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DEVELOPING SPRITUAL LEADERS AT THE BAPTIST  
CHURCH AT MCADORY IN MCCALLA, ALABAMA

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

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In Partial Fulfillment  
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Doctor of Ministry

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by  
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**APPROVAL SHEET**

DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL LEADERS AT THE BAPTIST  
CHURCH AT MCADORY IN MCCALLA, ALABAMA

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES .....	v
PREFACE .....	vi
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Purpose .....	1
Goals .....	1
Ministry Context .....	3
Rationale .....	5
Definitions, Limitations, and Delimitations .....	6
Research Methodology .....	7
2. BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR SPIRITUAL DISCIPLESHIP AND LEADERSHIP .....	9
Called to Pursue Godliness .....	9
Discipleship and the Sufficiency of Scripture .....	14
God Calls All Kinds of People .....	22
The Necessity of Prayer in the Pursuit of Holiness .....	25
God Calls Christians to Serve Others .....	30
Conclusion .....	34
3. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED TO LEADING PEOPLE TO PRACTICE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES AND EXHIBITING SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP QUALITIES .....	35
Leadership Development and the Practice of Spiritual Disciplines .....	35
Mutual Affirmation .....	42

Chapter	Page
Leaders Want to Serve .....	46
Leaders Will Train Future Leaders .....	50
Conclusion .....	53
4. PROJECT DESCRIPTION .....	55
Sermon Series .....	55
Integrating the Practice of Discipleship with Developing Spiritual Leadership .....	60
Conclusion .....	69
5. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT .....	70
Evaluation of the Purpose .....	70
Evaluation of the Goals .....	71
Strengths of the Project .....	74
Weaknesses of the Project .....	77
What I Would Do Differently .....	78
Theological Reflections .....	78
Personal Reflections .....	80
Conclusion .....	81
 Appendix	
1. SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE SURVEY .....	83
2. CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC .....	86
3. SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP SURVEY .....	87
4. LESSON PLANS .....	90
5. SURVEY TOTALS FOR LARGE GROUP .....	117
6. SURVEY TOTALS FOR SMALL GROUP .....	120
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	122

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
A1. Large group survey responses to demographic questions . . . . .	117
A2. Large group survey responses to agreement statements . . . . .	118
A3. Small group responses to part 1 of survey . . . . .	120
A4. Small group responses to part 2 of survey . . . . .	121

## PREFACE

Spiritual leaders emerge when individuals engage in the exercise of the spiritual disciplines. God places in the heart of every one of his servants an earnest desire to make disciples. Leaders in the church must provide the impetus for discipleship to take place. No single individual can make this happen alone. Someone once said it takes a village to raise a child. It also takes the body of Christ to raise up spiritual leaders from spiritual infants. Therefore, I want to thank a number of people who have helped see this project to its completion.

First, my precious wife of thirty years has been the individual who has never failed to provide the ultimate in love and support. In the early years of my education, she not only encouraged me to become more thoroughly equipped, but also painstakingly edited my feeble attempts at writing. My children, who are grown adults now, sacrificed some father-son time so I could travel to seminary and attend classes. May God's grace and peace be multiplied in their lives.

Second, the Director of Missions for the Bessemer Baptist Association, Dr. Barry Cospers, has been a constant encourager. He called often to offer his prayerful support. Along with Dr. Cospers, my prayer partner, Rev. James Gibson, frequently offered words of encouragement to stay the course and finish the work. Both of these gentlemen are godly men who by divine appointment held my hands up during the battle.

Third, I want to thank my church family who has allowed me to be their pastor. Their patience and love have abounded through all of my educational endeavors. They not only offered financial support, but have also granted the time away that was necessary to attend seminars and workshops. Through the implementation of this project,

The Baptist Church at McAdory became stronger and healthier. May our Lord continue to use this fellowship to foster a family of faith.

Fourth, I would be remiss if I did not thank my precious mother. She has been a constant prayer warrior for me during this process. She not only provided spiritual support, but also gave of her financial resources so that I could achieve a more excellent project.

Fifth, I want to thank Betsy Fredrick who edited this project. She not only corrected my fumbling errors in grammar and style, but did so with grace and compassion. May our Lord continue her ministry to others who, like me, struggle with their writing skills.

Sixth, I want to thank the entire Southern Baptist Theological Seminary staff, especially my supervisor, Dr. Michael Pohlman. Every person in the Professional Doctorate program has been most helpful and encouraging. Just as Aquila and Priscilla showed Apollos a more excellent way, so have the teaching faculty shown me a more accurate way to divide the word of truth and preach the gospel. I am thankful for their sincere dedication to equip individuals who are called to preach and teach the good news of Jesus Christ. May God continue to be honored through their ministry.

Bill McCall

McCalla, Alabama

May 2018



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to institute a disciple making plan that educates and encourages potential leaders at The Baptist Church at McAdory, McCalla, Alabama, to effectively develop reproducible, Spirit-filled disciples.

#### **Goals**

The first goal was to assess the church's understanding and practice of the spiritual disciplines. To obtain this data, a survey was given to adults who attend various Sunday morning Bible study classes. Respondents completed a twenty-five-question spiritual disciplines survey consisting of questions scored on a six-point Likert scale that determined their perceptions and practices concerning the spiritual disciplines and how often they exhibited leadership qualities in the home, community, and church.<sup>1</sup> Spiritual discipleship qualities included Bible intake,<sup>2</sup> prayer, worship, personal evangelism, and service. By using a four-number security system, the participants were assured of complete anonymity. This goal was determined to be successful if 50 percent, or 75 members, replied.

The second goal was to preach an eight-week sermon series of expository messages intended to encourage the congregation of The Baptist Church at McAdory (TBCM) to practice the spiritual disciplines. Following the sermon series, members who

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<sup>1</sup>See appendix 1.

<sup>2</sup>Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines of the Christian Life*, rev. ed. (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2014), 27.

completed the initial discipleship survey were surveyed again as a post-test. A paired, two-tail *t*-test method was employed to determine the impact of the sermon series. The first and second spiritual discipleship survey results were analyzed and the goal was considered successful when the results of the post-test indicated a statistically significant increase in members' understanding and practice of the spiritual disciplines.

The third goal was to enlist young and maturing leaders in a ten-week spiritual leadership formation program that equipped them with several practices and skills of discipleship and leadership. A season of prayer began the project. I asked those who participated in the survey to recommend potential male candidates for the program. The spiritual leadership training program integrated training in select spiritual disciplines and spiritual leadership principles. The program taught the importance of Bible intake and how it is necessary to become a competent leader. Students were encouraged to have a consistent prayer life so they could draw near to God. When they drew near to God, they became more confident in their leadership skills as they yielded to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The students were shown how worship builds godly character, and the important part worship plays in the life of any spiritual leader. The students were taught how to share the gospel, and how doing so increased their courage. They also learned how serving others taught them compassion.<sup>3</sup> A three-person expert panel of persons with at least ten years of ministry experience reviewed the curriculum using a rubric<sup>4</sup> to help reveal the program's strengths and weaknesses. This part of the goal was considered successful when the reviewers rated each aspect of the training program as "sufficient" or "exemplary."

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<sup>3</sup>The curriculum was developed by integrating Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, and Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer* (Chicago: Moody, 2007). Although there are many important biblical spiritual disciplines, such as fasting, stewardship, or silence, and solitude, this leadership training program emphasized those key disciplines that are especially needed at TBCM.

<sup>4</sup>See appendix 2.

Before the program began a spiritual discipleship and leadership survey was given to candidates to determine their level of Bible intake, prayer time, worship, evangelism, and service. The same spiritual discipleship and leadership survey was given at the end of the program.<sup>5</sup> The results of the surveys were analyzed and the goal was considered successful if the second spiritual discipleship and leadership survey revealed an increase in participants' practice of the various spiritual disciplines and employed the qualities of spiritual leadership. A paired, two-tail *t*-test method was employed to help determine if the goal had been accomplished.

The fourth goal was to create a sustainable discipleship strategy that would be perpetuated into future generations. Candidates who completed the program prayerfully considered the next generation of potential leaders. As the program's overseer, I guided them. This goal was determined to be successful when three new disciple leadership groups spawned from the original group.

### **Ministry Context**

TBCM is the product of a three-way merger and relocation. The three churches were located in the city limits of Bessemer, Alabama. The merger included First Baptist Church, South Highland, and Westside. All three churches were profoundly different in their cultures. The demographics of the congregations were relatively the same in relation to race and age; however, their vocational and educational backgrounds varied greatly. Westside Baptist primarily consisted of blue-collar workers whose education background was compromised of high school and vocational training. First Baptist Church's congregation contained many professionals such as lawyers, doctors, and bankers. Though South Highland was relatively small in comparison to the other congregations, it too held its own cultural significance. South Highland historically had members from the glory

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<sup>5</sup>See appendix 3.

days of Bessemer, Alabama. These people made a significant amount of money when the steel industry was at its height.

Because the congregations were somewhat diverse, it was important that a great deal of emphasis was on promoting unity with the newly formed fellowship. For the first year, biblical preaching centered on the importance of strengthening harmonious relationships. One of the strengths that developed out of the emphasis on unity was that the church developed a sweet spirit and flourished as a congregation. Overall, the attitudes of the people reflected what Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus: “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Eph 4:29-30). A harmonious and happy relationship has developed out of what could have been a potentially volatile situation.

When the churches first merged and relocated, the median age of the congregation was in the upper 70s. Since the relocation transpired and new members have been added, that age has significantly dropped to the lower 60s. Senior adults are often better tithers than younger adults. Consequently, the people have remained faithful financial stewards. The church has been able to pay off debt for the building and properties eleven years in advance. Financial stability in any family relationship helps the fellowship to remain congenial and friendly. Financial stability has afforded the congregation to add ministerial staff. The addition of staff members has not always been to accommodate the current populace. Additional staff has been added to seek ways to grow certain programs. Because the church was financially secure, it could add new ministers to help spark new ministries.

The older leaders have been strong and have led well in some areas, but the church lacks a sufficient number of young lay leaders. The older leadership was strong in business related areas, but lacked the spiritual maturity to lead the church into a stronger

spiritual condition. The church was not attracting a significant amount of younger people. The lack of a sufficient number of Spirit-led young lay leaders jeopardizes the future stability of the church. As natural attrition takes its course, the church will be left without the strong leadership of which it was accustomed. As younger people have joined, a long-term discipleship process has not been implemented to help them grow as leaders. The mentality has been to give them a kind of on-the-job training. The church would see potential in young people and elect them into office without giving any kind of discipleship or leadership training. They assumed that they would learn by observation. This error is critical in the life of the church that could supplant future growth.

### **Rationale**

This project was based on the belief that spiritual leaders will emerge when followers of Christ engage in the exercise of spiritual disciplines. In the Great Commission, Jesus commanded his followers to make disciples (Matt 28:19-20). His instructions should spark the church to engage in a plan and a process to make disciples so spiritual leaders will be raised up for the perpetuation of the church. Jesus was not alone in this biblical mandate. In the early years of the development of the nation of Israel, Moses instructed the people to teach the Lord's precepts to their children and their children's children (Deut 6:7). The church has a biblical directive to employ a pedagogic process to make disciples and therefore cultivating spiritual leaders for the future.

The ministry context also precipitated the need for this project to be implemented. TBCM has a tremendous amount of potential. The people are willing and ready to grow numerically, and in their relationship with the Lord. God has strategically placed the building in an area that is experiencing rapid growth, and schools in the area are receptive to the church's involvement. It is vitally important that this body of believers be prepared for future growth. The focus for the church must not be on the people that are here now, but on the people who will soon come.

“Sustainable agriculture” is a term popularized in the agriculture community, and is the idea that farmers in impoverished areas, through education and hands on training, will be able to perpetuate their crop productions for years without outside assistance. The premise of this project is that any local body should be able to develop within its membership leaders who will sustain the growth of the church for future generations.

### **Definitions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

Technical terms used throughout this project are defined below to aid the reader’s understanding of the subject.

*Spiritual leadership.* In this project, spiritual leadership focuses on God-appointed people who unselfishly serve the body of Christ. By the guidance of the Holy Spirit, these individuals practice spiritual disciplines and utilize their godly influence to glorify God.<sup>6</sup>

*Spiritual disciplines.* Whitney’s definition is used in this project:

The Spiritual Disciplines are those practices found in Scripture that promote spiritual growth among believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are the habits of devotion and experiential Christianity that have been practiced by the people of God since biblical times.<sup>7</sup>

The first limitation was that this project was based on volunteer participation and those volunteers exhibiting a lifestyle change. Potential lay leaders entered the group and agreed by signing a covenant that they would commit to the full ten-week program. The program was implemented in hopes that participants would increase their exercise of spiritual disciplines. Actual improvements to individuals’ behavior could not be forecasted.

The first delimitation is that the first pre-test and post-test were only given to members of adult Bible study classes of TBCM who met on Sunday mornings. Each respondent was asked to place a memorable four-digit security code on the survey to

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<sup>6</sup>Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 28-29.

<sup>7</sup>Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 4.

ensure complete anonymity. The second delimitation was that each respondent to the post-test affirmed that they had listened to at least six of the eight sermons in the series. The third delimitation was that only surveys that had been fully completed were analyzed. The fourth delimitation is that the expert panel consisted of three members who had at least ten years of full-time vocational ministry experience. The fifth delimitation is that even though there are many spiritual disciplines, only certain disciplines that were the most pertinent to TBCM were taught and developed.

### **Research Methodology**

The research methodology for this project included the use of a pre- and post-test survey given to adult Bible study classes who met on Sunday morning, a pre- and post-test given to participants in the ten-week servant leadership program, and an evaluation rubric for the three-person expert panel.<sup>8</sup> Four goals determined the effectiveness of this project. The first goal was to evaluate the church's level of practice of spiritual disciplines and spiritual leadership by administering a twenty-five-question survey to adult members of TBCM Bible study who met on Sunday mornings. The survey included questions related to the amount of time they spent in personal Bible study, prayer, and worship. The survey was administered prior to an eight-week sermon series. The information was analyzed and stored for future comparison. The goal was considered successfully met when more than 75 surveys were completed.

The second goal was to preach an eight-week sermon series of expository messages intended to equip the congregation of TBCM to become spiritual leaders. The series centered on biblical passages that specifically addressed the spiritual disciplines of Bible intake, prayer, evangelism, and service. The leadership qualities addressed were competency, confidence, courage, and compassion. A post-test was administered to those

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<sup>8</sup>All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee.

who participated in the pre-test. They were identified by a four-digit security code. The two surveys were analyzed by using a paired, two-tail *t*-test.

The third goal was to enlist potential leaders in a ten-week spiritual training program that would equip them with several practices and skills of discipleship and leadership. These young, but maturing leaders were laymen who may or may not have already served in some leadership capacity in the church. The spiritual training program began with a discussion of a spiritual discipline. The following week the participants learned an applicable leadership quality that related to that discipline. The remainder of the program alternated disciplines with spiritual leadership qualities. To ensure that this goal was successful, an expert panel was created to review the curriculum. A rubric was used as a tool for their evaluation. Adjustments were made to the curriculum based on their evaluation. The goal was determined to be successfully met when the panel approved of the adjusted curriculum with a “sufficient” or “exemplary” score. The expert panel was three individuals who had at least ten years of full-time ministry service. A pre-test and post-test similar to the test given to the larger group was also administered to the smaller group. The results of the tests were analyzed by employing a paired, two tail *t*-test method. The goal was considered met if the *t*-test revealed an increase in participants’ practice of the various qualities of spiritual leadership.

The fourth goal was to create a sustainable discipleship strategy that would be perpetuated into future generations. Those who completed the ten-week program were commissioned as instructors for future groups. The group was asked to prayerfully consider who should be enlisted for the next group. I helped guide those who completed the project in selecting the next generation of participants. I acted as an encourager and mentor to the new instructors. The goal was determined to be successful when three new disciple leadership groups began from the original group.



CHAPTER 2  
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR  
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLESHIP  
AND LEADERSHIP

For the last 100 years, the church has rightly stressed the importance of reaching out to lost people.<sup>1</sup> Evangelism is a part of the church's calling and commission. However, the newly converted infants in Christ have mostly been left to fend for themselves. Many of these new converts are not taken under the counsel of a more mature believer and shown how to grow in their faith. The majority of the people in the contemporary church would agree the lack of discipleship has had a negative impact on the church. Placing a priority on discipleship training will greatly strengthen any local fellowship. The church must not look to the latest philosophical whims as a guide. It must seek biblical mandates and precedents. It is the premise of this project that the Bible teaches all Christians are called to pursue godliness through the practice of various spiritual disciplines and exercise spiritual leadership within their spheres. This chapter provides key Bible passages that demonstrate: (1) all believers are called to pursue godliness, (2) God calls all kinds of people, (3) the necessity of prayer, (4) the sufficiency of Scripture in the pursuit of godliness, and (5) the importance of servanthood in the life of the discipleship.

**Called to Pursue Godliness**

After experiencing a new life in Christ, believers will have a God given desire to pursue godliness. This desire must be followed by a plan enabling the believer to grow

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<sup>1</sup>George Barna, *Growing True Disciples: New Strategies for Producing Genuine Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs: Water Brook, 2001), 2.

in godliness. Paul reminded Timothy of the pursuit of godliness: “Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness” (1 Tim 4:7).<sup>2</sup> Paul begins by telling Timothy to have nothing to do with irreverent and silly myths. Paul could have been referring to the endless genealogies he mentions in verse 4, which caused people to focus on erroneous teachings instead on the Word of God. This kind of speculation showed poor stewardship of time and energy. Instead of wasting his time on such fables, Timothy is to train himself for godliness. He gives this instruction in the midst of a paragraph that encourages him to be a “good minister of Christ Jesus” (v. 6). According to Paul, a good minister is one who puts before the people the words of faith and teaches them good doctrine. So, it was necessary for Timothy to train himself in godliness so he could be the good minister that teaches the good doctrine. The word Paul used for “train” is *gymanaze*. Earle says Paul is emphasizing that Timothy should train himself in godliness with the same intensity an athlete would train himself to compete in an event. The key is to be disciplined. Both spiritual and physical training require a commitment of the mind. Determination is certainly necessary to focus on training in godliness.<sup>3</sup> However, the instruction Paul gives Timothy involves more than just the mind. One of the great issues of Timothy’s day was sexual immorality. Sexual immorality occurs when one allows his body, with all its passions, to dominate the mind. Paul was not only telling Timothy to be disciplined in his mind, but also not to allow his body to dominate his thinking. The same is true today. The body should not dictate to the mind what a follower of Christ should do. Paul said it this way in 1 Corinthians 9:27, “But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.” Believers must bring their minds and bodies under discipline in their pursuit of godliness.

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<sup>2</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the English Standard Version.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Earle, *1 Timothy*, in vol. 11 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 373.

Towner correctly sees godliness as the central idea or interest in the text. Focusing on godliness helps put it in right priority within the scope of sincere and genuine Christian living.<sup>4</sup> So, a disciple should learn how to train his mind (overcoming the body) to focus on godliness. Towner brings up an important consideration when he says godliness is the equivalent of true Christian behavior, and godly behavior demonstrates the authenticity of his faith.<sup>5</sup> This is truly what godliness is all about. Mounce and Towner are in agreement with this definition. Mounce says godliness (*eusebeia*) refers to a specific way a believer lives. His lifestyle reflects a devotion to God.<sup>6</sup> Godly behavior (godliness) is affected by one's spiritual training. In other words, followers of Christ who train themselves in the knowledge of truth (the Bible) are more likely to have godliness develop in their lives.

Paul makes his point even clearer when he elaborates on what it means to train in godliness. He draws a mental picture by contrasting the vast difference between physical training and spiritual training. He says there is some value in physical training, but its results are only for a limited time. The training yielding the greatest benefit is spiritual training. Paul is stressing to Timothy the importance of first training himself in spiritual disciplines so he can train others. In verse 12 of this chapter he instructs him to not allow anyone to despise him because of his age. Rather, he was to be an example by in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. He was also to devote himself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, and to teaching. In verse 15 he tells him to practice these things. These practices Paul mentions are the very practices all followers of Christ should exercise.

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<sup>4</sup>Philip Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2006), 302.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>William Mounce, *Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 298.

Just as Paul instructed Timothy then, today all believers are mandated by the Bible to pursue godliness through spiritual disciplines.

Not only does Paul instruct Timothy in the pursuit of godliness, he also teaches Titus some important truths related to discipleship. In Titus 1:1-4, Paul first identifies himself as a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. He states further his purpose in being a servant and apostle is for the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth. According to Robertson, this is the aim of Paul's apostleship.<sup>7</sup> Paul understood that one's faith and his knowledge of the truth are in accord with godliness. Paul's purpose and identity are inseparable. As an apostle he is a messenger who bears the truth of Jesus Christ. MacArthur says the truth of which Paul is talking about is a divine truth:

Divine truth and godliness are inextricably related. No matter how sincere our intentions might be, we cannot obey God's will if we do not know what it is. We cannot be godly if we do not know what God is like and what He expects of those who belong to Him.<sup>8</sup>

According to this passage, the pursuit of godliness is directly related to one's knowledge of divine truth. How then is this divine truth known? Paul says it is manifested through preaching God's Word. Kitchen suggests what Paul was talking about was not the act of preaching itself, but what was being preached. Paul, as an apostle, is the messenger sent by the divine King to herald the truth of God's gracious and saving will.<sup>9</sup> One of the disciplines, which will be emphasized in this project, is Bible intake. A follower of Christ can increase Bible intake by hearing God's Word preached. Titus 1:1-4 demonstrates how godliness, the preaching of the Word, and divine truth are all interwoven and are essential to mature as a disciple of Christ. Even though preaching is essential, it cannot be the only way one receives the Word. Numerous people hear God's

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<sup>7</sup>A. T. Robertson, *Epistles of Paul, Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. 4 (Nashville: Broadman, 1933), 597.

<sup>8</sup>John MacArthur, *Titus, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1996), 7.

<sup>9</sup>John Kitchen, *The Pastoral Epistles for Pastors* (The Woodlands, TX: Kress Christian, 2009), 483.

Word preached every Sunday. However, many are not growing because they are not practicing other means of Bible intake, such as personal devotion, memorization, and meditation on Scripture. Preaching is vitally important to grow in knowledge of divine truth, but it cannot be held in isolation, other disciplines must be involved.

Hebrews 5:14 also helps clarify what it means to grow in godliness through the Word. “But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.” Mature believers move beyond the basic elements of the faith to deeper spiritual truths. This passage indicates there is a progression to discipleship. The mature follower of Christ is one who has developed to a level of discernment who through consistent practice will distinguish good from evil. Maturity is relative and can mean different things to different people. In this project it is important to have a clear understanding of what it means to be a mature follower of Christ. O’Brien says this mature believer in Hebrews is someone who exhibits a moral, spiritual life exposed to teaching about righteousness. Again, the Bible stresses godliness is directly related to one’s behavior. O’Brien continues in this idea of maturity by reminding his readers that the word for “maturity” in the original language is *teleios*.<sup>10</sup> The idea is one of completion, or one who has reached a goal. This is not to say that one ever completely arrives, and can therefore stop maturing in Christ. Like Paul, all followers of Christ must recognize no one has fully arrived at complete spiritual maturity. Spiritual maturity is an ongoing process of discipleship throughout the duration of one’s earthly life. It is not the fact the person has finished maturing, it simply says he shows evidence that he is skilled in the word of righteousness. Cockerill says *teleios* appears in the genitive plural, and without the definite article. Because it appears in this form the emphasis is placed on the quality of maturity the believer exhibits.<sup>11</sup> To be a mature believer is not a

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<sup>10</sup>Peter O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010), 209.

