggests, "The outer life of Jesus demonstrates that he had a body and grew and developed like all other human beings. For example, Jesus spoke of his body, head, hands, feet, blood, and bones, both before and after his resurrection."[103] Christ fully understood what it was to be man.

Donald Macleod captures Christ's humanity when he explains Jesus "had a human mind, subject to the same laws of perception, memory, logic and development as our own."[104] Christ learned to understand local laws, read Scripture, and engage in learning, just as anyone would learn. This included developing relationships with others, respecting authority, and developing conclusions. Finally, when reviewing the scriptural evidence, Wayne Grudem concludes, "All of these texts indicate that Jesus did not temporarily become man, he lives forever not just as the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, but also as Jesus, the man who was born of Mary, and as Christ, the

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[102] GotQuestions.org, "How Was Jesus Fully God and Fully Man?," GotQuestions.org, April 1, 2002, https://www.gotquestions.org/.

[103] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 211.

[104] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 215.

Messiah and Savior of his people. Jesus will remain fully God and fully man, yet one person, forever."[105]

Establishing the foundation of Christ as fully God and fully man is particularly important when discussing Christ as a mentor. The previous sections of this paper established a mentor's credibility based on an individual's spiritual credentials as a man seeking God. Be it Moses who spoke with God to lead people to the promised land, Eli, who was a priest who mentored Samuel in the way to recognize God's voice, or Paul, the apostle appointed by God, each was a man seeking God. Christ flips the script. Christ is God, in the form of man, seeking man: "He so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Christ gave it all to love mankind with his perfect example of love and obedience. Christ is the ultimate mentor who demonstrates love, commitment, dedication, and shepherds one in the way of God.

For Christ, who is God, it is important to understand that perspective. By confirming the fully human condition that Christ lived, he becomes the only perfect and reliable example of how to live and love others fully. He knows how to commune and pray to God in human form. He fully understands every challenge, temptation, and difficult condition any person could know or experience. "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin" (Heb 4:15). Why is this important? Because he lived a life and died just as any human would. But more, he rose from the dead to overcome the human condition. What better mentor to have in life? The balance of this paper will attempt to capture how he mentored the disciples. After that is explained, the bigger story is unveiled. His resurrection from the dead provides his perfect mentoring and shepherding to all who believe.

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[105] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 543.

Christ Engages the Disciples

The books of Matthew and Mark capture the moment that Christ began to engage the disciples. First, he engaged Peter and his brother, saying, "Come follow me" (Matt 4:19; Mark 1:17). The book of Luke provides a few more details that may demonstrate why Christ chose Peter and Andrew. We learn that Christ walked up to the shore near Peter and Andrew and "said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch'" (Luke 5:4). Christ asked this question after a long night with a poor catch. "Simon (Peter) answered, 'Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets'" (Luke 5:5). Once completed, Simon and Andrew hauled in a huge catch that required the help of many. "When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!'" (Luke 5:8). At this point, Christ invited Peter to follow him: "Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.' So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him" (Luke 5:10–11).

Christ begins by walking into their world and speaking to them. He makes a request, and Peter hesitates but gives Christ the benefit of the doubt and casts the nets, seemingly to respect Christ's request. What follows is an immediate recognition of who Christ is and Peter's confession of his sinful nature and need for salvation. What better mentee to have when seeking those to spread the gospel? Peter had no idea what his future vocation would be, yet he followed Christ in faith.

Calvin explains, "Peter and his companions, therefore, readily conclude that a *take*, so far beyond the ordinary quantity, was not accidental, but was bestowed on them by a divine interposition."[106] This individual was special and worthy to follow. Calvin continues, suggesting that Peter may have known Christ to be a teacher but did not yet understand him as the Christ: "Yet it cannot be denied, that he highly esteemed Christ,

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[106] John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, trans. William Pringle (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 1:240.

and had the highest respect for his authority."[107] After the haul, Peter begins to understand Christ is more than a teacher. Calvin captures the moment, explaining, "Although men are earnest in seeking the presence of God, yet, as soon as God appears, they must be struck with terror, and almost rendered lifeless by dread and alarm, until he administers consolation."[108] Peter is certainly struck, and Christ immediately offers a consolation. Peter and Andrew have been chosen. They show respect for Christ, humble admission of their sinful nature, and a desire to seek a true relationship with Christ.

Darrell Bock captures the calling of the disciples: "Jesus' ministry centers on his disciples. Luke 5:1–11 details how Jesus confirms the call of four disciples to serve with him. In this passage, miracle, teaching and discipleship form a collage that explains mission and who is qualified for it."[109] Peter and his brother started the process of demonstrating what it takes to be a disciple. As a mentor, one should look for individuals who demonstrate similar traits—a desire to know the Lord and a humble heart that approaches the task with reverence. Bock frames this condition when speaking of Peter's role and Christ's role: "Simon, for his part, knows that he is a sinner who is not worthy to experience the benefits of God's power and presence. There is no presumption that God owes him anything. Jesus, exemplifying God's grace, makes it clear that such a humble approach to God is exactly what God will use."[110] Christ engaged the disciples and changed their vocation from fishermen to fishers of men. The engagement was complete.

Christ Mentors the Disciples

Christ was the original mentor and shepherd. He walked with the disciples, did

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[107] Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, 1:241.

[108] Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, 1:241–42.

[109] Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, IVPNTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), s.v. "Lk 5:1–11."

[110] Bock, *Luke*, s.v. "Lk 5:1–11."

everyday life with the disciples, and faced challenges, disappointments, and victories with the disciples. He was a man walking with them through life as a demonstration of how to live and understand their purpose and vocation. The New Testament is full of examples of Christ's mentoring the disciples. For purposes of the paper, the example of mentoring will be taken from Matthew 13.

Christ was fully engaged in his ministry and mentoring of the disciples during the events of Matthew 13. Christ spent his time with the disciples, providing examples of how to engage others and teach them how to have a relationship with God; he took the time to explain his actions along the way. The Parable of the Sower is one such example. Christ was in a location that provided the opportunity to speak to a crowd. "That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables" (Matt 13:1–3).

Christ took the time to speak to crowds, demonstrating how to engage larger crowds. For mentoring purposes, it is also important to note that he provided time for the disciples to better understand his purpose. The disciples heard the same message as the crowd and had questions. Christ listened to them and directly answered their questions. Though he was delivering an important message to the crowd, he was also laying the groundwork for the disciples to understand their role and vocation. When the disciples asked about the parable, "He replied, because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them" (Matt 13:10–11). Christ continues with a broader message that confirms not only their understanding but why he is doing it. Christ is patiently teaching the disciples who he is and why he has come; he answers their questions and provides the bigger picture of fulfilling Scripture: "This is why I speak to them in parables: Though seeing they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah" (Matt 13:13–14).

Leon Morris notes that Christ changes venue. This, too, provides additional

context for the disciples to better understand his goal of reaching those in the synagogue and those outside. “This chapter marks something of a turning point for Matthew. Until now he has pictured for us Jesus teaching in synagogues, but here he speaks of him as teaching on a beach. Increasingly Jesus will forsake the synagogue and teach the people out of doors.”[111] Morris also notes that there is another message in Matthew. Christ was not only sharing the parable, but he was also providing a sketch of himself in the parable. As a mentor to the disciples, this would increase the meaning of his message. Morris suggests, “Later in the chapter the sower of the good seed is the Son of man (v. 37). Clearly Matthew wants the reader to see that it is Jesus who is the sower.”[112]

When the apostles asked their mentor, Christ, why he spoke in parables, Christ explained prophetically and practically. Certainly, one can see the fulfillment of Isaiah that Christ points out, but he also provides some practical advice for his disciples. Morris suggests, “The parable is a powerful method of teaching, but perhaps some measure of commitment is required in hearers if they are really to understand what a parable is saying.”[113] Christ helps his disciples see more than the message. He is teaching them that commitment is required to follow him and be equipped for their future vocation. Though the parables are difficult to understand, they provide a platform for someone to ponder the truth of Christ. When one asks questions and shows interest, they are welcome to ask more questions and grow.

Craig Keener suggests the disciples demonstrated a commitment to learn. Their questions confirmed their commitment to Christ. “The disciples alone had pressed close enough to Jesus to understand the rest of what he was giving them. To those who had some revelation, more revelation would be given (Mt 13:11–12). In other words, the

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[111] Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1992), 333.

[112] Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 335.

[113] Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 339.

disciples alone proved to be good soil (v. 23)."[114]

Christ was preparing the disciples for their future vocation. He provided a life example with his ministry and engaged the disciples with any questions or help they may need. He loved them, walked with them, and made the commitment to be their shepherd. Soon, he would begin to coach the disciples and provide them with opportunities to grow in understanding and faith.

Christ Coaching the Disciples

Matthew 6 captures Christ as he touches each of the four steps of the coaching cycle. As a mentor, Christ has demonstrated how to be a missionary for God. He has spoken to individuals and crowds, properly challenged the status quo, and demonstrated his love and deity through his miracles. Now, it is time to send the disciples on a missionary journey. "Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits" (Matt 6:6–7). While Christ demonstrates how to move from village to village, he calls the disciples and, in the first step of the coaching cycle, explains his plans for them and sends them out. Christ further equips them for their journey by giving them authority over impure spirits. The second step of the coaching cycle is complete as his disciples fully engage in tasks pointing toward their future vocation. Part of Christ's coaching includes specific instruction for their journey to equip them for what is coming and how to respond correctly to the situations that would occur. Jesus said, "Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra shirt. Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them" (Mark 6:8–11). These instructions had two

[114] Craig S. Keener, *Matthew*, IVPNTC 1 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), s.v. "Mt 13:10–17."

purposes. First, the instructions sent them on a mission, which comprised part of the third step of the coaching cycle. The instructions also facilitated the feedback and critique after returning from their mission trip. In the final step, Christ reviewed their experience. Although Scripture does not provide significant detail on his feedback, Christ completed this process as described in Mark 6:30, "The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught." The cycle was completed, and the disciples were one step closer to being sent on their future vocation.

James Brooks agrees, "Jesus sent out the Twelve to spread the gospel to more people than he alone could reach and to prepare the disciples for their later mission."[115] R. Alan Cole develops the mission a bit more when he captures training and sending as preparation for their future vocation: "It was indeed part of the very purpose for which he had initially called them (3:14), for this was both that they should stay in his presence (intensive teaching) and that he might then send them out (extensive evangelism)."[116]

Like much of Christ's teaching, the mission had more than one objective. Sending out the disciples in pairs encouraged teamwork and community. Gathering his disciples upon their return confirms the importance of community and the need for feedback and encouragement. Christ's instructions also encouraged the disciples to rely on their faith in God to move them through the mission. Finally, Christ gave instructions on how to properly deal with difficult situations that may occur in the context of the culture in which they were immersed.

When the apostles returned, Christ spent time reviewing their trip. Cole captures the spirit of mentoring in a Christian community: "There is a delightful naivete in the account of the apostles' reporting to Jesus, not only what they have done, but also

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[115] James A. Brooks, *Mark*, NAC 23 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1991), 101.

[116] R. Alan Cole, *Mark*, TNTC 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 171–72.

what they have said."[117] The disciples shared their experiences and observations from their assignment with their mentor. Cole continues, "This was true wisdom on the part of Jesus in allowing them time to unburden themselves to him, before even suggesting a time of rest."[118] One can observe the love of Christ, who takes the time to listen, edify, encourage, and suggest what is best—some rest. The wisdom presented is something all mentors should strive to achieve. This is echoed by Jay Adams when describing the disciples' return: "They gave Jesus a full report of their activities and of the results (v. 30). Jesus recognized that they had worked hard and endured much, so He urged them to rest a while. They had not even had an opportunity to eat since they returned (v. 31). He cares about such matters."[119] Adams highlights that a mentor should be aware and concerned about the whole person, just as Christ was concerned about their being tired and hungry. Yes, Christ understood. He was fully man.

One can observe the perfect model of coaching in Christ. He took the time to explain and provide demonstrations his mentees would understand. He gave them a chance to succeed and learn from their experiences, both in life and faith. Christ was a man walking with them, experiencing all they were experiencing. Finally, he gave loving and genuine feedback while caring for their needs. Christ is the perfect mentor, the shepherd of his flock.

Christ Sending the Disciples

There is no better example of a mentor sending his mentee than when Christ sent his disciples with the Great Commission. The mentoring and coaching were complete, and it was time for the mentees to engage in their new vocation. Further, like

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[117] Cole, *Mark*, 178.

[118] Cole, *Mark*, 178.

[119] Jay E. Adams, *The Gospels of Matthew and Mark*, CCC (Cordova, TN: Institute for Nouthetic Studies, 2020), 261.

the model of a perfect mentor, Christ remained available to listen, encourage, and support their efforts in the future. In community, the disciples were sent confidently with an understanding of what they were to do, experience provided by the mentor, and confidence in his being available to them. "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age'" (Matt 28:18–20). Leon Morris describes the encouragement Christ gives his disciples as he sends them. "He is making clear that the limitations that applied throughout the incarnation no longer apply to him. He has supreme authority throughout the universe."[120] They can confidently move forward, knowing he is available to each of them.

Conclusion

Jay Adams captures the role of the mentee becoming the mentor. It is a cycle that Christ challenges each of us to engage—to pass on what we have learned to others who are equipped and willing to learn. Adams suggests, "Interestingly this call to evangelize is an educational call. Because He had been given all authority in heaven and earth, they were to go and make disciples (learners, pupils) from all nations."[121] The mentees were to become mentors. To grow, learn, and share the love of Christ with others. To walk with them, guard them, guide them, teach them, and send them. To be shepherds. All mentors should strive to replicate the model of Christ. To go further, we should all model Christ in every part of our lives.

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[120] Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 745–46.

[121] Adams, *The Gospels of Matthew and Mark*, 215.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL, PRACTICAL, AND HISTORICAL ISSUES SUPPORTING A BIBLICAL APPROACH TO MENTORING AND COACHING

Chapter 2 concluded with the primary description and challenge for mentors to be good shepherds. Shepherds imitate Christ in all aspects of their lives. The scope of the mentor-shepherd role—encompassing teaching, training, coaching, and counseling—suggests that this is a significant commitment of time and effort, as a mentor who is a shepherd is in a role that touches each part of the church body. As in the four examples presented in the previous chapter, the time commitment in a shepherding relationship can be long-term and often a lifetime relationship. This does not suggest that all mentoring relationships are lifelong commitments. The point is to develop a strong relationship over time with the goal of creating future leaders and disciples of Christ. It takes time to grow a relationship, and one can see the benefit of time when considering the examples in chapter 2. Like the examples in chapter 2, today's shepherd demonstrates a personal relationship with Christ as he leads others to follow Christ.

A common term from today's vernacular for the mentor-shepherd relationship is discipleship. Like the examples, it takes time and commitment to facilitate the disciple's growth and development. The shepherd or mentor commits the time, patience, and training to demonstrate what it means to be a disciple of Christ. Christ's form of discipleship was different from any other form of teacher or mentor during the first century. It was a "unique form inaugurated with his announcement of the arrival of the

Kingdom of God summoning men and women to be his followers."[1] It was a form that not only worshiped Christ but continued by having all future disciples worship and imitate Christ instead of their teacher or mentor. The primary components included "his call to discipleship, recognition of Christ's identity, obedience to the call, counting the cost of allegiance to Christ, and losing one's life as they find another life in the family of God."[2] Each step was the process of being a disciple to Christ and is still the process of being a follower and disciple of Christ today. As a result, it is the mentor's role, as a shepherd, to provide an example and direct the disciples to acknowledge, worship, and imitate Christ, the perfect teacher. The mentor as shepherd accomplishes this task through his teaching, training, coaching, and wise counsel.

When contrasting the examples of chapter 2 with many of today's Western church models, one can see how discipleship, shepherding, or mentoring is often perceived as short-term and transactional. Though the three words are often used interchangeably, for purposes of this chapter and looking forward, the mentor is defined as *a shepherd who, as a disciple of Christ, will disciple others to be imitators of Christ*. I have observed that today's mentors often engage in a four-step process of engagement, salvation, training, and sending. Though this may have the potential to create small groups around a church, it also has the potential to limit connectedness and accountability. Elliott Clark explains, "Many Western churches tend to treat ministry as primarily informational and transactional. But it's not enough to teach content or to transfer responsibility. We also need to model, mentor, and *be with* each other."[3] It is more than a once-a-week meeting or phone call. Being with one another "happens most

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[1] M. J. Wilkins, "Disciples and Discipleship," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 522, Ebook.

[2] Wilkins, "Disciples and Discipleship," 522.

[3] Elliot Clark, "Is Your Discipleship Model Missing Something?," The Gospel Coalition, January 4, 2023, https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/discipleship-model-missing/.

naturally in the context of the local church and through hospitality, where believers fulfill these responsibilities with one another."[4] The emphasis is on spending time and crafting lasting relationships that build the necessary connectedness and accountability.

Even secular scholarship reviewed by Steven Jones's research confirms the importance of a trusting relationship between a mentor and a mentee. Steven Jones's research reinforced the importance and value of a strong relationship. His research "indicates that mentoring with a relation component is a very effective leadership development tool."[5] He continues, "Close communal relationships built on mutually earned trust and modeled in authentic behavior led to the participants developing a strong leader identity and a desire to lead and influence others."[6] Interestingly, the anticipated outcome matches that of the shepherd with his disciples. The process is technically the same for faith-based and secular mentoring. The Christian contribution is the love provided by the mentor in the process of explaining and demonstrating the desired behavior. Like Christ, the mentor can demonstrate as one who has walked the same path as the mentee and provide compassionate insight as the mentee grows. It is bigger than the skill and focused on personal development that can only come through genuine love and demonstration.

As the church endeavors to facilitate discipleship and cultivate future leaders, the church should recognize the eternal value of central and binding relationships formed through the mentoring process. Christopher Sarver's thesis emphasizes the need for cultivating future leaders through shepherding: "The task of shepherding and developing the next generation of Christian leaders for the church is no more pressing than doing so

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[4] Clark, "Is Your Discipleship Model Missing Something?"

[5] Steven L. B. Jones, "Compelled to Lead: From Mentee to Mentor—A Narrative Study of Leadership Development within a Relationship-Focused Mentoring Model" (PhD diss., Regent University, 2024), 131.

[6] Jones, "Compelled to Lead."

among those currently in the life stage of young adults under 30."[7] Sarver makes the point that this group needs examples of "Christ-centered followership"[8] to develop future leaders. Mentors model Christ-centered followership by explaining, demonstrating, sending, and providing counsel over time. This creates generational engagement, organizational stability, and long-term accountability as members are connected in lasting relationships. One important benefit is an organizational change that becomes evolutionary and has the potential for less disruption. Leadership is consistent, and the church organization can avoid the revolutionary change one often observes when a church has a leadership change.

Shepherd as Counselor

Inevitably, a mentor's role can touch every part of a mentee's life, particularly in the area of biblical counsel. Counseling is integral in Scripture; one need not look long to understand the importance of good counsel. Proverbs 11:14 supports an abundance of counselors, and Proverbs 19:20–21 demonstrates that wise counsel helps one seek God's best for their life. The point is that a mentor will certainly counsel. Brad Hambrick believes it to be so vital that he emphasizes, "One of the most important roles of the Pastor of Counseling is to equip small group leaders and members to effectively care for one another in the body of Christ."[9] A recent publication by Sharon Daloz Parks, directed to a secular audience, supports the task of engaging in significant situations in life that require wise counsel from an older and wiser individual: "Mentoring, in its classic sense, is an intentional and appropriately reciprocal relationship between two individuals, a

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[7] Christopher Alan Sarver, "Be the Example: Christ-Centered Followership in the Pastoral Epistles" (EdD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 5.

[8] Sarver, "Be the Example," 13.

[9] Brad Hambrick, "Biblical Counseling and Small Group Ministry, Part 1: At the Corner of Small Groups and Biblical Counseling," Biblical Counseling Coalition, November 7, 2011, https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/2011/11/07/biblical-counseling-and-small-group-ministry-part-1-at-the-corner-of-small-groups-and-biblical-counseling/.

younger adult and an older, wiser figure who assists the younger person in learning the ways of life."[10] In both secular and faith-based environments, we see the value of wisdom and counsel as part of mentoring or being a shepherd. Robert Jones emphasizes that small-group leaders will engage in counseling: "Group leaders and mentors provide formative discipling and spiritual direction and handle simple counseling situations with their group members or with mentees assigned to them."[11] Hambrick reminds us that "small groups intersect with many other ministries of the church."[12] Therefore, the importance of counseling in different types of mentoring relationships, whether group or individual, affects not only individual life but congregational life.

Recent scholarship by Daniel Kim reiterates the value of one-on-one counseling and its impact on the larger body. Daniel Kim explains that "the assigned shepherd [pastor] should also train and work together with lay leaders to effectively care for the congregation because a pastor cannot effectively minister to the flock alone."[13] He continues, "Without such a pluralistic and mutualistic pastoral structure, adequately caring for congregation members becomes difficult because the spiritual situation of church members remains unknown to shepherds."[14] The mentor or small group leader is critical for the care of the congregation as it includes the role of the shepherd to teach, train, coach, and counsel.

It is important to note that the mentoring relationship provides counsel to the disciple, and thankfully, there is a growing recognition of the importance of counseling in

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[10] Sharon Daloz Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Emerging Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2019), 177, Kindle.

[11] Robert D. Jones, "Who Can and Should Do Biblical Counseling?," in *The Gospel for Disordered Lives: An Introduction to Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, by Robert D. Jones, Kristin L. Kellen, and Rob Green (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2021), 24.

[12] Hambrick, "Biblical Counseling and Small Group Ministry."

[13] Daniel S. G. Kim, "The Pastor as a Biblical Counselor and Equipper of Biblical Counselors within the Local Church" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2024), 100.

[14] Kim, "The Pastor as a Biblical Counselor and Equipper," 100.

the discipleship process. Bob Kellemen and Stephen Viars describe discipleship "as a broader term that applies to the one-on-one Christ-centered mentoring that older Christians do with younger believers as captured in Titus 2."[15] They then highlight that "counseling is a subset of discipleship and deals with the more problematic and difficult aspect of life."[16] The growth in the need for biblical counseling has revealed that the personnel in a church-based counseling center may not be adequately equipped or have the time to counsel every situation that may occur. A vision of complementing a counseling initiative with properly equipped small group mentors helps the community get involved with soul care. Bob Kellemen views a healthy small group as a "complimentary approach to counseling because trained staff and counselors will never meet all the needs of the church."[17] The point is that "good discipleship includes elements of good counsel and good counsel includes elements of good discipleship."[18] The mentor will be in a position to counsel everyday life situations. This does not replace a counseling center but rather complements its efforts. What evolves is a small group environment in which the mentor walks with the disciple and will undoubtedly encounter a counseling situation as part of the mentoring process. Often, the mentor is equipped to manage the situation, but occasionally, the situation is more acute, and the mentor guides the mentee to more focused care in a counseling center. In layman's terms, the shepherd helps peel potatoes, but the counseling center helps peel the onions. The two work together and care for the saints.

What becomes apparent is that mentoring in the church is discipleship, discipleship involves shepherding, and shepherding is integral to counseling. The words

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[15] Robert W. Kellemen and Stephen Viars, *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling: Changing Lives with God's Changeless Truth* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2021), 248–49.

[16] Kellemen and Viars, *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, 249.

[17] Bob Kellemen, ed., *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God's Care through God's People* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 69, Kindle.

[18] Kellemen and Viars, *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, 249–51.

discipleship, shepherding, counseling, and mentoring are frequently used interchangeably when individuals discuss counseling and discipleship. Each word, however, has some nuances from a mentoring and shepherding perspective that deserve clarity. This understanding will help one know how they are similar, how they relate to one another, and how an attitude of shepherding is critical to being a mentor.

Counseling, according to Bob Kellemen, is "Christ-centered personal ministry that depends upon the Holy Spirit to relate God's inspired truth about people, problems, and solutions to human suffering and sin to equip people to exalt and enjoy God and to love others."[19] Kellemen continues with a focus on Christ as the model, explaining that counseling is "cultivating conformity to Christ and communion with Christ and the Body of Christ leading to a community of one-another disciple-makers."[20] This definition of counseling suggests a personal relationship that looks at a counselee's situation from a biblical perspective and depends on the Holy Spirit to relate God's truth about a situation or condition. The counselor is a shepherd and mentor throughout the process of guiding a disciple.

Jay Adams provides a more procedural outline of counseling, explaining that the role of the counselor is to "direct, instruct, impart understanding, show the right path, teach knowledge, and indicate the way of discernment."[21] Summarizing Isaiah 40:13–14, Adams explains that "God has set forth the nature of true counseling."[22] Adams's point is that "God demonstrates the steps that he would anticipate a counselor to follow."[23] In this

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[19] BCC STAFF, "BCC Weekend Resource: Six Definitions of Biblical Counseling," Biblical Counseling Coalition, July 20, 2013, https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/2013/07/20/bcc-weekend-resource-six-definitions-of-biblical-counseling/.

[20] BCC STAFF, "BCC Weekend Resource: Six Definitions of Biblical Counseling."

[21] Jay E. Adams, *Committed to Craftsmanship: In Biblical Counseling* (Cordova, TN: Institute for Nouthetic Studies, 2019), 29.

