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TRAINING THE MEN OF PROVIDENCE BIBLE FELLOWSHIP,
WEST CHESTER, OHIO TO BE SPIRITUAL LEADERS
IN THE HOME

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

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

by
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December 2015
APPROVAL SHEET

TRAINING THE MEN OF PROVIDENCE BIBLE FELLOWSHIP,
WEST CHESTER, OHIO TO BE SPIRITUAL LEADERS
IN THE HOME

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I dedicate this project to my wife, Shelby. Thank you for loving me, supporting me, and giving yourself in service to me. You have made the last twenty years a joy.
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PREFACE

This project was completed in large part due to the love and support of many people God has placed in my life. First, I am thankful that the Father introduced me to His Son when I was a young boy. He saved me and set me apart for the ministry He has now given me. Looking back, I can see His hand on me in every stage of my life in some way preparing me for what I am doing now. I am grateful for this privilege.

Second, the Lord blessed me by placing me in the care of two wonderful, godly parents, Jerry and Vicki Birdwell. Their commitment to raising their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord created the perfect atmosphere for the Lord to do His work in me. Because of them, I have always had an awareness of the gospel. Because of them, I learned to read, study, memorize, and love God’s Word. Because of their many sacrifices, I was able to pursue preparation for ministry at Southern Seminary. I praise God for their continued influence in my life.

Third, the Lord gave me the opportunity to study under many great men of faith. Though every professor has placed his mark on me in some measure, a few stand out. Dr. Bruce Ware cultivated in me a zeal for the glorious providence of God. Dr. James Hamilton taught me to read the Bible with new eyes. Dr. Stuart Scott showed me in practical terms that in Christ we have been granted all things pertaining to life and godliness. Dr. Hershael York taught me that the pulpit is no place for lazy men. Dr. Shawn Wright encouraged me to love my family enough to plant a church where they would hear God’s Word preached faithfully. To these men and others I owe a lifetime of gratitude.
Fourth, I am thankful for the privilege of serving the Lord with the body of Christ at Providence Bible Fellowship. I love these people, their zeal for God’s glory, and their appetite for God’s Word. They and the elders of the church have been gracious in supporting me throughout my theological education. They have loved me well. I am so grateful that the Lord has allowed me to plant my life among such saints.

Finally, time and language would fail me if I attempted to fully describe the blessing the Lord has given me in my wife, Shelby. I am thankful for her steadfast support through these many years of training at Southern. She has given more than anyone, including myself, to make sure that I finished this journey. Through the years of early morning and late night commutes, the countless J-terms and doctoral seminars, the widowhood that accompanies the last two weeks of every term, and the family emergencies that so often coincided with all these things, she has been my chief encourager. After twenty years of marriage and five children, she remains my favorite person on the planet and the love my life.

My hope and prayer is that this project will serve to grow me and the other men at Providence in the discipline of leading our families spiritually, that our wives and children would be blessed by it, and that God’s name would be magnified in us and in future generations.

Greg Birdwell

West Chester, Ohio
December 2015
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to train the men of Providence Bible Fellowship (PBF) in West Chester, Ohio to be spiritual leaders in the home.

Goals

The first goal of this project was to assess the understanding and practices of spiritual leadership of the men in the congregation. This assessment provided a picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the spiritual leadership in the homes represented at PBF. This goal was measured by administering a survey of the participants’ understanding and practices.¹ The goal was considered successfully met when at least 65 percent of the male members completed the survey and the survey was analyzed, yielding a clearer picture of the current understanding and practices of spiritual leadership in the home.

The second goal of this project was to develop an eight-week teaching series on male spiritual leadership. This goal was measured by a rubric used by the elders of the church to evaluate the material.² The goal was considered successfully met when 90 percent of the indicators on the rubric were at the “sufficient” or above levels.

¹See appendix 1.
²See appendix 2.
The third goal of this project was to train men to be spiritual leaders via an eight-week teaching series. This goal was measured by administering a post-series survey of the understanding and practice of spiritual leadership principles by the men in the congregation. This goal was considered successfully met when the t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive significant difference between the pre and post-series scores.

**Context of the Ministry Project**

The ministry project took place in the context of Providence Bible Fellowship in West Chester, Ohio. Three factors related to the ministry context at PBF were relevant to this project. First, PBF had a strong disposition toward complementarianism. The church was planted in March of 2008 with an emphasis on expositional preaching and biblical theology. The first sermon series in the life of the church was an exposition of the book of Ephesians, which gave the opportunity to lay a strong foundation for complementarianism. The messages on Ephesians 5:22-6:4 made the case that a man should function as the shepherd of his home, exercising loving leadership in the lives of his wife and children. In the course of preaching and teaching since then, there were numerous other opportunities to reinforce that teaching.

The initial appeal of the church plant was the attention to Scripture and the emphasis on conservative theology. As a result, the predominant attitude of the men and women in the congregation was favorable towards complementarianism. Generally

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3See appendix 1.
speaking, the men recognized their responsibility to lead their families, and their wives wanted them to do so.

Second, the great majority of the men in the congregation were in phases of life that biblically required them to exercise spiritual leadership on a daily basis, but they did not understand how to do so. Eighty-nine percent of the men in the congregation were married. Eighty percent were married with children; 61 percent were married with children still living at home. Of those men married with children at home, 68 percent were twenty to thirty-nine years old. In other words, almost 70 percent were in the heart of their childrearing years.

The inability to lead spiritually was expressed in different ways. The older married men in the congregation, those fifty years of age and older, married with no children at home, seemed to have developed longstanding bad habits in the way they related to their wives. The wives of several of these men had individually approached the elders expressing discouragement over their husbands’ lack of initiative in leading them spiritually. While each of the men would have recognized the biblical mandate to lead, they seemed to hold a misunderstanding of what that looked like in everyday life. In general, they tended to be overbearing husbands, lording their authority over their wives. They exercised authority, but not in a loving way and not out of a concern for their wives’ spiritual health.

In a general sense, the situation was different with the younger married men. They not only recognized their responsibility to lead their families, but they desired to do so in a Christ-like way. They wanted to love their wives as Christ loved the church and to raise their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, yet they simply were
not equipped to do so. Many had a vague sense of what it should look like, but nothing firmly crystallized. In summary, most of the men in the congregation were in phases of life that required them to exercise spiritual leadership, but they did not fully understand what that meant.

Third, the men’s ministry had never made an effort in the direction of training in spiritual leadership. At any one time, there were several opportunities for men to engage in studies with other men and enjoy fellowship together, but most of the studies completed were more theological in nature, leaving application to be born out of the group discussion. No study had ever focused on the theology of male spiritual leadership or the practical disciplines involved in leading one’s family. This led to a situation where there were men with an above average understanding of theology that had not translated into godlier homes.

**Rationale for the Project**

The three contextual factors above indicated that Providence Bible Fellowship was ripe for an intentional effort to train men to be spiritual leaders. First, because the congregation was already sympathetic towards complementarianism, they understood the biblical necessity of male spiritual leadership. Therefore, I had no need to sell the church on the project. This congregation already desired to be biblical in this area. They simply needed to be equipped for it. This project equipped them.

Second, because the vast majority of the men in the congregation were in seasons of life requiring them to lead spiritually, this project provided training that immediately impacted most of the people in the church. When the relevance of the
project to the wives, children, and grandchildren were taken into account, almost everyone in the congregation benefitted in some way from this project.

Third, because there had never been an intentional effort in the men’s ministry to train men to live out the biblical principles of spiritual leadership, this project addressed what seemed to be a significant void in the biblical training available at PBF. This was a project that the congregation found immediately acceptable, beneficial, and necessary, therefore, it was of utmost importance and urgency that the project be pursued.

**Definitions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

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

*Accountability.* For this project, accountability took the form of regular meetings with other men for the purpose of asking one another to give an account of whether and how they were implementing the practices prescribed in the training.

*Complementarianism.* Complementarianism is the view that God created man and woman in his own image, equal in value and personhood, yet distinct in their roles in the home and the church.\(^5\) This equality and distinctiveness are indicated in creation and redemption.\(^6\) God has called men to the distinct role of exercising spiritual leadership in the home.

*Egalitarianism.* Egalitarianism is the view that “the Bible does not teach different roles for men and women in marriage or the church that are based on gender


alone.”⁷ According to Wayne Grudem, egalitarians hold that “there is no unique leadership role that belongs to the husband in marriage, and that all governing and teaching roles in the church should be open to both men and women alike.”⁸

_Spiritual disciplines._ Donald Whitney defines spiritual disciplines as “those personal and corporate disciplines that promote spiritual growth.”⁹ Accountability, Bible intake, prayer, and worship were the spiritual disciplines emphasized in this project.

_Spiritual leadership._ This project used John Piper’s definition of spiritual leadership as “knowing where God wants people to be and taking the initiative to use God's methods to get them there in reliance on God's power.”¹⁰ Where God wants people to be is in a spiritual condition and lifestyle that glorifies Him. “Therefore, the goal of spiritual leadership is that people come to know God and to glorify him in all that they do.”¹¹

Two limitations applied to this project. First, the accuracy of the pre and post-series surveys were dependent upon the willingness of the respondents to be honest about their spiritual leadership practices. To mitigate this limitation, the respondents were promised that their answers would remain anonymous. Second, the effectiveness of the training was limited by the consistency of attendance. If the participants did not attend all

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⁸Ibid.


¹¹Ibid.
of the teaching series, it would have been difficult to gauge how helpful the training was. To mitigate this limitation, each week of the teaching series was posted online.

Three delimitations were placed on the project. First, the project addressed spiritual leadership in the home but not in the church. Spiritual leadership in the home included leading the family to be active in church, but the training did not address the exercise of spiritual leadership in the life of the church itself. Second, the project was confined to a twenty-week timeframe. This gave adequate time to prepare and teach the eight-week training series and to conduct the post-series survey four weeks later. Third, though women do exercise spiritual leadership over their children, this project was limited to training men to provide spiritual leadership in the lives of their wives and children.

**Research Methodology**

The research methodology for this project included a pre-series survey, a post-series survey, and an evaluation rubric. Three goals determined the effectiveness of the project. The first goal of this project was to assess the understanding and practices of spiritual leadership of the men in the congregation. At the first training session, a pre-series survey was distributed to the training participants. Each participant identified himself on the survey using a personal 4-digit code of his choice. To be included in this group, a participant had to commit to attend at least six of the eight training sessions and

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

13 See appendix 1.
to listen to any missed sessions online. To receive credit for listening to a session online, the participant had to submit a copy of the session handout completely filled out by the next session. The participant group had to include a minimum of 24 men.

The pre-series survey sought to determine two things about each participant. First, it assessed his awareness and conviction regarding the biblical principles of spiritual leadership. This section included questions about relevant biblical passages, the man’s role in marriage, and the father’s role in the home. Second, the survey assessed what practices the participant utilized in leading his family spiritually. This portion of the survey included questions regarding his personal devotional life, accountability relationships, and family worship. The first goal was successfully met when 65 percent of the men in the congregation completed the survey and the survey was analyzed, yielding a clearer picture of the current understanding and practices.\(^\text{14}\)

The second goal was to develop an eight-week teaching series on male spiritual leadership in the home. The series consisted of eight one-hour sessions dealing with such topics as the biblical basis for male spiritual leadership, the essential role of personal spiritual disciplines, the importance of accountability relationships, the man’s role as the shepherd of the home, setting a climate of worship in the home, and practical ways that a husband and father leads. The curriculum was submitted to the eldership for approval in the eight weeks prior to the beginning of the series. This goal was measured by a rubric used by the elders to evaluate the material.\(^\text{15}\) The rubric led the elders to evaluate the series primarily based upon its fidelity to Scripture and its clarity,

\(^\text{14}\)A 65 percent benchmark will equal approximately 25 men.
\(^\text{15}\)See appendix 2.
thoroughness, and practicality. If less than 90 percent of the indicators on the rubric were scored at “sufficient” or above, the elders’ feedback would be used to modify the series, after which the material would be submitted again to the elders for approval. This process would continue until at least 90 percent of the indicators on the rubric were scored at “sufficient” or above, at which time the second goal was considered successfully met.

The third goal was to train men to be spiritual leaders via the eight-week teaching series. The series took place on consecutive Saturday mornings. The sessions began with prayer and the teaching lasted approximately one hour. The first session emphasized the significance of accountability relationships to the task of spiritual leadership. The men were asked to join with one or two other men for the purpose of accountability at least every other week throughout the duration of the teaching series. The accountability groups served to help the men to incorporate the practices taught in the series into their homes.

At the end of the series, the men were exhorted to commit to continue using the spiritual leadership practices in their homes and to submit to continued meetings with their accountability partners. On the fourth Saturday after the final week of the training, there was a follow-up session that accomplished two purposes. First, it gave the men an opportunity to share the ways in which life in their homes had changed, what they were doing well, and what still needed work. Second, the men took a post-series survey, which was the instrument by which this third goal was measured. Only those who completed a pre-series survey and who attended all 8 training sessions, up to 2 of which may have been viewed via internet download, were invited to take the post-series survey. Each
participant was asked to identify himself on the post-series survey using the same 4-digit code he used on the pre-series survey. Like the initial survey, the post-series survey assessed each participant’s current understanding and practices related to spiritual leadership in the home.

A t-test for dependent samples was used to determine if there was a positive significant difference between the pre-series and post-series scores. Neil Salkind explains that a t-test for dependent samples “involves a comparison of the means from each group of scores and focuses on the differences between the scores.” Since this project involved a single group of the same subjects being surveyed under two conditions, a t-test of dependent samples was the appropriate test statistic. The third goal was considered successfully met when the t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive significant difference between the pre-series and post-series scores.

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16 See appendix 1.


18 Ibid., 189.
CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR
MALE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

The modern Christian man finds himself in a culture where egalitarianism is considered the virtuous norm and complementarianism is an archaic form of oppression. On college campuses, expressing a traditional understanding of gender roles is considered hate speech.¹ Even among confessing Christians like Tony Jones, the concept of male spiritual leadership is “biblically, theologically, and culturally untenable and downright disgusting.”² In such a hostile climate, it is incumbent upon the Christian man to hold with clarity and conviction to what God alone has called him to be.

This chapter will explicate the biblical and theological basis for male spiritual leadership in the home, demonstrating that the Bible teaches that a Christian man is equipped by the gospel and instructed by the Scriptures to lead his family toward spiritual maturity. An exploration of five biblical passages will support this thesis. First, exegesis of portions of Genesis 2-3 will show that male spiritual leadership was God’s original design for mankind, but a failure in this leadership led to the Fall, impeding all men’s ability to lead their families well. This treatment will be coupled with exegesis of Ephesians 2:1-10, which will show that the gospel frees man from this incapacitation and enables him to walk in obedience in all areas of life including the area of spiritual leadership in the home.


Second, exegesis of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 will reveal that man is instructed by God to lead his family by establishing God as the sole object of worship in his own life and in the home. Third, exegesis of Ephesians 5:25-33 will show that a husband is called to lead his wife by sacrificially loving her and caring for her spiritual and physical needs. Finally, exegesis of Ephesians 6:4 will demonstrate that a father is instructed to raise his children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. These passages do not exhaust the Bible’s material on this issue, but do provide broad support for the concept of male spiritual leadership in the home.

