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EQUIPPING STUDENTS WITH A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF
WORSHIP AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH CENTERTON
AND LIFE WAY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL IN
CENTERTON, ARKANSAS

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

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

by
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December 2017

APPROVAL SHEET

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PREFACE

I am amazed by the grace and mercy shown to me by my Heavenly Father and thankful for the salvation given to me through the redeeming blood of my Savior, Jesus Christ. This project is humbly submitted with great appreciation and love for First Baptist Church Centerton. I am grateful for the instruction and leadership of Dr. Joseph Crider, my supervising professor and my friend. I am also grateful to the many men and women who not only have given valuable instruction, but have labored with me through this process. My family's faithful prayer and timely words of encouragement have spurred me on. Without the constant support of my loving wife, Kay, I would not have begun this journey. It is with sincere appreciation I say "thank you" to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and all faculty, staff, and administrators who have walked this road with me.

Jim Daniel

Centerton, Arkansas
December 2017

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Believers have been given the biblical mandate to worship the Lord our God. We are to have no other gods before Him, and we are to love God with all of our heart, soul, and mind (Exod 20:3, Deut 6:5). God reveals Himself to His children through His word and instructs us in the ways He is to be worshiped. Unfortunately, it seems that there is very little biblical theology of worship being taught in evangelical churches and schools. Even though there seems to be a growing interest in corporate worship, David Peterson observes that the church lacks biblical teaching that adequately and accurately describes what is prescribed in Scripture concerning worship. In *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship*, Peterson states, “Above all, what seems to be so lacking in congregational life, and in books purporting to advise us about church services, is any serious attempt to grapple with a broadly based biblical theology of worship.”¹ The purpose of this project was to equip the students at First Baptist Church Centerton and Life Way Christian School with a biblical theology of worship.

Context

The project took place within the ministry context of First Baptist Church Centerton (FBCC) and Life Way Christian School (LWCS). There are several contextual factors that made this project relevant to the ministry at FBCC and LWCS. First, for several years the ministry of FBCC had enjoyed a student worship discipleship program

¹David Peterson, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 16.

that equipped students with spiritual and musical disciplines. That program was the structure used to prepare students for worship and worship leading opportunities. In the spring of 2014 the church adopted a new ministry schedule, which did not allow for student discipleship in worship to continue. The loss of discipleship left a void in the formation of a biblical theology of worship in the student worship ministry.

Second, the high school of LWCS has a rich theological curriculum, including courses in hermeneutics, systematic theology and personal evangelism. Curiously missing from the curriculum was a course on biblical foundations of worship, even though the entire student body (enrollment over 500) gathers with faculty and administration for weekly chapel worship. The services are led by high school students. Under past structures, very little strategic instruction was given to the preparation of worship leading and little to no pedagogy focusing on worship theology ensued during rehearsals as the students prepared to lead their peers in the weekly times of worship.

Third, as the church developed strategies for improving discipleship effectiveness and biblical literacy among students and adults during the Sunday morning small group instructional time, no specific classes were offered which focused on the theology of biblical worship.

Fourth, the community surrounding FBCC was, and is, growing rapidly. Major businesses have purchased property in the area with plans to build in the near future. Construction on large subdivisions has been initiated, and in anticipation of continued growth, a new high school has been added to the community. As the city plans for growth, so too is FBCC preparing to impact newcomers with the gospel. The church strategies to reach the influx of new people in our community included several specific discipleship classes, none of which addressed a biblical theology of worship.

Rationale

In Matthew's Gospel Jesus is recorded saying, "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). Although there were great strides made in the discipleship of students at FBCC and LWCS, there was still a void in the area of a biblical theology of worship. The disciples were commanded to teach *everything* they had been taught by the Lord Jesus and the Scriptures, including how His sheep are to offer Him their worship. What we believe about God will impact how we worship. How we worship will impact every facet of our daily lives. Therefore, it is vital to include biblical theology of worship to the discipleship ministry of FBCC and LWCS.

The school and church desperately needed a strategy to equip students with a biblical theology of worship. Ignoring this need would have left a void in the spiritual discipline and understanding of worship at LWCS and FBCC. With the new discipleship strategy adopted by the church, it became possible to offer such a course to the students involved in the student ministry. As school course requirements changed, an opportunity arose for students to choose various classes specifically dealing with Christian spiritual disciplines. For the first time, a discipleship class focusing on the theology of worship was offered to students both in the student ministry and at the school.

The truth of God’s Word, taught, modeled, and instilled in the hearts of young worship leaders, has the potential to impact other students at the school, families within the church, and generations of worshipers for years to come. By shaping the biblical understanding of worship in this generation of young people, a firm foundation is being laid for students to grow and eventually lead the church at large. In retrospect, it appeared the change in the schedule at FBCC opened the doors for the timeliness of this project.

The administration at Life Way Christian School was open to offering the study of a biblical theology of worship as a Bible elective to high school students. This

class provided the opportunity for students to study the biblical theology of worship in a classroom setting, and then apply what they learned as they led their peers in chapel. The class structure and time given to this class allowed for a significant amount of teaching to be combined with rehearsal and chapel preparation. Teaching in this structure provided an excellent opportunity to train the next generation of worshippers and worship leaders in a rich learning environment. The new worship course filled the void of teaching and discipleship that had been identified at LWCS. The fact that the school's administration was willing to consider this teaching opportunity also seemed to give evidence to the timeliness of the project.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this project was to equip select students of First Baptist Church Centerton (FBCC) and Life Way Christian School (LWCS) with a biblical theology of worship.

Goals

1. The first goal was to assess the current knowledge and biblical theology of worship among the participants of Life Way Christian School and First Baptist Church Centerton.
2. The second goal was to develop a six-week teaching series on the biblical theology of worship.
3. The third goal was to equip the participants with a firm foundation of a biblical theology of worship.
4. The fourth goal was to implement the worship curriculum into the ongoing discipleship strategy of FBCC and LWCS.

Research Methodology

The research methodology for the project used the following instruments: a

pretest, post-test and a curriculum rubric.² The first goal was to assess the current knowledge and biblical theology of worship among the participants of Life Way Christian School and First Baptist Church Centerton. This goal was measured by administering a pre-test, the Biblical Theology of Worship Assessment (BTWA) to the participants.³ The goal was to be considered successfully met when all of the participants had completed the BTWA and the results were recorded.

The second goal was to develop a six-week teaching curriculum designed to equip the participants with a biblical theology of worship. The curriculum covered corporate and private worship practices as described and recorded in Scripture. The instructional content was measured by the pastors of the FBCC and the administrators of LWCS, who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, clarity, and relevance of the curriculum.⁴ This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of all the rubric indicators met or exceeded the sufficiency level. If less than 90 percent of the indicators on the rubric had have been scored at “sufficient” or below, the pastors’ and the administrators’ feedback would have been used to modify the curriculum and it would have been submitted again for approval. The process would have continued until at least 90 percent of the indicators on the rubric were scored at “sufficient” or above. Each pastor and school administrator scored the curriculum “sufficient” or above, at which time the second goal was considered successfully met.

The third goal was to increase the knowledge and biblical understanding of the participants. This goal was measured by administering a post BTWA that recorded the participant’s change in level of knowledge and understanding of a biblical theology of

²All 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.

³See appendix 1.

⁴See appendix 2.

worship. This goal was considered successfully met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test scores.

The fourth goal of this project was to implement the curriculum for equipping students in a biblical theology of worship into the ongoing discipleship strategy of FBCC and LWCS. This goal was measured by the acceptance of the curriculum by the pastors of FBCC and the administrators of LWCS. The goal was considered successfully met when the pastors of FBCC and the administrators of LWCS accepted the calendar of curriculum implementation.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

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

Biblical worship. Worship that is guided by the truths of Scripture.⁵

Corporate worship. Worship that is led and expressed with the entire body of a local church.⁶

Private worship. Worship that is offered individually by a believer, without the guidance of a worship leader or the participation of others.⁷

Two delimitations were placed on the project. First, the participants in the project were students between the sophomore to senior year in high school. Second, the participants in the project were students who were members of FBCC or were enrolled in LWCS.

Two limitations applied to this project. The project was limited by the time frame in which the project was implemented and completed. The sessions were taught

⁵Peterson, *Engaging with God*, 16.

⁶Ibid., 16-17.

⁷Ibid.

within a six-week period. At the end of the six weeks the students took the post-test. The post-test was compared to the pre-test to evaluate growth of understanding. Second, sessions proved to be vital in the growth of understanding and knowledge. Therefore, only the post-tests of students who participated in the six teaching sessions were included in the project evaluation.

Conclusion

Believers have been given the biblical mandate to worship God. Scripture teaches that there are to be no other gods before Him, and that believers are to love God with all their heart, soul, and mind (Exod 20:3, Deut 6:5). The children of God are commanded to worship, but this worship must be offered in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). A biblical understanding of God and the worship He desires is necessary for His children to offer acceptable worship. Christ followers must understand the truth of His word and offer worship that is pleasing to Him. Biblical worship is to be practiced individually and corporately, and is then to be taught to others, beginning in the home, then through the church body, and to all the nations. The prayerful consideration and focused intention of this project was to equip the students at First Baptist Church Centerton and Life Way Christian School with a biblical theology of worship that would impact the worshipers of today and lay a biblical foundation for the worshipers of tomorrow.

CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR
EQUIPPING STUDENTS WITH A
THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP

Humans do not need to be taught how to worship. Humans have within them the innate capacity to worship and adore. Humans do, however, need to be taught how to worship biblically. In the opening chapter of Daniel Block's, *For the Glory of God*, the author states, "To be human is to worship. This statement is supported in the Scriptures, declared in our creeds, and evident from history."¹ In *Created for Worship*, Noel Due explains how the apostle Paul's letter to the Romans addresses humanity's worship. Due writes, "Human beings are clearly portrayed as creatures who must worship, and whose sin lies in the fact that they do not choose to worship as they should."² Humans are created with a capacity and desire to worship.

Bob Kauflin states, "It is guaranteed that everyone on this planet will be an extravagant worshiper of some kind, sacrificially spending themselves in a life of desire and devotion. But it's by no means guaranteed that their worship will travel along the right paths."³ Left to oneself, without the guidance of God's Word, humans will turn their worship to false gods. The apostle Paul describes this unbiblical worship in his letter to the church in Rome:

¹Daniel I. Block, *For the Glory of God: Recovering a Biblical Theology of Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2014), 1.

²Noel Due, *Created for Worship: From Genesis to Revelation to You* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2005), 29.

³Bob Kauflin, *True Worshipers: Seeking What Matters to God*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway 2015), 12.

For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore, God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. (Rom 1:21-25)

Without the guidance of Scripture and proper discipleship, worship is often misdirected and unbiblical. Scripture teaches clearly how believers are to worship God. Scripture also instructs believers to teach biblical truth to others as they make disciples of all nations. This chapter will provide an overview of several passages of Scripture that give instruction for biblical worship and worship discipleship.

Matthew 28:18-19

There is a biblical progression in our relationship with God and our relationship with others. Once we have been born again, we begin to grow in our knowledge and our love for God as the truth of God's Word is revealed to us through the teaching of the Holy Spirit and our personal discipleship. As believers grow in this love and knowledge, they begin to pass this love and knowledge to other generations of believers. Intentional discipleship involves ministry to family and those God has placed in our care as pastors and leaders. In His final words before He ascended to His Father, Jesus gave His followers a commission to go and make disciples. Matthew records this commission in his gospel account.

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matt 28:18-19)⁴

⁴All Scripture passages used in this project will be taken from the New American Standard Bible (NASB) unless otherwise noted.

Jesus gave a clear command to His followers to go and make disciples. They were to baptize them and teach them the full counsel of God’s Word. That commission is the same for believers today. We are still to be making disciples and teaching them to observe everything the Lord commanded.

Make Disciples

Many have the understanding that the commission given by Jesus refers only to the carrying of the gospel to other nations. However, the main emphasis found in this passage is on making disciples and teaching.⁵ Worship discipleship begins with the sharing of the gospel, for one cannot be a disciple of Christ without having a relationship with Christ through salvation. Using this passage as motivation to carry the gospel is appropriate. But the salvation experience is only the first step in this process. From there, the new disciple begins to learn.

New believers need to be discipled in the truths of God’s Word. In the discipleship process of new believers, it is essential that an understanding of biblical worship is foundational. John Piper suggests that believers actually glorify God *by* enjoying Him forever.⁶ This enjoyment is found in our worship of God, which is a relationship realized as a part of our daily lives. Piper goes on to say, “It is unbiblical and arrogant to try to worship God for any other reason than the pleasure to be had in Him.”⁷ Piper suggests that our enjoyment of God through a worshipping relationship with God brings Him much glory.⁸ The “worshipping relationship” Piper is referring to is a

⁵Jeffrey Kranz, *10 Things I Wish Everyone Knew about the Great Commission*, (www.faithstreet.com), February 23, 2015, accessed April 28, 2015, <https://www.onfaith.co/.../10-things-i-wish-everyone-knew-about-the-great-commission>.

⁶John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (Sisters, OR: Questar Publishers 1996), 15.

⁷Ibid., 16.

⁸Ibid., 20.

moment-by-moment response of the believer to the God of the universe who created us to worship Him and enjoy Him for His glory. This principle of worship is an example of a foundational premise that needs to be included in the discipleship process. Ed Steele, professor at the New Orleans Baptist Seminary and a Music Missionary with the International Mission Board for twenty years, speaks to this need of worship discipleship. In an article posted on his webpage he states,

This question has been front and center in my mind recently, and I find myself mulling over its implications. I realize that there are many really good materials already in existence designed to help new believers in their daily walk. Many of these actually incorporate some basics of worship as part of the material on how to have a daily devotional time with God. I praise the Lord for them, but what I am talking about is a little more in depth. We tell new believers, and even those who are well established in church life, that worship is important. We encourage them to worship daily and to participate in corporate worship, but do we tell them how to do it and show them what it looks like?⁸

Steele reveals in his study the lack of discipleship in the area of biblical worship. Pastors and leaders have a responsibility to disciple new believers with the truth of God's Word. New believers need to be taught the truth about worship and how to offer worship acceptable to God. For this to take place, we must recognize there is a lack of worship training and understanding in local churches and Christian schools.

Discipleship in biblical worship should also take place in the home. It is not the sole responsibility of the church to disciple. Discipleship must begin in the home where the parents take the responsibility of teaching their children the truths of God's Word.