[22] Adams, *Committed to Craftsmanship*, 28.

[23] Adams, *Committed to Craftsmanship*, 28.

second definition, we see a procedural approach as opposed to a personal ministry engagement and discussion, as noted in the first definition. I suggest that it takes both definitions to create counseling. In so doing, the mentor develops a personal relationship complete with the commitment and agreement to walk with an individual through a process of discovery and personal growth. This also sounds congruent with our next word: discipleship.

Discipleship is defined by Wayne Mack and John MacArthur as "the process of passing the truths of God's Word that one has learned and applied on to another believer."[24] They continue with an emphasis on commitment when they explain that "it takes time," as discipling an individual "may involve the investment of years of teaching, training, encouraging, and rebuking." As with counseling, discipleship's "goal during this process is to help the disciple grow to maturity in Christ that is, to walk consistently according to God's Word." Again, like counseling, the mentor "equips the individual so that ultimately that person in turn begins to build biblical principles into the lives of others by adhering to 2 Tim. 2:2." What appears to be the only difference in the definitions of discipleship and counseling is the nuance in the anticipated outcome. One is to address a specific issue biblically, and the other is to grow and live biblically. Both require a shepherd to guide them through the process. The only differences are the reasons for the initial engagement and the length of the engagement. Given the congruence, it is easy to see why the terms are often used interchangeably in the counseling and discipleship space. But what pulls them together? I believe it is the word shepherd and its role in the process.

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[24] Carey Hardy, quoted in "Frequently Asked Questions about Biblical Counseling," in *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, ed. John MacArthur and Wayne A. Mack, John MacArthur Pastor's Library (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 250, Kindle. Subsequent quotes in this paragraph are also contributed by Carey Hardy.

The Shepherd Metaphor

In Old Testament terms, the shepherd refers to one "responsible for leading, feeding, protecting, and procuring rest for their flock."[25] Often used metaphorically in the Old and New Testaments, it has been used to represent kings, leaders of groups, Christ, and God. Thomas Golding suggests that "shepherding is one of the most frequent and powerful images in the Bible."[26] The role is enhanced in the New Testament as the "writers present the act of shepherding as teaching."[27] This provides a component of leadership, empowerment, and the ability to help others. Another valuable component of shepherding is added when the New Testament refers to Christ as the Good Shepherd. This additional description of a shepherd incorporates the qualities demonstrated by Christ that create a loving and caring shepherd who provides for his flock: "Seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt 9:36). In Christ, we see that he "suffered with the needy, felt for them, and cared for them. His compassion permeated all his attempts to meet their needs."[28]

The term shepherd connotes an engaged and compassionate individual with a genuine interest in walking with the flock, caring for the flock, and teaching the flock. With 2 Timothy 3:16 in view, the shepherd can teach, rebuke, encourage, and equip the follower of Christ. To be a counselor, one must be a shepherd. To disciple someone, one must be a shepherd. To mentor someone, one must be a shepherd. Those who want to help individuals understand the importance of shepherding and its application to

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[25] Matthew Montonini, "Shepherd," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), Logos Bible Software 10.

[26] Thomas A. Golding, "The Imagery of Shepherding in the Bible, Part 1," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 163, no. 649 (January 2006): 18.

[27] Wayne Baxter, "Shepherding," in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

[28] Brandon Ridley, "Shephelah," in Barry, *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, Logos Bible Software 10.

discipleship, mentoring, and coaching methodology should guide them to understand the principles of being a shepherd and counselor. The result will be an understanding of the shepherd's role as mentor and counselor and the shepherd as one who equips disciples to shepherd others.

The meaning of the term shepherd has a richness and depth that can be diminished when individuals focus on the words discipleship, mentoring, pastor, and counseling. As Golding notes, "Many people today overlook the rich shepherd imagery intended in the word pastor."[29] Both pastors and mentors join individuals in their journey and walk beside them as shepherds. They do not simply meet and provide counsel; they meet, provide counsel, and develop relationships with the disciples under their care.

I believe the concept of walking alongside the individual as a shepherd is sometimes lost when considering the modern concept of discipleship and mentoring. It means doing one's best to walk with a disciple and be part of his life just as the shepherd keeps a watchful eye over his sheep. In the evening, the shepherd counts each sheep at night as it returns home. The imagery is of a shepherd with his flock in all situations, who "watched them all day, taking care that none of the sheep strayed, and if any for a time eluded his watch and wandered away from the rest, seeking diligently till he found and brought it back."[30] The shepherd is in and among the flock. He knows them intimately, and they know and follow him. His work does not stop when they return in the evening. "Often he had to guard the fold through the dark hours from the attack of wild beasts, or the wily attempts of the prowling thief."[31] It is this imagery and example that I believe the mentor should follow when engaging an individual in the flock, just as Christ said, "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me" (John 10:14). The

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[29] Golding, "The Imagery of Shepherding in the Bible, Part 1," 18.

[30] M. G. Easton, *Illustrated Bible Dictionary and Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893), 623.

[31] Easton, *Illustrated Bible Dictionary and Treasury*, 623.

mentor should know the disciple, and the individual should feel comfortable with the mentor.

Further, the mentor is to show compassion as Christ showed compassion: "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt 9:36). The mentor's goal should be one of compassion for the disciple. This can often be lost in the hustle and bustle of meetings, personal one-on-one discussions, and the ongoing challenges of life. It is critical that the mentor fully understands the role of shepherd and treats each disciple as a fellow image-bearer—to love them as Christ loves them. That love is put into action when the mentor leads others, protects them, corrects them, and guides them to better pastures with compassion anchored in the love of Christ. Christ was giving of himself to everyone he spoke with. It was his compassion at work in every interaction. David Powlison writes, "He was able to love them, climb into their lives, to go after what ruled their hearts, to give them himself in a fresh and personal way, so that they might come to believe and find mercy, hope, and direction."[32] The mentor is to strive to be like Christ and give of himself, creating a safe environment where the disciple knows his best interests are in mind, just as the great shepherd creates a safe environment and knows each of his sheep: "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). It is up to the mentor to create an environment in which the disciple knows the shepherd's heart of concern and is willing to listen to the shepherd provide direction, correction, and encouragement. It is the safe and compassionate environment that allows the mentor to enter the life of the disciple, discuss their heart issues, and help them find hope and direction. When accomplished, the disciple will feel safe to share their deepest issues with the mentor and know he will handle them with love, care, and respect.

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[32] David Powlison, *Speaking Truth in Love: Counsel in Community* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2005), 107.

When the mentor enters the life and challenges of the disciple, it is a very personal and intimate situation. The mentor must be one who is trusted, like a shepherd. The mentor must demonstrate compassion that leads to the disciple's confession, a desire to seek repentance, and a vulnerability to trust the mentor as a shepherd who will lead them to safe pastures. To lead a disciple to confess a heart issue and guide them to seek Christ's plan in their life is only accomplished when the disciple knows they are in a safe place and guided by one they know loves them and has compassion and empathy for their position.

The shepherd also leads the flock, just as a compassionate and strong mentor will lead the disciple. The concept of a leader being a shepherd is important to put into context. With Psalm 23 as the background, we see a shepherd leader who is more than a quiet individual who gently walks along a path with a flock. The shepherd provides and protects. "Shepherds might be gentle, but they're also tough as nails."[33] The shepherd is able to be the leader he needs to be. Meeting the flock where they are, he can be gentle and strong. The mentor is to understand the disciple by stepping into their life and providing suggestions and Scripture that encourage and edify or direct with a tone of discipline. Just as the shepherd understands the situation of his flock, the mentor should know the disciple and the context of their problem. In so doing, the mentor knows how to lead, be it gently or strongly. It is the responsibility of the mentor to walk with the disciple, interpret the situation, and discern what scriptural feedback or encouragement should be provided to the disciple. The mentor "can transfer thoughts from the Scriptures to his own heart and mind so that he is able to comprehend and ultimately explain these truths to others."[34] It is often difficult to explain the truth to a disciple. It takes strength, patience, and endurance to work with a disciple through difficult times. The strong

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[33] Blaine McCormick and David Davenport, *Shepherd Leadership: Wisdom for Leaders from Psalm 23* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2020), 2.

[34] Adams, *Committed to Craftsmanship*, 75.

leadership needed by a shepherd as mentor requires "a person full of goodness that cares about others enough to put himself out for them."[35] As Jay Adams explains, "He is concerned enough to hang in there when the going gets tough."[36] The mentor is to be like the Good Shepherd. He is to care for every individual before him just as the shepherd cares for and searches for the lost sheep. So, like the Good Shepherd, the mentor has the compassion to persist and the strength to engage the good and the difficult. "He cheerfully persists, even when some are downright nasty to him."[37] The good mentor, like the shepherd, is compassionate and concerned for everyone and demonstrates the strength of character to persist in difficult situations. The strength and knowledge to lead a disciple to scriptural truths will change their heart.

The shepherd's role includes the important components of protecting and correcting the flock. The mentor with a shepherd's heart will embrace the role of protection and correction by building trust that allows him to identify the issue at hand and guide the disciple to address a problem with faith and Scripture. This awareness will help the disciple make better decisions and protect them from similar problems in the future. "The wise person hears and increases his learning, and those who exercise discernment will acquire wise counsel to guide them" (Prov 1:5). A mentor who guides one to understand and apply Scripture is a loving shepherd who protects the flock with the wisdom and guidance that only Scripture can provide. With Psalm 19 in mind, "Scripture is our greatest possession, more precious than gold. It is the greatest pleasure, sweeter than honey. It is the greatest protection, warning us from error. It offers the greatest promise: an eternal reward. It is the greatest purifier, keeping us from sin."[38] Put

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[35] Adams, *Committed to Craftsmanship*, 86.

[36] Adams, *Committed to Craftsmanship*, 86.

[37] Adams, *Committed to Craftsmanship*, 87.

[38] John MacArthur, "Preaching and Biblical Counseling," in MacArthur and Mack, *Counseling*, 210.

simply, Scripture is our protection and the tool a mentor uses to strengthen a growing disciple of Christ.

The good shepherd also corrects the flock, creating an example for the good mentor to correct and reprove the disciple. The shepherd carries a rod and a staff for guidance and correction. The mentor carries the Scriptures, as "all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16–17). Being a mentor is to be one who corrects and admonishes. "The Greek word translated admonish (*noutheteō*) can also be translated counsel, and it most often means to correct or to warn."[39] This correction comes from a heart of love and concern. Just as the shepherd had concern for his flock, the mentor has a genuine concern for his disciple. The apostle Paul demonstrated this: "When he rebuked them for their sin, his tears communicated a genuine, caring, and loving heart."[40] The good mentor, like the good shepherd, has compassion for the young disciples and demonstrates that care and concern even when correcting and rebuking. This love is apparent, and the disciple will hopefully see and understand the love in the message of correction, just as Paul said, "For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you" (2 Cor 2:4).

The shepherd also guides his sheep to better pastures just as the mentor should guide the disciple to a better understanding of Scripture and its application to one's life. "It is showing the intent of the writer so clearly that those who listen say in their hearts, Ah! I see what God's talking about."[41] The mentor confidently leads the disciple to see the sin in their life and how Scripture can be the tool to address lasting change. A

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[39] Wayne A. Mack, "Developing a Helping Relationship with Counselees," in Macarthur and Mack, *Counseling*, 104.

[40] Mack, "Developing a Helping Relationship with Counselees," 104.

[41] Adams, *Committed to Craftsmanship*, 76.

mentor's biblical counsel "is confrontation that is done out of concern for the purposes of changing something God wants to change."[42] It is moving the disciple to a safer place based on scriptural foundations with a complete reliance on the Holy Spirit to do the work.

The shepherd lovingly leads the flock to water, but it is up to the flock to drink. "Scripture is the only reliable manual for true soul-study. It is so comprehensive in the diagnosis and treatment of every spiritual matter that, energized by the Holy Spirit in the believer, it leads to making one like Jesus Christ. This is the process of biblical sanctification."[43] Sanctification is the journey of every mentor as they walk with a disciple. The mentor is rewarded by participating in God's plan and witnessing the Holy Spirit change one's heart. The mentor, like the shepherd, cares for the sheep and guides them to safe pastures. Scripture becomes the path for understanding so one is guided to be more like Christ and move to a place of safety and solace—a place where the disciple learns of the love, protection, and peace provided by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

The shepherd metaphor captures the dynamic role of the mentor. Being a mentor is more than a transactional engagement; it is more than providing advice once a week. It is personal, relational, and compassionate. Just as the shepherd knows the flock, the mentor should know the disciple and walk with him. The engaged mentor will lead the disciple to an understanding of Scripture and its value in life's situations. The mentor also will help protect the disciple from problems in life created by sin. The mentor takes the role seriously and commits to making every effort to protect the disciple. This includes crafting a relationship of trust that provides permission for the mentor to admonish and correct the disciple's behavior and poor responses to life's challenges. Just

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[42] Jay E. Adams, *Ready to Restore: The Layman's Guide to Christian Counseling* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1981), 9–12.

[43] Macarthur and The Master's College Faculty, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, 8.

as the flock trusts the shepherd, the disciple should know the mentor has his best interests in mind. The mentor, like the shepherd, should remain strong and vigilant in providing guidance to the disciple. Even when it gets difficult, the mentor remains committed to the role of guide and shepherd. Finally, the mentor performs all these roles with a complete reliance on Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

Mentor as Shepherd

Chapter 2 described four biblical examples of how a mentor engaged his protégé to equip him for his vocation. The process began with engaging the individual to be trained. Once in place, the mentor provided examples for life and vocation, coached for understanding, and sent the individual to their eventual vocation for the Lord. This chapter began with the suggestion that to be a mentor, one should be a good shepherd, demonstrating the commitment to engage, teach, coach, counsel, and send. The mentor's long-term commitment goes beyond transactional engagement and is administered with love and compassion for the mentee as a disciple. The result is an individual who remains connected to his mentor, develops into a leadership position, adds value to the community of Christ, and equips disciples to shepherd others. The balance of this chapter will review the theoretical, practical, and historical aspects of the process of biblically inspired mentoring and coaching.

Qualifications of the Mentor

Identifying those qualified to mentor others is often a difficult task for church leaders. Understanding the importance and consequences of discipleship, many churches create lists of qualifications, programs, and/or guidelines to establish guardrails and implement good training that ensures the qualified are chosen. There are many books and publications addressing how to identify qualified leaders and how to develop individuals into qualified leaders. In his thesis on Christ-centered followership, Christopher Sarver notes that "evangelicals have published several works over the years addressing such

topics as male mentoring, men's ministries, the unique spiritual needs of men, and even male church participation."[44] In fact, his thesis proposes to fill a void he observed with a model focused on followership: "Yet, a void exists within the literature base concerning the application of a Christ-Centered followership model of leadership for the cultivation of young adult men as spiritual leaders."[45] Aligning with the theme of qualifying individuals to mentor, my project focuses on equipping individuals to lead young adult small groups at Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

A second issue to consider when identifying the qualified is how individuals are selected. Often, our cultural biases and habits can influence how a church determines who is qualified. Though speaking primarily of pastors and elders, it also applies to lay leaders chosen for leadership and service positions. Michael Anthony notes, "We do well to note the counterintuitive nature of God's selection process."[46] Bob Deffinbaugh describes the problem as "leadership profiling," explaining that "it is a well-known and commonly accepted fact that a disproportionate number of leaders in America are men who are 'tall, dark, and handsome.'"[47] Many churches in our culture are no different. "Within the halls of our Christian community," Deffinbaugh states, "we are profoundly guilty of leadership profiling looking to education, self-confidence, and success."[48] Though this is not a paper to discuss the challenges presented by cultural biases or profiling, it is important to recognize this reality when one considers the message of 1 Corinthians 1:26–31. God selected servants from a variety of people who were not

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[44] Sarver, "Be the Example," 12.

[45] Sarver, "Be the Example," 13.

[46] Michael J. Anthony, "The Heart of God and Preparation of the Pastor," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 176, no. 702 (April 2019): 137.

[47] Bob Deffinbaugh, "David Becomes Israel's King (1 Samuel 16–2 Samuel 10)," Bible.org, accessed November 15, 2024, https://bible.org/seriespage/18-david-becomes-israel-s-king-1-samuel-16-2-samuel-10#P2589_941144.

[48] Deffinbaugh, "David Becomes Israel's King."

necessarily those the world would choose. Our local churches should also have an eye for those who are qualified, willing to serve, and have a heart for the gospel and meet the qualifications noted in 1 Corinthians 1. J. T. English emphasizes the local church's responsibility to identify qualified individuals. English argues that instead of waiting for individuals to volunteer, "gifted people in the church have the responsibility of helping others find and use their gifts for the building up of the body of Christ."[49]

My intention is to demonstrate that there are many in the church who are qualified yet do not realize they meet the qualifications—or worse, they do not know that they can easily engage. Living Hope's challenge, for example, is getting mature members to engage in the mentoring process. As English suggests, the church needs to engage those equipped or ready to teach by implementing a platform designed to encourage engagement.

Mentoring is doing life with someone—getting to know them, providing an example, teaching, and coaching. In *The Mentoring Church: How Pastors and Congregations Cultivate Leaders*, Phil Newton describes the practice of "life on life mentoring" and suggests it is the most effective method to train and mentor an individual: "As the mentoring takes place within community, it deepens the lessons practiced and observed in real-life settings."[50] Though some may note he has a "narrow focus on church planting,"[51] the concept and application apply to anyone in the church participating in a church ministry or mentoring program. If one can do life with someone, one can mentor that individual.

In today's context, the local church should have a platform that helps identify

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[49] J. T. English, *Deep Discipleship: How the Church Can Make Whole Disciples of Jesus* (Nashville: B&H, 2024), 72.

[50] Phil A. Newton, *The Mentoring Church: How Pastors and Congregations Cultivate Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Ministry, 2017), 135, Kindle.

[51] Joshua J. Bleeker, Review of *The Mentoring Church: How Pastors and Congregations Cultivate Leaders*, by Phil A. Newton, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 176, no. 703 (2019): 382.

the needed qualifications for mentoring and, more importantly, provides a pathway for those who are qualified and interested in mentoring. I suggest that qualifications are often present, but pathways to serve may be vague. This is not to discount good biblical training, but to suggest that churches have mature Christians who can serve the body as a mentor. The church has the responsibility to ask qualified individuals to engage.

To mentor as a shepherd is to walk with someone, a process that benefits both the mentor and the mentee. The mentor grows as he is challenged to provide examples and guidance with the understanding that he, too, is learning. It is this transparency that builds trust and relationships of service and respect for one another. A mentor should be willing to humbly assess himself. Does he seek to grow in his faith? Does he look to Christ's saving work as a servant leader and seek to develop a servant's attitude? Does he desire to see the evidence of fruit in his life and in the lives of those he disciples? Is his life oriented around and rooted in the truth and authority of Scripture? These attributes are the marks of a mentor. Christopher Sarver parallels these qualifications in his thesis, starting with salvation and reliance on Scripture: "Mentors must be able to make a clear profession of faith in Christ and demonstrate growing confidence in him and his promises. Mentors should also cultivate personal allegiance to, and affection for, Christ and evidence lives oriented around the authority of the Scripture."[52] He suggests mentors "should lead the cohort and guide their mentees in such a way that they avoid moralism on the one hand and cold doctrinalism on the other as both are antithetical to Christo centrism and the gospel."[53] Just as Christ taught the spirit of the law, the mentor should lead his mentees with a Christ-centered humility tempered with wisdom that only comes from imitating Christ and seeking his truth in Scripture. The mentor also shares his successes and failures and shows his mentee how to grow in sanctification through the

[52] Sarver, "Be the Example," 264.

[53] Sarver, "Be the Example," 264.

power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, the mentor's goal is to "creatively and compellingly, by means of biblical instruction and life-illustration, portray the beauty and majesty of Christ in as clear a fashion as possible," accomplishing this by giving "themselves to the task of communicating the ways in which such a wonderful Savior and his salvific work directly and specifically impacts and transforms all domains of a person's life."[54]

David Setran and Chris Kiesling, writing on the importance of spiritual formation in young adults, contend that a mentor living life with young adults can demonstrate how Christ is the better choice, one vastly different from what the world has to offer: "The key here is that we must hold before emerging adults a captivating picture of the beauty of Christ and his promises."[55] As the mentor presents the challenges, struggles, and victories when one chooses Christ, "emerging adults must be confronted with a compelling picture of God and his kingdom so that they begin to recognize the deceit of sin."[56] The mentee observes the mentor demonstrating the right life decisions and confirming that "eternal pleasures are at God's right hand" (Ps 16:11). Setran and Kiesling continue, "Far from offering therapeutic happiness, we invite emerging adults to offer their bodies as living sacrifices, dying daily to self as sacred offerings to the God who gave himself up for them."[57] A mentor doing life alongside a mentee can demonstrate what it means to struggle against the world and gain victory when one maintains an eternal, Christ-centered focus.

To be qualified does not require a seminary degree or the ability to present oneself as moralistic and bound to doctrine. It means growing and learning in community

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[54] Sarver, "Be the Example," 264.

[55] David P. Setran and Chris A. Kiesling, *Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood: A Practical Theology for College and Young Adult Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 34.

[56] Setran and Kiesling, *Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood*, 35.

[57] Setran and Kiesling, *Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood*, 36.

and being an example that allows "emerging adults to learn all of the nuances of a Christian worldview while at the same time surrendering their hearts to the alluring cultural sirens of our day."[58] One who is qualified is not expected to be exactly like Paul, Eli, or Moses. However, one should understand that the worldview these men possessed is what changed their motivation and outlook. Moses's "worldview was altered by knowledge of and experiential interaction with the living God."[59] So, too, the mentor is changed by his interaction with Christ and its impact on his life. Christ is the example for both the mentor and mentee.

Engaging the Mentee

There is much literature explaining that it is a Christian's responsibility to "seek a godly mentor or seek someone to mentor in the Church."[60] Certainly, in some cases, mentoring relationships are the product of mentees who ask to be discipled. However, there are also situations in which a mentor-mentee relationship is arranged. Examples include a church-sponsored study, a program designed to assign people to groups through new membership programs, or programs that assign individuals by age, gender, or stage in life. Occasionally, a member from one of these groups may engage a leader and ask to be part of a small group or mentoring program. Unfortunately, this is more the exception than the rule; one needs only to listen for the call to join small groups on Sunday morning announcements. More often, the mentor must seek out and identify his mentee.

Three of the examples in chapter 2 demonstrate a mentor choosing a mentee:

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[58] Setran and Kiesling, *Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood*, 36.

[59] Setran and Kiesling, *Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood*, 35.

[60] Mark Dever, *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus*, 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 18.

Moses chose Joshua, Paul chose Timothy, and Christ chose the apostles. Christ commissioned his disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19), confirming that all in the church are to go and make disciples. Leaders are to train the congregation, and the members are to engage one another. Mark Dever writes, "It's not just a question for pastors. The Bible tasks all of us with this kind of work."[61] He continues, "John tells us to love one another in 2 Jn. 5, Paul tells us to encourage and build one another up in 1 Thess. 5:11, instruct one another to maturity in Col. 1:28, and the author of Hebrews tells us to stir one another up to love and good works in Heb. 10:24."[62] Nowhere in Scripture does it say to wait for disciples; it is the Christian's responsibility to find and make disciples who will form the next generation's church leadership.

When addressing the leadership void in our culture today, Albert Mohler states, "As biblical Christians, we are called to live in the present and prepare the next generation for the future."[63] Church leaders are to seek out individuals to train for future church leadership, just as Christ trained the apostles who would lead the early church. D. A. Carson reiterates a leader's responsibility to "make disciples of all men everywhere, without distinction."[64] Sarver argues that "the onus, then, rests upon those who are older to pray for, and prepare by the Spirit's enablement, a younger generation to faithfully lead."[65] J. T. English asserts, "The church is called to make disciples, and it is time to

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[61] Mark Dever, *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus*, 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 74.

[62] Dever, *Discipling*, 74.

[63] R. Albert Mohler Jr., *The Gathering Storm: Secularism, Culture, and the Church* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2020), 12.

[64] D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in *The Expositor's Bible* Commentary, vol. 8, *Matthew Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 596.

[65] Sarver, "Be the Example," 211n50.

stop delegating that responsibility to others."[66] Consensus confirms it is up to the church to go, find, and make disciples.

In his thesis on how God designed the church to care for its members, Robert Jones demonstrates that the church is structured for mentoring and discipleship: "Christ has given his church gifted pastors and teachers to equip the members to speak the gospel (and its implications and applications) to each other, and that as each member engages in that activity the church will grow in maturity and unity."[67] Everyone in the church should be equipped to do life together. Mentors should be identified, trained, and sent to engage others; these tasks grow the community and develop future leaders of the congregation. Put simply, everyone in the church is to be engaged. As Dever states, "You need to be on permanent lookout for more leaders."[68] This encourages those who want to learn and seek mentoring.

When a young person in the faith seeks a mentor, this is a good sign. Dever explains that "even if someone has asked you to disciple them, you should still initiate the relationship. . . . you are the one who, to some measure, leads the relationship by deliberately using your time together to point toward the way of Christ."[69] It is important for a mentor to get to know the mentee, help set his expectations for mentoring, and build the trust that enables the relationship to flourish.