The Why and How of Equipping for Male Leadership

A theological reading of Genesis 2-3 demonstrates that male spiritual leadership was God’s original plan, but that man’s failure to follow God’s design resulted in man’s permanent inability to lovingly lead his wife. Ephesians 2:1-10 outlines what God has done in Christ to reverse this curse. Together, these two portions of Scripture demonstrate why man needs to be equipped for the task of spiritual leadership in the home and how the gospel provides this equipping.

The Effect of the Fall on Male Leadership

In Genesis 2-3, there is laid a foundation for understanding man’s primary problem regarding his ability to lead spiritually. It is not merely that leadership does not come naturally to him. Rather, because of his rejection of God’s design for the family, he is bent against lovingly leading his family.

The establishment of God’s design. Several features of the text of Genesis 2 indicate that male spiritual leadership in the home was God’s design from before the Fall. First, the man was created before the woman. Genesis 2:7 reads, “Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed in his nostrils the breath of life, and
the man became a living creature.”³ Genesis 2:15-17 then reveals that God placed the man in the garden “to work it and keep it.” First Timothy 2:11-13 confirms that the order of creation is a significant indication of God’s plan for male leadership. There Paul requires that women “learn quietly with all submissiveness,” not exercising authority over a man. One of the reasons given for this injunction is that “Adam was formed first, then Eve.” Additionally, the significance of birth order throughout the Bible and especially in Genesis would indicate that the order of creation is not inconsequential. As George Knight points out, in a sense, man was the firstborn of the two; therefore, he was given “the right and responsibility of leadership in the family.”⁴

Second, that male spiritual leadership was God’s original design follows from the fact that God gave his very first commandment to the man. This is recorded in Genesis 2:16-17: “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’” It is likely the case that the man then gave instruction to the woman regarding this law as she was able in 3:3 to quote the law and the consequences for breaking it.

Adam’s reception of God’s law and subsequent instruction to his wife is similar to Moses’ reception of the law and later instruction to Israel in Exodus. God gave the law directly to Moses in Exodus 20-31 both orally and in the form of the two stone tablets, commanding him to teach it to the people (Deut 4:14). Moses then obeyed, passing the law on to the people beginning in Exodus 35. Moses’ reception of the law carried the automatic responsibility to convey that law to the people of God. That this same responsibility applies to the relationship between a husband and wife seems to be

³Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version.

validated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35a: “The women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home.” Here, Paul connects the woman’s role of submission to the role of learning from her husband. This implies that the headship and submission roles of marriage include the tasks of teaching and learning, respectively. It could be argued then that male headship and female submission are indicated by man’s reception of the law of God and his subsequent passing of that law to the woman.

Third, that male spiritual leadership in the home was God’s design before the Fall is indicated in that God made the woman for the man. Genesis 2:18 reads, “Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a helper fit for him.’” Bruce Waltke comments that the word “helper” in this context suggests that while the man and woman are dependent upon one another, the man has “governmental authority.”

Some may deny male headship and female subordination based upon the fact that the term “helper” (עֵזֶר) is repeatedly used of God in the Old Testament (Exod 18:4; Pss 20:2; 33:20; 70:5; 115:9-11; 121:1-2; 146:5). If God is the “helper” of man, then one might assume that this word could not possibly indicate a role of subordination. However, it is the context that must determine how the word should be understood. In those instances where God is described as a “helper” it is clear that his role is one of a stronger being helping a weaker one. However, the context of Genesis 2:18 makes it


unlikely that the woman’s role as a helper should be understood in the same way. Rather, the text points to her role as being one who assists a loving leader.⁸ Indeed, the New Testament affirms this understanding in 1 Corinthians 11:9, where Paul notes that man was not created for woman, “but woman for man.” He asserts this in support of the notion that wives are under the authority of their husbands. That the woman was created to be a helper to the man indicates that male spiritual leadership was God’s design from the beginning.

Fourth, it is clear that God intended male spiritual leadership in the home because the woman was made from the man. Genesis 2:21-22 reads, “So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.” Again, 1 Corinthians 11 provides the divine perspective on this. Paul teaches that the “head of a wife is her husband” (11:3) and that “woman is the glory of man” (11:7). He supports this point by noting that “man was not made from woman, but woman from man” (11:8).

Fifth, that man named woman indicates that male spiritual leadership was God’s design from the beginning. After God had created the woman from the rib taken from the man’s side and brought the woman to the man, the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man” (Gen 2:23). Later, in 3:20 the man “called his wife’s name Eve.” According to Waltke, this two-fold naming of the woman implies man’s authority over the woman. “In ancient times, the authority to name implied authority to govern.”⁹ That the initial naming of the woman took place before the Fall in Genesis 3 indicates that it

⁸Knight, “The Family and the Church,” 87.
⁹Waltke, Genesis, 89.
was God’s original design for man to assume the role of spiritual leader with the wife as his submissive helper.¹⁰

Each of these features of the Genesis 2 narrative reveals a clear difference of role between the man and the woman. From the beginning man was called to bear the responsibility of headship, while the wife was called to be the man’s perfectly suitable helper.¹¹ This was intended to be the normal relationship between the man and the wife. Male spiritual leadership in the home is God’s ideal.

However, Genesis 3 shows how man was rendered incapable of following this design after the entrance of sin into the world. Throughout the chapter, the reader encounters attacks on God’s design, the collective failure of man and woman to follow God’s design, and sins’ dark consequences for God’s design.

**Attack on God’s design.** It appears from the serpent’s tactic that God’s design for male leadership was implicitly under attack. While on the surface of the narrative the serpent obviously is intent upon causing the woman to question the goodness and authority of God, by approaching the woman instead of the man he is also attempting to turn God’s design on its head. The serpent’s interaction was solely with the woman while God’s interaction in the previous chapter was solely with the man. There is a sense in which the serpent worked in the opposite direction that God did. God gave the law regarding the forbidden fruit to the man and entrusted him with passing it on to the woman. The serpent brought temptation to violate the law to the woman and entrusted her with passing it on to the man. What God had established in placing the man in a position of authority over the woman the serpent disregarded by approaching the woman instead of the man.


¹¹Knight, “The Family and the Church,” 81.
Failure to follow God’s design. Not only was God’s design attacked by the approach of the serpent, but the man and woman also disregarded it. Their actions represent a reversal of the roles given to them in Genesis 2.\textsuperscript{12} When the woman was approached by the serpent, she entertained his questions without consulting her husband. Upon hearing the serpent’s contradiction of God’s word, she deliberated in her own mind, not heeding the human authority that God has placed in her life, her husband. Verse 6 reads, “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate…” She allowed her own mind and her own judgment to be her guide.\textsuperscript{13}

On the other hand, the man passively stood by and watched all this take place, for the text indicates in verse 6 that he was “with her.” It is striking that as the serpent approached the woman, questioned her, and accused God of deception and evil motives there is not one word recorded from the mouth of the man. He said nothing to counter the serpents lies. He said nothing to help his wife reason through the situation and deal with the temptation. He gave no direction or leadership to her. Even worse, when she offered him a bite of the sinful fruit, he followed her: “and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate” (3:6).

While the explicit sin of both was eating the forbidden fruit, underlying this outward action was a motive to subvert the authority of God’s design. That God considered Adam’s acquiescence to his wife to be a component of his disobedience is clear from God’s words to Adam in 3:17: “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree . . . cursed is the ground because of you.” The sin was not only eating of the tree but also listening to the voice of his wife, that is, following instead

\textsuperscript{12}Knight, “The Family and the Church,” 107.

of leading. Adam did not provide the loving leadership that God intended when he gave the woman to him.

Likewise, that Eve’s sin included her usurpation of her husband’s authority can be inferred from the nature of the penalty for her sin: “Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you” (3:16). A more detailed discussion of this verse will follow, but even a surface reading indicates that the penalty for her sin was that her husband would now lord his authority over her. This penalty is appropriate because the woman usurped the man’s rightful authority over her. Were it not her intent to violate God’s design for the male-female relationship this penalty would not make any logical sense, but would appear to be completely arbitrary. The outward act of eating the forbidden fruit was rooted in their sinful dispositions toward God’s design for their relationship. Victor Hamilton writes, “Hers is a sin of initiative. His is a sin of acquiescence.”

The text of Genesis 3 gives other subtle indications that lying under the surface is the important issue of God-designed gender roles. First, the timing of the effects of the sin indicates that though the woman led, it was the man’s actions that were decisive in bringing about the Fall. Verses 6 and 7 read,

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

The woman ate first but it was only after the man ate that the eyes of both were opened and they knew that they were naked. The woman’s eyes were not even opened until the man ate. Second, that God approached the man first following their sin implies that God viewed the man as primarily responsible for the violation. “But the LORD God called to

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15Knight, “The Family and the Church,” 107.
the man and said to him, ‘Where are you? . . . Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?’” (3:9-11). Throughout the Lord’s words in these verses, he consistently uses 2nd person masculine singular pronouns. His words are addressed specifically to the man even though it was the woman who led in the act of sinning. As Umberto Cassuto writes, “The man was the first to be tried because the primary responsibility rested upon him.” While the serpent, the man, and the woman all sought to subvert the design of God, the events following the sin show that his design was still the measuring stick by which the actions of all were being evaluated.

**Sin’s consequences for God’s design.** While the consequences of man’s fall into sin were numerous, one pertained directly to the ongoing difficulty that man and woman would experience in adhering to God’s design for gender roles. It was included in the Lord’s words to the woman in 3:16b: “Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.” The first clause is a difficult one. Some have taken “desire” to refer to the woman’s sexual appetite, understanding the consequence to be that due to the Fall a woman’s sexual desire may cause her to allow herself to be exploited by men.17

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However, there is a better way to understand the clause. The Hebrew word “desire” (תְּשׁוּקָה) is found extremely infrequently in the Old Testament. It is used only two other times, once in 4:7 and once in Song of Solomon 7:11. Its usage in 4:7 is instructive because of the close parallel with 3:16. In 4:7, the Lord says to Cain, “…sin is crouching at the door. Its desire (תְּשׁוּקָה) is for you, but you must rule over it.” Sin “desired” Cain in the sense that it sought to master or dominate him.18

The proximity of these two uses and the striking resemblance of the two verses in which they are found indicate that the writer intended for the word to be assigned the same meaning in both occasions.19 The woman would desire to master her husband in the same way that sin desired to master Cain. As a result of sin, she would naturally reject her God-given role of submissive helper in favor of a role of dominance over her husband.

If this were the totality of the effect of sin on the relationship between man and woman, the fallen woman might consider it a blessing rather than a curse. After all, in a sense it merely made permanent the selfish desire that she exhibited when she led her husband into sin. However, the second clause in 3:16b shows that while this desire would become ingrained in her heart, it would be a desire constantly thwarted by her husband: “…and he shall rule over you.” Therein lies the great punishment for the woman. Sin resulted in male dominance, not the loving male leadership instituted by God in chapter two.20 So the penalty seems to be a measure for measure response: because the woman sought to lead her husband regarding the forbidden fruit, she would now be subservient to her husband.21

19Waltke, Genesis, 94.
20Ibid.
21Cassuto, From Adam to Abraham, 165.
Therefore, one of the consequences of the Fall was an ongoing struggle for dominance between a husband and wife in marriage. Instead of exhibiting the caring headship and leadership ordained by God, man would “rule” over his wife. Conversely, rather than following her husband as a submissive helper, the woman would “desire” to master her husband.22 Woven through their sin nature would be the desire to strain against God’s good design for them. The harmony of the garden would be replaced by the strife of the wild.

The effects of sin would plague not only the first man and woman, but would also be passed down to all who would come after them. Ungodly male leadership and female usurpation can be read throughout the biblical narrative in the marriages of the patriarchs, the judges, and the kings of Israel. From Abraham’s “sister lie” in Genesis 12 to Delilah’s domination of Sampson in Judges 16, man abused his authority over woman and woman asserted herself over man. The Old Testament demonstrates that a return to the ideal of Eden would require a drastic change in the nature of humankind. That drastic change is the subject of Ephesians 2:1-10.

**The Gospel Equips Man to Lead**

Ephesians 2:1-10 teaches that through God’s work in Christ on man’s behalf on the cross, he freed man from his slavery to sin and enabled him to live a life of godliness. Though the entrance of sin into the world resulted in man’s inability to abide by God’s law or please him in any way, God himself made a provision through Christ for the reversal of this curse. Man no longer has to live the failure of the first Adam. The passage’s pertinence to the subject at hand is profound: through the gospel, God provided a solution to the darkness of Genesis 3, freeing the husband and wife from their struggle against one another and enabling them to return to God’s design for their relationship.

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22Knight, “The Family and the Church,” 346.
Man’s predicament. First, in verses 1-3 Paul gives an exposition of man’s natural condition:

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

These first three verses represent an anacoluthon. That is, the section is not grammatically related to the rest of the passage. A grammatical subject and finite verb do not appear until verse 4. The grammar of the verses in the original text leaves the reader in suspense, waiting for the resolution of a finite main verb. This grammatical device serves to build the suspense created by the subject matter itself. The three verses contain a sustained, grammatically unresolved account of man’s condition after the fall. As each phrase is piled onto the one before it, the darkness of man’s state seems blacker and blacker, so that the reader wants a theological resolution as well as a grammatical one.

The first assertion in verse 1 is that man is dead in his trespasses and sins. The choice of the word “dead” to describe man’s natural condition is theologically significant. It speaks to man’s complete spiritual helplessness and depravity. Just as a physically dead person cannot perform any function or communicate in any way, so also the spiritually dead person is unable to respond to God or make any effort toward him. Spiritual death denotes a state of alienation or separation from God caused by man’s transgressions and sins.

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23The opening phrase (Καὶ ἢμᾶς ὅντας νεκροῖς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἢμῶν) is a participial phrase with a string of subordinated clauses attached to it.

24Paul makes his theological statements in this section in terms of how they pertain to the recipients, predominantly using 2nd person plural pronouns. He is describing the former state of the recipients before their salvation in Christ. Because these things are true of all men prior to salvation, it is appropriate to discuss them in universal terms.

This condition is explained further in the following two verses through two nearly synonymous descriptions. The first description is in verse 2, which describes man’s natural state as walking in sin. “The trespasses and sin in which you once walked” refers to a lifestyle of sin, as “walked” (περιπατέω) is a common New Testament metaphor for a pattern of living. So the natural man lives a lifestyle of habitual sin. Paul then reveals two ungodly influences exacerbating and capitalizing on this sinful inclination: the world and the devil. Not only does man follow after the sinful pattern of the world, but he also follows after the supernatural ruler of this world. This indicates that as a result of sin, man has been separated from God and has joined the side of the serpent. Contrary to God’s design in which man served as his servant and representative in the world, sin has effected a reversal so that man serves the serpent as a representative of the fallen world.

The second description is in verse 3, which portrays man’s natural state as living in the passions of the flesh. This is similar to the previous description in that both depict a lifestyle of sin and rebellion against God. They differ only in the active influences mentioned. Whereas verse 2 depicted man following the world and the devil, verse 3 depicts man following his own lusts. The description of the devil in verse 2 as “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience” may give the impression that man’s relationship with the devil was one of slave and master. Perhaps, man does the bidding of the devil against his will. However, verse 3 demonstrates that if man does the bidding of the devil it is because it coincides with his own sinful desires. In other words, verses 2-3 together depict man’s sinful state as a delightful slavery. If man is enslaved, it is not against his will, but in accordance with it.