Scripture states, "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His

⁸Ed Steele, *Discipleship and Worship*, accessed April 28, 2015, blog post from Worship HeartCries, www.edsteeleworship.com, Tuesday, November 8, 2011.

commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged” (Deut 6:1-2). This passage clearly places the responsibility of discipleship on the family.

Many parents do not disciple their children in the home due to a lack of their own personal discipleship. Unfortunately, the church has not been consistent in stepping in to fill that void. Ed Steele makes this observation: “If information alone could transform our worship, then we should have long since seen a revolution in our church services. But information is only part of the solution. Learning how to apply what we know may be the biggest challenge we face.”⁹ Making the information available will not correct the lack of worship discipleship. Believers discipling other believers and parents discipling their children is the biblical strategy of discipleship.

To disciple in every aspect of God’s Word, yet leave off biblical teaching concerning worship, would cause one to be derelict in the duties of discipleship. Donald Hustad addresses the lack of understanding in the corporate setting when he states, “I believe strongly that most churches today need change in their worship, not only because congregations are calling for change but also because our recent past practices have been inadequate.”¹⁰ Discipleship in biblical worship needs to be included in what is taught to new believers, family members within the home, and congregations in an effort to correct this inadequate worship found in many congregations.

The commission given in Matthew 28, for discipleship must be acknowledged and steps made in the leadership of our local churches to fulfill that commission both in evangelism and in worship discipleship. Leaders of the church need to become better

⁹Ed Steele, *Worship HeartCries: Personal Preparation for Corporate Worship* (North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 1.

¹⁰Donald P. Hustad, *True Worship: Reclaiming the Wonder and Majesty* (Wheaton, IL: Hope Publishing, 1998), 219.

educated in the biblical teaching concerning worship. Worship pedagogy for congregations begins with an accurate and biblically-based definition of worship.

Wayne Grudem offers a simple, yet accurate definition in his systematic theology, defining worship as “. . . the activity of glorifying God in his presence with our voices and hearts.”¹¹ This definition could be applied to the individual and the corporate time of worship. The church has the responsibility to train and disciple congregants in their understanding of both private and corporate worship.

Corporate worship is to be a time of instruction and discipleship for the church family. It should model biblically correct principles of worship. Paul writes to the church of Colossae,

Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” (Col 3:14-16)

The church is to teach and admonish one another with singing. The psalms, hymns and spiritual songs are to be used to teach biblical worship. The teaching of biblical worship needs to be found in the instruction of the church leaders and continued through the discipleship of each believer through the Word of God.

Worship discipleship should be taught to the church in the corporate setting and in the small group setting. An effective approach for the church to disciple one another in the area of biblical worship would be to develop a curriculum on the subject. There is a need for adequate, biblical discipleship curriculum to be developed that would aid the local church in worship discipleship. A curriculum like this would be a great help to the local church as they seek to fulfill the commission given by Jesus to teach *all* that He had commanded.

¹¹Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 1003.

For the church to be obedient to the full commission of Jesus given to His disciples, we must evangelize and disciple in the full counsel of God’s Word. This must begin in the home and then be reinforced through the local church. It should then be taken to the nations.

Teach it to the Nations

Worship discipleship also has a missional aspect. The children of God are to make disciples locally by sharing the gospel with their neighbors and by discipling their own families. But there is also a sense of “going” that is seen in the commission given by Jesus. We are to disciple those we lead to Christ to observe everything Jesus has taught. As the gospel is spread across the street and around the world, new believers from every tongue and tribe should be led to understand and practice biblical worship.

One sees in the Great Commission a call to go to the nations, to baptize them and teach them. And yet, the ultimate purpose of the church is not to be devoted to missions, but to God. Our purpose is to glorify Him and lavish our affection on Him. It is the love for our Savior that compels us to share the gospel with others. We are called to carry the gospel around the world and commissioned to make disciples so they too can know God and worship Him biblically. John Piper explains it beautifully in one of his most famous comments: “Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exist because worship doesn’t.”¹² It is the purpose of each individual of the church to have a personal relationship with our Savior. From that relationship, and because of the love we have for Him, we are to carry the message of the gospel around the world. The most important element in discipling the nations, which comes through the sharing and subsequent response to the gospel, should be the teaching of the biblical attributes of God and how these new believers can know Him and worship Him biblically.

¹²John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 35.

As mentioned earlier and as Noel Due affirms, humans are created to worship.¹³ Humans do not need to be taught to worship. Humans need to be taught to worship God and how to worship Him biblically. The apostle Paul explained the result of unbiblical worship in his letter to the church in Rome, “For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen” (Rom 1:25). Left to our own understanding and without the guide of Scripture, humans will worship in unbiblical ways. Those who love the Lord Jesus and have a relationship with Him are compelled to go and teach others the truth about God and how to worship Him biblically. To completely fulfill the commission given to His disciples by the Lord Jesus, believers must carry the gospel to the lost, teaching a biblical theology of worship.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

The Great Commission gives believers the outline for evangelism and discipleship. The instructions of Jesus are to go and make disciples and then to teach them (Matt 28:18-19). In Acts 1:8 Jesus gives a strategy for carrying out the Great Commission. In verse eight Jesus says, “and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth (Acts 1:8). Taking into account where Jesus’ disciples were when they heard these words, one could deduce that Jesus was telling them to begin where they were (Jerusalem). They were then to carry the gospel to the surrounding area (Judea), pressing outward to the region (Samaria), and then to the entire world (remotest part of the earth).

If discipleship is within the Great Commission and believers are to begin this mission where they are, the reasonable conclusion would be to begin fulfilling this

¹³Noel Due, *Created for Worship: From Genesis to Revelation to You* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2005), 29.

mission in the home. Deuteronomy contains a similar command to teach God's Word beginning with the home (Deut 6:6-7). In this passage, we not only see the need to grow in individual understanding of God and His Word, but we also see the command to teach the Word to the next generation. The children of God are to pass the truth of God's Word from generation to generation. This truth should be the full counsel of God's Word and should include the biblical teachings on worship.

Scripture states that it is the responsibility of each believer to teach and disciple others (Matt 28:19-20). Discipleship should begin at home with a mother and a father teaching their children the truths of God's Word. The children of Israel were commanded to teach their children the laws of God.

Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deut 6:4-9)

This commandment impacted the lives of the Israelites as teaching began in the home and was taught from generation to generation. There is a need for parents to take the lead in discipleship once again. The strength of the home and the future of our families depend on effective discipleship.

Matt Friedman, Professor of Evangelism and Discipleship at Wesley Biblical Seminary, states, "American society is declining because our families are in crisis. If there is hope for our future, it begins with Christian parents evangelizing and discipling their own children. There is no more critical need in the body of Christ."¹⁴ This discipleship should begin with a relationship with Christ. It should include all of the teachings found in Scripture, including the biblical teachings about worship.

¹⁴Matt Friedeman, *Discipleship in the Home* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 2010), 6.

The home should be the first experience a child has in worship. It should not only be taught in the home, but modeled. Jason Helopoulos states in his article “11 Reasons to Worship with Your Family:”

One of the greatest benefits of family worship is the actual passing on of our faith to the next generation. We are teaching our children how to read the Scriptures, pray, confess their sins, sing unto God, and more. Our children will leave the home with memories of this daily worship. They will have learned by watching and participating how to search the Bible, intercede for their future children, and rejoice in God. And by God's grace and mercy they will carry it to the next generation of our families.¹⁵

By worshipping with their families, believers are fulfilling the commission of Jesus and obeying the commandment given to the children of Israel. Parents should be discipling their children with the truths of God’s Word and demonstrating how to worship God biblically.

Unfortunately, there seems to be a lack of family worship or worship discipleship actually taking place in our homes. There is a missing ingredient to our discipleship strategy. Jason Helopoulos voices his concern in the introduction of, *A Neglected Grace: Family Worship in the Christian Home* when he says, “We need to hear about the need for family worship in our homes. Pastors need to stress the importance of it. And lay people need to be talking about it. But even more importantly, we need to begin to practice it so that this silent void which has crept into our Christian homes will disappear.”¹⁶ This void needs to be filled with accurate teaching from God’s Word including a biblical approach to worship.

When the teaching begins at home under the instruction of the parents, it instills in the children a habit of worship that can be passed down from generation to

¹⁵Jason Helopoulos, “11 Reasons to Worship with Your Family,” accessed May 2, 2015, (www.thegospelcoalition.org, Christian Living, March 8, 2011).

¹⁶Jason Helopoulos, *A Neglected Grace: Family Worship in the Christian Home* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2013), 3.

generation just as is commanded in Deuteronomy. Unfortunately, the need for family worship is not being stressed from our parents or our church leaders. Don Whitney expresses this same concern in, *Family Worship* as he states,

I am persuaded from my own ministry experience in hundreds of churches that so little family worship regularly exists in Christian homes today, that even in most of our best churches, most of our best men do not even pray with their wives (and children if they have them) much less lead them in ten minutes or so of worship as a family.¹⁷

Whitney goes on to cite the results of research conducted by the Barna group concerning parental discipleship in the home. According to Barna's findings,

Eighty-five percent of parents with children under age 13 believe they have primary responsibility for teaching their children about religious beliefs and spiritual matters. However, a majority of parents don't spend any time during a typical week discussing religious matters or studying religious materials with their children. . . . Parents generally rely upon their church to do all of the religious training their children will receive.¹⁸

With parents not taking advantage of the opportunity to disciple in the home, this current generation will find it much more difficult to begin discipling their children in the next generation.

The foundation for one to worship God in an acceptable and biblical way is to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Deuteronomy gives instruction for this biblical truth to be taught in the homes and passed from generation to generation. But this discipleship does not end within the home. Jesus commissioned His followers to carry this teaching to the nations and then gave a beautiful example of personal discipleship and evangelism recorded in John's Gospel.

¹⁷Donald Whitney, *Family Worship* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 13.

¹⁸Ibid., 14. The research information was gathered by the Barna Research Group (May 6, 2003) and cited in Whitney's *Family Worship*, 14.

John 4:7-29

Acceptable worship must be founded on a biblical theology. Many passages of Scripture give believers instructions on how to worship acceptably. Also, several passages of Scripture give instructions on how believers are to pass this knowledge from generation to generation and then to the nations. An example of this foundational principle of worship and worship discipleship can be found in a conversation Jesus had with a woman recorded in John's Gospel. In this passage, Jesus not only corrects the woman's false understanding of worship, but also gives an example of how to share the truth with others.

To fully understand the significance of what Jesus teaches the woman and the example He gives to believers, one must consider the context of this passage.

He left Judea and went away again into Galilee. And He had to pass through Samaria. So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; and Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. (John 4:3-6)

Jesus and His disciples were making their way through the region and had taken the route from Jerusalem to Galilee through Samaria. This would have been unusual for Jews due to their tradition of prejudice against the Samaritans. In the town of Sychar, Jesus rested at a well and sent His men ahead to find food.

There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Therefore, the Samaritan woman said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." She said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?" (John 4:7-12)

It was not the custom for a man to address a strange woman.¹⁹ Jesus overlooked the cultural differences and the traditions concerning gender. He began a conversation with the woman that would lead to a revelation of who He was and the truth about worship. In Jesus' example of evangelism and discipleship, He disregards prejudice to teach about true worship. Jesus went out of His way to speak to this woman, showing that He had an unconditional love for her, despite her heritage or sin.

Jesus began to reveal His true purpose of stopping at the well as He led the woman to consider the gift of God and living water: "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life" (John 4:13-14). Jesus addressed the first requirement for true worship. He used the analogy of "living water" to describe a satisfaction that only He could give. Still the woman's response indicated that she did not understand with whom she was speaking or the implications of this living water. She asked for the living water so she would not have to return to the well each day. Immediately, Jesus turned the conversation to the true need of the woman. He instructed the woman, "Go call your husband" (John 4:16). With this statement, Jesus revealed the sin of the woman. She had no husband. This fact of the woman's life and her living situation would explain why she was drawing water in the middle of the day. She was surely ridiculed by the community and possibly lived under a threat of stoning for adultery. When Jesus showed His knowledge of the woman's life, she realized Jesus was more than a common man. The woman said, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet" (John 4:19). This may be the beginning of the woman's heart opening to the truth. Jesus did not immediately condemn her for her sin but revealed her sin, bringing it to the light.

¹⁹Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary: New Testament Prophets* (Colorado Springs: Cook Communications Ministries, 2001), 298.

The woman quickly turned the conversation to the worship practices of the Jews and Samaritans, possibly to steer the conversation away from her sin.²⁰ Or she could have wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to ask a prophet the question that likely had puzzled her from her childhood. “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship” (John 4:20). As Jesus answered this question He began to disciple the woman on the subject of biblical worship. He explained that biblical worship would no longer be tied to an earthly location, but would be determined by a relationship with Christ, founded on the truths of God’s Word.

Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:21-25)

Here again, Jesus gives the example of worship discipleship. He explained to the woman that God was seeking those who would worship in spirit and in truth. As Jesus taught the woman the biblical truth of who God is and how humans are to worship Him, He exemplified a beautiful example of worship discipleship. Believers need to understand the truth of worship and to follow Jesus’ example of discipling others in that truth.

Jesus revealed to the woman who He was in His statement, “I who speak to you am He” (John 4:26). Obviously, this statement had an enormous impact on the woman, for she left her water pot and returned to the city where she began to be a witness to what had just happened. In this biblical example of worship discipleship, the truth of God’s Word and the true Location and Object of worship (Jesus) led to a life changing experience for the woman. Her life was changed and she immediately became a witness

²⁰D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 221.

to the city in which she lived.

The beginning of worship discipleship is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus told Nicodemus of his need to be “born again” (John 3:3). Through this born-again relationship with Jesus a believer is given the capacity to worship in spirit. The believer then begins to grow in the knowledge and personal application of God’s Word. The believer begins to worship in truth. This “truth” includes all that is revealed in Scripture.

The end result of worship discipleship should be a changed life that worships biblically and leads others to worship. As seen in John’s account, Jesus used the explanation of biblical worship to lead the woman to the truth about Himself. Her immediate response was to go and share her experience with others. Believers are to follow the example of Jesus by making disciples and teaching them to observe everything that Jesus commanded.