One of the examples in chapter 2 featured a mentee, Samuel, who was dedicated to God and put under the mentorship of Eli. Although few mentoring assignments are as formally arranged as Samuel and Eli's relationship, many young people are seeking more mature members in the church to help them grow in their

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[66] English, *Deep Discipleship*, 74.

[67] Robert David Jones, "A Biblical-Theological Study of the New Testament Church as God's Designed Agent and Setting for the Ministry of Mutual Christian Care" (ThD thesis, University of South Africa, 2015), 131.

[68] Jones, "A Biblical-Theological Study of the New Testament Church," 96.

[69] Jones, "A Biblical-Theological Study of the New Testament Church," 96.

Christian walk. Jeylan Mortimer notes that young people today will often seek someone experienced in a vocation they desire: "Young adults develop passions as they see others active in vocation, determining that they would love to engage in that same activity or carry on the legacy of chosen mentors."[70] In a healthy church environment, it is reasonable for one who is young and motivated in their faith to seek someone they respect in the congregation, one who demonstrates the behaviors they want to learn or emulate.

J. T. English posits that a church is more likely to have individuals seeking mentorship when their curriculum and teaching spaces facilitate the core competencies of being a disciple. English challenges the church to be the place where people are discipled through small groups or Sunday studies using a curriculum that focuses on the core competencies of being disciples. A curriculum that focuses on "Scripture, doctrine, and habits"[71] will naturally lead to motivating individuals to desire a discipling relationship.

Jake Dunlow's research on churches that support and mentor young seminarians endorses the idea that churches should have programs that encourage young adults to seek a mentor; he advocates "for local churches to take a more active role in aiding the spiritual growth of seminarians."[72] Though Dunlow's research primarily addresses mentoring young seminarians, he explains the applications are broader: "A culture of mentoring . . . would be valuable in any local church. . . . There is no doubt other applications that could be found . . . applications that could focus on accountability for students in their spiritual growth and increased emphasis on students seeking out mature believers by which to be mentored."[73]

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[70] Jeylan T. Mortimer et al., "The Process of Occupational Decision Making: Patterns during the Transition to Adulthood," *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 61, no. 3 (December 2002): 452–53.

[71] English, *Deep Discipleship*, 105.

[72] English, *Deep Discipleship*, 105.

[73] Jake Dunlow, "Perceptions of Spiritual Formation among Nontraditional Seminary Students," Journal of Discipleship and Family Ministry 4, no. 2 (2014): 99.

Training that is grounded in Scripture equips individuals for discipleship and facilitates an environment of mentorship, resulting in spiritual growth in discipleship and numerical growth in future church leaders. As noted earlier, the knowledge of Scripture, the understanding of doctrine and what one believes, and spiritual habit development will produce fruit—trained disciples—in time. Dever adds that the body of Christ is present to support these programs and the mentors themselves, supplementing the gifts of the mentor if the mentee should require additional counsel. As such, the mentor's "leadership and discipling should reflect dependence on the body because the mentor is constantly calling upon other people to lend their expertise and strengths."[74]

Mentoring

Chapter 3 began by describing the role of the mentor as a shepherd, one who sets an example, crafts a relationship of trust, teaches, models, trains, and corrects. In contemporary Christian scholarship, most agree the role of a mentor in a Christian environment is to equip and make disciples. Matthew Montoninni explains that the shepherd is "responsible for leading, feeding, protecting, and procuring rest for their flock."[75] Mentoring relationships take time to develop and likely last long-term. The length of the relationship provides opportunities to build trust, knowledge of one another, and credibility to correct and exhort.

Modeling a biblical worldview is the foundation of being an example for the younger generation. Two examples from chapter 2 include Eli modeling a biblical worldview for Samuel, while being an example for Samuel to observe and imitate. The apostle Paul provided multiple teaching examples for Timothy; his practical examples in ministry were a model for Timothy to follow in word and action. The biblical worldview "includes everything related to the doctrines, values, priorities, and understanding of how

[74] Dever, *Discipling*, 109.

[75] Montonini, "Shepherd."

the world works that the Bible commends and promotes."[76] J. T. English suggests a curriculum that "asks what disciples need"[77] to facilitate their biblical worldview, with a focus on "Scripture, doctrine, and habits."[78] Scripture describes how Eli and Paul led Samuel and Timothy to a greater understanding of Scripture, creating a solid foundation of belief and practice. David Fletcher writes, "The mentor evaluates the individual and challenges the person to go to the next level."[79] The mentor challenges the mentee to grow in understanding and their ability to grow in their knowledge of God's Word and implement a biblical worldview in their life and habits.

Secular Scholarship

Sanjay Saint and Vineet Chopra, writing for the respected *Harvard Business Review*, suggest "six things a mentor should do" when engaging a mentee.[80] Though their terms do not reflect biblical language, their recommendations align with best practices and Christian thought leadership. They recommend that mentors "choose your mentee carefully, establish a mentor team, run a tight ship, head off rifts or resolve them, don't commit mentorship malpractice, and prepare for the transitions."[81] Wisely choosing a mentee aligns with seeking individuals to lead in the future. Mohler explains, "As biblical Christians, we are called to live in the present and prepare the next generation for the

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[76] C. Fred Smith, *Developing a Biblical Worldview: Seeing Things God's Way* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015), 5.

[77] English, *Deep Discipleship*, 11.

[78] English, *Deep Discipleship*, 105.

[79] David R. Fletcher, "Case Studies of Policy and Vision Implementation by the Executive Pastor" (DMin diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2004), 113–14. Though his purpose is to explain many of the tactical details for an executive pastor in support of the senior pastor, the role of mentor remains the same. The mentor especially supports the pastor's efforts to make disciples.

[80] Sanjay Saint and Vineet Chopra, "6 Things Every Mentor Should Do," *Harvard Business Review*, March 29, 2017, https://hbr.org/2017/03/6-things-every-mentor-should-do.

[81] Saint and Chopra, "6 Things Every Mentor Should Do."

future."[82] Identifying individuals for future leadership is a carefully executed task.

Second, the church should establish a mentor team. As one continues to grow in community, fellow church members and church staff contribute to an improved learning experience. Further, as mentors have challenges, the church leadership team can step in for support. Researcher Ditmar Pauck avers, "The results thus support the attempt to enhance church-based leadership development by creating a culture and network of mentoring relationships through consistent communication, good role-modeling, and simple but effective training."[83] Discussing the importance of leadership and working together, Peter Drucker explains, "Top-management work is work for a team rather than for one man. It is quite unlikely that any one man will, in his own power, unite the divergent temperaments which the job requires. Moreover, it will be found, when the top management tasks are analyzed, that there is more work to be done than anyone man can do."[84] Certainly, one-on-one mentoring is critical, as it facilitates personal development and individual accountability. The foundation of a one-on-one relationship is critical to mentoring. It is enhanced when the benefits of a mature Christian community are integrated into the process.

Saint and Chopra mention "running a tight ship," that is, communicating clearly and setting reasonable expectations. Kate Siberine and Lisa Kimball note mentors "are modeling being fully human and pilgrims on the Christian journey."[85] They note a mentor as coach "is intentional, goal-oriented, and contractual."[86] Both parties are

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[82] Mohler, *The Gathering Storm: Secularism, Culture, and the Church*, 12.

[83] Ditmar Pauck, "Development and Evaluation of Integrated Mentoring in a Church-Based Seminary Course" (PhD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2004), 109.

[84] Peter F. Drucker, *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 618.

[85] Kate H. Siberine and Lisa Kimball, "Confirming Mentoring: Mutual Experiences of Incarnation," *Theology Today* 76, no. 1 (2019): 40.

[86] Siberine and Kimball, "Confirming Mentoring."

committed and working together towards a stated outcome, with each member fulfilling their role like a crew managing a tight ship. A disciplined relationship of mentoring develops sound "spiritual habits."[87] Finally, as Debra Moncauskas mentions in her thesis, "Developing next generation leaders will not happen without an intentional and purposeful focus on their development as leaders."[88] She asserts, "Without a plan and a purposeful development process, most young people will miss some valuable training that will help them navigate and thrive in their world."[89] To be a mentor is to be a role model, to be intentional, and to provide an environment with expectations and goals for personal development.

The article's next point is that maintaining a healthy relationship with respect and responsibility helps to "head off rifts and resolve them."[90] As Mark Dever points out, it goes both ways. Identifying an issue with the mentee or the mentor provides an example of how to resolve an issue. Dever says, "Discipling in the gospel means that sometimes you lead the way in confessing weakness or sin. By doing so, you demonstrate what it looks like not to find your justification in yourself, but in Christ."[91] His point is that the mentor and mentee "live transparently and honestly."[92] This should be put in place from the beginning. In Justin Irving's book concerning leadership in thriving organizations, he notes, "In addition to transparency and honesty, [there is] a willingness to listen and an orientation toward responsiveness are essential in organizational

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[87] English, *Deep Discipleship*, 105.

[88] Debra L. Moncauskas, "Developing Next Generation Leaders: Strengths-Based Leadership for Children 10–13 Years Old" (DMin diss., Bethel Seminary, 2012), 143.

[89] Moncauskas, "Developing Next Generation Leaders," 143.

[90] Saint and Chopra, "6 Things Every Mentor Should Do."

[91] Dever, *Discipling*, 36.

[92] Dever, *Discipling*, 36.

communication."[93] Issues are often rooted in misunderstandings due to miscommunication; to head them off, Irving refers to Proverbs 18:13: "If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame." The point is that listening is an attempt to fully understand a situation or circumstance. Be it a large company or interpersonal relationship, one who speaks less and seeks understanding is more likely to avoid problems and rifts.

Next, the article suggests avoiding "mentor malpractice" by avoiding leveraging a position of authority to "wield power inappropriately."[94] In Christian terms, a mentor should embrace the concept of servant leadership. Looking to Christ as the model, Michael Wilder and Timothy Paul Jones explain,

> What Jesus modeled for us was not an office of leadership but a way of life that reshapes every aspect of leadership. This way pulls us away from striving to situate ourselves in particular offices of leadership. Where it leads instead is toward the habits of a shepherd, the heart of a servant, and the humble disposition of a fellow participant in the suffering of Christ.[95]

Referring to Wilder and Jones's book, Sarver notes in his thesis that "the core of a distinctly Christian approach to leadership rests in Christ and a leader's orientation toward and relationship with him."[96] He continues to explain it is not a relinquishing of personal position but rather embracing the position as Christ would. Building his argument, Sarver explains,

> Christ-centered leadership-as-followership model coincides with several core suppositions shaping much of contemporary followership theory: (1) Followers are equally important as leaders in leadership; (2) the self-perceptions (identity markers), traits, and behaviors followers engage in their relations with leaders are

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[93] Justin A. Irving, *Healthy Leadership for Thriving Organizations: Creating Contexts Where People Flourish* (Grand Rapids: Christian Audio, 2023), 133.

[94] Saint and Chopra, "6 Things Every Mentor Should Do."

[95] Michael S. Wilder and Timothy P. Jones, *The God Who Goes before You: Pastoral Leadership as Christ-Centered Followership* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2018), 195.

[96] Sarver, "Be the Example," 64.

> just as important to outcome creation as those of leaders; (3) followers and leaders relationally engage with each other in the coproduction of outcomes."[97]

Adopting this model reduces the possibility of malpractice as a mentor. A mentor gently leads as a shepherd, understands his mentee, and collaborates to build consensus as they chart a course anchored in truth and genuine respect for one another and each other's role in the process.

Finally, the article encourages the mentor to "prepare for the transition. . . . A mentor's accumulated wisdom and expertise must be passed on to the next generation."[98] Although a secular recommendation, this is congruent with Scripture's vision of discipleship. As a disciple of Christ, the mentor is to make disciples of Christ who will go and make other disciples of Christ. Leaning on the creation mandate and the Great Commission, Sarver explains, "While the creation account establishes the central pillar of human purpose, the great commission, as expressed in Matthew 28:18–20, fixes in place another column of purpose in the life of every Christian . . . to make disciples."[99] This brings the message of mentoring and discipleship full circle, as Mohler reiterates, "Prepare the next generation for the future."[100] Sarver summarizes, "Mentors model the practices of spiritual leadership, knowing that they provide an up-close, embodied example to the mentee of what it means to embrace the core identities of Christ-centered followership and live and lead consistent with them."[101]

Coaching

Chapter 2 introduced the process of coaching. Used congruently with mentoring, the coaching process has four primary steps: explanation by the mentor,

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[97] Sarver, "Be the Example," 65.

[98] Saint and Chopra, "6 Things Every Mentor Should Do."

[99] Sarver, "Be the Example," 208.

[100] Mohler, *The Gathering Storm*, 12.

[101] Sarver, "Be the Example," 249.

demonstration of the expected behavior by the mentor, trial by the mentee, and the final step of critique and review. The mentor models the desired behavior, and only after an understanding is in place does the mentee attempt the behavior or task himself. The larger responsibility lies with the mentor as he demonstrates and explains the objective. Additionally, the mentor is responsible for providing feedback and encouragement to the mentee after the trial has taken place. Each of the four examples in chapter 2 demonstrated how this process was followed. Coaching begins as the mentor engages the mentee and begins to model a Christian worldview. As the relationship matures, the mentee begins to ask questions, and the mentor provides additional explanations and demonstrates how the worldview works in daily life as a Christian. This learning process is demonstrated in Scripture, proven effective, and considered the model for training and coaching today. The *Harvard Business Review* suggests coaching is a long-term process and that even successful coaches should have coaches because lasting engagements of accountability lead to continued growth.

In the first two steps of the coaching cycle, the mentee listens to and observes, so mentors need to provide "a well-defined and well-articulated mission and purpose that they can relate back to their roles and contribution."[102] Not only does the mentor explain the expectation in the first step, but he also demonstrates it every day as part of the second step. In the third step, the mentee should attempt the skill or behavior that leads to success. Jim Harter, writing for the *Harvard Business Review*, explains that trainees "need clear expectations that are continually redefined with the ongoing, often changing, corporate strategy."[103] As the mentee engages in a situation, he is implementing the skills taught and learning to apply new skills in dynamic circumstances. The mentor is then

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[102] Jim Harter, "If Your Managers Aren't Engaged, Your Employees Won't Be Either," *Harvard Business Review*, June 6, 2019, https://hbr.org/2019/06/if-your-managers-arent-engaged-your-employees-wont-be-either.

[103] Harter, "If Your Managers Aren't Engaged, Your Employees Won't Be Either."

able to observe and provide additional examples as the mentee is engaged with the new skill. The fourth and final step duplicates how Christ trained his disciples. After the apostles returned from their mission, "the apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught" (Mark 6:30). Christ as a mentor reviewed what happened, provided feedback, and encouraged them to continue in their work. Harter's secular description explains, "They need continual coaching and accountability so that they can see their progress and potential."[104]

The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) duplicates the four-step model and calls each step a skill: "The 4 core skills we teach for coaching people effectively ensure that in the moment, you're not trying to remember a concept or a theory, but have pragmatic guidance to follow."[105] The CCL applies the "LACE" model to problem-solving in a corporate space. Step 1 ("L") is to listen, which refers to the coach listening to the explanation of the skill or situation to be addressed. Second ("A"), CCL challenges the coach to "ask powerful questions." This will assist the mentor in gauging the mentee's understanding. Asking questions allows for additional dialogue and demonstrations by the mentor. Third ("C"), CCL describes the trial by the trainee as "challenge and support." At some point, regardless of what one calls the step, the mentee or trainee must attempt to engage the skill or situation. Finally, CCL calls the feedback step ("E") "establish next steps and accountability."

Thought leaders in the evangelical space see discipleship as imitating Christ. From a coaching perspective, this means following the four steps Christ followed. In his book *The Mentoring Church*, Phil Newton demonstrates that local church-based "relationships offer a natural framework for accountability in spiritual walk and gospel

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[104] Harter, "If Your Managers Aren't Engaged, Your Employees Won't Be Either."

[105] Maggie Sass and Andre Keil, "How to Coach People," Center for Creative Leadership, February 3, 2024, https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/what-it-takes-to-coach-your-people/.

ministry."[106] Mutual accountability includes explanation, demonstration, trial, and critique. Newton touches on each step as he describes Christ's work: "Just as Jesus challenged the learning process of his disciples, mentors do the same through questions, assignments, accountability, correction, and affirmation."[107]

Justin Irving's book *Leadership in Christian Perspective* challenges leaders to use coaching to help in self-evaluation.[108] The *Harvard Business Review*'s article, "6 Things Every Mentor Should Do,"[109] aligns with Dr. Irving, suggesting that mentors need mentors. Irving challenges those who are leaders and mentors to seek a "trusted coach to identify possible blind spots."[110] His suggestions flow directly into the four steps of coaching. Facilitating dialogue is rewarding for the coach as he trains an individual willing to listen, grow, and apply.

Siberine and Kimball published an article in *Theology Today* describing a coaching engagement and affirming the four-step coaching model: "Good coaching is intentional, goal-oriented, and contractual. It requires coaches to partner with their clients to ask probing open-ended questions and listen deeply in a climate of ongoing support and accountability."[111] They follow the four steps, beginning with listening to understand and clarify, asking probing questions to lay the foundation for a demonstration, providing support for the trial, and holding the trainee accountable with feedback and critique.

Finally, modern scholarship aligns with the four-step process. Barbara Neumann's thesis concerning the mentoring needs of post-modern women describes a

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[106] Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 37.

[107] Newton, *The Mentoring Church*, 37.

[108] Justin A. Irving, *Leadership in Christian Perspective: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Practices for Servant Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019).

[109] Saint and Chopra, "6 Things Every Mentor Should Do."

[110] Irving, *Leadership in Christian Perspective*, 53.

[111] Siberine and Kimball, "Confirming Mentoring," 38–49.

mentor as one who follows the four-step process: "The mentor is one who has knowledge, insight, or skill and is willing to advise, guide, encourage, support, and facilitate the growth of another."[112] When broken down, the mentor is one who has walked a similar path and can explain the potential challenges being faced and guide the mentee by providing advice and examples of how to engage a particular situation. The mentor then encourages the mentee as they engage in the challenge on their own and finally facilitates growth through feedback and the benefit of an ongoing relationship. Simply put, the mentor explains, demonstrates, allows for trial, and then provides critique.

I chose Neumann's thesis to present the four-step process because she specifically addresses a contemporary need of post-modern women in the church. Even though their desired learning environment is different from the past, Neumann still engages in the four-step coaching process. Referring to herself as a post-modern, she describes the new learning environment desired by the post-modern woman as a "more organic, less structured environment. She is often open to a variety of Christian traditions and practices. . . . This young woman values simplicity, relational community, authenticity, and meaningful spiritual events that advance the kingdom of God."[113] This reflects the process used by Christ, who personally engaged, explained Scripture, provided an example, and then gave feedback for growth and development as his disciple. Regardless of time or generation, the fundamentals of coaching apply and have demonstrated effectiveness throughout Scripture and in secular endeavors and continue to be supported in modern scholarship.

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[112] Barbara Ann Neumann, "An Examination of Mentoring Programs for Serving the Needs of the Postmodern Christian Woman" (DMin diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2011), 9.

[113] Neumann, "An Examination of Mentoring Programs," 8.

Sending

The sending of the mentee into their spiritual vocation has two components. The first component is utilized in the coaching cycle. The mentee applies skills and abilities with the mentor explaining, guiding, encouraging, and correcting, just as Christ demonstrated when equipping his disciples. Next is the commissioning. Chapter 2 closed by explaining that mentees were to become mentors—to grow, learn, and share the love of Christ with another generation. To walk with them, guard them, guide them, teach them, and send them. To be shepherds. This is the culmination of the process: when the mentee is qualified and the mentor as shepherd has completed his role of the "one "responsible for leading, feeding, protecting, and procuring rest for their flock."[114] The mentee is equipped to move forward. The relationship between the mentor and the mentee is not over, but the time and focus of their relationship has changed. Like the four examples in chapter 2, the relationship remained but changed as the mentee transitioned to mentor and repeated the process of making disciples. This is the mentee's spiritual vocation. The mentor remains available and ready to love, support, and encourage; the contacts become less frequent, but not less valuable. This leads to Christ's charge: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt 28:19–20). The mentee is now a mentor equipped with a "knowledge of Scripture, an understanding of his beliefs and doctrine, and demonstrating fruit through his life, actions and habits."[115]

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[114] Montonini, "Shepherd."

[115] English, *Deep Discipleship*, 105.

CHAPTER 4

DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

This project's pilot class, "Biblically Inspired Mentoring and Coaching as a Small Group Shepherd," was the culmination of the research for a gospel-based mentoring and coaching program at Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green, Kentucky. The name and direction of the project were inspired by two things. First, the research demonstrated that a biblically inspired mentor and coach is a shepherd. Each of the components that create a good mentor and coach is integral to being a good shepherd, as illuminated in chapters 2 and 3. Second, the direction was modified to align with the needs and focus of Living Hope Baptist Church. It was important that the pastoral staff review and approve the curriculum to be administered. Further, if a class and research were to be conducted at LHBC, it would be beneficial to LHBC if the pilot class were not only congruent with the goals of LHBC, but also supported the focus of the small group ministry.

The class and the research results could provide beneficial information to LHBC leadership. It should be noted that LHBC has been developing a new model for small groups over the past eighteen months, and any pilot class in the space of small groups and shepherding at LHBC should be closely managed to help support their internal objectives while providing additional learnings and observations. Interestingly, LHBC arrived at the name of "small group shepherd" to describe the facilitators of small groups around the same time I concluded that shepherds should be mentors and coaches. This provided a smooth transition to calling the class a shepherding pilot with the hope that participants would (1) understand their qualification to lead a small group; (2) be convicted that the Scriptures are inerrant in their original form and authoritative in all

areas of life; and (3) understand how to be a shepherd/mentor, including coaching and sending individuals to be disciples of Christ, demonstrating the gospel at work, home, and in community.

The first half of this chapter describes the development of the curriculum, LHBC leadership's review and approval of it, the necessary steps to modify it to align with LHBC's small group strategy, and the recruiting of the pilot participants. The second half describes the implementation of the pilot curriculum, including a summary of each week's activities and observations.

Meetings to Review and Discuss Pilot Material and Logistics

Following the completion of chapter 2, I realized I would benefit from a graduate class on discipleship while working on chapter 3. I chose the Discipleship Ministry class, which was aligned with LHBC's focus and included material by J. T. English.[1] LHBC met with English on a few occasions to work on a model for some of LHBC's spiritual formation programs. This class selection proved beneficial, as the pastor of spiritual formation at LHBC was able to reference familiar material when discussing the goals and needs for LHBC's spiritual formation. A series of three meetings enabled us to solidify a curriculum that was congruent with the goals and objectives of LHBC while also accomplishing the objectives of the research project.

Because I am not a member of the church staff, the curriculum needed to be reviewed by four individuals before approval and implementation execution: the pastor for spiritual formation (PSF), the pastor responsible for small-group formation (PSG), the senior pastor (SP), and the pastor over the men's ministry (PMM). Because their roles connected in vital areas related to small groups and men's ministry, the pastors wanted to

[1] Timothy Paul Jones, "Discipleship Ministry Leadership" (class materials for 45260WW, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fall Semester, 2024).

ensure I worked closely with each ministry so there was clarity on goals and delivery, as will be described in more detail below.[2]

Meetings with the Pastor for Spiritual Formation

In my initial meetings with the PSF, I provided the first three chapters of the research project and explained the goal and focus of the research and the project's research guidelines for execution. My goal was to ensure the project pilot was congruent with LHBC's messaging for small group shepherds, as I hoped the pilot class would provide valuable observations to help church staff as they identify, train, and send small group shepherds.

The PSF expressed a desire to support the pilot and ensure that, since LHBC had just completed a small group shepherd training class, there would be no confusion between that endeavor and this pilot. He further requested that I work closely with the pastor responsible for implementing the new small-group shepherd training at LHBC. Initially, he suggested that the participants be selected for the class; however, after explaining that the project's goals required a random sampling of men in the congregation to provide valuable, objective information to church leadership, he approved the sampling approach.

The PSF was particularly helpful in making sure the pilot was congruent with LHBC's goals and plans for small group shepherds. He reviewed the proposed outline and suggested some modifications to maintain congruence with the LHBC plans. Specifically, he requested that the first week provide more specific details on LHBC's requirements to be a small group shepherd. He asked that the second week's topic be changed from "A Biblical World View" to "Inerrancy," with the purpose of reinforcing a

[2] See appendix 1, "Mentoring and Coaching Curriculum Rubric and Evaluation."

solid foundation on the integrity and reliability of Scripture. Finally, he suggested that the last week include a description of the robust inventory of training and support tools offered by LHBC.

We also discussed using J. T. English's book *Deep Discipleship*.[3] The PSF knows and has worked with English over the past few years, implementing many of the principles in *Deep Discipleship* that align with LHBC's specific needs. Part of the overall discussion included the PSF's goal to address what has been perceived as an academic rather than relational approach to classes at LHBC. The church has a robust inventory of classes and tools, and it is vital to ensure they are *applied* and not simply *attended*. Being relational is an important part of education, and in the pilot class, I wanted participants to be challenged to think relationally rather than transactionally, because LHBC views small groups as the primary platform for putting classes into practice.