Therefore, man has three influences working against him, two external and one internal. He has a sinful nature, slavery to his own passions, working within to prevent
him from turning to God. He has the world and the devil, working from without to prevent him from turning to God. He is unable and unwilling to obey God, to listen to God, or to repent of sin.

Further, Paul reveals, man is by nature a child of wrath. That is, because of sin man stands condemned before God. According to Peter O’Brien, the expression “children of wrath” is a Hebraism that means “worthy to receive divine judgment.” Paul indicates that this is true of all mankind.

Thus, the first three verses of the passage give a statement of man’s natural condition—spiritual death, which is characterized by three things. First, man walks in sin according to the pattern of the world, following the ruler of the world. Second, he lives in the lusts of the flesh, doing whatever sinful acts his mind and body craves. Finally, he is headed for the wrath of God due to his sin. Paul uses this anacoluthon to paint a striking picture of man’s depravity and inability to do anything to help himself. This section provides the context for the main point of the passage, preparing the reader to accept the fact that salvation is completely the work of the Lord without any assistance from the will of man.

**God’s solution.** The grammatical subject “God” finally appears in verse 4, with the main verbs following in verses 5-6: “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” The major assertion of the passage is found in three verbs in these verses. God made humans alive, raised them up, and seated them with him. All three actions are gracious acts of God by which he

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reversed their former condition. Thus, with the grammatical resolution provided in these verses comes also the theological resolution of man’s plight of sin.

Paul’s first point—that God made the believer “alive together with Christ”—shows that God’s first task was to bring man to life, a reversal of the former state described in verses 1-3. Just as Paul was careful to describe all of the blessings of God outlined in the first chapter of Ephesians as coming “in Christ,” so here he shows that God’s saving work is accomplished via the sinner’s association and participation in and with Christ.

The second and third points come in quick succession in verse 6: God “raised us up with him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” That man was raised up with Christ refers to a positional resurrection and not to a future, physical resurrection. By virtue of its connection to Christ’s resurrection, the power that raised him is also at work in the new believer. That the believer has been seated with Christ in the heavenly places shows the extent of God’s love in that not only did He make man alive with Christ and raise him up with Christ, but He also seated him with Christ. This speaks to the inheritance that is now the believer’s by adoption into God’s family.

After showing that salvation is God’s work alone, Paul then declares in verse 7 that salvation is ultimately for the glory of God. The goal of salvation is encompassed in the purpose clause, “So that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” The reason that God made the believer alive, raised him up, and seated him with Christ is so that He might show the surpassing riches of his grace in the coming ages.


28 Eph 1:11,14,18; 5:5.
Having explained God’s work in salvation in verses 4-7, Paul moves on in verses 8-10 to give a ground for the main point of verse 7:

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

If Paul’s main point is that salvation serves to bring glory to the Father, these verses demonstrate how that is the case. God receives all the glory for man’s salvation because the whole of salvation is a gift of God. Man contributes nothing.

Leaving no place for ambiguity, in verse 9 Paul continues to flesh out the nature of salvation by grace, that is, that salvation is “not a result of works.” The idea is that the components of salvation do not come from man (2:8), nor do they result from what man does (2:9a). A final reason for this is “so that no one may boast.” For God to receive all the glory, the redemption of man must be His work alone. There can be no reason for any man to boast.

The first phrase in verse 10 gives a quick summary of the passage: “for we are his workmanship.” Redeemed man is the product of the work of his hands. Paul then introduces the good conduct which should result from God’s work in believers’ lives and takes away any credit they might claim for those good works: “created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” This clause explains what it means for man to be God’s workmanship. Not only has he saved the believer, but even the good works for which he has created man are the product of his own hand.

Paul uses the entire passage to communicate the idea that salvation is God’s work for God’s glory. Verses 1-3 shows Paul painting a grim picture of spiritual death, 

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28The antecedent of “this” (τοῦτο) is most often considered to be “faith” (πίστεως). However, the difference in gender will not allow this. It is more likely that the pronoun refers to the entire preceding clause, so that the entire work of salvation is not of man, but is a gift of God.
in which man has been completely incapacitated and cannot respond to God. Verses 4-7 describe God’s actual work in making the believer alive, raising him up, and seating him with Christ in the heavenly places. Finally, in verses 8-10 Paul describes the nature of salvation by grace, a salvation that is a gift given without regard to the works of man.

This passage provides a powerful answer to the dilemma of Genesis 3. Sin left man in a state of inability and disinclination to relate to God or obey God. But God through Christ has reversed that state. The believer is no longer spiritually dead, but spiritually alive. There is now a new ability and new inclination to relate to God and obey God. Ephesians 2:1-10 gives the proper result of God’s work—that Christians would walk in good works—and the proper motive for obedience—that God would be glorified. This has profound implications for the power struggle that sin brought about between a husband and wife. God has brought freedom from the inherent desires of husbands and wives to dominate one another. Because of the gospel they are able to walk in the roles God originally designed for them.

**Establishing Worship in the Home**

For the man, that role includes lovingly leading his family by establishing God as the sole object of worship in the home. In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses sought to motivate the people to keep the Torah. Deuteronomy 4:6-9 demonstrates that fathers of households were charged with making this happen.\(^\text{30}\) All of the imperatives in the passage are addressed to the masculine “you,” meaning that Moses directed this responsibility to the fathers. That the forms are singular points to the fact that Moses is not speaking to an abstract group of fathers but to each individual father.\(^\text{31}\) Responsibility for establishing

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\(^\text{31}\) Ibid., 37.
the worship of Yahweh in the home fell upon the heads of households. The passage divides this responsibility into a three-fold task. The head of a household must love God alone with all of his being, focus his heart on the Word of God, and teach his family to do the same.

Loving God Alone

A man’s first task in establishing God as the sole object of worship in the home is to address his own spiritual health by seeking to love God alone with all of his being. The first verse of the passage establishes God as the only appropriate object of worship: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one” (Deut 6:4). This represents a major concern of the early chapters of Deuteronomy, which is to remind the people that Yahweh alone is God and the worship of any other gods is forbidden.\(^{32}\) The text is called the Shema as *shema* is the imperatival form of “hear.”\(^{33}\) Yet, the imperative is not merely a call to “hear” in a literal sense. To hear is to obey. Eugene Merrill writes, “To hear God without putting into effect the command is not to hear him at all.”\(^{34}\) So this first verse of the passage is a call to men to obey Yahweh as the one and only true God.

This truth is the ground for the exhortations that follow, beginning with verse 5: “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and

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\(^{32}\)While some have argued that the statement declares the unity of God, several contextual factors indicate that God’s uniqueness or exclusivity is in mind. First, in 4:32-40, Moses calls the people to consider the events of the exodus and what those events say about Yahweh: “The LORD is God; there is no other beside him” (4:35b). This proclamation is given as the basis for the command, “you shall keep his statutes and his commandments” (4:40a). Second, the first two commandments of the Decalogue in chap. 5 relate to the exclusivity of Yahweh. Third, in the verses following 6:4-9, he calls the people to “take care lest you forget the LORD. . . . You shall not go after other gods . . . for the LORD you God in your midst is a jealous God” (6:12-15). Fourth, the theme continues in chapter 7 as the people are commanded to utterly destroy the people of the land so as to prevent them from turning the sons of Israel from following Yahweh to serve other gods (7:1-5).


with all your might.” That Yahweh alone is God leads to the demand that he be recognized as such by obedience, which is construed as love. In Deuteronomy, the term “love” has a special meaning of loyalty. To love him is to obey him alone, and to obey him is to love him alone. For this reason, Merrill writes that a man is called to love God with all his “essence and expression.”

**Focusing on the Word**

How this was to be accomplished in the man’s life is the subject of 6:6: “And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.” “These commandments” is a phrase that refers to the whole body of covenant stipulations, but which is especially reflected in the Shema of verses 4-5. Verse 6 is a command to constantly reflect on these words. The man should meditate on them so that his obedience would be born not out of legalism, but rather love and understanding.

Psalm 119 gives expression to how a mind set on the Word of God results in a heart that loves and wants to obey God. Verses 97-104 show the interlocking elements of meditation on the Scriptures, love for and understanding of the truth, and the desire to be faithful:

Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day. Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts. I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word. I do not turn aside from your rules, for you have taught me. How

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35 The trio of prepositional phrases—“with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might”—indicates that this love of God must be the focus of the totality of one’s being. In Old Testament anthropology, the heart is the seat of the intellect, the soul is the seat of the will and emotions, and the might represents physical strength and material means.


37 Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 164.

38 Ibid., 167.

sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. (Ps 119:97-104)

If a man would establish God as the sole object of worship in the home, he must first love and obey God alone, which is a result of fixing his attention on the Scriptures.

**Leading the Family to Worship**

The final verses of the passage broaden the responsibility of the man by placing upon him the task of inculcating these same things into the lives of his family. That is, exclusive worship of Yahweh and constant reflection on his word was to be accompanied by passing these things on to those in his household. Verse 7 reads, “You shall teach them diligently to your children, 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.” Merrill comments on the figurative language behind “teach them diligently”:

The covenant recipient must impress the words of covenant faith into the thinking of his children by inscribing them there with indelible sharpness and precision. The image is that of the engraver of a monument who takes hammer and chisel in hand and with painstaking care etches a text into the face of a solid slab of granite. The sheer labor of such a task is daunting indeed, but once done the message is there to stay.40

The way that this impression is made permanent is by constant repetition. For worship and love of God to spread widely in Israel required that the parents teach God’s laws to the children and for the adults to speak of them among themselves.41 While the language of verse 7 is hyperbolic, the intent is clear that the man’s education of his family in the law of God was to be a primary focus of his life. Verses 8-9 give additional figurative expression to the centrality of the covenant to daily life: “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”42

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40Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 167.


42Some argue that these instructions were to be followed literally for the purpose of serving as
The Shema is not only a significant tenet of Old Testament Judaism, but also serves as a major imperative for the New Testament church. In Matthew 22:34-38, when Jesus was asked by Pharisees and Sadducees which was the greatest commandment of the law, he recited Deuteronomy 6:5, saying, “this is the great and first commandment.” That Deuteronomy 6:4-9 played a prominent role in the formation of New Testament theology is evident from the apostles’ numerous allusions to and quotations from it (Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:27; John 17:3; Rom 3:29-30; 1 Cor 8:4-6; Gal 3:20; Eph 4:4-6; 1 Tim 2:5; Jas 2:19; Jude 1:25). Additionally, the apostles reiterated the idea of the father as the spiritual leader of the home via repeated exhortations to the Christian man to lead his wife and children in the things of the Lord. For this reason, Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is rightly considered a pivotal text for the Christian man in his understanding of his God-given role in the home. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 instructs a man to lead his family by establishing God as the sole object of worship in the home.

**Lovingly Leading His Wife**

The New Testament gives much instruction to the man regarding his responsibility to lovingly lead his wife. One prominent passage is Ephesians 5:25-33, which builds upon the spirit of the Shema and directs the Christian husband back to God’s original plan for the relationship between a man and wife. It instructs a man to lead his wife by sacrificially loving her and caring for her spiritual and physical needs.

Paul founds the message of the entire passage upon the example of Christ and his loving service to the church:

> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or blemish, a constant reminder of God’s teachings. (See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 79.) However, a metaphorical meaning is more likely, given the other figurative language in the passage and surrounding context, as well as the practical impossibility of wearing frontlets in everyday life. It is best to understand these two verses as giving additional emphasis to the constancy with which the people should focus on the law of God.
wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (Eph 5:25-27)

The husband is called above all to love his wife as Christ loved the church. The character of that love is amplified in the clause, “and gave himself up for her.” This verb coupled with the reflexive pronoun indicates that Jesus took the initiative in handing himself over to death for the good of the church. ⁴³ That is, Christ, of his own volition, walked to the cross to give his all for his bride. This is the example that the Christian husband is to follow in his relationship with his bride. He is to willingly give of himself for the good of his wife. Indeed, this could be considered the essence of what it means for a husband to love his wife; it is to be ultimately committed to the good of his wife, giving all that he has and is to benefit her.

At this point, it is appropriate to consider what the ultimate good of the wife is according to this text. Paul gives an indication in his expression of the purpose for which Christ gave himself up for the church. He notes that Jesus’ sacrificial love was for the purpose of sanctifying his bride “that she might be holy and without blemish.” The ultimate good of the church is to be holy as the Lord is holy. For this Christ gave his life. Accordingly, the purpose for which Christ gave himself up for the church is instructive for the Christian husband. For a man to be committed to the good of his wife is for him to be committed to her sanctification, so committed that he will give himself up for it. ⁴⁴ The ways in which this devotion could be displayed are manifold, but Deuteronomy 6:4-9 would serve as a good picture. A man can devote himself to the spiritual well-being or sanctification of his wife by growing in his own worship of God, establishing God as the sole object of worship in the home, and leading his wife in study of God’s word. It could be said that one way for a man to walk in obedience to Ephesians 5:25-27 is to function as the pastor of his home, shepherding his wife in her relationship with the Lord.

⁴⁴Hoehner, Ephesians, 762.
While his wife’s spiritual health should be a primary concern for a Christian man, Ephesians 5:28-31 teaches that he should give himself up for every aspect of her well-being:

In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. (Eph 5:28-31)

Here Paul expands the exhortation to love by appealing to the one-flesh nature of marriage. The call to love “as their own bodies” is an application of the second great commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev 19:18; Matt 22:39). For the husband, his nearest and dearest neighbor is his wife. Yet, verse 28b is clear that this is not merely an exhortation to love his wife like he loves himself; rather, to love her is actually to love himself, for she is his body.

The strength of this exhortation lies partially in the picture of how a man cares for his own body. It would be contrary to nature for a man to not take care of his own flesh. Paul uses “nourish” and “cherish”—two terms of affection—to describe a man’s care for his own body. While this does not explicitly bring physical needs into the picture, it would be counterintuitive to understand Paul to be addressing only spiritual things. If a man is concerned with any aspect of his well-being it is certainly with his physical needs. Therefore, because the husband and wife are actually one-flesh, the husband should love his wife by looking after all of her needs just as he does his own.

To support this exhortation, Paul returns to Christ as the example. A man should care for his wife as his own body because Christ cares for the church as his own body. Earlier in Ephesians, the apostle established the imagery of Christ as the head of the church and the church as the body of Christ (1:22-23; 4:4-16). They are inextricably

\[45^{O’Brien, The Letter to the Ephesians, 426.}
\[46^{Ibid., 427.}\]
bound, and Christ demonstrates care commensurate with that union. In his care for the
needs of his wife, a man should emulate Christ, understanding that just as profoundly as
Christ has been joined with the church, he has been joined to his wife.

Paul’s quotation of Genesis 2:24 not only reminds the husband of the
theological basis for the one-flesh union, but also indicates that the instruction to love
one’s wife as Christ loved the church is the bridge back to God’s design for the marriage
relationship. Essentially, this passage calls a man to act in accordance with Genesis 2 and
contrary to the effect of the fall in Genesis 3. The man’s natural disposition that resulted
from the Fall was to “rule” over the wife, abusing his authority over her. This was an
inherently self-centered, adversarial disposition. Paul’s exhortation calls the man, enabled
by the gospel, to counter this disposition by following the selfless, loving example of
Jesus Christ.