<sup>11</sup>Garath Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, The New International Commentary on

state of being. No one should be able to say they are a fully developed follower of Christ. Again, all believers are a work in progress. The genitive in its anarthrous condition is stressing a quality of character exhibited in the lifestyle of someone who has walked in faith with the Lord. Bruce sums it up well when he writes,

It is ethically mature people, those “who through practice have had their senses trained to distinguish between good and evil,” who have built up in the course of experience a principle or standard of righteousness by which they can pass discriminating judgment on moral situations as they arise.”<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, Cockerill states those who exhibit spiritual maturity are the ones who have been trained by exercising their faith in life circumstances. They have developed a complete reliance on God, which comes through trusting his promises. The power to do so is only through Christ. Ultimately only Christ can bring a disciple to the place of maturity.<sup>13</sup> This important facet stresses the importance of preaching and teaching the gospel. Romans 1:17 says in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed. This passage further states, “The righteous shall live by faith.” The follower of Christ is made right before God by faith, and by faith he lives a godly lifestyle by fully trusting in Christ alone.

### **Discipleship and the Sufficiency of Scripture**

The Bible is the best source for guidance in the pursuit of this godly lifestyle. The Bible contains all types of instruction and illustrations to prove this point. One example is found in the life of Joshua. When it was time for Joshua to take over the leadership of God’s people, God clearly instructed him how to do so in Joshua 1:1-9.

Joshua had been Moses’ right hand man and walked through numerous trials and triumphs. It had come time for him to now lead the people into the Promised Land. Following Moses would have been a difficult thing to do. Moses had done what God

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the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2012), 260.

<sup>12</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 136.

<sup>13</sup>Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 259.

appointed him to do and Joshua would now be the person to lead the people forward. The Lord prepared Joshua to lead his people to accomplish a humanly impossible task. God told him to cross over the Jordan because he was giving them the land. Next, he gave Joshua a powerful promise. God told him he would not leave him nor forsake him. The Lord then instructed Joshua on what he was to do: be strong and very courageous. He would need these attributes as he faced the enemy. The Lord states further that in order to be strong and courageous, he would need to be careful to obey the whole Mosaic Law. Joshua was not to turn from to the right hand or the left. Butler says this law (*torah*) is more than just a compilation of edicts. He contends that the Torah is the “form that divine authority has assumed in the reality of Israel.”<sup>14</sup> In other words, this law Moses had received from God was to be the guiding force in his life. The power of this command is much greater than mere obedience out of obligation. This command says the Torah has become the way God would guide Joshua. Just like the Torah for Joshua, so should the Bible be for today’s generation of believers. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness.”

Joshua was to meditate on the Torah day and night. Butler says this meditation would be audible.<sup>15</sup> As Joshua assumed the leadership position, he was to not only know the law, but he was to repeat it often so that he would be shaped and guided by it. Madvig provides insight to what the Bible means by meditating. The word for meditate comes from the word *hagah*, and this literally means to mutter. The idea is when one mutters the word to himself, he is constantly thinking about it and thus being changed by it.<sup>16</sup> Later

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<sup>14</sup>Trent C. Butler, *Joshua 1-12*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 7a (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 220.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 221.

<sup>16</sup>Donald H. Madvig, *Joshua*, in vol. 3 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 257.

in the project this concept will be beneficial in helping students understand how to properly meditate on the word of God.

Psalm 1:1-2 equally demonstrates the sufficiency of Scripture for discipleship by contrasting the actions of the wicked versus the righteous. The psalmist starts with statements written in the negative, but then shows how the blessed or happy person delights in God's law. The word the psalmist uses for "delight" is used in the later Hebrew sense as one's occupation or business. In other words, he makes it his prime objective in life to fulfill God's law.<sup>17</sup> When a person loves his occupation he arises with delight to meet the day. One can imagine as the psalmist awakes every morning ready to read and act upon the Word of God. Jacobson says the real sense of the word for "law" is instruction and continues by saying this is specifically the Lord's instruction. He also says the message of Psalm 1:1-2 is clear: the way to be happy means that one should not follow the advice of human beings who have faulty characters, but should follow the Lord's instruction.<sup>18</sup> Today, people must understand the Bible contains the Lord's instruction. To hear and receive the Word of the Lord then becomes their goal and objective.

In developing potential leaders, it will be necessary to show them the need to listen to the right kind of counsel. The Bible is the source followers of Christ must turn to in order to receive this right kind of counsel. To be wise in the world is one thing, but the real need in most congregations is to have biblically savvy individuals being guided by the principles found in the Word of God. The psalmist is saying happy people listen to the Lord's instruction. He also tells the consequences of not seeking the Lord's instruction.

At this point in the chapter a point needs to be made for clarity. Any church that does not have leaders who are seeking to be led by biblical instruction will become

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<sup>17</sup>William R. Taylor, *The Book of Psalms*, in vol. 4 of *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Nolan B. Harmon (Nashville: Abingdon, 1955), 20.

<sup>18</sup>Rolf A. Jacobson, *The Book of Psalms*, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2014), 61.



weak and soon fall away. Both Joshua and the psalmist were to meditate on the Word of God. It has already been stated meditating on Scripture means to audibly repeat a passage repeatedly. Clowney says when a believer meditates on the Word, as it was originally intended, he enters the very counsels of heaven. Through God's revelation, his Word mysteries of a divine and heavenly nature are revealed.<sup>19</sup> Leading God's people is a great stewardship. Leading the body of Christ in the right direction comes from serious and contemplative study of the Bible. The Bible gives direction to the leader, and the leader gives direction to the people. Today's spiritual leaders need to regain this ancient art of meditating on Scripture.

Psalm 119:9 also demonstrates the sufficiency of Scripture in guiding one in godliness by first asking an important question, "How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word." Purity in character and godliness go hand in hand. In 1 Timothy, godliness was directly related to one's behavior. Purity and godliness are complementary terms. True Christian behavior will reflect the purity of one's heart. So, to train the mind to remain pure, which leads to right behavior, a person must guard his way according to God's Word. The psalmist continues this line of thinking in verse 10 by saying his focus is undivided. He is seeking God with his whole heart. In doing so he prays he will not stray from God's commandments. The sufficiency of Scripture is confirmed when the psalmist states in verse 11 that he has hidden God's Word in his heart so he will not sin against God. According to this passage, God's Word, when hidden in a person's heart (memorization and meditation), will enable him to refrain from sinning, thus living a life of purity and godliness. VanGemeran contends when the psalmist speaks of hiding God's Word in one's heart he is not just referring to memorization. The idea the psalm portrays includes a holistic lifestyle, which reflects one's devotion to the

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<sup>19</sup>Edmund P. Clowney, *Christian Meditation: What the Bible Teaches about Meditations and Spiritual Exercises* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2002), 22.

Lord.<sup>20</sup> VanGemerens point is a good one. For what good would the Word be if it were just instruction for the mind, and not correction for behavior? The Bible is not only sufficient to guide one into godliness, but it is entirely necessary.

Psalm 119:12 begins with a doxology that reflects the right kind of spirit one must have in the pursuit of godliness. VanGemerens comments on this passage: “This demonstrates that little instruction in godliness takes place unless the heart is full of praise.”<sup>21</sup> A proper perspective of worship and reverence toward God is necessary in order for the Word to take on its transforming work. Worship must be a priority in the disciples life if he is going to effectively pursue godliness in his life. After the psalmist gives praise to God, he implores him to teach him his statutes.

Prayer will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter. Though at this point the disciple must understand Bible intake and prayer are inseparable. People must ask God to open their minds and hearts to receive his Word into their lives. Life transformation takes place when one earnestly seeks Gods presence and power while he studies the Word.

One of the statements in this strophe of Psalm 119 is, “With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth.” This pivotal statement reflects the pedagogic priority Scriptures places on each disciple. The psalmist is reflecting the command that Moses gave in Deuteronomy 6. Gods people were to teach his statutes to the generations to come. The idea of sustainable discipleship is not new. Gods plan all along was for each generation of disciples to learn from the previous.

A healthy church is a reproducing church. One of the goals of this project is to develop a plan to encourage and enable leaders to train the next generation of leaders. Each generation must encourage, instruct, and admonish in love the next generation. It must do

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<sup>20</sup>William A. VanGemerens, *Psalms*, in vol. 5 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 740.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

so by correctly applying the Word of truth. Therefore, Scripture not only supports the principle of the pursuit of godliness, but it also supports the idea of sustainable discipleship.

Psalm 119 also reflects the heart of the true disciple as it relates to Scripture. Bible intake should never be drudgery or done with misery. For the psalmist, the study of Scripture means joy. The reason it is joyful is because he delights in the Word. The Word excites the heart of the believer. It is a joy, not an obligation to open the Bible and hear from the Lord.

Psalm 19 is another passage that speaks of the sufficiency of Scripture to guide one in the pursuit of godliness. Three emerging themes surface in the passage. Verses 1-6 tell how all of creation testifies to the glory of God. The second theme is more relative to the ideas discussed in this section. The psalmist starts by telling his reader how perfect the Law (Torah) is. Torah means more than just the legal sense of the word. It means all of God's instruction. Jacobson says this word the psalmist uses for "perfect" comes from a Hebrew root that has the basic sense of being all-encompassing. The psalmist says there is completeness in God's instruction, just like the sun's complete circuit. Because God's instruction is so all encompassing, it revives or refreshes the soul.<sup>22</sup> The Word of God is indeed perfect. It is the most effective tool for instruction in the pursuit of godliness.

In verses 7-9 the psalmist uses many synonyms for the Lord's instruction. He uses words like testimony, precepts, commandment, fear, and rules to convey the same idea of the validity and authority of God's instructive Word. After each declarative statement about the Lord's instruction, the psalmist then describes how the Word changes a person's life. For example, he says the testimony of the Lord is sure or established. He then follows that this established testimony makes the simple-minded one wise. These verses help disciples to know when they trust the Word of God to guide them; they will

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<sup>22</sup>Jacobson, *The Book of Psalms*, 210.

grow in godliness by its instruction. The psalmist makes other statements, which confirm the importance of God's Word in a disciple's life. He says that because the Word is right, a person's heart will rejoice. A person's eyes will be enlightened because the Word is pure. As a summary, the psalmist lists some conclusions based on the facts he has cited relative to the Lord's instruction. Because the Word is sure, right, pure, clean, enduring forever, true, and righteous altogether, then it is to be highly sought after and desired.

The New Testament demonstrates the sufficiency of Scripture as well. For example, 2 Peter 1:19-21 is a testimony of the importance of God's Word in anyone's life. Peter says in verse 19 that there is something even more sure than what they witnessed on the holy mountain. Peter was an eyewitness to the majesty of Christ on that holy mountain. According to this passage there is something even more certain than his seeing the transfiguration. Peter is placing a high value on the written Word of the Lord. He states further that his readers would do well to pay attention to this "prophetic word." Why is this Word so important in Peter's mind? Because it is "a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts." Peter says people need the prophetic word to shine for them and through them in these dark days of evil in the world. This lamp, as Peter calls it, is a lamp for the believer, which gives him direction and shines on the path of life so he might not stumble. The Word as a lamp means it also shines in the believer by being a testimony to those living in darkness.

Peter was refuting the heretics of his day who said the apostles were spreading myths about Jesus. For this reason, Peter used some very strong language to make his case. Green states Peter's use of *bebaios* (sure, firm, certain) to describe the prophetic word is significant. He elaborates that this adjective was used in other ancient literature to emphasize the validity of a legal document. Hence, Green says Peter's use of this word demonstrates the sureness and genuineness of the prophetic word.<sup>23</sup> Just like Peter

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<sup>23</sup>Gene L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 226.

refuted the heretics by standing firm on the authority of the Word of God, so should the contemporary church vigorously defend the same Word. Green adds another interesting thought about this passage. He points out how Peter encourages his readers to pay particular heed to the prophetic word: “Such attention implies that one will act on the words by embracing and following them.”<sup>24</sup> Not only should the church stand firm in its understanding about the sureness of Scripture, but it would also do well to embrace and follow these Scriptures. In order to follow through on Peter’s advice to the church, there must be intentional discipleship. In the pursuit of godliness, the Bible must be not only revered as the authoritative Word of God, but it also must be followed and obeyed.

Peter continues to show the validity and authority of the Word of God by showing its source. In verses 20-21 he strongly states the first matter of business for the student of the Word of God is to know that no prophecy is solely man’s doing. Humans are not the source of inspiration in Scripture. Strachan says the Holy Spirit is the agency, and human beings are the agent: “The men speak. The Spirit impels.”<sup>25</sup> It stands to reason if the third person of the Trinity is the moving force and agency in the writing of the Scriptures, then the sufficiency of Scripture in training for godliness should be a given. Training spiritual leaders using any other source would be a step in the wrong direction. Using business models to train spiritual leaders would cause instability within the fellowship. Churches then would become well run organizations accomplishing nothing in the kingdom of God. Their objectives are skewed because they have founded themselves on principles not intended for the church. Peter states that churches would do well to heed the prophetic word. Therefore, any training in godliness must rely upon the sufficiency of Scripture as its primary source for instruction.

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<sup>24</sup>Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 227.

<sup>25</sup>R. H. Strachan, *The Second Epistle General of Peter*, in vol. 5 of *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 132.

The passages in this section demonstrate not only the sureness of Scripture, but they demonstrate how important it is to follow God's Word as the guide for holiness. Every step in the process for developing spiritual leaders should be in agreement and adherence to the Bible.

### **God Calls All Kinds of People**

Not only does the Bible demonstrate that God calls believers to godliness, but it also says God calls all kinds of people out of many different circumstances to serve. The call of Moses is a prime example of this fact. In Exodus 3, Moses' call is outlined in fairly specific details. Verse 1 of the chapter says Moses was a shepherd for his father-in-law. The text reveals Moses is employed in one of the lowest occupations of his day. He not only was at the bottom of the vocational chart, but he was not even tending his own sheep. In the previous chapters Moses is described as one who lived in the house of royalty. Stuart says no one who still thought of himself as Egyptian would ever stoop to such a lowly position as a shepherd. Moses had to flee Egypt, and by the start of chapter 3 it is obvious he has nothing to do with being an Egyptian.<sup>26</sup>

No matter what area of ministry a person is called into, he must know his yielding to the call is not just a human choice. If one chooses to be involved in a ministry, or take on the role of a spiritual leader he can choose (when the going gets rough) to stop ministering or leading. The call becomes all so much more foundational when one remembers the call was God's calling and not his own.

Moses' call also reveals something universal in anyone's call. The emphasis in the text is not on Moses and his lifestyle and vocation. The text places the accent of all the action on God. One can see from the beginning of the narrative Moses was not seeking

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<sup>26</sup>Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 2 (Nashville: Broadman, 2006), 108.

any experience such as the one he encountered. By all indications he was just doing the job he had done for years, and was not expecting any word from the Lord God.<sup>27</sup>

The narrative continues by citing a series of interactions between Moses and the Lord. Most are excuses given by Moses as to why he cannot, and should not do what God has called him to do. In the midst of this conversation God reveals his personal name. The revelation of this name leaves an indelible mark on divine/human interaction. Durham gives insight to the revealing of the name “Yahweh.” In verse 13 Moses asks a question and in verse 14 God gives the answer. Durham contends to properly understand God’s answer, one must understand Moses’ question. Moses was asking God if he was capable of accomplishing all he said he was going to do. Why was this important for Moses to know? Knowing God was capable of performing all he promised would bring validity to his call. The name, as Durham continues to explain, the Lord reveals means, “I AM THAT I AM.” This means the God of whom Moses was talking was not a conceptual being, but an active being. He cannot ever be referred to in the past tense. He simply is One who always is.<sup>28</sup> Stuart says this revelation of God’s name is not only revealing of his being, but also of his nature. He contends this name is causative. He further states what Moses actually heard was, “I CAUSE TO BE because I cause to be.” Thus, the Lord God of Israel has commissioned and empowered Moses to accomplish what he has called him to do.<sup>29</sup> It is important to note not everyone receives the burning bush experience Moses had. In fact, Moses’ experience is not the typical experience most people had in the Old Testament. What is important to remember about the call of Moses is when God calls people to perform a task; he is not telling them to perform it based on their own resources. God’s call means God’s empowerment to accomplish the deed.

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<sup>27</sup>John I. Durham, *Exodus*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 3 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 29.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>29</sup>Stuart, *Exodus*, 112.

Jonah's call is different than Moses' in some ways, but they are similar in that God's purpose is ultimately accomplished in both situations. In Moses' conversation with God, he argues and tries to escape the call upon his life. Jonah does not argue with God, he just willfully and purposefully disobeys. The word of the Lord clearly came to Jonah and the Bible says Jonah rose to flee from the presence of the Lord. Instead of acting in obedience, he acted in disobedience. Several themes are repeated throughout the narrative. The majority of Bible students are well acquainted with the story and how a fish God prepared eventually swallowed Jonah. Allen contends this fish represents the amazing grace of the Lord. In fact, he says grace (the deliverance of Jonah) is one of the major dynamics in the entire story.<sup>30</sup> What has grace and one's call to a leadership role have to do with one another? Grace is the reason people are called. One's qualifications, or what appear to be disqualifications, are not the deciding factors. God saves and calls those whom he chooses, which is based upon his grace. Jonah's call, and his deliverance from certain death in the sea, is biblical proof God calls all kinds of people into roles of leadership.

Paul's testimony in Galatians 1:11-2:10 verifies God's call on a person's life is based on grace and not on merit. In fact, Paul emphatically states it was God who set him apart before he was born, and it was God who called him by his grace. Like others before him, Paul had a divine meeting with the Lord, and it was out of this meeting he was called. Fung contends the grammar and context of the text closely associates Paul's calling with Jesus' visitation with him on the road to Damascus. Fung states, "In other words, the divine call came to Paul by way of God's revealing his Son to him."<sup>31</sup> The manner in which Paul wrote this verse shows he was emphasizing the fact that God

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<sup>30</sup>Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1976), 213.

<sup>31</sup>Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1976) 64.



initiated his calling.<sup>32</sup> True enough, Paul's testimony reveals what he received was not from man. Therefore, he was not preaching man's gospel, but the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, which was an important fact to stress to the Galatian church for they had strayed from the gospel they originally heard from Paul. He did not receive counsel from anyone else. He spent the first three years of his newly converted life in isolation. His meeting with Peter and James only came after those years.

Paul continues in his testimony to prove a point that what he received, he received first hand from Christ. Those who opposed Paul in Galatia denied the validity of his preaching. They contended he received his message second-hand from the apostles. Paul stressed in his testimony that the people who were recognized as the primary leaders in the church validated his ministry by recognizing Paul had received the same grace as them. After his meeting with Peter, James (Jesus' brother), and John they extended to him the right hand of fellowship. George says the clasping of hands indicated the common life they shared in the Holy Spirit. George continues, "But we should not forget that the outcome of the agreement involved a recognition of the doctrine of grace Paul preached as well as recognition of that grace in his own life and ministry."<sup>33</sup>

### **The Necessity of Prayer in the Pursuit of Holiness**

In order to hear the call of God, a disciple must be engaged in a consistent prayer life. An exegesis of Psalm 32:6-7 demonstrates the necessity of prayer in the pursuit of holiness. This psalm is described as a *maskil*, which indicates it was used for teaching purposes. David was allowing others to learn from his life experiences. David's failures in the past are wiped away by a forgiving God. Good leaders will teach others through their life experiences.

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<sup>32</sup>Timothy George, *Galatians*, The New American Commentary, vol. 30 (Nashville: Broadman, 1994), 119.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, 165.

Verse 6 begins with “therefore.” David, the psalmist, is referring to the confession he made in verse 5. In this verse, he acknowledges his sin to God. He does not try to cover it up, but instead willfully confesses. The result is that the Lord forgives his sin. It was for this reason he says everyone who is godly should offer a similar prayer. Sclater explains the psalmist is calling upon godly men to develop and exercise the habit of prayer. Godly men understand they are still in the hands of God, and God recognizes their prayer.<sup>34</sup> Someone once said confession is good for the soul, which seems to be the psalmist’s intended message. In verse 3 and 4 he speaks of the misery that accompanies one’s refusal to confess. Verse 5 is the turning point. Tanner says it is a release from the torture described in the previous verses. She points out the fact that the author takes eight lines to describe the misery associated with sin and the point of confession. In four short words, God’s action reverses the whole tenor of the passage.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, God’s forgiving act is a sweet experience. Born out of his experience, the psalmist instructs the reader to confess his sin and in so doing, God forgives. In the pursuit of holiness, disciples must see their need to confess their sins before God. It is not necessary to confess to someone else, such as a minister or priest, but it is essential he confess to God. The blessing of confession is that God becomes one’s hiding place, and his children are surrounded with shouts of deliverance. The writer of Hebrews says believers should lay aside every weight and sin that clings so closely to them. They are to run the race that is set before them, looking to Jesus the founder and perfecter of their faith (Heb. 12:1-2a). These verses in Hebrews, as well as those in Psalm 32 teach confessional prayer is necessary. It is equally crucial in the pursuit of holiness. Calvin takes it a step further when he says Psalm 32 more importantly demonstrates how confession alone is not enough: “David obtained

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<sup>34</sup>J. R. P. Sclater, *The Book of Psalms*, in vol. 4 of *The Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1955), 171.

<sup>35</sup>Beth Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2014), 308.

forgiveness, not by the mere act of confession, as some speak, but by faith and prayer.”<sup>36</sup> A life of faith should include praying in faith. As a believer grows in his walk with the Lord, the Holy Spirit brings to his mind what he should confess. When he confesses, he will be stirred in his soul to turn away from past behavior that is not pleasing to the Lord. The result is a holier and godly lifestyle that places its trust in the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Jude 17-20 includes a very important phrase about prayer, and its necessity in the latter days. In this passage, Jude compares believers with non-believers. The non-believers are the people who attend church, but are not in Christ. He reminds his readers that the apostles predicted in the last times there would be scoffers and people who would follow after their own ungodly passions. The scoffer is not an atheist as understood in the modern vernacular. The scoffer is someone who does not believe God will judge him for his actions. Thus, they are able to indulge in whatever behavior they like without any thought of divine punishment or correction.<sup>37</sup> These kinds of people are the ones who cause division. Davids notes that the word used for “division” means to classify or categorize. The health of the church is greatly jeopardized by such people as Jude describes.<sup>38</sup> They are worldly people who are devoid of the Spirit. In verse 20 of his letter he uses a conjunction to separate and to compare. The beloved of Christ are to be different. They are to be “building themselves up in faith,” and, “praying in the Holy Spirit.” Schreiner says that the two participles (building and praying) modify the imperative “keep.” Therefore, Jude is instructing his readers how to sustain themselves in the love of God. Schreiner adds, “Believers cannot keep themselves in God’s love without depending on

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<sup>36</sup>John Calvin, *The Book of Psalms, Calvin’s Commentaries*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 532.