In our initial meetings, we also discussed LHBC's conviction that small groups are the foundation of building relationships and community. They are also key to leadership development, as leaders often emerge from small group initiatives. The first three classes of the curriculum intentionally addressed leadership, including defining a shepherd, learning to coach like Christ, and sending for the purpose of training and spiritual vocation. The PSF requested that when the curriculum mentioned a group leader, this was considered analogous to a group shepherd.

Our meetings concluded with the PSF's final review and approval of the curriculum outline, the topics for each class, and the expected results of the pilot. He then transitioned the responsibility for continued counsel and approval to the pastor for small group formation. The PSG then served as my primary contact going forward to organize the class, detail timing, and confirm logistical requirements.

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[3] J. T. English, *Deep Discipleship: How the Church Can Make Whole Disciples of Jesus* (Nashville: B&H, 2024).

Meetings with the Pastor for Small Group Formation

Living Hope has recently made small groups a foundational focus for each of its ministries, with the vision of pursuing a Christ-centered community that fosters discipleship. LHBC needs small group shepherds across each ministry, and the PSG had recently completed a booklet for small group leaders to introduce LHBC's small-group vision, including its core values, ministry structure, typical meeting agendas, and measures of success.

The goals of the first meeting with the PSG were to introduce him to the project, provide an overview of the research and research guidelines, solicit his expectations for any class that would impact LHBC small groups at LHBC, and provide an overview of the curriculum. The PSG requested a week to review the curriculum to ensure it was consistent with LHBC's vision for small groups, explaining that small-group training was next in the program development. It was his hope that the small-group shepherd training pilot could complement the vision booklet and provide some basic training for individuals interested in leading a small group. He further suggested that we work together when reviewing the research results, with the goal of modifying the pilot class to align fully with LHBC's small group vision. The PSG was receptive and supportive across the board, and we closed the meeting by discussing the timing and communication needs for announcing the pilot class.

The objectives of the second meeting were to confirm any changes to the pilot's outline and discuss logistics and the next steps for the pilot class. He affirmed that the outline aligned well with LHBC's vision for small group leaders and needed no changes at the time; however, he wanted to review the post-training research findings and determine how best to modify the training to work across multiple ministries. We also discussed logistics for the pilot class, including the training dates and announcement to

the congregation.[4] To achieve the random sample required, the PSG suggested I visit seven different adult Sunday Bible studies (ABF), one Sunday evening men's group, and as many men's small groups as possible. The ABF studies included a cross-section of men aged from 25 to 70 years old. Once the logistics were agreed upon, recruiting for the pilot could begin.

Meeting with the Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor was quite interested in the pilot program, given his focus on building small groups at LHBC. His priority is developing good relationships in both the men's and women's ministries. History has demonstrated that LHBC has built a substantial inventory of studies and courses; however, small groups and lasting relationships do not appear to be among the primary outcomes of these studies. Individuals may take one of the many courses, but then retreat and wait for the next course. The SP aims to develop small groups as a platform to launch individuals into community, personal spiritual growth, and leadership, as needed. Again, LHBC aims to shift the perception of the classes from "academic" to "relational" and, likewise, for church members to transition from transactional engagement to relational engagement with their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Put simply, LHBC wants to leverage its inventory of classes to build and equip disciples who make disciples. He had specific questions about the pilot and its potential to equip small group shepherds to grow and become future leaders at LHBC, and as such, he wanted to be involved in reviewing the pilot outline and the final curriculum before delivery.

Meeting with the Pastor of Men's Ministry

The Executive Pastor, who is also responsible for the men's ministry, fully

[4] See appendix 5, "Pilot Class Invitation."

agrees with the SP that there is an ongoing need to develop leaders within the men's ministry. He is also aligned with the PSG in executing a small group plan that LHBC intends to roll out in the near future. The PMM was both encouraging and supportive of the pilot project, suggesting that I also recruit for the pilot at a men's class on biblical manhood. We closed the meeting with his approval of the outline and his permission to recruit from the men's ministry.

Curriculum Review and Evaluation

As part of goal 3, the SP, the PSF, and the PSG evaluated the curriculum using a rubric to ensure its biblical fidelity and pedagogical suitability.[5] There were thirteen measures on the rubric, and the four possible scores were 1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention improvement; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary. The average for all measures on the rubric was 3.43, exceeding the sufficient level and thus meeting the requirements of goal 3. However, 2 out of 13 individual measures scored below the sufficient level. The panel members provided feedback on specific improvements that could be made to the curriculum in these two areas (see below and in chapter 5). I reviewed the changes requested by the PSF and received approval to proceed with organizing the pilot class.

Their feedback was constructive and encouraging. They requested several additions to the content, including a discussion of biblical authority in the session focused on biblical inerrancy, and some repetition in the training to facilitate learning, such as expanding week 6 to include a list of LHBC classes that support the growth and maturity of a small group. They also requested some changes to the way the coaching cycle is presented as a tool for the mentor. To improve the understanding and utilization of the coaching cycle, I increased the number of times the class reviewed and practiced the cycle. I also added an additional opportunity for participants to role-play (using a

[5] See appendix 1 for complete results from all panel members. See appendix 6 for the curriculum developed as part of this project.

"difficult" Scripture that the coach would address with the coachee) and practice the coaching cycle.

The curriculum reviewers also asked for greater emphasis on reviewing the life stage needs of young adults and the rationale for training young adult small group shepherds. Modifications to the curriculum included (1) an introduction on why small groups are important, (2) the qualities of a small group shepherd (week 1), and (3) the rationale for young adult small group shepherds (week 1).

Although the pilot was restricted to the men's ministry for the purposes of the research, all three reviewers felt that the curriculum would be easy to modify to meet the needs of small group leaders across the church. The SP wrote, "I think it will be excellent for young men, but will work for all ages." The pastoral feedback was helpful in many ways. Most importantly, it provided the opportunity to work closely with church leadership, understand the vision and mission from their perspective, and ultimately feel like part of the plan of execution. It demonstrated the importance of church members getting involved to support church leadership. A church can only grow through engagement and discipleship. I was genuinely encouraged to see the support and engagement for a program aimed at building small group shepherds.

Pilot Class Announcement and Recruiting

With approvals in place, it was time to announce and recruit for the pilot class. The goal was to recruit from a large random sample representative of the men at LHBC. The pilot class was presented as a program for those interested in learning about the role of small group shepherds. No specific requirements were noted for taking the pilot class. Participants simply had to possess an interest in understanding the role of a small group shepherd mentor at LHBC. This left the door open to individuals who may be members of LHBC or those attending but not yet members.

The demographics of the individuals invited to participate ranged in age from

25 to 65 and older. In total, over 150 eligible individuals received an invitation or heard a presentation regarding the training. Ultimately, sixteen individuals signed up for the class, although two later resigned, resulting in an initial class attendance of fourteen. The pilot class represented a diverse demographic in terms of vocation, age, and spiritual maturity. The participants ranged in age from 25 to over 65 years old and included executives, tradesmen, former missionaries, and young professionals.

Training Implementation

The pilot participants met for a total of seven classes. Fourteen individuals attended the introductory meeting. Each person was asked to attend each of the classes, and if a class was missed, make-up could be scheduled during the week. The remaining six classes were designed to cover one topic per week and equip individuals to be a small group shepherd. The content of each class is summarized below.

Introductory Meeting

The purpose of the introductory meeting was to prepare the pilot participants for the six weeks ahead. The meeting included a review of each week's format, which consisted of required reading, questions to be answered before class, and a description of the class time (e.g., discussion, breakout sessions, exercises, role-playing). Participants also completed the agreement to participate, received their class binder and reading materials, and completed the pre-pilot survey. To ensure anonymity, they were encouraged to assign a number to their survey that they could remember to use for the final survey.

Two weeks following the introductory class, I implemented the edited and approved curriculum. The table below provides an outline and preview of the topics by week. The table is followed by a more detailed description of each week's class. The flow of the class was first to understand the qualifications of being a small group shepherd. Next, the importance of Scripture was emphasized as the foundational tool for all small

groups. Once the qualifications and role of Scripture were clear, the class then focused on the skills training, followed by a review of the resources available at LHBC.

Table 1. Overview of training by week and topic

Week	Topic
Week 1	What Are the Qualifications of a Shepherd?
Week 2	Inerrancy (Why We Can Trust the Bible)
Week 3	Shepherds as Mentors
Week 4	Coaching Like Christ
Week 5	Sending for Growth and Gospel
Week 6	Equipping

Week 1: What Are the Qualifications of a Shepherd?

After each of the fourteen attendees introduced themselves to the other participants, the focus turned to a discussion of the two reading assignments. The first assignment was to read chapter 1 of John MacArthur's *Twelve Ordinary Men*.[6] The second assignment was to read the material in the pilot binder concerning the qualifications of a shepherd. Each member had an opportunity to contribute to both the group discussion and the breakout exercise.

The objectives of the first class were to observe the type of individuals Christ chose for his disciples, understand the description of a shepherd, and learn the qualifications of a group shepherd at LHBC. The hope was that participants would recognize what they had in common with the disciples and that they might be more qualified than they initially thought.

[6] John F. MacArthur, *Twelve Ordinary Men: How the Master Shaped His Disciples for Greatness, and What He Wants to Do with You* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson), 2006.

Following a robust discussion, the class recognized that the disciples were normal individuals with a willingness to engage Christ, something class participants believed they had in common with the disciples. They also demonstrated a growing understanding of what a shepherd is, the qualifications of a small group shepherd, and what the role of being a small group shepherd may entail. This was an important turning point for the class, as the mature Christians in the room began to encourage the younger Christians. The mature Christians pointed out that one cannot prepare for every situation and know all the answers. What is important is a willingness to lead a group, knowing that there is always a mature Christian or LHBC staff member who is excited to help mentor a small group shepherd, someone available to provide an answer or address a challenge.

It was also valuable for participants to recognize the importance of having regular discussions with a mature Christian. Intergenerational engagement is mutually beneficial, as younger Christians benefit from the guidance, mentoring, and coaching of mature Christians. The younger class participants expressed surprise that so much help was available, and more importantly, they did not have to know the answers to every question. The class grew in confidence to lead and use Scripture as a tool to explain God's design for a shepherd as a mentor, coach, and ultimately, as an imitator of Christ.

The final part of the class involved breaking into small groups to complete the class exercise. The participants listed how they may be qualified to be a small group shepherd and their primary reason for feeling unqualified. Interestingly, their primary concern was a perception that they lacked sufficient biblical knowledge. However, the discussion and exercise demonstrated, particularly to the younger participants, that they could continue their study of the Bible and still start a small group, confident in the support of others in the church to mentor and guide them. In the future, the length of this class could be extended by 30 minutes to accommodate additional discussion and exercises, particularly role-playing.

To summarize the results of week 1, each participant understood that there are no special qualifications to be a shepherd/mentor other than faith and a willingness to learn. Further, one cannot use worldly means to determine who is qualified. Rather, God, through the Holy Spirit, makes himself available to everyone who believes. The result is a diverse group of individuals with unique talents and abilities to contribute to the body. Those who possess a desire, humility, and a willingness to serve will allow the Holy Spirit to enter and support their efforts. Participants were also encouraged to hear, in the words of one of the more mature Christians in the group, that they could "go get tough questions and enjoy learning the answer. And remember, when you are working to support another with the Word, that too is worship." This comment addressed the primary concern of those who appeared hesitant to lead a small group. Simply, one will never have all the answers; keep reading the Word, engage a mentor, and know there is support to start a small group.

Week 2: Inerrancy (Why We Can Trust the Bible)

Week 2's reading and discussion served as a good follow-up to the discussion in week 1, as they addressed participants' feelings of inadequacy regarding the biblical knowledge required to lead a small group. Week 2 addressed biblical inerrancy, including the importance of inerrancy, Christ's view of Scripture, what the disciples said about Scripture, the question of errors being present in the Scriptures, and finally, what it means to be "inspired by God." The class concluded with an exercise in researching challenging passages and utilizing tools to answer a complex question about the Scriptures. Each participant was excited to see how the difficult questions were answered and, more importantly, that the answers were more easily obtained than they thought. The younger participants were encouraged by how reasonable the answers to the difficult Scriptures were, demonstrating that God's Word is for everyone. He is not trying to hide or create difficult messages; rather, he will provide a way to understand his message. The class

grew in confidence that they too can answer tough questions, and if not, there is someone available to help them. This was also confirmed by their growth in confidence in using the Bible for life application, as seen in the post-training survey results.

The objective of week 2 was to demonstrate to the class that the Bible is inerrant—a book they can trust for timeless guidance and the source of authority in their lives. Again, the mature Christians were able to discuss the reading and answer the questions and concerns of the younger Christians. Topics raised by the younger adults came from their experience or understanding of the Bible and included asking why the book of Hebrews is included in the Bible if it has an unknown author, how carbon dating does not align with biblical timing, questions on the creation debate, and the narrow and broad views of inerrancy. The more mature Christians in the class gracefully managed each concern raised by the class, with particular members who had studied these questions (and even had professional experience related to the questions) answering each question. Beyond asking and receiving answers to their questions, the class experienced the importance of community as they discussed challenging questions about the Bible.

Following the discussion of the assigned reading, the class split into smaller groups for the class exercise, which focused on how to engage difficult texts. Each participant became more aware of and familiar with the tools they should have to address challenging questions. These tools included websites and apps such as "Got Questions," provided by Got Questions Ministries.[7] Beyond additional websites provided in the materials disseminated before class, the participants noted the necessity of having a good Bible commentary and a concordance. The younger participants were fascinated by *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties*, by Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe.[8] They were relieved to see a book that broke down difficult Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation.

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[7] See GotQuestions.org.

[8] Norman L. Geisler and Thomas A. Howe, *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties: Clear and Concise Answers from Genesis to Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008).

Finally, one of the more mature Christians reinforced the importance of studying God's Word. One does not need to go to a seminary to read, study, and understand the Bible. It can be done by anyone at any time and is particularly fruitful when done as a group.

The class concluded with an upbeat tone, as participants were again encouraged by the tools available online, in groups, and through the church. Each of the four post-training survey questions addressing the use of the Bible demonstrated increased confidence and knowledge in using the Bible for life's circumstances. In the future, it would be helpful to increase the length of this class by at least 30 minutes, allowing participants more time to practice researching difficult Scriptures and questions.

Additionally, although this class did touch on the topic of the Bible's authority, I suggest that future iterations of the training treat this important topic separately, perhaps as a standalone class.

Week 3: Shepherds as Mentors

This week covered the idea that shepherds are mentors. The objective of the class was to provide the tools and environment necessary to understand the role of being a shepherd mentor at LHBC. Each participant needed to work from the same definition of a shepherd mentor, as the words "shepherd" and "mentor" can have different meanings depending on one's cultural background, context, and experiences. The class confirmed this definition: "A shepherd is a disciple of Christ who studies the Bible and teaches others to study the Bible and become a disciple of Christ." With a definition in place, the class could discuss the tools available to help individuals understand and be equipped to be effective shepherd mentors.

The first part of the discussion was the class's request to change the introductory quote to the section from "I don't know, but I'll find out" to "I don't know, but let's find out." This was a welcome change and evidence that the class understood and applied the reading. If one is to walk with someone, they should bring that same

person along as they address challenges themselves. This also reinforces how mentees can seek community for help addressing difficult questions. It was encouraging to observe the younger Christians realize that it is reasonable and normal to learn and grow into the role of small group shepherd. It, too, is part of the journey of sanctification.

The conversation naturally transitioned to the concept of doing life on life as a shepherd. As one mature Christian noted, "It is being transparent with the good and the bad." His encouragement was to be a leader who demonstrates what following Christ looks like individually and in community. The younger Christians engaged and liked the idea of being more transparent and avoiding the need to be perfect or a Bible scholar. It was apparent that in a genuine environment where a shepherd is willing to be transparent, learn, and teach, the willingness to shepherd a small group increases. Slowly, the perceptions of difficulties were being eliminated. It is normal to learn along the way as a small group shepherd.

The younger Christians' hesitation began to decline as attendees began to see themselves as qualified small group shepherds. This provided a grounding moment to ask, What, then, is required to be a small group shepherd? The dialogue shifted to the "counterintuitive nature of God's selection process."[9] What does God look for? The class decided to describe the attributes of a disciple of Christ who leads others to be disciples of Christ. This leader must possess a willingness to serve, a heart for the gospel, eagerness to learn, humility, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. These are attributes anyone can have when saved by grace. Being a biblical scholar is not on the list. One attendee said it another way: "Not all leaders are tall, dark, and handsome. They are willing and humble."

The class exercise applied the reading, focusing on the willingness and

[9] Michael J. Anthony, "The Heart of God and Preparation of the Pastor," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 176, no. 702 (April 2019): 137.

humility of a leader, an interest in others, and an environment of transparency. The class discussed how life-on-life shepherding is more than a weekly meeting. It focuses on relationships built around the study and application of Scripture, more than weekly transactional events that simply review Scripture. Life on life applies Scripture to one's personal context. It is a commitment of time and effort, an investment of the heart in living life together in community.

The participants reviewed the differences between transactional and relational engagement, focusing on how a shepherd is characterized by relational engagement. As one participant noted, "What good is knowledge of the Scripture if we do not apply it to ourselves or help others with it?" A shepherd must be transparent, humble, and willing to teach and learn. This was a fitting connection to the definition the participants agreed on at the beginning of class.

One observation from the discussion was the difference between shepherding and leading a Bible study. What became apparent was the relationship between small group study and becoming a shepherd mentor to others. The foundation for the church community begins with a small group. The small group environment fosters community, service, and the building of relationships founded on the principles of following Christ. As a small group matures, the group shepherd will likely see individuals accelerating their desire to grow closer to Christ. That is when the small group shepherd can begin to engage the individual in a shepherding role that leads to discipleship. One of the mature Christians in the class emphasized the importance of weekly study and relationship-building over a weekly transactional approach to Bible study. The group shepherd must get to know the group, care for the group, and provide growth opportunities for the ones challenging themselves to engage at a deeper level. It is essential to encourage younger Christians by reinforcing the availability of support from mature individuals in the church who can provide guidance and companionship. Working together, the shepherd mentor and his group focus on becoming more like Christ and teaching others to be disciples of

Christ through life-on-life relationships where they learn together, experience failure and victory together, grow together, and serve Christ together. This was confirmed by four of the survey questions, which demonstrated a positive change when using the Bible in day-to-day situations and applying a biblical worldview.

Week 4: Coaching Like Christ

The objective of week 4 was to build on weeks 1–3 and introduce and equip the class with a working knowledge of the coaching cycle. The class learned the process practiced by Christ and had an opportunity to practice the coaching cycle in a smaller group. The breakouts were designed to include both younger and mature Christians, modeling a small group learning environment.

Weeks 1 and 3 affirmed one's qualifications to be a shepherd who is capable of accomplishing the first step of the cycle: to understand and explain the purpose of mentoring. A small-group shepherd will follow Christ's example of listening, understanding, and explaining. The second step of the cycle, demonstration and example, incorporated week 2's focus on biblical inerrancy and reliance on the Bible as authoritative in all aspects of life. It reinforced the need for the shepherd mentor to be an example of applying Scripture in one's life.

The third step involves the mentee engaging a challenge through a trial of their own, followed by the fourth step, in which the shepherd mentor reviews and critiques the mentee's attempt and encourages the mentee based on the mentor's experience. The cycle is complete as the two work together on the next step and confirm the skill is in place. Throughout the coaching cycle, the shepherd guides the mentee through life, fostering a relationship built on trust. This trust and relationship enable both to maintain an awareness of how God's Word is reliable and authoritative in all areas of life.

The results of the class were positive. The class appreciated that the process Christ used to coach his followers is still used today. Whether one considers secular or

seminary scholarship or biblical accounts, there is value in the coaching cycle for the secular and spiritual aspects of one's life. The class recognized that the cycle demonstrates respect for the mentee by providing a safe learning environment that fosters trust and understanding, encourages the mentee to apply what they are learning from Scripture, and incorporates a component of accountability and encouragement. As one of the mature Christians noted during the recap, "The coaching cycle reinforces the value of a willingness to learn and a humble attitude for both engaged." The cycle also reinforced the message of week 3's lesson, specifically, a commitment to humility, meaningful engagement, teachability, coachability, willingness to give and receive good counsel, and how to send for learning and growth. The class then transitioned to a review of the following week's lesson on sending. This allowed the class to look ahead at how sending can be used for training and transitioning into a small group shepherd role.

There were two primary observations from week 4's class. First, consistent with the previous classes, week 4 would benefit from additional time, ideally a one-hour discussion on the coaching cycle, with a full 30 minutes allocated for practicing the cycle in the smaller breakouts. Packing all the information into one hour compressed the time available for practice or "trial by the mentee." Each group expressed a desire to have more time.

The second observation was the willingness of the younger Christians to engage topics that were real and relevant to their situation. The mixture of mature and younger Christians in each breakout proved fruitful. In fact, one breakout dominated the balance of the class discussion following the role-play exercise, as one of the younger Christians sought advice on how to counsel a friend experiencing issues in his marriage. The mature Christians in his breakout and the larger class proved invaluable, affirming that it was not his responsibility to fix the situation. As it was a serious situation that he was not equipped to address, he could first listen and then help the individual find an appropriate counselor through the church's counseling center. Although a very difficult

situation to address, it affirmed week 3's guiding statement: "I don't know, but let's find out." It proved an opportunity for the young Christian to demonstrate humility, a willingness to serve, and a reliance on community to help a fellow Christian in a difficult situation. It also provided an unexpected opportunity to demonstrate that when a difficult situation arises, mature Christians are available to shepherd and guide individuals through it. In an interesting twist, the class became a coaching opportunity for the class to learn how to shepherd with humility, compassion, and a heart to support someone in need of a solution. The research also affirmed a growth in learning and confidence to shepherd a small group.

Week 5: Sending for Growth and Gospel

Week 5 introduced the concept of sending as a form of training and sending one to move forward with their spiritual vocation in life. Spiritual vocation applies to being a small group shepherd and engaging one's vocation in life as a follower of Christ, teaching others to follow Christ. Sending is the third part of the four-step coaching cycle, encouraging the mentee to attempt a new skill or address a situation they have been coached to address. The result of sending is skill and spiritual development as one identifies areas of success and opportunity.

Sending one to their spiritual vocation means sending one out as a follower and witness of Christ. This applies not only in a small group setting but also across one's life, including family, friends, secular vocation, and church. The mentee begins to see opportunities where they can move forward, such as being an example, a shepherd, and, most importantly, a disciple of Christ. It also gives the shepherd and mentee time to do life together, grow together, and identify opportunities to contribute to the body of Christ.

The first part of class included a discussion on sending, the frequency of sending, the value of sending, its relationship to spiritual vocation, and its impact on the relationship between the shepherd/mentor and mentee. Each question for the week's

discussion resulted in a robust discussion of sending, its value, and how Christ utilized the process with everyone he discipled. The first part is sending for training as part of the coaching cycle. The class enjoyed discussing how Christ incorporated sending as part of the coaching cycle, particularly how Christ welcomed his disciples back, discussed what they had learned, and how they would implement their growing ability to share the gospel with others. In general, the class concluded that sending is important to growth, but more effective when one has the opportunity to discuss results and opportunities for personal development. When patterned after Christ's example, sending allows for trials, learning, risk-taking as one builds their confidence, and ultimately, life experience. These experiences build the individual so that they can pass along the skills of being a follower of Christ as they teach others to follow Christ.

The second part of sending is for vocation. One mature member summarized it well: "It is fulfilling the Great Commission. It is our purpose as believers in community with one another, impacting the community around us with the power of the gospel." As one might imagine, the conversation quickly shifted to the concept of spiritual vocation. One could observe mature Christians discussing how vocation is not necessarily a full-time vocation, such as being a minister. Rather, we are all ministers in our context, with those around us at work, in our families, and in the local community. Each of us has the opportunity to be a witness for the gospel in each aspect of our lives. One younger participant in the class summarized, "We are to be a witness for Christ in the area of our influence."

The final part of the discussion surrounding the reading material focused on the relationship one should have with their shepherd mentor. It is worth noting that the relationship does not end. A sound relationship is designed to continue. Like Paul and Timothy, the contacts may be less frequent, but they remain strong as each moves through life, encouraging and building up one another. As one mature member stated, "it creates a web of relationships in the church body instead of individuals engaging for a

period and moving on." In line with the reading, it emphasizes the importance of building strong relationships that will withstand the test of time. In fact, one mature member and former missionary explained, "It is important to be relational and avoid the transactional component so many churches engage."

The second half of the class consisted of smaller breakouts designed to discuss training and sending. The first topic they were to discuss was vocational training they may have had or are receiving from their current secular employer. Areas covered included the importance of training for the successful execution of programs, personal development, listening skills, and observation skills—a virtual mirror to the coaching cycle in week 4. Once completed, the groups were to discuss how training as disciples of Christ helps them in their spiritual vocation. The obvious answers included training, confirmation of skills and knowledge, the importance of studying the Word, how to love others well, and the need to be in a faith community to build understanding and support for their spiritual mission and vocation.