The connection of this instruction to the gospel itself is demonstrated by verses
32-33: “This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.
However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she
respects her husband.” “This mystery” refers to the typological relationship between
marriage and Christ and the church. So while Christ’s sacrificial love for the church and
the church’s submission to Christ serve as models for the husband and wife, the
connection runs in the other direction, too. A Christian marriage is to be a picture of
Christ loving his responsive church.47

Ephesians 5:25-33 calls a man back to God’s design for the marriage
relationship first shown in Genesis 2. Following Christ’s example of self-sacrificial love
for the church, the husband is to give himself up for the good of his wife, lovingly
leading her to spiritual maturity.

Raising His Children in the Lord

A man’s call to spiritual leadership encompasses not only his relationship with his wife, but also his children. Echoes of the Shema can be heard in various New Testament passages in which the Christian man is commanded to provide spiritual leadership to the children God has placed in his home. One such passage, Ephesians 6:4, instructs a man to raise his children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Interestingly, though the previous verses command the children of the Christian family to obey their parents, both mother and father, the command of 6:4 is addressed solely to the father. It reads, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” This focus on the father coincides with both Greco-Roman and Jewish culture in which the education of children was considered primarily the father’s responsibility.\(^{48}\) The instruction is addressed to the father not only in accordance with cultural norms, but also in accordance with the Shema, which places responsibility for spiritual leadership on the male head of the household.

The instruction is composed of both a negative command and a positive command. The negative—“do not provoke your children to anger”—is perhaps intended to counter the natural sinful tendency of a father. Though the Genesis 3 narrative does not explicitly detail sin’s effect on the father-child relationship, it could be said that the man’s sinful tendency to domineer over his wife is indicative of a general tendency to abuse authority. The issue of harsh parenting by fathers was widespread enough that Paul also addresses it in Colossians 3:21, which consists solely of the negative command, adding, “. . . lest they become discouraged.” It is possible that Christian men had been influenced by the Roman doctrine of patria postestas, which gave a father absolute power over his children, including the authority to imprison them, scourge them, shame them, shame them,

sell them into slavery, and even kill them.\(^{49}\) Regardless, it appears that Christian men in the ancient church, like Christian men today, were disposed to harsh parenting, which necessitated Paul’s addressing the issue multiple times in his New Testament writings.

It is essential that fathers not provoke their children to anger. Paul’s earlier exhortations regarding anger note that prolonged anger gives the devil an opportunity to exploit the discord for his own purposes.\(^{50}\) Andrew Lincoln expounds that to prevent this, a father should avoid words and actions that would drive a child to exasperation, such as “excessively severe discipline, unreasonably harsh demands, abuse of authority, arbitrariness, unfairness, constant nagging and condemnation, subjecting a child to humiliation, and all forms of gross insensitivity to a child’s needs and sensibilities.”\(^{51}\)

The positive command, “but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord,” instructs a father to raise his children with the training and admonition that comes from the Lord. “Bring up” (ἐκτρέφω) is the same verb used of the husband’s responsibility to “nourish” his wife in 5:29. Here it is used of rearing up children to maturity.\(^{52}\) “Discipline” (παιδεία) and “instruction” (νουθεσία), although similar in concept, probably carry slightly different ideas here. The former most likely refers to education or training in a comprehensive sense, with the latter representing the aspect of training that takes place through verbal admonition and correction.\(^{53}\) “The discipline and instruction of the Lord” is the sphere in which this rearing is to take place.\(^{54}\)

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\(^{49}\) Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 795.

\(^{50}\) Köstenberger, *God, Marriage & Family*, 118.


\(^{54}\) Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 797.
For a father to bring up his children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord is to shepherd them to maturity, educating, admonishing, and correcting them according to the instruction prescribed by the Lord. Paul gives here in practical terms what the Shema pictures in figurative terms. Given Paul’s background as a “Hebrew of Hebrews” (Phil 3:5-6), he may well have been drawing on the picture in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 as he gave this instruction to fathers. The image of a father talking about the things of the Lord with his children while sitting, walking, lying down, and rising, constantly placing the Scriptures in front of them, would be an apt representation of what it means to raise one’s children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Essentially, Ephesians 6:4 places on a Christian father the same responsibility that the Shema placed on a Jewish father. It calls a man to be the primary shepherd in the lives of his children, bringing them up in the things of the Lord.

**Conclusion**

God’s design from the very beginning was for the man to be the head of his household, providing spiritual leadership for all who dwell there. He was to do this lovingly and sacrificially. Adam’s failure to heed God’s plan led to the entrance of sin into the world, the penalty for which included spiritual death and a sin nature. From Adam on, man’s existence was marked by disinclination and inability to walk in obedience to God’s law. He could not lovingly lead according to God’s design, nor did he desire to do this. A failure to lead in the garden led to a permanent inability to lead.

Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God made a provision for the reversal of this curse. In Christ, the believer has been brought from death to life and enabled to walk in obedience to God. For the Christian husband and father, this means that the gospel has removed his former inability and disinclination and has renewed the call to loving spiritual leadership in the home. The Bible teaches that a
Christian man is equipped by the gospel and instructed by the Scriptures to lead his family toward spiritual maturity.
CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED TO MALE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

The theoretical and exegetical points already made provide a framework for understanding the biblical call for a man to lead his family. They reveal the general shape of that leadership. This chapter will address the more practical elements necessary to help a man pursue leadership in his home. This does not mean that it will address strictly extra-biblical sources and ideas. As the Scriptures are fully sufficient and profitable to guide man into spiritual maturity, it would be foolish to base the practical considerations related to spiritual leadership on strictly extra-biblical material. Therefore, the content of this chapter will be drawn primarily from biblical teaching. However, extra-biblical writings will offer insights into how the Scriptures can be applied in practical ways.

Spiritual leadership in the home requires a man to know where God wants his family to be and to rely on God's methods and power to get them there.¹ This statement encapsulates five principles that will be argued in the following sections. First, spiritual leadership requires a man to know the destination to which he is leading. He must have a biblical vision for where the family is going. Second, spiritual leadership requires a man to practice personal spiritual disciplines for the purpose of his own sanctification. He cannot lead somewhere that he is not going. Third, spiritual leadership is best pursued in the context of accountability with other men. This is a journey on which he should not set out alone. Fourth, spiritual leadership requires a man to lead his family in worship in the

home. It is during these times of worship that he demonstrates and teaches love and worship of the Lord. Fifth, spiritual leadership requires a man to disciple each member of his family. Not all family members will journey toward Christlikeness at the same rate. A man must know where every family member is on that journey so that he can provide individual help along the way.

**Knowing the Destination**

It is axiomatic that in order to lead one must know the destination to which he is leading. Albert Mohler contends that conviction about where a body must go is not only a pre-requisite for leadership, but it also is part of how leaders actually lead: “they make decisions and chart a direction.” Consequently, when there is no clear direction, no conviction about where a body should go, it could be said that leadership is not merely weak, but nonexistent. This is never truer than in leadership of the family. Spiritual leadership in the home requires a man to have a biblical vision for where his family is going.

Failure by men to lead their families can be traced to the absence of the crucial element of direction. Many have recognized a pervasive failure among men to lead in the family, but few have recognized that the main problem is a lack of biblical direction. Numerous Christian resources in recent decades have issued the call for men to rise up and lead their families spiritually, yet they have offered no biblical vision of where these families are to go. A prime example is *Point Man*, by Steve Farrar. Farrar rightly warns that the devil has declared war on the biblical family. He notes that Satan’s strategy is

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two-fold: (1) to alienate and sever a husband’s relationship with his wife; and (2) to alienate and sever a father’s relationship with his children.\textsuperscript{5} He demonstrates the effectiveness of this strategy by citing statistics regarding rising rates of divorce, unwed pregnancy, and teen sexual activity.\textsuperscript{6} He concludes that the typical Christian family is trying to survive this war without a point man. This is all true. Farrar proceeds to outline the activities that a man must engage in if he is to lead his family well.

Yet, in this offering of over 250 pages, he writes nothing about the destination to which the man should lead his family. The result is a book that gives many tasks to perform with no real place to go. To use Farrar’s own war metaphor, his book provides small unit tactics with no clear strategic objective.

The big picture is needed. If men are going to understand where God would have them to lead their families, they must understand where God is leading history. Their vision for their families will only have true biblical purpose as it coincides with God’s vision for all things.\textsuperscript{7} God has a plan for the ages, that spells out His ultimate aim for all things and He has graciously record it in the Scriptures. Michael Wilder comments that God

created Adam and Eve to multiply and to fill the earth (Gen 1:26-28) so that the dry lands would be covered with God’s glory (Isa 11:9; Hab 2:14). He blessed the family of Abraham so that, one day, the nations would be able to sing his praises (Gen 12:1-3)...so that children yet unborn and nations yet unknown would ascribe glory to their Redeemer and King.\textsuperscript{8}

Mohler agrees: the overarching biblical narrative, this story of “God’s determination to glorify himself by saving sinners through the atonement accomplished by his own Son,”

\textsuperscript{5} Farrar, \textit{Point Man}, 21.
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., 18.
\textsuperscript{7} Andreas J. Köstenberger, \textit{God, Marriage & Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation} (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 36.
is the story that gives meaning to every other story, including the stories of individual families.⁹

God has purposed to bring Himself glory through the redemption of sinners. This redemption includes not only their justification but the fullness of their salvation—including their glorification, when they are presented before the Father, holy, blameless, and above reproach (Rom 8:29-30; 1 Pet 1:3-5; Col 1:21-22). This redemption will bring glory to the Father in that it will demonstrate to all creation the manifold wisdom and immeasurable grace of God in transforming sinners who hated Him and one another into saints who love Him and one another (Eph 2:7, 3:10; Matt 5:16, 22:35-40).

This is the ultimate purpose of God for all things. Therefore, it is God’s ultimate purpose for a man’s family. He should see his family as a microcosm of God’s world with the same objective. That is, it should be his conviction that God desires to bring glory to Himself through the redemption of the family. The goal for the Christian man is not merely to raise a moral family, but to raise a family that lives for the glory of God, understanding that this is the chief end of man (Eph 3:20-21).

Walking the Walk

Not only must a leader know where he is leading, but he must go where he is leading. In order for a man to lead his family to follow Christ and love God and others, he must be pursuing this objective in his own life. In other words, he should be practicing the spiritual disciplines for the purpose of his own sanctification.

A man glorifies God by growing in godliness (Matt 5:14-16). A man grows in godliness through the spiritual disciplines (1 Tim 4:7b).¹⁰ It is important to realize that sanctification is not simply a function of human willpower, but a gift from God (Phil


2:12-13; 1 Thess 5:23). Still, believers are called to actively pursue holiness. The disciplines are given to them as a means of receiving God’s grace and growing in Christlikeness. By using them, Christians submit themselves to the Lord’s work in them.12

The Intake of the Word

A primary tool that God has granted for the purpose of transforming believers into the likeness of Christ is the intake of His Word. One of Jesus’ primary concerns for the disciples on the night before His death was that the Father would use His Word to make them holy. He prayed, “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17). Indeed, it is the God-breathed Scriptures that are uniquely and sufficiently able to make Christians mature in Christ, equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17). The Spirit uses His Word to expose their hearts and to transform their minds (Heb 4:12; Rom 12:2).

If a man is going to grow in godliness, he must make intake of the Word a major discipline of his life. R. Kent Hughes offers this:

You can never have a Christian mind without reading the Scriptures regularly because you cannot be profoundly influenced by that which you do not know. If you are filled with God’s Word, your life can then be informed and directed by God—your domestic relationships, your child-rearing, your career, your ethical decisions, your interior moral life. The way to a Christian mind is through God’s Word!13

11Much could be written regarding the respective roles of the believer and the Holy Spirit in sanctification, but this is beyond the scope of this chapter. All statements related to the use of the disciplines and to striving for holiness assume that the ultimate source of power for this work comes from the Holy Spirit. While this idea is not fully developed here, it will be taught to the men at PBF as part of the implementation of this project.


The apostle Paul exhorted the Colossians to “let the word of Christ dwell” in them richly (Col 3:16). The only way this can happen is if a man is intentionally taking in the Scriptures.

**Hearing the Word.** The simplest form of Bible intake is hearing the Word, which would include listening to sermons, participating in Bible studies, and listening to audible recordings of the Scriptures. At the very least, the discipline entails becoming a part of a New Testament church where the Bible is taught on a regular basis. Second Timothy 4:1-2 demonstrates the importance of hearing the Word: “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.” While most would regard this as an imperative to the preacher, and rightfully so, it also holds an implied imperative to the listener. If it is crucial that the content of the pastor’s preaching be the Word of God, this assumes that it is crucial for the church to hear the Word of God. The necessity of hearing the Word is founded upon the previous passage in which, Paul notes that the Word of God is able to make the believer complete and equipped. As God has commanded the preaching of the Word to the people of God, certainly it is intended to be a vital part of the believer’s diet.

**Reading the Word.** A second essential method of intake is Bible reading. With the wide availability of electronic and print copies of the Word, reading is perhaps the most convenient and readily available method of taking in the Scriptures. The Word itself seems to assume that believers read the Bible. For example, Jesus frequently questioned people’s knowledge of the Word, beginning with the words, “have you not

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read…?”), implying that God’s people read God’s Word. Given the repeated references in the Bible to the role of Scripture in sanctification, it is difficult to imagine a man growing in godliness without spending regular time reading the Word.

George Mueller provides an excellent example of the power of consistently reading the Bible:

It is absolutely needful…we should read regularly through the Scriptures… For the first four years after my conversion I made no progress, because I neglected the Bible. But when I regularly read on through the whole with reference to my own heart and soul, I directly made progress. Then my peace and joy continued more and more. Now I have been doing this for 47 years. I have read through the whole Bible about 100 times and I always find it fresh when I begin again. Thus my peace and joy have increased more and more.16

Mueller would live to the age of ninety-two, never changing his pursuit of satisfaction in God through the reading of the Scriptures.17 He noted in his later years, “I saw more clearly than ever, that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord… I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the word of God.”18 He viewed the reading of the Word as the primary means by which he grew in the knowledge of God, which led to his being happy in God.19 Regular Bible reading is a crucial part of the spiritual diet of a Christian man.

**Memorizing the Word.** Another method of Bible intake championed by the Scriptures is memorization. The Bible notes numerous benefits of memorizing God’s Word, just a few of which will be noted here. First, it supplies spiritual power to deal

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15Ibid., 32.
16George Muller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord’s Dealings with George Muller, Written by Himself* (Muskegon, MI: Dust and Ashes, 2003), 2:834.
18Muller, *A Narrative*, 271.
19Ibid., 740.
with temptation. The psalmist proclaimed, “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you” (Ps 119:11, cf. Matt 4:1-11). Second, memorization can strengthen one’s faith. Proverbs 22:17-19 exhorts the reader to internalize God’s Word “that your trust may be in the Lord.” Donald Whitney comments, “Memorizing Scripture strengthens your faith because it repeatedly reinforces the truth, often just when you need to hear it again.”