<sup>37</sup>Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2006), 88.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 89.

him by petitioning him in prayer. Love for God cannot be sustained without a relationship with him, and such a relationship is nurtured by prayer.”<sup>39</sup> As one is being kept in the love of God through the building of his faith and by praying in the Holy Spirit, his relationship grows and so does his godliness. The pursuit of godliness is directly related to time spent in sincere prayer with God. However, selfish praying can take precedent if a disciple does not pray in the Holy Spirit. People must allow the Holy Spirit to guide them if they are going to pray with pure hearts and pure motives.

Ephesians 6:10-18 is a parallel passage with Jude 17-20. No other passage is so emphatically relevant to discipleship and the pursuit of godliness than these verses in Ephesians. O’Brien observes that these verses occupy a prominent and significant place in the epistle, thus emphasizing their importance and meaningful instruction to the body of Christ.<sup>40</sup> Paul tells the church they must remain strong in the Lord. They are to be strong in his might. The inference is that one is not to be strong in his own might, but to be strong in the Lord. Paul teaches them how this can be accomplished. They must put on the whole armor of God in order to resist the schemes of the devil. This is necessary because they were not battling earthly foes that they could see. Paul says that their struggle is against “spiritual forces of evil in heavenly places.” O’Brien contends, “Christians must be aware of the conflict and be equipped with divine power to stand against them.”<sup>41</sup> In this passage, Paul describes each piece of the armor of God. He starts his depiction with the belt of truth, then the breastplate of righteousness, and shoes for the readiness given by the gospel of peace. He tells them to have the shield of faith at all times extinguishing the fiery darts of the evil one. They were to place on their heads the helmet

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<sup>39</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 483.

<sup>40</sup>Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 457.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, 459.

of salvation, and have the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Some important truths must be considered concerning the whole armor of God. O'Brien explains the context implies God is the one who provides the weaponry for believers.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, not one piece of this armor is insignificant. All of them play a crucial part in the defense of the gospel.

Many sermons on the armor of God stop with verse 17, or only give a cursory comment to verse 18. Yet, what is mentioned there is as vital as any part of the armor of God. Paul tells the church to pray at all times in the Spirit. The importance of prayer in the life of the believer cannot be overstated. O'Brien helps believers to understand this imperative to pray: "Paul wants his readers to understand that prayer is 'foundational' for the deployment of all the other weapons and is therefore crucial if they are to stand firm in their spiritual struggle."<sup>43</sup> Paul's instruction concerning one's prayer life is multifaceted. According to MacArthur, he uses two different words that mean two types of prayer. The first word is *proseuche*, and refers to general requests. The second word is *desis*, and is usually translated "petition." This type of praying refers to prayers, which is more specific.<sup>44</sup> O'Brien expands on these two terms by saying that though they are synonymous, they must be addressed separately. He contends then, the two main emphases here are to first pray at all times in the Spirit, and then one is to pray keeping alert in all perseverance and petition for all the saints.<sup>45</sup>

The term "pray in the Spirit" has been interpreted in multiple ways. Those of a more charismatic persuasion might think Paul is talking about using some kind of prayer language or ecstatic utterance. MacArthur helps his readers understand that Paul did not

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<sup>42</sup>O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 463.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 484.

<sup>44</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1986), 379.

<sup>45</sup>O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 484.

have in mind speaking in tongues while praying. He says if one is going to pray, it must be done in the Spirit. This means one is praying in the name of Christ. He is uttering a prayer consistent with the character and nature of Jesus Christ. MacArthur cites two biblical sources confirming this line of reasoning. First, Romans 8:26-27 says the Spirit intercedes for the Saints according to the will of God. Equally Zechariah 12:10 states he is the Spirit of grace and supplication.<sup>46</sup> This passage agrees with what Jude said about the necessity of praying in the Spirit. If any believer is going to seriously pursue holiness, then he must have a prayer life guided by the Holy Spirit.

Paul also instructs the church to make supplication for all the saints. So far, this chapter has explained the many facets of the disciple's prayer life. Intercessory prayer is one that cannot be omitted. O'Brien says believers need the intercession of other followers of Christ if they are going to stand firm in the heat of spiritual warfare. He continues by pointing out the four uses of the word "all" in the passage. Paul told them to pray at all times, with all prayer and supplication, with all perseverance, and to make supplication for all the saints. This repetition accentuates the priority Paul gave to reciprocal intercession.<sup>47</sup> Followers of Christ feel compelled to pray for each other. A sincere faith demands that those who have trusted in Christ will see the need to pray for one another. Those pursuing godliness will have an earnest desire to have a consistent and persistent prayer life.

### **God Calls Christians to Serve Others**

The Gospel of Mark tells of an episode in the life of Jesus and the disciples that demonstrates the attitude the true follower of Christ must have as it relates to serving others. James and John approached Jesus with a request to sit at the right and left hand of him when he came into his kingdom. They obviously did not understand all the

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<sup>46</sup>MacArthur, *Ephesians*, 380.

<sup>47</sup>O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 486.

ramifications of their request. Jesus used their asinine appeal to show them how they were totally off base to make such a plea. Jesus taught them that the person who demanded to be first in the kingdom would be the last. All those who had a “get ahead at any cost” ambition would find themselves lacking. Moreover, he stated greatness and being a servant were on equal grounds.<sup>48</sup> The very thought of being a slave and being great must have been so very foreign to the disciples. Bringing the opposite ends of the spectrum together taught them great leaders are also humble servants. Lane writes, “The order of life for the common dealing of the disciples is to be love expressed in the form of service. This transforms the question of rank and greatness into the task of service: only by service does one become great.”<sup>49</sup> Gould calls this way of thinking the paradox of the kingdom of God. To be great requires service. The word for “servant” in this passage denotes the performer of service. The follower of Christ cannot take as his model the Gentile rulers’ mentality; they must have the attitude of the bondservant.<sup>50</sup> Jesus summarized his teaching in 10:45: “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Here lies what should be the culminating thought and attitude in every believer’s heart. True disciples must remember that no one but Jesus could give his life for the sins of believers. Equally, his death was more than an example of sacrificial love, his death on the cross was the atoning sacrifice for sin. Lane points out that Jesus describes his death as his service to God. He also says it is a vicarious death for many so they may be released from the bondage of sin.<sup>51</sup> Followers of Christ

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<sup>48</sup>James Brooks, *Mark*, The New American Commentary, vol. 23 (Nashville: Broadman, 1991), 168-69.

<sup>49</sup>William L. Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979), 382.

<sup>50</sup>Ezra P. Gould, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Mark* (New York: Scribners, 1896), 202.

<sup>51</sup>Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 383.

cannot give their lives as a ransom for many, but they must take on the mind of Christ as a servant when they develop leadership skills.

The same thought of love as the motivating force in serving others is what Paul portrayed in Galatians 5:13-14: “For you were called to freedom, brother. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” In context, Paul was warning the church not to allow themselves to slip back into a form of legalism. He also warned them of the complete opposite of legalism. They were to be careful not to allow their freedom in Christ become a tool to behave in a manner not pleasing to God. When Paul uses the word “flesh” in these verses he means a variety of things, but most especially he means acting in a worldly and ungodly way. The pivotal statement in the whole pericope seems to be, “Through love serve one another.” In Christian leadership, this statement should be the banner over all who sense a call to lead Christ’s church. Serving one another through love dovetails so well with what Jesus taught his disciples in Mark 10:45. Earlier in Galatians, Paul mentions both ideas of freedom and love, but this is the first place he brings them together in a single thought. Just as there was in Mark 10, Paul uses a paradoxical idea to stress his point. Freedom and love are brought together in the very thing from which Christ has ransomed the saints: slavery. George explains,

Through love, Paul said, you should make yourselves slaves to one another. Thus freedom and slavery are not simply mutually exclusive terms: They stand in the closest possible relationship to one another and can only be adequately defined in terms of object and goal: What we are slave *to* and what we are free *for*.<sup>52</sup>

Evidently, Paul saw service in love as a much-needed characteristic in the life of the Galatian church. This same value is applicable in the modern church as well. Leaders must be free to love, and bound to love at the same time.

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<sup>52</sup>George, *Galatians*, 378.



James 2:14-26 stresses the idea that serving cannot be just conceptual. There must be some action to the love all Christians have toward one another. James asks what good is faith if it is not doing something? He gives illustrations of fellow brothers and sisters how do not have adequate clothing and food. McKnight contends that the language communicates more than just an inadequacy in clothing. The person in James' example is completely naked, would have been reprehensible to his Jewish audience. To be naked in public was shameful and disgraceful. A true follower would not, and furthermore could not, leave a fellow believer in such a state. McKnight also explains that this person who is without food in the text is one who does not have his or her daily allotment of food.<sup>53</sup> So, it is almost inconceivable how the person in this scenario could say, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled." James' point is the need has not been met; therefore, faith is useless or dead. Moo comments on this verse: "Failure to provide for an obvious need not only harms those who are in need, but also raises question about the spiritual state of the one who fails to act to relieve the need."<sup>54</sup> A conceptual faith is not really any better than what the demons possess. Demons believe God exists. He says they shudder at the thought of him. James also gives an Old Testament example in Abraham. Abraham did more than say he believed in God. He actually demonstrated his faith by taking Isaac, his son to be sacrificed. James points out how Abraham's faith was an active faith. He cites Rahab as another Old Testament example. She demonstrated her faith by receiving messengers from God's chosen people and then sending them out by another way. Verse 24 contains the culminating thought James wants to communicate: "You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone." James was not saying people are saved by their works<sup>55</sup>;

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<sup>53</sup>Scot McKnight, *The Letter of James*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2011), 230.

<sup>54</sup>Douglas Moo, *The Letter of James*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000), 125.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, 120.

he was telling his audience how faith, which does not have action behind it, is not a real faith at all. James is teaching that those who purport to be spiritual leaders must also be spiritual doers. Anyone who claims to have true faith in God must be compelled to exhibit his faith through accomplishing the will of God.

### **Conclusion**

From the passages examined, it is clear to see how God, through his Word commands his children to pursue godliness. The Bible also demonstrates that God calls all kinds of people to serve in his kingdom. Through prayer and consistent Bible study, God reveals his will for a person's life. Those disciples who are earnestly seeking to know God, and to implement his plan in their lives, will grow in their walk with him. When a follower of Christ prays in the Spirit, he will receive God's direction for his life. He will also see how he can be used in the kingdom to help others have a richer relationship with Christ.

CHAPTER 3  
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED  
TO LEADING PEOPLE TO PRACTICE SPIRITUAL  
DISCIPLINES AND EXHIBITING SPIRITUAL  
LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

Some individuals seem to have been born with leadership skills. They appear to be at ease and comfortable when presented with the challenges of leading a group. Whether or not a person appears to be a natural-born leader, he or she must still grow those skills in order to lead effectively. Spiritual leaders must not only exhibit the talent to lead, but they must demonstrate the discipline necessary to advance those leadership skills.

**Leadership Development and the Practice  
of Spiritual Disciplines**

God develops Christian leaders in multiple ways. One of the primary ways spiritual leaders can develop is through the exercise of spiritual disciplines. Effective spiritual leaders must first become consistent followers of Christ by practicing the spiritual disciplines. Oswald Sanders writes,

Often truly authoritative leadership falls on someone who years earlier dedicated themselves to practice the discipline of seeking first the kingdom of God. Then, as that person matures, God confers a leadership role, and Spirit of God goes to work through him.<sup>1</sup>

Seeking the kingdom of God is directly related to the exercise of spiritual disciplines. Therefore, as Sanders rightly states, spiritual leaders first start a process of spiritual maturity. Then, as their faith grows, they identify the need to lead others to start the same process in their lives.

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<sup>1</sup>Oswald J. Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody, 2007), 19.

One of the first disciplines potential leaders must practice is Bible intake.<sup>2</sup> A spiritually-minded person must be a serious student of the Bible. The Bible shapes the mind of the follower of Christ and gives him the instruction needed for godly living. R. Kent Hughes states, “You can never have a Christian mind without reading the Scriptures regularly because you cannot be profoundly influenced by what you do not know.”<sup>3</sup> Spiritual leaders will be called on to make multiple decisions. Those decisions will affect the body of Christ in either a positive or negative way. If a leader is heavily influenced by sources other than the Bible, then he is apt to steer people in the wrong direction. Barna stresses the importance of the practice of this discipline: “We must filter every choice through a mind and heart so saturated with God’s perspectives that our choices reflect His choices.”<sup>4</sup> It is clear; in order to be an effective spiritual leader, one must be in the constant practice of reading and studying the Bible.

Another important spiritual discipline leaders must practice is prayer. Great men of God have always been men of prayer. Hughes stresses the importance of prayer: “Prayer is like a time exposure to God. Our souls function like photographic plates, and Christ shining image is the light. The more we expose our lives to the white-hot sun of His righteous life . . . the more His image will be burned into our character.”<sup>5</sup> When leaders practice the discipline of prayer, they develop godly characteristics. Andrew Murray explains, “The more we abide in Him and grow into His likeness will His priestly life work in us mightily, and our life become what His is, a life that ever pleads and prevails

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<sup>2</sup>Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2014), 21

<sup>3</sup>R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Man* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 77.

<sup>4</sup>George Barna, *Growing True Disciples* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2001), 100.

<sup>5</sup>Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Man*, 83.

for men.”<sup>6</sup> The ability for any leader to effectively lead is directly related to the quality of his character. Godly character is afforded someone who spends time with God in prayer.

Praying leaders in the church are important, but they must pray in the right way. James 4:3 says, “You ask and do not receive because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.” Leaders must learn to pray in the right spirit by praying in unity with the will of God. Jesus taught his disciples to pray God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Murray reflects on this passage: “As the will is done, the kingdom of heaven comes into the heart. And wherever faith has accepted the Father’s love, obedience accepts the Father’s will. The surrender to, and the prayer for a life of heavenlike obedience, is the spirit of childlike prayer.”<sup>7</sup>

Along with Bible intake and prayer, worship is another spiritual discipline leaders must exercise. Worship encompasses many of the other disciplines. It could be simply stated that worship is essentially having an encounter with God. One could also say the elements of worship must include reading the Bible, prayer, praise to God, and so on. Yet, this definition of worship seems to be lacking. D. A. Carson contends defining what worship truly encompasses is not an easy task. The reason defining worship is not so easy is because people like to infuse their own opinions cloaked with personal preferences and comforts into their definition of worship. Carson helps clarify this issue by offering this definition: “Worship is the proper response of all moral, sentient beings to God, ascribing all honor and worth to their Creator-God precisely because he is worthy, delightfully so.”<sup>8</sup> Carson expands on his thoughts on worship by noting Christian worship must be Christ-centered. He says this worship is empowered by the Spirit and is in keeping with the dictates of the new covenant. This definition and explanation certainly

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<sup>6</sup>Andrew Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer* (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour, 2005), 7.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 32.

<sup>8</sup>D. A. Carson, *Worship by the Book* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), Kindle, 26.

helps clarify who the object of true worship must be. Carson's definition states true worship initiates a response in the heart of worshippers.<sup>9</sup> So, not only is worship an action of the worshipper, but the One worshipped acts to stir the worshipper's heart. One of the ways people respond in worship is to have a desire to be godly. When believers truly worship God, godliness becomes evident in their lives. Whitney writes, "Godliness without the worship of God is unthinkable."<sup>10</sup> The two are inseparable. However, the reality is that many people attend the "worship service," and never encounter God. Worship has been relegated in many people's minds as a meeting at a certain time and place. Whitney reminds his readers that worship can be in vain.<sup>11</sup> It happened in centuries past, and can certainly happen in the present generation. Whitney outlines what it means for believers to truly worship. First, in order to avoid worshiping in vain one must focus and respond to God. In essence, he says worship is more than listening to a biblically-sound sermon; it is being preoccupied with God.<sup>12</sup> Second, Whitney stresses the importance of what Jesus said in John 4:24: worship must be in truth and spirit. He states further that the Spirit of Truth must be present if true worship is going to occur.<sup>13</sup> Whitney strikes at the heart of the meaning of true worship when he identifies these two primary elements. Tozer adds that unless worshippers submit to truth, they cannot worship God. They must admit that what God says about himself is true. They must also submit to who Christ says he is. Further, worshippers must admit to the truth about

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<sup>9</sup>Carson, *Worship by the Book*, 29.

<sup>10</sup>Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 102.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 106.

themselves. They must see themselves as vile sinners who desperately need the atoning blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse them and make them presentable to a holy God.<sup>14</sup>

The late James Montgomery Boice had particular concern with worship in the contemporary church. He felt it had become more human-centered than God-centered. He outlines the problem by identifying three issues: (1) societal triviality has had an adverse effect on the church; (2) the modern culture lends itself to being self-absorbed and human-centered and the church is catering to this element; and (3) the current age is one that is oblivious to God, which tempts the church to engage in something less than true-worship.<sup>15</sup> Boice identifies a compromise of biblically mandated worship. A compromised worship precipitates a compromised lifestyle. If the church is going to have a real impact on the culture, it must engage in God-centered worship.

It has already been noted that godliness is directly related to one's behavior. Tozer said it this way: "Something wonderful and miraculous and life-changing takes place within the human soul when Jesus Christ is invited in to take His rightful place."<sup>16</sup> Indeed, worship is a life-changing experience. Believers and certainly spiritual leaders must behave in a godly manner. When believers and leaders encounter the true and living God through worship, they will see their ungodly acts, confess them, and repent. This modification of behavior demonstrates that the leader is maturing in his faith. Every spiritual leader will see the need to mature in their faith. True worship yields godly results in the lives of believers. Spiritual leaders understand worship is not limited to time and space restrictions. People who know God and are known by God can encounter him

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<sup>14</sup>A. W. Tozer, *Worship: The Reason We Were Created—Collected Insights from A. W. Tozer*, ed. Kevin P. Emmert (Chicago: Moody, 2017), Kindle, 60.

<sup>15</sup>Phillip Graham Ryken, *Give Praise to God: A Vision for Reforming Worship, Celebrating the Legacy of James Montgomery Boice* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R), Kindle, 323.

<sup>16</sup>Tozer, *Worship*, 44.

both corporately and privately.<sup>17</sup> Tozer concurs, “True worship of God must be a constant and consistent attitude or state of mind with the believer.”<sup>18</sup> To live in a state of worship is a life of joy, and it endears one’s heart even more to his Lord.

After Bible intake, prayer, and worship, spiritual leaders should practice evangelism. Telling the gospel story is a natural out-cropping of the other disciplines. Spiritual leaders are people who actively share their faith with others. Unfortunately, many people view evangelism as an art, and it has often been equated with salesmanship. The better one is at “closing the deal,” the better soul-winner they become. This concept is erroneous. Because this ideology has prevailed, many believers have felt uncomfortable sharing their faith for fear of failure. Simply stated, evangelism is telling the good news of Jesus Christ, and it is important for believers to know the conversion of souls, or the lack thereof, is not the responsibility of the one communicating the good news.

Dodson brings clarity to the understanding of discipleship and how it relates to evangelism: “A disciple is someone who learns the gospel, relates in the gospel, and communicates the gospel.”<sup>19</sup> His definition helps dispel the false dichotomy between evangelism and discipleship. Both are founded on hearing, receiving, and telling the good news of Jesus Christ. Spiritual leaders need to realize evangelism cannot be separated from Christ’s demand in the Great Commission to make disciples.

Hughes explains that evangelism is best accomplished through building relationships. Evangelism is most effective when ordinary people who have a heart for Christ engage in relationships with lost people.<sup>20</sup> This is the key to understanding how evangelism and discipleship are so inseparably linked. Through established relationships,

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<sup>17</sup>Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 111.

<sup>18</sup>Tozer, *Worship*, 44.

<sup>19</sup>Jonathan K. Dodson, *Gospel Centered Discipleship* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 38.

<sup>20</sup>Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Man*, 207.



the gospel story is told and sinners are converted. New converts are hungry to grow in grace, and there is no better person to disciple new follower of Christ than the seasoned believer who has established the relationship. Spiritual leaders who are actively seeking to follow Christ through Bible intake, prayer, and worship will earnestly seek to initiate relationships with lost people. At the appropriate and Spirit-anointed time, a true leader will share the gospel story and follow through in a long-term commitment to disciple those who receive salvation.

Much like evangelism, the discipline of serving also comes naturally to those engaged in the other disciplines. Spiritual leadership is servant leadership. Sanders reminds his readers that the Bible speaks little of leaders and leadership. Great leaders in the Bible were humble servants. Sanders further states that Christ himself taught that the kingdom of God is comprised of members who serve one another.<sup>21</sup> Even though the desire to serve is born out of Bible study, prayer and worship, leaders must understand that service in the kingdom requires discipline. Whitney writes, “If we don’t discipline ourselves to serve for the sake of Christ and His kingdom and for the purpose of godliness, we’ll serve only occasionally or when it’s convenient or self-serving.”<sup>22</sup>

It is important for the spiritual leader to realize that service in the kingdom should follow Bible intake, prayer, and worship. Through the exercise of these initial disciplines, God places in the heart of leaders his divine calling and purpose. Tragically, most church members never employ the spiritual disciplines before embarking on a life of service. Therefore, they are never properly in line with God’s purpose and plan. When believers study the Word, pray earnestly, and worship sincerely, God will place in their hearts a desire for service that honors him and glorifies his name.

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<sup>21</sup>Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 22.

<sup>22</sup>Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 144.

## Mutual Affirmation

A phenomenon occurs in the life of the church in relation to how leaders are instituted that is quite remarkable. A mutual affirmation takes place between the congregation and the potential leader. The people of the church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit recognize leadership qualities in individuals and affirm those qualities by encouraging them to consider assuming leadership roles within the fellowship. Potential leaders reciprocate this affirmation when they see needs in the fellowship that require their particular skill set. The Holy Spirit's gift of discernment then works in the hearts of believers both corporately and individually when leaders are needed in the fellowship. As the church observes potential leaders they will see distinctive characteristics to affirm.

The first characteristic the church should see in the lives of prospective leaders is biblical literacy. Savvy leaders must be spiritually minded by being immersed in the Scriptures. Trevor Joy and Spence Shelton inform their readers to search for a leader who has a genuine love for the Scriptures. This person has the confidence to communicate truth from God's Word. Furthermore, leaders in the church should be able to correctly apply Scriptures in real-life situations.<sup>23</sup> Edwin Cole writes on this aspect of biblical literacy: "The Bible is not merely a good source for playing trivia games. It's the very foundation upon which both natural and eternal life rest. Knowledge of God's Word is a bulwark against deception, temptation, accusation and even persecution."<sup>24</sup> Thabiti Anyabwile explains, "Congregations should look for men who know the body and are able to apply God's Word to God's people."<sup>25</sup> He further instructs the church to ask if the person shows discernment in this regard. They should know if he is able to speak to

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<sup>23</sup>Trevor Joy and Spence Shelton, *The People of God: Empowering the Church to Make Disciples* (Nashville: B & H, 2014), 19.