Romans 12:1-2

For effective discipleship to take place in the area of biblical worship, a clear definition of the term worship must be explored. However, the term itself is not easy to define. As D. A. Carson expounds, “The semantic range of our word worship, in any contemporary theory of worship, does not entirely match up with any one word or group of words in the Bible.”²¹ Carson further develops his views on the difficulty in specifically defining worship by articulating the following:

Unlike Trinity, the word worship is found in our English Bibles. So one might have thought that the construction of a doctrine of worship is easier than the construction of a doctrine of the Trinity, however, at least we agree on, more or less, what we are talking about. . . . By contrast, a cursory scan of the literature on worship soon discloses that people mean very different things when they talk about worship.²²

²¹D. A. Carson, *Worship by the Book* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 14.

²²Ibid.

Worship, in its broadest sense, can be defined as an act of showing worth toward something or someone. Harold Best defines worship as, “Acknowledging that someone or something is greater—worth more—and by consequence, to be obeyed, feared, and adored.”²³ Worship is expressed as one gives of themselves, their time, and their resources.

As Kauflin stated, “It’s guaranteed that everyone on this planet will be an extravagant worshiper of some kind, sacrificially spending themselves in a life of desire and devotion. But it’s by no means guaranteed that their worship will travel along the right paths.”²⁴ A biblical definition of worship must be understood and applied by the follower of God.

For the purposes of this study, the term worship can be examined biblically in at least three aspects. First, there is the individual worship of God expressed by the believer and described in the Word of God. Second, there is the corporate worship of God expressed by a gathering of believers, instructed and guided by the Word of God. Finally, there is a life lived as an offering of worship to God, as described by Paul in Romans 12:1-2.

Individual Worship of God

The command of God, given to His children, to love Him with all of their heart, soul, and might (Deut 6:5) is a common thread found in all three aspects of worship. Each individual follower of Christ is called to a life of devotion to God. The three parts of the command of God, heart, soul, and might, encompasses all of human existence.

143. ²³Harold Best, *Music through the Eyes of Faith* (New York: Harper Collins Publishing, 1993),

²⁴Kauflin, *True Worshipers*, 12.

To love God with all of one's heart is to love with all emotion, will, and desire. The ancient Jews referred to the heart as the center of one's being. The heart was the source and essence of one's life. "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life" (Prov 4:23). The heart was where knowledge was hidden and teachings stored. "Thus, you are to know in your heart that the Lord your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him" (Deut 8:5-7). "Know therefore today and take it to heart, that the Lord, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other" (Deut 4:39).

Jason DeRouchie, professor at Bethlehem College and Seminary states, "While surprising to some, the old covenant recognized that a spiritual relationship with God begins from within, with a proper disposition toward the preeminent Savior, sovereign, and satisfier . . . and without one's will, desires, passions, affections, perceptions, and thoughts rightly aligned, the life of love is impossible."²⁵ To love God with all one's heart is to give everything, including one's intellect and emotion.

To love God with all of one's soul builds on the swelling crescendo of loving God with all of the heart. The soul included the heart, but was considered much more. The soul included the personality, or the essence of the individual. Again, DeRouchie would say of the soul, "In the first five books of the Old Testament the soul refers to one's whole being as a living person, which includes one's heart, but is so much more."²⁶ He would go on to explain how Moses seemed to be calling the children of Israel to love the Lord, beginning from within and then for the love of God to engulf the outward expressions of the individual.

²⁵Jason DeRouchie, *Love God with Everything*, accessed September 12, 2017, (www.desiringgod.org), October 10, 2013.

²⁶Ibid.

Finally, DeRouchie explains how one is to love God with all their might.

What then is the meaning of loving God with our “might”? The word translated “might/strength” in Deuteronomy 6:5 usually functions as the adverb “very” in the Old Testament (298x). The noun version occurs in Deuteronomy and in only one other place, which itself is just an echo of our passage. In 2 Kings 23:25 we are told that King Josiah “turned to Yahweh with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might.” So, if the word usually means “very,” what would it mean to love the Lord with all our “very-ness”? Interestingly, the Greek translation of this word is “power.” The Aramaic translation is “wealth.” Both of these may actually be pointing in the same direction, for the strength of a person is not simply who he is, but what he has at his disposal.

To love God with all one’s might is to hold nothing back. The passage in Deuteronomy describes the biblical act of loving or worshiping God as beginning within the being of the individual, then includes the soul as the outward essence of the individual, and finally involves the might of the worshiper.

Personal worship of God involves every part of the individual. The personal expressions of worship are many, including the personal disciplines of prayer, Scripture intake and memorization. Personal worship also includes obedience to the commands of God. These outward expressions are in response to God’s revelation of Himself through His word.

Corporate Worship of God

Loving God with all of the heart, the soul, and might can also be expressed corporately as followers of Christ are gathered. In the corporate gathering, believers express their love for God together in several ways. Paul gives instruction to the biblical, corporate gathering of the early church when he calls the church to, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Col 3:16). The early church encouraged and edified one another as they worshiped the Lord.

Paul also exhorts the church to offer prayers to God in the corporate gathering

(1 Tim 2:1). The church was to fellowship in unity with one another as they gathered together. The spiritual disciplines practiced by individuals are also to be exercised in a corporate worship gathering. It is within this corporate gathering where worship is defined as followers of Christ celebrating the truths of God's Word. The gospel is retold and believers are encouraged in fellowship and edification. Robert Webber states:

Worship celebrates Christ. That is, worship is all about the overthrow of the powers of evil through the death and resurrection of Christ. Because of the Fall, the powers of evil affect every human being and all of the structures of existence whether political, economic, or institutional. Evil also affects the structures of relationships within the family or even personal one-on-one relationships we have with one another.²⁷

Followers of Christ gather corporately to celebrate the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. As hearts and minds are focused together in response to the gospel, the community of believers express their devotion to God.

Bruce Leafblad defines this corporate expression of worship as "Communion with God in which believers, by grace, center their mind's attention and their heart's affections on the Lord, humbly glorifying God in response to His greatness and His Word."²⁸ It is the reaction, or response, to the truth of God's Word which prompts the heart of God's children to worship. In that moment, the Lord receives the glory and is the center of the believer's attention and affections.

Life Lived in Worship of God

A biblical definition of worship must also include the entire life of the believer. As Paul would encourage the believer to "prayer without ceasing" (1 Thess 5:17), so does he call for worship as an ongoing sacrifice in Romans 12:1-2. This is the aspect of worship that is most misunderstood. Individual and corporate worship are often

²⁷Robert E. Webber, *Worship Is a Verb* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), 204.

²⁸The worship definition was taken from notes acquired during a lecture given by Bruce Leafblad at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, October, 1998.

understood as events with a starting point and an ending point. The church gathers for a time to focus their hearts on God in a corporate moment of worship. The misconception is that when the time for corporate worship is completed, worship is over until the next appointed time.

An individual's personal time of worship can be set aside for a particular part of the day. The misconception is that worship is confined to a set period of time. The biblical definition of worship must also include an on-going sacrifice of worship. This worship would be expressed in the daily life of an individual as it is lived out in accordance to God's Word. It is not a set time for a specific part of the day or week. It is a constant fellowship with God and an enjoyment of His constant presence.

Paul explains worship as a living sacrifice. The word sacrifice would bring back to memory the offering of the sacrificial system. The offering would be killed and consumed in fire. Paul used a different analogy, one of a living sacrifice. This sacrifice is on-going and never ending. Paul would say the offering of our bodies as a living, holy sacrifice is acceptable to God. It is our spiritual service of worship (Rom 12:1).

The idea of a living, on-going sacrifice moves beyond the limits of corporate gatherings or specific times set aside for personal worship. Biblical worship continues throughout the day as the life of a believer is lived in communion with God. A life with God certainly enjoys moments of concentrated worship. These moments would be described by Leafblad as believers setting their mind's attention and their heart's affections on the Lord, but worship is not bound to only those moments.

A biblical understanding of the definition of worship must be understood by the believer before biblical worship discipleship can take place. With the firm foundation of biblical knowledge and application, discipleship can take place in the individual, taught through the home, and then reinforced through the ministry of the local church.

Conclusion

The mandate of making disciples is clear in the Great Commission. Believers are to go, make disciples, teaching them everything taught through God's Word (Matt 28:19-20). The discipleship process should begin in the home as fathers teach their sons and their grandsons. Biblical teaching is to be passed from generation to generation, learned and expressed through a life of devotion to the Lord.

Biblical worship discipleship does not end with the individual or the individual's family. The Great Commission pushes the believer into all the nations. Followers of Christ are called to carry the gospel to the nations until the world has heard the truth of God's Word. The message of the gospel includes telling how one can experience the biblical worship of God through a relationship with His Son. Biblical worship expressed in the life of the believer results in evangelism. A life of obedience to God drives the worshiper to carry the gospel to the world.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE EQUIPPING OF STUDENTS WITH A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP

The mandate given to the children of God is clear: we are to teach and make disciples of all the nations (Matt 28:8-19). The model of discipleship throughout all of Scripture is also clear: we are to make disciples beginning in the home, through the church, and from the church to the world (Deut 6:6-9). Biblically-based teaching and instruction concerning Christian worship is vital for comprehensive discipleship. For the purposes of this study, four foundational areas of worship instruction will be addressed. First, a theological framework of biblical worship must be established. Second, an overarching assessment of past and current worship discipleship practices and pedagogies in Christian homes, churches and schools will be assessed. Third, a strategy will be developed and implemented at FBC Centerton, Arkansas to address deficiencies found in past and current practices of worship discipleship. Only through the power and grace given through the Spirit of God and His Word will necessary changes in the worship discipleship culture be realized.

Understanding Biblical Worship

Man was created to bring glory to God through a personal relationship with Him. God created man and placed him in a perfect environment where God would commune with His creation. In this environment and through this relationship with God, man was completely fulfilled as he interacted with God and fulfilled his purpose in creation. Noel Due states in *Created for Worship: From Genesis to Revelation to You*,

“The primal couple did not exist for themselves or by themselves, but they existed for God, at the head of a creation yet to be brought into its full glory. We see the primal couple was given a mandate, to ‘fill’ the earth, ‘subdue’ it and ‘rule over’ it (Gen 1:26), and a task to ‘cultivate and keep’ the garden (Gen 2:15). To engage in such tasks and to fulfill the mandate was to be their expression of worship.”¹ This obedience found in the life of Adam and Eve is the biblical example of a life fulfilling its purpose through undefiled worship.

John Piper explains this purpose of man further in *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*, where he asks:

What is man’s purpose here? According to the text, creation exists for man. But since God made man like Himself, man’s dominion over the world and his filling the world is a display – an imaging forth – of God. God’s aim, therefore was that man would so act that he mirror forth God, who has ultimate dominion. Man is given the exalted status of image-bearer not so he would become arrogant and autonomous (as he tried to do in the Fall), but so he would reflect the glory of his Maker whose image he bears.²

The relationship between God and man was for the purpose of God’s own glory. Man’s worship of God was demonstrated by his living in, and having dominion over, God’s creation.

Sin entered into the world when man disobeyed God. At that moment, the perfect relationship between God and man was severed and the worship relationship that man enjoyed was lost. God, in His sovereignty, knew that man would sin and had preordained a plan of salvation from the foundations of the earth. Through His plan of salvation, the relationship between God and man would be restored. The story of God redeeming man is told throughout the Word of God. It is through the grace of God that salvation is offered. “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of

¹Noel Due, *Created for Worship: From Genesis to Revelation to You* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2005), 40.

²John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1996), 256.

yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Eph 2:8). As an individual places faith in Christ, the relationship to God is restored and their original purpose for existing is renewed-to glorify Him through a life of obedience and to enjoy a relationship between the Creator and His creation.

The relationship man enjoyed in the garden was forfeited due to sin. And since then, sinful man has attempted to replace that divine relationship with earthly things. However, through His Word, God clearly revealed what was required for man to have a restored relationship with Him. Disregarding the Word of the Lord, man attempted to approach God in his own understanding, offering worship that was unacceptable. Dire consequences awaited those who would attempt to approach God in ways He did not condone. “Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord” (Lev 10:2). God expected His priests to follow His Word completely when offering worship. To disobey His commands would be to suffer His judgement.

The apostle Paul also records dire consequences to those who would attempt to worship in ways not condoned by God. To the church in Rome Paul writes,

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore, God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. (Rom 1:18-25)

The consequence found in the letter to Rome was God giving those who would offer unbiblical worship over to their sin. He would not receive their worship, nor would they enjoy His presence. They were sentenced to chase after what they put before the Lord because they had exchanged the truth of God’s Word for a lie. They had chosen to give themselves to things created rather than the Creator.

Prescriptions and laws described intricately in the book of the law pointed to Jesus as the fulfillment of what was required to reconcile God and man. Just as the Old Testament clearly described how God was to be approached in worship, the New Testament also explained how man is to worship God.

Biblical worship begins with a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. To worship God biblically, one must worship in spirit and in truth. “God is spirit and must be worshiped in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). This spirit is made alive, or as Jesus described, “born again”, at the point of conversion (John 3:3). Allen Ross states, “A true Christian worshipper is one who has come to faith in Christ and has received the righteousness of God.”³ In his book *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, Whitney explains, “Before we can worship in spirit and truth we must have within us the One who is the ‘Spirit of Truth’ (John 14:7), that is, the Holy Spirit. He lives only in those who have come to Christ in repentance and faith. Without Him true worship will not happen.”⁴ Worship offered biblically comes from the born-again spirit living inside the child of God.

D. A. Carson discusses the connection of “spirit” and “truth.” He writes that the two are not separate elements of biblical worship but that both characteristics must be present. Carson explains:

³Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2006), 299.

⁴Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2014), 106.

This God who is spirit can be worshipped only in spirit and in truth. There are not two separable characteristics of the worship that must be offered: it must be in “spirit and in truth”, i.e. essentially God-centered, made possible by the gift of the Holy Spirit, and in personal knowledge of and conformity to God’s Word-made-flesh, the One who is God’s “truth”, the faithful exposition and fulfilment of God and his saving purposes. The worshippers whom God seeks worship him out of the fullness of the supernatural life they enjoy (in “spirit”), and on the basis of God’s incarnate Self-Expression, Christ Jesus himself, through whom God’s person and will are finally and ultimately disclosed in (“truth”); and these two characteristics form one matrix, indivisible.⁵

To worship biblically not only requires a spirit that is alive within the worshipper through the rebirth described by Jesus, biblical worship is also to be offered in truth.

Truth is revealed through the Word of God. By learning the attributes of God through the studying of His Word, a worshiper can be led to understand the requirements for biblical worship. For instance, the understanding of the holiness of God would lead a worshiper to the confession and repentance of sin, for no one with unconfessed sin can offer worship to the Lord biblically. “Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps, but let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:23-24). “Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” (Isa 6:5). The characteristics of God are revealed through the truth of God’s Word. For a worshiper to worship God biblically, the worship must be offered in truth.