Third, Scripture memorization can be a means of God’s guidance. Psalm 119:24 reads, “Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors.” When the Scriptures are internalized, these counselors become constant companions able to give guidance at any time of day or night. Fourth, memorization facilitates Scripture meditation. Indeed, memorization is the only way to be like the psalmist, meditating on the Word “all the day” (Ps 119:97). With verses of Scriptures tucked away in one’s memory, one can meditate on it no matter the time or place. Memorization is a vital method of Bible intake for the Christian man.

**Meditating on the Word.** Meditation, a third method of taking in the Word, is defined by Whitney as “deep thinking on the truths and spiritual realities revealed in Scripture for the purposes of understanding, application, and prayer.” The Bible has much to say about the significance of this discipline. It promises success and spiritual fruitfulness to those who meditate on God’s Word (Josh 1:8; Ps 1:1-3). It indicates that Scriptural understanding comes through meditation (Ps 119:27, 99). It also teaches that love for the Word results from meditation on it, which motivates further meditation (Ps 119:14-16, 48, 97).

It is possible that meditation is the most important of all the methods because in it the believer takes what he has heard, read, and memorized and thinks deeply about

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21 Ibid., 48.
what it means and how it should be applied to his life. Meditation makes the other methods truly useful, for it is conceivable that one could take in the Word by other methods but without ever pondering them for the purpose of application. For this reason, it is critical that a Christian man discipline himself to regularly meditate on the Word of God.  

The Necessity of Prayer

A companion discipline to the intake of God’s Word is prayer. Scripture is clear that believers are to devote themselves to prayer and to pray without ceasing (Col 4:2; 1Thess 5:17). The spiritual benefits of prayer are manifold, but two will be mentioned here. First, prayer is a vital part of one’s daily communion with the Lord. John Owen described prayer as a means of retaining fellowship with God, writing, “The soul is never more raised with the love of God than when by the Spirit taken into intimate communion with him in the discharge of this duty.” As a believing man is seeking to grow in his worship of Christ, he can spend his time no more profitably than to pray. As with any relationship, communication is essential to the growth of one’s relationship with God. If believers would become closer to Him and more like Him, they must pray.

Second, prayer is an essential part of acquiring the spiritual strength Christians need to be faithful. Andrew Murray regarded prayer as “the root and strength of all other work” that Christians do, noting that there is “nothing we need to study and practice more than the art of praying.” Through prayer one gains the power to do all that the Lord has called him to do. Certainly, this is the example of the psalmist, who wrote, “He is the one

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22In my experience, a main reason for the scarcity of this discipline among Christian men is that most men have no idea how to meditate on Scripture. While methods of bible meditation are not provided here, such instruction will be included in the implementation of this project.


who gives power and strength to his people” (Ps 68:35, cf. 40:1-4). If believers would be faithful in other things, they must be faithful in prayer.

The spiritual disciplines are a pivotal component of spiritual leadership in the home. There are at least two ways in which practicing the disciplines in the pursuit of sanctification assists a man in leading his family. First, through them the man sets a godly example for his wife and children. As written earlier, a man cannot lead where he is not going himself. Leadership by example will be far more effective than mere leadership by speech. As he grows spiritually in front of his family, he demonstrates that engaging with the Lord through the disciplines is the norm for Christian life. Beyond the benefit of setting a godly example for his family, the disciplines also fill the well out of which the husband and father will provide spiritual nourishment for his family. If the well is dry, he will find himself unmotivated and unable to lead well. A man’s relationship with Christ will inevitably affect his other relationships. If he is not pursuing Jesus, he will be pursuing something else, which will leave him without the resources to lead spiritually. In order for a man to lead his family well, he must be practicing the disciplines for the sake of his own sanctification.

Walking with Others

Not only must a man be pursuing sanctification in his own life, but he must be committed to walking the road of spiritual leadership alongside others. Spiritual leadership is best pursued in the context of accountability with other men. This is a journey on which the Christian man should not set out alone.

25 Other spiritual disciplines, such as fellowship, accountability, and family worship, will be discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter and so will not be expanded here.

The Gift of the Church

God has prescribed three Spirit-empowered tools for sanctification. Two of these—the Word and prayer—were discussed in the previous section. The third tool is the church itself. Ephesians 4 teaches that God has designed the church to be a body that causes itself to grow in love. He has given gifts to each member for the benefit of the rest of the body (Eph 4:7). He has tasked the teachers of the church with equipping the saints to use those gifts for the work of ministry for the purpose of building up the body of Christ (Eph 4:11-14). The church builds itself up in love when each individual member is working properly, speaking the truth in love, and serving one another (Eph 4:15-16). This means that God has given the church to the church to help the church be the church!

Believers are not intended to live the Christian life alone. This is such a dangerous proposition that the church is commanded not to forsake gathering together for mutual encouragement and to stir one another up to love and good deeds (Heb 10:24-25). Not only is the church instructed to admonish, encourage, and help one another, but individuals should seek this accountability from one another (1 Thess 5:14). Paul writes to Timothy to flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart (2 Tim 2:22). Christians are commanded to confess their sins to one another and to pray for one another (Jas 5:16).

The Practice of Conferencing

The Puritan practice of conferencing is a helpful model for intentionally engaging in meaningful fellowship and accountability. Joanne Jung writes that for the Puritans, conferencing was a mechanism for living out the “one another” passages of Scripture (e.g., Rom 12:5, 10; 13:8; Gal 5:13; Eph 4; 5:19; Col 3:16; 1 Thess 4:18; 5:14), a means of “nourishing receptive souls and helping impoverished ones.”27 Among the

Puritans, everyone—whether a pastor, farmer, teenager, or mother of small children—was expected to practice conferencing. In it, participants would discuss Scripture, a recent sermon, and what was going on in their hearts.

Richard Baxter gave his congregation a list of conversation starters:

The last sermon that you heard, or of someone lately preached that nearly [i.e., deeply] touched you. Or of something in the last book you read. Or of some text of Scripture obvious [i.e., relevant] to your thoughts. Or of some notable (yea, ordinary) providence which did lately occur. Or of some examples of good or evil that are fresh before you. Or of the right doing of the duty that you are about.

Additionally, he encouraged them to open up regarding their own personal struggles, the deceitfulness and corruption of their hearts: “the nature and workings, effects and signs of ignorance, unbelief, hypocrisy, pride, sensuality, worldliness, impiety, injustice, intemperance, uncharitableness, and every other sin; with all the helps against them all.” Thus, the conference was to consist of weighty conversation regarding spiritual things. It was not merely a cold, theological discussion, but a meaningful discourse about the Word and the heart, an opportunity to build into one another’s lives with scriptural encouragement and exhortation.

Conferencing was built upon the conviction that believers do not stand under the Word of God alone, but with other brothers and sisters in the Lord. It is this element that would make the conferencing model somewhat revolutionary to the 21st century American church. The modern Western mind tends to view the world through the lens of private individualism. In the church this leads believers to regard their own hearts as a

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29 Strobel, *Formed for the Glory of God*, 149.


31 Ibid., 466.

32 Strobel, *Formed for the Glory of God*, 150.
private domain, which often sets them up to be overcome by private sin. Conversely, the Puritans believed that the heart is not private property but communal property. Because of the Ephesians 4 dynamic requiring each part to function for the benefit of the whole, it was believed that members did not have the right to separate themselves from one another. At the heart of the Christian life is pointing others to Jesus, bearing others’ burdens, encouraging and loving one another, and allowing others to do the same in one’s own life.33

The benefit of this practice compared to the typical modern day accountability group is that it focuses as much on positive growth in the worship of Christ in the heart as on recent successes or failures in overcoming temptation. A common conception of accountability today is the simple practice of asking one another “accountability questions,” which may consist of inquiries regarding the consistency of one’s recent devotional life and whether or not one has engaged in a particular set of immoral behaviors. These questions may be beneficial on some level, but surely Paul had something more in mind in Ephesians 4 than performing a task that anyone can program an iPad to do.

The accountability that will be espoused in this project will be of the conferencing model. Men will be encouraged to spend time talking about meaningful things of the Lord before ever approaching the “accountability questions.” They will be taught to view their own consumption of Biblical material (e.g. Bible reading, sermons, books, podcasts) as resources with which to bless their brothers during their conference time. When the accountability questions are finally approached, while the specific behavioral questions will be included, participants will be asked to focus on the heart.

The fellowship and accountability of the church is an often-overlooked third  

33Strobel, Formed for the Glory of God, 150.
tool that God has provided for believers’ spiritual growth. Given that God has designed sanctification to take place through the ministry of the body, it would be foolish for a man to neglect this essential tool for growing in holiness. However, if a man is fully engaged in close relationships with other men, speaking into their lives and allowing them to speak into his, his ability to lead his family well will be greatly benefited because his leadership will be an outgrowth of his own pursuit of the Lord.

**Leading in Worship**

Spiritual leadership also requires a man to lead his family in worship at home. If God is seeking worshipers to worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24), there is no better way for a man to lead His family to that end than to worship with them in the home. In fact, this may be the most visible and practical way in which he leads his family to love and worship the Lord.

**The Grounds for Family Worship**

Some may argue against the importance of family worship on the grounds that there is no positive command for it in Scripture. While there is no direct injunction, the practice of family worship would seem to be assumed by the various commands to raise one’s family to worship God alone. It would be strange indeed for the Old Testament to command, “you shall teach them diligently to your children” (Deut 6:4-9), and for the New Testament to command “bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph 6:4), and yet envision no times of formal worship in the home consisting of singing, prayer, and instruction from the Word. It would be difficult to understand how one might obey these explicit commands without ever engaging in family worship. Charles Spurgeon agreed, preaching,

I trust there are none here present, who profess to be followers of Christ who do not also practice prayer in their families. We may have no positive commandment for it, but we believe that it is so much in accord with the genius and spirit of the gospel, and that it is so commended by the example of the saints, that the neglect thereof is
a strange inconsistency.\textsuperscript{34}

Throughout the history of the church, believing families have been given to worshiping the Lord together in their homes. The typical family in the earliest decades and centuries of the church rose early in the morning to read the Scriptures together and pray.\textsuperscript{35} In the sixteenth century, Martin Luther advocated for regular family worship, writing, “Any godly and pious head of a household instructs his children . . . in godliness.”\textsuperscript{36} One hundred years later, family worship was prescribed in both the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Second London Confession of 1689.\textsuperscript{37} In the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, believers across Great Britain believed that family worship was so essential to the spiritual health of a family that men who neglected to lead in this practice should receive church discipline.\textsuperscript{38} The conviction of the evangelical church over the centuries has not been that family worship is unnecessary or unbiblical, but that it is not practiced widely enough. Modern voices have joined this chorus. Voddie Baucham urges that family worship is essential if a man would lead his family spiritually: “It’s impossible to talk about equipping family shepherds without addressing the issue of family worship. Regular family worship may well have greater impact on the spiritual life of a man’s family than any other practice he commits himself to.”\textsuperscript{39}


\textsuperscript{38}Donald S. Whitney, \textit{Family Worship: In the Bible, in History & in Your Home} (Shepherdsville, KY: Center for Biblical Spirituality, 2005), 26.

\textsuperscript{39}Voddie Baucham, \textit{Family Shepherds: Calling and Equipping Men to Lead Their Homes} (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 73.
The Benefits of Family Worship

There are numerous benefits to family worship, only a few of which will be enumerated here. First, worshiping the Lord together in the home teaches the family that God is to be worshiped daily and privately, not only weekly and publicly. Donald Whitney asks a pertinent question: “How is it possible to worship God publicly once each week when we do not worship Him privately throughout the week? Can we expect the flames of our worship of God to burn brightly in public on the Lord’s Day when they barely flicker for Him in secret on other days?” Commitment to worship in the home will demonstrate to a man’s family that communion with the Lord is to be enjoyed daily.

Second, children from homes where the Lord is worshiped regularly are more likely to remain on that course when they leave the home. One study found that even basic practices like regular Bible reading and prayer are associated with stronger and deeper faith commitments among teens. This bears out a well-known principle from the book of Proverbs: “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov 22:6). While this is a principle and not a promise, it should encourage a man to intentionally leading his family to follow the Lord by practicing family worship.

Third, as noted earlier, engaging in regular worship in the home is the most tangible and practical way that a man can obey the biblical commands to raise his family to know and love God (Deut 6:4-9; Eph 6:4). It is a helpful benchmark by which he can gauge how intentional he is being in leading his family. Without such quantifiable activities, it is difficult for a man to assure himself that he is at least heading in the right direction. If his only spiritual interaction with his family happens in accidental “teachable moments”, not only may he be inadvertently teaching his family that a Christian’s

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40Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, 93.
relationship with God is similarly haphazard and irregular, but he will inevitably feel as if his leadership is haphazard and irregular.

Fourth, family worship provides an occasion for explicit instruction on the spiritual disciplines. Certainly, it is vital for a man to model these for his family in his own life, and without this modeling any instruction in them will be hollow. On the other hand, modeling alone will not lead the family to rightly handle the Word of truth, to pray biblically, and to understand how to apply Scripture to their lives. Modeling provides the “what;” instruction provides the “how.” Both are essential.

Fifth, family worship provides a helpful tool for gauging the spiritual interest and progress of each member of the family. God does not save families, but individuals. Therefore, a man should see himself as leading individuals to become disciples of Christ. Worshiping together in the home provides a man a regular opportunity to interact with the family to get a feel for where each individual is spiritually. He can then use this information to help him know how to wisely use his individual time with each member.

There is more to leading a family spiritually than simply driving them to church each Sunday or even setting a good example of the pursuit of Christ. There is nothing a man can do to ensure his children will follow the Lord. However, there are many things he can do to point them in that direction. Regular family worship is one of them.

Discipling Each One

Spiritual leadership requires a man to evangelize and disciple each member of his family. As mentioned earlier, God does not save families, but individuals. It is not a certainty that all members of the family will trust the Lord at an early age. Likewise, not

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42This concept will be developed further in the following section.
all members of the family will journey toward Christlikeness at the same rate. A man must know where every member of his family is on the journey toward justification and sanctification so that he can provide individual help along the way.

**Observing Each One**

There are at least three ways that a man can watch the members of his family to discern where they are in the spiritual journey. The first is through simple observation in everyday life. Galatians 5 teaches that those who belong to Christ will bear the fruit of the Spirit. Of course this does not mean that Christians never sin, but the head of a household can gauge the spiritual condition of each member of the family by looking for growth in godliness. How are the members of the family treating one another? What level of interest in spiritual things does each one display? Is anyone isolating himself or herself from the rest of the family? Does it appear that an idolatrous lust may be forming in a member of the family? If a man keeps his eyes open during the mundane activities of life, he will discern clues that will guide him in knowing how to help each member of the family to trust the Lord and grow in godliness.

**Interacting with Each One**

A second way a man can seek to discern each member’s progress is through interaction with them in family worship. Any man who engages in worship in the home will notice varying levels of enthusiasm and participation in the different members of the family. Some will seem completely oblivious to various elements of worship. They will have trouble paying attention, will only reluctantly participate in discussions of the Word, will hesitate to pray, and will seem generally disinterested. This disinterest can mean different things depending upon the age of the person. If the person is a small child, difficulty paying attention is perfectly understandable. If the person is a teenager who has previously made a profession of faith, then perhaps the father will want to have a
conversation with him or her to dig a bit deeper.