<sup>24</sup>Edwin Louis Cole, *Strong Men in Tough Times: Developing Strong Character in an Age of Compromise* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 1993), 138.

<sup>25</sup>Thabiti M. Anyabwile, *Finding Faithful Elders and Deacons* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 79.

specific needs in the church with appropriate biblical counsel.<sup>26</sup> Any local fellowship's longevity depends on its leaders being biblically astute men of God. It is unfortunate the church has lacked the urgency and spiritual insight it needs to hold its spiritual leaders to a standard of biblical excellence. Biblical literacy is an essential quality in the life of spiritual leaders. A congregation who follows the will of God will see a potential leader's ability to rightly apply Scripture and affirm him in relation to his gift. Equally important is the leader's ability to see the needs for biblical application and employ what he has learned through his study. He will see the need for the church to be edified through what God has spoken to him through the Word.

Spirit-led churches must also recognize and affirm a future leader's exhibition of the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23 details nine attributes that encompass the fruit of the Spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." It is essential that potential leaders demonstrate these virtues both privately and publically. These qualities must also be understood in biblical terms and not defined by worldly ones. For example, love is a word that carries various meanings to many people. Love's true meaning can only truly be understood in light of Scripture. Joy and Shelton suggest that when a leader has a genuine love for God's people he will want to see them grow in the maturity of their faith: "A leader who has a love for people is not someone who simply knows the formula for change or who manipulates for change, but someone who out of love presses on and pursues their people past the walls they erect out of pride, embarrassment, or fear."<sup>27</sup> Church leaders and congregations must correctly and biblically define love.

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<sup>26</sup>Anyabwile, *Finding Faithful Elders and Deacons*, 79.

<sup>27</sup>Joy and Shelton, *People of God*, 20.

Though there are none any more important, there are many more attributes of the fruit of the Spirit beside love. Congregations must recognize the manifestation of other qualities evident in a spiritual leader's life. Leaders will face any number of issues in the church, and those issues can be frustrating. Anyabwile reminds his readers, "So, they need to be people full of grace, able to address issues with the Spirit's power and qualities."<sup>28</sup> It should be apparent: healthy churches must see the evidences of the fruit of the Spirit demonstrated in the lives of their leaders. Equally, they must affirm those qualities by encouraging Spirit-led believers to assume leadership roles in the church.

The church will also recognize a person's character. They see a potential leader as a person of integrity and one who is above reproach. This person would never be suspected of immoral behavior or any wrongdoing. Anyabwile explains this is important for at least two reasons. First, a leader who walks with integrity serves as an example to others. Because he has lived his life with integrity, he is given the benefit of the doubt when faced with unsubstantiated accusations. His character will speak louder than any false charges. Second, a leader must be affirmed because of his character. Choosing leaders based on wealth, popularity, or any worldly consideration is a recipe for disaster. Integrity must be the basis for a leader in his decision-making process. If he uses any worldly foundation for making decisions, he will do so out of partiality and not virtue.<sup>29</sup>

An element of mutual affirmation takes place in the body of Christ when noble potential leaders seek to assume leadership roles. They see the void in the church and want to fill it. It is imperative that true spiritual leaders rise to the occasion and fill these roles. When men who are above reproach sit back and allow others who are less scrupulous and spiritually minded to take on leadership positions, the organization will suffer. Cole comments, "By abandoning moral responsibility in the community, men

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<sup>28</sup>Anyabwile, *Finding Faithful Elders and Deacons*, 26.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 57.

make way for the criminal element to rise. Abandonment of responsibility is the surest way for good men to capitulate to criminal commission. Weakness ascends when strength abdicates.”<sup>30</sup> Simply stated, God anoints certain men to accomplish certain tasks. It is rebellion against him when men shirk their assignment.

Churches should also affirm spiritual maturity in promising leaders. Noticing spiritual maturity in someone goes hand-in-hand with affirming many of the other characteristics. It is another essential virtue that must be present if the church is going to progress. Anyabwile writes, “Churches should search for spiritual maturity because of the particular danger associated with immaturity. An immature man ‘may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.’”<sup>31</sup>

Spiritual maturity is not always easy to discern. Dennis Rainey lists some characteristics that should be present in a spiritually mature man: (1) he should be one who controls his emotions and passions; spiritually mature individuals are not driven by whims and emotions, (2) spiritually mature men provide for their families, (3) he protects his family, (4) he serves and leads his family, and (5) a spiritually mature man will follow God’s design for true masculinity.<sup>32</sup> These practical attributes can readily be seen by individuals in the church, and are characteristic of godly men found in the Scriptures.

Mutual affirmation can only come when both potential leaders and congregations have surrendered to the Holy Spirit’s leading. Jesus told his disciples the Holy Spirit would guide them in all truth. When the Spirit leads, both parties the church are edified. When the church is edified, God is glorified. Jerry Bridges writes that it is only through the work of the Holy Spirit believers are able to obey: “We are not just

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<sup>30</sup>Cole, *Strong Men in Tough Times*, 145.

<sup>31</sup>Anyabwile, *Finding Faithful Elders and Deacons*, 100. Anyabwile quotes from 1 Tim 3:6.

<sup>32</sup>Dennis Rainey, *Stepping Up: A Call to Courageous Manhood* (Little Rock, AR: Family Life, 1995), 36.

dependent on Him; we are desperately dependent on Him.”<sup>33</sup> In order for the church to accomplish its God-given assignment to make disciples, it must be led by the Holy Spirit. As the church is led by the Holy Spirit, potential leaders will emerge to effectively seek to meet the spiritual needs in the fellowship.

### **Leaders Want to Serve**

Born in the heart of every true spiritual leader is a heart to serve. When a follower of Christ is walking in the Spirit he is moved by the Spirit to serve others. This is more than a natural compulsion; it is a divine moving of God in the life of the believer. Bible reading, prayer, and worship prepare an individual to serve in the kingdom of God. If one truly takes to heart the teaching and leading of the Holy Spirit, he cannot help but to serve others. Jesus once said that he did not come to earth to be served but to serve others. As Paul stated in Romans 8, disciples are in the process of being conformed into the image of Christ. Therefore, the true follower of Christ is compelled by his new nature to have the same mindset of Christ.

There is a difference in service in God’s kingdom and simply performing charitable acts. To know the difference, a believer must first be fully engaged in other disciplines. At least two types of people exist in relation to serving others. One group is so eager to serve that they jump at any opportunity to get involved. Their faith is a “hands-on” kind of faith. They would rather do something than study about it. Involvement in their mind means action, and action means physically engaging in service. The other group seems quite content to sit back and let others do their thing by serving others. This group likes to talk about the work; they like to read and study and examine, but never want to be fully vested by engaging in actually serving. Both of these groups can present their own set of faults—they are problematic and headed toward failure.

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<sup>33</sup>Jerry Bridges, *Transforming Grace: Living Confidently in God’s Unfailing Love* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2001), 139, Kindle.

Serving others must follow Bible reading, prayer, and worship. These disciplines prepare the follower of Christ to accurately and effectively engage others in service. The Bible is God's Word to man to show him the way he should go. It tells the believer how to act, talk, and react in life situations. Prayer and worship seal the mind of the believer to continue to walk in faith. The person who is engaged in consistent prayer and worship has spent needed time with the Lord. Their minds are transformed in the renewal process which accompanies intimacy with God. A person who tries to serve others in God's kingdom without first spending time in the Word, prayer, and worship is untethered and lacks a solid foundation. The Bible lays out a foundation for service. It tells the believer why and how he should serve. The Holy Spirit, who guides believers in all truth, will lead the follower of Christ who has a lifestyle of worship. Whitney explains that when believers practice the discipline of worship and are led by the Holy Spirit, they will find serving to be one of the most sure and practical means of growth in grace.<sup>34</sup> It is imperative that believers serve others, however they must serve with right intentions and instruction.

Some individuals do not understand that all people are called to serve. Some are spiritually lazy, while others appear to be afraid to serve. Whatever the case, they are content to not engage. James addressed this issue when he said that faith without works is dead (Jas 2:26). Indeed, the faith that has been given is not a docile and inactive faith. Following Christ is not an academic study; it is taking up the cross and following Jesus.

Some leaders develop unhealthy attitudes and become disengaged from their people. Larry Michael writes, "The secure leader is confident in his ability to lead and to serve others in the process. Too often leaders have adopted professional attitudes that create barriers between them and their followers."<sup>35</sup> Church leaders emulate what they see in other leaders. When church leaders follow a business model instead of biblical

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<sup>34</sup>Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 144.

<sup>35</sup>Larry J. Michael, *Spurgeon on Leadership: Key Insights for Christian Leaders from the Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010), 47.

model, they will often develop an arrogance and egotistic form of leadership. There is no place for this kind of attitude if the church is going to have an impact in the community it serves. Michael suggests that true servant leaders strive to give leadership that will bring glory to God. The leader's only desire should be to build up the body of Christ instead of promoting self.<sup>36</sup> As leaders get personally involved with people, they will see spiritual needs that must be met. They will also become compassionate and have a desire to help meet those needs as the Holy Spirit moves them.

Spiritual leaders must beware of all kinds of wrong motives when seeking to serve in the church. It is important that they seek God's direction and ask him to search their hearts for any motive not pointed at honoring him. When leader's intentions are less than pure, they will become the victims of counterproductive actions. According to Hindley, in order to maintain the right kinds of motives one must have the right perspective: "When it comes to Christian service, the first place to look is at what is going on in our hearts, not what we are doing with our hands."<sup>37</sup> A person who serves for the right reasons must have a right view of God. Hindley lists several wrong motives that are spurred by wrong thinking. Some people want to serve the Lord so that they can be good enough for him. Salvation and service in the kingdom must be marked by grace and there is danger in trying to serve him with any other motivation in mind. Hindley states, "Serving Jesus to become good enough for Him might sound noble; in fact, it is futile. It is a recipe for constant doubt over whether we've done enough for Him, and so for uncertainty and misery . . . and failure."<sup>38</sup> Other people will serve as an effort to pay Jesus back. Indeed, born-again believers must show gratitude to the Lord for all he has done. However, to

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<sup>36</sup>Michael, *Spurgeon on Leadership*, 155.

<sup>37</sup>John Hindley, *Serving without Sinking: How to Serve Christ and Keep Your Joy* (London: Good Book, 2013), loc. 146, Kindle.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, loc. 190.



serve as a matter of repayment stirs in the heart of the disciple wrong intentions. People who have this attitude will burnout quickly. They will develop a sour disposition and the joy of serving will no longer prevail.<sup>39</sup>

Followers of Christ can equally develop the wrong attitude in serving by having a wrong perspective of people. Hindley offers insight in this view as well. People sometimes serve others so that they can impress others. The author reminds his readers of the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:1-2 when he warned everyone to beware of performing acts of righteousness in order to be noticed. Human accolades are only for the moment. When Christ is honored through a person's service there will be eternal implications. Any wrong view of God and others will set the servant on the wrong course. Therefore, it is highly important that disciples develop right thinking in relation to service. For this reason alone, one must see serving as a discipline. Whitney writes, "If we don't discipline ourselves to serve for the sake of Christ and His kingdom and for the purpose of godliness, we'll 'serve' only occasionally or when it's convenient or self-serving."<sup>40</sup>

Whitney also helps his readers by citing the right motives for serving. First, one should be motivated by obedience. He further suggests that for a professing Christian to sit on the proverbial sidelines and watch others do the work is unthinkable. Christians are walking in disobedience when they refuse to serve him. Whitney explains that another motivator for service should be gratitude. He calls on his readers when service becomes a burden to remember what great things God has done. This attitude has nothing to do with trying to repay God; it has everything to do with having a heart of thanksgiving. Whitney adds, "The people of God do not serve Him in order to be forgiven but because we are forgiven. When believers serve only because they feel guilty, they serve with a ball and

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<sup>39</sup>Hindley, *Serving without Sinking*, loc. 286.

<sup>40</sup>Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 144.

chain dragging from their hearts. There is no love in that kind of service, only labor.”<sup>41</sup> True disciples should also be motivated by humility. Humility in service is not only the example Jesus gave, but humility also helps guard against serving for personal gain. When a person is truly humble in the Lord, then he will not seek his own glory. The last motivator Whitney mentions is love. He writes that love is at the heart of service “No fuel for service burns longer and provides more energy than love.”<sup>42</sup>

Perils and pitfalls exist when considering serving in the kingdom. However, the command and demand of Jesus is clear. Disciples of Christ must be servants. To not serve is to sin against God. Followers of Christ must also guard their hearts against serving for the wrong reasons. As previously stated, wrong motives will produce wrong attitudes and can quickly result in harmful actions. As one develops as a disciple and practices the spiritual discipline of serving, he will see that God is transforming him every day into the image of his Son. He will recognize that serving more becomes a developing process in the life of the believer. He should also look forward with gleeful anticipation at what God is going to do next through him in service in the kingdom.

### **Leaders Will Train Future Leaders**

In the Great Commission, Jesus instructed his disciples to make disciples. A part of the church’s disciple-making initiative is the task of training new leaders. In the previous sections was a discussion on the phenomenon of mutual affirmation. After the church has identified future leaders, it must seek to train those leaders. Any church that fails to train potential leaders is setting itself up for weakness and instability. The biblical mandate is clearly set for the body of Christ and it must seek to train the next generation of leaders.

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<sup>41</sup>Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 148.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 150.

The church contains both current leaders and future leaders. Current leaders are tasked with the privilege and responsibility of training potential leaders. Current leaders need to bear this responsibility for numerous reasons. One reason is that the Bible has instructed the church to do so. Timothy and Titus' instructions from Paul included the importance of instructing and training leaders in the church. Paul wrote, "Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching" (1 Tim 4:13). Titus was told, "But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). Brian Croft explains, "Regardless of the type of gospel ministry, the Bible is clear. The identification, affirmation and sending of pastor and missionaries is the responsibility of the leaders of the local church."<sup>43</sup>

Another reason potential leaders should train new leaders is because the failure to do so starts a cycle of weak leadership. Finzel states, "Poor leadership habits and practices can spawn new generations of poor leaders."<sup>44</sup> Leaders usually practice what they have seen emulated before them. If predecessors fail to effectively train them, then they will fail to train the generation of leaders who follow, thus beginning a cycle of weak leadership making the church vulnerable. Power struggles will occur in the absence of strong leadership. People will sense the lack of structure and strong leadership and become disheartened. Such things quench the work of the Holy Spirit and put the church in a tailspin.

The best way to train future leaders is through mentoring. Numerous books have been written on the subject of mentoring and its effectiveness. Mentoring is a must if the church is going to effectively train its future leaders. Finzel writes, "Mentoring is a

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<sup>43</sup>Brian Croft, *Test, Train, Affirm and Send into Ministry: Recovering the Local Church's Responsibility in the External Call* (Leominster, UK: Day One, 2010), 38.

<sup>44</sup>Hans Finzel, *The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2007), loc. 215, Kindle.

nonnegotiable function of successful leadership”<sup>45</sup> Mentoring opens the door for many opportunities to correctly train someone to lead. When a more seasoned leader walks with a future leader, they will both encounter ministry situations that will help the potential leader grow. Serving in various ministry opportunities helps reveal each person’s giftedness. Richard Phillips writes, “Most often spiritual gifts are revealed not through a diagnostic tool but through the experience of serving the Lord.”<sup>46</sup> This practical application of ministry will enable a future leader to discern his particular gifts and know how to correctly use them in the kingdom.

The traditional mindset of mentoring is for one individual to take on only one other individual and teach them. Mentoring should not be limited to a one-on-one situation. A mentor can disciple two to three individuals at a time. Greg Ogden contends that disciples are best developed when a more seasoned disciple walks alongside an individual who needs guidance: “The intent is to create a mutual, egalitarian interchange, where life rubes up against life.”<sup>47</sup> This is mentoring at its best. Two or more believers live life in ministry and service and learn from each other. This scenario is both biblical and pragmatic. Colin Marshall and Tony Payne write, “The relational nature of training means that the best training will often occur by osmosis rather than formal instruction. It will be caught as much as taught. Trainees will end up resembling their trainers, much as children turn out like their parents.”<sup>48</sup> Marshall and Payne’s definition of training sounds more like mentoring than the conventional method of training. The point is that no matter

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<sup>45</sup>Finzel, *The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make*, loc. 3077.

<sup>46</sup>Richard D. Phillips, *The Masculine Mandate: God Calling to Men* (Orlando: Reformation Trust, 2010), 136.

<sup>47</sup>Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2003), 130.

<sup>48</sup>Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine: The Ministry Mind-Shift That Changes Everything* (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias, 2009), loc. 931, Kindle.

how one defines discipleship, mentoring, or training, disciples must be developed in smaller more relational settings.

Present day leaders must see the need to pour their lives into the lives of future leaders. Relational training by the virtue of mentoring is the best way to develop new leaders. Leaders must see the importance of showing others how to lead and not just telling them how to lead. They must let the younger and less mature disciple walk beside them in multiple ministry situations. In doing so, they will not only train new leaders, but they will also train new leaders how to train the next generation of leaders.

The model for leaders training leaders must begin with the pastor. Marshall and Payne make an excellent point when they suggest that the pastor must initiate the disciple making process. They list three current types of models of pastors. The first model is the most typical: the pastor is the professional clergyman. He essentially does all the work of ministry. He preaches, visits the sick, ministers in time of death, and counsels those in need. The second model Marshall and Payne mention is the pastor who becomes the manager. This pastor dictates and assigns tasks to other staff people. The last type of pastor they list is the one of which they advocate. This pastor is a preacher and a trainer. His goal is to train others in the congregation to do the work of ministry. Marshall and Payne contend that this is the most accurate biblical model. Their premise is a correct one. Again, disciple making and leader training must be syncretized because spiritual leaders come from effective disciple making practices.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, pastors should start by training a few lay leaders so that they may train others.

### **Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter, the dire necessity for the local church to initiate a practical plan to develop spiritual leaders within their fellowships has been noted. There is nothing new or earth shattering in these outlined principles. An effective discipleship

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<sup>49</sup>Marshall and Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine*, loc. 1271.

strategy through small groups will naturally develop and train spiritual leaders. The emergence of spiritual leaders ensures that the church will be healthy. When generations of spiritual leaders train the next generation of leaders, the health of the body can be perpetuated. Clearly this must begin with the pastor. When a pastor sees his role in a more biblical light and a less traditional one, he will lead his people to gain the spiritual health that will far outlast his tenure, fulfill the biblical mandate, and ultimately give glory to God.

## CHAPTER 4

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project began with assessing the church's understanding and practice of the spiritual disciplines. The project's aim was to increase the congregation's overall practice of the spiritual disciplines. It was not only so the practices may be exercised, but also with the goal of raising a new generation of spiritual leaders. I asked members of adult Bible study classes to complete a short survey about their practice of spiritual disciplines. Following the survey, I preached an eight-week sermon series of expository messages with the purpose of challenging people to grow in their relationship with Christ through the practice of spiritual disciplines. The series was entitled "Growing in Him," and it encouraged the people of TBCM to grow through Bible intake, prayer, worship, evangelism, and service. When the sermon series was completed I asked the same group to participate in the same survey. After the sermon series was finished, three individuals were chosen to participate in a ten-week intensive study integrating the practice of spiritual disciplines with principles of spiritual leadership. This chapter outlines the particulars of the project and how the project was fulfilled.

### **Sermon Series**

#### **Week 1**

The first week's sermon title was "Be a Berean," and I preached the passage from Acts 17:10-15. In the message I first gave the background of the text. I told of the trouble and problems Paul encountered at Thessalonica. Paul and Silas had to flee from there at night and when they arrived in Berea they went to the synagogue to share the gospel. Paul's custom as he entered the synagogue was to explain and prove that the Christ must suffer, die, and he would rise again. Many of the Bereans reacted to the

message in a positive way. Luke mentions three distinct characteristics followers of Christ would do well to emulate. First, the Bereans had a higher level of integrity and showed more discernment than the Jews in Thessalonica. Second, Luke says they received the Word with eagerness. Third, the Bereans examined the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul was saying was true. I challenged the people to not only study the Bible, but to do so in the right mind-set and spirit by applying these characteristics to their lives.

## **Week 2**

The second sermon focused on prayer by examining the “Model Prayer” our Lord taught in Matthew 6:5-14. As we examined each phrase I asked the congregation to examine their own prayer life and ask how it could become richer, fuller, and more intimate with God. First, Jesus taught his disciples they should pray in the right frame of mind as they prayed “Our Father who is in heaven.” Second, Jesus taught them to pray in a spirit of awe and wonder when they prayed, “hallowed be your name.” Third, they were to pray in a spirit of submission as they prayed “Your will be done.” Fourth, they were to pray in faith by praying, “For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory.”

## **Week 3**

The third sermon in the series focused on growing in Christ through worship. Jesus’ words to the woman at Sychar in John 4:21-26 were so poignant and was the text I used to preach the sermon entitled, “In Spirit and Truth.” I first asked the people to think about their own definition of worship. I asked them to privately name the essential elements of worship. I spoke to them about what robs believers of true worship and then I listed the elements Jesus named for true worship to take place. First, the presence of the Holy Spirit must be evident if true worship is to take place. I pointed to the passage from Ephesians 4:25-32 that outlines what grieves the Holy Spirit. I also spoke of the evidences of the presence of the Holy Spirit as defined in Galatians 5:22-23. Second, truth must be proclaimed if true worship occurs. I pointed to the fact Jesus prayed in John 17:17,



“Sanctify them through your word, your word is truth.” Third John 4 says, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.” Third, if true worship occurs, Jesus must be at the center. I reminded the people of what Jesus said at the close of his conversation with the women: “The woman said to him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes he will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am he’” (John 4:25-26). I stressed to the people that worship is not relegated to styles or format. I asked them to focus on the Messiah, for worship must be about Jesus.

#### **Week 4**

The fourth sermon in the series focused on evangelism, and its title was “Sowing the Seed.” I wanted the people to be prepared for evangelism by helping them be prepared for what kind of hearts they would encounter as they shared the gospel. I told them it should be obvious to any disciple that Jesus has instructed him to make disciples. The disciple-making process starts with telling the gospel story. I asked the people to consider this statement: “Our calling is to cast the seed of the Word of God. The condition of the soil is not my responsibility.” I then challenged them to think through the hearts they could expect to encounter. The first type of heart they could expect to encounter is the hard heart. I shared that only a sovereign God can change a person’s heart. The second heart they would meet is the shallow heart. As Jesus explained, these people seem to receive the Word, yet later fall away due to persecution or other hardship. The third type is the choked heart. These people allow the cares of the world to choke out the truth of the gospel. The fourth heart people will encounter is the good heart. This is the heart God has prepared ahead of time to receive the Word of God with gladness. Because God has prepared their hearts, they produce other disciples. I asked the congregation first to ask what kind of heart they had. Then I asked them to think about friends and others they have encountered. I asked them to pray for others in relation to the Lord’s description of the hearts one will encounter.