As God reveals Himself through His Word, biblical revelation prompts an honest response from the worshiper. An understanding of revealed truth is needed for acceptable worship. David Peterson explains this biblical understanding in *Engaging with God*:

A theology of worship must consider key themes such as revelation, redemption, God’s covenant with Israel and the call for His people to live as a distinct and separate nation. Once the connection between worship and these themes is

⁵D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), 225-26.

established and traced through to the New Testament, the distinctiveness of biblical teaching emerges.⁶

It is biblically informed worship that is acceptable to God. Worship marked by the truth of God's Word is found to be pleasing to God.

Biblical worship is offered from pure hearts and with pure motives. Daniel Block describes worship offered with pure hearts and motives as he recounts the story of Cain and Abel. God looked with favor on Abel's offering while rejecting the offering of Cain. Abel's heart was pure and the offering was from the first fruits, the most desirable parts. Block explains how Cain's offering was rejected because he withheld the best parts and did not offer the first fruits. Block states,

When people's hearts are pure and their lives exhibit righteousness, God responds favorably on their cultic worship. But God is not obligated to accept the worship of those whose hearts are hardened toward Him and who live contrary to His will, even if the forms of their worship are correct. God looks upon the offering through the lens of the worshiper's heart and character rather than seeing the worshiper through the lens of the offering.⁷

One cannot cling to their sin and offer to the Lord worship that is biblical. "Therefore, if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering" (Matt 5:23-24). The truth of God's holiness compels a biblical worshiper to deal with his sin.

As Jesus interacted with the woman at the well in John 4, the sin of the woman was quickly revealed by the Lord. John Piper asks, "Why does Jesus strip open the woman's inner life like this? Because He had said in John 3:20, 'Everyone who does evil hates the light and does not come to the light lest his deeds should be exposed.' Concealed sin keeps us from seeing the light of Christ."⁸ God's Word teaches that to offer

⁶David Peterson, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 23-24.

⁷Daniel I. Block, *For the Glory of God: Recovering A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2014), 63.

⁸Piper, *Desiring God*, 75.

biblical worship one must come with a pure heart by the confessing and repenting of sin.

Biblical worship also involves a total commitment of one's self to the Lord. "Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, and with all of your strength" (Deut. 6:5). To love the Lord with all of one's heart is to set nothing higher in one's affections than the Lord. "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exod 20:3). God is described in His Word as a jealous God who will not allow His children to serve another. The relationship between the Lord God and His children is to have no rivals.

Not only are the children of God not to worship any other God, but also there is to be nothing that rivals His children's affections. "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth" (Matt 6:24). Complete devotion to the Lord is what is commanded in God's Word.

A follower of Christ is to worship the Lord individually and corporately with other believers and this biblical understanding of worship should be applied to the corporate worship as well. Not all people have the right to offer worship to God. Daniel Block states, "Right of access may not be taken for granted or claimed as an entitlement; the invitation to worship is neither universal or unconditional."⁹ There is access to the throne of God, but that access is only through the blood of Christ. The author of Hebrews writes, "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb 10:19-22).

⁹Block, *For the Glory of God*, 78.

To have a full understanding of biblical worship, all of Scripture must be considered. Jesus said, “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill” (Matt 5:17). Throughout the Gospels we see Jesus going to the synagogue and participating in the reading of Scriptures as was commanded. Although it is true the Levitical law is not binding, instructional principles found in the Old Testament are applicable to New Testament worship. The New Testament writings also give words of instruction regarding the corporate gathering of worship in the New Testament.

Paul gives instruction to Timothy concerning the actions of men and women and how they are to offer worship in a corporate setting. “I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth” (1 Tim 3:14-15). Luke records the prayers that were offered in the corporate worship setting (Acts 20:7). Songs were sung (1 Cor 14:15-16). Offerings were given (1 Cor 16:1-2). The Word was proclaimed (2 Tim 4:2). These examples and instructions were given to the early church and were to be applied to their corporate gatherings. But there are many words of instruction concerning one’s private acts of worship as well. Paul’s letter to the church in Rome instructing them to offer themselves as “living sacrifices” is only one example of such instruction. “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship” (Rom 12:1). The obedient life of the Roman believer was an act of worship. To understand and to disciple others to understand the biblical meaning of worship, one must study and apply the full counsel of God’s Word.

The Over-arching Assessment of Past and Current Discipleship Practices

As biblical worship begins with a relationship with Christ through salvation, true biblical worship will end with the gospel being shared with others. It is the worship relationship with Jesus that compels the believer to go and make disciples of all the nations. We see a beautiful example of worship-driven evangelism in the encounter of Jesus and the woman at the well recorded in John 4. After the discourse between Jesus and the woman, Jesus reveals His identity by telling her that He is the Messiah (John 4:26). The reality of this statement caused the woman to leave her water pot and immediately become a witness to the men of the city. The end result of true worship is evangelism.

Isaiah's response to the vision of Heaven recorded in Isaiah 6 was an act of obedience. "Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?' Then I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'" (Isa 6:8). True worship and the love for the Savior is demonstrated through the obedience of the worshipper. In this obedience, the worshiper shares the gospel with a lost world and then teaches them the truth about worship, thus fulfilling the Great Commission given by the Lord.

The Great Commission begins with evangelism but continues with intentional discipleship and teaching that are based on the Word of God. To understand the current state of worship discipleship we must first look back in biblical history to see what has been taught and how that information affected the worship practices of the church. Through the history of the Bible, God has revealed truth about Himself to His creation. This truth was recorded and passed from generation to generation. The truth about God, His character and His ways, influenced the way His people worshipped Him. Allen Ross states, "That revelation from God made Abraham realize that there is only one sovereign God, and therefore only one way to worship. Accordingly, God called him to leave his

old way of life and introduce the true faith to the world.”¹⁰ Before the law and explicit details of the sacrificial system and the worship practices were given, God was teaching His people how to relate to Himself through worship.

The book of Deuteronomy clearly states the strategy for passing truth from generation to generation. The responsibility of worship discipleship was first given to the family. “These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead” (Deut 6:6-8). This practice was to continue through the life of the family and was then to inform the corporate worship practices of the people of God.

Worship practices described in the Old Testament were not abandoned by the early church. New Testament believers were given examples and further instruction that would affect the private and corporate worship practices. “Inspired by the patterns and principles of worship recorded in Holy Scripture, and influenced by the helpful refinements of synagogue worship, the early church very quickly developed a full and rich form of worship centered in the person and work of Jesus the Messiah.”¹¹ The followers of Christ were beginning to see Jesus as the focus and fulfillment of the Old Testament worship practices. The letters written by the apostles to the churches began to inform the worship practices of these new believers. As the gospel was spreading, these new churches needed instruction on how to worship God appropriately. The elements of worship, such as prayer, singing, and Scripture reading, and proclamation were addressed. For example, Paul wrote to the church in Corinth:

¹⁰Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2006), 135.

¹¹Ibid., 418.

What should be done then, my friends? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn; and let one interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let them be silent in church and speak to themselves and to God. Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to someone else sitting nearby, let the first person be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged. And the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets, for God is a God not of disorder but of peace. (1 Cor 14:26-33)

Paul also wrote to the church in Colossae, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Col 3:16). Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord (Eph 5:18-19). The early church was called to gather and use singing in the teaching and admonishing of the body of Christ.

Throughout Scripture, similar teachings instructing the corporate setting of worship are found. Paul instructs the church in Rome, “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship” (Rom 12:1). Paul taught the believers in Rome that worship involved the offering of one’s entire life as an act of worship. A “living sacrifice” is an ongoing offering that incorporates every activity of the day, offered to God in an attitude of reverence and obedience. Ron Owens and Jan McMurray write, “What a tragedy it is when a believer sees worship only as something that takes place at church on Sunday morning. Yet that is how many think of worshiping God. I write this letter to remind you that worship is so much more. Essentially, it is an attitude of the heart that find expression in the daily living of life. In reality, worship is a lifestyle.”¹²

¹²Ron Owens and Jan McMurray, *Return to Worship: A God-centered Approach* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishing, 1999), 38.

Paul writes to the church in Colossae, “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father” (Col 3:17). This would infer that everything we do is to be offered to God in an act of worship.

The aforementioned passages of Scripture reflect God’s insistence that discipleship be taught through the families of the nation of Israel and then through the early church. It was intended for this practice to be maintained in the home and through the local church. However, there has been a shift in our modern culture to become more dependent on the local church for the discipleship of our families. Recent discussions have revealed that very little discipleship is actually taking place within the home.¹³ Although the local church has consistently taught and disciplined individuals within the church, little attention has been given to discipleship within the home.

As quoted in chapter 2, Don Whitney finds that family worship is lacking even in the homes of some of our most respected church leaders.¹⁴ This lack of family worship has put the burden of discipleship solely on the church. It is true, the church is to partner with families to equip and disciple, but the biblical model for discipleship is to begin in the home. The teaching of true biblical worship should be taught in the home first and then reinforced by the teaching of the church.

The Barna Group survey, which was also cited in chapter 2, supports Whitney’s claim. According to Barna, eighty-five percent of parents with children under the age of thirteen believe they have the responsibility of discipling their children. However, the survey revealed that the majority of the parents do not spend any time teaching their children spiritual truths. This evidence reveals the dependence of parents on the church for the discipleship of their children. It is obvious that most Christian

¹³This statement is based on personal discussions with individuals concerning family discipleship. Intentional conversations revealed that most families do not have a strategic plan for discipling their children within the home.

¹⁴Donald S. Whitney, *Family Worship* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 13.

homes are not discipling their families in biblical worship. The burden has been clearly laid on the church.¹⁵

Realizing the need and fulfilling the equipping ministry of the church, most local churches throughout history incorporated some form of discipleship. Since 1895 the Southern Baptist Convention has had several discipleship strategies promoted through the convention and made available in the local church. The first discipleship organization was the Baptist Young People's Union. Their emphasis was on missions, church doctrine, and polity. In 1934, the title of the program was changed to the Baptist Training Union, but the emphasis remained basically the same. In 1968, the name changed to Church Training and in 1995 to Discipleship Training. The emphasis of discipleship has remained focused on church doctrine, missions through the cooperative program, and church polity. An overview of the curriculum gives no indication of an emphasis on biblical worship discipleship. As the churches continued to teach and disciple through the context of a strategic discipleship and teaching strategy, biblical worship discipleship was neglected.¹⁶ This lack of strategic teaching through our homes, our churches, and through our Christian Schools has led to a misunderstanding, and in some cases, ignorance to biblical worship.

Biblical worship is to be expressed through the life of the believer individually and corporately. And yet, when asking individuals to define worship, they often reference corporate worship settings, usually emphasizing the music that was presented in those

¹⁵Barna Research Group, *Parents Accept Responsibility for Their Child's Spiritual Development but Struggle with Effectiveness*, Family and Kids, May 6, 2003, accessed February 10, 2016, <https://www.barna.com/research/parents>.

¹⁶This review of literature was accomplished by discussing the current discipleship practices of sister churches and by the evaluation of past and current classes taught through the discipleship ministry of First Baptist Church Centerton and Life Way Christian School. The leaders involved in intentional conversations were Nick Bartmier, Principal at Life Way Christian School, September 8, 2016, Eric Jones, worship pastor at Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock, Arkansas (August 18, 2016) and David Poupard, Discipleship Pastor at Hibernia Baptist Church, Orange Park, Florida (July 31, 2016). Information was also gathered through informal discussions at the state roundtable for worship pastors held at First Baptist Church, Bentonville, Arkansas, September 22, 2016.

settings. They seldom mention the proclamation of God’s Word as part of the corporate worship experience and they rarely define worship as an ongoing relationship between the worshipper and God.¹⁷ Very little biblical understanding is demonstrated when discussing worship with the average church member.

George Barna references this lack of biblical understanding as he writes, “One stumbling block for many churches is in getting their people to possess an accurate understanding of what worship is and what it is not.”¹⁸ Based on his research, Barna reports that 32 percent of Christians who regularly attend the worship services of their local church say they have never experienced God’s presence.¹⁹ How can it be possible that a child of God would say they have never experienced God in worship? Barna lists six revealing answers to the question: The average church attender does not have a biblical definition of worship; they show no priority of worship; they have a wrong perception about worship; they substitute religious activity for a spiritual relationship; they have poor sensitivity to God’s presence; and they have no desire to confront sin.²⁰ Average church attenders are grossly deficient in their biblical understanding of worship.

The deficiency in biblical worship discipleship is found to be true within the church family of First Baptist Church Centerton as well. The lack of biblical understanding is the result of a shortfall in worship discipleship within the families of FBCC, the church body of FBCC and Life Way Christian School.

A biblical understanding of worship leads an individual to realize that, “worshippers are what we are and worshipping is what we do” as described by Jason

¹⁷This conclusion is derived from intentional conversations I have had with individuals within the church family of First Baptist Church Centerton and within Life Way Christian School.

¹⁸George Barna, *The Habits of Highly Effective Churches: Being Strategic in Your God-Given Ministry* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books Publishing, 1999), 86.

¹⁹Ibid., 84.

²⁰Ibid., 84-86.

Helopoulos in his book, *A Neglected Grace: Worship in the Christian Home*.²¹ Helopoulos describes the average Christian home having no thought given to leading a life of daily worship. Our current state shows the responsibility of discipleship being shifted solely to the local church. Unfortunately, our local churches are not consistently and strategically discipling in the area of biblical worship.

Although family worship and discipleship is a critical need in the lives of believers, due to time constraints the project was limited to addressing the issues found within the student ministries of the church and school through a strategic discipleship process. It is the hope that biblical worship discipleship will continue to be taught throughout the life of FBCC and that discipleship will be consistently re-emphasized in the home and reinforced by the church and school. This project began with a strategic approach and concentrated effort to disciple students within the church and school. In an effort to accomplish the task, a curriculum was developed and a strategy was put in place to teach the curriculum in the church of First Baptist Church Centerton and through the educational ministry of Life Way Christian School.

The Strategy for Biblical Worship Discipleship

Having identified some of the deficiencies in biblical worship discipleship, a strategic plan was created and implemented to address the deficiency. The proposed plan had two major components: The first component was the development of a discipleship curriculum to be used in teaching biblical worship through the church and school. Contained in the curriculum was a six-week study of the principles of worship (individual and corporate) found in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. The second component of the project strategically implemented the discipleship into the teaching of

²¹Jason Helopoulos, *A Neglected Grace: Family Worship in the Christian Home* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, Ltd, 2013), 19.

the church and school. Although the focus of the project was on high school students, the curriculum was also used in small group bible studies and as a preaching topic within the corporate gathering.