Part of the discussion included identifying how secular and faith-based training overlap. Once again, the value of mature Christians in the class was evident. They were able to explain how their faith training empowers them daily in their secular vocation. One member stated, "Both areas train for success, but only our faith is eternal and something that creates an eternal investment in others. It also helps define real success as we work with others in our secular environment. They see how we work, respect others, and our responsibility to work for the Lord in all we do."

The class then closed with each group creating a statement of one to three sentences explaining why sending is important for training and discipleship. Each group was genuinely engaged and worked to summarize the day's discussion with the following statements:

> Sending is important for training and discipleship because it equips others to equip others to fulfill the great commission, by inspiring comprehension and building relationships that support community.

Sending is to take responsibility to lead a small group and to be supported by church leadership to take it on.

Since Jesus has given us the Great Commission, we relationally engage others with our shared identity in Christ, equipping and walking with them to the end.

The observations from week 5 highlight the value of intergenerational engagement and the importance of collaborative learning review. Though not designed, the class mixture of both older and younger Christians has proven valuable each week. It was a pleasure to see mature Christians demonstrate how to engage the entire group, value their input, and incorporate their thoughts into the final product. Most important is their encouragement of younger Christians to continue on their path, knowing they can stretch themselves into service with the confidence of the church and their shepherd mentor supporting them.

The highlight was watching each group summarize the week's lesson. Individuals from each group explained how they enjoyed the exercise, which helped reinforce the week's topic and purpose: equipping others to equip others and focusing on relationships that last. Unlike in previous weeks, the allotted time was sufficient.

Week 6: Equipping

Week 6 was the final class of the pilot, so class objectives included discussion of the role of a shepherd mentor, the shepherd mentor's relationship to the Great Commission, and the role of a small group shepherd at LHBC. The dialogue was robust and included references to each of the previous five classes as tools to help equip each participant as they look forward to considering starting a small group.

The week's objectives were to first confirm the class's understanding of being a small group shepherd at LHBC and second to provide an exercise to create their own small group. Following a quick review of the previous weeks' material, the discussion focused on the role of a shepherd mentor and explaining how the role of a small group shepherd at LHBC is consistent with the Great Commission (Matt 28) and everyone's

responsibility to participate in the Great Commission. In obedience to the Great Commission, the participants agreed that their responsibility was to be on the lookout for individuals to join a small group. “We are all called to prepare the next generation of church leadership.”[10] As members of the local church, it is our role to support the ministerial staff by leading small groups and making disciples.

The class then discussed that being a small group shepherd is an integral part of LHBC’s plan for community, designed to develop a web of relationships that can rely on one another across the church body. As relationships grow, this strengthens the church body and members’ commitment to the church community.

Church leadership plays a critical role in the process. Church staff and lay leadership are available to support anyone interested in being a small group shepherd. Class participants were challenged to list at least two individuals from church staff or lay leadership who could assist them in building a small group. Surprisingly, each participant had at least two contacts who would be able to mentor and coach them through the process. Participants also searched the church website for tools, including classes for personal and group development, offered by LHBC. One of the participants noted that he already uses some of the classes offered in his small group, setting aside 6–8 weeks for his small group to attend a class, temporarily replacing the regular small group meetings. Once completed, they return to their small group cadence to apply the class and continue in their Bible study. Once again, this was encouraging for all participants to review the importance of, support for, and tools available to start a small group.

Participants were then given the opportunity to create a target list of individuals for participation in a small group. To broaden the scope, they were encouraged to make a list of individuals who may be facing a life challenge. Would that

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[10] R. Albert Mohler Jr., *The Gathering Storm: Secularism, Culture, and the Church* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2020), 12.

individual benefit from a group of friends that could be present and available for them? Could it be an opportunity to show love and support for someone as Christ would show love and support? They were then challenged to consider how they might invite them to a small group.

Another important component of inviting people to join a small group is knowing one's own testimony and how to share it. It is especially beneficial if one's testimony includes how a small group of faithful Christian friends can provide support and accountability. All invitees can benefit from hearing one's testimony, but individuals who may be in a time of challenge can be particularly encouraged by mature Christians who have found a community to help them through difficult times.

Discussion then turned to the tools offered by LHBC to help leaders start a small group. Each participant created a list of tools and was encouraged to meet with the pastor for small groups, who would provide group outlines, study guides, and topics to get started. Additionally, leaders would receive a small groups booklet to guide them through the process of starting a small group. The booklet includes structure, contacts, and identifying a mentor to help shepherd them through the process. Once again, the younger Christians realized they are more qualified and supported for the role than they thought.

The final step was for each participant to identify a time during the week for a small group. With the right training, support, and tools, as well as a list of potential members and a meeting time, each participant was encouraged to pray about everyone they were to invite. The mature Christians encouraged the class by explaining that there may be speed bumps or setbacks. The point is to rely on Christ and the Holy Spirit for help, covering the process in prayer and following Christ's example and direction. The class then closed in a prayer of encouragement for each participant to seek individuals to join a small group and grow the LHBC community of believers who support each other.

Observations on this final class again highlighted the need for younger

Christians in the group to receive encouragement and guidance from the more mature Christians. Discussing the importance of small groups, how they contribute to the Great Commission, and everyone's responsibility to be part of the Great Commission not only motivated the participants but also helped them recognize that despite the setbacks that inevitably come in ministry, obedience—getting started—is the first step. Skills and experience will grow over time.

I also observed that the participants were easily able to generate a list of potential small group members; however, it was how to invite members that proved more challenging. One participant struggled with how to invite an individual in a life crisis to a small group. The group helped him devise a good way to engage the individual: inviting him to a coffee with a more mature Christian equipped to discuss the situation. Specifically, he could say, "I know someone you may want to speak with about the issue. He is experienced and has helped me through a difficult time." Looking ahead, it is essential to determine who you want to invite, and more importantly, how to extend the invitation. When one prays for a person to benefit from spiritual community, it honors both the individual and the Lord.

At the end of the class, participants were asked to complete the second, post-training survey. The initial survey was completed by fourteen individuals. Unfortunately, five individuals dropped out of the class due to personal conflicts (work, family, or schedule). Fortunately, nine individuals remained in the class and completed the post-training survey, exceeding the targeted survey goal. This reinforced the importance of recruiting more participants than needed to complete the research survey. Setting up a class during a time frame that includes a spring break, Easter, and graduations created a challenge. The results will be reviewed in the next chapter.

Conclusion

Each participant who completed the class understood the principles of the

pilot, recognizing that they are more qualified than they initially thought. Their growing confidence, combined with their responsibility outlined in the Great Commission, created a platform for each member to launch a small group. Each member discovered that LHBC is ready to support and equip them on their journey with the necessary tools and people to support their efforts. Finally, they realized the importance of first relying on the Holy Spirit to work through them and their gifts, enabling them to engage and lead a small group.

As LHBC leadership works to create a relational environment, especially within its small groups, the class provided another avenue for instruction, preparation, and support for new and current small group shepherds. This curriculum, based on biblical principles that strengthen the body of Christ, can be used by each leader and member of LHBC to engage in relationships that build disciples that build disciples.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of this chapter is to assess the project's effectiveness, including an evaluation of the project's purpose statement and a review of the project's goals and their fulfillment. Following this assessment, I will reflect on the project's results, assess the strengths and weaknesses of the project implementation, and offer suggestions for improvement should a church determine to implement a similar training program. This chapter will conclude with personal and theological reflections that impacted me, my family, and my church family.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of the project was to develop a pilot program in which mature members of the men's ministry at Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green, Kentucky, are trained in biblical mentoring and coaching of young adult church members. Before the class, I would have described many of the men at LHBC as qualified to lead a small group. However, many of these men did not know or understand that they were qualified, and it proved challenging for church leadership to get individuals to volunteer to be a small group shepherd. Furthermore, many men in the church were unaware of the role they could play and how LHBC was prepared to support their efforts as small group shepherds. LHBC has a strong academic approach and a robust inventory of training classes. This repository of training, however, does not automatically result in individuals taking the next step to become a small group shepherd. The product of this project—the Small Group Shepherd Class Pilot—provided a means for participants to discover their ability to leverage the knowledge and training they have

received and contribute to the LHBC community. In fact, every participant who completed the pre- and post-project surveys noted in the post-survey that they "feel confident to now engage in a new mentoring and coaching role in the church." This is good news, demonstrating that the pilot class was successful in accomplishing the project's purpose of encouraging and equipping individuals to become small group shepherds and utilizing the resources provided by LHBC in the process. Many participants commented at the end of the pilot that they were interested in starting small groups, and a few of the younger individuals requested curriculum or outlines for the first few months of a small group. It was encouraging to see individuals engage in the idea of being a small group shepherd.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

The project included four goals to measure the success of the project's ability to train mature Christians in biblically inspired mentoring and coaching. The goals focused on assessing the mentoring and coaching skills and increasing the knowledge and skills of the participants in the pilot. The first goal was to secure at least six mature participants from the men's ministry to participate in the training class. The second goal was to assess the mentoring and coaching skills possessed by the individuals participating in the training class. The third goal was to develop a six-week curriculum informed by biblical wisdom that equips the participants to encourage, mentor, and coach young adults in spiritual development. The fourth goal was to increase the participants' knowledge of mentoring and coaching young adults by teaching the curriculum over a six-week period.

Goal 1: Secure Six Participants

The first goal of the project was to secure the participation of at least six mature individuals from the men's ministry to participate in the coaching and mentoring training class. The goal was measured by the number of participants who attended all the

classes and completed the pre- and post-project surveys. A total of twelve Bible study groups, representing over 150 individuals, heard the pilot class overview and received an invitation to participate. Fourteen people registered for the class, and nine participants completed the training. This met and exceeded the requirements of goal 1.

Goal 2: Pre-class Skill Assessment

The second goal was to assess the mentoring and coaching skills of the class participants. This goal was measured by administering the Survey of Mentoring and Coaching Knowledge to all participants. This goal was successfully accomplished when fourteen participants completed the pre-class survey during the class introduction, scheduled two weeks prior to the beginning of the pilot class. Each participant received a unique PIN that enabled me to match their pre- and post-class surveys for statistical analysis.

In addition to the pre-class survey administration, this class introduction enabled the participants to meet one another and review the outline of the next six weeks of classes. It also enabled me to make any adjustments to the curriculum before beginning the pilot class. Based on my initial review of the pre-class survey, no curriculum adjustments were necessary.

The pre-class survey data revealed that the class participants had a range of confidence and knowledge concerning the primary topics of the class (mentoring, coaching, utilization of a biblical worldview, and qualifications to be a mentor or "small group shepherd"). The survey is built on a 6-point Likert scale of agreement with each statement, with 1 = "Strongly Disagree"; 2 = "Disagree"; 3 = "Disagree Somewhat"; 4 = "Agree Somewhat"; 5 = "Agree"; 6 = "Strongly Agree." My statistical analysis included a review of the mean scores for each question as well as the standard deviation for each question, which would indicate a wide spread of answers in relation to the mean on particular topics.

In the pre-class survey, I noted that 12 of the 23 questions had a standard deviation of 1.0 or greater, the highest being 1.58 (see table 2, question 3). Each of the 11 questions related to the primary four topics had at least one score of 3 or below. I noticed that the lower scores were driven by 4 of the 9 participants. Three participants in this sub-group had a pre-class average score of 97, 15 percent below the class participant average of 114.11. I made note of this, as observing how these four participants would score in the post-test would be an enlightening quantitative measure of the class's effectiveness. I was encouraged to see scores that had significant room for improvement.

Pre-class Scores on Mentoring

Questions 1 and 3 specifically addressed understanding of and confidence in mentoring skills. The mean scores were 4.556 and 4.667, respectively, and the standard deviations were 1.424 and 1.581, respectively. This provided an opportunity to test the effectiveness of the class by increasing the mean and lowering the standard deviations driven by the four participants with the lower average scores.

Table 2. Pre-class results of mentoring questions

No.	Question	Pre-class Mean	Pre-class Std Dev
1	I understand the process of mentoring.	4.556	1.424
3	I am confident I can mentor a small group of young adults.	4.667	1.581

The balance of the participants had higher scores, with four participants scoring 5 or higher on question 1 and five participants scoring 5 or higher on question 3.

Pre-class Scores on Coaching

Questions 2 and 4 specifically addressed understanding of and confidence in coaching skills. Question 2 had a pre-survey mean score of 4.667, with the same four participants driving a standard deviation of 1.00. Question 4 had a pre-class mean of 4.667, yet an even higher standard deviation of 1.225.

Table 3. Pre-class results of coaching questions

No.	Question	Pre-class Mean	Pre-class Std Dev
2	I understand the process of coaching.	4.667	1.000
4	I am confident I can coach a small group of young adults.	4.667	1.225

Pre-class Scores on Utilizing Biblical Worldview in Coaching and Mentoring

Questions 12 and 21 specifically addressed understanding of and confidence in utilizing a biblical world view to coach and mentor others. Interestingly, the group's mean score on this question, 5.778, was the highest of all the pre-class survey questions. Further, the standard deviation of 0.441 was the lowest of the pre-survey.

Table 4. Pre-class results of questions on utilizing a biblical worldview in coaching and mentoring

No.	Question	Pre-class Mean	Pre-class Std Dev
12	I feel that biblical principles are part of life every day.	5.778	0.441
21	I encourage using a biblical worldview when thinking about problems.	5.111	1.054

Participants appeared to enter the class with an understanding of the importance of Scripture, yet the survey indicated a possible struggle with how to apply their knowledge with confidence as a small group shepherd. The training in, preaching of, and teaching on the importance and centrality of Scripture are effective. It may be that

some of the participants did not realize they had the training and skills to be a small group shepherd who can apply a biblical worldview to life situations. Likewise, question 21 had an average score of 5.111, yet the standard deviation was 1.054, demonstrating that the same four individuals may not realize they have the tools to implement a biblical worldview. In reviewing these results, in particular, my hope was that week 2 of the class would build the group's confidence in the Bible as inerrant and as an authoritative application for all of life's challenges.

Pre-class Scores on Understanding the Importance of and Qualifications to Be a Small Group Shepherd

Like the importance of Scripture noted above, the group also understands the importance of being a small group shepherd. Questions 14, 15, and 20 demonstrated that the group has a desire to be a small group shepherd, believes their faith and experience are an asset to share, and feels it is important to serve as a small group shepherd. All three questions had a pre-class survey score of 5.222 and a standard deviation of less than 0.840. It was encouraging to see that the class had the desire to be a shepherd and seemed ready to take the next step to be a shepherd.

Table 5. Pre-class results of questions on the importance of being a small group shepherd

No.	Question	Pre-class Mean	Pre-class Std Dev
14	I desire to mentor other believers.	5.222	0.833
15	I believe my faith and Christian maturity can be an asset to a young adult.	5.222	0.833
20	I am aware of why serving is important to the young adult ministry.	5.222	0.667

Questions 22 and 23 addressed the participants' perceived qualifications to mentor and coach young adults with a biblical worldview. These two questions draw the contrast between the importance of being a small group shepherd and becoming a small-

group shepherd. The average score for the group's confidence in mentoring and coaching was lower, with an average score of 4.889 and 4.667, respectively. Further, the standard deviations were 1.167 and 1.225, respectively.

Table 6. Pre-class results of questions on perceived qualifications to coach using a biblical worldview

No.	Question	Pre-class Mean	Pre-class Std Dev
22	I can mentor young adults in day-to-day life situations utilizing a biblical worldview.	4.889	1.167
23	I can coach young adults in day-to-day life situations utilizing a biblical worldview.	4.667	1.225

Weeks 1, 3, and 4 of the curriculum were designed to address one's qualifications. I made a note to examine in the post-class survey whether the mean score increased and the standard deviation decreased in these areas on the post-class survey. Removing any barrier to volunteering would be beneficial across the board.

Goal 3: Develop a Six-Week Curriculum

The third goal of this project was to develop a six-week curriculum informed by biblical wisdom that equipped participants to encourage, mentor, and coach young adults in spiritual development. The curriculum's foundation was based on a biblical worldview and included biblically informed fundamentals of mentoring and coaching young adult Christians toward spiritual development. The goal was successfully completed following a review by the panel of pastoral leadership at Living Hope Baptist Church. The panel utilized a rubric to ensure its biblical fidelity and pedagogical suitability. [1] The goal was to be rated at a sufficient or exemplary level. As noted in chapter 4, the average for all measures on the rubric was 3.43 (out of 4), exceeding the

[1] See appendix 1 for the rubric and the individual evaluators' scores and comments.

sufficient level and thus meeting the requirements of goal 3. However, 2 out of 13 individual measures scored below the sufficient level. The panel members provided feedback on specific improvements that could be made to the curriculum in these two areas. I presented the changes to the PSF and received his approval to proceed with the pilot class.

In future iterations of the project, the last two rubric questions on the evaluation should be modified. The course was designed for young adults; however, there was the potential for confusion when considering that the participants were pulled from the men's ministry, which was necessary given the limited scope of the project. Under practicality on the rubric, the question should be reworded as follows: "The course meets the needs of mature Christian men to lead young adults." The last question should be reworded in a similar fashion to confirm that the course length is sufficient to meet the needs of men teaching young adult men.

Goal 4: Increase Participants' Knowledge

The fourth goal of the project was to increase the participants' knowledge to mentor and coach young adults by teaching the curriculum over a six-week period. This goal was measured by re-administering the survey utilized in goal 2 to all pilot program participants.[2] Only post-class surveys completed by participants who also completed the pre-class survey were utilized in the analysis (for a total of nine surveys). Additional qualitative questions at the end of this survey assessed the participants' feedback on the class, including what they learned, how it helped them develop greater knowledge as a mentor and coach, and if they feel more qualified to be a mentor shepherd at LHBC. It also requested recommendations for future training. This goal was considered successfully met when a *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive,

[2] See appendix 2 for survey and appendix 4 for t-test results.

statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-class survey scores: $t_{(9)} = -4.107038$, p-value = 0.001702.[3]

Post-class Survey Analysis

The *t*-test, along with the qualitative questions, confirmed that the class increased in knowledge and confidence in leading a small group. To one of the qualitative questions, all participants affirmed that they "feel confident to now engage in a new mentoring and coaching role in the church." It was also encouraging to see that each of the four primary topics noted had improved scores on the post-class survey. Overall, the post-class mean jumped 14.7 percent to 130.889, and the total standard deviation dropped by 47.9 percent.[4] The decrease in standard deviation demonstrates that the individuals who scored the lowest in the pre-class survey demonstrated a significant improvement in their understanding and confidence.

As noted in the section on pre-class scores, four of the nine participants had a pre-test average score of 97, 15 percent below the class participant average of 114.11. Upon completion of the class, the average for these four participants increased to 125.495, compared to the old class average of 114.11 and the new post-class survey average of 130.889. Combined with the qualitative feedback, this was an encouraging result, as it indicated the participants' growing confidence in becoming a small group shepherd. The improvement is also encouraging when reviewing the four primary topics where learning and knowledge increased: mentoring, coaching, utilization of a biblical world view to coach and mentor others, and the importance of and qualifications to be a mentor or "small group shepherd").

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[3] See appendix 4.

[4] See appendix 3 for comparison of pre- and post-training scores, including the difference in means and standard deviation.

Post-class Scores on Mentoring

Questions 1 and 3 specifically addressed understanding of and confidence in mentoring skills. The post-class survey mean scores for these questions demonstrated that learning and knowledge had improved to 5.89 and 5.86, respectively. More importantly, the standard deviations improved with a decrease to 0.330 and 0.730, respectively.

Table 7. Post-class results of mentoring questions

No.	Question	Pre-class Mean	Pre-class Std Dev	Post-class Mean	Post-class Std Dev
1	I understand the process of mentoring.	4.556	1.424	5.889	0.333
3	I am confident I can mentor a small group of young adults.	4.667	1.581	5.556	0.726

This improvement demonstrated that the overall class and the individuals with the most to learn increased their knowledge and confidence to mentor.

Post-class Scores on Coaching

Questions 2 and 4 specifically addressed understanding of and confidence in coaching skills. The post-class survey mean score for question 2 was 6.000, with a standard deviation reduction to 0.000. Question 4's mean rose to 5.56, with a standard deviation reduction to 0.73. Both questions demonstrate an improved knowledge and confidence to coach young adults.

Table 8. Post-class results of coaching questions

No.	Question	Pre-class Mean	Pre-class Std Dev	Post-class Mean	Post-class Std Dev
2	I understand the process of coaching.	4.667	1.000	6.000	0.000
4	I am confident I can coach a small group of young adults.	4.667	1.225	5.556	0.726

Post-class Scores on Utilizing Biblical Worldview in Coaching and Mentoring

Questions 12 and 21 specifically addressed understanding of and confidence in utilizing a biblical world view to coach and mentor others. As noted, the group entered the class with an understanding of the importance of Scripture in daily life; however, some possibly struggled with how to apply the concepts as a small group shepherd. It was apparent that LHBC's training, preaching, and teaching of the importance and centrality of Scripture are effective; however, there was an opportunity to help members realize they possess the knowledge and skills needed to be a small group shepherd capable of applying a biblical worldview to life situations.

Question 21 had a pre-survey mean score of 5.111, with a standard deviation of 1.054. The post-survey mean was 5.89, with a standard deviation of 0.330, demonstrating an improvement in the group's ability to apply a biblical worldview to life situations. Further, the four individuals with the lower scores in the pre-survey raised their scores from a total mean of 18 to a total mean of 23 (three of the four rated themselves a 6 in the post-survey). This positive change and reduction in standard deviation suggest they now feel they possess the knowledge and confidence to implement a biblical worldview. It is also interesting that the entire class scored themselves 6 on question 12 in the post-survey, and all but one scored themselves a 6 on question 21 in the post-survey. This indicates that week 2 of the curriculum was successful in building the group's confidence

in the Bible as an inerrant source with authoritative applications for all of life's challenges.

Table 9. Pre-class results of questions on utilizing a biblical worldview in coaching and mentoring

No.	Question	Pre-class Mean	Pre-class Std Dev	Post-class Mean	Post-class Std Dev
12	I feel that biblical principles are part of life every day.	5.778	0.441	6.000	0.000
21	I encourage using a biblical worldview when thinking about problems.	5.111	1.054	5.889	0.333

Post-class Scores on Understanding the Importance of and Qualifications to Be a Small Group Shepherd

The results of questions 14, 15, and 20 demonstrated that the group has a desire to be a small group shepherd, believes their faith and experience are an asset to share, and feels it is important to serve as a small group shepherd.

Table 10. Post-class results of questions on the importance of being a small group shepherd

No.	Question	Pre-class Mean	Pre-class Std Dev	Post-class Mean	Post-class Std Dev
14	I desire to mentor other believers.	5.222	0.833	5.778	0.441
15	I believe my faith and Christian maturity can be an asset to a young adult.	5.222	0.833	5.667	0.500
20	I am aware of why serving is important to the young adult ministry.	5.222	0.667	5.778	0.441

The results of questions 22 and 23 demonstrate that the participants had a stronger understanding and perception of their qualifications to be a small group shepherd

in a biblical worldview. As noted earlier, these two questions highlight the contrast between the importance of being a small group shepherd and becoming one. The mean score for the group's confidence in mentoring (question 22) and coaching (question 23) increased to a mean of 5.556 and 5.667, respectively. It is also encouraging to see that the standard deviation reduced to 0.527 and 0.500, respectively. Again, the total mean score for four individuals who scored lower on the pre-survey increased from 15 to 21 on question 22 and from 14 to 21 on question 23.

Table 11. Post-class results of questions on qualifications to be a small group shepherd

No.	Question	Pre-class Mean	Pre-class Std Dev	Post-class Mean	Post-class Std Dev
22	I can mentor young adults in day-to-day life situations utilizing a biblical worldview.	4.889	1.167	5.556	0.527
23	I can coach young adults in day-to-day life situations utilizing a biblical worldview.	4.667	1.225	5.667	0.500

Overall, the results were positive and became more encouraging as each participant explained they felt more confident to be a small group shepherd. The significant improvement in each of the four training focus areas was primarily driven by the four individuals who struggled in these areas in the pre-class survey, and one participant who had slightly higher scores than these four individuals. The other four participants showed increases as well, but their increases were more subtle than the other five participants. Chapter 4 described a group of mature Christian participants who facilitated constructive dialogue and provided encouragement to a group of participants who were "younger" in the faith. The scores for each individual, as well as for the groups described in this chapter, were consistent with those who are younger in the faith (having lower scores) versus more mature in the faith (having higher scores).

Additional Post-class Survey Analysis

Two questions worthy of additional comment are questions 10 and 16. Question 10 should have been a binary question. It should say, "I am currently a small group shepherd, Y/N." Although the mean score increased from 4.33 to 5.11, it is unreasonable to scale what should be a binary question. Anecdotally, no one had mentioned that they started a new group. It is difficult to explain the change in score.

Question 16 simply demonstrated that the participants believed there is a place for God at work. I believe participant 8's score decrease from 6 to 5 is more of an anomaly. Further, participant 8's total score dropped from 130 to 127; however, he commented on feeling more qualified to be a small group shepherd and said he appreciated the class. The decrease is difficult to explain, as all his answers to the primary questions noted in the body of this chapter were either 5 or 6.