## **Week 5**

The fifth sermon challenged the people of TBCM to grow in Christ through the spiritual discipline of serving. The text was Matthew 20:25-28, and the title of the sermon was “The Heart of a Servant.” I shared with the congregation that we can only grow through serving if we have the heart of a servant. I said we must first fight the battle against self-interest and self-promotion. James and John’s mother wanted the best for her children but she tried to use a form of manipulation to gain positions for her boys. I shared that Christians must be on guard against this kind of maneuvering. It is divisive and runs contrary to God’s plan. The second thing Jesus did in the text was to give examples not to follow. He said do not be like the Gentiles who exercise authority in a heavy-handed and demeaning way. God’s plan is for people to develop as servant leaders, not tyrants and dictators. The third powerful point of instruction the Lord gave is found in Matthew 20:26-27. Essentially he gave himself as the prime example. To truly have the heart of the servant one must have the heart of Christ.

## **Week 6**

The sixth sermon challenged the people through stewardship. The passage was from 1 Samuel 1:21-28, and the title of the sermon was “A Giving Love.” First, I asked them to consider that a giving love finds its beginning in God’s grace. I told the story of Hannah and her plight. The Bible tells that God shined his favor on Hannah, which should be a reminder of how God has shined his favor on his people today as well. I reminded them of Romans 5:8 and 10:9-10 and how both passages verify God’s amazing love. Second, I stated that God’s gifts always come at the right time. Third, I explained that a giving love wants to see others in the presence of God. Hannah’s desire was for Samuel to be in the presence of God, which is Jesus’ desire for his followers and it should be Christians’ desire for others. Fourth, I said a giving love starts with prayer. Good stewards pray about their gifts. No one could doubt the sincerity of Hannah’s prayer.

Before giving anything, one must pray. I instructed the congregation that if they want to grow in Christ through stewardship they must give as they pray in the right spirit.

### **Week 7**

The seventh sermon was from Joel 1:13-20, and the title of the sermon was “Consecrate a Fast.” I began the message by pointing out the fact congregations seldom hear any preaching on fasting. The reason preachers do not preach or teach much on fasting is because most believers are not ready to fast. I explained, I told them the natural outpouring of a repentant heart is fasting. Food is the last thing on our minds when we get broken before God. The passage in Joel describes what the people of that day were to do as well as what modern day believers should do. God was calling the people to repentance and he is calling Christians today as well. I invited the congregation to ask some questions of the text. First, I asked them to consider who was God talking to; he was talking to ministers and priests. I helped them understand that ministers were not just those on the church payroll. Ministers are servants of the Lord and thus all believers are ministers. The priests are not the people who wear cleric collars. Priests are those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb of God. The second question one should ask of this text is what is he telling believers to do. He is telling them to come together, call out to him, and look to his coming. Therefore, I called on the people to confess their sins and repent. For true repentance will precipitate fasting.

### **Week 8**

The eighth sermon focused on growing in Christ through silence and solitude, and it was taken from Psalm 46. I asked the congregation to focus on verse 10 as a key verse in the psalm: “Be still, and know that I am God.” I shared that in order to grow in him, people must hear him. I asked how could such a command be accomplished. The psalmist outlines how people can truly hear and know he is God. First, verses 1-3 say that he must be a refuge and strength. Ultimately, this means believers must trust him in all

circumstances, but most of all Christians trust their souls are secure in his grasp. Second, verses 4-7 state he is the source of life in grace—being still and knowing God starts in grace and is sustained in grace. The river described by the psalmist is one of life and grace. The people of God are made glad by God’s life-giving grace. Third, verses 8-9 instruct Christians to recognize that God is personally involved. He is not remote, but very near. Growing in Him brings an understanding of his constant abiding in every way. Fourth, verses 10-11 tell followers in order to be still and know that he is God they must rightfully adore him as their sovereign Lord. In my conclusion I asked if they were truly listening to God. I encouraged them to hear God, for faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

The Sunday after I preached the final sermon in the series, I took the same survey to the same adult Bible study classes. I asked them to put their four-digit code on the top of the survey. Most of the group showed little or no change in their behavior and the way they approached discipleship. However, some comments affirmed a desire to grow more in their discipleship and how much the sermon series had challenged them.

### **Integrating the Practice of Discipleship with Developing Spiritual Leadership**

After a significant amount of time of prayer and consideration, three specific individuals continued to come to my mind in consideration for the small group to train for spiritual leadership. I approached those individuals, and they not only were willing, but eager to begin the training process. Two of these individuals were in their twenties and one was in his early fifties. All of them were in some leadership position. Two were active deacons, and one taught in Sunday School in the youth department. All of them were involved in some form of a leadership role in the church and earnestly desired to lead the church in the right direction. These young men, though already leading in some capacity, had never received training in spiritual leadership. They were eager to have their leadership skills honed. I chose this particular group because they demonstrated a

desire to not only lead, but also to teach. Choosing these individuals would give the disciple making and leadership training process a strong start.

Preparation for the group began by considering the greatest leadership needs in the church. It was important to be faithful to the original premise of the project, which was to integrate the practice of spiritual disciplines with development of certain leadership skills. I prepared ten lesson plans by alternating spiritual disciplines with spiritual leadership skills. A panel of experts was chosen to ensure the lessons plans were theologically sound and to be sure the lesson plan's objective was fulfilled. These experts were seasoned ministers who had served more than thirty years each in the ministry. Two had earned doctorates, and one had served as a pastor in churches that had seen growth during his tenure. Each panel member was given the first five lessons to review and a rubric for each lesson to guide them in their critique of the material. All the panel members indicated the material was theologically sound and the intent of the lesson objective was fulfilled. They gave each lesson plan a "satisfactory" or "exemplary" rating, which meet the criterion for success for the goal stated.

I met with the three members of the discipleship/leadership group on Wednesday nights and we began with prayer. The group completed the Spiritual Leadership Survey before beginning. The first discussion was on the necessity of the development of spiritual leaders. The group also engaged in a productive dialogue of the repercussions if a process of developing spiritual leaders was not begun immediately. All agreed some process needed to begin and they were ready to learn with a goal of teaching others the same curriculum.

### **Lesson 1**

The first session was on Bible intake. The lesson plan objective was for disciples to study, memorize, apply, and meditate on the Word of God because of their sincere love for its instruction and inspiration. We talked about Jesus' command to seek the kingdom of God first and exactly how we were to accomplish his command. The

Bible is the primary source for knowing more about God's kingdom, and it is the best way to seek this kingdom. We began a healthy discussion about what obstacles each of us had to spending time in the Word?

As we explored the heart of the lesson, we looked to Romans 10:17, which reminded us all of the importance of hearing the Word of God. We discussed the ways we can hear God's Word. Bible study groups, sound Bible preaching, and the public reading of God's Word are important avenues to help us to hear the Word of God. Next, we talked about studying the Word of God. For some, the word "study" brings up negative thoughts. So, we defined study as a systematic way to search Scripture so God can reveal the deep spiritual truths they contain. We talked about the necessity of prayer when we study. I also encouraged them to have a pen and paper handy when they studied so they could write down key thoughts and questions that come to mind while reading the passage. I also shared with the group the importance of memorizing and meditating on Scripture. We each committed to memorize one Bible verse before the next session for the purpose of meditation. At the end of the first session we examined the ways we are transformed by hearing, studying, and memorizing God's Word. As we applied what we had studied we sought ways we could adjust our schedules to allow more time in the Word. We also thought of processes we each could adopt to help us memorize Scripture. Finally we asked what steps we each could take for the Bible to inspire us to become better doers of the Word and not just hearers.

## **Lesson 2**

The second session was entitled, "Essential Qualities of Biblical Leadership." The learning objective was for disciple/leaders to correctly use the Bible to guide them in leading others in the kingdom of God. This session began by talking about what it means to be qualified to lead. I then asked the group to turn to Psalm 1 and we used this psalm to guide our discussion of the essential qualities of biblical leadership. As we explored the passage we talked about the quality of discipline in a leader's life. If a person is going

to lead others he must be a disciplined individual. The psalmist says this person does not listen to the advice and counsel of ungodly people. His joy, rather, is found in an intense focus on the instruction he finds in God's Word. The second quality we talked about was wisdom and discernment. The psalmist tells us the blessed man does not stand in the way with sinners, nor sits in the seat with scoffers. Instead of being influenced by the propaganda of the world, they are enlightened by the truth of the Word of the Lord. We had a helpful round table discussion about the work of the Holy Spirit in leading our lives in wisdom and discernment. We concluded the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to guide us into all truth.

Another leadership quality we discussed looking for in leaders was the ability to make decisions. Some people simply cannot make a decision and stick with it. Some do not have any type of process in place for making decisions. People who cannot make good decisions should not be given the responsibility of leading. Ultimately strong spiritual leaders will make decisions rooted in their disciplined study of the Scriptures. The last quality we discussed in this session was the art of listening. We talked about how the art of listening is not an easy one to obtain. Out of courtesy, most people in any conversation are quiet while the other person talks. They are not really listening they are thinking about the next thing they want to say. We talked about practicing becoming a good listener by repeating back to someone what they have said to us. Implementing this practice will not only help us to be better listeners, but it will also affirm to others we are listening to what they have to say.

### **Lesson 3**

The third session focused on prayer. The learning objective was for the disciple to learn and practice prayer in more meaningful ways by praying consistently, biblically, and effectively. I introduced this session by asking, "Can prayer ever become mundane and empty? Why does that happen?" When Christians pray simply out of duty or habit, prayer can become an empty practice. I said that believers pray because they are compelled

to talk to their God whom they love and worship. In the “Explore” section of the session I talked about how God expects all believers to pray. I cautioned them even though God expects people to pray, they should not pray simply out of obligation. Prayer is motivated by love for God. Obedience is not because they fear God’s retaliation, but because they want to talk with the One whom they love. I asked them to look at Paul’s instruction to the church in Ephesians 6:10-18. I demonstrated how they could use the Word of God as their template for prayer. I also talked about the model prayer found in Matthew 6:9-13. In this session I showed them how I personally pray every day. I shared with them how I pray in accordance to who I am in Christ. This process seemed to help individuals in the group to pray in a more focused way.

We also talked about how prayer is a learned practice. The more people pray in the right spirit, the sweeter prayer becomes. We talked about how prayer becomes richer when we pray while meditating on Scripture. I shared that prayers can become more effective by reading good books on prayer. I recommended some informative and inspirational books on prayer. We discussed public praying and the anxieties some people can have when called on to pray in public. We also shared how praying in public can help us pray in a more effective way. In the application section of this session we talked about steps we could make to help us have a more effective prayer life. As we closed the session we committed to be disciplined in our prayer life by learning more about biblical praying and practicing it.

#### **Lesson 4**

The fourth lesson was on leading by praying. The learning objective was for to pray in such a way we will know the truth and the Spirit are guiding us. I started this session by asking, “What is your first reaction or response when met with a crises or confrontational issue?” Most of the answers given were honest and heart felt. After a thorough discussion, all in the group admitted they needed more work in this area of their life. I asked them if it were possible to train our minds to react to such issues in life with



prayer instead of emotions or anything else not constructive? They all agreed it is possible to be trained to react with prayer. As we explored the objective in the lesson, we talked about the reasons leaders must pray in the Spirit. The second topic was centered on the idea that prayer is essential in leading people. We noted the fact that great spiritual leaders have always been people of prayer. The last area of discussion focused on praying as a tool for moral clarity. We agreed that our moral compass could point us in the wrong direction when we are not in tune with God by prayer. Our last discussion was on the ways we could pray more in the Spirit and ways we could keep our selfish motives from distorting our prayer lives.

## **Lesson 5**

Lesson 5 was on worship. The objective for this lesson was for potential leaders to make personal and corporate worship a top priority in their lives. As we started, I asked the group, “Why is there so much controversy surrounding the different styles of worship? All agreed the reason is because people are more centered on their own personal preferences than they are on meeting with God. I asked the group to give a definition of worship. After some introductory discussion, we began to unpack what it truly means to worship. First, we discovered worshipping is to focus on God. We talked about how God reveals himself, and shared how the Bible points us to the full and final revelation in Christ Jesus. Second, we read John 4:23-24 and explored what it means to worship in Spirit and truth. I led them in a discussion about how some people wrongly focus on either the Spirit or on truth. In reality, the two are inseparable if true worship is going to take place. The third aspect of worship we talked about was worship is both public and private. We examined the Scriptures and found biblical precedents for both private and public worship. We agreed that private worship must take place first if we are going to worship with others. Fourth, we talked about how we can cultivate the discipline of worship. We agreed, the practice of worship is an exciting and wonderful process, and when implemented appropriately will draw us nearer and nearer to the Lord. As we

thought about how to apply the concepts, I asked the group to think about the times they truly sensed the presence of God in worship. I then asked what adaptations in their lives were they willing to make to ensure they were going to engage in a lifetime of worship.

## **Lesson 6**

Lesson 5 was entitled “Keeping Your Focus.” The objective was aimed at instilling in the disciple/leader the importance of public and private worship as an agent for keeping them focused as a leader. Leaders who are not worshipping God are leading people in the wrong direction. I introduced this session by asking what distractions they had encountered keeping them from true worship. I reminded them of Paul’s instruction in Romans 12:1-2, encouraging them to refuse to be conformed to the world but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. Paul states this transformation was to be an act of worshipful service. The mind is transformed by transformational worship. We then entered into a discussion about the various issues in our lives that can cause us to lose focus. We talked about the intrusion of our own personal ambition. We can become distracted when we are confronted with what are perceived impossible situations. Sometimes what we see as a failure can distract us from worshipping and thus leading. We also talked about the pitfall of jealousy. I explained that when we meet with a holy God we will see our unholy attitudes and actions. Jealousy or any other selfish motivation distracts us from being the spiritual leader God has called us to be. I asked the group in closing to implement some action steps to help them remain focused as a leader when they are met with adversity.

## **Lesson 7**

Lesson 7 focused on discipleship. The goal in this session was for the students to place a high priority on their own personal growth as a disciple of Christ. We talked about the distractions keeping us from continuing discipleship and also discussed what safeguards we could put in place to help us avoid those disruptions. I shared some specific

ways they could help ensure they would continue in their personal discipleship growth, including submission to the role of the Holy Spirit in their lives, participation in the fellowship of the saints, and using the struggles we face in Christian living as a catalyst for growth. I asked them each to examine their lives and ask where they could be stronger in yielding the Holy Spirit's guidance. I also encouraged them to plan an event with another believer or believers with the intent of discussing spiritual matters. The last thing I admonished them to do was develop a plan leading them to rely on God more when they faced struggles in life.

## **Lesson 8**

Lesson 8's focus was on training future leaders. The objective for this lesson was for the group to learn and practice essential elements necessary to empower potential leaders. We began by talking about the Great Commission and the command of Christ to make disciples. I also reminded them that discipleship and spiritual leadership must go hand-in-hand. We reviewed the essential qualities of leadership that we should endeavor to develop in our own lives, and how we should look for those same qualities in others.

We discussed three primary elements in the way we look for leadership qualities. First, they should see what God sees. I reminded them of what the Lord said to Samuel when he was instructed to look for a king for Israel: "For the Lord sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (1 Sam 16:7). Second, do not expect someone to initially possess all the essential qualities of a leader. Some qualities must be developed through on the job training. Some things just cannot be taught in books or printed material. Therefore, I asked the group to be mindful of the ways they can help develop leaders by allowing them to lead. Third, mentorship is essential if on the job training is going to be successful. I encouraged the group as they look forward to walk beside whomever they sensed to be a potential leader. As we concluded, I asked the group to pray that God would show them potential leaders in the church and how they should approach them. I also asked them to think of great mentors they have had in the

past and what was beneficial to them as they developed. I encouraged them to develop those same mentoring skills in their own lives.

## **Lesson 9**

Lesson 9 was on serving as a spiritual discipline. The objective was for the group to discipline themselves to serve on a consistent basis. This discipline requires some intentionality by scheduling times and places to practice serving. More importantly, I asked the group to focus on serving for the right reasons. Using Whitney's outline as a template, we listed some godly reasons for serving. First, we should be motivated by obedience. God commands we serve others. Second, I talked to them about being motivated by gratitude. I reminded them not to serve solely out of obligation and duty, but to serve joyfully out of appreciation to our Lord. Third, I instructed the group that they should be motivated by gladness. I asked them to be mindful that a sour disposition while serving destroys the Christian witness. Serving out of guilt or notoriety will rob us of the joy of serving with gladness. Fourth, we should be motivated by humility. Jesus modeled humility in its purest form. I asked them to be on guard against having an inflated ego while leading others. I told them that people will offer accolades and recognition as a means of encouraging. I warned them these could cause them to think more of themselves than they should. I also reminded them that God deplores arrogance. Fifth, and I think the greatest of all motivations, is love. I said that love must be at the epicenter of all service in God's kingdom. We looked at 1 Corinthians 13 and were in agreement that without love we are nothing. In closing, I asked the group to analyze their reasons for serving. I asked them to be honest before God and allow the Holy Spirit to convict them where they are in error. I then encouraged them to engage in a service project in the church and to discipline their minds to serve for the right reasons.

## **Lesson 10**

Lesson 10 was on modeling servant leadership. The objective for this lesson was for the students to model for others what it means to be a servant leader by applying the sovereign principle of spiritual leadership, and the suffering principle of spiritual leadership. I shared Sanders' two principles and how they apply to modeling leadership. Leaders first must understand that spiritual leadership is not a position they choose. Rather, God chooses them to lead his people. Therefore, I explained that leadership is not a human decision, but a divine decision. The second principle Sanders shares is the suffering principle. His premise is that leadership is best modeled when the leader is under a trial. When leaders go through the struggles of life with grace and faith, they leave behind a witness which instructs and inspires other. The last portion of the session was spent talking about Jesus and the pattern he left to follow. The session concluded by analyzing the way we each lead others. I asked them to write down areas where they were strongest and weakest. I asked them to pray for God to show them the way they could better follow Jesus' model for leadership. At the end of the sessions I asked the group to complete again the Spiritual Leadership Survey that they had taken at the beginning of the course. Each answer was analyzed to determine if any lifestyle changes occurred.

## **Conclusion**

The project has already helped the church in numerous ways. I too have grown through this process. Individuals, especially of the smaller group, have made lifestyle changes and increased their practice of the spiritual disciplines. In the next chapter I give some of the specific benefits the project has had for the church and the smaller discipleship group. I also evaluate the project based on its ability to reach its goals, and its strengths and its weaknesses.

## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

This chapter evaluates the project to determine if it was beneficial to The Baptist Church at McAdory, in implementing a disciple making process and helping develop spiritual leaders. To effectively evaluate the project, its purpose, goals, strengths, and weaknesses are addressed. To further assess the effectiveness of the project, this chapter also discusses what could have been done differently, as well as some theological and personal reflections.

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

The purpose of this project was to institute a disciple making plan that educates and encourages potential leaders at TBCM to effectively develop reproducible, Spirit-filled disciples. The project's purpose was met first by assessing the church's understanding and practice of the spiritual disciplines. The second goal in the project was to preach a series of expository sermons on the practice of spiritual disciplines with the aim of developing spiritual leaders from practicing those disciplines. This series of sermons raised the church's awareness of its deficiency in the practice of spiritual disciplines and increased their awareness of the need to train a new generation of spiritual leaders. Second, key individuals in the church saw the need to personally practice the spiritual disciplines in a more intentional way. Many were engaged in some form of Bible reading, but were not focused on the finer points, such as memorizing, meditating, and studying Scripture in a more defined way. Third, the disciple-making plan was implanted primarily through the development of a small group of individuals who took seriously the practice of spiritual disciplines and training spiritual leaders. The pilot group understood the important role they would play in the church's identifying and training spiritual leaders. This initial

group understood from the beginning their purpose was to do more than learn, it was to practice, and then to teach.

The purpose of the project was achieved by raising awareness of the need for believers to practice spiritual disciplines. The church has begun a process and a plan to train a new generation of believers by practicing the spiritual disciplines.

### **Evaluation of the Goals**

The first goal of the project was to assess the church's understanding and practice of spiritual discipleship. This goal was achieved by submitting a twenty-five-question spiritual discipleship survey to adults who attend Sunday school. The teachers of those adult classes administered the survey. This survey was given in advance of an eight-week sermon series on the practice of spiritual disciplines. The premise of the project was when spiritual disciplines are practiced in a church, a new generation of leaders will emerge. The goal was considered achieved when 75 or more people participated. The total number of surveys received before the sermon series was 141. The goal was also considered achieved if there was a significant statistical improvement in people's practice of spiritual disciplines. The total number of surveys received after the sermon series was 70; however, only 53 were able to be cross-referenced with the previous group. Therefore, the success of the meeting the first goal was only partially achieved. Out of the 53 people who completed both surveys, the data showed some improvement in a few areas. While there was a slight increase in the mean scores between the pre- and post-test, a *t*-test for dependent samples indicates that the change lacked statistical significance ( $t_{(52)} = 1.55$ ,  $p = 0.1259$ ). The lack of improvement is due in part to the demographics of the congregation. Out of the 56 people who were able to be cross-referenced, 48 were 65 and older; 4 were 55-64; and 4 were 45-54. The data reflects what was already known about the age of the congregation, the group is comprised of primarily senior adults. It is important to note that, generally speaking, senior adults are much less likely to make lifestyle changes very rapidly or, at least not during an eight-week period of time.

The second goal was to preach an eight-week sermon series of expository messages intended to encourage the congregation of TBCM to become spiritual leaders through the practice of the spiritual disciplines. Sermons on the practice of spiritual disciplines were preached on Sunday mornings and Sunday evenings. The data collected from the spiritual discipleship surveys indicated that the series had partial success. For example, out of the 53 people, 5 more indicated they spend a sufficient amount of time in Bible study after the sermon series was completed; 7 more people strongly agreed that the Bible is a source for spiritual renewal; 4 more people strongly agreed one of the best ways to internalize God's will for their lives was through meditation; and 2 more people strongly agreed that studying the Bible helped them to live according to God's plan for their lives. The survey showed there was no difference in people's understanding and practice concerning prayer and worship. Even though the sermon series only saw slight changes in people's opinions.<sup>1</sup> The second goal was achieved because an eight-week sermon series was preached. However, the lack of significant statistical change indicated only some life-changing behavior occurred. Therefore, the second goal was only partially met.