The curriculum was composed of six sessions, which began with the basic foundation of private worship. The principles found in John 4 were used to teach that biblical worship is offered in spirit and in truth. A relationship with God through faith in Christ is necessary to have a spirit that is alive and capable of worship. The study then turned the student's attention to the "truth" that Jesus mentions to the woman in John 4. This truth was explained as the teaching found in God's Word concerning God's desire to have a relationship with man demonstrated through creation, man's sinful nature being introduced to humanity at the Fall, God's plan of redemption, and how, through the redeeming work of Christ, man can once again worship God privately and join with others in worshiping God corporately.

The purpose of this curriculum was to teach the foundational principles of worship. To identify the current level of the student's Biblical worship understanding, a pretest was given to all participants. The results of this pretest were used to gauge the level of each participant's knowledge of biblical worship. A posttest was used to gauge the increase of knowledge at the end of the six weeks.

The second component in correcting deficiencies concerning discipleship in biblical worship within homes, churches and Christian schools was to implement a teaching strategy for the curriculum. Worship discipleship material was developed for use in several different settings. The ideal setting for the study would prove to be a small group where the sessions were discussed on a personal level. This strategy was implemented in a life-group or traditional Sunday School venue where the teacher took six-weeks to teach and implement the discipleship course. The curriculum was also implemented in other small groups that met at various times throughout the week.

The corporate worship setting was also an effective venue for the teaching of biblical discipleship. The six sessions were constructed into a three-week sermon series involving the entire church body. Handouts were distributed to the church to be discussed with small groups. This approach worked well with the student ministry at FBCC as part of the corporate teaching within the student's Wednesday night worship series. In this setting, the entire student body of the church participated in the curriculum through the group teaching time and then broke into smaller groups for discussion.

The biblical worship discipleship curriculum could have been taught in the home. Parents could have had the opportunity to be discipled through the church, either in small groups or in the corporate setting, and then have access to the curriculum and encouraged to teach it to their families within the home. This teaching strategy would have addressed the needs identified in the home and within the church. Due to the constraints of time, this strategy has not been implemented as of yet.

To complete the teaching strategy, the curriculum was taught as a Bible class to the students of Life Way Christian School. In this setting the students studied the Bible and applied the truths of worship and worship leading in the school setting. The curriculum was adapted to include outside reading assignments on the topics of personal worship, corporate worship, and corporate worship leading.

The teaching strategy was implemented with the students of Life Way Christian school in a Bible class entitled Biblical Worship. In this setting the pretest and the post test was administered. The students completed the pretest as their first assignment. Upon the end of the semester and after the worship discipleship sessions were taught, the post test was administered. The results of the test were used to determine if knowledge in the area of biblical worship was increased.

The Power Available to Accomplish the Task

The task of teaching Biblical Worship Discipleship is no small or simple

assignment. Impacting this generation with the truth of God's Word is a God-sized task that can only be accomplished through the power of God. Confronting the misunderstandings of biblical worship will be to encroach on enemy territory, so it is only the power of God that will have any effect. God called us to the task of discipleship, but also gave a promise that He would supply the power needed to accomplish the task. "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty" (Zech 4:6).

Just a few days after the resurrection, Jesus commissioned His disciples with the great task of evangelism and discipleship. "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age'" (Matt 28:18-20). Jesus gave His disciples an impossible mission for humans to accomplish, but qualifies the charge by telling them that He has been given all authority and then promising them He would be with them always.

The power to accomplish the task of biblical discipleship comes through the Spirit of God. That power and presence of the Spirit is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to be with His disciples always, even to the end of the earth. Without this authority and without the presence of God, making disciples in every nation and teaching them to observe all Jesus had taught could never be accomplished. It is a God-sized task that cannot be accomplished in the power of man. It must be accomplished through the power of the Spirit of God.

The Spirit of God has many ministries related to discipleship and teaching. It is through the power of the Holy Spirit biblical teaching takes place and spiritual enlightenment is accomplished. Roy B. Zuck states, "The Holy Spirit instructs, reminds,

guides, declares, and reveals.”²² It is the Spirit of God who opens or closes the heart and mind of the learner. Jesus prayed, “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants” (Matt 11:25-26). Jesus continues:

You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; You will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; For the heart of this people has become dull, with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes, otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them. (Matt 13:14-15)

God can hinder the hearing of truth or He can reveal truth. Jesus tells His disciples, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” (John 14:26). Biblical teaching and discipleship is a work of the Spirit of God through the children of God.

The Spirit must not only be at work in the learner, opening the heart and mind during the process of discipleship, He must also be at work in and through the teacher. Roy Zuck continues, “The Holy Spirit seeks to teach through human channels or instruments. Human teachers should seek to be under the full control of the Spirit as clean and capable instruments. Effective Christian teaching takes place to the extent that teachers allow the Spirit to speak through them and use them.”²³ Effective biblical discipleship is only possible as the Spirit of God uses the gift of teaching through a child of God.

Biblical discipleship must be filled with the power and authority of Christ. Jesus promised this power in the book of Acts where He says, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (Acts

²²Roy B. Zuck, *Spirit Filled Teaching: The Power of the Holy Spirit in Your Ministry* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 25-29.

²³Ibid., 72.

1:8). In this passage, Jesus promised His disciples the power to accomplish the task and then He gave them the assignment. The power of the Holy Spirit would give the disciples the ability to be witnesses of God. The same power will be necessary to make disciples today. Biblical worship discipleship will combat the lack of knowledge and understanding found in the children of God, it will combat the false teaching being taught in the world, and it will threaten the stronghold of the enemy of God. The effectiveness against such odds will require the divine power of the Holy Spirit.

The importance of such a task is also daunting. To regain the relationship Adam and Eve enjoyed with God in the garden seems to be an impossible task. As discussed, through man's feeble attempts, it is an impossible task. Yet through the blood of Jesus, it is possible to have fellowship with God. It is possible for man to be redeemed and offer to God worship that is biblical. Only this relationship will fulfill the purpose of man's existence. It is why we were created.

John Piper states that as man fulfills his purpose of existence through an obedient life not only is God glorified, man is fulfilled through a relationship with God.²⁴ Without the ability to accomplish the purpose of existence, man is not completely fulfilled. Man's attempt to be fulfilled outside the parameters of God's intentions leads man further and further away from the truth. It is through biblical discipleship that we are taught how to experience peace and joy. That fulfillment is found when offering God acceptable worship.

Biblical worship discipleship begins with man's greatest need, a personal relationship with God through salvation. This is the good news of the Christian faith. By making this the first goal of worship discipleship, the commission of Christ begins. By following the biblical examples of worship found in the Word of God, a correct and

²⁴Piper, *Desiring God*, 15.

biblical approach to God is insured. Bryan Chapell states, “The redemptive flow of biblical worship inevitably makes our liturgy Christ-centered.”²⁵ By having biblically informed worship, the correct approach to God is exercised. It is through this biblically correct worship that one can enjoy the worship relationship that God intended.

Piper reminds readers that the worship relationship should permeate the believer’s entire life. It is not only an event enjoyed corporately with other believers but is an on-going relationship that affects the way we live. He states, “The first thing we learn is that worship has to do with real life. It is not a mythical interlude in a week of reality. Worship has to do with adultery and hunger and racial conflict.”²⁶ This relationship a believer enjoys with God is not just a part of the believer’s life, it *is* life.

Worship discipleship would correct a prevalent misunderstanding that worship is only an event. Worship is personal and something we as believers are given as an imperative from God. It is a call that God has been giving His children since the fall of man in the garden. Ross states, “We all were barred from the presence of God because of our sin and were unable to work our way back. But when we confessed our sin, believing His Word, we were restored to fellowship with God.”²⁷ Biblical worship discipleship will correct a growing misunderstanding within the church community that worship is determined by particular styles or methods but will teach it is determined by hearts and attitudes.²⁸ It will return to the biblical foundation of truth to be taught in the home, through the church, and then through the Christian school.

Discipling the followers of Christ is an important task. Biblical discipleship is

²⁵Bryan Chapell, *Christ Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape Our Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 2009), 113.

²⁶Piper, *Desiring God*, 73.

²⁷Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, 117.

²⁸Block, *For the Glory of God*, 63.

a task we are called to in the Great Commission. It is a task that can only be accomplished through the power of the Spirit. When this task is accomplished it will lead to the fulfillment of our very existence, to know God and to make Him known.

CHAPTER 4

DETAILS AND DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PROJECT

Overview

Chapter 4 will describe the project of equipping students with a biblical theology of worship carried out within the ministry context of First Baptist Church Centerton and Life Way Christian School. The project was intended to evaluate the current knowledge of students in the area of biblical worship, to increase the knowledge of the students through the teaching of six discipleship lessons on the topic, and to give opportunity to demonstrate the increased knowledge in a worship leading environment. First, a general description of the project will be given. Second, an overview of the teaching sessions will be given. Third, the results of the project will be given. Fourth, the results of the evaluations and the reviews of the six teaching sessions taught during the course of the project will be discussed.

The Project

In an effort to address the deficit of biblical worship discipleship at First Baptist Church Centerton and at Life Way Christian School, this project was brought before the pastors and the school administration in the summer of 2015. After describing the project and discussing the need and the desired results of the project, approval was given for implementation through the discipleship ministry of First Baptist Church Centerton (FBCC) and Life Way Christian School (LWCS).

The project began as the teaching sessions were written. Informal research had been accomplished through discussions with church members and small group discipleship classes on the topic of worship. The collected data from the discussions

revealed deficiencies in the biblical theology of worship and gave direction to the writing and information to be taught during the course of the discipleship process. Six discipleship sessions were developed. The sessions would be preceded by an orientation session and followed by an evaluation session. The orientation session was used to explain the equipping process, to gain permission from the students and their parents to participate in the project, and to assess their current knowledge in the area of biblical worship theology. The evaluation session was used to administer the post-test and give the students an opportunity to evaluate the equipping process.

The implementation of the project began on Wednesday, August 12, 2015, by introducing a new Bible class into the teaching schedule of LWCS and a new discipleship class into the student ministry of FBCC. On the first day of class each student was given the Biblical Theology of Worship Assessment (BTWA)¹ pre-test to be used in determining the current level of biblical knowledge and understanding on the topic of biblical worship.

Session 1 consisted of an introduction, orientation, and the taking of the pre-test by the students. Six weekly sessions of worship discipleship followed, which were taught to the students at LWCS and FBCC. On the seventh week, the BTWA was given to the students as a post-test. The students were given the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained through the teaching sessions by creating and leading a corporate worship time. The students of FBCC were asked to lead the worship time for the Wednesday night student gathering. The students of LWCS were asked to lead chapel for the school.

The Teaching of the Sessions

The six discipleship sessions were taught consecutively to the students at

¹See appendix 1.

LWCS and to students in the student ministry of FBCC. Each session followed an outline of discussion beginning with an introduction and orientation and ending with the redistribution of the assessment tool to be used as a post-test.

The class offered at LWCS was offered only to sophomores through seniors in high school. The class, offered through the school, was coupled with the responsibility of preparing and leading a weekly chapel service for the school body. When asked why they were interested in participating in the project, the students expressed their desire to be a part of the weekly worship leading team. The students of LWCS demonstrated a higher level of biblical understanding than identified in the research discussions that were used to identify deficiencies. The students had previous, but limited knowledge to key Scripture passages that would be used in the coming sessions.

The class offered through the student ministry of FBCC was open to all ministry students, grades seven through twelve. In this context, several students were desiring to participate due to their interest in leading worship. These worship leading opportunities would take place in the context of the Wednesday night Bible studies offered through the student ministry. However, several students were interested in participating simply because of their interest in the biblical theology of worship.

Although there was some level of prior knowledge, deficiencies in this context were greater than those identified in the teaching context of LWCS. This was due, primarily, to the greater age range of the students involved in the ministry setting of FBCC.

Session 1

Session 1 was titled, "Orientation and Introduction." The orientation session explained the project to the students. It was in the orientation that the agreement to participate was distributed. The students were asked to have the document signed by a parent or guardian before Session 1. In the orientation, the basis of the project was

described. The information was reviewed and discussed. The students were asked to describe their current understanding of worship and their reasoning as to why they desired to participate in the project and the teaching of the six sessions.

The main passage for Session 1 was John 4:1-26. In this passage, Jesus met the woman at the well in Sychar. The story in this passage of Scripture lays the foundation of the next six sessions of teaching. The woman's prior knowledge of where the Jews considered to be the place of worship and where the Samaritan's believed they were to worship began the class discussion of the biblical theology of worship. The students were led to begin researching what the Bible says about worship and about how His children are to relate to God biblically.

God commands His children to know Him and to love Him. He makes this commandment to the nation of Israel.

Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. (Deut 6:1-3)

God's commandments are to be learned and are then to be passed down to every generation. This knowledge contains the truth about who God is and what He requires from His children.

Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deut 6:4-9)

The teaching of these commandments was demonstrated in the limited knowledge of the woman at the well. She knew she was commanded to worship God. The location of worship had been taught to her, very possibly passed down from generation to generation

as described in the above commandment. And yet, Jesus corrected her misunderstanding of worship. He would teach her that true, biblical worship would not be tied to a location.

The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. (John 4:19-24)

Jesus taught the woman that there was a right way to worship and also revealed there was a wrong way to worship, “You worship what you do not know” (John 4:22). The students were led to realize that we have the responsibility, as children of God, to know who we worship and to know how we are to worship.

God reveals Himself to us through His Word. Scripture also teaches how we are to worship as God’s attributes are displayed through His Word. God’s Word guides the worshiper as instructions are given and as biblical examples of acceptable worship are recorded.

The students were asked to consider who God is, as described in Scripture. The students were led to Isaiah six and asked to describe God using the attributes identified in the passage.

In the year of King Uzziah’s death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory. (Isaiah 6:1-3)

One of the attributes identified in this passage is holiness. The angels cried out to one another, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts” (Isa 6:3). The students discussed the holiness of God and the term transcendent was introduced. God is completely and perfectly holy in His character. Worshipers of God must realize His holiness and their

sinfulness. For a human to enter into the presence of God in a relationship of worship, sin must be dealt with through confession and repentance.