Two participants in the pilot class merit additional comment: participants 3 and 6. Participant 3 was the youngest participant. His pre-survey total was 97, with his post-survey total rising to 130. This participant engaged in the material and finished the class with the intention of starting a small group. Further, he approached me for personal mentoring following the class, specifically, to engage in dialogue about ministry in his space of influence with young adults. Participant 3 has the intention to become a small-group shepherd. Further, he desires to be engaged with a mature Christian in a shepherding relationship. I now meet with him monthly. The next step will be to introduce him to our young adult pastor for engagement and participation in a small group.

Participant 6 is a young adult who is engaged with young adults as a small group shepherd. His intention in taking the class was to better understand the role of a mentor/shepherd and to determine how it applies to him personally, and to the small group he is leading. Participant 6 was at a career crossroads with a desire to meet with a more mature Christian to discuss the options he was considering. Like participant 3, this

participant asked if we could meet on a regular basis following the pilot class. We agreed to meet for six weeks to discuss the topics he wanted to cover. The results were positive. We discussed his spiritual priorities and how to maintain Christ as his top priority when pursuing his professional vocation. Put simply, how to keep his spiritual vocation as his top priority while pursuing a secular vocation aligned with his education and training. Once he understood that one can be on mission where they are, he began to take solace in accelerating his career search. Following much prayer and discussion, he took a position in his desired field that required him to move out of the local area. The most encouraging part of the meetings was his action plan for the move. He first facilitated a smooth transition for the small group he was leading. Second, he identified a church in his new location whose beliefs and articles of faith are aligned with LHBC. Third, he engaged in a small group of young men and identified a married couple's study for him and his wife. Finally, we agreed to stay in touch over the next few months to ensure a smooth transition as he engages his new church family. It was a joy to walk alongside this individual who has a heart for Christ and a desire to seek counsel as he manages his life decisions, all the time keeping Christ at the forefront.

Strengths of the Project

This project demonstrated strengths in a variety of areas. First, it encouraged participants to grow in their knowledge and confidence, preparing them to become small group shepherds at LHBC. It was rewarding to observe each member note that, following the pilot class, they feel qualified to be a small group shepherd at LHBC. The content and topics addressed concern many individuals who have questions when considering the role of a small group shepherd, beginning with "Am I qualified?" to "Can I lead a Bible study?" LHBC's robust teaching and sermon platforms have provided a knowledgeable congregation with great potential to grow into small groups and disciple-making. It is

humbling to consider that the leadership was kind enough to allow me to engage and teach this pilot class while offering support, encouragement, and advice.

A second strength was theological alignment. The class was grounded in biblical authority and Christ-centered mentoring, consistent with LHBC's emphasis on biblical fidelity and the gospel's transformative power. The class affirmed the Great Commission in Matthew. The class also echoed the heart and mission of LHBC for small groups as reflected in 2 Timothy 2:2. The frequent appeal to Christ as the model shepherd, coach, and mentor mirrors LHBC's focus on union and communion with Christ as the example for leading group life.

Another strength was the philosophy of discipleship aligning with LHBC's vision for small groups and discipleship. The pilot class stressed life-on-life mentoring that is relational, which is key to LHBC's "leading from the center" model for group shepherds. The training avoided a performance-driven, knowledge-based model for group leadership, instead calling for humility, availability, and spiritual growth as the primary goals. This was further supported by weeks 4 and 5 of the curriculum, which supported LHBC's emphasis on multiplication and equipping.

One additional strength was the missional engagement and alignment with LHBC's vision. The course affirmed the church's calling to develop leaders who make disciples. The important central message was to foster a culture where every believer is equipped and sent. The utilization of specific LHBC examples, tools, and pastoral support strengthens the integration of the message. Referencing LHBC's mission, elders, and training structure demonstrate an intent to align with the mission.

Though the overall results are encouraging, it is essential to note that this program is not ready for full implementation. Indeed, it demonstrates the potential to remove barriers to becoming a small group shepherd, but it also needs additional work to make sure each topic fully aligns with LHBC's plan for the spiritual formation of young adults. LHBC has a robust plan to grow small groups for young adults. As I am a member

of the church and not a vocational minister at LHBC, the leadership will determine how the results of this project can be utilized within the church body. What I have learned in this implementation, I presented to the senior staff as a thank you for their contribution.

Weaknesses of the Project

My excitement and personal encouragement resulting from this project have been life-changing. As much as I enjoyed the project and the results, there are certainly areas of weakness that reveal things to improve. To begin, it is important to note that these results are not projectable over the wider church population, but it is reasonable to review the information and consider it as LHBC makes decisions. It also supports the rationale for additional research into understanding why qualified individuals are reluctant to volunteer for small group leadership. As LHBC continues to embrace and understand the challenge, a better understanding of the entire population will become apparent.

The primary areas I have identified to improve upon include pedagogical fit, expanding the introductory class to include a broader view of the practical needs of young adults, expanding the unit on inerrancy by spending additional time on authority and less time on hermeneutics, and expanding the introduction to include the reason, value, and importance of small groups for young adults.

Pedagogically, the lessons provided a foundation for inductive learning and group engagement; however, there could be more explicit use of the inductive Bible study tools employed by LHBC. The training tools and outlines provided by LHBC are available and can provide the structure to accomplish this improvement. The additions should include how to structure a small group meeting, how to facilitate diverse group dynamics, how to ask questions that encourage involvement and learning, and how to handle the typical setbacks or challenges often encountered in a small group. There is enough information to address this challenge so that a new and separate unit can be

developed. Following week 6 of the curriculum, an additional week could be dedicated to planning and initiating small groups. The unit can be built with two parts. The first part would feature a workshop element that utilizes LHBC planning tools, including recruiting, topic choice, study method, and organizational tips for challenging individuals. The discussion component of the unit can include handling conflict, working through difficult situations in a peaceful fashion, and identifying a mature Christian to be available to coach and guide the new small group shepherd. Secondly, the unit should equip the attendees with a plan to follow as they leave with the intention of starting a small group.

The practical needs of young adults in today's context would broaden the application and benefit of the curriculum. Across the board, everyone, including young adults, is embedded in a cultural context flooded with conflicting opinions and information that is untested and often unreliable, not to mention cultural truths that have become fluid. The truth of Scripture often creates tension between the culture's norms and faith's convictions. As a result, it would add value to expand the introductory class to discuss the needs of young adults mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and relationally as Christians in today's context. This will help demonstrate the value of small groups to build community and provide faith-based engagement rooted in Scripture that addresses the specific needs of young adults' spiritual and emotional growth.

The authority of Scripture is a primary pillar of LHBC. Aligned with inerrancy, week 2 may be more effective by adding a discussion on the authority of Scripture and reducing the time spent on hermeneutics. Though hermeneutics is critical to effective Bible study, the typical weekly Bible study experience utilized by LHBC focuses more on application and authority of Scripture. Providing additional time to discuss how authority applies in one's life would benefit both the leader and the group. A second way to address this would be to add a separate unit to study and discuss authority. Given the importance and application of authority, it would be reasonable to have an

additional week on the importance of authority, providing reading, discussion, and application through role-play examples.

The reason, value, and importance of small groups for young adults should be added to the introductory class. The introductory class lays the groundwork for each lesson. As a result, it is important to explain the reason and value of the curriculum. It is important that each participant understand the "why" behind small groups. It is more than a weekly transactional meeting. It is a gathering to grow closer to God through study and community. The foundation of this addition should include the importance of community, the value of personal engagement around the Word of God, teaching, learning, friendship, and leadership development for LHBC. Each participant should understand the importance of providing teaching that facilitates learning and groups that facilitate friendship based on the truths of Scripture. Put simply, engage the path to sanctification through small groups. Young adults are learning to live and apply Scripture's truth in today's culture in their homes, work, and church family.

Things I Would Do Differently

The things I would do differently fall into two categories. First are the items related to the weaknesses of the project. I look at the project as a foundation that can be improved and modified, and a tool for LHBC leadership to use as they see fit. If utilized, improvement and changes will come through the implementation of the lessons, observations by LHBC leadership, and the input and contribution of future participants. The second category of items to do differently includes general observations during the project development and implementation. Each step of the process has been humbling and rewarding. Most importantly, it has illuminated many of the challenges church leaders face on a day-to-day basis. The patience, transparency, and encouragement LHBC

provided as I implemented this project are immeasurable. They have provided an example of shepherd leadership that I hope to achieve.

There are four areas I would change in future iterations of the project. First, I would close the class with a stronger call to action. Although the concept is implied throughout the course, the class should conclude with an exercise to plan a small group. As noted above, LHBC has the tools and support in place to improve the class. The tools will equip and encourage each participant to initiate a small group. Further, a call to action at the end complements the first lesson on being qualified. Each member noted they felt more qualified at the end. As a result, I should have included a call to action with a workshop to plan. If the class aims to remove barriers to being a small group shepherd at LHBC, it should conclude with a stronger call to become one.

A second change I would make to the project addresses one of the weaknesses noted earlier, specifically, to spend more time on the practical needs of young adults in today's context. Though addressed indirectly, tailoring the content to specifically address young adults' needs emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and relationally will enhance the relevance of the class content. Easily incorporated into the introductory class, it will help solidify the foundation of the course targeted at young adult leaders. Question 9 of the surveys supports the importance of this addition. We have learned that young adults desire a mentor and are willing to engage.

The third item I would change relates to questions 10 and 16. Question 10, "I am currently a mentor to another person," should not have been included as a scalable question. Rather, it should be a binary (yes/no) question. As a binary question, it would provide the foundation for the call to action at the end of the class. It would identify anyone not in or leading a small group. Question 16, "I believe that there is a place for God at work," asks the participants about their conviction concerning God in the workplace, yet it does not provide a scale of confidence to apply that conviction. An additional question addressing confidence level would help demonstrate that an area of

opportunity exists to equip individuals to apply that conviction. One option to consider would be, "I am confident I can explain there is a place for God at work." Finally, a fill-in-the-blank question that qualifies why their confidence level is lower than their convictions would illuminate areas of focus for the class. The goal is to understand why some individuals have lower confidence scores, so we can identify areas where they have opportunities for growth. This provides for additional customization of the class for the participants, addressing ways to remove perceived barriers to applying convictions and becoming a small group shepherd at LHBC.

The fourth change I would make relates to the project survey. Similar to the preceding change, additional questions written to discover why individuals are hesitant to lead a small group would be beneficial. First, it will identify a set of specific items that can be addressed. Second, the curriculum can be modified to address those specific areas of hesitation. Said another way: What is your reason for not being a small group shepherd? One of the most significant challenges faced is getting individuals to lead young adult small groups. It is reasonable to ask why they are hesitant. Once understood, it can be addressed. Finally, it is congruent with the class's objective to demonstrate that individuals are more qualified than they think. Addressing their specific hesitations will improve understanding, help remove barriers, improve participation, and support the call to action.

Theological Reflections

This project challenged me to reflect deeply on my responsibilities as a church member and my convictions to pursue the Great Commission. Evangelism and discipleship are bedrock foundations for all church members. Christ did not say for *some* to go make disciples. He was clear that *all* are to go and make disciples. For the local church, that means all members. Be it at work, home, or in the community, we are all to be disciples of Christ, making disciples of Christ.

The doctrine of the church is also clear: we are to make disciples. It is one thing to sit in the pew and understand the concept of discipleship. It is another thing to embrace the concept and go and make disciples. We certainly hear of the doctrine of the church on a regular basis. There are many classes, studies, and events that provide the opportunity to understand the doctrine and its importance to the church. Church leaders spend countless hours teaching, providing examples, and encouraging the body to make disciples. Enormous amounts of time and effort are spent explaining and teaching Scripture and doctrine. It is easy to see why church doctrine is understood, yet there is still a void in the practice of the church body. Many believe it is the pastor's role to execute the practice of the church. Christ was clear in Matthew 28: it is everyone's responsibility to engage in the practice of discipleship, which is a core component of any sound church doctrine. The church body should challenge itself to rally around leadership to support evangelism and discipleship. Certainly, it starts with leadership, but it should spread throughout the church and community. It takes the body to engage Scripture and the resulting church doctrine; it takes the body to make disciples.

All the research I completed on mentoring and coaching consistently led me back to being a shepherd. A shepherd is a mentor, a coach, and, most of all, a disciple of Christ, making disciples of Christ. It means actively engaging others for discipleship, actively supporting church leadership, and making sure I meet people where they are with the gospel as I encourage them to become a disciple of Christ.

A second area of deep reflection is the importance of the local church's doctrine, articles of faith, and plans to build and strengthen the body. I am fortunate to belong to a church that has put in place biblically aligned leadership, doctrine, articles of faith, and support for anyone willing to engage. Leadership demonstrates the heart of Christ with a determined plan to make disciples. My entire journey over the past eight years has been directed and encouraged by a leader willing to engage and disciple church members for the growth and edification of the body. The examples of humility and

servant leadership only serve to help the body grow more like Christ. After working closely with leadership over the past three years, I have an even stronger conviction to love and support them and their efforts. The battles they face, the challenges presented, and the variety of spiritual maturity they work with are daunting. Hebrews 13 encourages obedience and submission to leadership. First Thessalonians 5 and 1 Timothy 5 note that we should acknowledge and honor those who work hard in the ministry. We should all recognize the significant responsibility they have in watching over the flock.

It is humbling to be part of a church that engages Scripture, helps the congregation understand the resulting doctrine of the church, and has the heart to make the doctrine their practice. Finally, supporting the responsibility to make disciples, it is critical that we engage 2 Timothy 2:2 with all our effort. Seek out leaders, teach them, grow them, and strengthen the church. I am humbled to be part of a local church that has a clear vision and leadership with the patience and conviction to engage its flock. They are an example of individuals striving to embrace 1 Corinthians 13:4–5. Their patience and kindness have been on display for the past three years. As I look forward, I know there is a team in place standing ready to teach, support, and encourage the body to make disciples.

Personal Reflections

Completing the project certainly encouraged me to continue in my efforts to be an effective small group shepherd at LHBC, one who is encouraged by the mission of a disciple of Christ, making disciples of Christ. Completing the project also provided a deeper respect for church leadership and the challenges they face on a day-to-day basis. My respect and conviction have created an even sharper focus to engage and support their efforts. As a member of the body, it is my responsibility to actively engage in evangelism, serve the body, support leadership, and make disciples. My purpose is clear, and I know they stand ready to support and encourage my efforts.

The project has also challenged me to think in actionable terms. J. T. English's book *Deep Discipleship* captures it best when he explains the role of the local church. Discipleship is the responsibility of the local church—not parachurch organizations, not just the local leadership of the church—but the local church body. We are all to make disciples. Anything I can do to make disciples, eliminate barriers to becoming a disciple, and send disciples is my personal responsibility and action plan.

Finally, I am pleased with the outcome of my project. It was my hope to help individuals understand they are more qualified than they think to be a small group shepherd. Most importantly, it is about helping the body of Christ and the local church be better equipped to make disciples. This project was initiated because of the need for additional small group shepherds for the young adult ministry. I hope the information I can share, the improvements available to the project, and the key learning will be tools the church can use to commission more young adult small group shepherds. By better understanding the role, eliminating hesitation to lead, and taking the steps to start small groups, it is my hope that this project will be a benefit to LHBC.

Conclusion

The time and work required for this project greatly challenged me over the past three years. The commitment was greater than I anticipated and more rewarding than I had ever hoped. Each semester provided learning, hurdles, and most importantly, time to challenge my study and convictions. As I conclude my project, I have clarity on my role, a path to follow, and a strong conviction to shepherd young adults into discipleship. My purpose is clear, and I stand ready to support the church in the role of disciple-making.

The grace LHBC has shown me is immense. Their patience, transparency, and support helped me strive to engage in a project that would benefit the church. It is my prayer that this project will not only benefit my local church community but also that this project will benefit other pastors and churches who desire to engage young adults and

future leaders in discipleship. Finally, I am most grateful to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for its support, academic rigor, and commitment to the truth and application of Scripture. It has been an honor to study under their leadership. May God continue to bless Southern Seminary, the local church, and all who are determined to be disciples of Christ, making disciples of Christ.

APPENDIX 1

MENTORING AND COACHING CURRICULUM RUBRIC AND EVALUATION

During the development of the project training curriculum, an expert panel of three pastors at Living Hope Baptist Church evaluated each session of the training. The pastors used the following rubric to ensure its biblical fidelity and pedagogical suitability. Evaluator A is the Lead Pastor for Ministries and Spiritual Formation. Evaluator B is the Senior Pastor. Evaluator C is the Pastor for Groups and Membership.

Name of Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Curriculum Evaluation Rubric					
1 = insufficient 2 = requires attention 3 = sufficient 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**Comments**
Biblical Accuracy					
Each lesson included the important biblical examples and skills for mentoring and coaching.			A	B C	A: "Week 6 may need a bit more, with specific application." C: "Each lesson consistently integrates examples from Scripture (like Christ, Paul, Timothy, etc)."
Each lesson was consistent with the biblical example of how to mentor and coach.				A B C	C: "The structure and pedagogy mirror the biblical models of mentorship, especially Jesus' discipling method with the Twelve."
Scope					
The content of the mentoring and coaching curriculum sufficiently covers each example and skill it is designed to address.				A B C	B: "The 'coaching cycle' on page 29 is excellent." C: "The curriculum is comprehensive and includes a wide range of applicable skills."
The curriculum sufficiently covers a biblical pedagogical methodology to explain mentoring and coaching.			A C	B	A: "The references to the coaching cycle and roles of a mentor can be a little confusing to recall. An acrostic or more blatant repetition would be helpful." C: "Pedagogical methodology is present and biblically grounded, though a short theological section like 'A Biblical Theology of Shepherding' could elevate the theological clarity re: shepherding."

Scope					
The course spent adequate time on each topic to develop important skills for mentoring and coaching.			A C	B	C: "Each week develops a theme, but certain topics could benefit from extended treatment, especially practical role play (see below)."
The course increases the awareness of the needs of young adults and helped to train leaders for working with young adults.	A		B C		A: "Little focus on the practical needs of young adults—mentally, emotionally, spiritually, relationally—as connected to this life stage apart from general adult population." B: "Although it will be an excellent resource to develop young adults, the scope of the content seems to target all ages of men." C: "Young adult needs are indirectly addressed, though tailoring content more specifically to their cultural context might enhance relevance."
Pedagogy					
Each lesson was clear, containing a specific skill development.				A B C	C: "Lessons are clearly outlined with learning outcomes and practical application steps."

Pedagogy					
Each lesson provides opportunities for participant interaction with the material through examples and role play.		A	C	B	A: "There are guided discussions but only one true role play. Another one (at least) would make the curriculum more engaging." B: "The discussion questions were very good for this." C: "While opportunities for interaction are present, these are mostly discussion-based or reflective, not fully guided simulations. I'd also add case studies (e.g., confidentiality issues, theological disagreement, burnout). Maybe each participant plays the role of a shepherd in a mock group session at some point would solidify learning."
Practicality					
The curriculum clearly details how to develop the skills of mentoring or coaching.				A B C	C: "Practical instructions, examples, and step-by-step guidance are abundant, especially in Weeks 4–6."
At the end of the course, participants will be able to develop a mentoring and coaching relationship.			A	B C	C: "The course ends with commissioning steps, equipping attendees to mentor and disciple."
The course is congruent with and supports current Living Hope Baptist Church initiatives for leadership training.			B	A C	C: "The program aligns closely with LHBC's stated mission and vision, citing direct institutional support."
The course meets the leadership needs for young adults.		A	B C		A: "Intro explicitly ties to men's ministry—not to young adults." C: "Leadership development for young adults is a recurring theme, though not always explicitly focused on them."

Practicality					
The course length is sufficient to meet the skills needed for effective young adult mentoring and coaching.		A	C	B	A: "See above." C: "Six weeks provides solid foundations, though deeper practice might require a longer course."

Other Comments:

Note: The following was offered by Evaluator C.

Here are some thoughts as it pertains to possible alignment at Living Hope:

Theological Alignment

- The class is grounded is biblical authority and Christ-centered mentoring, consistent with our emphasis on biblical fidelity and the gospel's transformative power.
- Your class affirms the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18–20) and 2 Timothy
- 2:2, echoing our heart and mission for small groups.
- The frequent appeal to Christ as the model shepherd, coach, and mentor mirrors our focus on union and communion with Christ as the basis/foundation for leading group life.

Philosophy of Discipleship

- The curriculum stresses life-on-life, relational mentoring— key to our "leading from the center" model for group shepherding
- Your training avoids a performance-driven or purely knowledge-based model of group leadership, instead calling for humility, availability, and spiritual growth as the primary qualifications.
- The strong integration of coaching and sending (Weeks 4–5) supports our emphasis on multiplication and equipping, not just gathering.

Pedagogical Fit

- The lessons are well-structured and discussion-based, which provides a great foundation for inductive learning and group engagement.
- However, there could be more explicit use of the inductive Bible study tools we employ and training on how to structure a group meeting, facilitate diverse group dynamics, how to ask questions, handle certain situations, etc. This may not be the place for this though, as this is positioned as a gateway into leadership.
- Suggestions:
    - Perhaps supplement Week 2's "Inerrancy" session with inductive Bible study model
    - Add a session or resource on handling conflict, facilitating prayer, and spiritual discernment in groups.
    - OR instead of trying to cover "all the things" in this class—we instead identify and create a separate training module/s (perhaps via video) that covers more of these topical skills training.

Missional Engagement & LHBC Vision

- The course affirms the church's calling to develop leaders who make disciples. It fosters a culture where every believer is equipped and sent—this is central!
- The use of LHBC-specific examples, tools, and pastoral support strengthens its integration.
- References to LHBC's mission, elders, and training structure show a clear desire for alignment. Thank you for this!

Onboarding New Leaders

- While the class clearly prepares leaders, if adapted for use at LHBC, it would benefit by providing a clearer "next step" into leadership (point to next Shepherd Orientation, provide a certificate, give them a coach assignment, etc).
- Perhaps we provide a "Shepherding Covenant" or official job description/expectations sheet or invitation to our next Shepherd Orientation.

APPENDIX 2

SURVEY OF MENTORING AND COACHING KNOWLEDGE

This survey was administered to project participants before and after the training implementation. The purpose of this survey was to measure the participants' knowledge of mentoring and coaching prior to the six training sessions and to re-assess and measure the change in knowledge subsequent to the training.

Survey of Mentoring and Coaching Knowledge

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify your current understanding of mentoring and coaching young adults. This research is being conducted by Mark Robert Harris for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In this research, you will answer questions before the project, and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completing this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Name_____

[ ] I agree to participate
[ ] I do not agree to participate

Directions: Answer the following questions by placing a check mark in the box that most closely represents your current practices or beliefs.

The scale is as follows:
SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, DS = Disagree Somewhat,
AS = Agree Somewhat, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree.

#	Question	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
1	I understand the process of mentoring.						
2	I understand the process of coaching.						
3	I am confident I can mentor a small group of young adults.						
4	I am confident I can coach a small group of young adults.						
5	I can use the Bible to explain God's design for mentorship.						
6	I can use the Bible to explain God's design for coaching.						
7	I believe the Bible provides relevant examples of how to mentor young believers today.						
8	I believe the Bible provides relevant examples of how to coach young believers today.						
9	I believe that young adults desire a strong relationship with an older, mature Christian.						

#	Question	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
10	I am currently a mentor to another person.						
11	I am excited to mentor young adults.						
12	I feel that biblical principles are part of life every day.						
13	I know I can serve as a young adult small group mentor or coach.						
14	I desire to mentor other believers.						
15	I believe my faith and Christian maturity can be an asset to a young adult.						
16	I believe that there is a place for God at work.						
17	I can foster trust with young adult small group members.						
18	I can foster involvement with young adult small group members.						
19	I can speak optimistically about applying biblical principles in everyday life.						
20	I am aware of why serving is important to the young adult ministry.						
21	I encourage using a biblical worldview when thinking about problems.						
22	I can mentor young adults in day-to-day life situations utilizing a biblical worldview.						
23	I can coach young adults in day-to-day life situations utilizing a biblical worldview.						

Post-training survey additional questions:

1. Did the training effectively cover the topics you expected? (Yes/No)
   If no, what additional topics would you suggest?

2. Was the training well-organized and easy to follow? (Yes/No)

3. Did the trainer effectively engage the audience and facilitate learning? (Yes/No)

4. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1=not helpful; 2=somewhat helpful; 3=neutral; 4=helpful; 5=very helpful), how helpful were the material resources and homework in reinforcing the training content? _____
   What would you add or delete?

5. Did the training provide opportunities for hands-on practice and application of the concepts learned? (Yes/No)
   Additional feedback on practice and application is appreciated.

6. Do you feel confident to now engage in a new mentoring and coaching role in the church? (Yes/No)
   If no, what additional content would help you feel more confident?