On the other hand, a family member may have many questions during family worship, which should lead a man to take extra time making sure those questions are answered or probing to see what has prompted the person to ask those questions. If the family member is attentive and seems hungry for the Word, the man would do well to note this and to make sure that he keeps that member spiritually challenged and well fed.

**Conferencing with Each One**

Whatever a man notices about each members’ daily habits and participation in family worship should guide him in using wisely a third vehicle for keeping watch over their spiritual progress. This vehicle is conferencing. As mentioned earlier, conferencing is a valuable practice that a man should engage in with other men for his own spiritual growth. He can also engage in conferencing with each member of his family as a tool for leading them to grow in godliness.43 His observation of their daily lives and their participation in family worship will give him an idea of where each member is spiritually, and conferencing provides an occasion for individual attention to each person’s needs. If a son or daughter seems disinterested in spiritual things, he can gently guide a discussion to discern why. If his wife has seemed confused or troubled, conferencing affords private time to address those things. If it appears that a family member is not saved, he can use conferencing to share the gospel on the specific level of that person. During these conferences, the man will glean essential information to help him shepherd each individual member of the family.

Because every person in the family may not be saved or in the same place of spiritual maturity, a man should see himself as both an evangelist and discipler. His immediate objective for the unsaved will be to lead them to a saving knowledge of the

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43 Strobel, *Formed for the Glory of God*, 151.
Lord. His immediate goal for the saved will be to lead them to grow in godliness. Though the goals are not identical, the overall message that he should use is. Teaching the gospel should be the primary means by which he leads the unsaved to salvation and the saved to maturity in Christ. Because the message is the same, as long as family worship is gospel-centered, he will be serving each member of the family. Repetition of the gospel story, including the necessity of repentance and faith, will benefit everyone. The unsaved will be confronted constantly with their need for a savior. The saved will be reminded that the gospel is not merely the plan of salvation, but also God’s plan for transforming sinners who hated Him into saints who love Him. They will see that just as they needed His power to justify them, they need His daily power to sanctify them.

Again, conferencing will provide opportunity to give more concentrated application of the gospel to each person of the family, whether saved or unsaved. When the unsaved struggle with habitual sin, the gospel can be used to explain to them why they are unable to overcome it: they are still slaves to it and stand under the condemnation of God. Only by the blood of Christ can they be freed, forgiven, and empowered to walk in faithfulness. When the saved struggle with sin, the gospel can be used to help them understand the grace-infused process of putting off the old self and putting on the new self. They can be reminded that by their union with Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit they have the ability to be faithful.

It is essential for a man to understand that ultimately the spiritual condition and destiny of his family is in the Lord’s hands. He may be tempted to pursue spiritual leadership as if doing all the right things will guarantee that his family will all be saved and sanctified. Likewise, he may consider himself a failure if his leadership does not lead to the salvation of everyone in his family. However, he must understand that his

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44Baucham, Family Shepherds, 51.
responsibility is to lead his family by faithfully presenting the truth with his lips and his life. He is to offer himself as a vessel that the Lord may use however He wills. Any definition of the man’s task that includes results confuses his responsibility with God’s prerogative. The Lord will not hold him responsible for the end result, but only for his faithfulness as a vessel. He must keep this in mind as he shepherds each member of the family.

**Conclusion**

Spiritual leadership in the home requires a man to know where God wants his family to be and to rely on God's methods and power to get them there. The wise husband and father will embrace five principles in pursuing that task. First, he must know the destination to which he is leading. That is, there must be direction both in his own life and in his leadership. Second, he must pursue Christ personally; he cannot lead his family to a destination where he is not going. Third, he must use the God-given resource of the church to help him in his leadership task by engaging in meaningful relationships with other believing men who are walking the same road. Fourth, he should regularly lead his family in times of Bible intake, prayer, and singing, intentionally guiding them to love and worship the Lord. Fifth, he must give individual attention to the spiritual needs of each member of the family, knowing that they will all require different things at different times. If a man embraces these principles and engages in the associated practices, he can be assured that he is faithfully leading his family.

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CHAPTER 4
DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The ministry project was implemented over the course of 20 weeks. The first 6 weeks consisted of preparing the curriculum, gaining elder approval of each lesson of the curriculum, and promoting the upcoming teaching series to the congregation. The next 8 weeks were dedicated to completing the writing of the final lessons of the curriculum and teaching the curriculum to the men of the congregation. The final 6 weeks involved a review of the main principles via articles posted on the church website and culminated in a follow-up men’s breakfast at which the participants took the post-series survey. This chapter will detail the steps taken during each week of the project implementation.

Preparation and Promotion

The first 6 weeks of the project implementation were the most taxing for me. During this time I wrote the majority of the curriculum, prepared and delivered a short sermon series to introduce the men’s training, and posted a number of blog articles encouraging all the men in the congregation to participate.

Week 1

During the week of December 28, 2014 through January 3, 2015, I prepared the first lesson of the curriculum, entitled, “Knowing the Destination.” The lesson began with a definition of spiritual leadership: “Spiritual leadership entails knowing where God wants my family to be and relying on God's tools and power to get them there.”

main idea of the lesson was that spiritual leadership requires a man to know the
destination to which he is leading. The Shema of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 was the focal text,
revealing that the destination to which he is leading is that he and his family would love
God with all their being.

The lesson also touched briefly on the tools that God uses to get his people
where he wants them. The Word of God, prayer, and the ministry of the church are
indispensable tools that a man must implement in his life and in the lives of his family if
they are to reach the destination. While a man has definite responsibilities in this regard,
he must keep in mind that it is ultimately God who saves and sanctifies a person. Upon
completing this lesson, I sent it to the elders along with a rubric for evaluating it. Within
a week they had all responded with greater than 90 percent of the indicators on the rubric
scored at “sufficient” or above, meaning that the lesson was approved.

The final item accomplished in week 1 was the posting of an online
registration form on the church website. The registration information was then published
in all bulletins and congregational emails in the weeks preceding the training.

**Week 2**

During the week of January 4-10, I wrote the second lesson of the curriculum,
entitled “Pursuing the Destination.” The main idea of the lesson was that spiritual
leadership requires a man to be pursuing the destination personally. A man cannot lead
where he is not going. In the Shema, God calls first the head of the family to love God
with all his being. This implies that a man’s spiritual health is a crucial factor in the
spiritual health of his household.

The lesson also noted that a man’s personal fellowship with the Lord is the
well from which he derives the resources to lead his family. These resources include the
desire to lead, the biblical knowledge to teach, the faith to persevere, the wisdom to
counsel, the grace to be faithful, and the spiritual growth to give credibility to his words.
A man pursues fellowship with the Lord through three essential disciplines: intake of the Word, prayer, and participation in the ministry of the church.

Upon their evaluation of the lesson, the elders responded with greater than 90 percent of the indicators scored at “sufficient” or above. The lesson was approved.

**Week 3**

The third lesson was prepared during week 3. It was entitled “Pursuing the Destination with Others,” and its main focus was that spiritual leadership requires a man to pursue the destination alongside other men. Ephesians 4:7-16 teaches that sanctification is a corporate activity, not a solitary one. God has designed us to be instrumental in the spiritual growth of one another. Hebrews 10:24-25 indicates that minimum participation in the church is not merely meeting together, but stirring one another up to love and good deeds. If we are not regularly engaged in this activity with other believers, we are walking in disobedience.

Heavy emphasis was placed on the idea that because God has designed sanctification to be a corporate activity, those who try to grow in isolation will fail. This means that meaningful relationships with other Christian men is a do or die proposition for a man’s spiritual growth as the head of his family. The lesson explained and championed the Puritan practice of “conferencing” as opposed to traditional accountability relationships. Upon evaluation, the elders approved this lesson as well.

Week 3 also marked the beginning of a push for participation among all the men in the congregation. This campaign used both the pulpit and the church blog to communicate the necessity for this training, which the elders decided to call “Men’s Spiritual Leadership Boot Camp,” or just “the boot camp.” The boot camp had already been promoted in the church bulletin and Sunday morning announcements for two months prior, but week 3 began the concerted effort to put the training in front of the whole church, explain its purpose, and call for participation.
The first blog article was entitled “Why Every Empty-Nester and Every Single Man Should Attend the Spiritual Leadership Boot Camp.” The elders suspected that these two groups of men in particular would be tempted to forego the training. Some older men may have the notion that because their children are gone and they are retired that they no longer have meaningful responsibilities to lead. The article challenged these men to consider the calling that the Bible places on older men to disciple younger men in the church. Their maturity and experience is a gift to the church that should be used to help others. Also, the men were reminded that they still have wives who need and desire spiritual leadership.

The single men in the congregation might have considered the boot camp to be irrelevant to their lives. Therefore, the article called these men to prepare ahead of time to be godly leaders of a possible future family. Even if these men never marry, the Lord could use the boot camp to equip them to help other men.

This week also included the delivery of the first sermon in a two-sermon series on leadership in the home. This first message was entitled, “How the Fall Marred Male Spiritual Leadership,” and mirrored much of content of the second chapter of this project. It showed that God’s original plan for marriage was for a man to lovingly lead his wife and for a wife to respectfully submit to her husband. Sin’s entrance into the world resulted in the man and the woman becoming bent against God’s design. Rather than loving leadership, the man became prone to abuse his authority through either aggression or passivity. Likewise, rather than respectfully submitting to her husband, the wife became prone to manipulating her husband.

In the sermon, I gave an extensive personal testimony demonstrating my own failure as a leader, evidence of my connection to Adam and his original failure. I prompted the men in the congregation to reflect upon the difficulty they have experienced in leading their families and to consider why they have found it so difficult. The end of
the message gave a preview of how the gospel addresses this problem, which would be the focus of the second message in the series. Following both services, men came to me expressing complete identification with the personal struggles I shared in my testimony and great excitement at the prospect of attending the boot camp.

**Week 4**

During the week of January 18-24, I wrote lesson 4 of the curriculum. Entitled “The Mechanics of Sanctification, Part 1,” the lesson’s main idea was that spiritual leadership requires a man to understand how sanctification works so that he can pursue godliness and lead his family to do the same. The lesson introduced the concept of “Gospel Striving,” which is a way of understanding and acting upon God’s and man’s respective roles in sanctification. Lesson 4 emphasized the gospel; lesson 5 would emphasize the striving. The material noted that the gospel provides the right power, motive, and desire for change. For this reason, it is vital for a man to know the gospel and to meditate on it regularly. The lesson was sent to the elders, who approved it within one week.

The second article in the blog series was written and posted during week 4. It was entitled “Why Every Wife Should (Strongly) Encourage Her Husband to Attend the Spiritual Leadership Boot Camp.” The article outlined a number of benefits that could be expected by the entire family of a man who participates in the boot camp as well as biblical reasons why wives should encourage their husbands to attend.

Week 4 also included the delivery of the second sermon of the pre-boot camp series. Entitled “How the Gospel Equips Men to Lead,” the message was an exposition of Ephesians 2:1-10 with application focusing on how the gospel remedies the inter-relational problems caused by the Fall. Regenerate believers have the power, through the indwelling Holy Spirit, to walk in faithfulness to God’s original design for the family. The end of the message explained that the Boot Camp would give the “nuts and bolts” of
how to use the resources that God has provided for spiritual leadership. I also stated that the elders expected 100 percent participation from the male adult members of the congregation. The men were given one more week to register, after which I would personally be calling all those who had yet to do so. As with the first sermon in the series, the response was very positive.

**Week 5**

During the week of January 25-31, I wrote the fifth lesson of the curriculum, entitled “The Mechanics of Sanctification, Part 2.” As mentioned earlier, this session focused on the “striving” component of Gospel Striving. The main idea was that spiritual leadership requires a man to strive for godliness in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Bible’s method for doing this is through “putting off” sin and “putting on” righteousness as taught in Ephesians 4:20-24. The lesson emphasized that striving only happens when we have a concrete plan of attack. A specific plan was proposed, citing numerous New Testament passages that deal with subjects like sin, repentance, forgiveness, and the renewal of the mind. After considering the lesson, the elders gave unanimous approval.

The third article in the blog series was written and posted during week 5. It was entitled “Why Every Man Too Busy to Attend the Spiritual Leadership Boot Camp Should Attend the Spiritual Leadership Boot Camp.” Our congregation is full of professional men who have children in numerous activities. They are busy people. I suspected that one common rational for skipping the boot camp would be lack of time. The article sought to show that regardless of how busy we are, busyness provides no exemption from spiritually leading our homes. What the busy man needs is a streamlined, concentrated form of instruction that saves him time over the long haul. Eight Saturdays invested now will pay dividends for years. The article presented the boot camp as just such an efficient, time-saving venture.
Week 6

During the sixth week, February 1-7, I wrote lesson 6 of the training, entitled “Leading in Worship.” The main idea was that spiritual leadership requires a man to establish the Lord as the sole object of worship in his home. Joshua 24:14-15 promotes the truth that the head of a household has this responsibility. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 indicates that this leadership takes place through both formal instruction and informal conversation. Lesson 6 would focus on the former; lessons 7 and 8 on the latter.

The first portion of lesson 6 was dedicated to making a case for the necessity of family devotions. The second and largest portion was dedicated to practical instruction regarding how to cultivate, implement, and sustain family devotions. Upon considering the lesson, the elders approved it.

The final pre-training blog article was written and posted during the sixth week. It was entitled “Why Call It a Boot Camp?” and was intended to fill in some of the final details regarding what was expected of the participants. These expectations included being on time, finishing what we started, being accountable for our absences, and being committed to “going all out.”

Based upon the level of participation and the atmosphere on the first morning of the boot camp, the pre-training sermons and blog articles served their purpose. Every male member of the congregation registered with the intention of making the most of the boot camp.

Testing and Training

The second phase of implementation was 8 weeks long and included the final 2 lessons, administering the pre-series survey, and teaching the lessons to the men of the congregation.

Week 7

Several objectives were accomplished during the week of February 8-14. First,
I wrote the seventh lesson, entitled “Discipling Each One, Part 1.” The main idea was that spiritual leadership requires a man to evangelize and disciple each individual member of his family. People of different maturity levels will need different things from their discipler.

Part 1 of this topic focused on a man’s responsibility to lead his wife. Ephesians 5:24-33 teaches that a man should love his wife by pouring himself out for the sake of her growth in Christ. First Peter 3:7 calls a man to know his wife and to live with her in an understanding way. Genesis 3 implies that a man has a responsibility to protect his wife from spiritual dangers. The lesson also encouraged men to use conferencing as a model for interacting with their wives on a spiritual level. Lesson 7 was unanimously approved by the elders.

Week 7 was also the first week of the boot camp itself. It took place on Saturday, February 14 at 7a.m. The first item of business was to administer the pre-series survey.\(^2\) The men were asked not to write their names on the survey, but to use a unique four-digit code that they would remember. This code would be used on the post-series survey and would allow the pre- and post-series surveys to be matched up for each participant. There were 50 men in attendance, including 8 men from outside the church. The surveys of those outside the church were set aside since the main purpose of the survey was to allow me to discover growth in the leadership of men within the congregation.