Jesus introduced the concept of worshipping God in spirit, “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). The students were led to discuss worshipping in spirit. The discussion Jesus had with Nicodemus in John 3, was introduced to the students. In this passage, Jesus told Nicodemus he must be born again to even see the Kingdom of heaven. The idea of regeneration was discussed with the students as a prerequisite of worship.

The spirit of a human must be regenerated, born-again, before biblical worship can be accomplished. The discussion led the students to consider the fall of man and the need for sin to be atoned. Atonement, through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, and the believing faith demonstrated by the believer as a result of God’s grace, revives the dead spirit within the human and makes it possible for biblical worship to happen.

The concepts taught during Session 1 laid the foundation for session 2 and 3. Session 2 dealt specifically with Jesus’ teaching that God is spirit. For biblical worship to take place, or even be possible, one must worship in spirit. Session 3 introduced the concept of truth. Jesus also told the woman at the well that God is to be worshiped in truth. As Session 2 focused on the word spirit, Session 3, Session 4, and Session 5 focused on the word truth. The session involved students in discovering biblical attributes of God and how those attributes were addressed in worship. To close the discussion the students were led to consider the words of D. A. Carson:

This God who is spirit can be worshipped only in spirit and in truth. There are not two separable characteristics of the worship that must be offered: it must be in ‘spirit and in truth’, i.e. essentially God-centered, made possible by the gift of the Holy Spirit, and in personal knowledge of and conformity to God’s Word-made-flesh, the One who is God’s ‘truth’, the faithful exposition and fulfilment of God and His saving purposes. The worshippers whom God seeks worship Him out of the fullness of the supernatural life they enjoy (in ‘spirit’), and on the basis of God’s incarnate Self-Expression, Christ Jesus Himself, through whom God’s person and

will are finally and ultimately disclosed in ('truth'); and these two characteristics form one matrix, indivisible.²

The idea was introduced for the students to consider and prepare to discuss in session two. The students were asked to read John 4:1-26 in light of the words of D. A. Carson and to come ready to discuss worship offered in spirit and in truth.

Session 2

Session 2 was titled "Spirit." The focal teaching point of Session 2 was taken from Jesus' teaching the woman at the well. Jesus taught the woman that God was to be worshiped in spirit and in truth. The students were led to consider Jesus first point, spirit.

As the students discussed the concept of spirit, a concentrated discussion was led based on Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus in John 3. The students were asked the question, "Why do we have to be born-again to see the Kingdom of God? What implications does being born-again have on our relating to God biblically in worship?" The students were led back to Genesis 3 and the story of the fall of man was read and discussed.

God created a perfect environment and Adam and Eve enjoyed a perfect relationship with God. Their worship relationship was unhindered. When they chose to disobey God, their perfect relationship with God was severed by sin. There were many consequences of their sin, including the promise of death. God told them that if they ate of the forbidden fruit they would die. "The Lord commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die'" (Gen 2:16-17).

When Adam and Eve ate of the fruit, their spirits died within them. Their sin separated them from God and they were no longer able to enjoy the relationship they once had with their Lord. Sin had introduced shame and they began to hide themselves

²D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), 225-26.

from the presence of God. Atonement for sin became necessary for humans to relate to God in a way that was acceptable.

Within the teaching of Session 2, the students discussed the Old Testament picture of atonement as they reviewed the Levitical laws of sacrifice. The students were reminded that these laws, and the offering of the specific sacrifices, pointed to the ultimate and final sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross for sin was the final atoning sacrifice.

The gospel was clearly explained to the students during Session 2. It was discussed that it is by faith salvation comes to the believer and that through saving faith, the dead spirit is born-again, as Jesus described to Nicodemus. This born-again spirit now has the capacity to worship God biblically, for God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit.

Session 3

Session 3 was titled "Truth- Part One" and began with a review of session 1 and Session 2, then focused on the second truth Jesus revealed to the woman at the well. The second truth was those who wish to worship God biblically must worship Him in truth. The discussion was introduced with a question put to the students, "Why is it important for believers to know the truth about God? What is revealed in God's Word that could inform, prompt, and direct our worship?" The students were given time to discuss these questions openly.

The students discussed the attributes of God and how if believers are going to offer proper worship, they must understand who God is. The students also mentioned biblical instruction found in Scripture that gives direction to worship. The discussion then turned to Ecclesiastes 5:1-3.

Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil. Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore, let your words be few. For

the dream comes through much effort and the voice of a fool through many words.
(Eccl 5:1-3)

The warning found in this passage of Scripture was to the worshiper who would offer the sacrifice of fools. The worshipers were attempting to do what was required of them, but they were offering their sacrifices in an inappropriate way, not knowing what they were doing was evil in the sight of God.

The students were led to consider that often, believers who are not familiar with the Word of God attempt to have a relationship with God that is not biblical. The routine of corporate or private worship without the recognition of personal sin causes us to offer worship in an inappropriate fashion. God will not accept worship offered from unclean hearts.

The prophet Amos warns the people against offering a ritualistic form of worship from hearts that are riddled with unconfessed sin.

I hate, I reject your festivals, nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; And I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Did you present Me with sacrifices and grain offerings in the wilderness for forty years, O house of Israel? You also carried along Sikkuth your king and Kiyun, your images, the star of your gods which you made for yourselves. Therefore, I will make you go into exile beyond Damascus, says the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts. (Amos 5:21-26)

God was telling His people that He would not accept their worship, even though the ritual was being followed as directed. Their hearts were filled with sin. They had carried with them other Gods. They were following after other kings.

The students were able to discuss in session three the hindrances believers face in offering biblical worship. Those hindrances are sins, which are many, but include idols, anything made more important than the relationship with God. It includes hidden and unconfessed sin. The discussion of session three ended with a return to God's attribute of holiness. Worshipers are to relate to God through the blood of Jesus. Sin is to be

confessed. Hearts are to be clean, washed by bringing them under the blood of Jesus through confession and repentance.

Session 4

Session 4 was titled “Truth or Consequences” and began with a review of the importance of knowing God’s Word as it directs and informs biblical worship. The class discussion turned the focus from unbiblical worship not only being unacceptable to God, but also having the end result of severe consequences for the worshiper who attempts to bring an unworthy offering. Three examples were discussed in Session 4.

The first example was found in the account of Cain and Abel.

So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.” Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. (Gen 4:3-8)

The students were led to discuss the reason Cain’s offering was unacceptable while Abel’s offering was accepted. The discussion led the students to consider the heart of the two men offering the sacrifice as the passage was studied. God warned Cain about the sin that was in his heart. He warned Cain to do well and his countenance would be lifted. But if he did not do well, sin was ready to take him. Obviously, Cain did not heed the warning from God and the end result was the murder of Cain’s brother and the banishment of Cain.

The students considered once again the heart of the worshiper. God sees the hidden motives of the worshiper as an offering is brought before Him. He sees the sacrifice, or the lack thereof. The students were led to consider the story of the widow’s mite as found in the Gospel of Luke.

And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. And He saw

a poor widow putting in two small copper coins. And He said, “Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all *of them*; for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on. (Luke 21:1-4)

Jesus recognized the level of sacrifice. The students discussed the difference between the offering of the widow and those who had much. The widow gave all she had while the others gave a portion. The discussion of worship led the students to consider the New Testament’s teaching of giving. God requires all we have. We can hold nothing back from His Lordship. We are mere stewards. We are not our own and what He has blessed us with is not our own.

The second example discussed was the story of Aaron’s two sons, Nadab and Abihu. The two priests were given explicit instructions on how they were to approach God and how they were to offer the burnt offerings in His presence.

Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. Then Moses said to Aaron, “It is what the Lord spoke, saying, ‘By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored.’” So Aaron, therefore, kept silent. (Lev 10:1-3)

The students discussed the attribute of God’s holiness, as taught in session one. By disregarding the instruction given to the priests by the Word of God, and by not treating God as holy when coming before Him, Nadab and Abihu lost their lives in a consuming fire. The consequences of casually entering into the presence of God and offering sacrifices in an inappropriate manner were dire.

The students were led to consider the difference of the Old Testament consequences in comparison to New Testament consequences by discussing the question, “Is God different now? Are there no consequences for acting ignorantly coming before God? Are there consequences for knowing what God instructs through His Word, but then ignoring those instructions?” This discussion led the class to Paul’s letter to the church in Rome as they examined the third biblical example of dire consequences.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and

unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore, God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. (Rom 1:18-25)

God would not receive the worship, nor would those who attempted to worship enjoy the presence of God. The consequences of unbiblical worship, as discussed in Paul's letter, was God giving the individuals over to their sin, to allow them to chase after what they put before the Lord. They were not ignorant of the truth. They willingly suppressed the truth and gave themselves to the worship of those things created rather than the Creator. They had no relationship with the God of creation but substituted that relationship with idolatry and the worship of created things.

The students were led to realize that even though we may not see the physical consequences of inappropriate worship, as with Nadab and Abihu, God has not changed. He is the same today as He was during the writing of the Old Testament. The consequences of unbiblical worship are still dire. A biblical relationship to God through Christ leads to life. An unbiblical approach to God leads to death.

Biblical worship is a relationship with God, expressed through a born-again spirit, in response or reaction to the truth of God's Word. Worship offered in this manner is biblical and acceptable to God. This relationship is a life-giving relationship based on truth.

To reemphasize the point, the students considered Daniel Block's statement.

When people's hearts are pure and their lives exhibit righteousness, God responds favorably on their cultic worship. But God is not obligated to accept the worship of those whose hearts are hardened toward Him and who live contrary to His will, even

if the forms of their worship are correct. God looks upon the offering through the lens of the worshiper's heart and character rather than seeing the worshiper through the lens of the offering.³

Worship to God must not merely be rightly offered, the heart of the worshiper must be right as well. God is more concerned with the heart of the worshiper than the sacrifice offered.

The students continued to discuss the transcendent attributes of God as session four was brought to a close. The final thought discussed was the fact that believers have been given the responsibility to know who it is we worship and how we are to relate to God within that relationship.

Session 5

Session 5 was titled "Truth-Part Two" and continued with the discussion of worshipping God in truth. The students had spent a great deal of time in discussion and reading, considering the transcendent attributes of God and the consequences of offering worship considered inappropriate and unaccepted by God. In session 5, the intent was to examine the biblical attributes of God's immanence and how these attributes should prompt the follower of Christ to worship both corporately and privately.

Paul's letter to Timothy was used to, once again, stress the importance of knowing the truth about God. Paul wrote to Timothy, "I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth" (1 Tim 3:14-15). God's Word clearly describes the transcendence of God, but it also clearly describes His immanence as well. God desires to have a relationship with His creation.

³Daniel I. Block, *For the Glory of God: Recovering A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2014), 63

He initiates the relationship by drawing us to Himself through the convicting power of the Spirit. “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day” (John 6:44). It is the grace and mercy of God that calls and draws an individual into a relationship.

The sin, which separated man from God, is covered by the atoning blood of Jesus. It is the atonement of the blood that covers the sin of the individual who places their faith in Christ and begins a relationship with God as the spirit is born-again. The knowledge and understanding of this transaction prompts the individual to worship as gratitude and devotion is expressed.

The students considered the expressions of worship offered to God in reaction to salvation as evidence of a changed life. These expressions were to be offered both corporately and privately. The instructions of corporate worship practices, as described through the writings of the New Testament were considered by the students.

Luke records the gathering of the early Christians in a corporate worship setting, “On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight” (Acts 20:7). Paul gives instruction concerning the singing of songs, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God (Col 3:16). Offerings were given, “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come (1 Cor 16:1-2). The Word was to be proclaimed, “Preach the Word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction” (2 Tim 4:2). These practices were to be common among the followers of Christ as they gathered in corporate worship.

Personal worship was also discussed with the students as an expression of gratitude and love for the Lord. Paul's instructions to the church at Rome were read and discussed. "Therefore, I urge you brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship" (Rom 12:1). An obedient life lived in a relationship with God is an act of worship. As Paul writes, that act of worship is acceptable to God.

Session 5 concluded with a closing discussion of what biblical worship looks like. The students discussed corporate and private worship in light of the truth of God's Word. They reviewed the requirements of God both in the Old and the New Testament as they considered the heart of the worshiper.

Session 6

Session 6 was titled "The Result of Biblical Worship" and began with a short review of session 1 through 5. The discussion was then directed to consider the result of biblical worship. The students returned to John 4 and Isaiah 6. The reaction of the woman at the well when Jesus revealed to her that He was the Messiah was discussed as an honest reaction to truth.

The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming, He who is called Christ; when that One comes, He will declare all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He." So the woman left her water pot, and went into the city and said to the men, "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it? (John 4:25-26, 29)

The woman's reaction to Jesus' statement that He was the Messiah was to immediately leave her water pot and to go tell the men of the city what she had experienced. Her natural response was sharing the gospel.

The students discussed the reaction of a biblical encounter with Christ. A true worship encounter should prompt a believer to share the encounter with others. An obedient life, lived in a biblical relationship with God, leads to evangelism. Followers of Christ have been given a command found in the words of the Great Commission, "All

authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Matt 28:18-20). Obedient lives, expressing biblical worship results in a sharing of the gospel.

The students read the account of Isaiah 6, looking for the reaction of Isaiah to the worship encounter, “Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I. Send me!” (Isa 6:8). The students were led to see Isaiah’s reaction to what he had experienced as he volunteered to go with the message of the Lord. The result of a life of worship resulting in the carrying of the gospel was discussed as the major teaching point, and the conclusion of session six.

Session 7 was an added session for the specific purpose of redistributing the post-test. The students were asked to complete and return the test. After all tests were completed and returned, the students were allowed leave.

The Project Results

Twelve pre-tests were distributed and returned by the LWCS students and fifteen pre-tests were distributed and returned by the students at FBCC. Following the six sessions of teaching, twelve post-tests were distributed and returned by the students at LWCS while nine post-tests were distributed and returned by the students at FBCC. Each student that took the pre-test in the class setting of LWCS completed the six-week discipleship course. Only nine of the fifteen students from FBCC met the attendance requirement to complete the post-test assessment.

By comparing the post-test results with the pre-test results of the twenty-one students, it became evident that there was an increase in biblical knowledge and understanding concerning worship. For example, participant #2517 was a senior in high school. This participant showed measureable increase in understanding when asked to

explain Jesus' statement that God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. In the pretest, participant #2517 was unable to explain the statement. In the post-test the same participant wrote, "Our spirits must be alive in order for us to truly worship. In order for our spirits to be alive, we must have a born-again relationship with Jesus Christ."