7. Was the training length appropriate for the content being covered? (Yes/No)
   If no, what would you change?

8. Would you recommend this training? (Yes/No)

9. Is there anything that could be improved about the training content, training length, or training delivery?

APPENDIX 3

PRE- AND POST-SURVEY RESULTS

No.	Question	Pre-Test Score	Std Dev Pre-Test	Post-Test Score	Std Dev Post-Test	Difference in Means
1	I understand the process of mentoring.	4.556	1.424	5.889	0.333	1.333
2	I understand the process of coaching.	4.667	1.000	6.000	0.000	1.333
3	I am confident I can mentor a small group of young adults.	4.667	1.581	5.556	0.726	0.889
4	I am confident I can coach a small group of young adults.	4.667	1.225	5.556	0.726	0.889
5	I can use the Bible to explain God's design for mentorship.	4.222	1.093	5.667	0.500	1.444
6	I can use the Bible to explain God's design for coaching.	4.222	1.394	5.667	0.500	1.444
7	I believe the Bible provides relevant examples of how to mentor young believers today.	5.333	0.707	5.778	0.441	0.444
8	I believe the Bible provides relevant examples of how to coach young believers today.	5.222	0.833	5.778	0.441	0.556
9	I believe that young adults desire a strong relationship with an older, mature Christian.	4.778	0.667	5.667	0.707	0.889
10	I am currently a mentor to another person.	4.333	1.658	5.111	1.453	0.778
11	I am excited to mentor young adults.	5.000	1.000	5.444	0.726	0.444
12	I feel that biblical principles are part of life every day.	5.778	0.441	6.000	0.000	0.222
13	I know I can serve as a young adult small group mentor or coach.	5.000	1.118	5.556	0.527	0.556
14	I desire to mentor other believers.	5.222	0.833	5.778	0.441	0.556
15	I believe my faith and Christian maturity can be an asset to a young adult.	5.222	0.833	5.667	0.500	0.444

No.	Question	Pre-Test Score	Std Dev Pre-Test	Post-Test Score	Std Dev Post-Test	Difference in Means
16	I believe that there is a place for God at work.	5.889	0.333	5.889	0.333	0.000
17	I can foster trust with young adult small group members.	5.444	0.726	5.556	0.726	0.111
18	I can foster involvement with young adult small group members.	5.000	0.707	5.556	0.527	0.556
19	I can speak optimistically about applying biblical principles in everyday life.	5.000	0.866	5.889	0.333	0.889
20	I am aware of why serving is important to the young adult ministry.	5.222	0.667	5.778	0.441	0.556
21	I encourage using a biblical worldview when thinking about problems.	5.111	1.054	5.889	0.333	0.778
22	I can mentor young adults in day-to-day life situations utilizing a biblical worldview.	4.889	1.167	5.556	0.527	0.667
23	I can coach young adults in day-to-day life situations utilizing a biblical worldview.	4.667	1.225	5.667	0.500	1.000
	Total	**114.111**		**130.889**		**16.778**

APPENDIX 4

T-TEST RESULTS

T-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	Pre-Test Total	*Post-Test Total*
Mean	114.111111	130.888889
Variance	250.861111	59.3611111
Observations	9	9
Pearson Correlation	0.6556887	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	8	
t stat	–4.1070384	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.00170226	
t Critical one-tail	1.85954804	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.00340452	
t Critical two-tail	2.30600414	

APPENDIX 5

PILOT CLASS INVITATION

The pilot class was presented as a program for those interested in learning about the role of small group shepherd. No specific requirements were noted for taking the pilot class. Participants simply had to possess an interest in understanding the role of a small group leader at LHBC. This left the door open to individuals who may be members of LHBC or those attending but not yet members. The following invitation was extended to a total of twelve Bible study groups, representing over 150 individuals across the men's ministry.

SMALL GROUP SHEPHERD
PILOT CLASS

OVERVIEW:

- A pilot class has been developed as part of my doctoral research. To facilitate the research limitations, the population of participants will be initially limited to men with an interest in learning about being a leader / shepherd.
- Young adults are one of the fastest growing groups in Living Hope Baptist Church. With over 400 attendees on Wednesday's college night, the potential for young adults entering the life and career space as members of Living Hope Baptist Church is significant.
- This age group represents the potential for growing families, growing participation, and our future leaders.
- The opportunity exists for mature Christians to engage and shepherd a small group.

PURPOSE:

- Provide an opportunity for individuals to understand what leading a small group entails.
- Demonstrate that one may be more qualified than they anticipated.
- Provide concise information and basic skills in the event one decides they have a desire to lead a small group of young adults.

OBJECTIVES:

- Provide individuals an opportunity to understand the role of leader/shepherd for a small group at Living Hope Baptist Church.
- Provide the tools and environment for one to easily understand the role and enjoyment of walking with others as a shepherd.

STRUCTURE:

- 1st class to provide introduction, outline, and learning expectations for the class (2 weeks prior to class)
- 2nd is a series of six 60-minute classes on Sunday evenings.
- The class will be divided into three parts.
    - Information overview and questions
    - Group discussion
    - Workshop to begin discussion and the utilization of skills

TIMING

- Introduction class is Sunday, March 30, at the Living Hope Baptist Church main campus.
- 5:30 PM TO 6:30 PM
- The remaining 6 weekly classes begin on Sunday, April 13, and end on May 18, 2025.

IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST, PLEASE TEXT OR CALL MARK HARRIS OR CONTACT JEREMIE WADE'S OFFICE AT LHBC

APPENDIX 6

SMALL GROUP SHEPHERDING CURRICULUM

This appendix contains the Small Group Shepherding Curriculum developed for Living Hope Baptist Church as part of goal 3.

WELCOME

LHBC takes its mission seriously in each group it supports. Recently, additional focus has been given to the men's ministry that supports the church's purpose to "live as a faith-family, connecting in groups that foster the sort of Christ-centered relationships that enable us to fully love one another as Scripture commands."[1] Inspired by Hebrews 10, LHBC's focus is to edify the body and spur one another to love and good deeds within the body. The adult men's ministry has a goal to grow the number of mature Christians seeking an opportunity to engage and grow meaningful one-on-one relationships in the church. The hope is that you will take advantage of this class to understand the role of a group shepherd, develop an understanding of how you can contribute when you have the desire to engage, and know that LHBC stands ready to engage and support your effort with mature members and a pastoral staff excited to help you grow personally as you consider helping others become followers of Christ.

[1] Living Hope Baptist Church, "Living Hope Baptist Church Covenant," last modified March 30, 2021, 3, https://livehopeful.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Living-Hope-Baptist-Church-Covenant-approved-033021.pdf.

WHY SMALL GROUPS

Small groups are often considered the backbone of the local church. Small groups are important to facilitate community, personal engagement, teaching, learning, friendship, and leadership for the future. Small groups provide an important platform for the body of Christ and have been demonstrated in both the Old and New Testaments. In his book "The Essential Guide for Small Group Leaders,"

[1] Bill Search details the essentials for shepherding a small group and details the foundations and importance of a small group. Specifically, Search explains that foundations for the importance of small groups are highlighted in the "Old Testament, Christ's teachings, Paul's letters, and many of the other contributors, including Peter, James, John, and Jude."[2] His point is clear. Small groups are foundational to community, as detailed in the Old Testament, Christ's teachings, and examples that this class will review. The contributions of the apostles and Jude further support and demonstrate how important community and small group relationships are in building and strengthening the body of Christ.

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[1] Bill Search, *The Essential Guide for Small Group Leaders* (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, 2017).

[2] Search, *The Essential Guide for Small Group Leaders*, 192–95.

CLASS INTRODUCTION

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
Matt 28:18–20

The Purpose of a Class on Being a Shepherd/Mentor

The purpose of this class is to help members who have a desire to seek community to "live as a faith-family, connecting in groups that foster the sort of Christ-centered relationships that enable us to fully love one another as Scripture commands, consider others more important than ourselves, and express Christ's care as we share both joys and sorrows."[3] This will be accomplished by (1) providing individuals an opportunity to understand the role of shepherd/mentor for a small group at Living Hope Baptist Church; (2) providing the tools and environment for one to easily understand the role and enjoyment of walking with others as a shepherd.

To that end, this class provides an opportunity for individuals to understand what leading a small group may entail. The class will review five components of being a small group shepherd, beginning with the qualifications one should understand when considering a small group shepherd role. In the second week, the class will discuss biblical authority and one's ability to rely on Scripture for truth and guidance as you lead a small group Bible study. The third week reviews the qualities of a shepherd/mentor and how they are a member and shepherd of a small group. The fourth week will discuss the skills of coaching as Christ coached the disciples, and the fifth week will review the sending of individuals for personal spiritual development and the future role of making disciples. The training closes with session 6, which is a review of the tools and the

[3] Living Hope Baptist Church, "Governing Documents: Constitution, Articles of Faith, Covenant, and Bylaws," last modified February 2022, https://livehopeful.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Governing-Documents_2022Condensed.pdf.

pastoral staff LHBC provides to support a shepherd's role. All of this will provide a picture of the role of a small group shepherd and help you feel confident if you feel called to be a small group shepherd.

Class Structure and Timing

The first class will provide an introduction, outline, and learning expectations for the class. Five classes will follow this initial session. Each class will be divided into three parts:

- information review and questions
- group discussion concerning the topic for the week
- workshop to begin discussion and utilization of the skills presented

Although each attendee is encouraged to attend each class, if a class is missed, make-up materials will be provided prior to the next class.

WEEK 1: WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A SHEPHERD?

A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.
Prov 11:25

Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.
Benjamin Franklin

Rationale for Group Shepherds

The young adult ministry has grown quickly as the new members seek faith-based intentional relationships that connect them to community and provide support in their stage of life. Some in this group have grown close, meet occasionally outside of church activities, and are hungry for the gospel and how it applies to their life and work. Many of the young adults understand that "all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16–17).[1] This growing group of young adults is now looking to the church to guide them and provide the practical leadership they need in today's changing culture. The needs include how Scripture is sufficient to address their specific challenges and needs emotionally, spiritually, and relationally. A close-knit small group can facilitate this learning and support. The rapid growth in the young adult ministry and the lack of mature leadership volunteers have opened the door for attrition and poor training for the young adults. Living Hope Baptist Church can address this need directly by leveraging its strengths of training tools, mature Christians looking for a way to contribute locally, and a young adult ministry interested in intentional relationships with more mature Christians. The apostle Paul's encouragement in 2 Timothy provides the plan that is needed: "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" (2 Tim 2:2). The result will be meaningful one on one

[1] Unless otherwise specified, all Scripture references are from the New International Version.

relationships leading to discipleship, equipping the future leaders of the church, and more robust relationships across generations.

What Is a Shepherd?

To be a shepherd is to walk with someone over time and create a relationship based on scriptural truths and respect for one another. It is to walk alongside someone. It can develop into a discipleship relationship. Discipleship is defined by Wayne Mack and John MacArthur as "the process of passing the truths of God's Word that one has learned and applied on to another believer."[2]

In a small group, this type of engagement is between the members of the group. MacArthur and Mack continue with an emphasis on the commitment, explaining, "It takes time." Discipling an individual "may involve the investment of years of teaching, training, encouraging, and rebuking." Commitment is apparent when one makes the determination to disciple someone. The shepherd's goal is to identify and develop disciples. A shepherd's "goal during this process is to help the members of the small group grow to maturity in Christ, that is, to walk consistently according to God's Word." The small group shepherd "equips the individual so that ultimately that person in turn begins to build biblical principles into the lives of others by adhering to 2 Tim. 2:2."[3] The point is that a small group shepherd is to simply help someone to grow and live biblically. They don't have to go to seminary, they don't need to know the answer to every question, and they certainly are not expected to be perfect.

Discipleship will grow naturally out of the relationship as the group matures and specific individuals in the group decide to move deeper into the role of being a

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[2] Carey Hardy, quoted in "Frequently Asked Questions about Biblical Counseling," in *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, ed. John MacArthur and Wayne A. Mack, John MacArthur Pastor's Library (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 250, Kindle. Subsequent quotes in this paragraph are also contributed by Carey Hardy.

[3] Hardy, quoted in "Frequently Asked Questions about Biblical Counseling," 250.

follower of Christ. The shepherd simply creates the environment and provides the tools that one can use as one grows in their journey to be more like Christ. The small group shepherd is not perfect. In fact, often, the most important phrase a shepherd can use is "I don't know, but I will find out." The real qualifications are humility and a desire to walk with others as you *both* seek to be imitators of Christ. Having the humble heart of a shepherd is the key to being a small-group shepherd. It is your desire, humility, and willingness to serve that make it possible when the Holy Spirit is involved. To be a shepherd is to serve.

In Old Testament terms, the shepherd is referred to as one who is "responsible for leading, feeding, protecting, and procuring rest for their flock."[4] The shepherd is a more mature leader and guide. This role is enhanced in the New Testament as the "writers present the act of shepherding as teaching."[5] This provides a component of empowerment and the ability to help others. Finally, another valuable component of shepherding is added when the New Testament refers to Christ as the Good Shepherd, incorporating into the definition of shepherd the qualities demonstrated by Christ, who is a loving and caring Shepherd who provides for his flock. Christ is the example, and Scripture provides the description of how he was and is a Good Shepherd. Christ is the example—not seminary, not twenty men's retreats, and certainly not being someone with all the answers. At the core of being a shepherd is the imitation of Christ. "Seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt 9:36). In Christ, we see he "suffered with the needy, felt for them, and cared for them. His compassion permeated all his attempts to meet their

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[4] Matthew Montonini, "Shepherd," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

[5] Wayne Baxter, "Shepherding," in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

needs."[6] Finally, in both the Old Testament and New Testament examples, the relationship was long-term in nature. For example, though Paul and Timothy met frequently in the beginning, they stayed connected after Timothy was sent. The point is that shepherds create lifelong relationships that can begin in small groups.

Frequently, the leaders in churches and small groups hear from the mature members that something needs to be developed to guide and equip the younger generation. Interestingly, the younger generation is also pressing the church for leadership. The challenge goes beyond hiring another pastor for young adults. With Psalm 78:6–7 and Titus 2:3–5 in mind, it is time for mature Christians to have a path to accomplish what the entire church knows to be important: building and equipping disciples and the future leaders of the church. It starts with a small group of men gathered together to do life, study Scripture, and bear one another's burdens. As Matthew 28 details in the Great Commission, we are all challenged to make disciples. We are all challenged to be imitators of Christ and be shepherds.

This engages a second definition of shepherd that applies to small group shepherds at LHBC. The second definition of shepherd presents an engaged and compassionate individual with a genuine interest in walking with the flock, caring for the flock, and teaching the flock. With 2 Timothy 3:16 in view, the shepherd can teach, rebuke, encourage, and equip the follower of Christ. In fact, this often goes both ways as the group grows closer to one another. This is exactly what a small group shepherd must do. The mature Christians at LHBC see the need and can be empowered and equipped to accomplish what they see as a critical need. It is their responsibility. The next step is engaging.

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[6] Brandon Ridley, "Shephelah," in Barry, *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*.

Who Should Shepherd?

The small group shepherd will often be the first long-term mentoring relationship individuals will have within a church. As a result, the shepherds should meet some simple requirements to be considered for the role of small group shepherd. Consistent with the responsibilities for any role growing with others in the church, each shepherd likely has these qualities and behaviors:

- full membership in LHBC, including a public profession of faith and baptism
- regular church attendance
- a desire to engage and be part of a small group
- participation in a small group
- completion of a shepherding class

In summary, a small group shepherd is available, willing to learn, interested in the growth of others, and humble and willing to learn from the group he may be leading. He is a shepherd walking with others.

Qualities of a Small Group Shepherd

LHBC's commitment to small groups includes helping one confirm they have the qualities that are important to being a small-group shepherd. One important resource included in their inventory of tools is Bill Search's book, *The Essential Guide for Small Group Leaders*.[7] Bill Search begins by saying,

> How do you know you should lead a group? It's normal to face some self-doubt. We are usually our own worst critic and even in the Bible, people who were called to lead were reluctant. If that describes how you feel, join the club. So how can you be confident that leading a group is right for you? Here are some questions to ask yourself:
>
> Do you love God? This isn't about a "feeling" as much as it is about your inner thoughts. How often is God (or the things of God) on your mind? Just as a person in love who can't help but think of the object of their affections, one test of the love we have for God is the frequency he is in our thoughts.

[7] Bill Search, *The Essential Guide for Small Group Leaders* (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, 2017), 132–33.

Do you maintain spiritual practices? You don't have to be a Bible scholar to spend time every day reading a portion of the Bible and praying to God. If you answered, "Yes" to the previous question, then it's likely this is also affirmative.

Do you want to see others grow in their relationship with Christ? One of the most important qualities of a group leader is a deep desire to see spiritual progress in others.

Are you committed to your church? A small group is not the church. It is part of the church. A mature group leader operates under the authority of a church and within the support and encouragement of a church.

Are you willing to learn? Group leaders aren't experts; they are fellow pilgrims on a journey together. Leading a group will expose what you don't know, which is why great leaders are constant learners.[8]

You May Be More Qualified Than You Think

"Disciplemaking. It can sound difficult and overwhelming. But what if you discovered you already have what it takes? It's true! Disciplemaking can be one of the most natural things any believer does. What you need is just what God has given you—your gifts, heart and relationship with Him. So when it does come to disciplemaking, you have what it takes."[9]

[8] Search, The Essential Guide for Small Group Leaders, 132–33.

[9] Navigators, "Discipleship 101," accessed March 1, 2025, https://connect.navigators.org/discipleship-101.

Simple Summary

The Navigators organization provides a simple summary of discipleship:

> A disciple is someone who believes in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, intentionally learns from Him, and strives to live more like Him.
>
> Discipleship is a widely used word associated with a variety of definitions related to growing in our Christian faith. We [Navigators] are passionate about inspiring and equipping believers to embrace what we call Life-to-Life® discipleship. Essentially, it involves growing in Christ ourselves and helping others do the same. The Life-to-Life element is about intentionally coming alongside another person starting from wherever they are spiritually and sharing God's love with them in ways you think will resonate. *Sometimes it looks like praying with them, sometimes studying the Bible together, other times it involves just spending quality time together.*
>
> The verse we often look to as an example of Life-to-Life discipleship is 1 Thessalonians 2:8: "Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well."
>
> Jesus first demonstrated this kind of personal discipleship approach through His relationship with the 12 disciples. He intentionally chose everyday people (rather than religious leaders) and often used the phrase, "Follow me" to invite those around Him to pay attention to what He said, what He did, how He lived, and what was truly important, so His way of life would be replicated through theirs.

Here is a sampling of places in Scripture where He does this:

> "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." (Matt 4:19)
>
> Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." (Mark 10:21)
>
> After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him." (Luke 5:27–28)
>
> Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. (John 12:26)[10]

Summary

Once we are in Christ, we have what it takes to offer Life-to-Life discipleship to friends, family or neighbors that God puts on our hearts. It's not about being an expert. It's more about just passing on what you're learning as you grow in your relationship with Jesus. A seminary degree or Christian leadership position isn't required to "go and make disciples" of Jesus as He called us to do in the Great

[10] Navigators, "Discipleship 101."

Commission. All you need is to be who God created you to be and recognize you have what it takes to grow in Christ and help others do the same.[11]

Reading Summary

1. What made Christ controversial?

2. What was unusual about the men he chose to be his disciples?

3. What made those men such a potent force?

4. What do you have in common with the twelve men Christ chose?

Class Exercise

1. List why you may be qualified.

2. List what you see as your primary concerns about being a small-group shepherd.

3. Discuss with your table what would need to change for you to be a shepherd.

[11] Navigators, "Discipleship 101."

Reading for Next Week

Current Issues in Inerrancy by Robert Wilkin.

Questions to Answer before Next Week

1. Can we trust what the Bible says?

2. Does the Bible have errors?

3. Have you ever encountered a broad view of inerrancy?

4. How would a small group shepherd engage tough texts?

WEEK 2: INERRANCY—WHY WE CAN TRUST THE BIBLE

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching,
for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.
2 Tim 3:16

For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke
from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
2 Pet 1:21

The inerrancy of the Bible is a foundational doctrine,
and that it should be presumed to be accurate.
Norman Geisler

Why Is Inerrancy Important?

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, adopted at a meeting of more than two hundred evangelical leaders in October 1978, rightly affirms that

> the authority of Scripture is a key issue for the Christian church in this and every age. But authority cannot stand in isolation, as the statement shows. The authority of the Bible is based on its being the written Word of God, and because the Bible is the Word of God and the God of the Bible is Truth and speaks truthfully, authority is linked to inerrancy. If the Bible is the Word of God and if God is a God of truth, then the Bible must be inerrant—not merely in some of its parts, as some modern theologians are saying, but totally, as the church for the most part has said down through the ages of its history.[1]

What Was Christ's View of Scripture?

> Christ consistently treats the historical narratives as straightforward records of fact, and the force of His teaching often depends on their literal truth. He uses the teaching of the Old Testament as a court of appeal in matters of controversy in both doctrine and ethics. [This is] demonstrated with his exact use of Scripture when confronting Satan. That this was his standpoint is shown by His stress on Scripture after His resurrection. He treats the very words of Scripture, even "the smallest letter" and "the least stroke of a pen," as inspired. He recognizes that its books have human authors, but to Him the primary author of Scripture is *God Himself. To Christ, the Old Testament was true, authoritative, inspired*. To Him, the God of the Old Testament was the living God, and *the teaching of the Old Testament was the teaching of the living God*. To Him, what Scripture said, God said.[2]

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[1] R. C. Sproul, "Commentary," in *Explaining Biblical Inerrancy: The Chicago Statements on Biblical Inerrancy, Hermeneutics, and Application with Official ICBI Commentary*, by Norman L. Geisler, R. C. Sproul, and The International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (Arlington, TX: Bastion Books), 83–84, Kindle.

[2] Norman L. Geisler, *Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 2.

What about the Disciples?

The New Testament carries the same authority and inerrancy:

> The New Testament writers wrote because of their connection with and commitment to Jesus Christ. They shared the same high view of Scripture that their Master held. The Old Testament was for them the authority in religious matters because God had spoken it by His Spirit through human writers. The New Testament writer also reveal that their own writings are the commands of the Lord and equal in authority to the Old Testament revelation. This authority is not human authority but the Spirit of Christ giving the commands of Christ to His People.[3]

What about Errors?

As observed in the book, *Current Issues in Inerrancy*, alleged errors in the Scriptures have reasonable explanations.[4]

What Does It Mean by Inspired? (2 Tim 3:16)

> The Bible is as fully human as it is divine, and the way to get into the present mind of God the Holy Spirit is by getting into the expressed mind of His human agents—the authors were God's penman. Allegorizing, and everything like it, is illegitimate. The point is that the biblical words themselves (in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek) are to be seen as God Given. Men were not left to articulate information about, and interpretations of, God's way with men apart from His superintending providence. (God in control). On the contrary, the Lord who gave the Word also gave the words. It was not just the writers' thinking but "all Scripture," the written product, that is inspired by God [2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21] . . . Further, the reason the Bible can function effectively to bring people to Christ is that its teachings are inerrant.[5]

The Holy Spirit's Confirmation?

"The Holy Spirit's internal testimony works to confirm the reliability of Scripture, giving us certainty that the Bible is the Word of God. The distinctive term here is ***certainty***. Such is clearly the view of Augustine, Calvin, Luther, and Warfield."[6] We see throughout church history, "the believing individual makes a **subjective response** to

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[3] Geisler, *Inerrancy*, 38.

[4] Robert N. Wilkin, *Current Issues in Inerrancy* (Denton, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 2016).

[5] Geisler, *Inerrancy*, 211, 228.

[6] Geisler, *Inerrancy*, 336.

the **objective Word** through the impetus of the **Spirit**."[7] See 1 Corinthians 2:10, 14. Said another way, "Application refers to the work of the Spirit in applying the content of the Scripture to the life of the believer."[8]

A Formal Statement of God's Inspiration and Inerrancy of the Word of God

Article I from the Chicago Statements on Biblical Inerrancy states, "The Living God. We affirm that the one true and living God is the creator and sustainer of all things. **We affirm that this God can be known through His revelation of Himself in His inerrant written Word**. We affirm that this one God exists eternally in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each of whom is fully God. We affirm that this living, acting, speaking God entered into history through the Son Jesus Christ to bring salvation to the human race. **We affirm that the revealed character and will of God are the foundation of all morality.**"[9]

Questions for Discussion

1. Can we trust what the Bible says?

2. Does the Bible have errors?

3. Have you ever encountered a broad view of inerrancy?

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[7] Geisler, *Inerrancy*, 336.

[8] Geisler, *Inerrancy*, 337.

[9] Norman L. Geisler, R. C. Sproul, and The International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, "Articles of Affirmation and Denial," in *Explaining Biblical Inerrancy*, 59.

4. How would a small group shepherd engage tough texts?

Class Exercise

1. Why does inerrancy matter?

2. What tools are provided in chapter 7 to address tough texts?

3. As a table, use the tools from chapter 7 and look up the questions on the noted Scriptures.

4. Ask your table for a difficult passage to look up and answer.

5. What additional tools are available? What should you consider buying?

Reading for Next Week

Read tab "Week 3" and tab "Week 3 Reading."

Questions to Answer Before Next Week

1. What is a shepherd/mentor?

2. How is a small group shepherd a mentor?

3. What is the difference between transactional engagement and relational engagement as a shepherd/mentor?

4. How are you qualified to be a shepherd/mentor?

WEEK 3: SHEPHERDS AS MENTORS

Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled.
In everything set them an example by doing what is good.
Titus 2:6–7

A shepherd as mentor is defined as a shepherd who, as a disciple of Christ, will disciple others to be imitators of Christ.
Mark Harris

Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.
Benjamin Franklin

"I don't know, but I will find out."