Following the administration of the survey, we began with a time of sharing. The men were asked to share why they were attending the boot camp and what they hoped to glean from it. Approximately 12 men shared. A common theme was that the men experienced failure in the past and desired to change for the sake of their families.

\(^2\)See appendix 1.
After teaching the first lesson, I briefly explained the concept of conference groups. The men were asked to gather in groups of 2 or 3, preferably with men in the same phase of life. At the bottom of the lesson notes, there were questions to prompt discussion among the groups. I was encouraged by how easily the men formed the groups and opened up to one another. Most of the groups lingered well after the scheduled ending time.

**Week 8**

The first task for the week of February 15–21 was to write the final lesson of the curriculum. It was entitled “Discipling Each One, Part 2,” and focused on how a man should evangelize and disciple his children. The main idea was that a man should lead his children spiritually by bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Ephesians 6:4 and other passages demonstrate that raising children in the Lord has heart transformation, not merely behavior modification, as its goal. The lesson included practical instruction regarding how to intentionally observe and interact with each individual child in the family. It also included instruction about how to cultivate a Christian worldview and how to train children to spot errant worldviews. This final lesson was unanimously approved by the elders.

The second task of the week was writing a blog article entitled “Pressing on in the Face of Adversity.” I became aware of numerous trials that sprung up in the lives of several men in the congregation following the first session of the boot camp. This was not surprising since I expected the enemy to oppose what we were doing. This article was intended to discuss the nature of spiritual adversity and how to overcome it for the sake of remaining faithful to the Lord. The men were encouraged to meditate on the gospel, stay in the Word, remain constant in prayer, and stay the course. Their wives were asked to pray for them, knowing that a real enemy opposes them, but that there is also a real Savior who answers prayer.
The third task of the week was teaching the second training session of the boot camp. The session began with a brief time of sharing regarding what ways the first session had prompted changes in the men’s thinking and habits. Then lesson 2 was taught. The session was concluded with about half an hour spent in our conference groups, following the prompts for discussion in the lesson notes.

**Weeks 9-14**

The next 6 weeks, from February 22 through April 4, were nearly identical in terms of implementation. Lessons 3-8 were taught during these weeks, with each session consisting of an opening time of sharing, the main teaching time, and a concluding time of conferencing. The lesson notes were usually supplemented with a separate handout of recommended resources pertaining to the topic of the week.

During the final session, I encouraged the men to remain committed to meeting with their conference groups weekly during the following 6 weeks. On the sixth Saturday, May 16, we would hold a follow-up men’s breakfast, during which we would share how we were doing regarding maintaining the leadership practices we implemented during the boot camp. We would also use that breakfast as an occasion to take the post-series survey. I explained to them that their success in keeping these practices alive would depend in large part upon their determination to continue meeting with their conference groups. Without that influence stirring them up to love and good works, they would find it extremely difficult to keep the ball rolling.

**Reminders and Follow-Up**

The final 6 weeks of implementation were the lightest in terms of workload. The men were given reminders of the content of the boot camp via articles on the church blog. A final follow-up session was held during the final week for the sake of catching up with one another and taking the post-series survey.
**Weeks 15-19**

The implementation period from April 5 to May 9 was focused on allowing the men the freedom to sink or swim. It provided several weeks of no contact from me regarding the material of the book camp, followed by 3 weeks of blog articles designed to give them a boost of encouragement. The first of these articles was entitled “Evaluating Worldviews,” and served as a brief refresher on the importance of worldview instruction in the home, with the goal of showing how errant worldviews are deficient when compared with a Christian worldview. The second article was dedicated to revisiting the main points of lessons 1-4 of the curriculum. The third article revisited the main points of lessons 5-8. Outside of the writing of these articles, I spent several days logging the data from the participants’ pre-series surveys.

**Week 20**

On Saturday, May 16, we held a men’s breakfast at the church. Volunteers showed up at 6a.m. to prepare the food. Approximately 45 men attended. We enjoyed about half an hour of fellowship as we ate. Then I led the men in a time of sharing regarding how we were doing maintaining our spiritual leadership in our homes. Numerous men shared the great positive changes they had seen in themselves and in their families. As a general rule, the men were much more aware of the spiritual condition of their wives and children than they had been before the boot camp. However, a common theme among the testimonies was the extreme difficulty of maintaining regular contact with their conference groups. Many men were unable to meet even once during the 6 weeks after the boot camp due to the inability to coordinate their schedules. Those men who were unable to continue the conference groups found it more difficult to maintain good leadership practices in their homes than those men who were able to continue the conference groups. Following the sharing time, the men were given the post-series survey.
CHAPTER 5
EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

This chapter will assess the project overall. It will evaluate the project’s purpose and whether or not the project’s goals were met. Additionally, it will include consideration of the project’s strengths and weaknesses, theological reflections, and my own personal reflections.

Evaluation of the Purpose

The purpose of the project was to train the men of Providence Bible Fellowship in West Chester, Ohio to be spiritual leaders in the home. The first chapter of this project noted the circumstances that led me to recognize the need for this kind of training in our congregation. First, the vast majority of the people of PBF are committed to complementarianism, so this training was bound to be something that would quickly be embraced both by the men and the women. Second, most of the men in the church were in phases of life in which they are biblically called to exercise spiritual leadership on a daily basis, yet they were largely unequipped to do so. The vast majority are married or married with children still at home, but for one reason or another they were ineffective as spiritual leaders. Third, though the church has been committed to complementarianism since its inception, we had never provided structured training for men regarding how to lead their families biblically. It seemed like an obvious area for concentrated instruction.

Now that the project has been completed, it is even clearer that this was the right project at the right time. The entire church—men, women, and children—embraced the concept wholeheartedly. Of the able-bodied men in the congregation, there was
almost 100 percent participation. All the men began the training. Only one refused to complete it. Although the elders were hoping for all to finish, we were grateful to God that such a high level of participation resulted without a great deal of pressure from the leadership. Even months after the training was completed, we are still seeing the benefits of it. There was formerly a gaping hole in the congregation’s equipping for godly living in the home that has now been addressed.

There were a number of encouraging personal stories to come out of the training, but one stands out. One of our members is a man who grew up in Catholicism and who had no concept of a personal relationship with Christ prior to coming to PBF. As he pursued the membership process, it became clear to the elders that this man was not a believer. I was assigned to meet with him regularly to engage him with the gospel and answer his questions about faith and theology. After meeting for approximately one year, he repented and trusted in the Lord for salvation, and he was subsequently baptized and admitted into membership.

His own relationship with the Lord was relatively strong, but he had no idea how to lead his wife and children spiritually. For that reason, he was extremely excited to participate in the boot camp. After only two weeks of the training, he began to implement not only the disciplines we had covered up to that point, but also to jump ahead and practice leadership principles we had not fully covered yet. Simply based upon the foundational principles taught in the introductory sermon series and the first two lessons of the training curriculum, he was able to piece together how to put these things into practice in his home. Before the training was completed, he reported drastic changes in the atmosphere of his home. He and his wife were having meaningful conversations about the Scriptures and praying together. He was teaching his children the bible on a daily basis. He was busy stirring up other men to love and good deeds. As a result, he and his family were all growing spiritually. When I think about how lost he was a few years
ago and how drastically his life and home have changed, I am convinced that this was the right project at the right time, even if only for one man.

However, there were many men and families who were helped by the training. Based upon the personal testimonies shared publicly and privately, it appears that this project was perfectly timed by the Lord for the majority of our congregation.

**Evaluation of the Goals**

The project consisted of three goals, the first of which was to assess the understanding and practices of spiritual leadership of the men in the congregation. This was measured through the completion of the pre-series survey at the beginning of the first training session. The pre-series survey sought to determine two things about each participant. First, it was designed to assess the participant’s awareness and conviction regarding the biblical principles of spiritual leadership. Second, it assessed what practices the participant uses in leading his family spiritually.

There were two tasks to be completed in order for this first goal to be met. First, at least 65 percent of the men in the congregation must complete the survey. This first task was completed as 100 percent of the men filled out the survey. Second, the survey needed to be analyzed so as to gain a clearer picture of the initial understanding and practices of the participants. A number of striking results were found. Regarding the question, “I am an effective spiritual leader of my home,” only 1 participant out of 32 responded, “Strongly Agree.” In response to the question, “If asked, I could articulate the gospel,” only 15 of 32 answered, “Strongly Agree.” Conversely, the vast majority of the participants were more confident that their wives could articulate the gospel than that they could. Another concerning insight was that only 3 out of 32 respondents met weekly with other men for the purpose of accountability; a large majority had no meaningful accountability.

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1See appendix 1.
accountability at all.\textsuperscript{2}

The overall picture yielded by the pre-series survey was that the men almost universally desired to lead their families well, but that they did not know how and were practicing relatively few disciplines associated with spiritual leadership. Since the requisite percentage of men participated in the survey and the results were analyzed, yielding a clear picture of the initial understanding and practices of the participants, the first goal of the project is deemed met.

The second goal of the project was to develop an eight-week teaching series on male spiritual leadership in the home. It consisted of 8 one-hour sessions covering the biblical foundations for male spiritual leadership, the responsibility to establish Christ as the sole object of worship in the home, the necessity for personal spiritual growth, the necessity for meaningful accountability with other men, the mechanics of sanctification, the purpose and components of family worship, and the principles of discipling each individual member of the family.

This goal was measured by a rubric used by the elders to evaluate the material. The rubric led the elders to assess each lesson based upon its clarity, relevance, fidelity to Scripture, coherence, and practicality. In order for this goal to be met, the elders must have scored at least 90 percent of the indicators at “sufficient” or above. After evaluating each lesson, the elders scored 100 percent of the indicators at “sufficient” or above. No lesson required modification in order to gain elder approval. The second goal of the project is deemed met.

The third goal of the project was to train the men of the congregation to be spiritual leaders via the eight-week teaching series. This goal was measured through the participant’s completion of the post-series survey four weeks after the end of the training.

\textsuperscript{2}See appendix 3 to find answer totals for the entire pre-series survey.
These survey results were compared to the results of the pre-series survey using a t-test for dependent samples. The mean score for the pre-series survey was 145.84, while the mean for the post-series survey was 166.53. The t-test showed that the teaching of the material to the men of the congregation made a statistically significant difference, resulting in an improvement of their doctrinal knowledge and practice ($t(31)=4.347$, $p<.0001$). Therefore, the third goal of the project is deemed met.

**Strengths of the Project**

The first strength of the project was the effort to publicize the training and gain the participation of the men. The articles posted to the blog were significant in that they served to remove what I anticipated to be the most common excuses for non-participation. For example, one article explained why the single men of the congregation should join the boot camp. Every single man in the congregation participated and attended all eight sessions. Likewise, all of the empty-nesters participated.

Perhaps the most significant component of the effort to publicize the training and gain participation was the two-week sermon series that preceding the boot camp. The sermons demonstrated why most men tend to have trouble leading their families well. The sermons also pointed to the hope that the gospel holds for men who are poor leaders. Additionally, at the close of each message I pressed the men on behalf of the elders to make a commitment to participate. I promised that any man who did not register on his own would receive a phone call from one of the elders to discuss their reluctance and address their concerns. No phone calls were necessary.

A second strength of the project was the inclusion of time in each session dedicated to conferencing. The brotherhood and camaraderie that this afforded us went a long way toward solidifying the men’s commitment to begin a new path in their homes. Because the groups were formed spontaneously with no warning, most of the men simply connected with men sitting closest to them. This caused groups to be formed by men who
did not know each other well. Over the eight weeks of the boot camp, these men became very close with one another, which has served to bond the congregation as a whole. It is fair to say most men in the congregation have more close friends now than they did prior to the boot camp.

The conferencing time served us well in another way. It made the logistics of meeting together far simpler. All the men were already at the church for the training, so there was no need to coordinate schedules outside of Saturday mornings in order to conference. This benefit is more striking now that the training is over and men are struggling to find times to meet that work for everyone in the group. At least for the duration of the training, the built-in conference time provided consistency.

A third strength of the project was its commitment to biblical principles. I have participated in men’s trainings in the past at other churches and they have been almost universally light on biblical teaching. In some cases, men’s ministries simply take worldly conceptions of manhood and leadership and Christianize them in some way without providing any Scriptural foundation.

However, our boot camp founded every component in the pages of Scripture. The Shema is so rich and applicable that it provided ample foundation and instruction to help the Christian man lead his family well. The picture it paints of establishing God as the sole object of worship in the home gave the perfect framework for the whole series. Likewise, the instruction to husbands and fathers in the fifth and sixth chapters of Ephesians gave gospel-centered direction for leadership in the home.

This leads to a fourth strength of the project, which was the bible-focused homework required of the participants. The “weekly mission” gave the men practical tasks for implementing that week’s main principle. For example, the weekly mission following lesson 3, in which the concept of conferencing was introduced, the men were responsible for finding some tool—a passage of Scripture, a sermon excerpt, or a blog
Similarly, because going from no family devotions to daily family devotions would be a huge jump for most men, we began taking baby steps in that direction from the very first week. The men were first asked to begin praying with their wives daily. The next week we began to pray with the whole family. The following week we added a Scripture reading to the prayer. In this way, the men were able to incorporate the different elements slowly so that the change was not overwhelming.

Men seem to rise to the expectations placed upon them. When we train them without requiring any effort from them outside of church, they give exactly that. When we expect them to accomplish a number of specific goals each week, they do that as well. If this training was effective, it was due in large part to the tasks required of the men each week.

**Weaknesses of the Project**

The most immediately evident weakness of the project was the lack of any substantive structure for maintaining the conferencing groups beyond the last week of the training. This actually was by design. In the training, I emphasized that the conference groups were the key to maintaining longevity in the practice of these new spiritual leadership principles. It was my hope that this would move the men to make the conference groups a priority and that they would take it upon themselves to maintain them. This self-initiative was part of being a spiritual leader. Since then it has occurred to me that perhaps maintaining some kind of structure for the men for a period of time beyond the training would have helped to solidify the groups more permanently.

Another weakness of the project was the lack of additional resources suggested to the men pertaining to the subject matter of each lesson. Additional resources were suggested, but they were somewhat of an afterthought, as I spent the majority of my time preparing my own material. The main area where this would have benefitted the men is in
the practice of family worship. The curriculum suggested a simple format for family worship that did not require much in the way of preparation. However, some surely would have benefitted from the suggestion of published resources that they could use as a weekly or daily guide.

What I Would Do Differently

The things that I would do differently pertain to the aforementioned weaknesses of the project. First, I would devise a structure for maintaining the conference groups beyond the end of the training. The main obstacle men faced in maintaining the groups was difficulty in coordinating their schedules. A possible solution, tedious though it might be, would be to have the men fill out a schedule of their usual availability. I could then group the men together accordingly. That would take care of the logistics, but some form of accountability would also be necessary. One way to provide this accountability would be to check in with each group, either via phone call or email, once a quarter to inquire about the consistency of the group. If a group was beginning to fizzle out, I could meet with that group personally to encourage them to stay the course and to remind them why the groups are so pivotal to their ability to lead their families well.