Participant #8092 was also a senior in high school. When asked in the pretest to explain the transcendence of God, the participant indicated they were unfamiliar with the term. When asked the same question in the post-test the participant wrote, "The transcendence of God are attributes that only God possess. An example of God's transcendent characteristics would be His omnipotence or complete holiness." Although there is much room for this participant to grow in biblical understanding of transcendence, the post-test response did show an increase in understanding. The same participant increased in his/her understanding of the concept of biblical theology of worship, moving from "disagree somewhat" to "strongly agree" on questions 2 through 5.

Participant #7407 was a sophomore in high school. This participant moved from "disagree somewhat" to "agree" on questions 1 through 5 of section two of the BTWA, showing an increase of understanding in the concepts of biblical theology of worship. This participant was unable to explain question 3 of section 4 in the pretest, but answered the same question in the post-test by writing, "In Romans Paul says we are to offer ourselves as living sacrifices. This involves giving our time, our talents, our skills, our whole lives to Christ to use for His purpose." The statement by participant #7407 shows an increase in understanding for section 4 of the post-test.

Measurable increase of understanding was found in each of the post-test results. There were levels of understanding that remained the same for some questions and there were some answers to questions that moved from "agree" to "somewhat agree" when asked question 1 of section 2. Overall, each participant that returned the post-test showed measurable increase in understanding the biblical theology of worship.

The students were also given opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge gained as a result of the six teaching sessions as they planned and implemented worship services. These worship leading opportunities took place in the context LWCS in the form of school chapels and in the context of the student ministry of FBCC in the form of Wednesday night Bible Studies. Knowledge gained through the teaching of the six sessions was evident as the students chose Scriptures to guide the time of worship.

The Teaching Session Evaluations

The six sessions on the topic of the biblical theology of worship were taught in consecutive weeks and evaluated by six individuals outside of the teaching context implemented with the students. The sessions were taught in this context with the purpose of being evaluated by the individuals who agreed to participate. The sessions followed a similar outline as taught to the students.

Session one was used as an orientation and introduction. The main text for session one was John 4:1-26. In this text, Jesus set the foundation for biblical worship. He told the woman at the well that it is God who is seeking worshippers and that those worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). This session was titled “Spirit and Truth” and was used as an introduction to the following discipleship series.

Session two was titled “Spirit” and began by revisiting the text from John 4, focusing on verses 23 through 26. The review was used to bring the focus to Jesus’ teaching that worship found acceptable to God is offered in spirit and in truth. The students were led to study closely the word “spirit.” The explanation of Jesus’ words to the woman took the study to John 3:3-5 where Jesus explained the process of being born again to Nicodemus. The session led the students to discuss the fall of man, which took place in the garden, and how that fall separated man from God. The fact that it was God who initiated the relationship with man through creation and that it continues to be God who provides redemption for man through the atoning sacrifice of His son was also

discussed in Session 2. The gospel was clearly explained and the students were asked to evaluate their lives and their relationship with God through Christ. At the conclusion of session two the students were asked to write their salvation story.

Session 3 began with a review of the fall of man and how the redemption story found throughout Scripture is God's provision for an individual to be born again. The process of regeneration was discussed using John 3, where Jesus described being born again to Nicodemus. The concept of regeneration, or being born again, was considered as a prerequisite to biblical worship and was discussed in detail. This discussion was used to segue the students to study the second part of Jesus' teaching to the woman at the well. The title of Session 3 was "Truth-Part One." In this session, the students were led to consider the fact that God not only desires worship, but that He demands it from His children, and that He demands it to be offered biblically. The discussion considered the Levitical law and the prescription commanded by God concerning worship. It was discussed how the detailed instructions given to the Levitical priests gave evidence that God was very serious about biblical worship and that He would accept nothing else.

Session 4 was titled "Truth-Part Two" and continued with the theme of biblical truth and how God's Word informs us of the character of God and should guide the worship expressions of His people. The main text for this session was Isaiah 6:1-6 and Revelation 1:12-18. The premise of the session was the transcendent character of God and the effect that realization had on the prophet Isaiah and John. The text was used to teach the important truth that God is holy, and as unholy humans, our sin must be dealt with through confession and repentance to offer biblical worship. The transcendence and immanence of God was also discussed in this session as a comparison was made between John's relationship to Christ when He was on the earth, as described in John 13, and John's reaction when he saw Jesus as recorded in Revelation 1:17.

Session 5 continued with the title, "Truth or Consequences." This session discussed the consequence of attempting to offer worship that is not biblical. Three main

texts were used to illustrate the premise. Leviticus 10:1-2 was used to remind the students of the Levitical law and the prescriptions commanded by God when offering sacrifices to God. This Old Testament example was used to demonstrate the dire consequences that the priests faced for not following God's instructions in how to come before Him. Amos 5:21-26 was used to demonstrate God's attitude toward those who would attempt to offer worship with unconfessed sin, or in a way that is not an expression of complete devotion to the Lord. Romans 1:18-25 was used to demonstrate the continuing consequence of worship offered in an unbiblical fashion. The students were led to consider the ultimate consequence of unbiblical and misdirected worship, which is found in verse 26 where Paul states that God gave them over to their sin.

Session 6 was used as the conclusion of the biblical worship discipleship instruction. The session was titled, "The Result of Biblical Worship" and used as its main text John 4:25-42 and Isaiah 6:8. The premise of session 6 was based on the response of the characters found in these passages. When Jesus revealed His identity as the Messiah to the woman at the well, Scripture says she left her water pot and went back to the village where she began to witness as to what she had heard and seen (John 4:28-29). In Isaiah 6 the prophet willingly volunteered to be used of God as His messenger when God asked the question, "Whom shall I send and who will go for Us" (Isa 6:8). The concluding premise was that true worship changes the life of the worshipper and leads the individual to a closer walk with the Lord, made evident through a life of obedient sharing of the gospel.

The six adults reviewed and critiqued each of the six sessions. Each person was given a rubric to use in evaluating the biblical and theological accuracy of the sessions.⁴ The rubric included eight areas of criteria to evaluate including: the relevancy of the lesson to the topic of a biblical theology of worship, the biblical accuracy to the

⁴See appendix 2.

text used in each session, the theological consistency throughout the sessions, the clarity of the stated goals, the clarity of the points as they support the thesis, the points of practical application, the adequate coverage of the material, and finally, the overall clarity of the lessons. Using the rubric, each of the six adults graded each of the sessions as sufficient or exemplary in all criteria categories, surpassing the original goal.

Each of the six adults hold a master's level of education or above. Two of the adults are school teachers, teaching English and Bible at Life Way Christian School in Centerton, Arkansas and History at Bentonville High School West in Centerton, Arkansas. Three of the male evaluators serve on the pastoral team of First Baptist Church in Centerton, Arkansas in the role of lead teaching pastor, Administrator of Life Way Christian School, and Pastor of Community ministries. The final male evaluator is an attorney at law in Bentonville, Arkansas.

CHAPTER 5
PROJECT EVALUATION AND
PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Overview

Chapter 5 will evaluate the project in light of the set goals and also give personal insights gained while implementing the project through the ministry context of First Baptist Church Centerton and Life Way Christian School. The city of Centerton is located in the heart of Benton County. The counties of Benton and Washington comprise the region referred to as Northwest Arkansas, which is considered one of the fastest growing communities in the state. It is a unique region due to the influence of major retail and trucking industries. This regional uniqueness has given the ministry of First Baptist Church Centerton the opportunity to reach many incoming residents with the gospel. Two important ministries of the church mobilized to impact this community are the student ministry of First Baptist Church Centerton (FBCC) and Life Way Christian School (LWCS). This project specifically targeted students with an attempt to equip them with a biblical theology of worship. The implementation of the project took place within the context of these two student ministries of the church.

Summary of the Project

The project had a single aim with four goals. The aim of the project was to equip the students of FBCC and LWCS with a biblical theology of worship. This aim was measured by four goals: 1) an assessment to determine the student's current level of biblical understanding concerning worship; 2) the development of a curriculum that would meet the deficiencies of the student's biblical knowledge; 3) the implementation

and teaching of the curriculum through the student ministry and the school in an effort correct the theological deficiencies identified through the assessment tool; 4) the integration of the worship curriculum into the ongoing discipleship ministry of FBCC and LWCS.

The project idea was introduced to the pastors of the church and the administrators of the school and was received with affirmation and excitement. Over the next several months a six-week curriculum was developed and presented to the pastors and administrators for evaluation. In a teaching environment, the pastors and administrators were able to evaluate the curriculum using an eight-category rubric to judge the biblical and theological accuracy, and also the relevancy of the curriculum. The affirmation of this team of evaluators was unanimous. The sessions were then taught in a class setting to students of LWCS and FBCC.

Evaluation of the Goals

All four goals mentioned at the outset of the project were met during implementation. The first goal, designed to assess the current biblical and theological knowledge of the students, was the development and distribution of an assessment tool. The tool was successfully developed and given to the students at the beginning of session one of the curriculum.

Two groups of students were assessed using the assessment tool. The first group of students were from LWCS and had chosen to take the class offered as an elective where the curriculum would be taught. The second group of students were involved in the student ministry of FBCC. These students participated in the class as an after-school discipleship opportunity.

The students assessed were from evangelical backgrounds. Of those students surveyed, 100 percent marked “yes” to question one, “Do you have a personal relationship with Christ?” Each student who volunteered to take the discipleship classes

showed some level of prior interest in worship leading. The assessment revealed a significant level of basic, biblical understanding, but also identified deficiencies in their understanding of biblical worship and theological knowledge.

The second goal was to develop a six-week curriculum to be used to increase the knowledge of the students concerning the biblical theology of worship. The level of biblical knowledge discovered in the initial pre-survey assessment led to minor adjustments in the curriculum ideas and development. The curriculum addressed the biblical foundation of worship, but was also able to progress more rapidly and in more depth than initially expected. The teaching sessions offered through LWCS were developed as to incorporate worship planning instruction. In the school setting, the sessions were designed to equip students with a biblical theology of worship while incorporating a biblical approach to worship leading. The sessions offered through the student ministry did not include the teaching of worship leading, but were developed to focus entirely on equipping the students with a biblical theology of worship.

The third goal was to equip the students with a firm foundation of a biblical theology of worship by teaching the curriculum. The goal was met in two parts. First, the school allowed the curriculum to be taught as a Bible class through the school's fall semester. Twelve students enrolled in the class and participated in the sessions. Second, permission was given to teach the curriculum through the student ministry as an after-school discipleship class. Fifteen students enrolled in the discipleship class and participated in the sessions. With the results of the post-test assessment, evidence showed that the goal of equipping students with a biblical theology of worship had been met. Each student who completed the teaching sessions demonstrated an increase in their knowledge of biblical worship.

The fourth and final goal, which was the ongoing integration of the curriculum into the teaching and discipleship strategy of the church, was successfully met as the student ministry and LWCS adopted the curriculum as part of their course offerings and

discipleship strategies. The sessions have continued to be taught through the class setting of LWCS in several different formats. The curriculum has been taught through LWCS as a course offering during school and as an after-school chapel preparation elective. The discipleship strategy of the church's student ministry has been offered as a discipleship class and in the form of a student worship retreat.

Strengths of the Project

Several strengths were identified during the implementation and the evaluation of the project. One strength, which was actually one of the set goals, was the increase in knowledge demonstrated by the students. After teaching the six sessions, the students demonstrated an increase in knowledge through the post-test assessment. There was also evidence of an increase of knowledge in the discussions during the sessions.

However, this biblical understanding was best demonstrated by the students as they planned and led corporate times of worship in weekly chapels at LWCS and within the Wednesday night student worship setting of FBCC. The students applied their biblical knowledge gained through the teaching of the curriculum, which was exhibited in their planning and structure of the corporate times of worship. The student's thoughtful design of worship settings was obviously influenced by the teaching sessions as they incorporated conscious efforts of attention drawn to the attributes of God, the need of a regenerated spirit, and the necessity of biblical integrity when choosing songs and other expressions of worship. The efforts of the students were recognized and affirmed by their peers and teachers.

The ongoing results of the project are visible as the students continue to plan and lead worship opportunities for the school and student ministries. The students have demonstrated worship planning behaviors consistent with the biblical teachings of the curriculum. These behaviors, or worship leading habits, were specifically taught in the sessions offered through LWCS due to the nature of the class. The students involved

with the school also had the responsibility of preparing to lead a weekly worship service in a chapel setting. This gave need and opportunity to the inclusion of biblical worship planning and leading.

However, the sessions offered to the students through the ministry of FBCC was not in preparation for worship leading, but as a discipleship course. In this setting, worship planning and leading was not included in the course teachings. However, many of the students who participated in the equipping sessions did demonstrate an increase of biblical understanding as they applied the increase of biblical theology to their leadership. This was also noticed by their peers and affirmed by their adult leaders.

A second strength was the application of knowledge outside of the context of the original project. The students applied their biblical understanding as they planned worship for other corporate opportunities, including summer events and mission trips, which were considered as positive byproducts of the original intent. This evaluation of applied knowledge has continued to be consistent throughout the ministry of both the school and the student ministry.

A third strength and positive result of the project was the impact it has had on other ministries of FBCC. Although not part of the initial implementation plan, there have been many opportunities to teach the curriculum in other ministry settings. The curriculum has been taught as a six-week, Sunday morning Bible study with college students, as a Sunday night preaching series with the entire church body, and offered as a discipleship track as part of a student worship arts camp sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. The process of implementing the project opened the door to several opportunities to teach the curriculum both to the church family of FBCC and in the context of many different ministry settings.

Weaknesses of the Project

During the implementation process, there were weaknesses to the project

identified. First, the six-week course to be taught as a Bible class, offered to the students of LWCS was titled “Worship Leading” in the course offering document given to the students by the school. This misunderstanding of the course objective by the school’s office staff led to a misrepresentation of the course to the students and their parents. By giving the course this title, several students felt it would not be beneficial for them since they did not consider themselves “worship leaders” and were not interested in taking part of the school’s chapel services. This limited the scope of student involvement.

Second, the age level of implementation through the student ministry of FBCC was stretched to include junior high students. This proved to be problematic and caused the teaching times to be less effective. Although there were a few students in this age group who exhibited consistent interest, most were not able to fully grasp the teaching content due to the teaching methodology. The curriculum proved to be better suited for tenth grade students and above.