One of the biggest roadblocks to considering the role of a small group shepherd is a concern about one's knowledge of Scripture. However, as we observed in recent readings, this need not be a concern. Certainly, one should have an understanding of the Bible, the primary story of the Bible, and the salvation that Christ brings. This should be grounded with prayer and a reliance on the Holy Spirit. There will be many questions that one will receive that may need a little research or the help of another shepherd available to the small group shepherd. Certainly, the body of believers in the local church is there to support and help one another grow in their understanding of God's Word and learn to follow Christ. That is when you lean in on your group leader or a member of the church staff. When you add up all the experience of the staff of Living Hope, you will quickly tap into over 100 years of combined experience studying and applying Scripture to life! Said another way, you are not on an island, and there are many bridges to help support your personal growth and your group's growth. It is okay to say, "I don't know, but I will find out." We learn from Proverbs 11:14, "For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisors." Your small group will not only respect your honesty, but they will see an example of seeking the counsel of someone in community to help clarify a life lesson or question.

What Does a Small Group Shepherd Do?

The shepherding process begins with **engaging** individuals to be in a small group. Once in place, the mentor provides examples for life and vocation, coaches for understanding, and sends the individual members to their eventual vocation for the Lord. This includes being an example of how to seek wise counsel and work together in community to do life with one another. Much of our reading began with the suggestion that to be a mentor, one should be a good shepherd, demonstrating the commitment to be **humble**, **engage, teach, coach, counsel, and send**. The mentor's long-term commitment goes beyond transactional engagement and is administered with love and compassion for the mentee as a disciple. The result is an individual who remains connected to his mentor, develops into a disciple of Christ, adds value to the community of Christ, and equips other disciples to be shepherds and disciple-makers. This is the Great Commission. To be a shepherd is to study the Bible and teach others to study the Bible. You will learn and grow together as you both lean on the Holy Spirit to guide and teach each other.

So, Am I Qualified?

Often, our cultural biases and habits can influence how a church determines who is qualified. Bob Deffinbaugh describes the problem as "leadership profiling," explaining that "it is a well-known and commonly accepted fact that a disproportionate number of leaders in America are men who are 'tall, dark, and handsome.'"[1] Many churches in our culture are no different. "Within the halls of our Christian community," Deffinbaugh states, "we are profoundly guilty of leadership profiling looking to education, self-confidence, and success."[2] However, Michael Anthony notes, "We do

[1] Bob Deffinbaugh, "David Becomes Israel's King (1 Samuel 16–2 Samuel 10)," Bible.org, accessed November 15, 2024, https://bible.org/seriespage/18-david-becomes-israel-s-king-1-samuel-16-2-samuel-10#P2589_941144.

[2] Deffinbaugh, "David Becomes Israel's King."

well to note the counterintuitive nature of God's selection process."[3] Though this is not a class to discuss the challenges presented by cultural biases or profiling, it is important to recognize this reality when considering the message of 1 Corinthians 1:26–31. God selected servants from a variety of people who were not necessarily those the world would choose. Our local churches should also have an eye for those who are qualified, willing to serve, have a heart for the gospel, and meet the qualifications noted in 1 Corinthians 1. Though speaking primarily of pastors and elders, this also applies to lay leaders chosen for leadership and service positions. J. T. English emphasizes the local church's responsibility to identify qualified individuals. English argues that instead of waiting for individuals to volunteer, "gifted people in the church have the responsibility of helping others find and use their gifts for the building up of the body of Christ."[4] We need to engage and love our congregation.

One purpose of this class is to demonstrate that there are many in the church who are qualified yet do not realize they meet the qualifications—or worse, they do not know that they can easily engage. Virtually every church's challenge, for example, is getting mature members to engage in the mentoring process. As English suggests, the church needs to engage those equipped or ready to teach by implementing a platform designed to encourage engagement. Living Hope has just that platform through small group shepherds.

Life on Life Mentoring

Mentoring is doing life with someone—getting to know them, providing an example, teaching, and coaching. In *The Mentoring Church: How Pastors and Congregations Cultivate Leaders*, Phil Newton describes the practice of "life on life

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[3] Michael J. Anthony, "The Heart of God and Preparation of the Pastor," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 176, no. 702 (April 2019): 137.

[4] J. T. English, *Deep Discipleship: How the Church Can Make Whole Disciples of Jesus* (Nashville: B&H, 2024), 72.

mentoring" and suggests it is the most effective method to train and mentor an individual: "As the mentoring takes place within community, it deepens the lessons practiced and observed in real-life settings."[5] Though some may note he has a "narrow focus on church planting,"[6] the concept and application apply to anyone in the church participating in a church ministry or mentoring program. If one can do life with someone, one can be a shepherd mentor to that individual.

To mentor as a shepherd is to walk with someone, a process that benefits both the mentor and the mentee. The mentor grows as he is challenged to provide examples and guidance with the understanding that he, too, is learning. It is this transparency that builds trust and relationships of service and respect for one another. A mentor should be willing to humbly assess himself. Does he seek to grow in his faith? Does he look to Christ's saving work as a servant leader and seek to develop a servant's attitude? Does he desire to see the evidence of fruit in his life and in the lives of those he disciples? Is his life oriented around and rooted in the truth and authority of Scripture? These attributes are the marks of a mentor. Christopher Sarver parallels these qualifications in his thesis, starting with salvation and reliance on Scripture: "Mentors must be able to make a clear profession of faith in Christ and demonstrate growing confidence in him and his promises. Mentors should also cultivate personal allegiance to, and affection for, Christ and evidence lives oriented around the authority of the Scripture."[7] He suggests mentors "should lead the cohort and guide their mentees in such a way that they **avoid moralism on the one hand and cold doctrinalism on the other** as both are antithetical to Christo centrism and the gospel."[8] Just as Christ taught the spirit of the law, the mentor should

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[5] Phil A. Newton, *The Mentoring Church: How Pastors and Congregations Cultivate Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Ministry, 2017), 135, Kindle.

[6] Joshua J. Bleeker, review of *The Mentoring Church: How Pastors and Congregations Cultivate Leaders*, by Phil A. Newton, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 176, no. 703 (2019): 382.

[7] Christopher Alan Sarver, "Be the Example: Christ-Centered Fellowship in the Pastoral Epistles" (DEdMin thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 264.

[8] Sarver, "Be the Example," 264.

lead his mentees with a Christ-centered humility tempered with wisdom that only comes from imitating Christ and seeking his truth in Scripture.

The mentor also shares his successes and failures and shows his mentee how to grow in sanctification through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, the mentor's goal is to "creatively and compellingly, by means of biblical instruction and life-illustration, portray the beauty and majesty of Christ in as clear a fashion as possible," accomplishing this by giving "themselves to the task of communicating the ways in which such a wonderful Savior and his salvific work directly and specifically impacts and transforms all domains of a person's life." [9]

Questions for Discussion

1. What is a shepherd/mentor?

2. How is a small group shepherd a mentor?

3. What is the difference between transactional engagement and relational engagement as a shepherd/mentor?

4. How are you qualified to be a shepherd/mentor?

[9] Sarver, "Be the Example," 264.

Class Exercise for Each Table

1. What tools and support are available to each shepherd leader to fulfill the statement "I don't know, but I will find out"?

2. How are you qualified to be a small group shepherd?

3. What is an example of life-on-life shepherding in today's culture that comes to mind, and why would it be important?

4. Describe in one or two sentences the difference between transactional and relational shepherding.

5. Role play explaining to a member of a small group how a difficult situation in your life resulted in personal spiritual growth.

Reading for Next Week

Read tabs "Week 4" and "Week 4 Reading."

Questions to Answer Before Next Week

1. What is a coach?

2. What are the steps in the coaching cycle?

3. Can you coach for daily living and faith challenges?

4. How has someone been a coach in your life?

WEEK 4: COACHING LIKE CHRIST

Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits.
Mark 6:6–7

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught.
Mark 6:30

A coach is someone who tells you what you don't want to hear, who has you see what you don't want to see, so you can be who you have always known you could be.
Tom Landry

Christ the Coach

Matthew 6 captures Christ as he touches each of the four steps of the coaching cycle. As a mentor, Christ has demonstrated how to be a missionary for God. He has spoken to individuals and crowds, properly challenged the status quo, and demonstrated his love and deity through his miracles. Now, it is time to send the disciples on a missionary journey. In the first step of the coaching cycle, explains his plans for them and sends them out. Christ further equips them for their journey by giving them authority over impure spirits. The second step of the coaching cycle is complete as his disciples fully engage in tasks pointing toward their future vocation. Part of Christ's coaching includes specific instruction for their journey to equip them for what is coming and how to respond correctly to the situations that would occur. These instructions had two purposes. First, the instructions sent them on a mission, which comprised part of the third step of the coaching cycle. The instructions also facilitated the feedback and critique after returning from their mission trip. In the final step, Christ reviewed their experience.

Like much of Christ's teaching, the mission had more than one objective. Sending out the disciples in pairs encouraged teamwork and community. Gathering his disciples upon their return confirms the importance of community and the need for feedback and encouragement. Christ's instructions also encouraged the disciples to rely on their faith in God to move them through the mission. Finally, Christ gave instructions

on how to properly deal with difficult situations that may occur in the context of the culture in which they were immersed.

Christ Understands and Explains

Christ was the original mentor and shepherd. He walked with the disciples, did everyday life with the disciples, and faced challenges, disappointments, and victories with the disciples. He demonstrated an understanding of their life and invested the time to **explain** his actions and plans. He was a man walking with them through life as a demonstration of how to live and understand their purpose and vocation. The New Testament is full of examples of Christ mentoring and coaching the disciples. For purposes of the class, the example of mentoring and coaching will be taken from Matthew 13.

Christ was fully engaged in his ministry and mentored and coached the disciples during the events of Matthew 13. Christ spent his time with the disciples, providing examples of how to engage others and teach them how to have a relationship with God; he took the time to explain his actions along the way. The Parable of the Sower is one such example. Christ was in a location that provided the opportunity to speak to a crowd and to lay the groundwork for explaining important things to the disciples: "That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables" (Matt 13:1–3).

Christ took the time to speak to crowds, demonstrating how to engage larger crowds. For mentoring purposes, it is also important to note that **he provided time for the disciples to better understand his purpose**. The disciples heard the same message as the crowd and had questions. **Christ listened to them and directly answered their questions**. Though he was delivering an important message to the crowd, he was also laying the groundwork for the disciples to understand their role and vocation. When the

disciples asked about the parable, “He replied, because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them” (Matt 13:10–11). Christ continued with a broader message that confirmed their understanding, but he also **explained** why he was doing it. Christ patiently taught the disciples who he was and why he had come; he answered their question and provided the bigger picture of fulfilling Scripture: “This is why I speak to them in parables: Though seeing they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah” (Matt 13:13–14).

Christ Provides the Demonstration

Christ was preparing the disciples for their future vocation. Through his ministry, he provided a life example and engaged the disciples with any questions or help they needed. He loved them, walked with them, and made the commitment to be their shepherd and example. Soon, as his demonstrations were understood, he would begin to coach the disciples and provide them with opportunities to grow in understanding and faith.

The Disciples Go on Their First Mission to Practice

With the completion of the second step of the coaching cycle, Christ sent the disciples on their first missionary trip that pointed toward their future vocation. Part of Christ’s coaching included specific instruction for their journey to equip them for what was to come and how to respond correctly to the situations that would occur. Jesus said, “Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra shirt. Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them” (Mark 6:8–11). These instructions had two purposes. First, the instructions sent them on a mission to apply what they had learned, which comprised part of the third step of the coaching cycle, trial by the

mentee. They now implemented, in community, what Christ had taught them. They would have both successes and failures leading to the final step of the coaching cycle that Christ would again demonstrate upon their return.

Christ Provides Feedback, Critique, and Encouragement

In the final step, Christ reviewed their missionary experience. Although Scripture does not provide significant detail on his feedback, Christ completed this process as described in Mark 6:30, "The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught." The cycle was completed, and the disciples were one step closer to being sent on their future vocation.

Providing the model, Christ teaches each of us how to be a shepherd who can explain, demonstrate, send on a trial, and provide edifying feedback for their personal growth in faith. James Brooks states, "Jesus sent out the Twelve to spread the gospel to more people than he alone could reach and to prepare the disciples for their later mission."[1] R. Alan Cole develops the mission a bit more when he captures training and sending as preparation for their future vocation: "It was indeed part of the very purpose for which he had initially called them (3:14), for this was both that they should stay in his presence (intensive teaching) and that he might then send them out (extensive evangelism)."[2]

Christ, the Complete Coach

One can observe the perfect model of coaching in Christ. He took the time to **explain** and provide **demonstrations** that his mentees would understand. He gave them a

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[1] James A. Brooks, *Mark*, New American Commentary 23 (Nashville: B&H, 1991), 101.

[2] R. Alan Cole, *Mark*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 171–72.

chance to succeed and **learn from their experiences**, both in life and faith. Christ was a man walking with them, experiencing all they were experiencing. Finally, he gave **loving and genuine feedback** while caring for their needs. Christ is the perfect mentor, the shepherd of his flock.

Question for Discussion

1. What is a coach?

2. What are the steps in the coaching cycle?

3. Can you coach for daily living and faith challenges?

4. How has someone been a coach in your life?

Class Exercise for Each Table

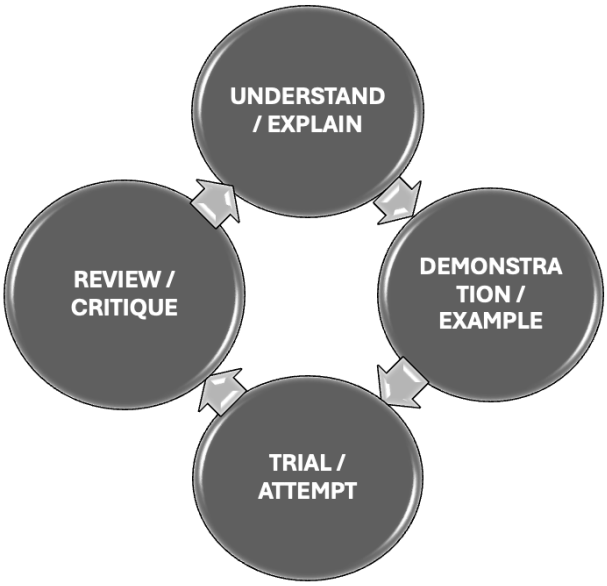
As a small group shepherd, you have a member of your group who is struggling with a friend who is a non-believer and wants to stay in contact as a witness. The challenge is that his friend wants to continue in a lifestyle that is inconsistent with what your group member is learning as a disciple of Christ. As a group, develop each step of the coaching cycle as you think it should occur *or* how it may have occurred in your life.

1. Understanding / Explanation
   - Spend time understanding
   - Spend time identifying supporting Scripture

2. Demonstration from Life Experience
    - Previous life experience that is similar
    - Crafting a plan for the group member's meeting with his friend

3. Trial by the Mentee
    - Example from your life that is similar

4. Feedback, Encouragement, and Next Steps



Reading for Next Week

Read tabs "Week 5" and "Reading Week 5."

Questions to Answer Before Next Week

1. What is a sending? (both parts)

2. Do you send individuals once or frequently?

3. How does sending relate to coaching?

4. How does sending help us grow?

WEEK 5: SENDING FOR GROWTH AND GOSPEL

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.
Matt 28:19–20

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.
2 Tim 2:2

It is costly, because it calls to discipleship; it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ.
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Sending in Two Parts

The sending of the mentee into their spiritual vocation has two components. The first component is part of the coaching cycle. The mentee applies skills and abilities with the mentor explaining, guiding, encouraging, and correcting, just as Christ demonstrated when equipping his disciples. Next is the commissioning. Previous readings have explained that mentees were to become mentors—to grow, learn, and share the love of Christ with another generation—to walk with them, guard them, guide them, teach them, and send them. To be shepherds. This is the culmination of the process: when the mentee is qualified and the mentor as shepherd has completed his role of the "one "responsible for leading, feeding, protecting, and procuring rest for their flock."[1] The mentee is equipped to move forward. The relationship between the mentor and the mentee is not over, but the time and focus of their relationship have changed. As mentioned earlier, Paul and Timothy maintained their relationship, but the relationship changed as Timothy began to repeat the process of making disciples. This is the mentee's spiritual vocation. The mentor remains available and ready to love, support, and encourage; the contacts become less frequent but not less valuable. This leads to Christ's charge: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of

[1] Matthew Montonini, "Shepherd," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt 28:19–20). The mentee is now a mentor equipped with a "knowledge of Scripture, an understanding of his beliefs and doctrine, and demonstrating fruit through his life, actions and habits."[2]

Paul Sends Timothy

Paul's second letter to Timothy includes his final charge to Timothy. Paul knows the end is near for himself, and he encourages Timothy to continue in the faith. Paul confirms his example as a mentor and confirms each step of the coaching cycle for Timothy:

> You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:10–17)

Paul recaps his example as a mentor. His teaching, his way of life, and his demonstration of faith proved to be an example of how to proceed. Paul explained and demonstrated how to be a disciple of Christ. Paul then encouraged Timothy by referring to Timothy's successful attempts to imitate Paul, his mentor. Paul then proceeds to the fourth step: reviewing what Timothy had learned and applied. The cycle is complete, and he gives Timothy one last charge to rely on the Scriptures as a tool to teach, rebuke, correct, and train. Paul closes with encouraging words and the cycle that Timothy is to follow, just as

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[2] J. T. English, Deep Discipleship: How the Church Can Make Whole Disciples of Jesus (Nashville: B&H, 2024), 105.

Paul demonstrated and followed with him. John Stott explains, "Paul is reminding Timothy not simply that he has fully known or observed his doctrine and conduct, as if he were merely an impartial student or a detached observer, but that he has become a dedicated disciple of the apostles."[3] Timothy has completed the training and is ready to be sent. Stott continues, saying that Timothy "made it his own, believed it, absorbed it, lived by it. Similarly, he doubtless began by watching the apostle's manner of life, but then he went on to imitate it."[4] Timothy followed his mentor, listened to his coaching, and was equipped to be sent.

Christ Sends the Disciples

There is no better example of a mentor sending his mentee than when Christ sent his disciples with the Great Commission. The mentoring and coaching were complete, and it was time for the mentees to engage in their new vocation. Further, like the model of a perfect mentor, Christ remained available to listen, encourage, and support their efforts in the future. In community, the disciples were sent confidently with an understanding of what they were to do, the experience provided by the mentor, and confidence in his being available to them. Leon Morris describes the encouragement Christ gives his disciples as he sends them: "He is making clear that the limitations that applied throughout the incarnation no longer apply to him. He has supreme authority throughout the universe."[5] They can confidently move forward, knowing he is available to each of them.

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[3] John R. W. Stott, *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 93–94.

[4] Stott, Guard the Gospel, 94.

[5] Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1992), 745–46.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is a sending? (both parts)

2. Do you send individuals once or frequently?

3. How does sending relate to coaching?

4. How does sending help us grow?

Class Exercise for Each Table

1. Discuss how you have been trained in your field of work in preparation for your chosen vocation in life.

2. Discuss how training as a disciple helps prepare you for your Christian vocation. Do the two vocations overlap?

3. How are the two vocations similar? How are they different?

4. As a table, create a statement of 1 to 3 sentences explaining why sending is important for training and discipleship.

Reading for Next Week

- Review answers for weeks 1 to 5.
- Read LHBC's three big things.
- Read LHBC's essentials.
- Visit LHBC's website and review ministries and training.
- Read LHBC's articles of faith.

Questions to Answer Before Next Week

1. Explain how being a shepherd is part of the Great Commission.

2. Explain how being a small group shepherd is part of LHBC's plans for the community.

3. List five tools or classes that LHBC offers that can be found on the LHBC website.

4. List two things that you discovered about LHBC that you did not know.

WEEK 6: EQUIPPING

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.
Eph 4:14–15

Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.
Heb 13:20–21

For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.
Aristotle

Finding a Small Group: "Go and Get Em"

When addressing the leadership void in our culture today, Albert Mohler states, "As biblical Christians, we are called to live in the present and prepare the next generation for the future."[1] Church leaders are to seek out individuals to train for future church leadership, just as Christ trained the apostles who would lead the early church. D. A. Carson reiterates a leader's responsibility to "make disciples of all men everywhere, without distinction."[2] Sarver argues that "the onus, then, rests upon those who are older to pray for, and prepare by the Spirit's enablement, a younger generation to faithfully lead."[3] J. T. English asserts, "The church is called to make disciples, and it is time to stop delegating that responsibility to others."[4] Consensus confirms it is up to the church to go, find, and make disciples.

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[1] R. Albert Mohler Jr., *The Gathering Storm: Secularism, Culture, and the Church* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2020), 12.

[2] D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in *The Expositor's Bible* Commentary, vol. 8, *Matthew Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 596.

[3] Christopher Alan Sarver, "Be the Example: Christ-Centered Fellowship in the Pastoral Epistles" (DEdMin thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 211n50.

[4] J. T. English, Deep Discipleship: How the Church Can Make Whole Disciples of Jesus (Nashville: B&H, 2024), 74.

In his thesis on how God designed the church to care for its members, Robert Jones demonstrates that the church is structured for mentoring and discipleship: "Christ has given his church gifted pastors and teachers to **equip the members to speak the gospel (and its implications and applications) to each other, and that as each member engages in that activity the church will grow in maturity and unity**."[5] Everyone in the church should be equipped to do life together. Mentors should be identified, trained, and sent to engage others; these tasks grow the community and develop future leaders of the congregation. Put simply, everyone in the church is to be engaged. As Dever states, "You need to be on permanent lookout for more leaders."[6] This encourages those who want to learn and seek mentoring. Put simply, we are all to go and make disciples.

Questions for Discussion

1. Explain how being a shepherd is part of the Great Commission.

2. Explain how being a small group shepherd is part of LHBC's plans for the community.

3. List five tools or classes that LHBC offers that can be found on the LHBC website.

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[5] Robert David Jones, "A Biblical-Theological Study of the New Testament Church as God's Designed Agent and Setting for the Ministry of Mutual Christian Care" (ThD thesis, University of South Africa, 2015), 131.

[6] Mark Dever, *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus*, 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 96.

4. List two things that you discovered about LHBC that you did not know.

Planning a First Small Group Meeting

A small group shepherd builds a group that will become disciples of Christ. "It can sound difficult and overwhelming. But what if you discovered you already have what it takes? It's true! Disciplemaking can be one of the most natural things any believer does. What you need is just what God has given you—your gifts, heart and relationship with Him. So when it does come to disciplemaking, you have what it takes."[7]

> God has a plan for you. Are you aware that God knows and understands you intimately? He knows your schedule, your thoughts, your concerns, how you make your decisions, your giftings, your social circles, your personality—He knows it all.
>
> > You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. (Ps 139:1–3)
>
> Since God knows you intimately, He knows what discipleship can look like in your life. Often, He reveals discipleship opportunities as we consider relationships we already have and ask Him to show us who is open or even eager to explore faith. You may begin to see how God is working in your time with them. Taking that first step and starting those conversations about faith opens the door to continuing the conversation. Ultimately, you want to grow in your relationship with God. Then you can share how you're growing, what you're learning, and how Jesus is changing your life.[8]

Life to Life Discipleship

1. Did you know you can contact an LHBC minister or mature member to train and encourage you to start a small group? They are available and want to help! List one or two pastors or mature Christians you know at LHBC.

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[7] Navigators, "Discipleship 101," accessed March 1, 2025, https://connect.navigators.org/discipleship-101.

[8] Navigators, "Discipleship 101," accessed March 1, 2025, https://connect.navigators.org/discipleship-101.

2. Do you have someone or some individuals in mind that you could invite to a small group? Write them down and make a list.

3. Consider your own testimony and how Christ is working in your life. How would your testimony help a small group?

4. Do you know someone who is currently going through some challenges? Could they benefit from a small group of friends?

5. What tools does LHBC offer to help you launch a small group?

6. When do you have time in a week to have a one-hour small group meeting?

Additional Tools and Classes Offered by LHBC

- Abide
- I-Q
- Equip class
- Peacemaking
- Holy Habits
- Intersections
- Essentials

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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPMENT OF A GOSPEL-BASED MENTORING AND COACHING PROGRAM AT LIVING HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH IN BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY

Mark Robert Harris, DMin
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2025
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Justin A. Irving

This project aims to train the mature members of the men's ministry at Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green, Kentucky, with knowledge in gospel-based mentoring and coaching of young adult church members. Chapter 1 provides the context for the project and describes the rationale, purpose, and goals of the project. Chapter 2 presents the biblical and theological foundations for mentoring and coaching using examples from the Old Testament and New Testament. Chapter 3 reviews modern applications of mentoring and coaching from a biblical perspective and demonstrates that biblical values are present even in best practices offered by secular sources. Chapter 4 recounts the project implementation, including pre-training assessment of the participants, curriculum development, training implementation, and re-assessment of the participants to evaluate increased knowledge in mentoring and coaching. Chapter 5 evaluates the effectiveness of the project based on the completion of the specified goals.

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