The third goal was to enlist potential leaders in a ten-week spiritual leadership formation program that would equip them with several practices and skills of discipleship and leadership. The first order of business for the group was prayer. Many individuals in the fellowship could be considered for the pilot group. I earnestly wanted the first group to be chosen by God and anointed with His Spirit. I discerned the election and anointing of these individuals by earnestly seeking the Lord, specifically praying about this group. I had also observed these individuals and saw their potential as developing and maturing leaders. The second important element in the ten-week training was the development of the curriculum. The material I taught would play a crucial role in the development of

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<sup>1</sup>See appendix 5 for answer totals for the entire pre- and post-surveys for the large group.



spiritual leaders. Therefore, the curriculum needed to be held to a high level of accountability. I chose godly men who were seasoned ministers of the gospel to read and critique the material. I have known every one of these men for years and know their walk with the Lord is one of faith and integrity. This group helped me maintain the material's theological integrity as well as ensure practical and measurable learning goals. The goal was for the curriculum to receive a sufficient or exemplary rating from all members of the expert panel. The expert panel used a rubric to analyze each lesson plan and all members of the group gave each lesson plan a sufficient or exemplary evaluation. Therefore, the goal was achieved.

The three potential leaders were given a fifteen-question survey at the beginning of the ten-week discipleship program. Each session began with prayer and then discussion. The format of the lesson plan encouraged dialogue among the participants. This format allowed for questions about specific issues each member of the group faced. They were able to openly discuss strengths and weaknesses in their own development in discipleship and leadership. We adapted our meeting time to accommodate various work schedules. The group remained committed throughout the sessions and we were able to have productive conversations. Toward the end of our time I gave the group the same survey they received at the beginning. While there was a significant increase in the mean scores between the pre- and post-test, a *t*-test for dependent samples indicates that the change lacked statistical significance ( $t_{(2)} = 2.945, p = 0.09846$ ).

Though the statistics do not bear this out, the results of the post-test showed a significant improvement in their practice of spiritual disciplines. For example, the pre-test showed that no one in the group set a specific time in their day for prayer. Their prayer life was random and only when they sensed they needed to pray. After our session every member of the group had set aside a specific time each day to pray.

The group also showed a higher level of confidence in their ability to lead others. Another example of the effectiveness of the sessions was the way the members of

the group perceived themselves as spiritual leaders. When asked in the pre-spiritual leadership survey if they considered themselves to be spiritual leaders, 1 person disagreed, 1 agreed somewhat, and 1 other agreed. In the post-test survey, when asked the same question, 2 of the men strongly agreed, and 1 other person agreed. When asked if they could instruct another man in how to be a spiritual leader the pre-spiritual leadership survey showed 1 disagreed, and 2 agreed. The post-spiritual leadership survey result for the same question was 2 agreed, and 1 strongly agreed. The group's overall improvement was evident and the goal for the group was met.<sup>2</sup>

### **Strengths of the Project**

The first strength of the project is both theological and practical. The project helped TBCM to fulfill the command of Christ in the Great Commission. The imperative found in Matthew 28:19-20 is clearly to make disciples. The importance and priority of making disciples has somehow fallen through the cracks. The church's focus has been on many important issues. It was necessary in the beginning to find common ground among the people. Relocation, building a new a building, and outreach to the community were necessary elements to help the church remain healthy. The plan for growing disciples had been left up to traditional formats of Bible study. This project helped the church focus and become more intentional in fulfilling Christ's command of disciple-making.

Second, the project helped awaken the church to its own deficiency. The lack of spiritual leaders was a direct result of not making disciples. Spiritual leaders emerge in a church when spiritual disciplines are practiced. The leadership began to see the need for a new generation of spiritual leaders to lead in the fellowship. In a way, this project helped them see the need to be more proactive and less reactive. The potential problems associated with unspiritual leaders have not yet surfaced. However, the church now recognizes that to remain healthy, a new generation of spiritually minded people must be readied to take

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<sup>2</sup>See appendix 6 for answer totals for the entire pre- and post-surveys.

leadership positions. The church indeed has a sweet spirit; however, it had been lulled to sleep in its state of comfort. The church had not been marked by controversy. In fact, many who joined the fellowship after relocation had come from churches known for upheaval—they were tired of the wrangling and wanted to experience peace in a local church. We have had a long season of peace at TBCM. The church now realizes it must prepare spiritual leaders to guide them into the future, so peace might be maintained. The church also now more fully understands the perils that can surface if spiritual leaders are not leading the church according to the will of God.

Third, the project excited a new generation of leaders. Meeting with the pilot group of young leaders was a joy. It was a pleasure to meet with them and watch them grow in their discipleship and hone their skills as leaders. They too expressed eagerness to meet together and ask questions and have an open dialogue within the group. The healthy and spiritual conversation enabled them to respect the leadership of the past, but also look to the needs in the future. They understood that the church must change the way it views itself if it is going to remain healthy in the community. They have been eager to reach out to others and begin their own discipleship groups. In fact, one of the members of the group had already begun another discipleship group before we finished the ten-week session.

A fourth strength of the project was that it gave the church a process for implanting a discipleship program. The curriculum for the small group gave the church a tool to use for future groups. The ten-week plan is clear and simple. It is not complicated and would not overwhelm most lay people. In the past, the church relied on large Sunday morning Bible study groups to disciple future leaders. It was necessary to have a plan in place to be more intentional in making disciples. The project gave them exactly what is necessary to raise up future spiritual leaders.

The main strength of the project was in its direct benefit to TBCM. One of the project's strengths was its high level of accountability. The heart of the project was in

forming the small discipleship group for future leaders. The curriculum for the group had to be practical and to the point. The lesson plans for the small group were constructed by relying on two primary resources. However, I chose to also include personal thoughts on the way I exercise the spiritual disciplines and my experiences as a spiritual leader. Having seasoned ministers read and critique the material was beneficial to ensure the lessons were theologically and practically sound. Though only minor adjustments were made to the curriculum after their review, having the readers helped me write in a more responsible way.

Another strength of the project was the way it was implemented to the larger group first and then the smaller group. The congregation at large heard a series of sermons on the exercise of spiritual disciplines, which was followed by a season of prayer for God to raise up a new generation of spiritual leaders based on individuals increasing their practice of the spiritual disciplines. This was the most spiritual and biblical way for leaders to emerge. While leaders can be brought in from outside the congregation, it is always best for leaders to come from within. This is exactly what happened, and it emulated the way I became the pastor. I had been a leader in one of the churches by serving in various capacities. The church extended the call to me to be their pastor and I came from within. In the same way, the smaller group was comprised of men already leading the church in some way. They arose to take the church to a new level of spiritual maturity.

Keeping the initial discipleship group small was intentional and was another strength of the project. The group was able to freely interact with me and other members of the group. None of them seemed intimidated or bashful about expressing their concerns or new revelations. Other people expressed a desire to enter the group, but I shared with them they could become a part of another group at a later date. Only on one occasion did I allow anyone else to attend one of the sessions. One of my readers wanted sit in on a session to see how I taught the lesson plan. He only interjected when asked to add to the

discussion. Otherwise, he remained silent and only observed. So, keeping the discipleship group small was a definite strength.

### **Weaknesses of the Project**

The first weakness of the project was the way the first survey was implemented. I relied on Sunday School teachers to administer and collect the data necessary. The first group responded well, with 140 completed and turned in surveys. I went around to each class and thanked them for their help in the project. I also explained that the survey was not just to help me in my school work, but it would also help the church see what spiritual growth issues needed to be addressed. Many participants filled out the survey but failed to give a personal code. The lack of a personal code did not allow me to properly cross-reference the pre and post surveys. When the second survey was given, two of the regular teachers of large classes were out and substitute teachers were teaching the class. Even though I gave clear instructions on administering the survey, these two classes chose not to participate. In hindsight, I should have waited until the regular teacher returned and asked the survey to be administered then.

The second weakness of the survey was its lack of exposure. In my effort to keep the pilot group small, I did not promote or announce in any way the formation of the small group. Some individuals found out about the group and asked to join; however, I intentionally kept the group down to three individuals. The church had been asked to pray about the need for spiritual leaders, and I should have asked them to pray specifically for the small group as it began to meet.

The third weakness of the project was unless I promote and continue to push leaders to find new individuals to form new groups, it will not happen. This project hinges on one person encouraging others to develop new groups. This deficiency is certainly true in the infancy of the discipleship plan, but I must trust that God is faithful, and he will appoint leaders who will see the importance of discipleship and spiritual leadership in the life of the church.

### **What I Would Do Differently**

The first thing I would do differently is to stay on task better. There were seasons I simply lost fire and passion to get the project on its way. If I had stayed on task with my writing, it would have benefited the church more. Ministry demands and personal distractions became excuses and reasons to put away my writing and attend to other needs. Those things come and go in ministry, but I should have remained focused and pressed on. I came to understand and appreciate the project was very necessary for the health of the church.

Second, I would implement the first survey differently. The adult Sunday School group was the right group; however, I would stress to them even more the importance of participation for the health of the church. I would also take more time to explain to them the necessity for a personal identification code on each survey. I would do a better job of collecting the data for the post-survey.

Third, I would develop a stronger post-project plan for sustainable discipleship. The continuation of discipleship is too dependent on my ability to promote and lead others to get involved with the plan. Sustainable discipleship must include more than one individual to keep it going. The first thing I would do is to enlist prayer partners who would help me pray for God's direction. Next, I would look at models to see how other fellowships continue their discipleship plan, and develop a plan based on their success. I realize it is not too late to begin this process, but given the opportunity I would spend more time developing a plan for sustainable discipleship during the implementation of the project.

### **Theological Reflections**

The first theological truth that became evident in this project was the fact the Great Commission is still the mantra for healthy churches. It is the banner for pastors to wave before God's people. When the church loses sight of Christ's imperative, it no longer exists as a church. Making disciples is not an easy task, especially in this day. People have

many distractions and can easily lose their focus. Remaining committed to a discipleship plan is difficult for most people, but the demand of Christ has not diminished over time. It is as necessary today as it was on the day he spoke it to his disciples. Pastors and teachers cannot compromise or back down in any way from putting forth every effort to make disciples. Fulfilling the Great Commission is a joyful and rewarding task and demonstrates that we love our Lord. Jesus clearly stated, “If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love” (John 15:10).

The second theological truth is that it is imperative for leaders in the church to practice spiritual disciplines. Repeatedly, the project revealed the insufficiency and ineffectiveness of leaders in the church if they are not actively practicing the spiritual disciplines. Every single leader in the Bible who was walking according to the will of God was attentive to his Word, engaged in a consistent prayer life, and full of the Holy Spirit. When leaders are not actively involved in the exercise of essential spiritual disciplines, they made grievous errors.

The third theological truth is that leadership has nothing to do with how many people one leads. Jesus set a precedent for teaching both small and large groups. He stood before the masses and spoke the Beatitudes. He also sat in the middle of his inner circle of disciples and taught them eternal truths. Pastors can never neglect the preaching of the Word in the larger context, nor can they abandon the practice of mentoring the small group. Both must be observed and practiced. Jesus showed in his ministry the need for both.

Fourth, God will raise up spiritual leaders to fulfill his will. God promised his people over and over again that if they would seek him, they would find him. Two examples in Scripture reflect this truth. Jeremiah 29:12-14a says, “Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declared the Lord.” Second Chronicles 7:14 says, “If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek

my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” While completing the necessary elements of this project I have asked the church to pray earnestly for spiritual leaders to emerge. God has granted a new generation of leaders who are eager to reach out to the community and evangelize the lost. God always answers, and his provision refreshes the tired souls of worn pastors.

### **Personal Reflections**

The first reflection could really be more a theological reflection, yet it was a reality that became most evident to me. I found through this project that God is sovereign, and though humans are fallible and frail, he will prevail. Proverbs 16: 9 says, “The heart of a man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.” As a pastor, I had to learn to trust that God was going to accomplish exactly what he wanted to through the project. The church is in the process of taking steps toward developing a plan for discipleship. The project’s design was to start small and allow God to give the increase. It was difficult for me to be patient and allow the process to proceed at a healthy pace. Nonetheless, God’s sovereign will was accomplished.

Second, if a pastor truly loves his people he will not leave them in a state of spiritual immaturity—He will strive to grow them up in the Lord. The Lord said in Jeremiah 23:4, “I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the Lord.” The same principle applicable in Jeremiah’s day still holds true today. Pastors who lazily or apathetically go about ministry in a nonchalant attitude are disobedient to the Lord. As a shepherd of the flock of God it is my joy and privilege to teach the truths of God’s Word and help the church apply them to everyday living. When I stop feeding the flock, I stop being a pastor. May it never be.

Third, leadership in the church cannot be based on business models. True spiritual leaders are born out of a love for the Lord, his Word, and His people. God appoints leaders from those who are actively seeking him. Business leaders and spiritual



leaders can share some qualities—both types are leading groups of human beings and there are some similarities. However, it is troubling when church leaders pattern their style of leadership after successful business models instead of biblical examples. This project affirmed that as a pastor I must remain faithful to his Word and allow God to develop leaders from those who are actively seeking him.

Fourth, I learned to stay the course; not to give up, and not to give in. At times I thought leading the church to develop spiritual leaders was beyond my ability. I found my ability was not what was needed. I realized that I must submit to the Father's plan and his timing. Letting go and giving in were not an option in his plan. This project taught me to be patient and consistent. These attributes of the fruit of the Spirit were manifested and grown in me during the implementation of the project.

### **Conclusion**

I have learned so much about spiritual leadership through this project. One important principle I learned was that the development of spiritual leaders does not happen on accident. The church must intentionally encourage and train future leaders. God's people cannot be casual about who leads them. While it is true that God is the One who appoints and develops true spiritual leaders, he expects his followers to seek him in the process.

The practice of spiritual disciplines needs to be encouraged more in the church. The small group became the heart of this project. It was where we had to start in order to effectively begin a discipleship plan. However, the congregation should be exposed on a more frequent basis the need to exercise the spiritual disciplines. This fact stirred me to think of ways I can teach spiritual disciplines to a larger group. The Wednesday night prayer group could be one option; or, I could develop more intentionality in my sermon plan to include spiritual disciplines.

Even though I know this congregation very well, familiarity caused me to overlook some needs. The project made me look deeper than the surface. This congregation

has had a history of peace and congeniality, and it is a joy to fellowship with this blessed group; however, comfort can breed complacency. This congregation is under my watch care, and I must lovingly and patiently help them grow in the grace of the Lord. Ultimately, this project was the catalyst I needed to implement a strategy for discipleship and consequently improve the health of the church.

## APPENDIX 1

### SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE 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 Bill McCall for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

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

#### **Part 1**

1. Do you consider yourself a Christian?  
 A. Yes  
 B. No
2. Have you repented of your sin and trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation?  
 A. Yes  
 B. No
3. Do you attend church on a regular basis?  
 A. Yes  
 B. No
4. Do you believe that all Christians should study the Bible?  
 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 a serious follower of Christ.  
SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
7. There is strong evidence in my lifestyle that I am a follower of Christ.  
SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
8. I spend at least one hour every week in personal Bible study.  
SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
9. I set a specific time to pray everyday.  
SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
10. I worship God both when I am at church and also during the week.  
SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
11. If asked, I could share the gospel with someone.  
SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
12. It is difficult finding the time to spend with God.  
SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
13. Service to God should be given daily, no matter the size of the need.  
SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
14. I am actively involved in serving others through my church.  
SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
15. Gathering with other believers in worship is spiritually strengthening.  
SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
16. Christians should feel compelled to act when they see a need.  
SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
17. A consistent prayer life is necessary in order to walk in obedient faith.  
SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
18. All Christians are called to serve others in some way.  
SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
19. I could instruct another how to be a spiritual leader.  
SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
20. Memorizing Scripture is important in my Christian walk.  
SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA

21. Leaders in the church need to be closely walking with the Lord.  
SD      D      DS      AS      A      SA
  
22. Every Christian should have a systematic way to study the Bible.  
SD      D      DS      AS      A      SA
  
23. One of the best ways we can imitate Christ is by serving others.  
SD      D      DS      AS      A      SA
  
24. One of the best ways to internalize God's will for your life is through meditation.  
SD      D      DS      AS      A      SA
  
25. Studying the Bible helps you live according to God's plan for your life.  
SD      D      DS      AS      A      SA

APPENDIX 2  
CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

<b>Spiritual Discipline and Leadership Curriculum Evaluation Tool</b>					
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The curriculum is clearly relevant to the issue of developing spiritual disciplines in the heart of the believer.					
The curriculum relies on a biblical foundation and utilizes sound biblical interpretation in developing the lesson content.					
The curriculum is theologically consistent.					
The curriculum clearly states the goals of each lesson.					
The lesson plan can be practically implemented.					
The curriculum effectively integrates spiritual disciplines with spiritual leadership qualities.					
The curriculum is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.					
Overall, the curriculum is clear.					

## APPENDIX 3

### 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. Bill McCall is conducting this research for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

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

#### **Part 1**

1. I read my Bible (check only one)
  - A. more than once per day
  - B. once per day
  - C. several times per week
  - D. once per week
  - E. several times per month
  - F. once per month
  - G. several times per year
  - H. not at all
  
2. I meditate on Scripture (check only one)
  - A. more than once per day
  - B. once per day
  - C. several times per week
  - D. once per week
  - E. several times per month
  - F. once per month
  - G. several times per year
  - H. not at all

3. I pray (check only one)  
 A. more than once per day  
 B. once per day  
 C. several times per week  
 D. once per week  
 E. several times per month  
 F. once per month  
 G. several times per year  
 H. not at all
4. I have a specific time set aside for prayer.  
 A. Yes  
 B. No
5. I most often pray for (check only one)  
 A. myself  
 B. family  
 C. friends  
 D. other
6. I most often pray (check only one)  
 A. at church  
 B. at home  
 C. while traveling  
 D. at work  
 E. other

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

7. I consider myself to be a spiritual leader.  
 SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
8. I am an effective spiritual leader of my home.  
 SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
9. I desire to lead in my home, community, and church  
 SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
10. I have a strong grasp of what it means to be the spiritual leader of my home.  
 SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
11. My spiritual health directly impacts my ability to lead.  
 SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA
12. I feel comfortable sharing the Gospel with others.  
 SD    D    DS    AS    A    SA



13. I not only pray for the sick, but also for the lost.  
SD D DS AS A SA

14. I could instruct another man in how to be a spiritual leader.  
SD D DS AS A SA

15. I sense that God has given me the ability to teach.  
SD D DS AS A SA

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

APPENDIX 4  
LESSON PLANS

**Developing Spiritual Leaders  
at The Baptist Church at McAdory  
Through the Practice of Spiritual Disciplines**

## Lesson 1: Bible Intake

*Learning Objective:* Disciples will study, memorize, apply, and meditate on the Word of God because of their sincere love for its instruction and inspiration.

### Introduce

Discuss the necessity for spiritual leadership in the church: What can happen in a local church when the people who rise to the place of leadership are not growing in their discipleship?

Oswald Sanders once wrote, “Often truly authoritative leadership falls on someone who years earlier dedicated themselves to practice the discipline of seeking first the Kingdom of God.”<sup>1</sup> It is interesting that Sanders who has been widely known as an expert in the field of spiritual leadership says that in most cases spiritual leaders are first individuals who are first seeking God’s Kingdom.

Jesus specifically commanded us to seek the Kingdom first. The question we must ask is how then do we seek the Kingdom? The Bible is the primary source for knowing more about God’s Kingdom, and it is the best way for us to seek this kingdom. However, many find themselves frustrated and lost when they try to read the Bible. To a degree the Bible must come alive for the reader. He must find himself totally immersed in its message. To do this we must become more than a Bible reader, we must become a student of the Word. A good student will be involved in hearing the Word, studying the Word, memorizing and meditating on the Word, and then he will apply the Word.

Discuss what keeps people from spending time in the Word? What keeps you from spending time in the Word?

### Explore:

#### *Hearing the Word*

Romans 10:17 says, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” It is therefore vitally important that we hear the word of the Lord. Whitney says hearing God’s Word is important, “Because if we don’t discipline ourselves to hear God’s Word regularly, we may hear it only accidentally, just when we feel like it, or never hear it all.”<sup>2</sup> It should be evident if any person is going to grow in their love for Christ, he must be an active listener of the Word of God. We can practice this discipline in several ways.

One way to hear the Word is to become a part of a Bible study group. Bible study groups who are truly searching the Scriptures will have members who will encourage and challenge each other. Bible study groups offer a forum that allows interaction and discussion, which is effective in nurturing a growing disciple. Another way to hear the Word is to listen to Bible preaching. The proclamation of the Word is a must in the church, and the true disciple of Christ will yearn to hear solid Bible preaching. While it is true that one can hear good Bible preaching by several venues, the most effective place is in corporate worship. When God’s people gather to hear the Word they unite in one Spirit

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<sup>1</sup> Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 23.

and celebrate together God's truth.

Cooperate worship should also include the public reading of God's Word. Paul wrote in Timothy 4:13, "Until I come devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching." The savvy spiritual leader will not only see the need to hear others speak the Word, but they also will learn to effectively communicate the Word to others. Reading scripture out loud effectively requires development. Reading the Word with clarity means one must practice his reading and be willing to be corrected as he matures in his reading.

### *Studying the Word*

When someone mentions the word "study" there are usually all kinds of negative thoughts that enter our minds. But, studying God's word is simply a systematic way of searching the deep spiritual truths God wants to reveal. Studying God's Word really means asking question that helps us know what God is saying. Students of the Word will wrestle with the text and not let go until they have the truth in their hearts. We can achieve effective Bible study in several ways.

First, one must have the right attitude as he approaches the Word. Prayer is essential in achieving a right spirit of learning. We will discuss the discipline of prayer in greater detail a little later in our study. But for now, it is important that we ask God to open our hearts and minds to receive the truths that he has for us. Secondly, we should have pen and paper handy as we begin our study. This will help us remember what questions and thoughts come to our mind. We cannot be afraid to write down our thoughts. We may find later our thinking was wrong, but nonetheless we will not know until we are able to remember what we were thinking. Writing our responses down will help us think through the passage and will help us understand it more clearly.

When we engage the Word there will be questions about some passages of which we are unable to answer. A good Bible dictionary and study Bible are helpful when we find ourselves in these predicaments. The important thing to remember is to not give up the search. As we study we will find that the depth of God's Word enriches our lives. More importantly, the more we know of God's Word, the more we know God. As we grow in our relationship with him we will desire to bring him glory and honor with every aspect of our lives.

### *Memorizing and Meditating on the Word*

As we study there will be passages that we will want to remember. Studying God's Word in depth will precipitate our desire to carry God's Word in our hearts. Whitney gives us five reasons that we should memorize God's Word.