Third, by limiting the curriculum to six week sessions, the topics of instruction taught through the student ministry of FBCC were not allowed to be very deep in content. In the church setting, the class met only once a week. However, in the school setting of LWCS, the students were in the class three days a week, which allowed more depth in the discussions. Each LWCS session was divided into three sections and taught in the course of one week. Although there were indications of an increase in knowledge in both settings, the weaknesses identified proved to be limiting for the student ministry.

What I Would Have Done Differently

There are adjustments that would be made in light of the weaknesses identified and also adjustments that would be made in light of the strengths. First, the course in its current form would not be offered to students under the tenth-grade level. By limiting the age of the participating students, more effective class discussion and application could take place, which could lead to a higher level of increased knowledge.

Second, the times of instruction need to be extended to allow the students opportunity for discussion and implementation. In an effort to teach the curriculum through the student ministry, the sessions would be divided and made into a twelve-week study.

Third, one of the positive byproducts of the project implementation was the opportunity to teach the sessions in different forms throughout the ministry of FBCC. A more deliberate attempt to involve adults in the project and broadening the scope of the course offering would open the door for the curriculum to be taught to a larger portion of the church body.

Fourth, although the curriculum had immediate effects on corporate worship planning and leading, the intent of the curriculum was to teach an overall, biblical theology of worship. The curriculum was designed to apply to all believers in the form of personal and corporate discipleship. By connecting the teaching session to worship leading instruction, the misunderstanding of worship being tied to music was reinforced. That was not the intention of the project.

In future course offerings, it would be desirable to offer the biblical theology of worship sessions separate from chapel preparation and also separate from the students' preparation for Wednesday night worship. Although the application of the learned biblical truth concerning worship does impact the corporate worship setting, that was not the original intent. Teaching the course as a biblical theology would better equip the students to realize the biblical truth of worship and how it relates to their personal devotion to God and how devotion is expressed through an obedient life.

Conclusion

A biblical understanding of worship enhances every aspect of the life of a believer. When a follower of Christ realizes the spiritual implications of Paul's writing to the church in Rome in Romans 12, worship becomes part of the everyday life, expressed

through obedience to God and His Word. It is no longer confined to an event. It is an ongoing offering of oneself in a relationship to God. “Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom 12:1-2). Our love and devotion for God is expressed through our daily lives. It is also expressed in moments of personal worship and corporate worship with other believers.

As this biblical understanding of worship is understood and applied individually, the believer enjoys a firm, biblical foundation from which to teach. Teaching and discipling others becomes an act of obedience to the command of Jesus found in the Great Commission. Parents, obedient to the command of God recorded in Deuteronomy six, begin to teach and disciples their children. The spiritually mature teach those who are weaker in their faith. It is the biblical process of discipleship and evangelism.

When this discipleship process begins in the home, families are raised in the admonition of the Lord, under the guidance and instruction of God’s Word. When local churches are careful to disciple their church family through a biblical process of discipleship, communities are stronger, built up by the exhortation and the edification of the church. The biblical theology of worship must be an ongoing teaching of parents to their children and churches to the membership. The misunderstanding that worship takes place during a set aside event only needs to be corrected. Worship includes those events, but it is not confined to those events. Worship is expressed in many ways, including the life of a believer lived out in devotion to the lordship of Christ.

The project focused on the equipping of students with a biblical theology of worship, for it was believed if this biblical theology could be taught to the young, they would be equipped to teach it to their children, and then to their children’s children. By

reaching this generation with the truth of God's Word, a correct understanding of biblical worship could be passed on.

As research was accomplished in preparation for the implementation of the project, it became evident that the term worship was highly misunderstood. Most believed that worship took place only when the body of Christ gathered to celebrate together. Some recognized that worship could take place as an individual took time out from the day to focus on the Lord through prayer and Bible study. But the idea that worship is also an all-encompassing, ongoing relationship with God, expressed through an obedient life of devotion was not evident in the research discussions.

A worship relationship with God, which is all encompassing, is a biblical concept clearly taught in God's Word. To misunderstand or to be ignorant of this teaching leads to future misconceptions and consequences. Students who are not properly disciplined with a biblical understanding of worship by their parents in the home have been shown to have a much higher rate of dropout in college. Churches who do not take the opportunity to partner with parents in the proper discipling of students with a biblical understanding of worship see their students leave the ministry of the church as they go to college and flounder in their faith.

Studies show high percentages of students who go away for college become disengaged from the life and ministry of the church. Most researchers would point back to discipleship deficiencies identified in the home and in the church. Ken Ham identifies, what he considers, the main cause of student drop out. He attributes it to the students never actually being a part of the church before they left for college. They attended a church, and may have called it worship, but they did not understand worship to be an ongoing relationship expressed through an obedient life.

Ken Ham, Britt Beemer, and Todd Hillard teamed together to write, *Already Gone: Why Your Kids Will Quit Church and What You Can Do to Stop It*.⁶¹ In this book, the authors give the results of their research concerning the dropout of teenage students from the life of the church. The authors would argue that the reason the students tend to drop out of the church when they enter college is because they were really not an active part of the church body before they left. They would cite several studies and the statistics to show the rapid decline of church goers in America, focusing on this trend being evident among young adults. Again, this resource would discuss the problem and identify the cause as a deficiency in the discipleship process of the individuals. The students researched were found to be involved in church, but they were not grounded in their faith.

Many books discuss the problem of teenage church drop out and give suggestions on why this problem exists. Most will point to the lack of adequate, biblical discipleship provided through student ministries or other ministries of the church. There are also numerous articles and blog posts that address the issue. *Christianity Today* posted an article in December of 2014 entitled “The Real Reasons Young Adults Drop Out of Church.”⁶² In this article, Ed Stetzer gives the results of a survey stating that twenty-five percent of young adults who dropped out of the church claim they did so because they moved away to college. Stetzer would argue the drop out was more likely due to the student not having a faith that was truly their own.

In his posting, Stetzer cites a book by Thom and Sam Rainer, *Essential Church: Reclaiming a Generation of Dropouts*.⁶³ As suggested by the title, the book identifies the

⁶¹Ken Ham, Britt Beemer, and Todd Hillard, *Already Gone: Why Your Kids Will Quit Church and What You Can Do to Stop It* (Forest, AR: Masterbooks, 2009).

⁶²Ed Stetzer, “The Real Reasons Young Adults Drop Out of Church,” December 2014, accessed August 8, 2017, christianitytoday.com.

⁶³Thom Rainer and Sam Rainer, *Essential Church: Reclaiming a Generation of Dropouts* (Nashville: B&H Books, 2008).

deficiencies found in the discipleship of teens and young adults and suggests ways to correct these deficiencies in an effort to reclaim those who have dropped out of the church. The authors would suggest elements of the church that are of utmost importance in the biblical discipleship of church members. By addressing the deficiencies and building firm biblical foundations in church members, specifically students, the authors propose these who have left the church can be reclaimed.

The discipling and equipping process of the project was an attempt to correct a misunderstanding of the term “worship” and to instill in the students the theological foundation of a life of worship expressed through devotion to the Lord. The project was meant to equip students with a biblical theology of worship that would lead them to a closer and more intimate relationship with Christ.

A believer who understands the biblical meaning of worship will demonstrate this understanding through a life of devotion to the Lord. The spiritual life and expression of worship will begin with a personal relationship with the Lord, which begins with the rebirth of a dead spirit through salvation, as described by Jesus in John 3 and four. Biblical worship will involve all aspects of the individual, as taught in Deuteronomy 6. The individual’s expression of worship will be an ongoing sacrifice, as described by Paul in Romans 12. The end result of a life of worship will be expressed by the obedient carrying of the gospel to the nations, as described in Isaiah 6.

The project of discipling students with a biblical theology of worship has been used by the Lord in several ways. From the idea development to the evaluation process, the project has proven to be personally life changing. It has led to a deeper understanding of God’s Word, which has altered the teaching practices, worship leading, and discipleship practices.

The implementation of the project through the two ministries of the church has been enriching. It has increased the level of biblical understanding of the students involved in the project, but it has also awakened the awareness of others who were not

immediately involved. Parents of students have been impacted. Other ministries of the church have been positively affected. This is not due to the project itself. Nor is it due to the author of the curriculum. This is an obvious answer to prayer that was lifted at the onset of the idea and whispered several times throughout the process. There was a humble, constant and fervent petition for guidance and wisdom throughout the entire project.

The opportunity to be personally involved in the discipleship process of many individuals would not have been readily available without the implementation of the project. The opportunity alone was a gift from the Lord. To see the Word of God impact the lives of students as they considered biblical worship was truly rewarding. The project became much more than what was originally anticipated.

The prayer continues to be that the project and the ongoing teaching of the curriculum would be used by the Lord in the equipping of the membership of FBCC and LWCS. “Now to Him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Eph 3:20).

APPENDIX 1
BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP ASSESSMENT

Agreement to Participate

You are being requested to give permission for a minor or member of a vulnerable population under your legal supervision to participate in a study designed to identify the current Biblical understanding of worship. This research is being conducted by Jimmy Wayne Daniel for purposes of collecting data for a Doctoral project. In this research, a person will answer questions before the project and then answer questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information provided will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will a person's name be reported, or a person's name identified with his or her responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary, and the person you are giving approval to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By signing your name below, you are giving informed consent for the designated minor or member of a vulnerable population to participate in this research if he or she desires.

Participant Name _____

Parent/Guardian Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Personal Identification Code (please choose and remember a four-digit code): _ _ _ _

Section I: General information about the participants.

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

1. Do you have a personal relationship with Christ?

- A. Yes
 B. No
 C. Not Sure

2. Are you a member of First Baptist Church Centerton and/or enrolled as a student of Life Way Christian School?

- A. Yes
 B. No

3. What year are you in high school?

- A. 9th grade
 B. 10th grade
 C. 11th grade
 D. 12th grade

4. Are you now leading, or would you like to lead, worship?

- A. Yes
 B. No
 C. Not Sure

Directions: Answer the following questions: (1) Place a check by the multiple-choice questions. (2) Some questions ask you to give your opinion using the following scale: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, DS = disagree somewhat, AS = agree somewhat, A = agree, SA = strongly agree; please circle the appropriate answer. (3) write a short answer

Section II: Concept of a biblical theology of worship.

1. Using the following scale, please write the letter(s) that best corresponds to your response to the following statements:

Strongly Agree – SA Agree – A Agree Somewhat – AS
 Disagree Somewhat – DS Disagree – D Strongly Disagree – SD

- _____ 1. I can name at least one biblical passage concerning worship.
- _____ 2. I can explain the transcendence of God.
- _____ 3. I can explain the immanence of God
- _____ 4. I can give one biblical example of the transcendence of God.
- _____ 5. I can give one biblical example of the immanence of God.

Strongly Agree – SA Agree – A Agree Somewhat – AS
 Disagree Somewhat – DS Disagree – D Strongly Disagree – SD

2. To be a worshipper as described in Scripture, one must:

- _____ 1. Have a personal relationship with Christ
- _____ 2. Attend church regularly
- _____ 3. Be able to sing or play an instrument
- _____ 4. Be involved in a worship ministry

Using the following scale, please write the letter(s) that best corresponds to your response to the following statements:

Strongly Agree – SA Agree – A Agree Somewhat – AS
 Disagree Somewhat – DS Disagree – D Strongly Disagree – SD

- _____ 1. I feel I fully understand what the Bible teaches about worship.
- _____ 2. I feel confident in explaining biblical worship.
- _____ 3. I am an active worshipper.
- _____ 4. I engage in personal and corporate worship.
- _____ 5. I have a firm foundation in Biblical truth concerning worship.

Section III: Personal Assessment

- 1. I consider myself to be a biblical worshipper.
 SD D DS AS A SA
- 2. I consider myself to be a worship leader.
 SD D DS AS A SA
- 3. I am an effective worship leader.
 SD D DS AS A SA

4. I desire to know my leadership style.
SD D DS AS A SA
5. I have a strong grasp of what it means to be a biblical worshiper.
SD D DS AS A SA
6. My spiritual health directly impacts my ability to worship biblically.
SD D DS AS A SA

1. I read my Bible (check only one)

- A. more than once per day
 B. once per day
 C. several times per week
 D. once per week
 E. several times per month
 F. once per month
 G. several times per year
 H. not at all

2. I meditate on Scripture (check only one)

- A. more than once per day
 B. once per day
 C. several times per week
 D. once per week
 E. several times per month
 F. once per month
 G. several times per year
 H. not at all

3. I pray (check only one)

- A. more than once per day
 B. once per day
 C. several times per week
 D. once per week
 E. several times per month
 F. once per month
 G. several times per year
 H. not at all

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

- A. Yes
 B. No

5. I most often pray (check only one)

- ___ A. at church
- ___ B. at home
- ___ C. at school
- ___ D. other

6. I consider personal accountability with others to be a vital part of worshipping biblically.

SD D DS AS A SA

Section IV: Not to be answered during Pre Test. To be answered in the **Post Test Only**

Explain what you understand the following phrases to mean:

1. God is Spirit and those who worship must worship in Spirit and in Truth.

2. We are to love God with all of our heart, with all of our soul and with all of our mind:

3. Offering yourselves as a spiritual sacrifice is true and proper worship:

4. Unbiblical worship is not accepted by God:

5. Name at least one biblical passage concerning worship:

6. Explain the transcendence of God:

7. Explain the immanence of the God:

APPENDIX 2
CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

Biblical Theology of Worship Curriculum Evaluation Tool					
Lesson # _____ Evaluation					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The lesson is clearly relevant to the issue of biblical theology of worship.					
The material presented is biblically accurate.					
The material is theologically consistent.					
The goal of the lesson is clearly stated.					
The points of the lesson clearly support the thesis.					
The lesson contains points of practical application.					
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.					
Overall, the lesson is clear.					

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING STUDENTS WITH A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH CENTERTON AND LIFE WAY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL IN CENTERTON, ARKANSAS

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017
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The purpose of the project was to equip select students of First Baptist Centerton and Life Way Christian School in Centerton, Arkansas with a biblical theology of worship. Chapter 1 gives the context in which the project was implemented, the rationale for the project, the purpose statement of the project, the goals of the project and the research methodology used by the project. Chapter 2 includes the biblical and theological basis for equipping students with a biblical theology of worship. Chapter 3 includes the theoretical, practical, and historical issues related to equipping students with a biblical theology of worship. Chapter 4 discusses the results of the project. Chapter 5 is an evaluation of the project.

VITA

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EDUCATION

BME, Brewton Parker College, 1991

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MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Worship Pastor, Poplar Springs North Baptist Church, Dublin, Georgia, 1987-1996

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