A second thing I would do differently is take more time to thoughtfully prepare a list of additional resources for each lesson. These would include a number of the sources consulted for this project. I would begin to consider these resources and research additional ones several months before the training began so that I would have ample time to evaluate each one and ensure that it was a quality tool. Resources pertaining to family worship and communication within the family would be areas of priority in this research. I also would have made the best of these resources immediately available for purchase after each session.

One additional thing that I would do differently is to begin preparing the curriculum months earlier. Even though I gave myself approximately one week to
prepare each lesson, the preparation took place relatively shortly before each lesson was taught. Also, I was preparing the last lessons while already teaching the first lessons. More than once as I taught the later lessons, I wished that I had phrased or framed something differently in the earlier lessons. In each of those instances it dawned on me how helpful it would have been to begin preparing much earlier. If I had it to do again, I would complete the whole curriculum at least one month before the training began so that I could spend more time revising and ensuring coherence from one lesson to another.

Theological Reflections

The project has reemphasized for me just how essential the church is to an individual’s sanctification. God intended for sanctification to be a corporate activity. We are unable to maintain consistent growth in Christ in isolation from the gifts of other believers. Ephesians chapter 4 teaches that the Lord has gifted all believers and has equipped them through the teaching of the church to use those gifts so that the body achieves unity and mature manhood in Christ. The apostle Paul clearly depicts this in corporate terms. If the members of the body are not exercising their gifts in one another’s lives, the body will not build itself up in love.

This principle has been vividly displayed during this project by the vibrant growth that took place during the implementation of this project, as well as by the common struggle that the men have experienced since finding difficulty maintaining their conference groups. While we were actively and consistently stirring one another up to love and good works, we each grew in love and good works and led our families well. When we began to decline in our consistency meeting together, we began to find our own walks with the Lord and our leadership in our homes to be an uphill battle.

Another theological truth born out by this study is that the spiritual health of the head of a household has far-reaching consequences for the members of that household. The opening chapters of Genesis indicate that male spiritual leadership of the
home was God’s design from the very beginning. In the absence of male leadership things go awry. Through the power of the gospel, the believing man is able to return to God’s ideal and provide the leadership He expects. The Lord has tasked a man with pouring himself out for the spiritual wellbeing of his wife and children. The family will thrive when it functions God’s way.

We have seen this truth in living color in our church. As the men of the church began to practice biblical principles of leadership in the home, the families of the church experienced a greater interest in spiritual things. As the husbands and fathers grew, wives and children grew. As the husbands began to struggle in terms of their consistency, so also the wives and children experienced various difficulties.

To summarize, the main theological reflection gleaned from this project is that God’s Word is true. He always does what He says He will do. When God’s people live according to the Scriptures, they are blessed just the way Scripture describes. This is not to say that godly male leadership in the home results in problem-free living. Difficulty, sin, and pain will always exist until the Lord returns. However, in homes where there is strong male leadership, the family has the tools to deal with those struggles biblically and grow in Christ through it all.

**Personal Reflections**

The biggest thing this project has taught me is that I am no different than any of the men in our congregation. Like everyone else, I need other men in my life to stir me up to love and good works. I needed this training, too. My leadership of my family has been inconsistent over the years. There have been seasons of great growth and seasons of stagnancy. During the preparation and implementation of this project, I did quite well practicing the principles involved. I was consistent in my personal devotions, in leading family devotions, and in discipling each member of the family. With my increased focus, my family grew in their attention to the things of the Lord.
The greatest benefit I derived was from meeting with my conference partner. In the weeks following the end of the training, we were able to meet consistently and we both were helped by it. However, his schedule changed drastically for the summer and our meetings became almost non-existent. We did our best to keep up with one another via email, but this was far from effective. As a result, we both found ourselves slipping in our personal and family devotions. We found that we desperately needed to be stirred up on a weekly basis. As the end of summer approaches, his schedule will go back to normal and we will be able to meet weekly again. We look forward to the many benefits this will bring.

Another principle that I learned from this project is that men will rise to the expectations placed upon them. I was somewhat pessimistic as I began to plan the project. Past experience indicated that men in the church would vocalize excitement about any kind of men’s study, but that time would prove most men to be noncommittal. One thing I have observed in many men’s studies is that they tend to require very little. Men are able to just show up and listen. Virtually nothing is really expected of them. It appears to me that this may be why such studies fail to draw long-term participation.

When the elders of PBF expressed their expectation to the congregation that every man should participate and give 100 percent, the men rose to the occasion. I was surprised and thankful to God. Everyone participated and only one man failed to finish the course. Perhaps many churches are unable to raise up godly male leaders because they fail to expect their men to do hard things. When we allow them to be passive and give the least amount possible, we unwittingly train them to be like the Adam of Genesis 3.

**Conclusion**

My theological training has been broad and thorough. The Master of Divinity that I earned at Southern Seminary gave me a strong theological and philosophical basis
for ministry. It opened to me a world of things I didn’t know I didn’t know. I am grateful for the many courses I took, the many papers I wrote, and the many professors who gave so much to instruct me. They all served me well.

However, in a sense, ministry was largely theoretical in the M.Div. classroom. Everything was black and white. Everything was simple. Every question could be answered with a neat and tidy essay. Real life ministry is very different. There is much that is gray, complicated, and messy. The Doctor of Ministry program at Southern has helped to bridge the gap between thorough theological preparation and effective practical ministry.

This project represents more than the final requirement of a long theological education. It required much of me, not the least of which was taking a long, critical look at the condition of the congregation I serve. It required me to discern their needs for specific areas of shepherding. It required me to find the best way to address those needs. It required me to analyze, organize, publicize, read, study, pray, converse, manage, lead, and grow. Beyond providing an occasion for addressing one specific need among the men of the church, it gave me the practical tools to address other different needs in the future. It taught me how to apply theology to the lives of the congregation in a way that makes a difference in how they live in this gray, complicated, and messy world. It gave me the tools to be a better shepherd. For that I am grateful.
APPENDIX 1
SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP SURVEY

Agreement to Participate
The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the current understanding and practices of spiritual leadership of the participant. This research is being conducted by Greg Birdwell for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

By completion of this survey, and checking the appropriate box below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

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

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

Part 1

1. Do you consider yourself a Christian?
   ___ A. Yes
   ___ B. No

2. Have you repented of your sin and trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation?
   ___ A. Yes
   ___ B. No

3. Are you married?
   ___ A. Yes
   ___ B. No
4. Do you have any children age 18 or younger living in the home?
   ___ A. Yes
   ___ B. Yes

5. What is your age in years?
   ___ A. 18-24
   ___ B. 25-34
   ___ C. 35-44
   ___ D. 45-54
   ___ E. 55-64
   ___ F. 65 and over

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.

**Part 2**

6. I consider myself to be the spiritual leader of my home.
   SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA

7. I am an effective spiritual leader of my home.
   SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA

8. I desire to lead my family well.
   SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA

9. I have a strong grasp of what it means to be the spiritual leader of my home.
   SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA

10. My spiritual health directly impacts my ability to lead my family spiritually.
    SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA

11. If asked, I could articulate the gospel.
    SD  D  DS  AS  A  SA
12. 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

13. 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

14. 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

15. I have a specific time set aside for prayer.
   ___ A. Yes
   ___ B. No

16. I most often pray for (check only one)
   ___ A. myself
   ___ B. family
   ___ C. friends
   ___ D. other
17. I most often pray (check only one)
   ___ A. at church
   ___ B. at home
   ___ C. while traveling
   ___ D. at work
   ___ E. other

18. I consider personal accountability with another man or men to be a vital part of leading my family spiritually.

   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

19. I meet with another man or men for the purpose of accountability (check only one)
   ___ A. several times per week
   ___ B. once per week
   ___ C. several times per month
   ___ D. once per month
   ___ E. several times per year
   ___ F. not at all

20. I could instruct another man in how to be the spiritual leader of his home.

   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

**Part 3** (If you are not married, please skip to Part 4).

21. I understand what the Bible teaches regarding how to lead my wife spiritually.

   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

22. The Bible calls me to love my wife as Christ loved the church.

   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

23. The Bible calls my wife to submit to me as the church submits to Christ.

   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA

24. If asked, my wife could articulate the gospel.

   SD   D   DS   AS   A   SA
25. I pray with my wife (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

26. I discuss spiritual things with my wife (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

27. I read the Bible with my wife (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

28. I read Christian books with my wife (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
29. I know the areas in which my wife is struggling in her sanctification.
   SD D DS AS A SA

30. I encourage my wife to have close accountability relationships with other believing women.
   SD D DS AS A SA

31. I encourage my wife to spend time reading the Bible and to pray.
   SD D DS AS A SA

32. I seek to serve in the church with my wife.
   SD D DS AS A SA

33. I seek to minimize the impediments to my wife’s spiritual growth.
   SD D DS AS A SA

34. I value my wife’s help in my own spiritual growth.
   SD D DS AS A SA

35. When I sin against my wife, I express repentance and ask for forgiveness.
   SD D DS AS A SA

36. When my wife and I have conflict, I take the lead in seeking biblical resolution.
   SD D DS AS A SA

**Part 4** (If you do not have children age 18 or younger, please skip Part 4.)

37. I understand what the Bible teaches regarding how to raise my children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.
   SD D DS AS A SA

38. I am an effective spiritual leader for my children.
   SD D DS AS A SA
39. I pray with my children (choose only one)
   ___ A. more than once per day
   ___ B. once per day
   ___ C. several times per week
   ___ D. once per week
   ___ E. several times per month
   ___ F. once per month
   ___ G. several times per year
   ___ H. not at all

40. I read the Bible with my children (choose only one)
   ___ A. more than once per day
   ___ B. once per day
   ___ C. several times per week
   ___ D. once per week
   ___ E. several times per month
   ___ F. once per month
   ___ G. several times per year
   ___ H. not at all

41. I read Christian books to/with my children (choose only one)
   ___ A. more than once per day
   ___ B. once per day
   ___ C. several times per week
   ___ D. once per week
   ___ E. several times per month
   ___ F. once per month
   ___ G. several times per year
   ___ H. not at all

42. I know the areas in which my believing children are struggling in their sanctification.
   SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA

43. I use occasions of my children’s sin to instruct them with the gospel.
   SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA

44. I encourage my children to spend time reading the Bible and praying.
   SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
45. I use everyday situations as opportunities to instruct my children with Biblical principles.

46. I lead my home in family worship (specific time of Bible-reading and prayer) (check only one)
   ___ A. more than once per day
   ___ B. once per day
   ___ C. several times per week
   ___ D. once per week
   ___ E. several times per month
   ___ F. once per month
   ___ G. several times per year
   ___ H. not at all

47. When I sin against my children, I express repentance and ask for forgiveness.

48. When my children have conflict with each other, I lead them to seek biblical resolution.

Personal Identification Number: ________________
### Spiritual Leadership Curriculum Evaluation Tool

#### Lesson One Evaluation

1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary

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### Spiritual Leadership Curriculum Evaluation Tool

#### Lesson Five Evaluation

1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary

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## Spiritual Leadership Curriculum Evaluation Tool

### Lesson Six Evaluation

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## Spiritual Leadership Curriculum Evaluation Tool

### Lesson Seven Evaluation

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Lesson Eight Evaluation

1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary
APPENDIX 3

PRE-SERIES AND POST-SERIES SURVEY TOTALS

**Part 1**

1. Do you consider yourself a Christian?

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2. Have you repented of your sin and trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation?

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3. Are you married?

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4. Do you have any children age 18 or younger?

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5. What is your age in years?

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<td>C. 35-44</td>
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<td>D. 45-54</td>
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<td>E. 55-64</td>
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<td>F. 65 and over</td>
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**Part 2**

6. I consider myself to be the spiritual leader of my home.

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<td>7 I am an effective spiritual leader of my home.</td>
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<th></th>
<th>9 I have a strong grasp of what it means to be the spiritual leader of my home.</th>
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<td>D. once per week</td>
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14 I pray

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<tr>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>D. once per week</td>
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<td>E. several times per month</td>
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</tr>
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<td>F. once per month</td>
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<tr>
<td>G. several times per year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. not at all</td>
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15 I have a specific time set aside for prayer.

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16 I most often pray for

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<td>B. family</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. other</td>
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17 I most often pray

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<td>B. at home</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. while traveling</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. at work</td>
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<td>E. other</td>
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18 I consider personal accountability with another man or men to be a vital part of leading my family spiritually.

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19 I meet with another man or men for the purpose of accountability

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20 I could instruct another man in how to be the spiritual leader of his home.

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### Part 3

21. I understand what the Bible teaches regarding how to lead my wife spiritually.

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22. The Bible calls me to love my wife as Christ loved the church.

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23. The Bible calls my wife to submit to me as the church submits to Christ.

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24. If asked, my wife could articulate the gospel.

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25. I pray with my wife

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26. I discuss spiritual things with my wife

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27 I read the Bible with my wife

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28 I read Christian books with my wife

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29 I know the areas in which my wife is struggling in her sanctification.

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30 I encourage my wife to have close accountability relationships with other believing women.

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31 I encourage my wife to spend time reading the Bible and praying.

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32 I seek to serve in the church with my wife.

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33 I seek to minimize the impediments to my wife’s spiritual growth.

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34 I value my wife’s help in my own spiritual growth.

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35 When I sin against my wife, I express repentance and ask for forgiveness.

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36 When my wife and I have conflict, I take the lead in seeking biblical resolution.

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**Part 4**

37 I understand what the Bible teaches regarding how to raise my children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

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38 I am an effective spiritual leader for my children.

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39 I pray with my children

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46. I lead my home in family worship (specific time of Bible-reading and prayer)

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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. once per day</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. several times per week</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. once per week</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. several times per month</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. once per month</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. several times per year</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. not at all</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47. When I sin against my children, I express repentance and ask for forgiveness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>DS</th>
<th>AS</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

48. When my children have conflict with each other, I lead them to seek biblical resolution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>DS</th>
<th>AS</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
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BIBLIOGRAPHY


ABSTRACT

TRAINING THE MEN OF PROVIDENCE BIBLE FELLOWSHIP
WEST CHESTER, OHIO TO BE SPIRITUAL LEADERS
IN THE HOME

Jerry Greg Birdwell, D.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Brian J. Vickers

The purpose of this project is to train men to be spiritual leaders in their homes. Chapter 1 presents the purpose, goals, context, rationale, definitions, limitations, and research methodology of the project.

Chapter 2 is a study of the biblical and theological basis for male spiritual leadership in the home. First, the chapter presents evidence that male spiritual leadership was God’s design for the family prior to man’s fall in to sin. Second, it shows the negative effects on male leadership caused by man’s fall into sin. Finally, the chapter demonstrates how the gospel frees man from sin and equips him to lead his family spiritually.

Chapter 3 addresses theoretical and practical issues related to male spiritual leadership. It demonstrates that in order for a man to lead his family well, he must know
the destination to which he is leading, pursue that destination himself with other men, and commit to leading his family in worship and discipleship.

Chapters 4 and 5 provide details of the implementation of the project, as well as numerous evaluations of the project.
VITA

Jerry Greg Birdwell

EDUCATION
   B.B.A., Belmont University, 1999
   M.Div., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012

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   Preaching Pastor, Providence Bible Fellowship, West Chester, Ohio, 2008-