1. Memorization Supplies Spiritual Power. The Holy Spirit will bring those passages that we have memorized back to our minds at the point in our spiritual journey we need them most.
2. Memorization strengthens your faith. All of us need our faith strengthened and God's Word in our hearts solidifies our faith in our Lord.
3. Memorization prepares us for witnessing and counseling. Sometimes we will hesitate to witness to others. We do so because we do not know what to say. When God's Word is implanted in our hearts we will be ready to speak his Word to others. A witness is truly one who speaks God's Word and not their own.
4. Memorization provides a means of God's guidance. His Word becomes a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. He will show us the way when we are leaning on his Word stored in our hearts.
5. Memorization stimulates meditation. Meditation means we allow God's Word to resonate in our hearts. Memorization is the prerequisite to mediation. When we memorize a passage it will continually come back to our minds. No matter what we are

doing God's Word speak to our hearts when we memorize and meditate upon it.<sup>3</sup>

### *Applying the Word*

Ultimately, as we grow in Christ we must understand that God's Word changes the way we live our lives. James 1:22 commands us to be doers of the Word and not hearers only. Again, Whitney offers us some guidance on how to apply God's Word. First, we should expect to discover an application as we hear, study, and memorize God's Word. Whitney says, "Because of God's inspiration of Scripture, believe that what you are reading was meant for you—at least in some Christ-related way—as well as for the first recipients of the message."<sup>4</sup>

Second, we should meditate on the passage seeking God's direction for our lives. The more we think on the passage, the more situations related to our lives will come to our minds. Third, we should ask application-oriented question of the text. Asking these right questions will give us the right answers. Fourth, we should respond in a specific way to what the text is telling us. God's Word helps transform us into a greater likeness of God's Son. Becoming more Christ-like is our goal, not just becoming more knowledgeable.

### **Apply**

What adjustments will you make in your schedule to allow more time in the Word?

What process will you adopt to memorize Scripture?

What steps will you take for the Bible to inspire you to become more of a doer of the Word and not just a hearer?

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<sup>3</sup>Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 39-42.

<sup>4</sup>Whitney, 71.

## Lesson 2: Essential Qualities of Biblical Leadership

*Learning Objective:* Disciple/leaders will correctly use the Bible to guide them in leading others in the Kingdom of God.

### Introduce

What do you think about the statement, “God does not call the qualified, he qualifies the called?” What qualities should the church look for in individuals to encourage them to be leaders?

People are anointed by God to be leaders. He endows them with a skill set enabling them to lead the group of people to whom they have been called. The church must endeavor to recognize essential qualities of leadership in individuals and lead them to further develop those skills. Psalm 1 is a perfect template for any person to follow, but especially godly leaders. This passage will show us some of the essentials required for spiritual leadership. They include discipline and endurance, wisdom and discernment, the ability to make right decisions, and the art of listening.

### Explore

Read Psalm 1

#### *Discipline*

Psalm 1 begins with, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly.” The word “blessed” can have multiple meanings in the Bible, but most often it means to find favor with God. Without God’s anointing and special favor no person could dare to try to lead his people. According to this psalm, God’s blessed people will not walk in the counsel of ungodly people. They will not listen to the advice, nor follow the advice of people whose behavior is not in keeping with God’s character. This truly takes discipline and endurance. We are inundated with all kinds of ungodly counsel. Commercials on television are doing their best to lure potential customers by making their product as attractive as they possibly can. Advertisers will use every enticing device at their disposal to gain the attention of the television audience. The disciplined leader of God’s people will practice turning his attention away from those who want to twist his thinking and consequently his behavior. Sanders says this kind of discipline must come from within a person. The spiritual leader must display discipline not only for his personal conduct, but as a leader he must recognize the need to be an example for others. Sanders says, “If a leader shows strong discipline, others will see it and cooperate with the expectations placed on them. At this point, leadership by example is crucial.”<sup>5</sup>

#### *Wisdom and Discernment*

The psalmist in Psalm 1 also says the blessed man does not stand in the way of sinners nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the law of the Lord. Godly leaders do not make a habit of listening to people who continually practice sinful behavior. Rather, they choose to focus their attention on God’s Word. Instead of being influenced by the propaganda of the world they are enlightened by the truth of Word of the Lord. Proverbs clearly tells us in numerous places that the beginning of wisdom is the

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<sup>5</sup>Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 55.

fear of the Lord. When we are exposed to the Bible we learn how infinitely wise our eternal God is. Spiritual leaders will think more clearly and act more wisely when they meditate on the God's instructions. Sanders notes that we should make a clear distinction between knowledge and wisdom. He profoundly states, "Wisdom is the faculty of making the use of knowledge, a combination of discernment, judgment, sagacity, and similar powers."<sup>6</sup> Wisdom and godly discernment go hand in hand. The Holy Spirit must lead a discerning person. Without the direction and guidance of the Holy Spirit leaders will take the people whom they lead down dead-end paths. Certain frustration lies ahead for the people and the leaders who are not relying on the Spirit's counsel.

Discuss: Can watching and listening to unwholesome programs cloud a person's judgment?

What happens to leaders when they spend too much time listening to media?

### *Decision Making*

According to Sanders, spiritual leaders will weigh all the evidence, and then make sound decisions based on sound premises.<sup>7</sup> Good decision-making is based on a process not mired in emotions, faulty motives, or false information. Spiritual leaders make good decisions after they have carefully considered the options and then choosing the best of all choices. The place to start is with the process. Many people make decisions in life without having a tried and true process. It is true situations will arise when one will have to make an immediate decision. However, decisions made on a continuing basis must be facilitated with a process. Another important thing to remember about leaders who make decisions is they must make them on a timely basis. Good leaders will not dawdle and procrastinate. Sanders reminds us when we postpone a decision we are really deciding for the status quo.<sup>8</sup> Organizations and churches will go nowhere when their leaders refuse to step in and make decisions at the appropriate times. Leaders cannot put off their decisions and they cannot vacillate once they have made a decision. Weak leaders will cave in to pressure when people do not like the decision. Therefore, it is important spiritual leaders listen to godly counsel. The psalmist again reminds us to not listen to the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the way of sinners, or sit with the scoffers. Strong spiritual leaders make decisions rooted in their disciplined study of the Scriptures. Those ancient words will guide one's thinking as he navigates through the process of making right decisions.

### *The Art of Listening*

An often-overlooked essential quality of a spiritual leader is the ability to be a good listener. Strong personalities have the tendency to run rough shod over others when engaged in a conversation. Their minds have the tendency to jump ahead because they are problem solvers. Good leaders want to resolve issues and make corrections, and this requires patience with people when they are voicing their concerns. "To get to the root of problems, a leader must develop into a skillful listener."<sup>9</sup> Most people are silent while

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<sup>6</sup>Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 58.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid. 59.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid. 60.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid. 73.



another person is talking because they do not want to be rude. Being quiet is only a small part of being a listener. A good practice is to repeat back to the person what they have said. This practice will not only help enable you to become a better listener, but it will also be more likely to demonstrate to the other person that you are hearing what they have said. The bottom line is good leaders will be good listeners.

### **Apply**

How can the Bible be used to effectively lead others?

In what ways will you allow the Bible to form your decision making process?

How can I become a better listener?

### Lesson 3: Prayer

*Learning Objective:* The disciple will learn and practice prayer in a more meaningful way. He will pray consistently, biblically, and effectively.

#### Introduce

Can prayer ever become mundane and empty? Why does that happen?

Prayer has to be one of the most beautiful ways to grow in your relationship with Christ. Volumes of books and articles could be written on the subject. In fact, many people have written on prayer and they can be very helpful when we want to explore and expand our prayer life. The Bible teaches us that we should pray. We pray because we are compelled to talk to our God whom we love and worship. Yes, prayer is essential if we are going to grow, but prayer is a discipline not viewed in drudgery like a duty to perform. It is a joy and privilege to speak to the Lord. The more we pray the more joyful and pleasurable prayer becomes.

#### Explore:

##### *Prayer is Expected*

To say that prayer is expected almost sounds as if prayer is only based in some form of duty. That notion is probably what precipitated written prayers for specific situations. Praying with that sort of attitude leads to an insincere and mindless action. Whitney said it this way, "Prayer is not so much as a duty as a privilege, and not so much as a privilege as an expression of life."<sup>10</sup> Truly any follower of Christ will have a desire in his heart to pray. If you love someone you yearn to talk with them. Praying is talking to God, therefore as followers of Christ we want to talk to him on a daily basis.

At the end of Paul's instruction on putting on the whole armor of God he commanded the Ephesians to pray about everything, Jesus taught his disciples the importance of prayer as well as how they should pray. So, praying is expected for at least two reasons. One, any true follower of Christ should want to talk to his Lord. Second, the Bible commands that we should pray. The best way to facilitate this expectation is to have both a season of prayer and an attitude of prayer.

A season of prayer means we should have a specific time in the day dedicated to prayer. Some people are naturally morning people. They love to arise early and meet the morning as the sun rises. Others are more alert in the evening. Find the time to pray when you are at your best and most attentive. Prayer takes a great deal of disciplined concentration. Therefore it is important to tailor your season of prayer during a time when your focus will be at its peak. During your season of prayer it is important to pray in such a way that helps you focus. I have a plan when I pray. First, I pray as a follower of Christ. Here is where I pour my heart out to God to seek his face as his child. I confess my sins, I beg for his forgiveness, and ask him to help me to be more conformed into the image of his Son. I ask him for guidance and direction in my life. I pray that my heart is in tune with the leading of the Holy Spirit and I am not guilty of grieving him. Second, I pray as a husband. I pray for my wife daily. When I am intentional in my praying for her, I think about the things that she has shared with me about her life and I direct my heart toward God for intercessory prayer for her. It is my joy and duty to pray for my wife. If you love someone you will pray for them. Third, I pray as a father. Though my children

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<sup>10</sup>Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 83.

are grown I still sense the need to pray for them. I pray that God will continue to draw them unto himself as he draws all of us. I pray protection for my family and ask the Lord to bless their day. Fourth, I pray for my whole family. I lift them up by name. Fifth, I pray as a pastor. It is my joy and privilege to lift up all of the flock of God who he allows me to shepherd. Some of them have specific needs. Those needs will come to mind as I seek out God's will for their life in intercessory prayer. I also pray for the church as a whole. I ask God to give us a clear direction and a vision for where he wants us to be. Sixth, I pray as a citizen of my country. I pray for our president, and all elected officials.

This process of praying might appear to be lengthy. How long we spend in our season of prayer is directly related to the amount of needs around us. Generally speaking, my season of prayer lasts 30-45 minutes. If there are pressing needs then I will spend a longer amount of time in prayer. Whatever elements are involved in your season of prayer, it is important to have a system to help you remember to pray in the most effective way you can.

An attitude of prayer means we should always be ready to pray. Life does not come at us in an organized way. Surprises and challenges can catch us off guard. Our default mechanism when confronted with issues of life should be to automatically pray. The more we discipline our minds to pray instead of react, the more we will learn to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. Having an attitude of prayer will help you more effectively meet ministry needs as they arise. We are often confronted with those needs in an unplanned moment. For example, when someone approaches us for some kind of financial assistance we must be ready to take those needs to the Lord. It is difficult to discern if a person truly needs help or if they are seeking to take advantage of our generosity. Always be ready to turn to the Lord in prayer. Not only is an attitude of prayer important when we are meeting ministry needs, but praying in this way helps tune our minds as we read the Scriptures, as we encounter joyful blessings, and all types of decisions we must make in life. Both the attitude and season of prayer are important in a believer's life.

Discuss: Do you have a systematic way you pray? Or, do you just pray as random thoughts entire your mind?

### *Prayer is Learned*

Of all the things the disciples wanted to know from Jesus, they asked him to teach them how to pray. New believers can find it to be difficult. Consequently, there are many people who have been saved for years who pray very little. They don't know what to say; therefore, they either repeat the same prayer, or just do not pray at all. Empty words or no words will not suffice for the believer. We have already stated the need to pray is great for all believers. Learning to pray in the right manner is equally important.

Praying comes with practice. Whitney equates learning to pray with learning a foreign language. The more one speaks the foreign language, the better they become. The same is true with praying. The more one talks to the Lord they more comfortable they will be with speaking with him. The more one matures in his faith, the more he will pray in the right spirit.<sup>11</sup> The practice of prayer must come with some intentionality. As stated before, this requires both a season of prayer and an attitude of prayer.

Another way we can become more effective in our prayer life is to pray while meditating on Scripture. Scripture will guide our minds in right direction. For example, try praying as you meditate on the Model Prayer Jesus taught his disciples. As you recite each phrase think about its meaning and ask the Lord to reveal how the phrase relates to

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid, 85.

real life issues. Repeating what we have learned in the Bible helps us to pray with meaningful and rich words. These words will minister to our hearts as we grow in Christ.

Believers, both mature and immature can experience anxiety when asked to pray with others present. However, we must learn the power of the Lord is present when we pray with others. All through out Scriptures we are commanded to assemble with other believers for prayer, Bible reading and studying, and other forms of corporate worship. The best way to start the discipline of praying with others is to find a prayer partner. This needs to be someone with whom you are entirely comfortable. You should not feel intimidated by their presence in anyway. If you are married, the obvious choice should be your spouse, if they are a believer. Spending time in prayer with such a partner will not only grow your relationship with them, but it will also instill confidence in your ability to adequately voice your prayer.

Reading books on prayer will also help you increase your proficiency in praying. These books will help remind you of some elements of prayer that you have forgotten. Andrew Murray's book *With Christ in the School of Prayer* is a timeless book teaching the importance of praying the way Christ taught his disciples to pray. He dissects the Model Prayer and explains how to effectively pray through each phrase. Learning to pray in a systematic way is not always easy to develop. Whether or not you think in a linear pattern books like Murray's helps you explore the biblical ways to grow your prayer life.

### **Apply**

Has your prayer life grown since you were first converted?  
Are there ways you can pray more effectively?

## Lesson 4: Leading By Praying

*Learning Objective:* The disciple/spiritual leader will pray in such a way he will know truth and the Spirit are guiding him.

### Introduce

What is your first reaction or response when met with a crises or confrontational issue?

Sanders wrote, “The spiritual leader should outpace the rest of the church, above all, in prayer. And yet the most advanced leader is conscious of the possibility of endless development in his pray life.”<sup>12</sup>

### Explore:

#### *Leaders Must Pray in the Spirit*

The list for reasons to pray in the Spirit could be endless, but Sanders reminds us of two of them. First, praying in the Spirit lifts our minds to the heavenly realm. We are to live under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In a way, he is our operating system. We must be under his leadership and direction. All too often followers of Christ will pray only in the physical realm and not a spiritual one. We limit our prayer lives and ourselves when we are praying in accordance to our own ability to think through any situation. When we pray in the Spirit we begin to pray in a much more powerful and dynamic way. Surrendering our minds to the Holy Spirit will cause us to pray placing emphasis on the more weighty and eternal circumstances surrounding our lives.

Second, praying in the Spirit means we pray in his power and energy. Leaders and disciples alike will face all kinds of obstacles to their prayer life. They will feel like they can't pray because of sin in their lives. The Spirit reminds us to claim the forgiving power of Christ's sacrificial blood. There are times when our own ignorance keeps us from praying the way we should. The Holy Spirit knows the will and mind of God. He leads us in the right way to pray as we pray in faith. Our prayer life can be hindered by our own physical ailments. None of us are immune to sickness. When we are sick or feeling bad in any way it is hard to pray effectively. The Spirit will help us pray and rise above our weaknesses.

1 Peter 5:8 tells us, “Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” Praying in the Spirit helps the leader resist the satanic influences all around him. As he prays in the Spirit he gains a clearer understanding of the spiritual warfare in which he is engaged. Doing so will help him place the most important things in first priority, and help him avoid what is frivolous and useless. As Sanders said, “Spiritual leaders should know the experience of praying in the Spirit as part of their daily walk.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 83.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid. 87.

### *Prayer is Essential in Leading People*

Great spiritual leaders have always been people of prayer. They have done so because they have understood God is the only one who can truly change people. Certainly, we might motivate people to do something on a short-term basis. But, any real and lasting change must come from God. We must use God's power to move people's hearts in the right direction. God's sovereignty is demonstrated when we see him at work in people's lives. God is consistent and unchangeable and he blesses people by allowing them to be a part of his plan. God has promised he will answer our prayers. He never says he will always do what we want him to do. However, we can be assured he will always answer. Prayer is not meaningless or benign. It is God's powerful tool to move people where he wants them to be.

As stated before praying as a leader will keep us in tune with God's will. The influence we have on people is a great responsibility. To lead them in any other direction than the will of God would be a sin and can be detrimental. Human wisdom is not adequate to guide and lead people in the kingdom of God. Praying in the right spirit will assure we will lead people with godly wisdom.

Discuss: Can you lead people without praying?

### *Prayer Gives Moral Clarity*

The leader who is not praying becomes vulnerable to the influences of the flesh. Our moral compass can point us in the wrong direction when we are not in tune with God by prayer. When we deal with people on a consistent basis we can become tired, angry, and discouraged. Emotions are a part of our makeup and it is easy to allow those feelings to dominate our thinking. We will make wrong decisions when they are based on an emotional whim. Praying helps us sort out all of our feelings. Spending time with God in prayer will purify our minds and help us filter out the enemy's tools he uses to steer us in the wrong direction.

When emotions cloud our thinking we begin to talk. Some talk can be destructive and damage our credibility as leaders. When we get overwhelmed we should never limit our talk with God. We must be honest with him and not pray form prayers of empty words. Prayers before God must always be heart felt and sincere, but especially when we are bombarded by the enemy's attack.

James 4:3 says, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions." He furthermore informs us that whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. When we pray in accordance to our passions we demonstrate we have become friends with the world. When we pray in the Spirit he convicts us of our sinful lusts and confronts us with God's holiness. God's holiness is the bright spiritual light that illuminates our sinful passions and wakes us to the reality of our transgressions. Prayer in the right spirit is vitally important for when we pray wrongly we will justify our actions no matter how horrific and evil.

### **Apply**

How can I pray more in the Spirit?

How can I keep selfish motives from distorting my prayer life?

## Lesson 5: Worship

*Learning Objective:* Disciples/leaders will make personal and corporate worship a top priority in their lives.

### Introduce

Why is there so much controversy surrounding the different styles of worship? The reason most people disagree is because they are focused on the elements of worship most pleasing to them. In other words, they want a specific kind of music, with a specific format. Appetites for differing styles of worship will vary from generation to generation. The real problem is not on the style of music, venue, or format. The real issue is focus. Worship is never to be on appeasing our own appetites. Worship is encountering the true and living God.

Whitney says worship means to ascribe proper worth to God, to magnify his worthiness.”<sup>14</sup> His definition pinpoints the essence of worship. As we encounter God we truly see how worthy of worship he truly is. This is more than emotions; it is more than mere inspiration. Worship means we are having a spiritual face-to-face with God. Emotions and human inspiration will fade with time. But, when we see God in all of his worthiness we will be impacted forever.

Worship requires us to focus on God. God’s Spirit and his truth must be present if true worship is going to take place. In this lesson we will not only rediscover these two powerful truths, but we will also see that worship can take place both privately and publically. We will also seek ways we can worship everyday of our lives.

How can we worship God without worshiping Him in vain?  
How do you define worship?

### Explore

*Worship is Focusing on God*

What would you do if you saw God face to face right now?  
Would you have a problem maintaining your focus?

God has chosen to reveal himself to us in two ways. First, he has declared his glory through his creation. The psalmist wrote, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork” (Ps. 19:1). When we gaze out over the waters while standing on the beach we can catch a glimpse of the vastness of the earth. And yet, the earth is miniscule compared to the universe. God’s created order becomes a powerful testimony to the greatness of our God. If we are truly contemplative we will be awestruck by the worthiness of God.

Second, and more specifically, God has chosen to reveal himself through his Word. All that we truly know about God the Father is seen in God the Son. The whole Bible points us to the worthiness of God’s Son, Jesus Christ. Without the Bible we will lose our focus. Jeremiah 7:1 says, “Hear the word of the Lord, all you men of Judah who enter these gates to worship the Lord.” The Bible testifies of itself and the important role it plays in directing people’s hearts to worship. Yes, the Bible must be our guide to worship. This is why our Bible intake is so essential in our discipleship. When we read God’s Word our response will be to worship.

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<sup>14</sup>Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 103

### *Worship is in Spirit and Truth*

Read John 4:23-24

What happens when a body of believers places too much emphasis on the Spirit or the Truth?

Worshipping in Spirit and truth means we must balance the two keeping both in right perspective. We worship with both our heart and our minds. We worship with emotion and thought. To try and separate the Spirit from truth is man's invention and not God's. God never allows his Spirit to be removed from his truth. Actually the two complement each other. Whitney reminds us, "The Holy Spirit opens minds to the truth of Scripture and awakens hearts that were dead toward God."<sup>15</sup> So, by Whitney's comment we can see both the Spirit and the truth must be present if we are truly going to have an encounter with God.

The Spirit also plays a vital role in our worship because he enlivens our hearts and makes us tender toward God. Our passion and love for God is ignited when the Spirit directs our worship. Without the Spirit directing worship we will simply worship out of duty and not affection. Though emotions can arise as the result of worship, we must be careful they do not dictate our actions. For example, we may feel like we did not worship when we were not overwhelmed with emotions. Worship will always cause us to think more deeply about God and who he is. Sometimes, that is coupled with emotions of exuberant joy, or weeping. But, praise is not limited to either emotion. Praise is our response to meeting with our awesome God.

Can someone who is not filled with the Holy Spirit worship God?

### *Worship is Both Public and Private*

For years people saw worship is something they only participated in on Sunday morning and evenings. Worship was relegated to the program and its outline as it was carried out in the "church building." The Bible never limits worship to one single location. In fact, the Bible teaches us that God is everywhere. So, worship is not limited to just the corporate setting. Indeed worship can take place both privately and corporately. We should use caution at this point. We should never allow private worship to take the place of corporate worship. Neither should we allow corporate worship to be a substitute for private worship. Clearly, we should participate in both.

There are biblical precedents for both public and private worship. The obvious exhortation for public or corporate worship is Hebrews 10:24-25. "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." The instruction of the Word commands we are to never neglect meeting together. Yet, we must acknowledge for corporate worship to be most meaningful we must have met with God alone. Jesus himself participated in both. In the fourth chapter of Luke we see Jesus meeting in the synagogue to worship with others. Luke also informs us Jesus "would withdraw to desolate places and pray" (5:16). We should never neglect either public or private worship. To do so is to adversely affect our growth as disciples of Christ.

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid. 107.



### *Cultivating the Discipline of Worship*

Again, anytime we use the word “discipline” we must explain this cannot be done out of drudgery. Our attitude in worship must be one that demonstrates our earnest desire to be in the presence of God. Our attitude will reflect our motivation. If we are motivated to worship because we want to keep God off our backs, then we will never achieve true worship. Whitney wrote, “The rigid rehearsal of a routine is not the same as rightly practicing a Spiritual Discipline.”<sup>16</sup>

Worship is focusing on God. Focusing on God takes focus, and focus requires discipline. The practice of worship is an exciting and wonderful process that when implemented appropriately will draw us nearer and nearer to the Lord.

#### **Apply**

Think about the times you truly sensed the presence of God in worship.

What were the circumstances? Where were you? What was going on in your life? What adaptations in your life are you willing to make to ensure you are going to engage in a lifetime of worship?

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 114.

## Lesson 6: Keeping Your Focus

**Lesson Objective:** Potential leaders will commit to spending an appropriate amount of time in public and private worship for the purpose of remaining focused as a leader.

### Introduce

Paul instructed the church at Rome to not be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. Right before he spoke this command he appealed to them to present their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God. Then he added, “which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1-2). Spiritual leaders must remain focused by consistently offering themselves to God in spiritual worship. Conformity to the world comes by compromise. Worship is one area of a leader’s life he cannot compromise. When leaders fail to worship, the church follows suit. A church that is not engaged in true worship stops growing in Christ.

Discuss: What are some things in your life that can keep you from worshipping?

### Explore

Reflect on Moses’ encounter with Pharaoh and how Moses could have compromised and lost (Exodus 5-12).

All leaders will be tested. It is vitally important spiritual leaders keep their focus. The best way to keep your focus is to be uncompromising in your worship. In other words, always make worship a priority in your life.

Discuss issues in our lives that can cause us to lose focus.

### *Personal Ambition*

Personal ambition gets in the way of worship because we see our personal advancement as more important than the advancement of the gospel. Worship means we see God as worthy of praise. Ambition and our personal advancement clouds our thinking, and we can become prideful. When leaders begin to follow their own agendas they lose sight of the worthiness of God and his purpose.

An aggressive ambition will cause dissension in the fellowship because God’s plan is not being followed. Really, the leader in such a case is worshipping himself more than he is worshipping God. He may justify his attitude and actions by say he is doing a good thing. Yet, he must regain his focus on God, and the best place to start is in worshipping God.

Ask: Why is personal advancement such a temptation?  
How can true worship bring conviction and clarity to a leader’s heart?

### *Impossible Situations*

Sanders says, “If leaders are to survive, they must view the difficult as commonplace, the complex as normal.”<sup>17</sup>

Ask: What do you think about his statement?

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<sup>17</sup>Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 133.

Worship is a close encounter with God. God shares his vision with those who worship and praise him on a consistent basis. When leaders worship they are more apt to see beyond their human abilities and view obstacle and challenges as God sees them. The angel told Mary, the mother of Jesus an important truth when she questioned her divine conception. The angel said, "For nothing will be impossible with God." Whatever God plans, God does.

Spiritual leaders will realize impossible situations are made possible when they put their faith in God and his plan. We must be careful not think if we will just have enough faith, we will get our way. Our God cannot be manipulated. When we are actively involved in worship, and we see God's worthiness instead of ours, our desire will be to follow God and his plan. Resistance to his plan will come. Yet, we must see if God has a plan he has a way it will be accomplished.

Ask: What are some action steps we can take to overcome what seems to be an impossible situation?

### *Failure*

The Bible is full of stories of people who failed in one way or another. Some had moral failures. Others failed in remaining faithful to God. The point is failure is a reality. Most great leaders met with some kind of failure in their lives before they moved on to accomplish great things. Spiritual leaders can lose their focus when they allow some failure to defeat them.

What has worship got to do with overcoming failure? Sanders says, "Failures and even feeling of inadequacy can provoke humility and serve to remind a leader who is really in charge."<sup>18</sup> In other words, we can take failures or even setbacks and turn them into something positive in our lives. True worship allows the believer to come into the presence of a loving God with no shame. Not because of his own accomplishments, but because of what Christ did on the cross.

Discuss ways to overcome failure in order to lead God's people.

### *Jealousy*

All leaders will face jealousy at some point in their leadership lives. Either their own jealousy or the jealousy others have will present a challenge to remain focused. Worship means we meet with a holy God. When we meet with a holy God we will see our own unholy attitudes and actions. Jealousy in unholy, and in the midst of our encounter with God we will see it and be convicted of it.

When spiritual leaders are active in their worship God appoints them to fill important roles in the fellowship. Sanders writes, "The person who fills a role appointed by God need not worry about vindicating his or her work when rivals become jealous or treacherous."<sup>19</sup>

### **Apply**

Implement some action steps to help you remain focused as a leader?

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 135.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 136.

Develop a plan that helps you overcome distractions when you are trying to worship.  
How can I be proactive and possibly anticipate those moments again?

## Lesson 7: Discipleship

**Lesson Objective:** Disciples will place a high priority on their own personal growth as a disciple of Christ.

### Introduce

My father once said, “Son, you can spiritually starve yourself to death while preaching and teaching.” The advice he gave me was invaluable. He was telling me if my preparation and study is only for preaching and teaching, I will dwindle away as a disciple. Personal growth in discipleship must be intentional. We will need to prepare for preaching and teaching. However, it is vitally important we continue our discipleship growth. Someone once said we preach out of the overflow. In our personal time with God, he will speak to our hearts and we must speak the message to others.

Professionals often must participate in some kind of continuing education program. For example, physicians must be trained on the latest techniques and practices if they are going to continue their practice. Discipleship essentially is continuing education. We must constantly train our minds in spiritual matters if we are going to remain effective in the kingdom.

Discuss: What distractions can keep us from our personal growth as a disciple? What safeguards can we put in place in our lives to ensure we do not compromise our time with God?

### Explore

#### *Ways to Continue in Discipleship*

Whitney tells us there are three primary ways we can continue in discipleship.

1. We must submit to the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives. In Romans 8 and in Galatians 5 Paul clearly tells us the sinful desires of this world are in direct opposition to the leading of the Holy Spirit. We are either going to walk in the flesh, or we are going to walk in the Spirit. We cannot do both. Our struggle as we live out this earthly life is to increasingly put away the works of the flesh and surrender to the Holy Spirit’s guidance. Discipleship is following Christ. The Holy Spirit guides us in the way we are to follow him. It is vitally important any leader must submit to the Holy Spirit as he grows in his discipleship.

It is important for us to know we cannot make ourselves Christ like. The fruit of the Holy Spirit in us reflects the very nature of Christ. As we are conformed into the image of Christ, the Holy Spirit creates in us a hunger for holiness. Thus, he creates in us a desire to be like Christ. Ultimately, we must recognize the Holy Spirit is faithful to help us persevere in what makes us more like Christ. We must not harden our hearts, but respond to his prompting.

2. We must participate in the fellowship of the saints. Church attendance and faithfulness to God are not the same. Many people think they are being faithful simply by being in the church building every time it is open. Many of those who never miss a service, never engage in any personal spiritual discipline. With that caveat in mind, we still must remember the importance of meeting together with other believers. Coming to the church building is not the only way to assemble. In fact, coming to the church building should be only one of many meetings we have with each other.

Why should we meet together? Not all spiritual disciplines cannot be practiced in isolation. Indeed, we must practice some of the disciplines while we are alone with God.

However, corporate worship, public prayer, and service to others can only be exercised by interacting with others. The monastic life might be attractive to some, but our Lord commanded us to make disciples. We can neither grow as a disciple nor make disciples if we spend all our time in solitude. A healthy balance is required. Jesus demonstrated the need for both isolation and public interaction. He spent time alone with God so he would have the strength to engage the masses of people who came to him.

Another reason we should meet with other believers is our spiritual maturity includes growth in fellowship with the children of God. Fellowship and socialization are not the same. We can come together and talk about all kinds of common interests. We can talk about sports, family, jobs, weather, and the list goes on. This is good and healthy, however is not spiritual fellowship. Fellowship involves spiritual conversations leading us to worship our God. We offer each other encouragement and exhortation. Our spirits are united under the leadership of the Spirit of God.

3. We must take advantage of the struggles we face in Christian living.

James 1:2-3 says, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness." God uses the trials in our lives to produce steadfastness. As we face adversities in life we learn to count on him more and more. Someone once said, "God will not put on you anymore than you can handle." I think this philosophy is not theologically sound. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." We constantly face issues in life beyond our control. Our God is faithful, and he will never leave us nor forsake us in times of trouble.

What is meant for evil, God means for good. He will season us and grow us as we face difficult issues in our lives. We are to grow in our faith as we learn to trust him more and more no matter what obstacles we face.

### **Apply**

Examine your life and ask where you could be stronger in yielding to the Holy Spirit's leading.

Plan an event with another believer or believers and be intentional in spiritual fellowship.

Develop a plan that leads you to rely on God more when you face the struggles of life?

## Lesson 8: Training Future Leaders

**Learning Objective:** Future leaders will practice essential elements necessary to empower other potential leaders.

### Introduce

When Jesus gave us the Great Commission the emphasis clearly was on making disciples and teaching others. Jesus' mandate calls for us to remain seriously committed to training others. As we have discovered throughout our journey, discipleship and spiritual leadership must go hand-in-hand. Spiritual leaders must be disciples of Christ. We have talked about the essential qualities of leadership we should develop in our own lives. We should also look for those same qualities in others and help guide them in their development.

Discuss: What are some of the essential qualities we should look for in potential leaders?

### Explore

*See What God Sees*

When Samuel was called to anoint a new king for Israel he was told where he was to go and what family. He was never told exactly what individual was to anoint until he saw him face-to-face. God instructed Samuel by saying, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as a man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:6-9).

Notice how God looks on the inside of a person, and not on the outside. God sees everything there is to see about an individual. This aspect makes our reliance on the guidance of the Holy Spirit an imperative. We cannot see hidden motives and agendas, God does. Therefore, the first place we should start in seeking leaders to replace us is with the Holy Spirit.

*OTJ*

While it is true spiritual leaders must educate and train to be effective leaders, they cannot learn how to lead until they have actively led someone. Sanders says,

Younger people should feel the weight of heavy burdens, opportunity for initiative, and power of final decision. The younger leader should receive generous credit for achievement. For most they must be trusted. Blunders are the inevitable price of training leaders.

On the job training provides opportunities that cannot be taught in books or in a training environment. People learn best by doing, especially when it concerns interacting with people. Certainly, we cannot discount the necessity of learning the principles of good leadership. However, one must learn to apply those principles by engaging people.

*Mentorship*

Potential leaders must learn by doing. Yet, we do God's people a disservice when we are not right beside them. Godly leaders not only acknowledge spiritual leaders, they train them by staying with them as they walk through the learning process. Jesus Christ

best models mentorship. He walked with his disciples for 3 years, teaching them by showing them. According to the Great Commission they were to teach all things they had observed from him. We must teach others not only with our words, but also with our actions. To mentor means to commit to teaching for a lifetime. We cannot simply have a teaching session and then leave future leaders alone. We must be encouragers, correctors, and instructors as they face the challenges and joys of spiritual leadership.

### **Apply**

Pray that God would show you potential leaders in the church and how you should approach them.

Develop a plan to seek out future leaders in the church.

Think about effective mentors you have had in the past. Pray that God would help you become an effective mentor.



## Lesson 9: Serving

**Lesson Objective:** Students will discipline themselves to serve on a consistent basis.

### Introduce

There are numerous factors which compel us into action. We must be honest and ask what motivates us to serve. Those who serve for the wrong reasons can taint the church's witness for Christ. Bad attitudes and selfish agendas rob the joy out of serving. In this lesson we will talk about the factors that can positively motivate us for service.

Discuss:

How can we discipline our minds to serve for the right reasons?

### Explore

#### *Motivated by Obedience*

The Bible is full of statements commanding God's people to obey his words. Obedience is not something most humans consider desirable. Yet, because we belong to God our heart's desire should be to follow him in complete obedience. Granted there are many other factors that should motivate us to serve. Yet, every true Christian should have a desire to obey God. God's Word commands us to serve. Whitney quotes Deuteronomy 13:4, "You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him."

#### *Motivated by Gratitude*

Have you ever stopped and really thought about what God has done for you by saving your soul? It is healthy for the Christian to think about his conversion experience and to contemplate what it was like to be apart from Christ. There is nothing that can stir our hearts any more than being grateful for our salvation. This spirit of thanksgiving spurs us to service. We don't serve to try to pay God back. We will never be able to pay God back. We don't serve out of obligation. If duty is our sole motivation we are destined for misery. Gratitude is different in this respect; we joyfully serve out of sheer appreciation to our Lord.

#### *Motivated by Gladness*

A sour disposition destroys the Christian witness. Many in the church will serve, but they do so with reluctance. Whitney writes, "The person who can't serve the Lord with gladness contradicts with his heart what he professes with his lips."<sup>20</sup> When we serve simply because we are supposed to, or out of guilt, we negate the joyful blessing God has in store for us. The psalmist instructed us to serve the Lord with gladness. Serving with gladness and serving with gratitude go hand-in-hand. When we are grateful, we will be glad.

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<sup>20</sup> Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 147.

### *Motivated by Humility*

One of the hardest influences of the flesh to overcome is arrogance. Jesus modeled humility in its purest forms. He demonstrated fully what it meant to accomplish great things, yet remain humble before God, the Father. In the flesh we want to be told what a good job we are doing. Humans want to receive accolades and recognition. What is meant for encouragement can inflate our egos and cause us to think more of ourselves than we ought. Serving with humility requires discipline. We must focus on our purpose of giving God glory. When we take our eyes off of our divine purpose we will serve with selfish intentions. We must be on guard in this matter.

### *Motivated by Love*

Of all the motivations, being motivated by love is key. We serve in obedience, gratitude, gladness, and humility because of our love for our Lord. Paul said in 1Corinthians 13 if we accomplish the greatest of feats and do not have love we are clanging cymbal. In other words, we are just making noise with no real impact on our world. God knows our hearts, and if we are not in love with God others will see through our façade. Love must be at the epicenter of all service in God's Kingdom.

### **Apply**

Analyze your reasons for serving. Are you serving with the right motives?  
Engage in a service project in the church, and discipline your mind to serve for the right reasons.

## Lesson 10: Modeling Servant Leadership

**Learning Objective:** Students will model for others what it means to be a servant leader by applying the sovereign principle of spiritual leadership, and the suffering principle of spiritual leadership.

### Introduce

Jesus warned his disciples to not follow the example of the religious leaders of their day. They were bad examples. Imagine the very people who were to immolate the principles and character of God to man were the very ones Jesus said not to follow. The church has gone through seasons during its history where it was best not to follow its leaders. If we strictly lead in the power of our own abilities we will lead others to try to do the same. Spiritual leadership must not only be taught with words, but it also must be taught with action. Modeling servant leadership is not an option; it is a must.

Discuss: What do you think of when someone uses the phrase, “Don’t do what I do, do what I say?”

### Explore

#### *Principles of Spiritual Leadership*

Sanders explains two principles we must live by if we are going to model spiritual leadership.

1. The sovereign principle of spiritual leadership. We did not choose this position in the church, God chose us. God gives us our assignment in ministry. We are equipped by his power and placed in a position of leadership when he ordains it. So, we don’t arrive at the position of leadership merely by popular vote, committee selection, or human appointment. We have come to this place in the church because God in his sovereign grace commanded it.

2. The suffering principle of spiritual leadership. Whether we like it or not, people are watching us. When we experience the tragedies of life they are paying attention to how we react. They want to know how deep our faith is when we are faced with adversity. The reality is that we indeed will face suffering in this life. It is God’s powerful way of conforming us into the image of his Son. We model spiritual leadership best when we are walking through the fire. We are being forged into the instrument God will continue to use.

Our previous lesson challenged us to serve for the right reasons. We are to serve out of obedience, gratitude, gladness, humility, and love. When we serve for the right reasons we model what it means to truly serve for God’s glory. Sanders reminds us of the greatest example of modeling spiritual leadership we find in the New Testament. In John 13 Jesus washed the disciples’ feet. In John 13:15 he said he was doing so as an example. This was right before he went to the cross and suffered the most excruciating and painful death one could possibly experience. Serving and suffering always go together. One cannot serve without suffering.

#### *The Spirit of Spiritual Leadership*

Jesus gave us a pattern for us to follow. As previously stated he became the example for us to follow. Sanders defines some of the principles he lived by:

1. He was fully dependent on his heavenly Father. Philippians 2:7 says Jesus “emptied himself.” By emptying himself Jesus humbly became reliant on the Father for everything. Jesus modeled this characteristic in leadership and it shows us our first

priority is to wholly lean on God for everything. This is more than relying on him for “church matters,” this means the Lord controls all issues in lives.

2. His delight was to do God’s will and God was pleased with him. Matthew 3:17 records God’s favor was on his Son when he said, “This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased.” Psalm 40:8 spoke of the coming Messiah, “I delight to do your will, O my God.” Spiritual leaders have one agenda, and it is to follow and do the will of God. When we stray outside those lines, we find ourselves in contradiction to our calling. Furthermore, we lead others to follow in our footsteps. God’s favor is on us because of his grace. His blessing and favor continue when we do what he commands us to do.

3. Our Lord demonstrated modesty. Isaiah 42:2 foretold of the Messiah’s actions, “He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street.” Jesus never was into self-promotion even though he had every right. Even the devil could not persuade him to stoop to gain attention through sensationalism. As leaders we must be on guard to not do anything that would promote our own notoriety. Our goal is to make Jesus famous, not ourselves and not even the organization to which we belong.

4. Jesus had empathy toward others. Isaiah 42:3 said, “A bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice.” Jesus identified with the poor and marginalized people in society. He felt their pain and knew their suffering. Sanders says, “The ideal servant does not trample on the weak and failing He mends bruises and fans the weak spirit into a flame. Those who follow in His steps will never walk over people.”<sup>21</sup>

5. The Father anointed Jesus for the task. Jesus clearly stated in Luke 4:18, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.” Of all the characteristic we must have, God’s anointing is the most important. We cannot accomplish one thing without the empowering of the Holy Spirit. Whenever we endeavor to do God’s work in the power of the flesh, we are destined for failure.

## **Apply**

Analyze how you lead in any given situation. Write down the areas where you are strongest and weakest.

Pray God would show you the ways you can better follow Jesus’ model for leadership.

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<sup>21</sup> Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 25.

APPENDIX 5

SURVEY TOTALS FOR LARGE GROUP

Table A1. Large group survey responses to demographic questions

	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
1. Do you consider yourself a Christian?		
A. Yes	56	56
B. No	0	0
2. Have you repented of your sins and trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation?		
A. Yes	56	56
B. No	0	0
3. Do you attend church on a regular basis?		
A. Yes	56	56
B. No	0	0
4. Do you believe that all Christians should study the Bible?		
A. Yes	56	56
B. No	0	0
5. What is your age in years?		
A. 18-24		
B. 25-34		
C. 35-44		
D. 45-54	4	
E. 55-64	4	
F. 65 & Over	48	

Table A2. Large group survey responses to agreement statements

	6. I consider myself to be a serious follower of Christ.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre				2	20	34
Post				1	7	47
	7. There is strong evidence in my lifestyle that I am a follower of Christ.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre				5	23	28
Post				2	24	30
	8. I spend a sufficient amount of time in Bible study.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre		4	4	8	25	15
Post			3	14	26	13
	9. I believe that prayer is vitally important in a Christian's life.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre					7	49
Post					4	51
	10. I worship both privately and corporately.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre		1			25	30
Post				4	12	39
	11. If asked, I could articulate the gospel.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre		1	3	15	19	18
Post		1	1	17	18	16
	12. It is difficult finding the time to spend with God.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre	8	7	4	10	24	3
Post	10	8	7	12	14	5
	13. Service to God should be given daily, no matter the size of the need.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre				1	13	42
Post					6	48
	14. I see Bible study as a source for spiritual renewal.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre					17	39
Post					10	46
	15. Gathering with other believers in worship is spiritually strengthening.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre					8	48
Post					7	46

Table A2 continued

	16. Christians should feel compelled to act when they see a need.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre				1	9	46
Post				2	11	39
	17. A fundamental of an obedient faith is a consistent prayer life.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre					11	45
Post					8	45
	18. All Christians are called to serve others in some way.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre					14	42
Post					9	45
	19. I could instruct another how to be the spiritual leader.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre		3	6	15	24	4
Post	1	3	5	17	23	3
	20. Memorizing Scripture is important in my Christian walk.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre				15	18	22
Post			1	5	26	20
	21. Leaders in the church need to be closely walking with the Lord.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre					12	43
Post				1	7	45
	22. Everyone should have a methodical way to study the Bible.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre			1	6	30	19
Post	1			1	26	25
	23. One of the best ways we can imitate Christ is by serving others.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre				1	9	44
Post				1	7	44
	24. One of the best ways to internalize God's will for your life is through meditation.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre			1	6	24	22
Post		1	1	6	18	26
	25. Studying the bible helps you to live according to God's plan for your life.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre					13	42
Post				1	8	44

APPENDIX 6

SURVEY TOTALS FOR SMALL GROUP

Table A3. Small group responses to part 1 of survey

	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey
1. I read my Bible (check only one):		
A. More than once per day	1	1
B. Once per day	0	1
C. Several times per week	2	1
D. Once per week		
E. Several times per month		
F. Once per month		
G. Several times per year		
H. Not at all		
2. I meditate on Scripture (check only one):		
A. More than once per day		
B. Once per day		2
C. Several times per week	3	1
D. Once per week		
E. Several times per month		
F. Once per month		
G. Several times per year		
H. Not at all		
3. I pray (check only one):		
A. More than once per day	3	3
B. Once per day		
C. Several times per week		
D. Once per week		
E. Several times per month		
F. Once per month		
G. Several times per year		
H. Not at all		
4. I have a specific time set aside for prayer.		
A. Yes		3
B. No	3	
5. I most often pray for (check only one):		
A. Myself	2	2
B. Family		
C. Friends	1	
D. Others		1
6. I most often pray (check only one):		
A. At Church		
B. At Home	1	1
C. While traveling	1	
D. At work		1
E. Other	1	1



Table A4. Small group responses to part 2 of survey

	7. I consider myself to be a spiritual leader.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre		1		1	1	
Post					1	2
	8. I am an effective spiritual leader of my home.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre				2	1	
Post					2	1
	9. I desire to lead in my home, community, and church.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre					1	2
Post						3
	10. I have a strong grasp of what it means to be the spiritual leader of my home.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre				3		
Post					1	2
	11. My spiritual health directly impacts my ability to lead.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre					1	2
Post						3
	12. I feel comfortable sharing the Gospel with others.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre				2		1
Post					1	2
	13. I not only pray for the sick, but also for the lost.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre				1	1	1
Post					1	2
	14. I could instruct another man in how to be a spiritual leader.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre		1		2		
Post					2	1
	15. I sense that God has given me the ability to teach.					
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Pre				1	1	1
Post					3	

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## ABSTRACT

### DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL LEADERS AT THE BAPTIST CHURCH AT MCADORY IN MCCALLA, ALABAMA

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This project's purpose was to institute a disciple making plan that educated and encouraged potential leaders. Chapter 1 identifies four goals to achieve this purpose by accessing the church's understanding of spiritual leadership, preaching eight expository messages on the spiritual disciplines, enlisting a group of potential leaders in a ten-week spiritual formation plan, and establishing a sustainable discipleship strategy.

Chapter 2 demonstrates how the Bible teaches that all Christians are called to pursue godliness. Bible passages are examined that demonstrate how all believers are called to godliness, the sufficiency of Scripture, the necessity of prayer, God calls a variety people to be leaders, and God calls Christians to serve others.

Chapter 3 examines the theoretical and practical issues related to leading people to practice spiritual disciplines. This chapter shows how God uses the disciplines to form people into leaders.

Chapter 4 lists the eight expository sermons along with a brief description of the content covered in each sermon. This chapter also includes the ten-week training sessions aimed at training new leaders through the exercise of spiritual disciplines.

Chapter 5 evaluates the project based on the level of achievement of the goals outlined in chapter 1.

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